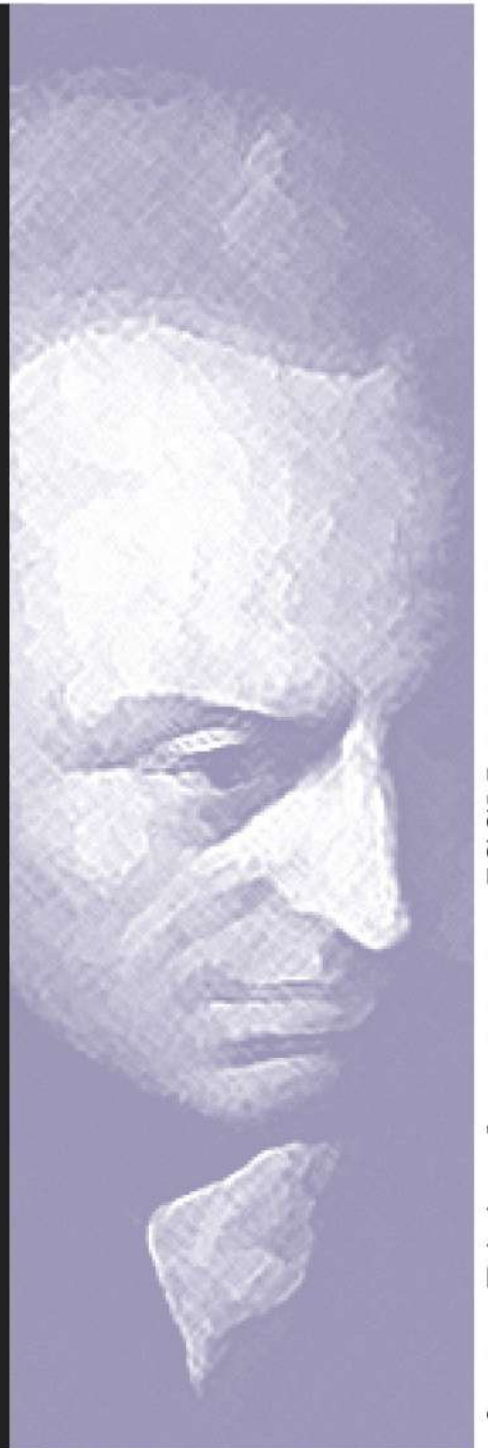


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Editorial CTK 12

La revista internacional *Con-Textos Kantianos* quiere compartir con sus auténticos protagonistas, es decir, con sus colaboradores y lectores una excelente noticia, cual es haber alcanzado su inclusión en el segundo cuartil (Q2) justo antes de la pandemia, en 2019, tal como indica el *Scimago Journal List**. Este reconocimiento ha sido un efecto colateral del buen quehacer colectivo y para nada una querencia buscada por sí misma. Parece mentira que un producto bastante artesanal e independiente haya logrado acceder a ese puesto en el ranking de impactos en su quinto año.

Quizá pueda haber ayudado el no estar sometidos a una política burocrática especializada en aplicar todo tipo de normativas como si fueran los algoritmos de una inflexible aplicación. Cabe cumplir con los estándares de calidad sin esa vigilancia administrativa o acaso gracias precisamente a no tener que padecerla. Compartir Q2 con *Kant-Studien*, sin contar con su respaldo institucional, financiación y demás coberturas editoriales, demuestra que se pueden hacer las cosas de otra manera, por el mero placer de hacerlas y basta creer en ellas al modo kantiano.

Alcancemos o no la clasificación de Q1, el horizonte del tricentenario kantiano se presenta halagüeño para el balance de CTK. Pues ya se han celebrado cuatro encuentros internacionales que llevan su nombre (en Bogotá, Madrid, Santiago de Chile y México), algunos de los cuales han terminado en la imprenta de uno u otro modo. Adaptándonos a la pandemia es muy probable que ahora lancemos un segundo encuentro sobre *Parerga Kantiana* (<http://cchs.csic.es/es/event/parerga-kantiana-ii-encuentro-internacional-ctk-ctk-e-books>), cuyo formato sea telemático y que podríamos organizar en colaboración con RIKEPS (<https://kantrikeps.es/>), una Red Iberoamericana de índole temático sobre *Kant: Ética, Política y Sociedad*.

* <https://www.scimagojr.com/journalsearch.php?q=21100837207&tip=sid&clean=0>

Quienes ideamos y pusimos en marcha este proyecto, enseguida decidimos asociar a la revista una Biblioteca Digital de acceso libre (*CTK E-Books*: <https://ctkebooks.net/>), la cual también satisface los estándares de calidad y cuenta con un significativo número de usuarios, en colaboración con la editorial Alamanda de Nuria Roca, que gestiona los ISBN y la maquetación de cada volumen a un coste mínimo que permite por añadidura ofrecer ejemplares en papel bajo demanda.

Ha sido un auténtico privilegio fundar ambos proyectos académico-editoriales junto a Nuria Sánchez Madrid (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, España), sin cuya extraordinaria labor y dedicación hubiera sido imposible ponerlos en marcha, viéndonos bien acompañados desde un principio por María Julia Bertomeu (CONICET, Argentina), Catalina González (Univ. de Los Andes, Colombia), Efraín Lazos (IIF/UNAM, México) y Luis Eduardo Molina (Univ. Alberto Hurtado, Chile). Esperemos que *CTK* pueda seguir concitando nuevos respaldos personales e institucionales que le permitan proseguir su andadura. Pero en cualquier caso habrá servido para estimular iniciativas parecidas.

CTK 12 presenta su nuevo número monográfico sobre la *Teoría estética de Kant*, que cuenta como editor invitado con el investigador João Lemos (Ifilnova, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal). CTK12 se ve complementado con algunas de sus secciones habituales, como la entrevista al Prof. Alejandro Vigo (Univ. de Navarra, España), realizada por Roberto Casales, Livia Bastos Andrade y Rubén Sánchez Muñoz, todos docentes e investigadores de la UPAEP de México, y una *Discusión* en torno a la función que desempeña la teoría de la propiedad en el republicanismo kantiano, en la que participan Macarena Marey (CONICET/UBA, Argentina), María Julia Bertomeu (CONICET, Argentina) y Nuria Sánchez Madrid (Universidad Complutense de Madrid). Ocho reseñas de novedades bibliográficas completan los contenidos del presente número.



Roberto R. Aramayo
Editor Principal y Fundador de CTK
Instituto de Filosofía del CSIC, Noviembre 2020
<https://theconversation.com/profiles/roberto-r-aramayo-875223>



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CTK 12 Editorial Note

The international journal *Con-Textos Kantianos* is very glad to share with its contributors and readers a great new, i.e. to have reached a few months before the pandemic crisis the acknowledgment Q2 as the *Scimago Journal List* reports*. This acknowledgment looks like to be a collateral effect of a long-term sustained editorial work, which in five years has achieved this outstanding impact. Our independence from already usual bureaucratic guidelines applied as inflexible algorithms might have ironically contributed to obtain this score. In our view it is possible to meet demanding quality standards without imposing a heavy administrative surveillance. Moreover, the lack of such a burden helps to strengthen the academic commitment of CTK journal. To share the Q2 impact with journals as *Kant-Studien* proves that the outcomes generated by a sound institutional can be also earned through the individual enthusiasm felt for boosting the research and contemporary reception of Kant's writings.

Even if we get or not the Q1 impact, the horizon of Kant's tricentenary appears promising for the balance of this journal. CTK has already organized four international workshops —held in Bogotá, Madrid, Santiago de Chile and México—, and some of them have been published in collected volumes. According to the circumstances of the pandemic it is likely that a second edition of *Parerga Kantiana* (<http://cchs.csic.es/es/event/parerga-kantiana-ii-encuentro-internacional-ctk-ctk-e-books>) might be held in 2021, as a digital discussion organized in cooperation with the Latin American, Spanish and Portuguese Network RIKEPS (<https://kantrikeps.es/>).

The promoters and sponsors of this project decided at quite early stage to link the journal with the free access Kantian Digital Library (*CTK E-Books*: <https://ctkebooks.net/>),

* <https://www.scimagojr.com/journalsearch.php?q=21100837207&tip=sid&clean=0>

another project developed in cooperation with Nuria Roca, from Alamanda publishing house, which meets the highest quality standards and displays a large number of downloads. Alamanda runs the layout process and the production of each blind peer reviewed volume and also prints hard copies on demand.

It has been a privilege to have grounded both academic and publishing projects with Nuria Sánchez Madrid (University Complutense of Madrid, Spain), whose extraordinary support has been a key actor to launch them. From the outset we enjoyed the helpful company of María Julia Bertomeu (CONICET, Argentina), Catalina González (Univ. of Los Andes, Colombia), Efraín Lazos (IIF/UNAM, México) and Luis Eduardo Molina (Univ. Alberto Hurtado, Chile). We hope that *CTK* continues receiving individual and institutional supports for its further development. At any case, this example should encourage further similar initiatives.

CTK 12 contains a special issue with the title *Kant's Aesthetic Theory*, whose guest editor is the post-doc researcher João Lemos (Nova University of Lisbon, Portugal). This December issue also contains an *Interview* with Prof. Alejandro Vigo (Univ. of Navarra, Spain), authored by Roberto Casales, Livia Bastos Andrade y Rubén Sánchez Muñoz, all of them from the UPAEP (México) and a *Discussion* focusing on the function that property fulfills in Kantian republicanism, with the participation of Macarena Marey (CONICET/UBA, Argentina), María Julia Bertomeu (CONICET, Argentina) and Nuria Sánchez Madrid (University Complutense of Madrid). Eight book reviews of recent Kant-related essays and collected books complete the table of contents of this issue.



Roberto R. Aramayo
Main Editor and founder of CTK
CSIC Institute of Philosophy, November 2020
<https://theconversation.com/profiles/roberto-r-aramayo-875223>



**Identidad práctica, virtud y sentido. Entrevista a Alejandro
Vigo**

***Practical Identity, Virtue and Meaning. An Interview to Alejandro
Vigo***

Roberto Casales García*

UPAEP, México

Livia Bastos Andrade**

UPAEP, México

Rubén Sánchez Muñoz***

UPAEP, México

Resumen

A través de esta entrevista a Alejandro Vigo, un referente obligado para quien desea profundizar en el pensamiento de autores como Kant, Aristóteles, Husserl o Heidegger, exploramos los puntos de encuentro entre estas tradiciones, a fin de esclarecer la relación entre identidad práctica, virtud y

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sentido. Esta entrevista a Alejandro Vigo, además de permitirnos explorar parte de su itinerario intelectual, nos da la oportunidad de reflexionar sobre los alcances y las limitaciones de las propuestas filosóficas de cada uno de estos autores.

Palabras clave

Kant; Aristóteles; Fenomenología; Virtud; Carácter; Identidad práctica

Abstract

Through this interview to Alejandro Vigo, an obligatory reference for those who wish to deepen the thought of authors such as Kant, Aristotle, Husserl or Heidegger, we explore the meeting points between these traditions, in order to clarify the relationship between practical identity, virtue, and meaning. This interview with Alejandro Vigo not only allows us to explore part of his intellectual itinerary but also allows us to reflect on the scope and limitations of each of these authors' philosophical proposals.

Key words

Kant; Aristotle; Phenomenology; Virtue; Character; Practical Identity

Alejandro G. Vigo (Buenos Aires, 1958) es licenciado en Filosofía por la Universidad de Buenos Aires (1988), donde trabajó con el Dr. Conrado Eggers Lan, y doctor en Filosofía por la Universidad de Heidelberg (1994), cuya tesis fue realizada bajo la dirección del Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Wieland. Como catedrático, no sólo ha impartido cursos en distintas Universidades de Latinoamérica y Europa, sino también una amplia variedad de temas, entre los que destacan sus cursos de griego clásico, de filosofía antigua, de Kant, fenomenología, hermenéutica y teoría de la acción. Ha dictado más de 222 conferencias a lo largo del mundo y publicado 14 libros de autoría propia, 6 más en coautoría y 14 como editor o coeditor. Cuenta con más de 144 artículos especializados, 10 más para diccionarios o enciclopedias y ha realizado más de 15 traducciones científicas. Entre las distinciones y premios que ha recibido, destacan la medalla de la Universidad de los Andes (2006), la Plaqueta del Instituto de Filosofía por la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (2006), el premio “Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Forschungspreis” otorgado por la Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung y el Bunderministerium für Bildung und Forschung (2010), la “Cátedra Diánoia 2012” de la UNAM, y el premio Internazionale di Filosofia “Antonio Jannone” por la Pontificia Univesità della Santa Croce (2017). Es, además, miembro del Institut International de Philosophie de la École Normal Supérieure-CNRS, París, desde el 2001. Colabora en diversas revistas especializadas de Filosofía, entre las que figura

Méthexis, Philosophia, Tópicos, Ordina Prima. Journal for Classical Studies, Methodus, Anuario Filosófico, Hypnos, Open Insight, Logos. Anales del Seminario de Metafísica, Ápeiron. Estudios de Filosofía y Metafísica y Persona. Actualmente es profesor e investigador del Departamento de Filosofía de la Universidad de Navarra.

Roberto Casales García.– El quehacer filosófico, al menos en lo que respecta a nuestra experiencia, parece estar siempre motivado por una serie de inquietudes o cuestiones que terminan por definir nuestros gustos e intereses filosóficos. En una disciplina cuya complejidad y diversidad de temas es tan amplia, ¿cómo es que Alejandro Vigo llegó a la filosofía? ¿Cuáles fueron esas inquietudes que despertaron o motivaron su interés por la filosofía, concretamente por la filosofía práctica de autores clásicos y contemporáneos como Platón, Aristóteles, Kant, Fichte, Husserl, Anscombe y Heidegger?

Alejandro Vigo.– Llegué a la filosofía de una manera distinta de cómo continué una vez que estaba en ella. Vale decir, una respuesta tiene que ver con cómo llegue a la filosofía y una segunda es por qué después descubrí la relevancia de la filosofía práctica. Lo voy a decir en dos tramos. Llegué a la filosofía por razones que son biográficas y muy fáciles de explicar. Fui adolescente en una época muy convulsa. Yo tenía 15 años en el 73. A esa edad, por lo menos en mi circuito de mi colegio, que éramos gente normal de un colegio no especialmente destacado, leíamos a Kafka, a Dostoievski. Personalmente, me marcó mucho la literatura de Ernesto Sábato, quien citaba a todos esos y otros autores, especialmente, en una obra llamada *Abaddón el exterminador*, publicada en el 74, que compré y leí de inmediato. Recuerdo que anoté todos los nombres que Sábato citaba allí para ir a leerlos. Incluso me carteeé en esos años con Ernesto Sábato. Le mandé unas cartas y él me contestó muy amablemente. Entonces, claro, había una crisis de sentido tremenda en Argentina: estaba la guerrilla, un gobierno peronista que en menos de un año había girado desde una posición de izquierda filomarxista nuevamente hacia el fascismo de sus orígenes a fines de los años '30 y comienzos de los '40, muerte por todos lados, locura inflacionaria, crisis completa de sentido. Yo tenía un *background* católico, desde el cual no se entendía mucho lo que estaba pasando. Fue entonces cuando descubrí, de la mano de Sábato, la gran literatura de corte existencial, Dostoievsky, Kafka, etc. y eso me llevó a leer todas esas cosas a una edad muy temprana, inconveniente, quizás. Yo quería hacer eso mismo, sí, pero de una manera más conceptual. Quería ver tratados esos problemas, pero

no de ese modo, y supuse que la filosofía me podía dar algo de eso. Como a los 16 me decidí a estudiar filosofía, pero dudé un largo tiempo entre filosofía y astronomía. Y fue una sorpresa tremenda para mí, cuando empecé filosofía, darme cuenta de que los primeros filósofos eran gente que miraban las estrellas, astrónomos que se caían en pozos por andar mirando hacia arriba, como cuenta Platón de Tales. Vale decir que, en definitiva, astronomía y filosofía algo de común tienen, que es esa actitud contemplativa, de mirar hacia lo alto, por así decir. Pero el descubrimiento de la praxis y su relevancia filosófica fue más tardío, no muy tardío, pero sí bastante posterior. Al comienzo, yo quería hacer más bien filosofía teórica. De hecho, las primeras cosas que hice, todavía en la licenciatura, eran temas de la teoría de la sustancia, sustancia y tiempo, etc. Tardé en darme cuenta de la relevancia de la praxis. Y, sobre todo, la descubrí al hilo del modo en que Heidegger retoma la praxis aristotélica, como un acceso al mundo de pleno derecho, que supone una ontología regional particular: la ontología que subyace a la vida humana en su ejecución habitual. En ese sentido, mi interés por la praxis fue primero ontológico. Por trabajar como ayudante en la cátedra de Historia de la Filosofía Antigua, yo ya había tenido que enseñar a Aristóteles, la *Ética Nicómaco* y cosas así. Pero cuando me fui a Alemania, me di cuenta de que había estado enseñando cosas que realmente no entendía y me preguntaba cómo es que había podido enseñar esas cosas sin entenderlas demasiado. El punto es que fui convirtiéndome en alguien de mayor inflexión práctica, por así decir, con el tiempo, porque me fui dando cuenta de que los problemas y los temas de la filosofía práctica, lejos de reducirse a ser una mera aplicación de la filosofía teórica, o lejos de deducirse de la ontología de la sustancia, tenían una especificidad, una consistencia propia, que reclamaba otro tipo de abordaje. Y como siempre fui de talante anti-deductivista, me distancié muy rápidamente de ese modelo según el cual la filosofía práctica tendría que estar fundada en la metafísica o algo así. En suma, creo que fue eso, una convergencia de múltiples factores, lo que me fue llevando a adoptar gradualmente una inflexión más práctica.

Livia Bastos Andrade.— Una obra que me ha marcado la formación, justamente por mi cambio de pensar, fue el libro de Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (1993). Considero que ahí tiene tesis osadas. Y una de ellas se refiere al rol formal y metodológico de la *eudaimonía*, a la hora de desarrollar la teorización ética en la filosofía antigua. Según Alejandro Vigo, ¿qué rol metodológico y formal tiene la *eudaimonía* en la constitución de las teorías éticas en el mundo antiguo, en especial, en Aristóteles?

A.V.– Es una gran pregunta. Ese libro de Julia Annas a mí también me marcó bastante en algún momento. Ella publicó primero un artículo en 1992 sobre ética antigua y moralidad moderna, que resume de algún modo la tesis principal del libro, que es, creo, de 1993. Pienso que el título contiene intencionadamente un oxímoron, desde el punto de vista de la manera habitual de ver, porque *morality* es el nombre que se le da modernamente a la ética, y *happiness* es algo que, desde ese punto de vista, parecería ser extrínseco a la ética misma. Annas combina ambas nociones en un título unitario, *The Morality of Happiness*, cosa que, desde la perspectiva de una visión muy compartimentada, vendría a ser una especie de círculo cuadrado. Digo esto, porque, según una visión muy difundida, en los autores donde la ética es entendida como *morality*, en sentido moderno, pareciera que la *happiness*, la felicidad, no juega ningún papel, al menos, no juega un papel central. Y muchos dicen, inversamente, que la teoría antigua de la felicidad no es ética, en sentido estricto, no es moralidad, por que esta última sería, en definitiva, una teoría relativa a reglas, deberes y obligaciones, es decir, a cosas que no tienen mucho o nada que ver con la felicidad. Ha habido y hay todavía mucha gente que opina así, por ejemplo, la gente que marca que entre la ética antigua y la moralidad moderna no hay un hilo de continuidad, sino que se trataría, en rigor, de dos cosas distintas, como si las teorías morales modernas no pertenecieran, en rigor, a la misma disciplina que las teorías éticas antiguas, sino que hubiera aquí un cambio radical de asunto, al modo del que tiene en vista el famoso aserto de Quine: “cambio de lógica es cambio de tema”. En cambio, Julia Annas practica un enfoque, en buena medida, compatibilista, una manera de ver que también yo, de modo mucho más modesto, he tratado defender. Dicho de modo simplificado: en un enfoque de ese tipo se asume que, desde luego, hay diferencias de orientación y acentuación, a veces notorias, entre las teorías antiguas y las modernas, pero, a la vez, se sostiene que es falso que exista una inconmensurabilidad radical. Por caso, es falso asumir que las teorías éticas antiguas eran indiferentes a la noción de lo que es debido hacer, que es aquella en la que parecen estar centradas las teorías modernas más representativas. Y, de modo complementario, es falso también que las teorías modernas sean indiferentes a la dimensión vinculada con la noción de felicidad, por lo menos, no lo son aquellas las teorías modernas que resultan más representativas y más interesantes, como la de Kant. Siempre me he adscripto a esta visión compatibilista, en lo que toca al caso de la ética antigua y la moralidad moderna. Una cuestión ulterior es la de qué papel debe jugar la felicidad en un

diseño ético. Lo que yo haría aquí es contrastar los dos autores que más me han influido, que son Aristóteles y Kant. Entre ambos hay una diferencia clarísima, no tanto respecto de la relevancia de la felicidad en la ética o la moral, sino, más bien, respecto del lugar preciso en el que debe colocarse la felicidad dentro de una concepción de conjunto. A diferencia de Kant, Aristóteles reclama de la noción de felicidad una función de fundamentación, si es que se puede hablar propiamente de una “fundamentación” de la ética en su caso.

L.B.A.– La felicidad sería el punto de partida...

A.V.– Claro. En el caso de Kant, es diferente: también para Kant la felicidad es algo muy importante dentro del ámbito de la moralidad, pero a la noción de felicidad no se le puede pedir, según Kant, que cumpla una función de fundamentación de la moralidad. A primera vista, podría parecer que son posiciones totalmente opuestas. Y en este nivel de abstracción, puede que lo sean. Pero en el nivel de ejecución que corresponde al desarrollo de conjunto de ambos modelos, las distancias se acortan de manera muy notoria. Y esto se puede ver desde los dos lados, a mi juicio, tanto desde Aristóteles como desde Kant. Desde el lado de Aristóteles, porque mucho de lo que modernamente identificaríamos como contenido de la noción de deber –mucho de eso, no todo– queda incorporado, de hecho, en una noción peculiar de felicidad que, en Aristóteles, tiene carácter normativo. La noción aristotélica de felicidad es normativa, y no conativa, para decirlo con la terminología propuesta por Terence Irwin: la felicidad no queda definida por referencia a cualesquiera deseos que el agente pudiera tener, sino por referencia a aquello que el agente, en tanto es el tipo de ser que es, a saber, un ser humano, ha de querer y debe aspirar a lograr. Así, la felicidad es, para Aristóteles, el logro pleno y estable de un modo de vida acorde a las capacidades que caracterizan al ser humano como el tipo de ser que es. Por lo tanto, la felicidad es aquello que le proporciona al ser humano el mejor modo de vida, pero también es aquello a lo que está llamado, por así decir, como algo a lo que debe aspirar y a lo que, de cierta forma, está destinado. No se trata entonces de algo que el agente pueda diseñar de modo puramente constructivo, es decir, de un modo que se desentienda completamente de sus condiciones de partida.

L.B.A.– No es algo arbitrario.

A.V.– Exactamente, uno no puede determinar el contenido de la felicidad para el ser humano de una manera puramente arbitraria en cada caso. Más bien, Aristóteles cree que hay maneras de argumentar en favor de una visión, digamos, más articulada de la felicidad, que tenga mucho más que ver con las capacidades que esencialmente posee un ser humano. Este enfoque lleva a admitir, siguiendo una intuición de origen socrático, que un agente individual muy bien puede estar equivocado respecto a su propia felicidad: puede incluso haber alcanzado todo lo que se proponía y, sin embargo, estar equivocado acerca de qué es lo que debería proponerse. Por lo tanto, se trata de una concepción normativa de la felicidad, de tal manera que incorpora buena parte de aquello que la moralidad moderna trata bajo la noción de deber. Por el lado de Kant, viceversa, la felicidad propia no es un mandato moral básico, pero es un deber moral indirecto. Kant dice que yo tengo el deber indirecto de cuidar de mi propio bienestar, porque si no cuido de eso pongo en riesgo mi propia capacidad de obrar de un modo adecuado a las exigencias de la moralidad. Esto, en lo que toca a mí mismo. Pero, además, la promoción de la felicidad es un deber primario respecto de los demás. Las dos máximas de la ética material kantiana son: la máxima de la perfección propia y la máxima de la felicidad ajena. Bajo esas dos máximas caen, en definitiva, todos los deberes de virtud. Yo no puedo buscar la perfección ajena, porque la perfección moral sólo se puede buscar en primera persona, de modo no delegatorio. Nadie puede asumir la tarea de lograr el perfeccionamiento moral por el otro. Pero yo debo contribuir, en lo que de mí dependa, a que el otro alcance el mayor grado de felicidad posible. Entonces, es sencillamente falso que en la ética kantiana la felicidad sea irrelevante. La felicidad es fundamental en mi trato con el otro: yo debo hacer todo lo posible para hacerle amable la vida a los demás. Ese es un mandato kantiano, es un deber de virtud. En cambio, no debo poner jamás mi propia felicidad como el primer mandato moral. Como es obvio, este planteo de Kant es mucho más cercano al cristianismo que el de Aristóteles, porque en el cristianismo, claramente, debo poder subordinar la búsqueda de mi propia felicidad o mi propio bienestar, muchas veces, a la promoción de la felicidad ajena. Y después, ya en sede propiamente teológica, uno puede decir que el camino para encontrar la verdadera felicidad, la dicha perfecta, consiste finalmente subordinar mi propio bienestar. No es que renuncio a mi propio bienestar o lo subordino a la felicidad ajena para finalmente alcanzar la dicha perfecta, sino porque eso es lo que debo hacer. Pero haciendo eso que debo hacer puedo tener la esperanza de poder ser finalmente premiado

con la dicha perfecta. Ahora bien, más allá de todas estas y otras diferencias, hay cierta compatibilidad de fondo entre los enfoques de Aristóteles y Kant, al menos, en el sentido de que ni la ética aristotélica es ajena a la dimensión de lo que hoy llamamos deber, ni la ética kantiana es ajena a la dimensión de la felicidad. En tal sentido, soy defensor de un enfoque compatibilista, lo que no significa decir que ambos autores sostienen exactamente lo mismo. Por eso, pienso que, sobre todo, en los círculos de extracción católica es muy importante realizar un esfuerzo mayor de comprensión que apunte a hacer justicia realmente a lo que propone la ética kantiana. Digo esto, porque en sede católica suele imperar todavía, lamentablemente, la tendencia doblemente errónea a, por un lado, querer bautizar a Aristóteles y, por otro, querer demonizar a Kant. Desde mi modesto punto de vista, esto es un craso error: ni Aristóteles es tan fácilmente bautizable, al menos, no en todos los aspectos, ni hay realmente razones de peso para ver a Kant como un pensador que deba ser execrado, mucho menos, cuando se trata, precisamente, de su filosofía moral.

R.C.G.– A lo largo de tus estudios sobre la filosofía práctica de Aristóteles, defiendes que toda genuina acción intencional tiene una estructura hilemórfica, donde se establece una relación entre la estructura kinética de la acción, propia del movimiento corpóreo, y el entramado teleológico de sentido que responde a las disposiciones internas del sujeto, esto es, tanto a sus creencias, convicciones y conocimientos, como a aquellos deseos, propósitos e intenciones que motivan la acción. Al considerar esta dualidad constitutiva de la acción y establecer cierta prioridad de la segunda, sin por eso dejar de ver la importancia de la primera, sostienes que en la teoría aristotélica de la acción intencional “la razón práctica sólo está en condiciones de *hallar* sentido a partir de una *apuesta* en un proyecto de futuro” (2011b: 282). Esto implica que el sujeto de la praxis es capaz de situarse más allá de la facticidad para actuar en función de su concepción de una buena vida, es decir, “sobre la base de un proyecto total, más o menos articulado, de aquellas posibilidades futuras que el agente asume en cada caso como propias” (Vigo, 2011b: 284). Bajo este panorama, ¿qué papel juega la habituación, la autorreferencialidad y la verdad práctica en su explicación de la filosofía práctica aristotélica?

A.V.– Mi punto básico es el siguiente: la manera en que Aristóteles trata con la agencia y, por tanto, con aquello que llamamos praxis, es una manera que no es de carácter elementarizante, sino, más bien, de corte totalizante, holístico. Esto es así, porque

Aristóteles conecta la noción de praxis con exigencias propias de la comprensión: sólo es un genuino agente de praxis, en sentido aristotélico, alguien que puede tratar consigo mismo de una manera peculiar, esto es, sobre la base de una cierta anticipación global de la propia vida. Alguien no puede contar como un genuino agente, en sentido aristotélico, si no está en condiciones de darse a sí mismo una cierta representación global de su propia vida. Esa representación no es detallada, por eso sólo hablo de una representación global. No es una anticipación, imposible de hecho, de todo lo que le va a ocurrir a alguien. Es, más bien, una cierta imagen de lo que él mismo es y quiere ser. Proyectos prácticos del tipo: “voy a ser profesor” o “voy a dedicarme a la acción social”, o “voy a ser militar” son esbozos globales de un cierto tipo de vida. No sé de antemano a qué misión me van a mandar, no sé qué va a pasar el día tal en que tengo que dar una clase, pero hago una apuesta por comprenderme a mí mismo con arreglo a una representación global de lo que soy y quiero ser. Son apuestas del tipo de lo que en la teología se solía llamar en un tiempo las “opciones fundamentales”, en las cuales uno toma posición con respecto de sí mismo: hago una apuesta por un modo de autocomprenderme, que, como tal, adquiere carácter normativo, regulativo, porque es aquello que pretendo alcanzar y, por lo tanto, a aquello a partir de lo cual me oriento. Es ese esbozo global de la propia vida el que me proporciona los criterios últimos de relevancia para decir cómo, en qué medida, hasta qué punto debo o no involucrarme en ciertas actividades, en qué momento debo involucrarme más o menos en esto o aquello, qué estoy haciendo conmigo mismo cuando actúo como actúo, etc. Si soy profesor, se entiende porqué estoy en clase, pero también tengo que ir al médico, pero además puedo practicar un *hobby*, pero además estoy casado. Todo eso es la gestión de una complejidad que no se puede sustentar sin una cierta representación, más o menos articulada, del tipo de persona que uno es y quiere ser. A mi modo de ver, este enfoque aristotélico es filosóficamente muy rico, ya que es lo que permite poner a Aristóteles también en conexión directa y en diálogo directo, como de hecho ocurre, con concepciones modernas de la identidad personal y también de la racionalidad práctica. Por otro lado, la anticipación global de una vida es, necesariamente, un modo de tratar con la estructura temporal de la vida misma. No es un plan atemporal de acción, ni es tampoco un conjunto de condiciones, al modo de *set* de carácter lógico. La función fundamental de tal representación global de la propia vida tiene que ver con el intento de conceder una cierta unidad vertical de sentido a la unidad horizontal del tiempo en el que la vida misma se

despliega. Apunta a lograr una cierta manera de gestionar la multiplicidad temporal y la unidad horizontal de la temporalidad, digamos así, con arreglo a una cierta articulación vertical de sentido, que no está completamente realizada en ningún momento de la secuencia temporal, pero que está presente de algún modo en todo momento, de tal manera que, cuando estoy confrontado toda esa multiplicidad de circunstancias, tengo un cierto norte que me permite orientar la gestión de esa misma multiplicidad. Por lo mismo, poder comprenderse a sí mismo como totalidad está intrínsecamente conectado con la capacidad de poder anticiparse a sí mismo, es decir, de poder venir a sí mismo desde una cierta representación global del propio futuro. La legibilidad del presente sólo es posible desde algún tipo de anticipación de futuro que concierne mi propia identidad práctica y vital, por así decir. ¿Qué relevancia tiene, por caso, esta situación concreta de estar haciendo una entrevista sobre asuntos de filosofía? La respuesta, obviamente, tiene que ver con el hecho de que me considero y me proyecto a mí mismo como profesor de filosofía, y algo semejante vale también en el caso de cada uno de ustedes. El presente es ilegible librado a sí mismo, es decir, si no hay una cierta proyección de anticipación, que apunta a las posibilidades propias de un agente de praxis. Entre esas posibilidades están las que pertenecen al tipo de ser que uno es y que, por tanto, comparte con todos sus semejantes, pero hay también un cúmulo de posibilidades fácticas que son de otro tipo, por caso: el haber nacido en un cierto lugar y en un determinado momento histórico, el tener una determinada lengua materna, el poseer ciertos talentos y habilidades, y no otros, el carecer de ciertos talentos o habilidades que otros tienen, y un larguísimo etc. Todo eso nos conduce a tener que lograr una cierta gestión de nuestra propia facticidad, desde el punto de vista que proporciona una cierta representación anticipativa de nuestra propia vida. Como es obvio, todo esto se conecta muy centralmente con la noción aristotélica de verdad práctica, que, para Aristóteles, consiste en la correspondencia que la acción particular que realizo voluntaria e intencionalmente tiene con el fin que en cada caso anticipa el deseo. Ahora bien, para estar frente a un caso de verdad práctica, Aristóteles le plantea al deseo una exigencia de carácter moral, que queda expresada en el criterio de rectitud: el deseo debe ser recto. Aquí “recto” significa que tiene que estar en correspondencia con todo aquello que es y puede ser bueno para mi vida, concebida esta última según una representación adecuada de la felicidad. En mi interpretación, la exigencia de rectitud del deseo, que Aristóteles plantea como al pasar, es nada menos que la punta del iceberg de

toda esta concepción totalizante y holística de la praxis, según la cual no tenemos deseos aislados, sino deseos interconectados, de mayor y menor alcance, de mediano y largo plazo, que, en último término, están conectados con un deseo último que es el de querer ser feliz, el de querer llevar un tipo de vida que esté adecuado a lo que soy y quiero ser. Por el lado de la exigencia de rectitud del deseo aparece, según esta interpretación, un componente holístico también en la propia noción de verdad práctica, tal que la acción concreta que realizo aquí y ahora sólo puede contar como un caso de verdad práctica cuando está en correspondencia, siquiera de modo tácito o indirecto, con esa totalidad de sentido anticipada en la representación global de mi propia vida.

R.C.G.– ¿Crees que bajo este esquema es posible hablar de vocación?

A.V.– Pienso que sí. La noción de vocación no está formulada así, me parece, en Aristóteles. La metáfora de la vocación es la metáfora de un llamado, y se hace muy fuerte en el cristianismo, porque ahí hay una ética de la interpelación que pone de relieve un aspecto diferente: que yo nunca podría hacerme cargo genuinamente de mí mismo, si previamente alguien no me escoge y me llama por mi nombre. Este atisbo fundamental de que hay otro que me supera infinitamente y me dice “tú, tal cosa”, es un motivo originalmente cristiano que posteriormente explota también en la filosofía. Pero, hasta donde alcanzo a ver, no es un motivo muy característico de la ética griega. Puedo estar equivocado, desde luego, pero pienso que, en estos casos, hay que intentar leer a los griegos desde los griegos mismos, si uno quiere minimizar el riesgo de confusión. A mi modo de ver, la aportación del cristianismo es tan decisiva que, cuando uno trata de homologar demasiado el cristianismo con el pensamiento griego, termina pensando que los cristianos no han hecho más que repetir, por ejemplo, a Aristóteles. En el caso de la ética, se pierde de vista así que el cristianismo posee un dramatismo existencial que, en Aristóteles, por ejemplo, no está presente en esa forma. La ética judeocristiana de la interpelación, que es de donde procede en definitiva la noción de llamado, se extrapola posteriormente al “foro interior”, cuando aparece la idea de la “voz de la conciencia”, que es también un “llamado”, algo así como una réplica o un eco interior de un llamado trascendente. No por nada se habla del “santuario de la conciencia”, porque pareciera que esa voz, que viene de mí mismo, viene también de mucho más allá de mí, desde aquello que me trasciende infinitamente. Todos estos motivos y conexiones pertenecen

originalmente, más bien, a la ética cristiana, y reaparecen en autores como Kant, Fichte, Heidegger, y muchos otros, aunque desligados de su contexto teológico original. No son motivos griegos, ni aristotélicos. Si, una vez dicho esto, uno quisiera ir a los griegos para ver qué antecedentes o motivos análogos se puede encontrar para la temática de la vocación, naturalmente podrá hallar cosas relevantes. Sin ir más lejos, se puede acudir al famoso mandato de Píndaro: “llega a ser lo que eres”. Uno tiene un cierto mandato de llegar a desplegar aquello que uno *in nuce*, por así decir, ya es, y eso es a lo que uno, en cierta forma, está llamado.

L.B.A.– El “conócete a ti mismo” se da al interior de un horizonte teleológico, que es un presente y un futuro.

A.V.– Exactamente. Pero no está presente ahí la metáfora del llamado, que es tan potente, porque proporciona una metáfora vinculada con una noción de trascendencia y alteridad que no es propiamente griega. Motivos análogos, dotados de otra acentuación, sí que los hay en la ética griega. Uno podría decir que, naturalmente, lo que Aristóteles dice acerca de la vida plena o lograda puede verse como una manera de traducir a términos muy técnicos y mucho más sofisticados el núcleo significativo del mandato de Píndaro. Pero este último se puede interpretar de muchas formas. De hecho, también Nietzsche lo hace suyo. Lo que quiero decir es simplemente que uno puede leer la ética aristotélica como una manera de traducir, desde una visión muy diferenciada y conceptualmente muy balanceada, un mandato tradicional que, así entendido, nos está diciendo lo siguiente: “tú tienes que llegar a ser lo que eres, porque tienes que desplegar aquellas capacidades connaturales a tu propia condición como ser humano, como individuo capaz de *proáiresis*, y por eso tienes que elegirte a ti mismo de cierta manera”.

Rubén Sánchez Muñoz.– En relación con la prudencia que es exigida al hombre que intenta ser virtuoso, el tiempo, el *kairós* está jugando un papel fundamental. ¿De qué modo la vida virtuosa y, por tanto, la prudencia dependen o están en relación estrecha con el *kairós* y con la circunstancia?

A.V.– La temática del *kairós* es pre-aristotélica. Aquí Aristóteles es deudor de una tradición que ha puesto el dedo en la llaga, en relación con el asunto de la importancia de la oportunidad. Es una temática griega, que está también en la mitología greco-romana. El

refrán español “a la oportunidad la pintan calva” viene del modo de representar a la diosa de la ocasión como una mujer con espesa cabellera hacia delante, pero calva hacia atrás, de modo que, si no se la pesca de la cabellera al momento exacto de pasar, se escapa, porque desde atrás ya no se puede agarrarla. La temática referida a la importancia de la oportunidad es tradicional, porque corresponde a una experiencia habitual en la vida práctica. Por caso, si alguien se prepara mucho para lograr algo, pero pierde el momento preciso para llevarlo a cabo, entonces ocurre a menudo que todo el esfuerzo realizado resulta vano, incluso si la decisión tomada fuera la correcta: ejecutada en el momento inadecuado, ya no resulta eficaz. Esto tiene mucho que ver también con la peculiar estructura del fracaso de la praxis, ya que muchas veces no se fracasa por haber pensado o decidido lo incorrecto, sino, simplemente, por haber llegado a destiempo. Esto resulta bastante trágico, porque uno se dice entonces: “lo hicimos todo bien, pero llegamos tarde y ahora no sirve de nada”. Hay unos cuantos ejemplos de esto en la tragedia griega. La temática de la oportunidad juega un papel importante, sobre todo, en la sofística, en la retórica y en la medicina, y no por casualidad. El tratamiento médico adecuado, si se aplica demasiado tarde o antes de tiempo, puede no servir: para acertar, el médico tiene que reconocer el momento o la situación en que se encuentra el enfermo y dar con el momento justo de aplicar tal o cual remedio. Del igual modo, el retórico que no atiende al *kairós*, el general que no atiende al *kairós*, el navegante que no atiende al *kairós*, es un insensato, porque fracasa en su objetivo o bien incurre en riesgos innecesarios. Toda esta temática, entonces, es previa, no es una temática originada en la ética aristotélica. Aristóteles la recibe y la asume con toda conciencia, porque concierne a estructuras básicas de la praxis. Su concepción del saber práctico enfatiza la importancia decisiva del juicio prudencial, porque es muy sensible al hecho básico que el saber práctico está vinculado al contexto particular de acción. No es un saber general del tipo de la ciencia. El saber práctico al modo de la *phrónesis*, la prudencia, es sensitivo al contexto, como diríamos nosotros, hace posible un permanente ajuste a la particularidad de las circunstancias. El prudente o también el que descuella en algunas artes, por ejemplo, el gran médico, es alguien que está todo el tiempo ajustándose a la facticidad, no es alguien que viene con ideas preconcebidas y procede sin tener en cuenta la especificidad de la situación. El juicio prudencial, para Aristóteles, tiene siempre una dimensión de este tipo. Parte fundamental de la tarea de la prudencia es considerar las circunstancias y lograr el debido ajuste a ellas. A través de Cicerón y de la

llamada “tópica de la circunstancia” –que es un desarrollo post-aristotélico, pero derivado de Aristóteles–, toda esta problemática llega posteriormente incluso hasta el Medioevo. Basta recordar que en la concepción escolástica sobre el acto moral se distingue habitualmente entre objeto, fin y circunstancia. ¿Por qué aparece aquí la circunstancia, en lugar tan destacado? Esto es un resultado de la recepción escolástica de toda una muy larga historia de lucidez sobre la importancia de la atención a las circunstancias de acción, como parte esencial de la elaboración del juicio prudencial. Atender a este aspecto revela la clara conciencia de la insuficiencia de los meros esquemas generales para guiar la acción: por más que uno tenga los conceptos correctos y sepa, en general, lo que hay que hacer, siempre se puede equivocar por no tomar debidamente en cuenta las particularidades del caso. De tal manera que no existe un recetario infalible, a la hora de guiar la acción. Es cierto que hay tres o cuatro cosas que nunca están bien, que es lo que no hay que hacer en ningún caso. Las prohibiciones absolutas conciernen a tres o cuatro cosas que están en los márgenes de la vida moral, pero no proporcionan ellos mismos una guía suficiente para lograr el perfeccionamiento moral. Si alguien nos dice que no asesina a nadie y no roba, ¿nos basta con eso para saber si es una persona virtuosa? Es obvio que no. Para ser alguien realmente virtuoso, hay que lograr gestionar de modo excelente la multiplicidad inabarcable de las situaciones con las que se confronta el obrar humano. Saber que no debo matar o robar me garantiza, cuando mucho, no ser un delincuente, pero no me basta para configurar de modo excelente mi vida, como un todo. La “tópica de la circunstancia” pertenece, de una u otra manera, a toda ética que no está centrada en los meros mandatos prohibitivos. Los mandatos prohibitivos son muy pocos y delimitan el ámbito más allá de cual ya no hay verdadera racionalidad en el obrar. Prohíben aquellas cosas para las cuales ya no puede haber verdadera justificación. En cambio, determinar las razones positivas para obrar de tal o cual manera reclama balance prudencial, es decir, el adecuado equilibrio a la hora de determinar si “más” o “menos”, “hasta dónde”, “cuándo”, etc. Todo esto es clave en la buena gestión del intrincado laberinto de la praxis, dentro del cual hay que actuar y tratar de hacer las cosas bien. Reconocerlo es fundamental. La ética kantiana, por cierto, tampoco está centrada en las prohibiciones. Los mandatos prohibitivos son sólo los ejemplos que Kant emplea preferentemente a la hora de establecer la fundamentación de la moralidad, precisamente, por su claridad y su sencillez. Pero, en su contenido material, la ética kantiana es una ética de la virtud. Cuando Kant clasifica los deberes distingue entre

los deberes negativos, que son deberes no laxos o latos sino estrechos, porque solamente prescriben que no hay que realizar un cierto tipo de acción, y los deberes de virtud, que prescriben esforzarse en la consecución de un cierto objetivo general y que, por lo mismo, tienen un carácter laxo o lato. Por caso, el mandato de generosidad, que nos dice “sé generoso”, expresa un deber de virtud y nos prescribe un cierto objetivo general a alcanzar, un fin, nos fija un norte. Ahora bien, ¿qué significa ser generoso aquí y ahora respecto de esta precisa persona? Con los deberes de virtud, Kant tiene exactamente el mismo problema que Aristóteles y propone el mismo tipo de solución, porque apela al juicio prudencial. Quiero decir: para poder decir en concreto qué significa ser generoso, aquí y ahora, con una determinada persona, hace falta recurrir a la “facultad del juicio”, la *Urteilkraft*, que corresponde en este empleo a lo que Aristóteles llama *phrónesis*. Esto es así, por la simple razón de que el modo adecuado de ser generoso no es siempre uno solo ni el mismo. Supongamos que a una persona que está en una grave situación médica quiero dedicarle mi tiempo. Pero dedicarle mi tiempo, probablemente, no quiere decir aquí pretender darle clases de filosofía antigua. En este caso, eso no sería ser generoso, sino, más bien, ser necio o incluso egoísta, porque no le estoy dando a esa persona lo que realmente necesita en ese momento, sino lo que a mí me interesa. Probablemente, ser generoso en ese momento sería decir: “me dejo de molestar con la filosofía antigua y le voy a traer los remedios que necesita”, o algo semejante. El objetivo de la generosidad es un objetivo general que debemos tener, es un fin que es a la vez un deber. Pero se puede alcanzar por múltiples caminos, que varían fuertemente según los casos. Kant tiene esto muy presente, por cierto. Por eso, tener el noble objetivo de ser generoso no me desliga, en modo alguno, de la obligación de ser juicioso o prudente. Más bien, es el comienzo mismo de la ardua tarea de tener que determinar, una y otra vez, cómo se alcanza ese objetivo, en diversos contextos de acción.

L.B.A.– Si entendí bien, usted ubica en Kant una ética de la virtud.

A.V.– Sin duda alguna, porque la ética material de Kant *es* una teoría de la virtud. La confusión que hay con Kant es que muchas veces se toma como su ética lo que aparece en los escritos dedicados a la fundamentación de la moral, donde Kant, para ejemplificar la aplicación del principio de la moralidad, pone mayormente ejemplos de normas negativas, que resultan inmediatamente claros. Pero la ética material de Kant está en su teoría de la

virtud, y es una ética de fines: los deberes de virtud son fines que es obligatorio tener, objetivos a los que racionalmente no es posible renunciar, vale decir, objetivos que es racional, vale decir, racionalmente exigible, darse a sí mismo. Lo que se tiene aquí es un conjunto de deberes para con uno mismo y para con los otros, que apuntan, básicamente, al perfeccionamiento moral, en el caso de uno mismo, y al bienestar o la felicidad, en el caso del prójimo, porque todos los objetivos vinculados con los deberes de virtud caen, en último término, bajo esas dos máximas generalísimas: perfeccionamiento moral propio y felicidad ajena. Los deberes de virtud son deberes de carácter lato, dice Kant, en cuanto que no prescriben un tipo de acción en particular. El deber de ser generoso significa potencialmente toda una amplia gama de cosas, que hay que determinar y precisar adecuadamente en cada caso. En cambio, el mandato de no robar es mucho más claro, al menos, en primera instancia, porque lo que hace es prohibir, sin más, un tipo particular de acción. Decir que hay que ser generoso es prescribir un objetivo de modo general, no mandar un único tipo de acción determinado. La ética de la virtud kantiana es una ética finalista, de objetivos, es decir, teleológica. Y los deberes de virtud que prescriben tales objetivos son de carácter lato, dice Kant, porque no hay manera de indicar de modo genérico qué significa ser generoso en todas y cada una de las diversas circunstancias. El mismo problema tiene Aristóteles. Hay un deber de generosidad. Ahora bien, ¿qué significa ser generoso con una persona que sufre una enfermedad terminal? Obviamente, no quiere decir lo mismo que ser generoso con un alumno que quiere entender Aristóteles. Determinar con quién, en qué medida, de qué forma se ha de ser generoso en cada caso es, para Kant, tarea de la “facultad del juicio”, la *Urteilkraft*, y, para Aristóteles, de la prudencia, la *phrónesis*. Por eso Kant, cuando en su teoría de la virtud trata de los diferentes deberes de virtud, recurre al expediente de añadir en cada párrafo un excursus casuístico, para ilustrar lo que se quiere decir en cada caso, con arreglo a algún ejemplo o caso señalado. Pero se trata de una mera ilustración casuística, es decir, de algo que, a su vez, se debe tomar como tal y se debe tratar de entender razonablemente. En cambio, sobre los mandatos prohibitivos del tipo de no matar, no robar, etc., no hay necesidad del mismo tipo reflexión prudencial, sin duda. Pero la ética kantiana no está, en modo alguno, centrada en esos mandatos. Por eso digo que, muchas veces, circula una visión muy deformada o, incluso, severamente mutilada de la ética kantiana.

R.S.M.– A mí me ha parecido que Husserl está más cerca de Aristóteles que de Platón, aunque sin duda también le confiere un lugar importante a Platón y, evidentemente, a Descartes. Quizás uno de los lugares donde se podría ver algunos paralelismos entre Aristóteles y Husserl, es en la importancia que ambos conceden al tema de las habitualidades. ¿Podrías hablarnos del modo como las habitualidades aparecen en ambos autores y qué lugar están jugando en ambos casos?

A.V.– No soy un experto husserliano como mi querido y admirado profesor de fenomenología, Roberto Walton. Tuve la gran fortuna de ser su alumno en mis estudios de grado. Roberto tiene un dominio del *corpus* husserliano que yo no tendré en cinco vidas, si es que hubiera cinco vidas, y para peor hay una sola. Así que imagínate qué puedo decir yo de Husserl. Es cierto que he hecho algunas incursiones en Husserl, sobre todo, en temas como la teoría del juicio y otros afines. Y también me ha interesado el tema de la identidad práctica. Desde hace mucho vengo diciendo algo que, en primera instancia, suena un poco dogmático, pero que pienso que se entiende por qué lo he repetido varias veces: si uno quiere buscar, en sede trascendental, un pensador que le haga relativa justicia al habitualismo de corte aristotélico, tiene que buscarlo, a mi modo de ver, por el lado de Husserl, y no por el de Heidegger, por mucho que sea Heidegger quien, de los dos, más intensamente se haya ocupado de Aristóteles, con mucha diferencia. Hay gente inclinada a Heidegger que trata de aproximar a Heidegger al habitualismo aristotélico. Se puede intentar en cierta medida. Pero, en el caso de Husserl, la proximidad es notoria y no hace falta forzar las cosas. Husserl tiene una teoría del “yo” práctico que presenta una orientación fuertemente habitualista. Desde bastante temprano, Husserl se vio llevado – como guiado por las cosas mismas, diría Aristóteles– a reconocer que el “yo”, aunque tenga un núcleo de actividad trascendental originaria, en su concreción personal, como el yo personal que es, es ya en gran medida el resultado de su propia actuación. Husserl dice, con toda claridad, que un “yo” personal es ya la concreción de un cierto modo de actuar, tiene un carácter y un estilo propio. Este estilo personal es delineado por un conjunto de convicciones duraderas, que son el resultado sedimentado de su propia actividad, tanto la perceptiva y judicativa como la operativa y práctica. Husserl ve el “yo” práctico fundamentalmente como un “yo puedo”, en el sentido de que no sólo puedo juzgar, sino también percibir, moverme en torno de las cosas espaciales y variar así el entorno de mi

actividad perceptiva, investigar los objetos desde diferentes ángulos, y un largo etc. Así aprendo, por ejemplo, que los objetos se ven desde varios ángulos y presentan diferentes caras, pero también aprendo y voy familiarizándome, por eso mismo, con el hecho de que, con ver las cosas de un solo lado, no alcanza para decir cómo son o aparecen. Se da lugar así a un desarrollo que hace posible alcanzar, por ejemplo, mayor prudencia en el uso de la capacidad de juicio, y un montón de otras cosas más, que son muy básicas e importantes. Todo eso va floreciendo, por así decir, como resultado sedimentado de la propia actuación: la actividad sedimenta en la forma de las “habitualidades del yo”, que es como Husserl llama a lo que la filosofía más tradicional identificaba como la dimensión de la “segunda naturaleza”. Husserl le hace mucha justicia, desde el punto de vista fenomenológico, a esta dimensión, tan importante en la tradición que remonta a Aristóteles. Hay otros autores que, en cambio, no advierten adecuadamente la relevancia constitutiva de esta dimensión o, incluso, la pasan por alto olímpicamente. Pero Husserl, que, más allá de lo que puedan ser las ocasionales limitaciones de su enfoque, tenía ese impresionante apego a los fenómenos y esa tenacidad al describir, incorpora esta temática en lugar central de su concepción y le dedica mucha atención. Por eso, creo que uno puede establecer puentes importantes entre el habitualismo aristotélico y el habitualismo husserliano, sin que Husserl haya sido necesariamente un receptor directo de Aristóteles en esta materia. Lo que hay aquí es, más bien, una convergencia en la cosa, más que una deuda de lecturas previas, pues Husserl leyó más bien poco a Aristóteles, si se lo compara, por caso, con Heidegger. Como ya dije, escribí algo sobre teoría del juicio en Husserl. Y ocurre que, también en el ámbito de la teoría del juicio, Husserl es muy aristotélico en varios aspectos de gran importancia, pero no es que haya sido un gran lector de Aristóteles.

R.S.M.– Más bien es que Brentano está mediando.

A.V.– Claro, hay muchas cosas que explican por qué la orientación de Husserl es la que es. Pero no es que, en su caso, haya por detrás un estudio intensivo de la fuente aristotélica misma. Por otra parte, en ética, Husserl no parecer ser un aristotélico, ni remotamente, ahí hay otras cosas en juego. Pero, en teoría de la identidad práctica, hay, sin duda, puntos de convergencia muy importantes con Aristóteles.

L.B.A.– Ahora en 2019 se han cumplido 10 años del fallecimiento de Franco Volpi, quien lamentablemente murió muy joven en un accidente banal, trágico. Volpi siempre me

ha iluminado para entender la filosofía aristotélica. Algo que enfatiza es del tema del *akribés*. Se relaciona con lo que estábamos hablando. En la misma *Ética a Nicómaco* Aristóteles propone un criterio epistemológico, según el cual en cada género de conocimiento es necesario requerir tanta precisión, *akríbeia*, como lo permita la naturaleza del objeto. Y él dice que en las ciencias prácticas, la política y la ética, tendrían como objeto el *hos epi tò poly*, lo que suele ocurrir, o sea que el *hos epi tò poly* está entre lo que pasa siempre y lo que pasa en modo caótico que no tiene ninguna regularidad. De lo que Volpi concluye que en la ética aristotélica debemos contentarnos en mostrar la verdad *grosso modo* y de modo esquemático, porque, partiendo de premisas –y ahí estamos en el ámbito del silogismo práctico– que son “en su mayoría”, las conclusiones sólo podrán ser a su vez “en su mayoría”. ¿Qué tendría que decirnos de esta aproximación del profesor Volpi?

A.V.– Primero recordar esa figura entrañable, inolvidable. Fui amigo personal de Volpi y he sido incluso su traductor en alguna oportunidad. Traduje con mi esposa su libro sobre *El nihilismo*. Fuimos amigos mucho tiempo, y ahora acaba de salir el libro en homenaje, a los diez años de su muerte, para el cual he escrito algo. Realmente, fue una persona muy significativa para mí, que nos fue arrebatada muy pronto y de modo casi incomprensible, al menos, desde la perspectiva de los que quedamos aquí. En fin. No podría agregar mucho a lo que dice Franco sobre este asunto. A lo sumo algún detalle menor, para ratificar lo que dice él. Por cierto, esa posición sobre el problema de la exactitud refleja un espíritu netamente aristotélico. En varios lugares de la *Ética a Nicómaco* Aristóteles aclara que la filosofía moral, la teoría ética, no puede operar con una noción de exactitud que estuviera tomada de un ámbito diferente como, por ejemplo, la ciencia matemática. La razón es que el modo en que procede una teoría, un tipo de teoría, debe ser adecuado a la materia de la que trata. Esto es lo que suelo llamar el principio aristotélico del pluralismo metódico. Aristóteles no es un monista metódico, rechaza que la filosofía pueda ser matemática o la matemática filosofía. Pero lo que se tiene aquí es una exigencia metódica de la filosofía o, en general, de la teoría, no de la acción, como tal. Aristóteles dice que lo que él mismo va a hacer en la *Ética a Nicómaco* es algo aproximativo: va a tratar de los asuntos que hay que tratar de modo esquemático y, por así decir, *grosso modo*. Bien entendido, esa restricción vale sólo para la teoría ética, no para la acción misma. Las

ciencias prácticas, como la ética y la política, no se ocupan con lo que ocurre siempre y de modo necesario, como, a juicio de Aristóteles, ocurre, en vez, con la astronomía y con las matemáticas. Las ciencias prácticas se ocupan con cosas que tienen un amplio grado de variabilidad, aunque no carecen de cierto grado de regularidad. A esto que ocurre de modo regular, pero no invariable, Aristóteles lo designa como lo que ocurre *hos epì tò polý*, que es lo que Tomás de Aquino llama *ut in pluribus*: lo que ocurre en la mayoría de los casos. A su vez, esto admite gradaciones. Por caso, para Aristóteles, la física sublunar, no la astronomía, la física que se ocupa de lo que ocurre por debajo de la luna, también es una ciencia que, a pesar de ser meramente teórica, se ocupa de lo que ocurre *hos epì tò polý*, aunque, en este caso, con un grado de regularidad que es mayor que el propio del objeto de la ética y la política.

L.B.A.– Exacto, eso lo dice Volpi y hay quien afirme que los mejores comentaristas de Aristóteles tropezaron en no identificar que el *ut in pluribus* también ocurre en una ciencia teórica como es la física sublunar aristotélica.

A.V.– Por eso mismo, Aristóteles piensa también que el joven no puede ser un buen filósofo natural ni tampoco un buen filósofo moral, un buen ético: porque todavía no está suficientemente acostumbrado a la variabilidad ni tuvo el suficiente tiempo para adquirir la experiencia necesaria. Pero la física sublunar, para Aristóteles, también se ocupa de aquello que ocurre *hos epì tò polý*, no es como la física supralunar, que se ocupa de lo que es necesario e invariable. Hay, por tanto, una cierta gradación de lo *hos epì tò polý*. Sobre el empleo epistemológico de la noción de *hos epì tò polý* hay un artículo muy interesante de un antiguo colega de Franco Volpi, el profesor Carlo Natali, otro gran aristotelista. Natali muestra que podemos hacer aquí una gradación, y que el nivel de regularidad de lo *hos epì tò polý* en el ámbito de la ética, el *ut in pluribus* ético, está por debajo del que corresponde a la física sublunar. Los asuntos humanos, además, están situados ellos mismos en el mundo sublunar, pero son incluso más variables que procesos como el crecimiento de las plantas o la reproducción de los animales. Cómo se organizan las ciudades, por qué una constitución fracasó, etc. todo eso bastante más variable todavía que lo que pertenece al mundo físico que está por debajo de la luna. Y como lo humano también está por debajo de la luna, queda afectado, además, por toda la variabilidad propia de esa región física. Por ejemplo, hay terremotos, de modo que un gobierno que iba bien, de

repente, puede quedar arruinado por una catástrofe natural. Todo esto pertenece, pues, a un ámbito signado por una gran contingencia. Pero, como digo, todas estas restricciones relativas al grado de exactitud que se puede buscar afectan, ante todo, a la teoría ética y la teoría política, y no a la acción moral misma. Aquí hay que distinguir nítidamente entre la teoría ética, que es o pretende ser una ciencia práctica, y la praxis misma, que va guiada por una virtud como la prudencia, que no es ni pretende ser una ciencia. Respecto de la virtud, Aristóteles dice que es más exacta que cualquier técnica y cualquier ciencia práctica. Pero la exactitud de la virtud no tiene nada que ver con la generalización y la universalidad, como ocurre en el caso de las ciencias: la *phrónesis*, que está implicada también en todas las virtudes del carácter, es exacta, en el sentido de que permite hacer justicia a lo particular y permite acertar en la situación concreta de acción. Se trata aquí, pues, de un tipo diferente de exactitud, de modo que no sólo hay grados de exactitud, sino también diferentes tipos o especies de ella. Este es el sentido fundamental del principio metódico aristotélico según el cual hay que pedir en cada ámbito de conocimiento el grado y el tipo de exactitud que puede y debe ofrecer. En ese sentido, sería tan absurdo pedirle al retórico demostraciones matemáticas como pedirle al matemático que sea persuasivo, en el sentido retórico. A la persona prudente, por su parte, se le exige un tipo de acierto que, a su modo, es muy exacto, pero en circunstancias donde la generalización no ayuda mucho. Pero la *phrónesis* es exacta, porque hace justicia a lo particular, en cuanto particular; da en el blanco con respecto a lo que hay que decidir y hacer aquí y ahora. Como se ve, Aristóteles es un enemigo declarado del monismo metódico, es un pluralista metódico convencido.

L.B.A.– Aquí hay una articulación entre el nivel de ciencia ética, teórica en algún modo, y el nivel de la praxis, porque al final estamos hablando de una ética que es esquemática, *grosso modo*, y, al mismo tiempo, se articula con el ideal tan alto, de la *areté*. No estamos hablando de una aproximación laxa (en el sentido de poco exigente) a la filosofía práctica.

A.V.– Claro. Y hay que recordar que Aristóteles dice –y lo dice varias veces, aunque a menudo se quiera pasarlo por alto– que un libro como la *Ética a Nicómaco* sólo le sirve al que ya es virtuoso, es decir, no sustituye el aprendizaje de la virtud y la educación del carácter. También por eso el joven no es un buen auditor de lecciones sobre filosofía moral. En cierto modo, puede decirse que la teoría ética expuesta en *Ética a Nicómaco* es

al comportamiento moral lo que el estudio de la gramática española es a la competencia lingüística del hablante nativo del español. Si uno es un hablante competente del español, cuando estudia gramática sólo refuerza de modo reflexivo su propia competencia: el estudio de la gramática le hace tomar conciencia, con una lucidez diferente, de lo que, en rigor, ya sabe hacer, pero la gramática no es el modo original ni más eficaz de aprender español, y es completamente inútil cuando uno recién empieza a hablar español y no sabe tampoco otra lengua. De modo semejante, el obrar moralmente correcto se aprende por vía de emulación en la casa, en la aldea, en la *polis*, y se aprende con gente virtuosa que, además, nos dice: “¡esto no se hace”, “¡esto está bien!”, etc. Y luego, cuando un buen día uno asiste como oyente a lecciones ética como las que ditaba Aristóteles, encuentra que lo que ahí se indica es, más o menos, lo que uno ya hacía, de modo que tiene así una cierta experiencia de *déjà vu*, que lo ayuda a reforzar la seguridad de su propia praxis. Pero pretender remplazar el aprendizaje de la virtud y el proceso de formación del carácter con la simple lectura de libros de ética es lo propio de un enfoque intelectualista ingenuo, con el que Aristóteles no tiene absolutamente nada que ver.

R.C.G.– Y esto nos recuerda aquel pasaje de la *Crítica de la razón práctica* donde Kant se burla de uno de sus críticos, el cual le reclamaba no haber inventado un principio nuevo para la moralidad, como si la moral fuese algo que no existiera hasta que Kant publica su libro.

A.V.– Exactamente, Kant dice que sería un disparate que un filósofo pretendiera introducir un nuevo principio de la moralidad. Lo que es moralmente bueno o malo, en general, es algo que ya todo el mundo sabe. Kant piensa que, en sede práctica, el sentido común es totalmente eficaz, al menos, en lo que concierne a los principios más generales de la moralidad. La gente comete errores y pecados, sin duda, pero sabe que lo son. No hay nadie que necesite ser adoctrinado demasiado sobre estas cosas. Lo que hay que salvar, en sede de filosofía práctica, es la idea de que la razón puede ser ella misma práctica, y esto se debe llevar a cabo frente a aquellas teorías filosóficas que afirman que no hay algo así como una razón práctica no condicionada empíricamente. Pero en el ámbito de la filosofía práctica, a diferencia de lo que ocurre en el caso de la filosofía teórica, no hay necesidad alguna, a juicio de Kant, de enmendar filosóficamente el sentido común. ¿Qué es lo que hay que hacer entonces? Elevar al plano del concepto los principios de los que se vale ya el

juicio moral del que los agentes echan mano en su actuación, y eso ayuda al propio sentido común a reforzar su propia seguridad, en una especie de vuelta reflexiva temática sobre sí mismo. Sin embargo, en la reflexión sobre los principios que subyacen al ejercicio habitual del juicio moral, el filósofo moral no introduce él mismo, según Kant, ningún criterio de moralidad que fuera nuevo o desconocido.

R.C.G.– En la primera parte de tu artículo, “Persona, hábito y tiempo. Constitución de la identidad personal”, nos dices que en Kant “la multiplicidad de representaciones dadas en la experiencia interna no es, como tal, posible sino por referencia a la unidad sintética originaria de la apercepción trascendental, expresada en la proposición «yo pienso»” (1993: 274), lo cual implica que “la conciencia de sí está siempre ya coimplicada en toda experiencia interna o externa” (1993: 275). Esta caracterización de la unidad de la conciencia, si entiendo bien su propuesta, alude tan sólo a un «yo» trascendental que, por su misma condición, se muestra insuficiente para hablar de un «yo» empírico que atienda a la dimensión práctica de la identidad personal. En función de esto giras a ver a Aristóteles y a Husserl.

A.V.– Quizá parezca exagerado, pero no encuentro en Kant un habitualismo consecuentemente desplegado, como el que hay en Aristóteles. Si bien algunas ideas básicas están presentes en Kant, si uno compara con las cosas que dice Aristóteles sobre el papel constitutivo de la habitualidad, el balance resulta en este caso, pienso, muy positivo a favor de Aristóteles.

R.C.G. No obstante, si tomamos como punto de partida la teoría kantiana de la acción que presentas en “Acción como estructura causal y como estructura de sentido. Reflexiones programáticas a partir de Kant” (2018) –originalmente presentado en alemán en la *Humboldt Lecture* (2011a) –, pareciera que en Kant encontramos elementos para hacer frente a esta problemática. ¿Podemos decir que la concepción kantiana de la agencia moral logra transitar de ese «yo» trascendental de la *Crítica de la razón pura*, a un «yo» empírico? Y si es así, ¿en qué medida se distingue de la concepción aristotélica del carácter (*êthos*)?

A.V.– Excelente pregunta, pero difícil de responder. Quisiera aclarar esto, porque, si no, se puede entender mal lo que he querido decir: la concepción kantiana es hilemórfica

respecto de la constitución de la acción. Personalmente siempre fui enemigo de presentar a Kant como un formalista. Esto que digo se refiere, en primera instancia, a su teoría de la acción, no a su teoría del yo, que son dos asuntos muy distintos. Veamos lo que ocurre con el criterio kantiano de corrección moral. Digo que Kant es un pensador hilemórfico, y no formalista. Es un pensador que apunta al ajuste recíproco de forma y materia, tanto en su filosofía teórica como, de otro modo, en su filosofía práctica. Por caso, la manera en que Kant concibe el conocimiento en su filosofía teórica no es, en modo alguno, formalista. Kant elabora una concepción acerca de las condiciones apriorísticas que tiene que reunir cualquier acto sintético para calificar como conocimiento, pero esas condiciones apriorísticas sólo proporcionan conocimiento en concurrencia con la correspondiente materia, que, en la mayoría de los casos, además, es materia empírica. Por caso, en la experiencia corriente, no hay conocimiento sin concurrencia de materia empírica. ¿Cómo podría haberlo? Pero tampoco hay conocimiento si solo se tiene una materia empírica dada, vale decir, si no concurre una forma conceptual apriorística en la cual esa materia empírica queda, por así decir, acogida. Para Kant, por tanto, el conocimiento, como acto sintético, tiene un carácter necesariamente hilemórfico. No entiendo cómo esto puede pasarse por alto a veces con tanta facilidad, cuando es parte central del sentido de la concepción presentada en *Crítica de la razón pura*. Kant tematiza las condiciones apriorísticas de la experiencia, ciertamente. Pero esas condiciones de la experiencia, libradas a sí mismas, ¿son acaso experiencia o proporcionan alguna experiencia? Desde luego que no: son meras condiciones formales de la experiencia, condiciones sin el concurso de las cuales la experiencia, como tal, no resulta posible. ¿Se sigue acaso la experiencia de esas meras condiciones formales? ¿Se deriva simplemente a partir de ellas? No, la experiencia no se sigue de sus meras condiciones apriorísticas de posibilidad. ¿Cuándo aparece entonces la experiencia? Cuando un *input*, por decir así, que ya no deriva de esas mismas condiciones apriorísticas, es acogido en ese marco de condiciones y elevado así a la correspondiente forma conceptual. Pero ese *input* es dado *a posteriori*. Así, por ejemplo, el juicio empírico “la puerta está cerrada” es un juicio que tiene forma apriorística y materia empírica. El concepto de “puerta” es un concepto empírico y el concepto “estar cerrado” también. Pero ambos quedan vinculados a través de una forma de enlace que es apriorística: la categoría de sustancia (subsistencia) y accidente (inherencia). Por otro lado, con la mera categoría de sustancia y accidente no puedo realizar todavía ningún juicio sobre el mundo: para poder

hablar de las cosas y referirme a ellas con pretensión de verdad, necesito dotar de contenido empírico a la forma apriorística provista por la categoría, por medio del recurso a conceptos empíricos. Y si el juicio empírico resultante, que combina en su estructura interna *forma conceptual apriorística* y *materia conceptual empírica*, resulta verdadero, entonces lo que afirmo será un acierto respecto del mundo, porque quedará ratificado por lo que se presenta como dado en la intuición empírica. En este caso, hay acierto y, por tanto, conocimiento, porque se da una adecuada concurrencia de lo apriorístico y lo empírico, entre la forma y la materia del juicio, que, a su vez, remite a lo dado en la intuición empírica. Cambiando lo que hay que cambiar, que es bastante, algo análogo pasa, a juicio de Kant, en el caso del juicio moral. También en sede moral Kant es, pues, un pensador esencialmente hilemórfico. Veamos. Si cuento ya con el imperativo categórico, que es un principio apriorístico de carácter formal, entonces sé que debo obrar de tal manera que la máxima de mi querer pueda valer al mismo tiempo como principio de una legislación universal. Pero ¿qué hago ahora, si no procedo a aplicar ese mismo criterio formal a alguna máxima de acción concreta, es decir, dotada de contenido empírico? Lo que tengo con el imperativo categórico es un mero criterio formal de enjuiciamiento moral de máximas, que no se aplica sobre sí mismo, sino sobre algo diferente, que es lo que, en cada caso, corresponde a aquello que proporciona la determinación empírica del querer. El querer humano está siempre empíricamente determinado, pero la determinación empírica no me provee el criterio para enjuiciar la corrección moral de lo que quiero hacer. El criterio para enjuiciar la corrección moral de lo que quiero hacer es él mismo de carácter formal y apriorístico, porque es de origen puramente racional, y no empírico. He de aplicarlo, sin embargo, a aquello que empíricamente quiero, para poder saber si tengo moralmente permitido obrar de ese modo o no. Por lo mismo, el resultado de esa aplicación y ese modo de enjuiciamiento no puede no tener contenido empírico: será un mandato del tipo “no mientas” o bien “ayuda a tus semejantes”, o algún otro parecido. Aquí es donde encontramos, propiamente, mandatos morales que están dotados de un contenido determinado. Los imperativos morales son, por su forma, categóricos, pero siempre mandan o prohíben algo determinado. El mandato “no mientas” tiene forma categórica y, por lo mismo, una pretensión de validez apriorística, pero tiene también una materia empírica: mentir es un tipo de acción determinado, que se corresponde con un determinado concepto empírico. Ahora bien, todo esto pertenece, en Kant, a la teoría de la

acción, la teoría de la motivación y la teoría moral, y no primariamente a la teoría del sujeto. Si ahora nos preguntamos por la teoría kantiana del sujeto, la primera pregunta sería aquí la de cómo mi actuación resulta posibilitada por esa fuente de actividad última del “yo” trascendental, que queda siempre a la espalda, por así decir, de lo que hacemos y que es lo que Husserl llamó el presente viviente. Es algo análogo a lo que en sede metafísica era el *noûs*, en el sentido de Plotino y de Platón, ese foco último de actividad inextinguible que está a la espalda de cualquier experiencia, el cursor de la experiencia, por así decir. Pero ¿eso es todo lo que se puede decir del “yo”? Evidentemente no. Además de lo referido al “yo” trascendental, Kant hace también una serie de observaciones referidas al “yo” empírico. Por supuesto. Pero la pregunta es si tiene Kant una buena teoría de cómo se constituye el “yo” empírico en su carácter de empírico. Yo diría que no, que su consideración del “yo” empírico es muy fragmentaria y bastante insuficiente, porque no ofrece todo lo que podría y debería dar. Me parece que esto es así, entre otras cosas, porque Kant no tiene una teoría desarrollada de los hábitos que enfatice su importante función constitutiva, como sí ocurre en el caso de Aristóteles o Husserl. Ahondar en ese aspecto le hubiera permitido a Kant, probablemente, plantearse finalmente la pregunta de cómo se constituye la identidad práctica del “yo” empírico, para cuestionarse si acaso puede pensarse como un mero sujeto de sensaciones, sentimientos e inclinaciones, o si más bien hay que verlo como un sujeto de habitualidades, que, sobre la base de su propia actuación, lo van orientando en una determinada dirección. Kant sabía que existe esta dimensión, sin duda alguna, pero mi punto es que no le hizo debida justicia en el plano teórico, porque no la abordó con el detenimiento y la extensión necesarios. Obviamente, hay una cantidad de observaciones muy interesantes sobre estos asuntos en Kant. Pero, en todo caso, no sería el autor que yo recomendaría tomar como punto de partida para intentar elaborar una teoría más diferenciada del “yo” empírico.

R.C.G.– Tomando como referencia la lectura que presenta Wieland en *Urteil und Gefühl. Kants Theorie der Urteilskraft* (2001), tanto en “Determinación y reflexión” (2004: 771 y ss.) como en “Reflexión y juicio” (2006: 29 y ss.) nos ofreces una lectura más comprensiva del Kant teórico, en virtud de la cual reivindicas el papel de los procesos de mediación reflexiva en la epistemología kantiana. Acorde con ambos textos, la aplicación efectiva de las categorías a los objetos de la experiencia supone ciertos procesos de mediación reflexiva previos, en cuanto que éstos hacen “posible la selección del concepto

bajo el cual dicho(s) objeto(s) pueden quedar efectivamente subsumidos” (2004: 772). En el 2004, casi al mismo tiempo en que apuntabas esta tesis, presentaste una ponencia en el Seminario de Homenaje al Prof. Dr. Mirko Skarica Zúñiga, titulada “Conciencia moral y facultad del juicio. Kant y el camino reflexivo hacia la ética de la situación”, donde parece sugerir que estos procesos de mediación reflexiva también juegan un papel fundamental en la filosofía práctica de Kant, en concreto al considerar la situación. ¿Podemos decir que la reflexividad juega un papel central dentro de la ética kantiana, en particular en su caracterización de la agencia moral?

A.V.— Claro, sin duda. Estoy sorprendido de que conozcas la conferencia de 2004, porque realmente es algo que nunca publiqué en esa forma. Incorporé cosas tomadas de ahí en otros trabajos, pero la conferencia como tal no está publicada y su punto principal es precisamente el mismo que estás marcando. Pero vayamos a la pregunta de fondo. Déjame ir un poco más atrás: si Kant es un pensador hilemórfico, como dije antes, entonces es necesariamente también un pensador de la reflexión, porque la mediación entre forma y materia es, en la mayoría de los casos, reflexiva, más precisamente, viene posibilitada por prestaciones reflexivas. Sólo en casos donde la materia no ofrece ninguna heterogeneidad, la mediación entre forma y materia no reclama reflexión. ¿Qué quiero decir con esto? Por ejemplo, si uno tomara el esquematismo trascendental como un proceso de determinación de una materia dada *a priori* que es completamente homogénea, la intuición pura del tiempo, entonces la aplicación de categorías a una materia pura homogénea no reclama ningún proceso reflexivo de ida y vuelta entre el polo formal y el polo material, porque no hay nada que tomar en cuenta en la materia misma que hiciera alguna diferencia relevante para la aplicación de la forma. Por eso, la aplicación de formas categoriales al mero tiempo o al mero espacio es un procedimiento parecido, digamos así, a lo que ocurre cuando uno incide con el cursor en el campo activado que ofrece la pantalla del computador dibuja formas y se dedica a ver lo que aparece en ese campo activado. Por medio de ese procedimiento de activación, el campo mismo muestra ciertas propiedades que posee y que están conectadas con la multiplicidad homogénea que alberga en su estructura interna. Algo así es, según Kant, lo que hacemos, por ejemplo, cuando esquematizamos matemáticamente, por caso, cuando construimos figuras geométricas en el espacio, que es un procedimiento apriorísticamente reglado de exhibición de objetos en la intuición pura. Pero, en cambio,

cuando queremos aplicar formas apriorísticas, esto es, categorías ya esquematizadas, a los objetos de la experiencia, necesitamos tomar en cuenta una realidad empírica, una materia empírica dada *a posteriori*, que ya no es homogénea y, por lo mismo, los procesos reflexivos de ida y vuelta entre la regla y el caso resultan inevitables. Tomemos el caso de un simple concepto empírico, que ni siquiera presupone todavía la aplicación de formas de enlace judicativo: el concepto de mesa. Obviamente, el concepto empírico de mesa pretende ser un concepto de algo que cuenta como una sustancia. Pero basta tomarlo aquí como un concepto empírico aplicable a un tipo de objetos, sin hacer referencia a la correspondiente forma categorial que lo ubicaría como sujeto de un juicio, por ejemplo. Pues bien, si esto que tengo delante es o no una mesa no me lo dice jamás el mero concepto de mesa. Para poder aplicar el concepto a lo que tengo dado aquí delante, tengo que mediar entre lo que veo, que es el caso, y la regla que me proporciona el concepto. Por lo tanto, que a esto lo designe como mesa, y no como silla, y a esto otro, en cambio, como silla y como no mesa, es una prestación que presupone ya una cierta mediación reflexiva. En la vida corriente, habitualizamos estos procedimientos a tal punto, que ya no nos damos cuenta de que, para hacer lo que hacemos, de entrada hay que poder reflexionar. Pero, en cambio, cuando un niño está aprendiendo una lengua, hay que estar enseñándole estas cosas todo el tiempo: cómo aplicar a lo que le es dado en la intuición conceptos o términos como “vaso”, “silla”, “mesa”, etc. La necesidad de poner ejemplos, muchas veces variando los casos para apuntar a la diferencia entre lo que es importante y lo que no, por caso, el color diverso de las cosas que se llaman “mesa”, responde a la necesidad de mediación reflexiva, cuando la materia con la que tratamos ya no es homogénea, sino que presenta múltiples diferencias. Ahora bien, ¿qué pasa en el ámbito de la moralidad? Cambiando lo que hay que cambiar, exactamente lo mismo. Por ejemplo, un imperativo moral como “no mentir” es una norma absoluta, sobre cuya validez irrestricta no hay nada que meditar ni se necesita deliberar. Sin embargo, si lo que uno va a decir es mentir o no, o bien si una declaración cae bajo el concepto empírico de mentira, ya son asuntos bastante más complicados. Mentir es un concepto empírico. La mentira está apriorísticamente prohibida, pero mentir es un concepto empírico. No hay que confundir la validez universal del mandato que prohíbe la mentira, de modo apriorístico, con el carácter mismo del concepto que se emplea para identificar aquello que está prohibido en este caso: tenemos aquí un mandato de validez apriorística que versa sobre algo que tiene contenido empírico. El

mandato es claro en su significado o, al menos, supongamos que lo es, que todo mundo sabe qué con claridad qué es, en general, mentir. Pero la cuestión de si lo que se acaba de decir es o no una mentira, ya no es tan fácil de responder y, en ocasiones, puede incluso resultar muy difícil responderla con toda seguridad. En el ámbito de la actuación moral, estamos yendo y viniendo reflexivamente entre regla y caso casi todo el tiempo, a menudo sin advertirlo siquiera. El mismo tipo de problema se plantea, por ejemplo, cuando un juez tiene que enjuiciar un caso desde el punto de vista jurídico. El robo está prohibido, no sólo moralmente, sino también en el derecho. Pero la cuestión de si este hecho que el juez debe enjuiciar constituye o no un robo puede, a menudo, no ser tan fácil de responder. También aquí operan habitualmente procesos de mediación reflexiva entre regla y caso, aunque normalmente el que los lleva a cabo se valga simplemente de ellos, sin necesidad de tematizarlos como tales ni preguntarse por su estructura. A mi modo de ver, un pensador que es hilemórfico, en el modo en que digo que lo es Kant, no puede serlo realmente, sin ser al mismo tiempo también un pensador de la reflexión. No es casual, por tanto, que Aristóteles y Kant sean ambos, cada uno a su modo, pensadores hilemórficos y también defensores de la importancia fundamental de la capacidad reflexiva, que es la que permite mediar entre caso y regla. Aquí reside la semejanza de familia más importante que yo veo entre estos dos autores, con todas las diferencias que puedan tener y tienen en tantísimos otros aspectos. Pero hay entre ambos una semejanza de familia que concierne a su orientación metódica, que se podría resumir en la consigna “hilemorfismo + reflexión” o bien “hilemorfismo + facultad del juicio”.

R.S.M.– Algunos autores suelen referirse en ocasiones a las descripciones o análisis que realizan Aristóteles, Platón, Tomás de Aquino o Kant, por mencionar solo a algunos, en el sentido de “análisis fenomenológicos” o “descripciones fenomenológicas”. Y quienes están poco familiarizados con la fenomenología cuestionan la legitimidad de estas afirmaciones. A tu juicio, ¿en qué sentido se puede hablar de autores que vivieron antes del surgimiento y desarrollo de la fenomenología como pensadores que hicieron análisis fenomenológico?

A.V.– Esa es una pregunta que se plantea mucho también en círculos fenomenológicos, porque hay gente que tiene un concepto muy técnico de fenomenología, más restrictivo, y hay gente, en cambio, que defiende un concepto menos ortodoxo y más

amplio. Yo pertenezco seguramente al segundo grupo. No me considero un fenomenólogo ortodoxo, si por ortodoxo se entiende que ser fenomenólogo es, por ejemplo, practicar el método de la reducción fenomenológica, o cosas semejantes. No digo que esté mal practicar la reducción fenomenológica, digo que mi concepto de fenomenología es más amplio, menos restrictivo, aunque deriva, en definitiva, de cosas que han dicho y hecho el propio Husserl y después, sobre todo, Heidegger. Diría que en filosofía suele ocurrir que, en los diversos pensadores, se hallan pasajes o momentos descriptivos o comprensivos, pero también pasajes o momentos más especulativos. A mi juicio, una filosofía de estilo fenomenológico es una filosofía en la cual la descripción y la comprensión tienen un papel mucho más protagónico que la construcción especulativa. Apostar por una filosofía de estilo fenomenológico, a mi modo de ver, es apostar por un tipo de filosofía que no enfatiza tanto la necesidad de unidad sistemática, como la necesidad de hacer justicia a la diversidad y la especificidad de los diferentes contextos descriptivos. Por caso, Hegel es un pensador que, indudablemente, tiene abundantes momentos fenomenológicos, muchas veces, de enorme lucidez descriptiva y comprensiva. Pero, a la vez, es claro que Hegel tiene una fortísima vocación sistemática, y no pocas veces le ocurre, a mi modo de ver, que, para forzar unidad sistemática, se ve tentado de abandonar la proximidad a los fenómenos. ¿Es Aristóteles un pensador fenomenológico? A mi juicio, lo es en gran medida, al punto de que, en muchos aspectos, puede verse como un fenomenólogo *avant la lettre*. Y lo es, porque, a la hora de optar por una unidad sistemática más fuerte o una mayor especificidad de la descripción, se inclina a menudo por lo segundo. Doy un ejemplo: Aristóteles no intenta tratar el ámbito de la praxis y la ética en los términos de su propia teoría de la sustancia o su propia filosofía natural. En cambio, los que muy posteriormente se consideran, con o sin razón, aristotélicos muchas veces sí intentan llevar a cabo ese tipo de trasposición explicativa. Aristóteles es un habitualista en el ámbito de la ética, y no un mero sustancialista, porque lo que le importa primariamente en este ámbito corresponde a lo que luego se llamó la “segunda naturaleza”, y no tanto la naturaleza misma, ni mucho menos la sustancia, como tal. A mi modo de ver, lejos de ser esto un defecto o una falta de consistencia, es más bien lo que permite decir que Aristóteles es un fenomenólogo *avant la lettre*, en el sentido de que es un pensador que, si bien busca cierta unidad explicativa, al mismo tiempo e incluso con mayor énfasis, busca hacer justicia a la variedad irreductible de los diversos contextos de experiencia. A la hora de decidir entre

unidad sistemática y proximidad a la experiencia, en toda su amplitud, Aristóteles es un pensador que, más allá de las limitaciones que pueda tener, intenta conceder la voz cantante a la experiencia misma, incluso al precio de sacrificar a veces una mayor unidad sistemática. Esto es lo que, a mi modo de ver, caracteriza de modo emblemático a una filosofía de estilo fenomenológico o de inspiración fenomenológica. Y es lo que personalmente me basta para declararme simpatizante de ese estilo o esa inspiración. En cambio, la gente que defiende una visión muy ortodoxa de la fenomenología podrá decir, no sin razón, que esto ya no alcanza para hablar propiamente de fenomenología, porque la fenomenología, tomada la expresión en su sentido más técnico, presupone la referencia al *ego* trascendental, el recurso a la teoría de la reducción, etc. A mi juicio, el estilo fenomenológico del filosofar aparece allí donde se descrea de la mera construcción especulativa o bien se reacciona contra sus excesos. Así entendida, la fenomenología es, sobre todo, un llamado a no construir, sobre todo, antes de describir y comprender suficientemente, y a sujetar la construcción, allí donde sea necesaria, a los límites que prescriben la descripción y la comprensión.

R.S.M.— Describir más que explicar.

A.V.— Exactamente, si por explicar se entiende cosas como inferir, deducir o especular. Pero describir significa, a la vez, comprender, porque describir es siempre a la vez interpretar. Usar una máquina fotográfica no es hacer fenomenología.

R.S.M.— Claro, no se puede describir sin interpretar.

A.V.— Así es. Pero la divisa es siempre atenerse a lo que se da, tal como se da, sin llevar a cabo construcciones que no puedan acreditarse por referencia a lo dado mismo. El que intenta atenerse a esa pauta metódica es un fenomenólogo, al menos, en este sentido no demasiado técnico del término. Por eso creo que Heidegger tenía algo de razón, cuando dijo aquello de que Aristóteles fue el último que tenía ojos para ver. Es una exageración, naturalmente, pero da a entender que, en muchos ámbitos, Aristóteles fue, efectivamente, una especie de fenomenólogo *avant la lettre*. Por caso, los notables análisis que hace Aristóteles de la *phrónesis* son claramente fenomenológicos, en este sentido amplio del término, porque Aristóteles elabora una teoría de la *phrónesis* que se mantiene aferrada, en todo momento, al campo fenoménico que pretende abordar. Y no extrapola sin necesidad

desde otros ámbitos. Por caso, y contra lo que afirma una corriente de interpretación ahora en boga, a la hora de tematizar la *phrónesis*, Aristóteles no se apoya fundamentalmente en el instrumental conceptual que él mismo elabora en su teoría de la ciencia. La tematización *phrónesis*, piensa Aristóteles, reclama sus propios instrumentos descriptivos e interpretativos, y el recurso a la experiencia pre-reflexiva, tal como aparece articulada en el uso habitual del lenguaje. Los filósofos que a mí más me interesan son los que cultivan una actitud y un estilo de este tipo.

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Kant's Aesthetic Theory: key issues. An Introduction by the Guest Editor of the Special Issue

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Abstract

This introduction presents an overview of the special issue of *Con-Textos Kantianos* devoted to Kant's aesthetic theory. The articles in this issue have been organized into two sections: those written by keynote-authors, and those written in response to the general call for papers. Within each of these two sections, articles have been organized thematically, although the philosophical traditions that they engage with, as well as points of contact between articles, have also been considered. In the first section, keynote-authors address questions of aesthetic normativity; the role of aesthetics in the acquisition of empirical concepts; the emotional nature of aesthetics; subjectivity and disinterestedness; connections between aesthetics, anthropology, and politics; and aesthetic non-conceptualism. The second section begins with contributions dealing with matters of formalism and conceptualism in Kant's aesthetics, as well as their relation and relevance to thinking about art, the arts, and contemporary art. It continues with papers that address key issues of Kant's aesthetics, such as the free play and the role of imagination, as well as possible complementarities between the three Critiques. It closes with articles that focus on the reception of Kant's aesthetic theory in the works of major philosophers of the 20th century, namely within critical theory and the phenomenological-hermeneutical tradition.

Keywords

Aesthetics; judgment of taste; beauty; sublime; art; aesthetic normativity

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The call for papers for the special issue of *Con-textos Kantianos – international journal of philosophy* devoted to **Kant’s aesthetic theory** was announced at the beginning of 2020. In the meantime, major contributions on Kant’s aesthetic theory kept being published in leading journals, with one particularly welcome development being that Aviv Reiter was awarded the 2020 British Society of Aesthetics Essay Prize for her paper ‘Kant on the aesthetic ideas of beautiful nature’, soon to be published in the *British Journal of Aesthetics*. Equally welcome is the news that the ultimate outcome of the conference “Kant, aesthetics and contemporary art”, which took place in October 2020, will take the form of a special issue of *Kantian Review* on the relation between Kant’s aesthetics and contemporary art, to be published in 2021. Kant’s aesthetic theory is clearly a lively field of research both within and beyond the scope of Kantian scholarship.

Con-Textos Kantianos plays a key role in propagating this field of research, as a journal which commits to both a clear Latin American scope and a Kantian cosmopolitan vocation. The call for papers for this special issue on Kant’s aesthetic theory elicited responses from a number of authors, with outstanding contributions being submitted in five different languages (Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, German, and English). Fifteen papers have been selected, in addition to the articles of six keynote-authors who have kindly accepted our invitation to head the issue.

The papers within the two parts of this issue have been organized thematically, although the philosophical traditions that the papers engage with, as well as how they work in dialogue with other papers, have also been considered.

Among the contributions given by the keynote-authors, the first three are on aesthetic normativity. **Hannah Ginsborg**’s leading status in the scholarship on Kant’s aesthetics is reason enough for this issue to start with her article, but the way that the two following papers develop in dialogue with her views serves to reiterate the importance of her contributions to this field. Indeed, both **Ido Geiger** (who takes the experience of pure aesthetic pleasure as revealing to us a condition of empirical experience and knowledge, without itself being that condition) and **Serena Feloj** (who argues for a reconsideration of aesthetic normativity in favour of regulativity) explicitly address Ginsborg’s views in their discussions. While Ginsborg, Geiger, and Feloj help us to consider how Kant’s aesthetic

theory can be relevant to current discussions on aesthetic normativity, **David Fenner** reminds us about the impact that Kant has already had on aesthetics, namely by solidifying the subjective turn and by offering perhaps the most sophisticated view of disinterestedness of any other thinker. The following contribution from **Virginia Figueiredo** broadens the spectrum of discussion by addressing the themes of critique, reflection, the sublime, and humanity. Figueiredo draws mostly on the views of Portuguese and Brazilian authors, as well as some French thinkers, and ultimately proposes an alternative conception of the human species. The first part of the issue closes with **Dietmar H. Heidemann's** response to his critics: Heidemann carefully considers the objections raised (in previous issues of *Con-Textos Kantianos*) against his non-conceptualist reading of Kant's aesthetic theory and defends his interpretation of Kant's aesthetics against them.

The second section of this special issue begins with contributions dealing with matters of formalism and conceptualism in Kant's aesthetics, as well as their relation and relevance to thinking about art, the arts, and contemporary art (**Hemmo Laiho, Sandra Shapshay, Ioannis Trisokkas, Iris Vidmar Jovanović, and Maria João Mayer Branco**). It continues with papers that address key issues of Kant's aesthetics, such as the free play and the role of imagination, as well as possible complementarities between the three Critiques (**Elena Romano, Jackson Hoerth, Moran Godess-Riccitelli, Stelios Gadris, Levi Haeck, and Zoltán Papp**). This special issue closes with articles that discuss the reception of Kant's aesthetic theory in the works of major philosophers of the 20th century, namely within critical theory and the phenomenological-hermeneutical tradition (**María Verónica Galfione, Guillermo Moreno Tirado, Stefano Marino, and Stéphane Vinolo**).

Keynote articles

In 'Aesthetic Normativity and Knowing How To Go On', **Hannah Ginsborg (University of California, Berkeley)** offers an answer to the question of how it is possible that aesthetic responses are appropriate or inappropriate to their objects. Ginsborg's proposal is inspired by Kant and ascribes a central role to Wittgenstein's notion of 'knowing how to go on'. Her main thesis is that there can be legitimate claims to the normativity of one's responses which do not rely on those responses' reflecting

appreciation of objective facts. According to Ginsborg, what we ought to acknowledge is a kind of normativity applicable to our psychological responses to things that does not depend on those responses registering objective facts but that is, rather, a condition of objective cognition.

In ‘Aesthetic Normativity and the Acquisition of Empirical Concepts’, **Ido Geiger (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev)** compares Ginsborg’s account of our most fundamental experience with the account that he attributes to Kant, in order to examine whether the pure aesthetic judgment can serve as a model for fundamental empirical conceptualization. Drawing mostly on the third Critiques’s notion of the aesthetic normal idea, as well as on the first introduction, Geiger suggests taking Kant as putting forward a three-step model in which the first two steps (the delineation of objects in pure aesthetic judgments and the sorting of objects according to form) are pre-conceptual. Within this framework, the experience of pure aesthetic pleasure reveals to us a condition of empirical experience and knowledge, without itself being that condition.

In ‘Aesthetic Normativity in Kant’s Account: A Regulative Model’, **Serena Feloj (University of Pavia)** discusses the normative character of aesthetic emotions in Kant’s third Critique by drawing upon the notions of regulativity and exemplarity. Feloj examines three interpretations of aesthetic normativity and argues that the sentimentalist elements of Kant’s account call for a reconsideration of aesthetic normativity in favour of the more indeterminate notion of regulativity, possibly understood as a peculiar kind of normativity that preserves the ideality, the exemplarity, the indeterminacy and, ultimately, the emotional nature of aesthetics.

In ‘Immanuel Kant’s Aesthetics: Beginnings and Ends’, **David Fenner (University of North Florida)** focuses on the space that Kant occupies at two important crossroads in aesthetics: the culmination of the tradition of disinterestedness, and the subjective turn. By offering perhaps the most sophisticated view of disinterestedness of any other thinker, Kant has brought that tradition to its historic zenith, and by finding the answer to his questions about aesthetics in the nature of subjectivity, he shaped the conversations of aestheticians and art theorists for the last two centuries. What is more, the problem of aesthetic normativity plays a role in Fenner’s paper – according to him, disinterest was a

way to place one's attentive focus on those elements of one's focus that are normatively justificatory when rendering a judgment of taste.

In 'Sobre abismos, pontes e travessias', **Virginia Figueiredo (Federal University of Minas Gerais)** follows the guiding thread given by Kant's metaphors of abysses, bridges, and crossings, and reflects on some key concepts of the third Critique in order to point out a wider Copernican revolution in Kant's philosophy that entails a change in the very concept of the human being. Focusing on the current situation in Brazil and considering the words of Ailton Krenak, Figueiredo ultimately proposes an alternative conception of the human species that walks hand in hand with Patrícia Kauark-Leite's proposal of a poietic enlightenment.

In 'Response to my critics: In defense of Kant's aesthetic non-conceptualism', **Dietmar H. Heidemann (University of Luxembourg)** responds to objections raised (in previous issues of *Con-Textos Kantianos*, by Matías Oroño, as well as Silvia del Luján di Saanza, Pedro Stepanenko, and Luciana Martínez) against his non-conceptualist reading of Kant's theory of judgments of taste. Heidemann concentrates mostly on two difficulties with a non-conceptualist reading of Kant's aesthetics that seem to be central: the cognitive status of judgments of taste and the representationalist capacity of aesthetic feeling as non-conceptual mental content. He defends his overall non-conceptualist interpretation of Kant's aesthetics against his critics.

General articles

In 'On Aesthetic Judgments and Contemplative Perception in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*', **Hemmo Laiho (University of Turku)** claims that Kant's accounts of the aesthetic judgment of sense and the aesthetic judgment of taste both suggest that a contemplative model of perception underlies his largely formalistic account of aesthetic appreciation. The basic aim of Laiho's paper is to outline how this model might work.

In 'Kant, Celmins and Art after the End of Art', **Sandra Shapshay (City University of New York)** builds on Arthur Danto's claim that Kant had two conceptions of art, the second of which is non-formalist, and puts Kant's theory in dialogue with the art

practice of Vija Celmins, in order to highlight two ways in which Kant's aesthetics is of great continuing relevance to the artworld today.

In 'Can Kant's Aesthetic Accommodate Conceptual Art? A Reply to Costello', **Ioannis Trisokkas (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)** claims that Kant's art theory, as presented by Diarmuid Costello, applies neither to conceptual art nor to all other kinds of art, and holds that either one of two amendments to the theory would enable it to accommodate all art, including conceptual art.

In 'A New Look at Kant's Genius: a Proposal of a Multi-componential Account', **Iris Vidmar Jovanović (University of Rijeka)** argues that genius is multi-componential and includes a capacity to maximize imagination's productivity as well as a capacity to develop taste to the point where it establishes new ways of creation and gives the rule to art. Vidmar Jovanović extrapolates further aspects of genius, which relate to the artist's capacity to create products imbued with moral and cognitive significance.

In "uma certa falta de urbanidade". As hesitações de Kant a respeito da música', **Maria João Mayer Branco (NOVA University of Lisbon)** aims to show how Kant's ambivalent views on music are in line with the modern philosophical reflection on this art, and clarifies the place of these views within Kantian aesthetics. According to Mayer Branco, this justifies Kant's hesitations about whether to classify music as beautiful or agreeable, art or mere enjoyment, free or dependent beauty, and culture or nature.

In 'Can everything be beautiful? Pan-aestheticism and the Kantian puzzle of the free play of the faculties', **Elena Romano (University of Pavia)** provides an overview of the ways in which the problem of Kant's apparent commitment to pan-aestheticism can be confronted and eventually solved. Romano rejects two potential solutions and proposes a third. She draws upon the reflecting status of judgments of taste in order to explain why pan-aestheticism cannot follow from Kant's account.

In 'Schematism and Free Play: The Imagination's Formal Power as a Unifying Feature in Kant's Doctrine of the Faculties', **Jackson Hoerth (Temple University)** argues that the imagination demonstrates a formal capacity that can be seen in the first Critique's schematism and can be more clearly recognized in the third Critique's discussion of

harmonious free play. According to Hoerth, not only does this formal capacity provide the key to demonstrating that the imagination is an original, unified, and independent faculty across Kant's critical framework, but the capacity itself also serves as the ground for the purposiveness of nature.

In 'The Cipher of Nature in Kant's Third Critique: How to Represent Natural Beauty as Meaningful?', **Moran Godess-Riccitelli (University of Potsdam)** examines how we represent natural beauty as meaningful while leaving it open to a certain form of interpretation. The systematic question is how and for what end we should treat nature as possessing its own language when it comes to our aesthetic experience in nature. Godess-Riccitelli argues that it is from our experience in nature that it is possible to extend our reflections to the assumption of a final end of nature.

In 'Striving: Feeling the sublime', **Stelios Gadris (University of Crete)** proposes that we ultimately succeed in presenting – rather than representing – the absolute as a symbol or in art, and that this re-affirms that the fundamental role of intuition for human beings is fulfilling the need to make our notions tangible. Gadris claims that Kant ultimately vindicates sensibility in the aesthetic (he)autonomy of the subject.

In 'Exploring the Deduction of the Category of Totality from within the Analytic of the Sublime', **Levi Haeck (Ghent University)** defends an interpretation of the first Critique's category of totality based on Kant's analysis of totality in the third Critique's analytic of the sublime. Haeck ultimately holds that such an aesthetical detour has the potential to reveal how the subjective aspects of objectivity are accounted for in the very system of the categories itself.

In 'Matters of Taste: Kant's Epistemological Aesthetics', **Zoltán Papp (Eötvös Loránd University)** suggests that Kant's theory of taste is intended as the completion of a twofold epistemological job that remained unfinished in the first Critique. By highlighting how the judgment of taste cannot be made without assuming the purposiveness of nature and the uniformity of the cognizing subjects, Papp contends that such judgment offers a solution to the problem that the transcendental theory of experience needs a common sense in order to secure a common objectivity.

In 'Las aporías de la apariencia. Modernidad y estética en el pensamiento de Kant',

María Verónica Galfione (National University of Litoral) reconstructs the epistemic context of the third Critique, considers Kant's delimitation of the autonomy of the judgment of taste, and revises those moments in which Kant goes beyond his own claims. Using this discussion, Galfione proposes that the problem of truth is not completely absent from Kantian aesthetics, because the autonomization of the aesthetic dimension is thought of on the basis of a unified subjective experience.

In 'El "concepto hermenéutico". Una interpretación del juicio estético puro kantiano desde Heidegger', **Guillermo Moreno Tirado (Complutense University of Madrid)** offers an interpretation of Kant's pure aesthetic judgment in a Heideggerian mode by presenting a foundation for the intellectual artifact "hermeneutic concept" based on an interpretation of the third Critique's deduction of pure aesthetic judgments. Moreno Tirado ultimately outlines two reading hypotheses, one for the place of Kant's third Critique in the work of Heidegger, and another for Kant's aesthetics and aesthetics in general.

In 'La ricezione della *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* nell'ermeneutica contemporanea (Heidegger, Gadamer, Figal)', **Stefano Marino (University of Bologna)** proposes that a progressive shift can be observed in the development of the phenomenological-hermeneutical tradition. This tradition initially favoured Hegel's philosophy of art, then moved to an explicit critique of the supposed subjectivization of aesthetics by Kant, and finally culminated in a full-blown rehabilitation and retrieval of the significance of Kant's treatment of beauty as essential for any serious philosophical aesthetics.

In 'La estética kantiana como paradigma de la fenomenología de la donación de Jean-Luc Marion', **Stéphane Vinolo (Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador)** argues in favour of the Kantian legacy of the phenomenology of givenness by establishing a link between Marion's phenomenon of revelation and the sublime in Kant. According to Vinolo, Marion finds that Kant's aesthetics offers the possibility of presenting negativities in a positive way, and therefore also offers evidence of the givenness of negativities.

Considering the wide range of topics covered by this special issue of *Con-Textos Kantianos* devoted to **Kant's aesthetic theory**, as well as the quality of each of the articles included in it – their originality and exemplarity, one might say – I strongly believe that it constitutes an important contribution to fostering further research on Kant's aesthetics, not only within Kantian scholarship, but also in current and future discussion in aesthetics, including its connections with philosophy of art, philosophy of perception, epistemology, ethics, and moral and political philosophy.





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Aesthetic Normativity and Knowing How to Go On

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Abstract

This paper addresses a problem about aesthetic normativity raised by Kant. Can aesthetic experiences be appropriate or inappropriate to their objects? And, if so, how is that possible given that, according to Kant, aesthetic experience is not objective? Kant thought the answer to the first question was yes. But his official answer to the second question, in terms of the free play of the faculties, is obscure. The paper offers a clearer answer, inspired by Kant, which invokes Wittgenstein's notion of "knowing how to go on." Aesthetic normativity is problematic only on the assumption that claims to the normativity of one's responses to things must be based on the recognition of objective properties of those things. However, Wittgenstein's discussion shows that we need not accept that assumption. There can be legitimate claims to the normativity of one's responses which do not rely on those responses' reflecting appreciation of objective facts.

Keywords

aesthetics, normativity, Kant, Wittgenstein

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§1 Kant on the normativity of aesthetic response

This paper addresses a problem about aesthetic normativity, and specifically about whether there are norms governing aesthetic experience or aesthetic response. Is there such a thing as an appropriate or inappropriate aesthetic response to an object, and if so, how is that possible?¹ This is a question which was thematized by Hume in “On the Standard of Taste” and discussed more systematically by Kant in his *Critique of Judgment*, specifically the “Analytic of the Beautiful” and the “Deduction of Taste.” In the Kantian formulation the paradigm aesthetic experience is the feeling of pleasure in the beautiful, whether in nature or art, and this is the kind of aesthetic response I will have in mind throughout. When I come upon a cherry tree in bloom, or see a vase in the window of an antique shop, or hear music on the radio as I walk into a room, I may have a certain experience of pleasure which is naturally expressed by thinking or saying “That’s beautiful.” That is the paradigm aesthetic experience for Kant, and the question I want to raise, following Kant, is whether we can think of such an experience as one which we not only do have, but in some sense *should* have, when confronted with the object. Is there such a thing as how I should respond aesthetically to an object, where the “should” reflects something over and above how I am naturally disposed to respond? Can I claim, of someone who is left cold by the cherry tree, that they are mistaken in how they are experiencing the object, that they are failing to see something in it which calls for a response of pleasure? Or is my response to be compared to liking or not liking the taste of goat cheese or “peaty” Scotch whisky, where talk of how one ought to respond seems out of place, and where there doesn’t seem to be room for criticism of someone whose tastes differ from mine?

Kant himself wanted to defend the idea of aesthetic normativity in this sense. He held that we can indeed say of my response to the cherry tree or the vase that it is appropriate. He makes the point in terms of a sharp distinction between judgments of beauty and judgments of the agreeable. As he puts it, judgments of beauty have what he calls universal validity and necessity, where the necessity he has in mind is clearly normative necessity. When I judge something to be beautiful I claim that everyone —

¹ Note that I am not here concerned with whether aesthetic experience is subject to, say, moral norms, for example, whether it is morally inappropriate to feel pleasure in art with racist or sexist content, or which one knows to have been produced with morally objectionable intentions. Rather, my concern is about how there can be normativity intrinsic to aesthetic experience.

myself included— should judge it as I do. But this is missing in the case of judgments of the agreeable; these more or less correspond to expressions of my own liking for something. When I judge that an object is agreeable, saying for example that Lagavulin whisky is delicious, I don't judge that everyone should agree with me—I accept that others might not share my taste for peaty Scotches. I'm happy to accept, as a reformulation, "I like the taste of Lagavulin." This is not the case for judgments of beauty, according to Kant: in their case it seems to us that we are picking out an objective property of the object, one whose presence should be recognized by everyone. In fact, as we shall see, he denies that judgments of beauty are in fact objective: beauty is not an objective property of the cherry tree and in judging that the object is beautiful we are not bringing it under a concept, at least not in the ordinary way. But judgments of beauty carry the same claim to their own appropriateness as objective judgments, and for that reason it can seem as though they involve the same normativity as objective empirical judgments.

Now it might seem here that in talking about Kant on aesthetic judgments I have changed the subject. I began by raising the question of the normativity of aesthetic response or aesthetic experience: isn't there a difference between my pleasurable response to the cherry tree and my judgment that it is beautiful? On my reading of Kant, the answer to this last question is "actually no; for Kant the pleasure just is the judgment." Saying of the cherry tree "That's beautiful" just is a way of putting into words the pleasure one feels, so the pleasure is just the taking, or finding, of the tree to be beautiful. This is a controversial reading of Kant.² If it is accepted, then saying that the judgment of beauty involves a claim to its own appropriateness to the object amounts to saying that the pleasure involves a claim to its own appropriateness: it is part of my feeling of pleasure that I feel the rightness of that pleasure as a response to the object. There are reasons, which I won't go into here, to ascribe that view to Kant; and it is also an appealing view in its own right. But you do not need to accept my controversial view on the identity of the pleasure and the judgment to find in Kant a defence of the normativity of aesthetic response as well as judgment. For he makes clear that, in judging something to be beautiful, I claim not only that everyone should agree with my *judgment*, but that everyone should share *the pleasure I feel*. So even if we do make a distinction between feeling

² See for example my recent exchange with Paul Guyer, framed in terms of an opposition between "one-act" and "two-act" approaches to Kant's account of aesthetic judgment, in Guyer (2018) and Ginsborg (2018).

pleasure in an object's beauty, and making some kind of considered judgment about the object on the basis of that pleasure, we still have to allow that the pleasure itself, for Kant, is normatively governed. And this, I think, has some plausibility in its own right. If somebody I respect disagrees with me aesthetically—for example if they dismiss Bill Evans as mere lounge music, or Andrea del Sarto's religious paintings as listless and vapid—it is my aesthetic response that I will feel defensive about, not any explicit judgment I might have made on the basis of that response. A criticism of my taste criticizes my liking what (in the view of the critic) doesn't deserve to be liked, or my failure to like what I should like. My own inclination is to see this as grounds for identifying aesthetic response and aesthetic judgment: to be a good judge of aesthetic value in some domain to have the appropriate aesthetic responses to objects in that domain.³ But we do not need to go down that route to see that Kant's view at least includes the idea that we take our aesthetic responses to be subject to normative constraint, and that that idea has some initial plausibility.

§2 The problem of aesthetic normativity and Kant's answer to it

Why is there a problem about the possibility of this kind of aesthetic normativity? Why shouldn't it be appropriate for me to experience pleasure in the flowering cherry tree just as it is appropriate for me to see the blossoms as white rather than yellow, or to see the cherry tree as having a tree-like shape rather than the shape of a house? In other words, why shouldn't we treat the perception of an object's beauty just as we do the perception of any other property of the object, that is, as subject to norms of veridicality? On that way of treating aesthetic experience, my feeling pleasure in something which arguably doesn't deserve it, or failing to feel pleasure in something which does, is simply a matter of mistaken perception: it is a matter of my seeming to discern an objective property of the object which is not in fact there, or failing to discern one which is. (This is the approach which is suggested by Hume's parable, in "On the Standard of Taste," of the key with the

³ This is not to deny that someone could be good at discerning what is likely to cause aesthetic pleasure in most people, even if they don't feel the pleasure themselves. (We could imagine an antique dealer who dislikes eighteenth-century British china but is skilled at predicting what will please collectors.) It is just to say that such a person wouldn't be skilled at aesthetic judgment (wouldn't "have good taste") but would, rather, be skilled at predicting the aesthetic judgments of others.

leathern thong.) On that approach there is no special problem about aesthetic normativity, any more than there is a problem about how ordinary perceptions can be veridical, or fail to be veridical, with respect to the object perceived. Kant's reasons for thinking that there is a problem are bound up with his denial that judgments of beauty can be assimilated to cognitive judgments. In his terminology, although the judgment of beauty makes a claim to universal agreement, it is not objective. Relatedly, when we feel pleasure in a beautiful object, or find it beautiful, we are not perceiving a feature of it which is there independent of the particular experience we are having of it. This has to do with the difference between the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, or "subjective sensation," and the objective sensation associated with, say, the perception of colour (CJ §3, 5:206). In the case of the feeling of pleasure our experience is never of the object as such, but always of what he calls its relation to the subject: how the object is affecting us in the experience we are having of it. This is true both of pleasure in the agreeable and of pleasure in the beautiful.⁴

The subjective status of the feeling of pleasure is reflected in a number of other features of judgments of beauty to which Kant draws attention. One is that judgments of beauty cannot be proved; there are no criteria for determining whether or not something is beautiful. Another is that I cannot judge that something is beautiful on the basis of someone else's feeling of pleasure. I cannot, for example, learn by hearsay that something is beautiful; I have to see the thing myself in order to be able to make a judgment of beauty about it. Moreover, if I do find something beautiful, and someone else looking at the same object fails to share my pleasure in it, that is not a reason for me to change my judgment. "The approval of others in no way provides. . . a valid proof for judging beauty . . . what has pleased others cannot serve as the ground of a judgement of beauty' (CJ, §33, 5:284). The point that it is only my own feeling that is relevant to judging beauty, and hence that I must myself perceive the object in order to judge it to be beautiful, is brought out by Kant through a comparison with judgments of the agreeable. "Someone may recount to me all the ingredients of a dish, and remark of each of them that it is agreeable to me... Yet I am

⁴ Here we should keep in mind that to speak of the "object itself" in this context is not to speak of the thing in itself, in the sense of the first Critique, but rather the spatio-temporal object, that is, what in the first Critique Kant calls an appearance. The objects and subjects which figure in the third Critique are ordinary spatio-temporal objects and individual embodied human beings; for the purposes of the present discussion we can disregard Kant's transcendental idealism and simply take for granted the empirical realism which he also takes himself to have established in the first Critique.

deaf to all these reasons; I try the dish with *my own* tongue and palate, and lay down my judgement accordingly.” The same general point, according to Kant, applies to judgments of beauty. “Although critics, as Hume says, may reason more plausibly than cooks, they still share the same fate” (CJ, §34, 5:285). It is my feeling of pleasure alone which is decisive in determining whether I can or cannot judge something to be beautiful. This distinguishes judgments of beauty from what might seem to be their nearest cognitive analogues, nonevaluative judgments of sensory properties like colour and taste. For in these cases I can rely on the reports of others to determine whether or not such judgments are legitimate.

This lack of objectivity, according to Kant, is what makes aesthetic normativity, in the sense I have been discussing, problematic. In the kind of paradigm experience I have described, of finding a flowering cherry or a passage of music beautiful, I take my own pleasurable response to the object to be appropriate to or called-for by the object. And as long as I do not think that the response is due to some personal interest that distinguishes me from other human beings—for example happy memories of flowering cherries from a childhood visit to Paris—I take it to be called for from all human beings. So I make a normative claim on the agreement of others, that is, a normative claim that my aesthetic response should be shared. And I do so, Kant says, in just the way that I demand agreement from others regarding the perceptual states relevant to cognition. He compares the claim to that made by someone who perceives a movable drop of water in a rock-crystal and “rightly demands that everyone else must find it just as he does.” (CJ Introduction VII, 5:191). The demand, he says, is the “very same” in the case of a judgment of beauty. Presumably in the case of a judgment of beauty I am also demanding that everyone have the same experience as I do, in respect of my finding it beautiful, or feeling the corresponding pleasure in it. One might here wonder why Kant uses the somewhat arcane example; I believe that it has something to do with debates going on at the time about whether rock-crystal, that is quartz, was formed from hardened ice. Presumably if someone sees a drop of water in a rock-crystal that might be evidence for the ice hypothesis. What is relevant here is that the demand bears not on a theoretical judgment but on the experience of seeing the rock-crystal: I rightly demand that everyone should see it as I do, where the seeing it as I do is described as seeing a movable drop of water in it. My entitlement to do that is a condition of our going on to have a theoretical debate about the origin of rock-

crystals—it is needed if we are to have common data on which to base our subsequent hypotheses.

But there is also an obvious disanalogy. In the rock-crystal case I can cite a ground for my claim in terms of a property of the object. There is a fact about whether or not there is a movable drop of water inside the crystal, and I can appeal to that fact as offering an objective, albeit uninformative justification for the claim. (Spelled out, the justification would be something like: Everyone ought to see it the way I do, because I see it as having a drop of water in it and it does have a drop of water in it.) There are also facts which might be seen as warranting or providing evidence for the claim, and so providing a kind of subjective justification: for example that it looks as though there is a movable drop of water, or that it looks as though there is a clear liquid in it, and an arbitrary clear liquid in these circumstances is most likely to be water. And there are means of finding out whether I have been experiencing the situation correctly. If there is doubt about whether the liquid is water, we can crack open the crystal and find out. Or if my perceptual capacities are in question, I can have other people, with better vision, take a look. But in the aesthetic case, there are no corresponding sources of justification. Since beauty is not an objective property of things I cannot claim that my finding the flowering cherry beautiful is appropriate to the flowering cherry just because it is, in fact, beautiful. Relatedly, there are no tests or criteria I can employ to justify my claim. And, as Kant is at pains to emphasize, I cannot appeal to how other people experience the object. Whether or not I am entitled to claim that something is beautiful, and so that everyone else ought to share my pleasure in it, is independent of whether anyone else feels pleasure in it: the only basis for my judgment can be my own pleasure. So how can I possibly be entitled to demand universal agreement for that pleasure? As Kant puts it in a canonical statement of the problem: “how is a judgement possible which, merely from the subject’s *own* feeling of pleasure in the object, independent of the concept of it, judges this pleasure to attach to the representation of the same object in *every other subject*, and does so a priori, that is without being allowed to await the agreement of others?” (CJ, §36, 5:288).

§3 Kant's answer to the problem

Kant offers an apparent answer to this question in terms of his notion of the free play of the faculties of imagination and understanding. He claims that pleasure in the beautiful consists in a state in which the imagination apprehends the object in a way which accords with the requirements of understanding, but does so freely, that is, without being governed by concepts of the understanding. This state of free play, he says, is one for which we can claim universal agreement, he says, because it manifests what he calls the “subjective formal condition of a judgment in general” (CJ §35, 5:287). The possibility of cognition requires that we be able to claim universal agreement for our cognitive states, for example experiential states like that of seeing the movable drop of water in the rock-crystal. This yields an entitlement to claim universal agreement which carries over from our cognitive states to the state of the free play. Because of the free play's status as a subjective condition of cognition, we are entitled to claim agreement not just for particular cognitions, but for the free play, and hence for the feeling of pleasure in which it is manifested. This answer, viewed at the most general level, attempts to justify the normativity of aesthetic judgment by making a connection between aesthetic and cognitive experience. Although aesthetic experience is not itself cognitive, its relation to cognition is such that we cannot deny the claim of aesthetic experience to universal agreement without also undermining the possibility of cognition. But it is notoriously difficult to make sense of Kant's argument here. Those who attempt a charitable interpretation are typically faced with a dilemma regarding the relation of the free play to ordinary cognition. If the free play is a necessary condition of cognition then it would appear that every object we cognize should be experienced as beautiful. But if it is not a necessary condition of cognition then it is not clear why the claim of cognitive experience to universal validity should carry over to aesthetic experience. And even aside from this specific obscurity in the argument, we also have to contend with the more general obscurity of the transcendental-psychological language in which it is framed. So if we take seriously the question Kant raises, and want to address it, we either need to find a way of clarifying Kant's answer and making it persuasive, or adopt another approach.

Philosophers who have taken the problem seriously but rejected Kant's answer to it have tended to address it either by rejecting aesthetic normativity or by insisting on the

objectivity of aesthetic experience. The latter can seem like the more tempting approach, especially given that, in many ways of using the term “objectivity” it is interchangeable with Kant’s notion of universal validity. It can seem like a contradiction in terms to assert that I am entitled to claim universal agreement for my judgment that something is beautiful, and yet to deny that the judgment is objective. Or it can seem as though Kant must be operating with an unduly demanding notion of objectivity, one which demands, say, that judgments must be provable to count as objective, or that it must be possible to formulate them in terms which make no reference to specifically human responses. But I think that this approach misses an important commonality between the experience of something as beautiful, or positive aesthetic experience more generally, and the experience of just liking something, as in Kant’s judgments of the agreeable. We do not want to lose sight of the fact that ordinary experiences of beauty are in the first instance experiences of pleasure, liking or enjoyment. They play a different role in our psychological economy, so to speak, from experiences which serve to register the features of objects, to tell us what kind of things they are. If I find the flowering cherry beautiful and you do not, it seems strained to describe the difference in our experiences by saying that I notice a feature of the cherry which you fail to notice. Assuming that the two of us have an equally clear view of it and that we come to it with the same conceptual background, we see it as having all the same features. The difference lies in *how* we see it, our *way* of seeing it, where “how we see it” does not translate into “how we see it *as being*.” Unlike you, I see it in a way which is pleasurable; but this does not mean that I see it *as being* a certain way, that I see it as having a property which you fail to see it as having.⁵ In not seeing it the way I do you are not cognitively worse off. What you are missing is not some item of information about the cherry tree, but rather the pleasurable way of seeing it. If we insist in this way on the subjectivity of taste, dissociating aesthetic experience from cognition and insisting on the connection with pleasure, then the question of aesthetic normativity remains pressing.

In the remainder of this paper I want to propose an answer which is at the very least inspired by Kant’s own answer, and arguably an interpretation of it. I have in fact argued previously that Kant’s account of aesthetic normativity should be understood roughly

⁵ For this distinction, see Ginsborg (2006, p. 358), and Ginsborg (2015, pp. 181-182).

along the lines of the answer I'm now about to sketch,⁶ but in this paper I will not try to defend that point, but will simply present the answer in its own right. Putting it very roughly: it is a misapprehension to think that there is a conflict between the normative character of aesthetic judgments and the fact that they are not objective. The thought that there is a tension rests on the mistaken view that normativity in one's judging or more generally in one's cognitive or perceptual response to an object, depends on the judgment's being objective or on one's response to the object amounting to appreciation of an objective feature of it. We can avoid this mistaken view by acknowledging a kind of normativity applicable to our psychological responses to things that does not depend on those responses registering objective facts but that is, rather, a condition of objective cognition. Once we recognize the possibility of taking one's response to an object to be normative—to be appropriate to the object—in a way that doesn't stand in need of justification in terms of the objective features of the object, then there is no longer any mystery about aesthetic normativity. The fact that we can take our psychological response to a beautiful object to be one that everyone should share is simply an instance of a more general entitlement to take our natural psychological responses to things to be appropriate to those things. This answer explicitly follows Kant in accounting for the normativity of aesthetic response in terms of the conditions of cognition, and more specifically in terms of the normativity of the perceptual responses which enter into cognition. But it aims to clarify the kind of normativity at issue in a way which makes clear that it is not incompatible with the denial of objectivity.

§4 Knowing how to go on and primitive normativity

I want to explain the notion of normativity I have in mind by looking at an idea which appears frequently in Wittgenstein's later philosophy, the idea of "knowing how to go on."⁷ This idea appears in the context of Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations. Here Wittgenstein is concerned with the general question, what is it to grasp a rule, where it is clear that his concern is also with grasping the meaning of an expression or grasping a concept. Part of his strategy in approaching this question is to consider how children come

⁶ See Essays 5 and 8 of Ginsborg (2015). The answer presented here differs from the answer presented earlier in ascribing a more central role to Wittgenstein.

⁷ I develop the idea in its own right in Ginsborg (2020).

to master linguistic expressions or acquire concepts. His answer is that they do so by a kind of training in which the teacher presents them with examples of behaviour which they are encouraged to follow. A normal child presented with a sufficient number and range of examples will come to “know how to go on” from them, and this knowledge makes possible the grasp of a corresponding rule or concept. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein illustrates this knowing how to go on with the example of mastering basic arithmetical concepts. Learning the decimal system, for example, is a matter of multiple stages of learning how to go on from examples of behaviour modelled by the teacher. A child must first learn how to write the individual numerals 0 through 9 by first perhaps having her hand guided by the teacher, or tracing the shape that the teacher has given her, before she can go on to write each number on her own. She must then learn to get the numerals in the right order, again going on from examples she has been given. Following that she must learn to continue the pattern of numerals exemplified by the series of natural numbers in the teens, twenties, thirties and so on, and then into the hundreds. At some point we can say she knows how to go on: she has, we might say, got the hang of, or come to understand the principle of decimal notation, even if she is not able to give a good explanation of it. This teaching might employ verbal explanation, but Wittgenstein makes clear that it does not have to. Describing it in the *Investigations* he talks about “[using] particular emphases, underlin[ing] figures, writ[ing] them one under another in such-and-such ways, and similar things” (*Investigations* §145). And in *Zettel* he says that the learning may happen “only through examples,” without any rule being given (*Zettel* §295). Once a child has learned the principle of decimal notation, we can teach her the meaning of expressions for simple arithmetical operations. Wittgenstein gives the example of an expression he calls ‘+2’ which corresponds to developing the series of even numbers (*Investigations* §185). We can teach a child the meaning of this expression, and, correspondingly, the concept of adding two to an even number, by giving her the example of the series of 0, 2, 4, 6, 8... and so on, and showing her how to continue it. If she is able to continue the series for high enough numbers, we can say of her that she knows how to go on, and this, for Wittgenstein, is equivalent, or at least comes close, to her having come to grasp the rule or concept underlying it.

Against this background, Wittgenstein introduces his famous example of the aberrant pupil who has apparently learned to develop the sequence of even numbers, and who does so competently up to 1000, but then goes on with 1004, 1008, 1012 instead of, as expected, 1002, 1004, 1006. When the pupil is challenged, he says: “Yes, isn’t that right? I thought that was what I was supposed to do” (*Investigations* §185). We try to explain to him that this is not the right way to go on, but he misunderstands our explanations in just the same way in which he seems to have misunderstood what we were trying to teach him. Wittgenstein suggests that it is as though it comes naturally to him to understand the command “+2” as we would understand the order “Add 2 up to 1000, 4 up to 2000, 6 up to 3000” and so on. And he compares the case to one in which a person responds to a pointing gesture by looking in the direction of fingertip to wrist rather than the other way around (*ibid.*). The aberrant pupil, we’re inclined to say, has got the wrong end of the stick: he has not caught on to the rule we intended him to catch on to. But, as in the case of someone who misunderstands the pointing gesture, we do not seem to have any way of correcting him. In the case of the pointing gesture there is literally nothing we can do to show the person which way to look: anything we provide (more pointing, arrow signs, even physically turning him around) will be understood in the opposite way from the way we intended. Something similar is the case for the aberrant pupil. Imagine how we might try to show him that he is going on wrong. We might have him write the numbers vertically in columns and compare the unit column for the numbers he’s given with the corresponding columns for all the other numbers. Look, we might say, this last column is different! And here we have to imagine that he insists that it’s the same: that the column 0, 4, 8, 2, in the context where those numbers appear in the units column of the four digit numbers, is the same as the column 0, 2, 4, 6 where the numbers appear in the units column of the three digit numbers. Perhaps then we have him compare just the number 4 which he has written in 1004 and compare it with the 2 he wrote in 992, and he again insists that they’re the same. Let’s suppose now that we just cut out the two numbers -- the 4 he wrote in 1004 and the 2 he wrote in 992 and put them side by side. “Now they’re the same,” he says; but when we put them back in their places he says, “Now they’re different.”⁸ It is as though something went wrong at the very beginning, when we were

⁸ Compare the woodsellors at *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, I §149. “How could I show them that —as I should say—you don't really buy more wood if you buy a pile covering a bigger area?—I should, for instance, take a pile which was small by their ideas and, by laying the logs around, change it into a 'big'

teaching him just to write the numerals. We thought he had learned how to go on in the sequence of writing the same numeral again and again, that he had got the hang of what the numeral 2 is. But actually he hadn't: he had apparently picked up an alternate way of going on in which the correct numeral to write after 2 if you are, say, copying numbers from the units column of a column of three digit numbers to the units column of a column of four digit numbers, is 4.

The example of the aberrant pupil is relevant for our purposes because it brings into relief a certain kind of normativity associated with knowing how to go on, and it is in terms of this kind of normativity that I want to address the question of how aesthetic normativity is possible. Notice that, when we challenge the aberrant pupil, the first thing he says is "Isn't that right?" He not only says 1004, he thinks that it's the right thing to say in this context, that it's the appropriate response to being shown the series of numbers he's already written and being asked to "go on."⁹ This isn't a peculiarity of the aberrant pupil; a normal child who writes 1002 also probably thinks that what she is doing is correct, although she is not likely to express this thought unless she is challenged. And we can assume that this is true also in the more basic cases of going on, like copying individual numerals or writing them in an order which matches the teacher's. The child is not simply producing the numerals mechanically like an automaton, but is rather conscious of herself as attempting to meet a normative demand set by the teacher's examples. The case of the aberrant pupil gets us to focus on this normativity by having us imagine a context in which it is called into question. Consider again the aberrant pupil's claim that going on with 1004 is correct. I think the natural reaction to this claim is to reject it: writing 1004 is going on wrong from the previous sequence and it is 1002 which is right. Yet there is, as we have seen, no way to persuade the pupil of this. And this isn't just because he is stubborn or stupid. We could imagine him, indeed, as highly intelligent and capable of sophisticated rational argument, but still unconvinced. The point is that there is in fact no rational argument to be given for the correctness of his writing 1002 as opposed to his writing 1004. If we could assume that he had been previously been applying the add-two rule, and

one. This *might* convince them—but perhaps they would say: "Yes, now it's a *lot* of wood and costs more"—and that would be the end of the matter."

⁹ Here I diverge from my earlier reading of Wittgenstein in Essay 5 of my Ginsborg (2015), where I claimed that examples like that of the aberrant pupil leave out, or at least fail to highlight, the normativity involved in knowing how to go on (Ginsborg 2015, p. 127).

that in asking him to go on from the sequence we were asking him to apply the same rule he had applied previously, then we could argue that 1002 is correct by appealing to the obvious objective fact that the add-two rule as applied to 1000 yields 1002. But his previous behaviour is equally compatible with his having applied any number of rules, including the rule “add 2 up to 1000 and then add 4.” Once we drop the assumption that the pupil’s previous behaviour manifested his application of the add-two rule, then we have no objective ground for rejecting his claim that writing 1004 is just as good a way of going on as writing 1002.

One way in which Wittgenstein’s example has been understood is as calling into question the very possibility of rule-following and meaning. The impossibility of giving reasons for the correctness of 1002, or of citing an objective fact in virtue of which writing 1002 is correct, has implications not just for the pupil but for ourselves; it implies that we have no grounds for our own conviction, under normal circumstances, that writing 1002 is the right way to go on from a series which begins with 0,2,4,6,8... and goes up to 1000. We might think that at least in our own case, if not in the pupil’s, we know what rule we are applying when we write such a series, but Wittgenstein gives convincing reasons for supposing that we are no better off epistemically in our own case than in that of the pupil. I know, for instance, that I have been following the rule that I have been taught by being given examples like those that the pupil has been given, or with words like “count by twos” or “write out the even numbers.” But knowing that I learned the rule from being shown the examples does not tell me any more about what I should write than I know about what the pupil should write. And regarding the verbal instructions I was given, I learned the meaning of the words in them by learning how to go on from a finite set of examples I was shown, so the question of what I should write in the light of those instructions remains just as open as the question of how I should go on from the sequence taken in isolation. The upshot, according to this way of understanding Wittgenstein, is that “knowing how to go on” is a misnomer. We may all be disposed to continue the sequence in the same way and to do so with a feeling of conviction that we are going on appropriately, but there is no genuine recognition of how to go on. And if, as Wittgenstein suggests, knowing how to go on is the foundation of our grasp of rules, concepts and

meaning, then that yields the skeptical conclusion that there are no such things, and correspondingly no such thing as truth-evaluable judgment.¹⁰

However, as I see it, the moral we should draw from the example is quite different. The fact that there is no rational argument to be given for the rightness of 1002 as opposed to 1004 should not be taken as undermining our conviction that writing 1002 is the right way to go on and that writing 1004 is not. Rather it should be taken as showing that our claim to the correctness of 1002 can stand without rational justification. More generally, in the kind of learning situation which Wittgenstein describes, the sense of correctness in which 1002 and not 1004 is the correct thing to write, is not a matter of objective truth. The appropriateness of 1002 at that point in the sequence neither amounts to, nor depends on, the truth of the arithmetical judgment that $1000+2=1002$. It is, I want to say, more primitive, both in the conceptual sense that we need it to make sense of their being such things as arithmetical judgments, and in the ontogenetic sense that our capacity to grasp it precedes our capacity to recognize arithmetical truth.

I understand Wittgenstein's examples of learning how to go on as intended at least in part to draw our attention to this primitive appropriateness. We cannot explain the correctness of writing 1002 after 1000 in terms of the accordance of that behaviour with a previously grasped rule. But that does not mean to say that we cannot make sense of 1002 being the correct thing to write in those contexts. The same goes for the more basic cases of knowing how to go on illustrated by a child learning to write individual numerals following the teacher's example. If a teacher writes the number 2 several times and tells the pupil to go on, the correct thing for the pupil to do is to keep writing the number 2; she should not, for example, start writing 4 after 500 occurrences, or if the place she is asked to write it is in the units place of a four-digit number. Moreover, although Wittgenstein illustrates this kind of correctness in a context of learning arithmetical expressions and concepts, it is applicable also to the acquisition of everyday concepts like *dog* and *chair*. A

¹⁰ Saul Kripke reads Wittgenstein in roughly this way (see his 1982, ch. 2). So does Crispin Wright; see e.g. chs. 2, 11 and 12 of Wright (1980). John McDowell comments as follows on the skeptical, or at least counterintuitive, consequences of Wittgenstein's view as interpreted by Wright: "If Wittgenstein's conclusion, as Wright interprets it, is allowed to stand, the most striking casualty is a familiar intuitive notion of objectivity. The idea at risk is the idea of things being thus and so anyway, whether or not we choose to investigate the matter in question, and whatever the outcome of any such investigation" (McDowell 1998, p. 222).

child comes to grasp the concept *dog*, in a way which allows her to make judgments like “That’s a big dog” or “Grandma’s dog is in the park,” through mastery of sorting activities in which she learns to respond in certain specific ways to dogs in contrast to other things in her environment. Such activities might form part of everyday interactions with actual dogs: the child learns to treat unfamiliar dogs with caution, to pat them if allowed to do so, to say “hello doggie,” and so on. Her learning how to behave around dogs can be seen as a kind of learning how to go on: her parents have encouraged her to say “hello doggie” to various dogs she has encountered and at a certain point she finds it natural to do so spontaneously with new dogs which cross her path. She can also learn the concept through more structured activities, for example activities of sorting different kinds of toy animals into different bins. The child who is able to add more dogs to the bin where she has seen the teacher putting them, and to leave on side the cats and the horses, is “going on” in a way analogous to that of the child continuing the add-two series.

As in Wittgenstein’s examples we can speak of knowledge of how to go on, and not a mere disposition to go on, because the child recognizes, as we do, that what she is doing fits the context. We might imagine her, like the aberrant pupil, protesting if her behaviour is challenged. If we try to put the spotted dog with the cats rather than with the other dogs she might rightly object that it “doesn’t belong there.”¹¹ So there is a recognition of her behaviour as normatively governed, both by her and by us: we all recognize that the spotted dog should be sorted with the dogs and not the cats. But, again as in Wittgenstein’s cases, the “should” here is not a matter of the truth of an objective judgment. We cannot justify the claim about where the spotted dog belongs by appealing to the fact that it is a dog, or that it has other objective features in common with the dogs in the bin. We can see this by noting that the child must be able to recognize the “should” before having acquired the concept *dog* or other concepts of features which dogs have in common; the sorting activity is one which makes possible, rather than depending on, possession of the concept *dog*. Another way is to note that, as the rule-following considerations suggest, there are any number of objective features to which we could appeal to justify sorting the spotted

¹¹ Jonas Langer describes a 30-month old child in a sorting experiment “rebuking” the tester with “No belongs this way” when she was given a mismatched set of coloured blocks (Langer 2001, p. 22). Langer’s descriptions of younger children’s nonverbal “self-correcting” activity, starting around 15 months (see e.g. Langer 1986, p. 57), as well as descriptions of self-correcting behaviour in 18-month-olds in Sugarman (1983, pp. 90-91), suggest that these attitudes predate the capacity to express them verbally. I discuss the relevant normative attitudes further in Ginsborg (forthcoming).

dog with the cats rather than the dogs already in the bin. For example the spotted dog shares with the cats the feature of being either a spotted dog or a cat; and assuming that none of the other dogs in the bin have spots, this is a feature which it does not share with the dogs that have previously been sorted together. The upshot is that our grasp of ordinary empirical truths about dogs and chairs, like our grasp of arithmetical truth, depends on the recognition of a kind of normativity more primitive than that associated with objective judgment. There is such a thing as sorting an object correctly or incorrectly with others, where the correctness does not depend for its ascription on the idea that the object possesses some general feature in virtue of which it should be sorted that way.

§5 Conclusion

Let us return now to the problem of aesthetic normativity. As we saw, that problem as Kant construes it arises because of a seeming conflict between the normative character of aesthetic judgments and the fact that they are not objective. I proposed to address the problem by showing that it is based on the misapprehension that claims to the normativity of one's responses to things must be based on the recognition of objective properties of those things. There can be legitimate claims to the normativity of one's responses which do not rely on those responses' reflecting appreciation of objective facts. My discussion of the normativity involved in knowing how to go on was intended to show how this can be. In order to avoid skepticism about rules, meaning, and content we have to allow a kind of normativity in our ways of going on—imitation of others' behaviour, continuing patterns, sorting objects based on examples—whose recognition does not depend on the appreciation of objective truth. If this kind of normativity is accepted, then the supposed problem of aesthetic normativity disappears.

It is important to note that this solution does not depend on simply identifying aesthetic responses to objects with the kinds of perceptual responses to things which make it possible to know how to go on. I am not claiming, for example, that the child's knowing to sort the spotted dog with the other dogs rather than the cats is due to some kind of aesthetic sensitivity. Although we might think of her behavioural response to the dog as reflecting her way of perceiving it—a way that allows her to see it as more similar to the

other dogs than to the cats—this is a quite different way of perceiving than the pleasurable way in which we perceive the flowering cherry. Conversely, when one feels pleasure in a thing, one is precisely not having the kind of response which allows one to classify it as belonging in some general kind rather than another. That distinction is central to Kant’s distinction between objective and subjective sensation as well as to his point that judgments of beauty are not conceptual. The point is rather that we can appeal to the normativity involved in knowing how to go on in order to show that there need not be a special problem about how we can take our aesthetic responses to be appropriate to the things we perceive. Rather than suppose that any claim to appropriateness or universal agreement requires a justification for its legitimacy, we can, so to speak, shift the burden of proof. If someone wants to deny that our aesthetic responses can be appropriate to their objects, then they need to come up with a reason. They need to argue, for example, that aesthetic pleasure is invariably “interested” (in Kant’s sense of the term), that is, that it is always rooted in the individual’s particular desires or preferences. That would require showing that my pleasure in the flowering cherry is not, as it seems to be, something which is obviously called for by the object and so something which any human being ought to recognize, but rather that it reflects idiosyncratic preferences due to my particular history and education. I have not been claiming that aesthetic normativity cannot be challenged on those or similar grounds. What I have been claiming is that the mere absence of what Kant calls objectivity in our aesthetic judgments is not sufficient to motivate such a challenge. The impossibility of providing rational justifications for our aesthetic judgments is not in itself a reason for questioning our intuitive commitment to the normativity of our aesthetic responses.¹²

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¹² This is a lightly reworked version of a talk presented at a workshop on aesthetic normativity at Harvard University in May 2019. I am grateful to the audience on that occasion for discussion, and especially to Francey Russell for her excellent comments.

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Aesthetic Normativity and the Acquisition of Empirical Concepts

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Abstract

In the Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant claims that the *Critique of Pure Reason* accounted for the necessary conditions of experience and knowledge in general, but that it was not a complete transcendental account of the possibility of a particular empirical experience of objects and knowledge of empirical laws of nature. To fill this gap the third *Critique* puts forward, as an additional transcendental condition, the regulative principle of the purposiveness of nature. In this paper, I will attempt to show how Kant's account of pure aesthetic judgment can be read as articulating an aesthetic non-conceptual condition of the search for the conceptual order of nature and so as constituting an essential part of the account of the transcendental conditions of empirical experience and knowledge.

Keywords

Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment, beautiful form, natural kinds, concept acquisition, aesthetic normativity, Ginsborg

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Introduction

In the Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant claims that the *Critique of Pure Reason* accounted for the necessary conditions of experience and knowledge in general, but that it was not a complete transcendental account of the possibility of a particular empirical experience of objects and knowledge of empirical laws of nature. The forms of intuition and the pure concepts and principles of the understanding are necessary but not sufficient transcendental conditions of empirical experience and knowledge. They “yield such an interconnection among things with respect to their genera, as things of nature in general, but not specifically, as such and such particular beings in nature” (KU 5:183; see also: KU 5:181; EEKU 20:208-210). To fill this gap the third *Critique* puts forward, as an additional transcendental condition of empirical experience and knowledge, “the principle of the purposiveness of nature in its multiplicity” (KU 5:180).

The principle has two aspects: logical or conceptual and aesthetic. The first is the assumption that nature constitutes a comprehensive system of regularities and so can be subsumed under a comprehensive system of empirical concepts. Kant’s claim is that this assumption is a transcendental condition of empirical experience and knowledge, because the employment of any empirical concept presupposes the comprehensive and systematic conceptual purposiveness of nature. The assumption of empirical determination by a comprehensive hierarchy of concepts, leading up to the most general concepts and down to ever more specific concepts, is, I think, Kant’s way of talking about real or objective unity. The thought is that only the complete determination of the sensibly given by a comprehensive system of concepts would ground in full the claims to objectivity and truth we make when we subsume a particular under an empirical concept in a determinative judgment. Kant thus holds that employing any empirical universal concept to make a purportedly objectively true assertion presupposes the conceptual purposiveness of nature as a whole.

I further suggest that we should add to the picture of a comprehensive system of empirical concepts the thought that the hierarchy of concepts leads up to general causal

forces and laws and down to ever more specific complexes explainable in their terms. Ideally, for Kant, our empirical concepts are to inform us about the causal connections between things in the world. Kant is then concerned with the objectivity of kinds, causal laws and causal explanations. Thought of in this way, the assumption of the comprehensive conceptual purposiveness of nature underwrites the universality and strict necessity of empirical causal laws. The assumption of the conceptual purposiveness of nature is the transcendental bridge Kant draws between the general conditions of experience and the principle of causality specifically and, on the other hand, the conditions of a particular experience of nature comprising empirical concepts and causal laws.

The principle of the conceptual purposiveness of nature is a subjective regulative principle. It does not determine objects. But it is nevertheless a condition of our particular experience and knowledge of nature. For Kant, the investigation of nature is an on-going task. Empirical knowledge is continuously subject to critical scrutiny, refinement – and possibly, to radical revision. This is the deep significance of claiming that a transcendental condition of empirical experience is a regulative principle.

This sketch might seem to offer a complete if telegraphic answer to the question of how the third *Critique* completes the account of the transcendental conditions of experience and knowledge. In this paper, I will suggest that the principle of the aesthetic purposiveness of nature can be read as an essential part of Kant's transcendental account. My principal aim is not exegetical. Rather, I hope to show how Kant's account of pure aesthetic judgment can be read as articulating an aesthetic non-conceptual condition of the search for the conceptual order of nature and so as constituting an essential part of the account of the transcendental conditions of empirical experience and knowledge.

Pure Aesthetic Judgment and the Beautiful Forms of Natural Kinds

In what follows, I will describe briefly how I propose to read Kant's analysis of pure judgments of taste and to explain how they are related to the process of acquiring empirical concepts. I should say again clearly that although I will employ passages from the *Critique of the Power of Aesthetic Judgment* to support the view I am proposing, my

aims in this paper are not exegetical. Rather, I hope to put forward a philosophically valuable model for the acquisition of our most fundamental empirical concepts.

Pure judgments of taste, according to Kant, are not attributions of a property or set of properties to an object. They are reports of a distinct pleasurable feeling experienced by a subject in view of an object. More specifically, they are responses to what Kant characterizes as the purposive form of an object. Kant describes the pleasurable feeling as an animated self-sustaining absorption in the form of an object, which he thinks of as the “feeling of life” (KU 5:204; see also: KU 5:219; EEKU 20:230-231) and as the harmonious free play of the imagination and the understanding (KU 5:217-218) or the feeling of their mutual subjective correspondence or agreement (KU 5:218, 219). The feeling can be glossed, I suggest, as the feeling that the form of an object is cognitively significant. Although pure aesthetic judgments are not attributions of concepts to objects and do not furnish us with concepts, we nevertheless feel that for the objects, the forms of which evoke pure aesthetic pleasure in us, concepts can be found. In other words, we feel that the beautiful forms of objects reveal the conceptual order of nature.

It is of particular importance to Kant to underscore that pure judgments of taste are subjective, but that they nevertheless lay claim to universal assent. They “must be combined with a claim to subjective universality” (KU 5:212) – thus giving them the appearance of objective cognitive judgments. Indeed, Kant calls the necessity of pure judgments of taste “exemplary, i.e., a necessity of the assent of all to a judgment that is regarded as an example of a universal rule that one cannot produce” (KU 5:237). He calls this presupposition of universal assent the “indeterminate norm of a common sense” (KU 5:239). In other words, the pleasurable working of the mind, to which overt judgments of taste give expression, is taken to be common to all subjects. This, Kant opaquely suggests, explains why their analysis might be of interest to transcendental philosophy (KU 5:213).

The first step towards seeing how pure judgment of taste might be related to the task of empirical conceptualization is to ask what precisely Kant means by form. This is a deeply contested matter. But many readers agree that what Kant means is the spatial (or, less frequently, spatio-temporal) shape of an object. There is considerable textual evidence for this. But perhaps the clearest is Kant’s explicit statement that beauty in nature is

“ascribed to objects only in relation to reflection on their **outer** intuition, thus only to the form of the surface” (KU 5:375).¹ Pure aesthetic judgments express the feeling that a spatial figure or outline apprehended in intuition is cognitively purposive.

It is particularly important to see that although Kant emphasizes that pure aesthetic judgments are not the attributions of a property to an object but reports of the inner pleasurable feeling of the subject, they are nevertheless responses to an aspect of the object. The spatial figure or outline of an external object is a subjective aspect of its representation in the sense that space is the subjective *a priori* form of outer intuition. But as Kant says clearly, space “in spite of its merely subjective quality, is nevertheless an element in the cognition of things as appearances” (KU 5:189). – This is the first, very important clue about the relation between pure judgments of taste and the cognition of objects given externally in space.

The second crucial step to unraveling the connection between aesthetic judgment and empirical cognition is to see that Kant’s most prevalent examples are a host of what he thinks of as natural species or kinds. The most prevalent examples are flowers and other biological kinds. Specific examples include the rose (KU 5:215) and the tulip (KU 5:236 note); Kant speaks of wildflowers (KU 5:299) and most often of flowers in general (KU 5:207, 216, 229, 233, 281). Indeed, some of these *loci* seem to suggest that all flowers are beautiful. “Flowers,” Kant says, “are free natural beauties” (KU 5:229; cf., MS 6:443). Animal kinds are also very common examples: “Many birds (the parrot, the hummingbird, the bird of paradise) and a host of marine crustaceans are beauties in themselves” (KU 5:229); but Kant also speaks, generally again, of a bird or insect as beautiful (KU 5:299) as well as of seashells (KU 5:349).

It cannot be stressed enough that Kant lays great emphasis on the fact that “all judgments of taste are singular” (KU 5:215) and says emphatically that the statement that “roses in general are beautiful, is no longer pronounced merely as an aesthetic judgment, but as an aesthetically grounded logical judgment” (KU 5:215; see also, KU 5:285). Very surprisingly, he nevertheless self-consciously employs general terms or concepts to present

¹ I have very slightly amended the translation. Kant speaks in the singular: “*der Form der Oberfläche.*” For other particularly clear passages see, KU 5:189, 242, 299.

his examples. Kant is claiming, I suggest, that each ordinary or typical specimen of the general kinds he mentions is singly beautiful.

This surprising claim finds in fact considerable support in the text. First, consider the notion of an aesthetic normal idea of a species: it is “the image for the whole species, hovering among all the particular variously diverging intuitions of the individuals, which nature used as the archetype underlying her productions in the same species, but does not seem to have fully achieved in any individual” (KU 5:234-235). It is the shape we would get if we were “to superimpose one image on another and by means of the congruence of several of the same kind to arrive at a mean that can serve them all as a common measure” (KU 5:234). The discussion strongly suggests that Kant holds that very many species have such normal ideas. In pure judgments of taste, I am claiming, we typically and paradigmatically respond to spatial forms, the archetype of which is an aesthetic normal idea of a species. Indeed, it is precisely this claim that enables us to explain how Kant can say that “in beautiful nature the mere reflection on a given intuition, without a concept of what the object ought to be, is sufficient for arousing and communicating the idea of which that object is considered as the expression” (KU 5:320). The idea he is talking about in this vexed passage is the normal idea of a species.²

By saying that in pure judgments of taste we typically respond to spatial forms, the archetype of which is an aesthetic normal idea of a species, I don’t mean that we respond to them as (approximations of) normal ideas. This would make the judgment conceptual. What we respond to are particular intuitions of individual forms. It is Kant’s analysis that asserts that hovering among them and expressed by them is the normal idea of the species to which they belong.

Towards the end of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment, Kant points once again to the beauty of flowers, “blossoms, indeed the shape of whole plants; the delicacy of animal formations of all sorts of species” and to the beauty of pheasants, crustaceans, insects (KU 5:347). He moves on to discuss inorganic matter, mentioning a variety of striking examples of the beauty of solids that have crystallized (KU 5:348-349; see also, MS 6:443). Significantly, he claims that solids generally assume “upon solidification a determinate

² For detailed defense of this claim see, Reiter, manuscript.

shape or fabric (figure or texture) [*Gestalt oder Gewebe (Figur oder Textur)*] which, where there is a specific difference in the matter, is different, but if the matter is the same is exactly the same” (KU 5:348). He further says that “internally all materials that were fluid only because of heat and which through cooling have become solid reveal, when broken, a determinate texture, and thus make it possible to judge that if their own weight or contact with air had not prevented it, they would also have displayed their specifically proper shape [*spezifisch eigentümliche Gestalt*] externally” (KU 5:349). Kant is clearly proclaiming that inorganic solid kinds have a “specifically proper shape.” The beautiful forms of the organic world, animal and vegetable, as well as the forms of solid matter, suggest how the kingdom of nature might initially be cut at the joints.

Finally, further very significant support for the claim that Kant is discussing the beautiful forms of natural kinds comes from an examination of the Idealist tradition in the theory of art, still very prominent in Kant’s own day, and its conception of the beauty of the idealized forms of natural kinds.³

The Forms of Natural Kinds as Conditions of the Acquisition of Empirical Concepts

Now it might well be thought that the mental process of constructing idealized forms of natural kinds presupposes the sorting of nature into such kinds (as indeed it does for the Idealist tradition) – and so cannot illuminate the process of acquiring our most fundamental empirical concepts. But Kant suggests that this is not the case. His proposed elaboration of the mental process of the formation of aesthetic normal ideas begins by contrasting the imagination’s capacity to recall for concepts, even after a long time, their sensible signs or marks with what the imagination can apparently achieve without the guidance of concepts. The imagination “also knows how to reproduce the image and shape [*das Bild und die Gestalt*] of an object out of an immense number of objects of different kinds, or even of one and the same kind; indeed, when the mind is set on making comparisons, it even knows how, by all accounts actually if not consciously, as it were to

³ For detailed defense of this claim see: Reiter 2020; Reiter manuscript. For a shorter sketch of the tradition see, Reiter and Geiger 2018, pp. 81-83.

Kant names Winckelmann in this context. See, V-Anth/Mron 25:1330. For the claim that Kant is following Winckelmann’s Idealist understanding of form, see: Biemel 1959, p. 54 note 6; Düsing 1990, p. 183.

superimpose one image on another and by means of the congruence of several of the same kind to arrive at a mean that can serve them all as a common measure” (KU 5:234). The important emphasis, I suggest, is that the imagination is not working under the conceptual guidance of the understanding. It does not create normal ideas for a conceptually sorted kind. Rather, it operates on its own. Kant goes on to say that the imagination operates “by means of a dynamic effect, which arises from the repeated apprehension of such figures on the organ of inner sense” (KU 5:234) – speaking only of the imagination and its capacity for apprehension. By speaking of a dynamical effect he seems to be stressing that the activity here is properly that of the imagination.

Kant is not claiming then that we arrive at normal ideas by a process of abstraction, which presupposes a conceptual sorting of objects that belong to a species or kind. Crucially for our concerns, he suggests that it is such normal ideas and the mental process of comparison it presupposes that make possible the empirical judgment of nature. He speaks of the normal idea as “the standard for judging it as a thing belonging to a particular species of animal” and as the “universal standard for the aesthetic judging of every individual of this species” (KU 5:233). Our capacity to apprehend the characteristic shape of a species is a condition of our possession of concepts for this species: “This **normal idea** is not derived from the proportions taken from experience, as **determinate rules**; rather, it is in accordance with it that rules for judging first become possible” (KU 5:234-235).

The First Introduction is even more explicit about this point. Kant there distinguishes the “multiplicity and diversity of [...] laws” from the “natural forms corresponding to them” (EEKU 20:209) – a distinction he also describes by speaking of empirical laws and “**specific** forms matching these, which however through their comparison with others are also **generically corresponding** forms [*generisch übereinstimmende Formen*]” (EEKU 20:213). Indeed, in characterizing what he calls there the principle of reflection he seems briefly to distinguish its aesthetic and conceptual tasks:

The principle of reflection on given objects of nature is that for all things in nature empirically determinate concepts can be found, which is to say the same as that in all of its

products one can always presuppose a form that is possible for general laws cognizable by us. For if we did not presuppose this and did not ground our treatment of empirical representations on this principle, then all reflection would become arbitrary and blind [*bloß aufs Geratewohl und blind*], and hence would be undertaken without any well-grounded expectation of its agreement with nature. (EEKU 20:211-212)

Kant suggests here that we seek general laws for objects that have in common their mere form. If we did not presuppose this first aesthetic sorting of nature then anything at all might be a potential object of the process of comparison through which we seek empirical concepts. We would have no clue what objects we are to compare – “all reflection would become arbitrary and blind.”⁴

In the note clarifying this passage Kant makes the decisive claim that the principle of reflection is not a principle of mere logic, which teaches us that we can compare objects and thus form concepts. It is a synthetic transcendental assumption, which is a condition of applying this principle of logic to nature.⁵

On first glance, this principle does not look at all like a synthetic and transcendental proposition, but seems rather to be tautological and to belong to mere logic. For the latter teaches how one can compare a given representation with others, and, by extracting what it has in common with others, as a characteristic for general use, form a concept. But about whether for each object nature has many others to put forth as objects of comparison, which have much in common with the first in their form, it teaches us nothing; rather, this condition of the possibility of the application of logic to nature is a principle of the representation of nature as a system for our power of judgment, in which the manifold, divided into genera and species, makes it possible to bring all the natural forms that are forthcoming to concepts (of greater or lesser generality) through comparison. [...] the (reflecting) power of judgment, which also seeks concepts for empirical representations, as such, must further assume for this purpose that nature in its boundless multiplicity has hit

⁴ Significantly, Ginsborg appears to take the emphasis on form to refer to the very possibility of applying concepts to objects (Ginsborg, 2015a, pp. 137-138).

⁵ This is reminiscent of the dependence of the logical principles of systematic unity, similarity, variety and continuity and transcendental principles bearing the same names in the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic (see: A650-651/B678-679, A654/B682, A657/B685, A660/B688).

upon a division of itself into genera and species that makes it possible for our power of judgment to find consensus in the comparison of natural forms and to arrive at empirical concepts, and their interconnection with each other, through ascent to more general but still empirical concepts; i.e., the power of judgment presupposes a system of nature which is also in accordance with empirical laws and does so *a priori*, consequently by means of a transcendental principle. (EEKU 211-212 note)

The logical process of the formation of concepts, alluded to in this passage, comprises three steps: comparison, reflection and abstraction (see, for example: V-Lo/Wiener 24:909; Log 9:94-95).⁶ But logic, Kant says, does not answer the question of “whether for each object nature has many others to put forth as objects of comparison, which have in common with the first their form.” This precisely is the role of the merely formal division of the manifold into species and genera. As proposals of comparison sets, it “makes it possible for our power of judgment to find consensus in the comparison of natural forms and to arrive at empirical concepts.”

Our aesthetic response to the beautiful forms of objects and the sorting that is based on it are to be understood as proposing a hypothesis. This is suggested, I think, by the fact that aesthetic judgments cannot claim universal validity and demand universal assent, for they are not grounded in concepts. Kant thus says that aesthetic judgment “solicits assent from everyone [*wirbt um jedes andern Beistimmung*]” (KU 5:237), adding that the “**should** [*Sollen*] in aesthetic judgments of taste is [...] pronounced only conditionally” (KU 5:237). Kant calls this assumption of universal assent, we saw, the “indeterminate norm of a common sense” (KU 5:239). The assumption is that we can all find the same forms beautiful and so sort nature aesthetically in the same way. This is a subjective condition of finding the objective conceptual order of nature.

The assumption of the aesthetic purposiveness of nature is then the assumption of the existence of aesthetically significant forms. Sorting nature into objects, which share these forms, is a condition of the search for concepts under which to subsume these objects and kinds. The assumption of the aesthetic purposiveness of nature is a necessary

⁶ Readers often quote this account of concept formation and take it to be a complete account of the formation of empirical concepts. For the claim that it is not see: Ginsborg 2015b, pp. 151-153; Allison 2001, pp. 20-30.

transcendental condition of empirical experience and knowledge. As I will claim below, it is very important that this first sorting of nature is aesthetic and non-conceptual.

Two Objections and Adaptations

I am claiming that for Kant the capacity of the imagination to construct idealized forms of natural kinds is a condition of the search for the empirical conceptual order of nature. This will inevitably raise a whole host of objections and questions. I will try to answer two that are most important in order to begin to make the idea plausible and interesting.

The first obvious objection is that even if we accept that Kant thinks there is a connection between non-conceptual aesthetic pleasure and concept acquisition, there might be reason to think the connection is somewhat looser than he claims. For there's tension between taking aesthetic pleasure to be the first step in or condition of discovering the empirical order of nature and claiming that we feel aesthetic pleasure when the imagination is "unintentionally brought into accord with the understanding" (KU 5:190) and that we experience pleasure in the form of an object "without any intention of acquiring a concept from it" (KU 5:190).

A way of resolving the tension would be to begin with what at the most fundamental level we would subconsciously identify as an object possessing significant form. It is these objects that we would pick out were we imaginarily first setting out to investigate nature; and we would naturally take their forms as first clues as to what objects possess common properties beyond their form. Our experiences of natural beauty can be thought of as making conscious such moments – but, in cases of aesthetic judgment, our attention remains focused on the object and goes no further. So pure aesthetic judgments would be very closely allied to what we imaginarily conceive of as the first step in or condition of the search for empirical knowledge, without themselves being the first step in that search. Indeed, it might make sense to think of aesthetic pleasure as an experience that presupposes possessing empirical knowledge of nature (as Kant clearly does) and as a disinterested and protracted return to those moments of naturally focusing on an object and its form. The experience of pure aesthetic pleasure would in this way reveal to us a

condition of empirical experience and knowledge, without itself being the condition. To get at what is philosophically significant in Kant's view, I propose reading him as revealing that a condition of the search for empirical knowledge of nature is a pre-conceptual identification of would-be objects and a rudimentary pre-conceptual sorting of them into would-be kinds.

The second no less obvious objection is that it seems implausible to claim that what Kant thinks of as significant form infallibly directs us to every natural object and kind. Some natural kinds might not possess a beautiful common form; and some objects which share such a form might not constitute a natural kind.

I suggest taking Kant to hold that pure judgments of taste and the pre-conceptual sorting of nature that they make possible offer a *first, partial* delineation of nature into objects, which in turn makes possible a first *provisional* sorting of nature into kinds. Pure judgments of taste are nevertheless a necessary condition of experience generally, because in the order of discovery they in effect serve as our *first, fallible and revisable hypothesis where the joints of nature are located*. Some of these hypotheses might ultimately have to be rejected; other joints will be discovered later by conceptually-guided empirical research. But in both cases, empirical investigation sets out from and so depends upon these first hypotheses. In what follows, I will emphasize the advantages of reading Kant in this way, relating it to the distinct normativity of pure aesthetic judgments.

Before proceeding, I want to acknowledge clearly that neither of these responses is found in Kant's text.

Ginsborg on The Acquisition of Fundamental Empirical Concepts

It will prove particularly fruitful to compare the view of our most fundamental experience of the world, which I am attributing to Kant, with the view Ginsborg defends in a number of important and detailed papers on this and closely related matters. One obvious reason for examining this body of work is the fact that Ginsborg is a leading interpreter of Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* and of the *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment* in particular. Moreover, her account of our most fundamental experience draws

significantly on Kant's view of aesthetic judgment. These facts will facilitate the examination of her position and make for some interesting points of comparison. But it bears emphasizing again that the principal purpose of this paper is not to defend the reading of Kant I presented above as an exegesis of the third *Critique*. Its aim rather is to examine the philosophical value of the theory I am attributing to Kant; and I propose doing so by comparing it to an important contemporary account. It should be noted furthermore that Ginsborg herself does not claim that her view is an interpretation of Kant – though she does claim to be drawing on and developing central insights of his.⁷

More importantly then, Ginsborg's contribution to the debate over the nature of experience aims to account for the acquisition of our most fundamental concepts of observation. Significantly, she undertakes to offer a philosophical account of experience, according to which the acquisition of new conceptual capacities need not in all cases presuppose that such capacities are already in play and indeed presupposed by any experience. In other words, she aims to give an account that will help us make sense of the acquisition of our most fundamental empirical conceptual capacities. On this count in particular it will prove illuminating to compare her view to the position I attributed above to Kant. For this, I have claimed, is a task that the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* too undertakes.

To begin to describe Ginsborg's Kantian conception of experience it is very useful to turn to her discussion of his empiricist predecessors. According to the view we find in Locke and Berkeley, Ginsborg recounts, universal concepts are constructed from particular ideas by attending to some features different particulars share and disregarding other features peculiar to them. But the account is circular: It attributes to us the capacity to recognize common, general features; and it attributes to us the capacity to distinguish those features that make up the content of the universal concepts we employ from those that do not (Ginsborg 2015b, pp. 154-156). Significantly, the same problem would arise for Kant, if the often-quoted account of concept formation, which I discussed above and which

⁷ Ginsborg's official position seems to be that her account of experience draws or is modeled on Kant's analysis of pure judgments of taste. She lays great emphasis on the connection between the role reflective judgment plays in empirical conceptualization and aesthetic judgment, especially in Ginsborg 2015c. In the conclusion of this paper, she suggests that she might be describing correctly Kant's view of empirical conceptualization (see, Ginsborg 2015c, pp. 200-201). But she nowhere claims, as I would, that Kant's analysis of aesthetic judgment is in fact a central component of his account of empirical conceptualization.

Ginsborg too analyzes, were taken to be his complete answer to the question (Ginsborg 2015b, pp. 151-153). These accounts obviously fail to meet Ginsborg's demand for an account of empirical concept formation that does not presuppose the possession of such concepts.⁸

Hume's account of the customary association of a variety of particulars with a common name can be read as suffering from the very same circularity found in Locke and Berkeley. To acquire universal concepts we must view particulars as possessing certain relevant features and resembling others in just these respects. But Ginsborg proposes to read Hume differently, specifically as claiming that "it is a basic psychological fact about us that our association of ideas follow certain regular patterns [...] 'Finding a resemblance' [...] on this reading, does not precede the acquisition of the corresponding disposition; rather, acquiring the disposition is just what finding the resemblance consists in" (Ginsborg 2015b, p. 157). On this reading, Hume, unlike his predecessors, does not implicitly presuppose a basic capacity to represent universals, but offers a genuinely non-circular account of acquiring a capacity to identify resemblances or similarities. But there is an obvious problem with this dispositional account. It describes a subjective tendency rather than the normative representation of objective similarities (Ginsborg 2015b, pp. 158-159).

It is at this juncture that Ginsborg turns to Kant in order to give Hume what she describes as a normative twist.

[...] I want to see Kant as adopting a Humean view, but with two significant modifications. First, Kant expands the role that Hume had ascribed to the association of ideas, holding that dispositions to associate ideas are required not just for general thought and belief, but also for perception itself [...] Second and more importantly for the purposes of this essay, Kant gives the Humean view a normative twist. My perception of a tree not only involves my being in a state of readiness to call to mind – or in Kant's terms to 'reproduce' – representations of other trees; it also involves my taking it that, in so far as I do call ideas of other trees to mind, I am doing what I and everyone else ought to be doing under the

⁸ For a concise analytic presentation of the problem see, Ginsborg 2015c, p. 174. For the claim that Peacocke's non-conceptualist account of the acquisition of concepts equivocates between perceiving something in a certain way and perceiving it as being that way and is consequently also circular see, Ginsborg 2015c, pp. 174-182.

circumstances. The generality of my disposition is thus, so to speak, incorporated into my perception, rather than remaining external to it, as on the Humean view. I see the tree *as* a tree in virtue not merely of my state of readiness to call to mind previously perceived trees in connection with it, but also of my awareness that this state of readiness is *appropriate* given my present perceptual situation. (Ginsborg 2015b, p. 160)

Ginsborg claims that it is in Kant's account of the ruled-governed activity of the imagination that we find this view, specifically in his discussion of the first two stages of the threefold synthesis of the A deduction. Kant, she says, is usually understood as holding that the categories as well as empirical concepts of the understanding guide the reproductive syntheses of the imagination (Ginsborg 2015b, p. 162).

But we can also read Kant in a way that brings him closer to Hume while still doing justice to the rule-governed character of our reproductive associations. For the claim that our activity of imagination is governed by rules does not necessarily imply that our activity must be guided by those rules. Nor does it imply that the activity cannot be, as on Hume's view, the expression of natural dispositions of the kind that are shared by animals. On the reading that I am proposing, the activity of reproductive synthesis, like the association of ideas for Hume is simply something that we are naturally disposed to do. It is a natural psychological fact about human beings that, if shown a certain number of trees, they will develop a disposition such that the perception of one tree will tend to call to mind other previously perceived trees. What makes the corresponding associations rule-governed is not that they are guided by a specific, antecedently grasped rule, but rather the fact that we take them to have normative significance. The associations are rule-governed because in carrying them out I take myself to be doing not only what I am disposed to do, but also what I (and everyone else) ought to do. That is, I take my actual associations, blindly habitual though they are, to manifest conformity to a normative standard applicable to everyone. The rule-governedness of my associations is thus a function of my taking them to be rule-governed, which is in turn a function of my taking my natural dispositions as exemplifying a universally valid norm. (Ginsborg 2015b, p. 162)

As Ginsborg emphasizes, on her reading, Kant answers the question of how empirical conceptual capacities are acquired without assuming that rules must be grasped antecedently to the experiences through which we acquire these very capacities (Ginsborg 2015b, p. 162). She also emphasizes in different papers that the normative twist she attributes to Kant's account of experience draws on his analysis of pure judgments of taste: "the idea that our imaginative activity can be, and be recognized by us, as rule-governed, without our having any awareness of the relevant rules prior to engaging in that activity [...] is not explicitly articulated by Kant, but I take it to be a consequence of the account of aesthetic experience which he gives in the *Critique of Judgment*" (Ginsborg 2006a, p. 357).

Can Pure Aesthetic Judgment Serve as a Model for Fundamental Empirical Conceptualization?

To compare fruitfully the view of Kant I sketched above with Ginsborg's the first thing to do is to bracket the status of space and time as the subjective transcendental forms of receptivity and with it the Kantian distinction between the aesthetic transcendental and empirical aspects of our psychology. To insist on the indispensability of these foundational Kantian doctrines and distinctions would be to put a great, possibly unbridgeable distance between Kant and contemporary views about the nature of experience. Bracketing the matter also allows us not to make too much of the difference between Kant's exclusive focus on spatial form and empirically oriented approaches to perception that acknowledge its importance, but emphasize the importance of other fundamental sensible properties such as say color and whatever other deliverances of our sense modalities are discovered to be involved in our perception of the most fundamental order of nature.

Having said that a good place to start the comparison is to note that while Kant insists on the subjectivity of pure judgments of taste, Ginsborg describes the primitive feeling or consciousness of normativity as "*appropriate* given my present perceptual situation" (Ginsborg 2015b, p. 160) or as "*exemplary* of how the object *ought* to be perceived" (Ginsborg 2015c, pp. 190-191) and as "*appropriate* to those things" (Ginsborg 2006a, p. 359). The perception, for Ginsborg, is of a thing or object. Kant though describes

the comparable pleasurable feeling of harmony or fit as subjective, specifically, as a quality of the interaction of capacities of the mind of the subject.

But is this not to lay emphasis on just the sort of point I said above we should set aside? It might seem that to insist on the subjectivity of judgments of taste is to bring back into the discussion Kant's doctrine of space and time as the subjective transcendental forms of intuition. But bracketing this discussion, we should be willing to describe Kant as claiming that we take pure aesthetic pleasure in the form of an object. Indeed, as I pointed out above, Kant is obviously aware of the fact that spatial form can be ascribed to an object as its property. Furthermore, Kant sees very clearly that concepts that describe shapes are for us of special salience. It is precisely this that leads him emphatically to deny that simple geometrical forms are rightly called beautiful (see, KU 5:241).⁹

So Kant's insistence on the subjectivity of pure judgments of taste is perhaps a way of insisting on their non-conceptuality. But Ginsborg employs judgments of taste as a model for experiences that are conceptual.¹⁰ She crucially describes the primitive feeling of appropriateness as accompanying tasks of sorting objects, like with like. It is no coincidence that she speaks both of how an object – in the singular – ought to be perceived and of appropriateness to things – in the plural. It is this fact precisely that makes the feeling a way of grasping a concept. But Kant insists that aesthetic judgment “is not grounded on any available concept of the object and does not furnish one” (KU 5:191). Like Kant, Ginsborg emphasizes that the primitive feeling of appropriateness “is not grounded on any available concept of the object” – our most fundamental experience does not presuppose concepts on her view. But she does claim that it serves to furnish concepts.

But again, it is not clear what this difference amounts to. For Kant, on the reading I presented, holds that aesthetic judgment delineates a spatial form. I also suggested that he should further be taken to hold that we can recognize the same form in other objects. For I claimed that aesthetic judgments can serve for a first pre-conceptual sorting of objects according to mere shape. Presumably, Kant would not deny that we can register

⁹ It is hard to escape a sense of irony in realizing that the passage discussing the ascription of beauty to simple geometrical shapes amounts to a rejection of the canonical examples philosophers give of the simplest objects we perceive. For Kant our most fundamental experience is emphatically not of red balls, blue pyramids or pink ice-cubes.

¹⁰ This is the view presented in Ginsborg 2006a. For strategic reasons, the main argument of Ginsborg 2015c leaves the question of the conceptuality of experience open. See, Ginsborg 2015c, p. 185 note 40.

comparable similarities of other sensible properties such as color; and anyway, I suggested we should not insist on the difference between shape, color and other sensible properties. Why then would Kant deny that aesthetic judgment can serve to furnish a concept, say of objects with a certain shape or with a certain shape and color and whatever other sensible properties serve the most fundamental sorting of nature into kinds?

So perhaps a different way of getting at the difference might be noting that, on the interpretation I proposed, it is important that the claim of an aesthetic judgment to universal validity is grounded in the assumption of a common sense. Aesthetic judgment, as I have been emphasizing, “solicits assent from everyone [*wirbt um jedes andern Beistimmung*]” (KU 5:237); the “**should** [*Sollen*] in aesthetic judgments of taste is [...] pronounced only conditionally” (KU 5:237). For Kant then aesthetic judgment has a different normative status than does the feeling of appropriateness accompanying a sorting response described by Ginsborg. As I see it, an aesthetic judgment is not itself normative. It asks for or seeks assent rather than demands it, precisely because it is not grounded in concepts and for this reason is not itself already normative. It is proposed as the ground of a norm – but is not itself one. Ginsborg’s sorting responses too are not grounded in concepts. But they are normative or taken as normative. They demand universal assent. The child she describes as acquiring the concepts of a solid does not suggest or propose but rather simply “recognizes that the chalk *should* go with the stone” (Ginsborg 2015b, p. 165; see also Ginsborg 2015a, p. 141, 146).

But again, what is the significance of this difference? Kant thinks of aesthetic judgment as asking for assent. But he also appears to think that if others judge disinterestedly, assent will indeed be given. Considering the possibility that sorting responses might differ, Ginsborg similarly emphasizes that by and large “human beings naturally converge in the ways they are inclined to sort objects and, correspondingly, to associate representations” (Ginsborg 2015b, p. 167; see also Ginsborg 2015c, pp. 199-200). The difference between the views might not then be great.

Finally, Kant insists that “judgments of taste are singular judgments” (KU 5:215). They are responses to a single object. This, of course, is something of which Ginsborg is very clearly aware. She presents in detail the problem of the content of experience

precisely as a problem about the singularity of sensible intuitions (Ginsborg 2015b, pp. 150-154). But again perhaps the thought is that we can clearly identify the form of a single beautiful object in those similarly shaped; and the same presumably holds for other sensible properties. Judgments of taste can then serve as a model for sorting objects.

I think, however, that Kant should be read differently. I suggested reading Kant as putting forward a three-step model: 1) the delineation of objects in pure aesthetic judgments; 2) the sorting of objects according to form; 3) the search for empirical concepts describing these aesthetically sorted kinds. I claimed that Kant views the first two steps as pre-conceptual. Evidence of this is found in Kant's description of the common spatial form of a kind as an *aesthetic* normal idea. It is clearest in his claim in the First Introduction that the sorting of objects according to spatial form logically precedes the search for empirical concepts through the process of comparison, reflection and abstraction. The comparison of like-formed objects is a condition of the search for empirical concepts and not the first fruit of this search. Empirical concepts, for Kant, must properly contain more than a common form; and, extending again, empirical concepts must contain more than merely basic observational properties.

Facts and Norms

I emphasized above that Ginsborg's account of experience does not claim to be an interpretation of Kant's analysis of judgments of taste and that in any case this is not what is of interest to us in this paper. The comparison of Kant's view to the model Ginsborg proposes is meant to serve as a guide to getting at the philosophically significant differences between these accounts. I claimed that whereas for Kant pure judgments of taste are subjective, Ginsborg uses them as a model for fundamental objective norms. Very closely related to this is the fact that for Kant, as I propose to read him, pure judgments of taste presuppose an inter-subjective common sense that is a condition of sharing objective norms. Furthermore, Kant emphasizes the singularity of the judgments, while Ginsborg employs them as a model for how universal conceptual norms are furnished. Finally, whereas Kant emphasizes the non-conceptual nature of pure judgments of taste and insists that they do not furnish us with concepts, Ginsborg employs them as a model for an

account of how our most fundamental concepts are acquired. Though I have emphasized the differences between Kant (as I propose reading him) and Ginsborg, I think the comparison also shows that Ginsborg claims with very good reason that her account of experience is drawing on Kantian insights. The important question is this: What is the significance of the differences between the view I am attributing to Kant and the model Ginsborg defends?

As I emphasized above, Ginsborg lays great emphasis on the role played in her account by our natural modalities of sense. Indeed, this is an important part of the force of her view, specifically because it contends with the challenge of proposing a philosophical account of concept acquisition that can link up to the discoveries of the sciences of perception. Now Ginsborg clearly does not claim that the bare deliverances of natural sense modalities are normative. To so claim would be to attribute to non-rational animals standing in the space of reasons. This is precisely why she emphatically adds, we saw, a normative twist to the naturalist reading of Hume. But on her account, our natural dispositions are accompanied by a primitive awareness that we are perceiving an object as it ought to be perceived and thus that we are sorting it with others in the right way. The deliverances of our sense modalities are clearly natural and the primitive awareness of appropriateness appears to belong to our nature too. Indeed, to describe the feeling as primitive amounts perhaps precisely to claiming that it is part of our nature, though to our nature as potentially conceptual beings.¹¹ Thus Ginsborg ascribes to unsynthesized intuitions a merely causal and thus clearly natural role in the constitution of experience, while emphasizing the non-directive role the understanding plays in the process of synthesis (see, Ginsborg 2006b, pp. 94-96). To put the main point simply, on Ginsborg's account, our natural dispositions turn out to give us our most fundamental norms. This is indeed a principal advantage of her view.

We can begin to appreciate Kant's distinct view by recalling that, on the picture he has in mind, in aesthetic judgment the imagination is "taken not as reproductive, as subjected to the laws of association, but as productive and self-active (as the authoress of voluntary [*willkürlicher*] forms of possible intuitions)" (KU 5:240) and that it is

¹¹ Ginsborg doubts the sort of normative awareness she discusses can be attributed to non-human animals; she does not think it is implausible to attribute it to children, even in the early stages of language-learning. See, Ginsborg 2015c, p. 188.

“unintentionally brought into accord with the understanding” (KU 5:190). Both the fact that the imagination is not itself guided by a rule but rather freely produces and tries forms out (so to speak) and the fact that the faculty of concepts is required to respond in approval to a proposed form are significant. I suggest that this is a way of insisting that aesthetic pleasure is not natural – precisely not something we share with animals, though he emphasizes the fact that it is in part grounded in our animal nature: “beauty is valid only for human beings, i.e., animal but also rational beings” (KU 5:210). Nor is it a distinct natural feeling that accompanies an otherwise natural mental function we do share with animals. Animal cognition is pre-determined by laws of association (see, Letter 362 to Herz; 26 May 1789; Br 11:52); and, on Ginsborg’s account, so is our most fundamental experience of things. She says clearly that our activity of imagination is “the expression of natural dispositions of the kind that are shared by animals” (Ginsborg 2015b, p. 162). Kant though describes human cognition as distinct even at the most fundamental level. As rational creatures charged with making sense of what is given to us empirically even the most fundamental order is a result of a mental activity distinctive of conceptual creatures.

What is the significance of Kant’s insistence on the distinct cognitive and normative nature of pure judgments of taste? What, specifically, is the significance of the claim that the imagination is not reproductive and subjected to the laws of association but “productive and self-active” and of the role the understanding plays in pure judgments of taste?

It might be thought that a capacity that is not bound by given associative rules allows us to contend with potentially very different environments – including environments very different from our own. It would be the faculty of versatile investigators of nature equipped for all epistemic occasions. But it seems implausible to claim that even in an environment radically different from ours we would still find the forms of fundamental natural kinds (and their other distinctive sensible properties) cognitively significant. Think of being relocated to an environment, in which the most important distinctions are revealed by very subtle differences in odor or by electro-magnetic radiation other than visible light. Put differently, Ginsborg is in at least one sense right to insist on the continuity of human and animal cognitive capacities. Our cognitive capacities are evolutionary products of contending with our environment. For this reason it is not

promising to read Kant as thinking of our most fundamental experience of nature as, in this way, radically different from that of our animal ancestors. It would be far better to find a way of reading Kant that allows us to incorporate the sort of sober commitment to naturalism we find in Ginsborg's account.

Kant describes the imagination as freely producing forms and aesthetic pleasure as requiring the positive response of the understanding. But this interaction falls short of being conceptually normative. On the account I offered, aesthetic pleasure can serve to ground a conceptual norm. But it is not itself conceptually normative. Kant emphasizes that pure judgments of taste do not depend upon or furnish us with concepts. On the model Ginsborg presents, the imagination seems to present us with the rules by which it operates; it seems to impose these rules upon us. And these rules just are our most fundamental observational sortal concepts.

Against this view, Kant can be read as making a conceptual point: A natural fact cannot be a norm. For Ginsborg, the way in which we perceive objects and are disposed to sort them is a "natural psychological fact about human beings" (Ginsborg 2015b, p. 162). It also appears to be a fact about us that we take these dispositions to be normative. Somehow, these two facts together are supposed to yield a norm:

What makes the corresponding associations rule-governed is [...] the fact that we take them to have normative significance. The associations are rule-governed because in carrying them out I take myself to be doing not only what I am disposed to do, but also what I (and everyone else) ought to do. That is, I take my actual associations, blindly habitual though they are, to manifest conformity to a normative standard applicable to everyone. The rule-governedness of my associations is thus a function of my taking them to be rule-governed, which is in turn a function of my taking my natural dispositions as exemplifying a universally valid norm. (Ginsborg 2015b, p. 162)

To this suggestion Kant might respond that a fact about me, a blind habit, can't just be declared a norm.¹²

The Integration of Fundamental Perception into the Space of Reasons

It isn't clear though that this response makes sense in the context of the present discussion. After all, on my account, Kant allows for the aesthetic delineation of objects and for their sorting according to their spatial form alone. But I have also agreed that we should loosen the Kantian distinction between the formal-aesthetic and the material-conceptual and allow for sorting according to sensible properties generally – properties the identification of which Kant would understand as requiring concepts that apply to the matter of experience. How, in this looser account, does our most fundamental capacity to sort objects according to their fundamental observable similarities fall short of giving us a preliminary conceptual sorting of nature into kinds? How does this sorting fall short of providing us with conceptual norms?

I want to suggest that even for the more relaxed Kantian view we are considering our fundamental sorting is not in itself conceptually normative. What is missing in order to make them conceptually normative is taking upon ourselves rational responsibility for the natural operations of our mind. This means, among other things, that these fundamental proposed norms are not immune to rational criticism. We have the responsibility of testing them empirically. We accept them provisionally and take upon ourselves the rational responsibility to revise or even reject them – if that is required. Of decisive importance, on Kant's view, is the question of whether any further generalizations, crucially, any causal generalizations apply to a proposed sort or kind. Putting the point skeptically, on Kant's account, we might ultimately claim that what our senses most fundamentally present to us as similar are not in fact similar, or, more precisely, not similar in any way beyond being merely observationally similar. This is the way I am suggesting we gloss the distinction between aesthetic and conceptual normativity and between the aesthetic and the logical purposiveness of nature.

¹² In earlier work, Ginsborg says that “the capacity for bringing objects under empirical concepts is not a natural psychological capacity” (Ginsborg 2015a, p. 140).

Ginsborg's proposed kinds are not yet integrated into the sort of systematic and causally informative body of knowledge, which Kant envisions as our end in cognition. Suppose sorting like-shaped and similarly colored objects is causally just uninformative. They would then be precisely the causally unprojectible 'grues' and 'sphubes' of discussions of empirical conceptualization. I suggested in the introduction to this paper that Kant thinks that the idea of the complete determination of what is given to us sensibly by a comprehensive system of empirical concepts grounds the claims made by empirical determinative judgments to being objectively true. So for Kant, objects that are merely observationally similar are not objectively similar. Conversely, to claim that observationally similar objects are objectively similar is to claim that they would fit into the comprehensive system of concepts that fully describes the natural world and its laws.

Putting the point about the integration of observational kinds into a system of knowledge in this way brings to mind a very important passage from Sellars, in which he affirms that experience rests on observation *and* that these observations, like empirical knowledge generally, can be revised or rejected.

I do wish to insist that the metaphor of "foundation" is misleading in that it keeps us from seeing that if there is a logical dimension on which other empirical propositions rest on observation reports, there is another logical dimension in which the latter rest on the former.

Above all, the picture is misleading because of its static character: One seems forced to choose between the picture of an elephant which rests on a tortoise (What supports the tortoise?) and the picture of the great Hegelian serpent of knowledge with its tail in its mouth (Where does it begin?). Neither will do. For empirical knowledge, like its sophisticated extension, science, is rational, not because it has a *foundation* but because it is a self-correcting enterprise which can put *any* claim in jeopardy, though not *all* at once. (Sellars 1997, §32, pp. 78-79)

To put the point skeptically, the worry is that no further empirical propositions might rest on our fundamental observations and, conversely, that there would be no sense in which the observations rest on such further empirical propositions. Put non-skeptically, Kant's deep concern is getting right the precise status of our most fundamental observations. They are proposals or hypotheses; their normative status, content and truth ultimately depend on what they turn out to ground. Put slightly differently, our fundamental observations of similarity are not normative independently of revealing further similarities – crucially for Kant, similarities in causal properties. Insisting on this means that, on Kant's account, even our most fundamental observations of similarity can be put in jeopardy and corrected, if and when this is required. On Ginsborg's view, these fundamental observations are facts about us and seem immune to correction. But it should be definitive of empirical norms that they must not be immune to revision and possibly even rejection.

Recall here the important passage from the Introduction to the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* (ignoring in this context the very important distinction between properly and improperly so-called natural science).

[...] the doctrine of nature can be better divided into *historical doctrine of nature*, which contains nothing but systematically ordered facts about natural things (and would in turn consist of *natural description*, as a system of classification for natural things in accordance with their similarities, and *natural history*, as a systematic presentation of natural things at various times and places), and natural science [...] Any whole of cognition that is systematic can, for this reason, already be called *science*, and, if the connection of cognition in this system is an interconnection of grounds and consequences, even *rational science*. (MAN 4:468)

Systematically ordered our fundamental observations might perhaps constitute a historical doctrine of nature. But they would not qualify as rational natural science. I think Kant is assuming that the historical doctrine of nature and natural history specifically employ for classification similarities that can also serve for constructing a system in accordance with causal similarities. This is why natural history employs for classification

time and place. On the skeptical scenario we are considering, however, this would not hold true. The systematized descriptions or observations would be cognitively barren – in no way part of the self-correcting enterprise of a rational science of nature (in Kant’s sense) or of the logical space of reason (to use the Sellarsian phrase). It is in this way, I suggest, that Kant’s insistence on the subjectivity and distinct normative status of pure judgments of taste is of significance.

Experience, Assent and Commitment

I think there is reason to believe that the claims I have been making and the adjustments they suggest would not be rejected out of hand by Ginsborg. My reason for thinking this can be supported initially by returning to a criticism she raises against McDowell. McDowell holds that having an experience does not imply that its contents are endorsed; it requires, he claims, a further act to assent or commit oneself to the content of an experience. To this Ginsborg responds:

[...] if experiences do not carry with them commitment or assent to the claims figuring in their contents, then they cannot serve as rational grounds for judgments. This expression draws on the intuition expressed in Davidson’s well-known remark “nothing can count as reason for holding belief except another belief” (1986, 310). McDowell assumes that Davidson’s point can be recast as the claim that “nothing can count as a reason for belief except something that is already in the space of concepts” (1994, 140), but in fact Davidson wants to make the stronger point that, to be a reason, a psychological state must involve assent or commitment. The mere entertaining of a conceptual content is not enough to supply me with reasons for endorsing either that content, or any other content which is inferentially related to it. (Ginsborg 2006b, p. 79; see also, Ginsborg 2006a, p. 351)¹³

¹³ Ginsborg develops this criticism of McDowell in detail (Ginsborg 2006c, pp. 286-318). Stroud too makes this point: “But to be ‘saddled’ with a certain content in perception is not simply for that content to be ‘available’ to be entertained or contemplated, as it is in the unasserted antecedent of a conditional proposition, for instance. To take in some content in perception is to have accepted or endorsed that content, or to find oneself accepting or endorsing it.” (Stroud 2002, pp. 86-87.) Glüer puts the point succinctly: “Perceptions, be they as conceptual or propositional as you like, are reasons only if you believe that the proposition delivered is true” (Glüer 2004, p. 209).

In Ginsborg's account of concept acquisition, the primitive feeling of appropriateness obviously meets the requirement of experience involving assent or commitment. And now it is a matter of spelling out what assenting or committing yourself to an empirical content must be for an experience to be a reason for belief. But as Sellars claims, in the space of empirical experience and knowledge all beliefs are open to criticism, revision and even rejection. Part of what it is to commit yourself to an empirical content is to take upon yourself the responsibility of revising or even rejecting it – if there are reasons to do this. Indeed, it is precisely the commitment to take into account reasons that might demand revising our beliefs that makes these beliefs good reasons for endorsing other beliefs. Making them immune to criticism would also make their status as reasons highly questionable. The point can be made by saying that commitment to empirical beliefs is an on-going task that requires taking into account new evidence that might count for or against these beliefs. A great advantage of Kant's view of empirical knowledge is precisely his appreciation of the fact that the acquisition of empirical knowledge is an on-going task. This is the deep significance of claiming that the transcendental assumption of the aesthetic and conceptual purposiveness of nature is regulative. It governs our on-going investigation of the empirical order of nature.

Ginsborg emphasizes that when we acquire a concept the feeling of appropriateness that accompanies our mental activity in effect makes a normative claim on others. But she also says, more specifically, that “insofar as the subject's imaginative synthesis involves the awareness of its own appropriateness with respect to the circumstances, it carries with it the kind of commitment or endorsement that is characteristic of judgment” (Ginsborg 2006b, p. 94); the person whose synthesis it is “commits herself to it and thus in a sense makes it her own” (Ginsborg 2006b, p. 94). I am claiming that being open to criticism and so to the possibility of revision or rejection is characteristic of empirical judgments; we take upon ourselves this responsibility in making these acts our own.¹⁴

Indeed, in a recent essay, Ginsborg explicitly connects her account of concept acquisition with the assumptions of the systematicity of nature and of its conceptual

¹⁴ In a footnote, Ginsborg raises the question of what makes taking our mental activity to exemplify normative rules legitimate. She answers by appealing to the “dependence of our grasp of empirical concepts on our adoption of this normative attitude” (Ginsborg 2015b, p. 168 note 38). I am claiming that the openness to criticism characteristic of empirical concepts should be applied to the normative attitude that makes them possible.

purposiveness, explicitly addressing the issue of revisability. Her account, she says, “does not rule out the thought that we might come to reject particular concepts and systems of concepts in favor of concepts that we find more appropriate to nature than the ones we had before” (Ginsborg 2017, p. 84). But it does, she emphasizes, entail the denial of the thought that “while there are appropriate ways of conceptualizing nature, these are completely at odds with our natural ways of conceptualizing” (Ginsborg 2017, p. 84). This might sound like an emphatic rejection of the claim I am insisting upon. But I conceded above, on Kant’s behalf, that it makes good sense to think of the most fundamental operation of our cognitive capacities as evolutionary products of contending with our specific environment. In this sense, we cannot revise or reject them. And Ginsborg furthermore recognizes that it is only from the first-person perspective that we must view our distinct way of sorting nature as appropriate. Things look different when we consider the matter from the third-person perspective.

We assume, in our activity of conceptualizing, that nature calls for, or makes appropriate, this very activity. But even though we cannot exercise reflective judgment without conceiving of a normative fit between our activity of reflective judgment and nature, we can still step back and adopt a third-personal view on the relation between that activity, now conceived as the actualization of human sorting dispositions, and the ways in which natural things ought to be sorted. And from that point of view, the concept of a way natural things ought to be sorted comes apart from the concept of how human beings in fact sort them. We get the idea that there so much as are ways in which nature ought to be conceptualized – that there are, in other words, genuine natural kinds and corresponding empirical laws – only through taking our own ways of sorting natural things to be appropriate to nature, and thus ruling out the possibility of a radical mismatch between our ways of conceptualizing and ways in which nature ought to be conceptualized. But once we have the notions, on the one hand, of a way in which nature ought to be conceptualized, and, on the other, of the way in which human beings are naturally inclined to conceptualize it, we can see how the two might come apart. (Ginsborg 2017, pp. 87-88)

What I am insisting on is the importance of this third-person perspective on our attempt to conceptualize nature. How we most fundamentally sort nature is a fact about us. To take it to be rationally normative is a further step and comes with accepting that even the most fundamental concepts and distinctions we make might need revision or even rejection. Once again, I take it to be crucial for Kant to distinguish clearly aesthetic from conceptual normativity. As we just saw, Ginsborg makes room for a distinction that in an important respect resembles the Kantian distinction. But she also seems to want to merge the two perspectives and in doing so to assimilate the third-person perspective to the first person perspective. She claims that our fundamental sorting behavior is part of our nature. But she further claims that our attempts to arrive at increasingly systematic conceptions of nature are also natural.

There is also a second respect in which, in revising our systems of concepts, we rely on our natural sorting inclinations. This is that we are naturally inclined to sort things not only at the “basic level” and in ways corresponding to simple features like color and shape, but also at various different levels of specificity. We do not – and this is something that again comes naturally to us – rest content with just sorting Fido together with the other dogs. We also sort him more specifically with the poodles and, if we are dog fanciers, with a particular variety of poodles. In the other direction we sort him with other animals and more generally with living things. It is of a piece with this feature of how we sort that we are inclined to prefer ways of sorting that are more conducive to systematic classification. This is part of what drives us to revise our initial classifications. Our carrying out such revisions with the aim of arriving at an increasingly systematic classification of nature is itself a natural feature of our sorting behavior, and it is part of what makes it the case that we do not stop at the conceptualizing that is required for ordinary experience but rather go on to engage in scientific inquiry. (Ginsborg 2017, p. 85)

I don't think Kant would deny that the pursuit of a systematic conception of the empirical world is natural to us. But it is natural to us as rational creatures. It is part of the second-nature of creatures who move in the space of reasons – rational cognizers who seek to systematize their worldview and are driven by further discretionary intellectual and practical goals, the goals of scientists and dog fanciers. In this we differ from all other

animals. And Ginsborg emphasizes that our fundamental sorting behavior employs the “same kind of sorting or discriminative capacities possessed by animals” (Ginsborg 2017, p. 81) and she is explicit that the sense of appropriateness she highlights “cannot be spelled out in terms either of veridicality or of rational justification” (Ginsborg 2017, p. 82). I thus think Ginsborg is wrong to say that when we “come to classify whales as mammals instead of fish [...] we are still following our natural sorting inclinations” (Ginsborg 2017, p. 85). We classify whales as mammals, because there are good reasons to do so – though we continue to see them as fishlike. On Kant’s behalf, I am insisting on the importance of distinguishing our first from our second nature, precisely by distinguishing aesthetic from rational-conceptual normativity. We will not stop identifying certain things as objects or seeing fundamental similarities where we do. But we need not take these facts on as rationally normative. This is the lesson I think we should take from Kant.

Conclusion

In attempting to compare Ginsborg’s account of the acquisition of fundamental empirical concepts and the view I am attributing to Kant I made a significant concession on his behalf. I suggested that we set aside his exclusive focus on spatial form and accept the idea that our fundamental attempt to order the empirical world might involve all our sense modalities. Ultimately, I think it is a question for empirical investigation what sensible properties play a role in the performance of this task. I now suggest a further very significant concession: Perhaps Kant is wrong about the connection between aesthetic pleasure and cognition. Perhaps this too can be empirically decided. Then the views of Kant and Ginsborg could be seen as very close to one another. The remaining very important difference would be Kant’s insistence that the feeling that we are rightly perceiving objects and right to associate them with others cannot itself be epistemically or rationally normative. To become rationally rather than aesthetically normative we must take the deliverances of our natural dispositions to constitute hypotheses, to be corroborated or refined – possibly even rejected – by further empirical investigation. For in this way we take on rational responsibility for our natural dispositions and so integrate them into the self-correcting enterprise of discovering the empirical order of nature.

I think there is a very good reason to concede this last point to Kant. Ultimately, I think it is this crucial aspect of Kant's view that shows he is not vulnerable to the myth of the given. And the fact that for Ginsborg our natural dispositions account for our most fundamental conceptualization of nature threatens to make her vulnerable to the charge. For Kant, our most fundamental experience of the world is not conceptual or rational. It can nevertheless serve as the ground of conceptual norms and can thus be brought under our rational responsibility. On Ginsborg's account, the most fundamental deliverances of our sense modalities are proto-conceptual. But it seems we cannot reject them, precisely because on her view perception ties us to the empirical world. Our most fundamental experience of the world thus appears to be immune to rational control. For Kant, in contrast, there is an important sense according to which it is not perception that ties us to the empirical world. What ultimately ties us to the empirical world is the on-going and self-correcting investigation of nature. I have suggested that there are reasons to think Ginsborg should concede this last important point to Kant. In her terms, this would mean giving the third person perspective on our most fundamental encounter with nature its due – our natural conceptualizing dispositions too might need to be revised or rejected.¹⁵

Abbreviations

The *Critique of Pure Reason* is referred to by citing the pagination of the 1781 (A) and 1787 (B) editions of this work. All other references are to the volume and page number in the Academy edition. The page numbers appear in the margins of the translations I use.

I use the following abbreviations and translations:

A/B: Kant, I. (1998), *Critique of Pure Reason*, edited and translated by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁵ I am grateful to Aviv Reiter for discussion of this paper. This research was supported by the ISRAEL SCIENCE FOUNDATION (grant No. 659/19).

Br: Kant, I. (1999), *Correspondence*, edited and translated by Arnulf Zweig. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

EEKU: Kant, I. (2000), “First Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*,” in *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, edited by Paul Guyer, translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

KU: Kant, I. (2000), *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, edited by Paul Guyer, translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Log: Kant, I. (1992), *The Jäsche Logic*, in *Lectures on Logic*, edited and translated by J. M. Young. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

MAN: Kant, I. (2002), *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*. In *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, edited by Henry E. Allison and Peter Heath, translated by Gary Hatfield. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

MS: Kant, I. (1997), *Metaphysics of Morals*. In *Practical Philosophy*, edited and translated by Mary J. Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

V-Anth/Mron: Kant, I. (2012), *Anthropology Mrongovius*, in *Lectures on Anthropology*, edited by Allen W. Wood and Robert B. Louden, translated by Robert R. Clewis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

V-Lo/Wiener: Kant, I. (1992), *The Vienna Logic*, in *Lectures on Logic*, edited and translated by J. M. Young. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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Aesthetic Normativity in Kant's Account: A Regulative Model

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Abstract

The notion of normativity has been key to an actualizing reading of the subjective universality that for Kant characterizes the aesthetic judgment. However, in the scholarly literature little discussion is made, somehow unsurprisingly, of what exactly we should understand by normativity when it comes to Kant's aesthetics. Recent trends show indeed the tendency to take normativity very broadly to the point of nuancing most of its core meaning. Based on how we speak about normativity in aesthetics, we seem indeed to have accepted that every kind of evaluative process is normative. I will argue that the sentimentalist elements of Kant's account call for a revision of its normative interpretations, for a better framing of its subjective universalism, and finally for a reconsideration of aesthetic normativity in favour of regulativity.

Keywords

normativity, regulative, aesthetic judgment, universalism, emotions

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In the current debate, the term normativity is increasingly used to define issues concerning epistemology, moral philosophy, aesthetics. Nevertheless, it is difficult to understand the meaning of such a broad term and it is necessary to define it first. In the light of the current debate on aesthetic normativity, the key role played by emotions, and in particular by the feeling of pleasure within Kant's account can be a real game changer (see Graham 2014). The notion of normativity has been indeed key to an actualizing reading of the subjective universality that for Kant characterizes the aesthetic judgement. The question ensuing from the discussion on normativity in aesthetics can be simplified as follows: how can an emotion, that is to say a subjective state of mind, be expressed in a communicable and universally valid judgement? In this regard it is true that, up to an extent, the notion of aesthetic normativity finds suitable ground in Kant's theory of taste and this has lent Kant's aesthetic judgement a high-rank position within the contemporary debate. Recent trends show indeed the tendency to take normativity very broadly to the point of nuancing most of its core meaning. Based on how we speak about normativity in aesthetics, we seem indeed to have accepted that every kind of evaluative process is normative.

I will notably argue that the sentimentalist elements of Kant's account call for a revision of its normative interpretations, for a better framing of its subjective universalism, and finally for a reconsideration of aesthetic normativity in favour of regulativity. We will see that given this very wide meaning of the notion of normativity many problems arise: 1. Based on Kant's aesthetic judgement no value is attributed to an object, as it is rather a feeling that is expressed; the question is: can a feeling be normative? 2. How is it possible to combine the regulative character, essential to Kant's judgement of taste, with the aesthetic normativity? Is it possible to speak about normativity without rules, norms and standards (normal idea)? 3. Is it yet possible to speak about normativity while entirely renouncing to prescriptions? My paper aims to discuss the normative character of aesthetic emotions in Kant's third Critique by calling upon the notions of regulativity and exemplarity. An argumentation as such not only provides an alternative reading to some of the paragraphs of Kant's aesthetics, that are most discussed in the contemporary debate, but also aims to retrieve the peculiarity of the aesthetic experience as an experience

characterized by spontaneity and communicable to others through a judgement with an essential character of indeterminacy.

Among Kantian scholars, two main opposite positions have been upheld on this topic: the one that ascribes to Kant's theory of aesthetic pleasure an opaque and non-intentional nature, mostly supported by Paul Guyer (Guyer 1979), and the one we can call intentionalist, which states the function of aesthetic pleasure in making us conscious of our faculties activity. This position has been championed mainly by Henry A. Allison (Allison 1998)¹.

It should also be added that in the past ten years, also due to the influence of analytic philosophy on the philosophical scientific debate, much of the issues connected to Kant's notion of aesthetic pleasure have been referred to the notion of aesthetic normativity. Such a reference to normativity seems to grant the possibility to ground the normative validity of aesthetic judgements on Kant's transcendental philosophy, provided the normative nature of Kant's notion of emotion is given for granted. Clearly exemplifying of this assumption, the voice 'Aesthetic Judgement' written by Nick Zangwill for the *Stanford Encyclopedia*, especially in its revisited edition of 2014 and then of 2019 (Zangwill 2019) applies the most recent acquisition in the Kantian contemporary debate to the definition of aesthetic judgement. What stands out here is how the normative character of Kant's aesthetic judgement is taken for granted; the assumption that Kant's aesthetic is normative ensues nonetheless from the idea that pleasure in beauty has an intentional content. However, as already anticipated, this is not an entirely uncontroversial interpretation.

Three interpretations of aesthetic normativity

The normative essence of Kant's aesthetic judgment is usually evidenced by the universal validity of aesthetic claims and by the sharable and communicable nature of this kind of judgments. What is peculiar to Kant's aesthetic theory is indeed the aspiration to a universal validity of taste, which would allow us to think that in matters of taste and beauty

¹ Guyer and Allison have defended their respective positions in Dialogue: Paul Guyer and Henry Allison on Allison's Kant's Theory of Taste (Kukla 2006).

others 'should' share our judgment. As a result, Kant's account seems to lay the ground to basic normativity in the shape of an aesthetic judgment adequacy principle, ensuring that when I say 'X is beautiful' my judgment is correct, or at least appropriate. In brief, this is also what allows many scholars to think that Kant's aesthetics could easily be interpreted as exemplifying the normativity of the aesthetic judgment. Any claim about correctness in an aesthetic judgment is, however, problematic and non self-evident as, from Kant's point of view in particular, beauty is not an attribute of the object, but rather a feeling of the subject. For this reason, the subjective nature of aesthetic universality and the meaning of the aesthetic 'should' have generated and still raise many interpretive problems. After careful assessment of the elements at stake, we will see that when Kant mentions an element of universality in this context, what he has in mind is something ideal, different from 'normal' universality, and that in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* a distinctive definition of the aesthetic 'should' (*Sollen*) is provided (§ 19)² which departs in some important respects from regular accounts of normativity.

I have isolated three different interpretations about aesthetic normativity in Kant's account. These three are surely not exhaustive of the debate, but they summarize three different way to read Kant's account. I would call these interpretations as follows: 1. vero-functional normativity, 2. primitive normativity and 3. ideal normativity.

1. I would refer the first position, a vero-functional reading of aesthetic normativity, to the discussion of Kant by Zangwill. While trying to reconcile this kind of statement with the normativity suggested by Kant's reference to what also others 'ought to' judge, Zangwill states that 'a judgment of taste makes a claim to correctness', which implies 'to shift from the problematic "ought" that is involved in a judgment of taste to a problematic "correctness" or "betterness". This may be inevitable. We are dealing with a normative notion, and while some normative notions may be explainable in terms of others, we cannot express normative notions in non-normative terms' (Zangwill 2019)³. In Zangwill's

² 'The judgment of taste ascribes assent to everyone, and whoever declares something to be beautiful wishes that everyone **should** approve of the object in question and similarly declare it to be beautiful. The **should** in aesthetic judgments of taste is thus pronounced only conditionally even given all the data that are required for the judging. One solicits assent from everyone else because one has a ground for it that is common to all; one could even count on this assent if only one were always sure that the case were correctly subsumed under that ground as the rule of approval.' (KU, 5: 237)

³ Other than in the 2014 version, in 2019 Zangwill prefers to use the term 'ought' rather than 'should'.

recasting of normativity, a normative constraint is essential of our judgments of taste, and so we assume that not all judgments of beauty are equally appropriate and we think that there is a right and a wrong answer at which we are aiming. The normativity of judgment derives however from the normativity of feeling. Zangwill indicates two characteristics of aesthetic normativity: 'it is definitive of pleasure in beauty that it licenses judgments that make claim to correctness' and 'it is based on subjective grounds of pleasure or displeasure' (Zangwill 2019).

This interpretation is to say the least problematic, and for more than one reason. First of all, it is implausible to speak about correctness in the absence of a verification criterion. The aesthetic judgment is in fact not an epistemic statement about an object, but an expression of subjective feelings; more plausible would be to speak about appropriateness to a community of judging people. Secondly, even shifting from the problematic aesthetic 'should' to the maybe even more problematic aesthetic 'correctness' we can ascribe to aesthetic judgments a normative nature only if this is meant in a very wide (and vague) manner, without any references to prescriptions.

It is however not clear how can the normativity of judgments of taste be inherent in the feelings and how can feelings be more or less veridical. As Zangwill writes, the normative claim of our aesthetic judgments derives from the fact that 'we think that some *responses* are better or more appropriate to their object than others'. In this way, judgments can be more or less appropriate because responses themselves can be more or less appropriate. The example is clearly taken from Hume:

if I get pleasure from drinking Canary-wine and you do not, neither of us will think of the other as being *mistaken*. But if you don't get pleasure from Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, I will think of you as being in error—not just your *judgment*, but your *liking*. I think that I am *right* to have my *response*, and that your *response* is *defective*. (Zangwill 2019)

In Hume's words, only someone with a defective sensibility could think that there is 'an equality of genius' between some inferior composer and J. S. Bach (Hume 1757 [1985: 230]; see Kulenkampff 1990). But Hume's solution rests on common sense and on a

'subjective normativity', based on which if 'I get the idea or sentiment and you don't, in contemplating the same object, either you or I may be "abnormal," but there is no sense in which either of us can be "wrong" or "right," which is to say, "mistaken" or "correct"' (Kivy 2016). What should be emphasized here is that when I demand the agreement of others as to what I can call beautiful, my request is neither a prescription nor a matter of facts⁴. It is an ideal agreement based on which all judging people are meant to speak with an universal voice.

2. The second way to interpret the aesthetic normativity deal with the notion of primitive normativity and I would refer it mainly to Hannah Ginsborg. Ginsborg defines normativity as a necessary condition for knowledge, as the element we need in order to make a claim for an agreement by the others. Ginsborg defines so an interpretive model that she calls 'primitive normative'. This notion of normativity does not necessarily include a reference to the truth and to the rational justification; it is however required by every form of empirical conceptualization. Ginsborg understands the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* as a complement of the logic knowledge defined in the first Critique and she understands thus the aesthetic judgment as a judgment of knowledge in general. Starting from Kant, Ginsborg aims to deal with a theoretical proposal for the contemporary debate in aesthetics (Ginsborg 2015, pp. 4-5)⁵. Her thesis expresses a general idea on our relation with the world and she states that our natural answers, perceptive and imaginative, towards the objects has to include a primitive require of normativity. This is a kind of normativity that could be defined as primitive because it refers to the relationship between the empirical characteristics of the objects and the functions of natural psychological inclination of the subject. The judgment is so for Ginsborg a linguistic answer to this inclination, that establishes a normative relation with the objects and that can be an answer more or less adequate. The primitive normativity allows thus to give account of aesthetic conflicts and to show how the aesthetic experience makes explicit divergences in perception. The claim of adequacy in the aesthetic judgment is however the same

⁴ See what Kant writes in § 7: 'does not count on the agreement of others with his judgement of satisfaction because he has frequently found them to be agreeable with his own, but rather **demands** it from them' (KU, 5: 212-213).

⁵ Ginsborg has been directly confronted with the contemporary debate in other writings (see Ginsborg 2011).

concerning perception, where we understand this claim as not bound with the objectivity of the concept nor with the truth of knowledge (Ginsborg 2015, pp. 195-201).

Ginsborg's proposal to understand the aesthetic normativity as a particular case of a more general primitive normativity has many merits. Nevertheless she does not actually explain the aesthetic normativity: most of all she does not give an explanation of the sharing claim in relation to the dynamic between feeling and judgement. The aesthetic feeling of pleasure seems to be understood, as by Allison, only as an awareness of the perceptive adequacy (Allison 2001, pp. 130). The feeling of pleasure seems thus to have been relegated to a precognitive stage and it does not represent a very alternative to the logic knowledge. It seems so that the subject remains in a certain mental state because she/he recognizes that she/he has to do in this way according to perceptive rules and just for that reason she/he feels pleasure. In doing so every right perception should give place to a feeling of pleasure and the aesthetic experience would not be explained as a peculiar experience, alternative to the cognitive one.

3. In Ginsborg's explanation it is completely excluded any element of ideality, that is rather fundamental in Kant's aesthetics. Ideality is instead the main focus of Chignell's reading of aesthetic normativity in Kant's account. Chignell is convinced, at variance with Guyer, that in his 'subject-based theory, Kant clearly did not intend to give up the idea that judgements of taste are normative' (Chignell 2007, p. 416). Chignell's proposal tries then to solve the problem of aesthetic normativity by showing that the subjective basis of the normativity of the aesthetic judgement is not at variance with the theory of aesthetic ideas (Chignell 2007, p. 419). Chignell's interpretation duly recognizes the ideality of the subjective universality and he convincingly argues as to bring Kant's formalism back to the front matter of the discussion. We should not forget that Kant brings into focus how we experience an object regardless of the content of the object of our experience. Less convincingly Chignell's line of argument takes once more for granted the normativity of aesthetic emotions and does not question how Kant's aesthetic normativity should be understood.

Chignell reads the ideality of the intersubjective validity of taste mainly based on the last paragraphs of the *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgement* (§§ 49-59) and his

argumentation aims to demonstrate how these texts are not at variance with the main topic of the entire *Deduction*, that is the subjective universality of taste (Chignell 2007, p. 423).

I agree with him as he underlines the continuity between these paragraphs, however I am also convinced that an alternative path further explains the key features of aesthetic normativity in Kant. What I suggest is to establish a comparison between the fourth moment of the *Analytic of beauty* and the conclusion of the *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgement*. This comparison allows indeed to stress the importance of the regulative use of the feeling of pleasure in aesthetic judging.

The ideal nature of the universality of taste is even more strongly outlined further on in § 17 where Kant includes a discouraging warning for anyone who is looking for the source of aesthetic normativity in his theory of taste:

For every judgement from this source is aesthetic, i.e., its determining ground is the feeling of the subject and not a concept of an object. To seek a principle of taste that would provide the universal criterion of the beautiful through determinate concepts is a fruitless undertaking, because what is sought is impossible and intrinsically self-contradictory. (KU, 5: 231)

Since the 'determining ground'⁶ of judging is the feeling of the subject, the aesthetic judgement deals with the communicability of the emotion, which qualifies as rather peculiar inasmuch as it is neither granted by a concept – as it happens with the normative moral judgement and the good – nor just derived from some kind of empirical regularity – as it happens with the agreeable and the descriptive affirmation of one's own preferences –. What defines here the judgement of taste is neither fully normative nor clearly descriptive. It is rather defined by its exemplarity.

The aesthetic subjective universality is in fact taken as ideal as it is determined by the spontaneity of an emotion that cannot be prescribed to anyone, but that can well be

⁶ The 'determining ground' of judging is different from the transcendental ground, identified with the free play between imagination and understanding.

requested from others. There is no sign or a guarantee of an effective agreement, but there is a possibility. The ideality of the aesthetic emotion sets therefore the universality of the judgement of taste in a possible future. The ideal of beauty is defined in the following terms: as the exhibition of a rational idea, it is an example of judging through taste and it is 'something that we strive to produce in ourselves even if we are not in possession of it' (KU, 5: 232).

While excluding any correctness criterion, the aesthetic normativity in Kant's account leads to the claim that there are no empirical rule, no rational concept and no norm granting the aesthetic judgement's universality, and no normal idea will not be enough to explain the communicability of feelings. One may well wonder whether it still makes sense to talk about normativity when all these elements are excluded from the aesthetic judging. One element persists in this direction though. What remains indeed stable in the exemplarity of the aesthetic ideal is the element of necessity. The ideal of beauty is archetypical and exemplary 'in accordance with which he must judge everything that is an object of taste, or that is an example of judging through taste, even the taste of everyone' (KU, 5: 232). The normativity of the judgement of taste can still be validated, then, through the aesthetic 'should'.

A non prescriptive necessity: the aesthetic 'should'

Before venturing into a discussion of regulativity, it is useful to understand how the normative claim can be crucially combined with the element of ideality. If the normativity of taste can rest only on the 'should' that characterizes aesthetic intersubjective validity, and has no rules nor concepts as guarantee, it will be very useful to understand the kind of necessity here at stake. It is my belief that in this respect the ideality of the aesthetic demand cannot be disregarded.

On the topic of the intersubjective validity, Kant clarifies that the aesthetic necessity is set in the field of possibility:

not a theoretical objective necessity, where it can be cognized *a priori* that everyone **will feel** this satisfaction in the object called beautiful by me, nor a practical necessity, whereby means of concepts of a pure will, serving as rules for freely acting beings [...]. Rather, as a necessity that is thought in an aesthetic judgement, it can only be called **exemplary**, i.e., a necessity of the assent of **all** to a judgement that is regarded as an example of a universal rule that one cannot produce. (KU, 5: 236-237)

Differently from objective theoretic necessity and from practical necessity, aesthetic necessity is peculiar in that it can be called only exemplary. In this sense any rule of taste can be possibly inferred and the necessity of the aesthetic feeling is far from being apodictic: 'Since an aesthetic judgement is not an objective and cognitive judgement, this necessity cannot be derived from determinate concepts, and is therefore not apodictic' (KU, 5: 237). This also entails that in aesthetics the pleasure we feel and the expression of the judgement are not two completely separated moments but two elements of the same experience.

Furthermore, the exemplarity of taste defines not only its necessity but also the distinctive 'should' implied in aesthetic judging. The aesthetic 'should' is conditioned as it is granted only by the faculties we have in common, it is so a subjective should that does not describe an actual agreement nor it prescribes the approval of others, but it rather places the universality in ideality and possibility. This ideality of the aesthetic 'should' is to be linked to the determining function of emotions. When we experience and judge aesthetically we can only request from others to share our emotions, and the subjective universality of emotions, granted by the common sense, assumes the form of a peculiar should that is more an expectation than a prescription. The unique 'should' Kant is describing here could sound almost as an oxymoron as it is a non-prescribing 'should'. In this sense the judgement of taste 'determines what pleases or displeases only through feeling and not through concepts, but yet with universal validity' (KU, 5: 238).

The determining function of emotions means that aesthetic feelings are non private. In spite of their unavoidable subjective nature, they are sharable and universal communicable. The determining function of emotions does not mean however that feelings

follow rules or prescriptions or can be correct or incorrect. Furthermore, Kant has clear in mind that feeling emotions is not our choice and does not depend on our will. The spontaneity of emotion is here preserved.

In this conception of aesthetic evaluation, it is however clear that a perceptual normativity is not compatible with the specificity of the aesthetic judgement as an expression of feeling within an experience with a finalistic connotation. The feeling is not, in fact, to be considered as an objective attribute, nor can it necessarily be associated with selected qualities of the object. The subjective feeling is rather the pleasure needed to be able to judge aesthetically an object. Therefore, pleasure becomes, in the aesthetic experience, prior to any form of knowledge, to any criterion of truth or correctness, and it constitutes the starting point for judging aesthetics as a conscious expression of our sentimental experience. The aesthetic judgement cannot therefore be understood as a second level judgement of reflection on our cognitive faculties: there is no intellectual understanding of feeling, no reasons are given through the judgement. At the same time, the aesthetic judgement is not simply an activity of sharing one's own pleasure, otherwise there would be no distinction between aesthetic judgement and the mere affirmation of one's own preference.

The aesthetic pleasure, on the other hand, in the absence of an intellectual concept, functions as a unifying principle of experience through subjective projection; the act of judging is so the awareness of feeling as a principle that regulates the aesthetic experience and it consists in evaluating in accordance with this principle, in recognizing experience as unified through the feeling. The normative element is therefore included in the same evaluation act, where the claim made towards others, in form of an aesthetic duty, is not to be understood simply as a request to share our own pleasure. The aesthetic claim is instead a description of the state of judgment, as a public sharing of the connection between pleasure and the representation of the object. It is, therefore, a normativity partly similar to that required by any judgement of experience, which associates an attribute to a representation of the object. The aesthetic normativity finds then its specificity in the fact that the association is related to the feeling of the subject and not to a quality of the object. In short, just as the judgments of experience express the relationships within the experience and imply statements that want to be universally valid, so the aesthetic judgment expresses

as necessary the relationship between pleasure and the object and requires this same connection to others. The aesthetic pleasure experienced in front of the representation of an object is therefore perceived as a fact, albeit *sui generis*, and it is expressed through the judgment. However, it is a description of a fact that is expected to be shared by others.

The specificity of the aesthetic experience consists therefore in its articulation in two closely connected moments, the feeling and the judgement, in which the sentimental moment is the matter of fact of the subject, constitutively non-normative. The judgement that expresses the feeling, giving a description of it, constitutes at the same time an evaluative activity that shows its normativity in the expectation of sharing by the others. The possibility of a passage from the fact of feeling to the evaluation of judgment is made possible by the projection of the subject who orders the experience, that is by the principle of purposiveness as reflection of the subject on the representation of the object. In referring the feeling to the representation of the object, the judgement is not describing the subjective mood, but it is evaluating the object through a finalistic projection of the subject on the world.

The same teleological system then invests the aesthetic duty and the claim of an agreement by the others. The expectation of an aesthetic agreement, or more precisely the legitimacy of this expectation, is guaranteed by the same finalistic projection that constitutes the necessity to consider others capable of achieving the same connection between pleasure and the representation of the object through the judgement. The purposiveness, which connects pleasure to representation in a projective form, is, in fact, a subjective condition for the possibility of aesthetic experience, a condition that is thought to be shared by all subjects, not only by virtue of the common cultural belonging, but by reason of the same projective capacity of their own feelings.

The difficulties of a 'should' grounded on emotions are openly admitted also by Kant in the controversial § 22. Here Kant makes clear that the aesthetic 'should', as 'I ascribe exemplary validity' to my judgement of taste, depends on a common sense that 'is a merely ideal norm' (KU, 5: 239), says Kant. What is added here is the qualifying remark presenting the judgement of taste as an 'indeterminate norm' (*unbestimmte Norm*). Kant himself seems to admit the difficulty of his aesthetic 'should' by asking whether the

common sense has to be taken 'as a constitutive principle of the possibility of experience' or 'whether a yet higher principle of reason only makes it into a regulative principle for us first to produce a common sense in ourselves for higher ends' (KU, 5: 240). Kant seems to prefer the latter solution, which leads to other complex questions: the judgement of taste, 'with its expectation of a universal assent', becomes 'in fact only a demand of reason to produce such a unanimity in the manner of sensing' (KU, 5: 240). And this has important consequences on the definition of the aesthetic 'should', as it has to be understood only as a possibility: 'the objective necessity of the confluence of the feeling of everyone with that of each, signifies only the possibility of coming to agreement about this, and the judgement of taste only provides an example of the application of this principle' (KU, 5: 240).

A subjective requirement: from normativity to regulativity

Interesting results can so ensue from implementing in contemporary terms the more indeterminate notion of regulativity, possibly as a peculiar kind of normativity, that preserves the ideality, the exemplarity, the indeterminacy and, at the end, the emotional nature of aesthetics.

It is possible to argue then that Kant sets his notion of aesthetic universality in the tracks of the same theory of the regulative use of reason presented in the first Critique, where the expectation of a universal approval is meant as a demand of reason and the aesthetic 'should' signifies only the possibility of coming to an agreement⁷. In the *Introduction* of the third Critique Kant gives us some elements to support this idea. He writes in fact that the combination of the feeling of pleasure with purposiveness is a need of our understanding to find an order in nature (KU, 5: 186). The feeling of pleasure is therefore a presupposition for the reflective power of judgement (KU, 5: 188).

The aesthetic feeling is combined then to the representation of the form of the object with a particular kind of necessity, as it derives from the agreement between the cognitive faculties that we have in common with others.

⁷ When, in the cognitive field and therefore different from the aesthetic one, Kant defines the regulative use of reason, he affirms that the idea of unity constitutes 'a logical principle, in order, where the understanding alone does not attain to rules, to help it through ideas, simultaneously creating unanimity among its various rules under one principle (the systematic)' (KrV, A648 | B676).

What is strange and anomalous is only this: that it is not an empirical concept but rather a feeling of pleasure (consequently not a concept at all) which, through the judgement of taste, is nevertheless to be expected of everyone and connected with its representation, just as if it were a predicate associated with the cognition of the object. (KU, 5: 190-191)

The subjective universality of the judgement of taste can thus sound 'strange and anomalous', but what is to keep in mind is that it is 'a feeling of pleasure (consequently not a concept at all) which, through the judgement of taste, is nevertheless to be expected of everyone and connected with its representation, just as if it were a predicate associated with the cognition of the object' (KU, 5: 191). This expectation 'in spite of its intrinsic contingency, is always possible' (KU, 5: 191) in virtue of the humanity intrinsic in every subject.

Furthermore, in the *Methodology of Taste* Kant sums up the relation between the ideality and the universal validity of taste also clarifying the role of norms. In the aesthetic experience there are no 'universal rules' and no prescriptions; on the contrary 'there must be regard for a certain ideal that art must have before its eyes, even though in practice it is never fully attained' (KU, 5: 355).

Any concept and any norm prescribed to the subject would thereby nullify the freedom of imagination, that is the essence of the aesthetic experience. The notion of subjective universality as mere possibility should instead preserve the indeterminacy that defines aesthetics. In this regard Kant writes:

the propaedeutic for all beautiful art, so far as it is aimed at the highest degree of its perfection, seems to lie not in precepts, but in the culture of the mental powers through those prior forms of knowledge that are called *humaniora*, presumably because *humanity* means on the one hand the universal *feeling of participation* and on the other hand the capacity for being able to *communicate* one's inmost self universally, which properties taken together constitute the sociability. (KU, 5: 355)

In conclusion, in § 60 Kant seems to understand the 'indeterminate norm' that ideally guides our aesthetic feeling as the promotion of humanity, that – in transcendental terms – consists in the vivification of the cognitive faculties we share with others. This complex meaning of the notion of norm in the aesthetic experience allows us to reassess the value of normativity in Kant's aesthetic theory. More precisely, the ideality of taste, despite its being mentioned by Chignell in order to strengthen the normative nature of Kant's aesthetic judgement, is what calls for a revision of the normativity claim; the ideality of taste shows, in fact, to what extent aesthetic normativity is a mere subjective need of our reason. Whereas in morality I can have the prescription of the moral law but I can also decide to have a morally bad behaviour, in aesthetics I feel pleasure and I express a judgement of taste without any prescription and without the mediation of any concept. If we take thus into consideration the ideality, the exemplarity and the indeterminacy of the aesthetic judgement, we can define the subjective universality and necessity of taste as a peculiar form of regulative normativity.

To define aesthetic normativity as a regulative normativity means, first of all, to recognize the peculiarity of aesthetic experience in expectation and possibility, starting from the evaluative element that constitutes the judgement of taste and differentiates it from the judgement of perception. The term 'regulative' allows to overcome a rigid dichotomy between the descriptive and the evaluative character of the judgement and it allows to think of an agreement between the judges without resorting to a criterion of truth. The aesthetic agreement is, therefore, an ideal agreement that acts as a rule over the aesthetic experience and invests our judging ensuring it the possibility of sharing. The aesthetic agreement acts on the judgement as a regulative idea not only by virtue of the sharing of the same cultural context, but also on a deeper level which, if one does not want to resort to the transcendental explanation of the sharing of humanity, can be explained, in Hume's terms, as sharing of the same capacity of the aesthetic feeling.

The regulative idea, although not constitutive, is – subjectively – universally and necessarily valid (McLaughlin 2014, pp. 554-572): the idea of the aesthetic agreement, which can be understood as the unity of representations guaranteed by the principle of purposiveness, i.e. as the projection of a subjective need, is not a simple recommendation

on how to proceed in the aesthetic experience, but is a norm generated within the same structure of judgement (McLaughlin 2014, pp. 561-563). The idea, which acts as a rule in judgement, is therefore 'inevitably necessary' (KrV, A 465 | B 473)⁸, and only if the connection between pleasure and representation of the object is thought as necessary and universal, it can be expressed in a judgement answering to the aesthetic should. The 'indeterminate norm' of the aesthetic judgement is therefore to be read according to a regulative meaning. The aesthetic feeling requires the indeterminacy of the norm and avoids a conceptual explanation; the aesthetic agreement, formulated as a claim, makes the aesthetic judgement normative and acts as a regulative ideal in our evaluation. Aesthetic normativity therefore emerges in its specificity, which requires a revision of the very concept of normativity: being different both from perceptive normativity and from moral normativity, aesthetic normativity moves between the claim of sharing, in common with empirical judgements, and the claim of a should, in common with moral prescriptions. The 'should' contained in the aesthetic judgement is not prescriptive, it takes the form of waiting, and it is not guaranteed by any criterion of truth, but it reveals itself as the possibility of sharing feelings on the basis of an understanding of the other as part of human society itself.

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⁸ 'In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the idea is taken to ensure the systematic unity of knowledge [...]. The idea cannot have objective reality, despite being assumed a priori as necessary. The necessary features of regulative ideas of reason rely mainly on the impossibility of a chaotic presentation of the phenomenal world. Reason cannot infer the unity of rules from the contingent structure of nature, and, on the other hand, without the law of reason there would be no consistent use of the understanding, since no sufficient criteria would be available to guarantee empirical truth. In this regard, the rational idea of the unity of nature is objectively valid and necessary. A logic necessity is at stake guaranteeing the correct functioning of the understanding and establishing a condition of possibility – then the a priori ground – of the judgement of knowledge'. (Feloj 2015, p. 90)

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Immanuel Kant's Aesthetics: Beginnings and Ends*

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Abstract

Immanuel Kant and his work occupied a space at the crossroads of several important movements in philosophy. In this essay, I look at two important crossroads in aesthetics. First, the subjective turn in aesthetics, when the focus on aesthetic objects (and events) was rebalanced with the focus on the subject's experience of such objects, the weight shifting from the objective to the subjective. Second, after many years and many theories advancing the view that universality of judgment could be achieved, at least in part, through adoption of the appropriate perspective – or attitude – when considering a particular aesthetic object, Kant offers us perhaps the most sophisticated view of disinterestedness of any, and as he does so he solidifies that tradition, bringing it to its culmination, and ushers in the beginning of its end.

Keywords

Subjective, Subjectivity, Disinterest, Disinterestedness, Aesthetic Attitude

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Immanuel Kant¹ and his work occupied a space at the crossroads of several important movements in philosophy. The existence of these junctions may be attributed both to his particular genius as a philosopher and to confluences in the natural course of the unfolding history of ideas. He was the right person at the right time. In this essay, I would like to look at two important crossroads in aesthetics. First, the subjective turn in aesthetics, when the focus on aesthetic objects (and events) was rebalanced with the focus on the subject's experience of such objects, the weight shifting from the objective to the subjective. Second, after many years and many theories advancing the view that universality of judgment could be achieved, at least in part, through adoption of the appropriate perspective – or attitude – when considering a particular aesthetic object, Kant offers us perhaps the most sophisticated view of disinterestedness of any, and as he does so he solidifies that tradition, bringing it to its culmination, and ushers in the beginning of its end. Crossroads are not the ends of paths, and there are certainly theorists who followed Kant who would identify themselves as formalists, as aesthetic attitude theorists, or as disinterestedness theorists, but as the world of art begins preparing for the advent of Pablo Picasso and Modern Art, as theories that hold that the promise of aesthetic realism – that we can achieve universality of judgment either through appreciating the right properties of objects and/or putting ourselves in the right epistemic position – soften to allow greater acceptance of varieties of taste and even antirealist approaches, the well worn paths are left by many for the trodding of new ones.

The Subjective Turn

When it comes to aesthetics and the philosophy of art, the primary focus on objects (and events) goes all the way back to Plato and Aristotle.² And for good reason: such a focus is simply natural. When we consider objects as aesthetic objects, it is the object that is the most natural point of focus. The object is the focus of our attention; it is the content of our experience; the focus on this object – and not that – is what differentiates the experience from one where the experiential content is different. That is the first reason but

¹ Kant's views on aesthetics represented in this paper come from his *Critique of Judgment*, originally published in 1790 in Germany.

² As represented in Plato's *Ion*, *The Republic*, and *The Symposium*, and in Aristotle's *The Poetics*.

there are others. If our purpose is the exploration of our judgments of an object – perhaps in an attempt to discover either what makes a judgment correct or what makes one judgment better than another – then judgments must be comparable one with another. The stability of judgments seems most easily achieved through the one item that is (fairly) stable across judgments: the object itself. Finally, if aesthetics, taken narrowly and perhaps etymologically, is about how our senses uptake objects and how we uptake them in an unmediated way, how the properties or features of those objects, through our consideration of them, give rise to our appreciation of their aesthetic properties or features, then this is yet one more reason to have as our primary focus the object. Formalism³ endures for so long – even to this day (see Zangwill, 2000a and 2000b) – because it makes sense; it is the natural first port of call when considering the nature of aesthetic attention. We focus on objects and on their properties.

While Plato's discussions of art were largely part of a somewhat different agenda, Aristotle is easily recognizable as a formalist. In the middle ages, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas were formalists. Closer to the present, Clive Bell, G. E. Moore, Eduard Hanslick, José Ortega y Gasset, Oscar Wilde and James Whistler were formalists; in the twentieth century, William Wimsatt, Clement Greenberg, Cleanth Brooks, André Levinson, Heinrich Wölfflin, Roger Fry, Stuart Hampshire, and dance critic Arlene Croce were as well. It is an impressive collection of theorists, and while up to the twentieth century this was the clear trend, we find formalists well past the advent of Modern Art, even past the point when we might expect to. The reason I believe is the attractiveness of the position, as I mentioned above.

Perhaps no one more than David Hume is responsible for the initial turn toward the subjective in aesthetics. His focus may be described as more epistemological than ontological. Instead of exploring the nature of objects, properties, and kinds of objects and properties, Hume instead chooses to concentrate on the subject and to explore the conditions of what it means for a subject to know that an object is beautiful. He begins – quite famously – with his statement on the nature of taste: there is no disputing it. When

³ Nick Zangwill is the leading voice in formalist aesthetics today. "Formal properties are entirely determined by narrow nonaesthetic properties, whereas non-formal aesthetic properties are partly determined by broad nonaesthetic properties..." And he defines a narrow nonaesthetic property as: "...the word 'narrow' includes both sensory properties, non-relational physical properties, and also any dispositions to provoke responses that might be thought of to be partly constitutive of aesthetic properties." (Zangwill 1999, p. 610).

one experiences an object positively, one cannot be wrong in that positive experience. Such experiences are subjective and incorrigible, and so not open to others to inspect or to correct. In this Hume is referring to the experience itself and not to its objective focus. But when the subject goes beyond the report of what Hume called “sentiment,” and she offers a claim about the object itself – a claim about the object’s beauty – the dynamic changes and so do the standards. When one makes a claim about the beauty of an object, she means to say something that is true, and so Hume asks: how does she know? There are, says Hume, certain objective qualities – or patterns of qualities – that are designed to elicit a positive response. What these qualities are Hume does not say, and that he does not say is important. Instead of offering an objective formula in the style of those mentioned directly above, Hume instead looks at the epistemic position of the subject making the claim. If that subject is in the correct epistemic position, then she is prepared for offering a judgment that is worthy to be taken seriously as a claim about the truth. He says that if a subject has the correct attributes, that subject’s judgment will be worthy: the subject must

- possess a serenity of mind,
- possess a delicacy of taste,
- be well practiced,
- be versed in comparison among objects,
- be free from prejudice,
- and have keen senses.

Whether this approach to capturing the right epistemic position to render the right aesthetic judgment succeeds may be a controversial matter. One may reject the “true judge” approach because she believes it should be reducible down to objective formulizing, because it is too idealized, because we may tend to populate the criteria of who may be a “true judge” in ways that privilege certain biases, or because of the intransigent problem of disagreement between those who can rightly claim to be “true judges.” Whether any of these criticisms land, the strongest of the lot is the last: the possibility of unresolvable differences among “true judges.” This criticism is not only

theoretic, it becomes practical when the landscape of practicing art critics – individuals who may claim to fully instantiate the range of Humean attributes listed above – includes such diversity of opinion even about specific objects and particular events.

Despite drawbacks, Hume essentially draws a bright line in the sand, separating off those who prefer exclusive or otherwise strong foci on objects and those who wish to address the hope of commonality among aesthetic judgments by focusing on the judges themselves. As I said, perhaps no one is a stronger initiator of the subjective turn than Hume.

Perhaps no one with the arguable exception of Kant.

Hume's style of epistemology is recognizable. It is, from a justificatory perspective, a reliabilist sort. So long as the mechanisms by which the beliefs are developed – in this case, those mechanisms being traits descriptive of either the subject's ability, training, or disposition – the resulting belief counts as knowledge. In other words, it counts as a true judgment about the object's beauty. Kant's focus on subjectivity is different from Hume's. Kant's focus is on the nature of the subjectivity itself. While Hume focuses on traits that are, or may be, possessed by some subjects in order to establish a basis for quality judgments, Kant focuses on dispositions that can be adopted by any subject. In this sense, Kant's path is more closely aligned with the goal of acquiring judgments that are universal across subjects.

Kant's treatment of subjectivity is nuanced and detailed in order to achieve his goal. He begins, as he does in his treatment of ethics, by understanding the problem and thereby circumscribing what may be expected in an answer. The problem is the identification of the correct means to correctly ascribe beauty (or perhaps we could take the license to say "aesthetic worth") to an object or event under our consideration or as we experience it. The symptom or hallmark of finding such a thing is that correct judgments would then be universally common among all those employing these correct means. So universality – absolute commonality – among aesthetic judgments would not only be expected in an answer to the problem, we would know that we achieved an answer if universality among judgments were the result of the employment of these correct means. This is not to say that universality among judgments is a contingent matter, a matter that if

achieved would demonstrate a particular fact about aesthetic judging; universality of judgment is instead a premise upon which we proceed. It is endemic to the very question we seek to answer.

Kant's subjective focus is augmented by taking as a still narrower focus a subject's particular experience. He is not looking for nomological devices that would range over all or even a plurality of judgments. This frees him from the potential complaint that if lawlike formulas may be found within subjects' judgments, as those judgments take as their focus and content particular objects, the search for objective patterns, and so objective formulas, should not be abandoned. Kant says that no rules or principles of taste are possible.

Next Kant narrows the possibilities of an answer to his question by making a distinction that echoes one Hume made. While there may be no disputing taste, and no disputing preferences and likes – what Kant refers to as Judgments of Agreeableness, a matter that echoes Hume's initial focus on sentiment – Judgments of Taste, aesthetic judgments, are of a different sort. Judgments of Taste are not about the preferences of an individual subject; they are about the nature of subjective judgment itself. Judgments of Taste are not matters of logic or pure rationality. They cannot be, or else rules that govern logic and rationality would be applicable here, and no special treatment for aesthetic judgments would be necessary. So “agreeableness” has a role to play; affect or sentiment is a part of the equation. Its role is in concert, in balance, with the rational. This balance Kant describes as a “free play between the understanding and the imagination.” The ability to engage in this free play is common, Kant says, to every subject; we all have this ability – it is not relegated to the few – and so if we do carefully engage it, we are part way to our goal of rendering correct Judgments of Taste.

We can complete the journey to being able to render such judgments by ensuring that our judgments are not merely Judgments of Agreeableness but truly Judgments of Taste, and this we do by ridding ourselves of those very elements that make us different, subject to subject. We rid ourselves of the particularly of our preferences, our likes and dislikes, and this we accomplish by adopting the stance of disinterest. The commonality we experience with one another as we engage in free play between the understanding and the imagination is occasioned by removing what separates us from one another in terms of our

subjectivity. Through adoption of a disinterested perspective this is achieved. We will discuss below at more length Kant's particular conception of disinterest.

When we engage the free play between the understanding and the imagination, having adopted the attitude of disinterest, we see within those objects and events worthy of positive judgments a formality, a fit of formal elements, that may be described as "purposeless purposefulness." To see an object as formally purposive – in the absence of any particular purpose it might serve (because we are disinterested) – is to see its beauty or aesthetic worth. The free play we engage in allows us to appreciate an object without consideration for any label that might be attached to it, without consideration for any kind, set, or classification under which it might be subsumed or described. We regard the object simply in terms of its phenomenal characteristics, on their own and for their own sake. And, if the object is indeed beautiful or aesthetically meritorious, its phenomenal characteristics will exhibit a formal order that we come to appreciate on its own and for its own sake. It strikes us as internally coherent and fit. But this formal order is not a feature of the object per se; it is rather found in our appreciation of its properties and how they relate to one another. This makes the project supremely subjective. We all have this common ability to see these features in objects, and as we tap into our common subjective abilities, so we come to render judgments about the aesthetic nature of our experiences of these objects that is similar to the judgments of all others similarly engaged.

Perhaps no where in the history of aesthetics do we find a more detailed description of a theory, focused on the subject, than we do with Kant. Kant does not merely invoke the focus on the subject as a constituent part of a theory aiming to show how an aesthetic judgment may be justified; he explores the nature of subjectivity in depth, finding the answers to his questions in the very essence of the subjectivity. The focus on the subject is not a "locational" shift where we replace looking at the object and the objective with the subject and the subjective. It is not as if the answers to his questions are simply in a different location. In a real sense, the location – so to speak – is the answer. It is the nature of subjectivity that provides the answer; that nature, as Kant explores it, is the answer. We move, then, from answering the more common "what" question – "what is it that accounts for justification of aesthetic judgment" – to the deeper and more rewarding "how" question – "how does the nature of subjectivity provide for the justification we seek?"

While Kant may not get the credit for the initial big move into replacing focus on the objective with focus on the subjective – Hume might get such credit, or perhaps it is more properly shared generally with the British Taste Theorists as a whole – it is with Kant that the subjective turn in aesthetics, if we should call it that, is solidified. He stands at the crossroads. Or perhaps more metaphorically precise, he paves the path that Hume began to cut, and actually creates a crossroads. Some may wish to continue on paths that are object focused, but the vast majority of the contents of the conversations in which aestheticians and art theorists have engaged for the last two centuries have been much more focused in the other direction.

Judgments of Taste and Disinterest

Kant's incorporation of disinterestedness as the principle means of capturing the correctness of aesthetic judgments was not Kant's invention. Many theorists who came before – and we will examine some – included disinterestedness, or a close cousin by perhaps a different name, in their theories. But Kant's explication of disinterestedness was perhaps the most nuanced, certainly the most detailed, and his incorporated some novel elements. Many aestheticians today go back to Kant's view when considering the nature of disinterest, despite the fact that there are disinterest theories working right into the late twentieth century, one of whom in particular was especially noteworthy (we will examine the view of Jerome Stolnitz briefly below). One plausible explanation is that Kant's view was special. That specialness is not only borne out by its sophistication, a sophistication itself borne out on the interconnectedness of disinterest with the whole of his view on aesthetic judgment, but also because in Kant disinterestedness reached its historic zenith.

While Kant stood toward the beginning of the subjective turn in aesthetics, he stood toward the end of the reliance on adoption of a special aesthetic attitude to secure correctness in aesthetic judgment.

The Aesthetic Attitude tradition began a number of years before Kant. It likely began with Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury. Shaftesbury's focus was objective. He was, in fact, a Platonist about beauty, but he believed, despite having an

objectivist metaphysics, that the way one appropriately epistemically accessed the property of beauty in an object was to adopt a particular perspective. That perspective was one colored by disinterest in how the object might fulfill an instrumental role in service of some purpose or other. Shaftesbury's notion of the "moral sense" allows us access to the objective property of beauty and so it allows us access to making a correct judgment as we exercise our faculty of taste. Despite the fact that Shaftesbury's views have this subjective focus, on the whole he was still primarily an objectivist and formalist: he believed that beauty was present when an object possessed "unity in multiplicity." Shaftesbury ushers in something of the subjective and a first glance at disinterest as the crux of what it meant to employ the faculty of taste, but his Platonism and ensuing formalism kept his views as merely first steps along these paths.

The next theorist to walk along the path was Francis Hutcheson. The key difference between Hutcheson and Shaftesbury was that Hutcheson was not a Platonist. Instead he took a more naturalistic tact. Instead of a "moral sense," Hutcheson talked about an "internal sense," and instead of the "moral sense" being essentially about access to the super-objective, the "internal sense" was more psychologically or, perhaps more accurately, physiologically based, like the senses of sight, hearing, and so forth. As humans see the sky as blue in an unmediated way, so Hutcheson's internal sense allowed humans to see – so long as they were properly disposed to see – beauty. This is what and how, for him, the faculty of taste is and functioned. "Properly disposed" was of course to view disinterestedly, and as color differentiation is honed by practice, so the same is true of the exercise of taste. While Hutcheson's steps are definitely along a subjectivist path, in the end he too primarily trod an objectivist and formalist one, advancing the view that the natural formula that underwrites beauty is "uniformity amongst variety."

Of a still more scientific predilection was Joseph Addison. Addison sought to take a more empiricist tact toward explaining how Hutcheson's internal sense functioned. Instead of adding to the set of a person's senses, Addison's goal was to explain how we respond to "the great, the uncommon, and the beautiful" through our basic five senses. We use our senses, through a proper focus on the qualities of the object under our perception, to judge the object's aesthetic quality. And we can know that we are successful in adopting a proper focus through practice; through reading the great time-tested, time-honored classics, and

paying attention to their objective qualities as the basis for our judgments, we can know that we are judging from the right point of view. It is, of course, to view these objects and their qualities disinterestedly that fulfills the requirements of proper viewing.

Along this path of focusing on disinterestedness -- along this path of British Taste Theory-- Addison is followed by Archibald Alison. Alison, writing at about the same time as Kant, stressed disinterestedness even more than his predecessors did, and he brought the concept even more in line with the way we may think about it today. Given that his work was at a time close to that of Kant, and given that he was working in the British tradition, the influence on him of Hume and Empiricism was strong. Like Hume and Kant, for Alison the identification of the presence of beauty was as much about the imagination and associations of the subject as it was about features of the object. Through mindful, imaginative, and attentive engagement, characterized of course by disinterest, the subject could know that the result was indeed an identification of (objective) beauty and not of mere pleasure in the object or the experience of it. Through imaginative engagement, a bridge is created whereby the aesthetic features of the object are the focus of the subject's experience, and so we have a theory where the importance of the object and of the subject's consideration of the object are in balance in importance.

This is where Kant enters. As we saw above, Kant argues that one must adopt the proper attitude or perspective in order to render the conditions necessary for making a true Judgment of Taste. This perspective is, of course, for the attender to be disinterested. As with all those theories that came before and those that come after in the "disinterestedness" tradition, disinterest begins with an absence of consideration of any function or actual purpose to which the object may be put. But it does not stop there. For Kant, "disinterest" is more. Instead of being simply removed from consideration of the instrumental uses to which the object may be employed; instead of being removed from any personal or profitable interest in the object; instead of being merely "free from prejudice" as Hume would recommend; Kant describes disinterest in terms of regard for the actual existence of the object. To be disinterested, for Kant, means chiefly to take no interest in the actual existence of the object under consideration. We care only for the object as it is an object of our attention; we care only for the phenomenal manifestation of the object as we consider its properties, its features. That there is an object that exists in space and time is of no

concern because the only “purpose” to which the object is put, when we are engaged in the free play between the understanding and the imagination, is as the focus of that free play. Nothing else.

In addition to being immune from consideration of an object's function or actual existence, Kant says that being disinterested includes avoidance of bringing the object under consideration “under any category.” We must not consider the object of our attention as a this or a that; we must consider it merely as a collection of phenomenal properties arranged in a way that is pleasing. To consider the object “under a category” is to bring the object under external relations with other objects. Instead we must consider only the internal relationships the properties of the object have with its other properties; this is the way that we may come to see the formal order of the object, how its properties form a coherent whole that suggests that the object is purposive without any purpose to which the object may be employed considered.

As is the case with so many in this tradition, Kant's version is essentially negative. Disinterest is defined in ways we should not attend to an object.

Arthur Schopenhauer continues the disinterestedness tradition after Kant, but in an important sense he does not continue along the path that Kant trod. Instead he may be seen to turn all the way back to Shaftesbury. Schopenhauer was, like Shaftesbury, a Platonist about beauty. His commitment to Platonism was more than a mere metaphysical preference; Schopenhauer's commitment was almost functionalist. The “will” for Schopenhauer is a force that binds everyone with chains of desire and striving. One way out, one way to achieve relief, however temporary, was to experience the aesthetic. Through such experience one could connect with the supernatural – by which I mean something more like the Platonic realm of ideas than God. As the will is characterized by desire, aesthetic appreciation is characterized by the opposite, by disinterest, by shedding desire. Through adoption of the aesthetic attitude, the subject actually transforms the object from one with connections to other objects and to instrumental purposes to a different kind, to an aesthetic object -- for Schopenhauer, a distinct metaphysical category. Schopenhauer's views have an attractive coherence, and both the focus on the supernatural and on disinterest fit well into an overall view of the world Schopenhauer describes. In the end, while he may be seen to advance at least the motivation for adopting an attitude of

disinterest, and that motivation may be seen as subjectively located, his metaphysics goes well beyond the natural world.

From Schopenhauer, we enter the 20th century, where there are a variety of aesthetic attitude theorists: Edward Bullough's theory of "Psychical Distance," Vincent Tomas' theory of "Non-Categorizing Aesthetic Vision," and Virgil Aldrich's theory of "Impressionistic Seeing." But none is more in keeping with the Kantian tradition than Jerome Stolnitz' reformation of disinterestedness. To some degree, each of the first three mentioned above contributes something to the disinterestedness tradition. Bullough offers a distinctly psychological way of understanding the way that adoption of disinterest may work as well as implications that follow from his view. Tomas reinforces the Kantian notion of removing from consideration of an aesthetic object all relations that object may bear not only to all others but to all forms of classification. But it is Stolnitz' view on which we want to concentrate here, as he is the clear successor to Kant's views on disinterestedness.

Stolnitz' focus was not metaphysical, as was Schopenhauer's, and it was not about aesthetic judgment, as was Kant's, but it was firmly fixed on the adoption of the attitude of disinterest in order to secure the appropriate conditions for an experience properly labeled "aesthetic." Stolnitz begins by noting that all attention is selective; we select various aspects of the presented world for our attention and we ignore others. This is natural and necessary given the amount of sensory stimulation with which we would need to deal if we were to attend to it all. The selection of our focus is largely directed by our purposes. If we are hungry and our purpose is to address that hunger, then our focus will be on acquisition of food and on the nutritional and gustatory aspects of that food. It is when, says Stolnitz, we are attending to an object (or event) in the absence of purpose – when we are attending simply to the phenomenal properties of the object on their own, for their own sake -- that our experience will be an aesthetic one. Stolnitz coupled "disinterest" with "sympathy" in his articulation of the correct posture for aesthetic viewing and in so doing he ensures that "disinterest" cannot, in attending in the absence of consideration of purpose or instrumentality, devolve into "lack of interest." This is a notion that strongly mirrors the views of Bullough, mentioned above.

There are of course critics of both theories of disinterestedness and the notion that there exists a special attitude that renders experiences aesthetic or provides the appropriate subjective platform for quality aesthetic judgment. George Dickie being perhaps the most important of the latter, his view is that attention need not be divided into different kinds, aesthetic and not. Consideration of an object can incorporate at the same time attention to its aesthetic features and to features having to do with, say, the moral point of view being expressed by the object or perhaps by the artist. I have criticized the disinterestedness tradition by articulating the view, following in the spirit of Dickie, that on occasion the aesthetic value of an experience – the “aesthetic” value per se – can be enhanced when attention includes focus on the purpose of the object, such as being frightened when watching a horror film or worshipping God when attending a cathedral service. I argue that to see these perspectives – a purely aesthetic and disinterested one, and one that attends to the purpose of the event under consideration – as distinct is artificial (Fenner, 1996). There are, to be sure, more criticisms of disinterestedness available, but the point of this essay is not to argue the merits of the tradition but rather to try to show that Kant was its most nuanced and detailed advocate, and that after Kant, the tradition declines in popularity, with Stolnitz as perhaps the last great banner-carrier of that tradition.

While it might be natural to think that a greater focus on disinterestedness would result in a lesser focus on the subject, as disinterest was meant to release the subject from capture by personal concerns connected to consideration of objects as tools of one sort or another, strangely the opposite came to pass. The disinterestedness tradition, with the notable exception of Schopenhauer, moved from a more objectivist origin with Shaftesbury to increasingly psychological characterizations as it made its way through Hutcheson, Addison, and Alison. Indeed, Bullough's contribution to the conversation was published in the *British Journal of Psychology*. As the British Taste Theory tradition advances, they realize successively that disinterest is itself a perspectival tool, and as a means of manipulating perspective, it was indeed a matter that lent itself to empirical inspection, both as a tool per se and in the way that it functioned to achieve its end. While the end to be achieved was increased access to the “unbiased” – what many regarded and still regard as “objective” – it was never really, contra Shaftesbury and Schopenhauer, access to the “objective” in the Kantian sense of the word. That is, we commonly use the word “objective” in two ways, to denote a focus on the object and its features (the Kantian way)

and to denote as absence of bias or partiality. What disinterest meant always to achieve was the latter, an absence of the invasion of the particular personal preferences of the one doing the judging. With a clear distinction between these two different denotative senses of “objective,” the conflation of the one with the other was avoidable, and so we were able to see that movement toward the absence of personal particularity did not need to entail that our focus was locationally fixed on the object and its properties. This then allowed for the more psychological character of the conversation to grow.

No one can accuse Kant of being a psychologist in philosopher’s clothing. His theories – whether metaphysical or value focused – speak very clearly against that. Kant’s exploration of the subjective was never amenable to reduction to empirical inspection or formation. But with that in mind, Kant’s exploration of aesthetic judgment certainly had elements that might properly be called psychological. The incorporation of affect, and free play between the imagination and the understanding, perhaps could be further unpacked by empirical study.

For Kant, however, the normativity of correct aesthetic judgment that he sought could not be found through empirical inquiry, despite the fact that the British Taste Theory tradition, and perhaps even Hume himself, seemed headed in that trajectory. The normativity he sought could only be grounded, in his eyes, on truths that were universal to all subjectivity as subjectivity. And so disinterest, for Kant, was not a mere tool to acquire “objectivity” in the “unbiased” sense (as it was certainly not to acquire “objectivity” in the more metaphysical sense); disinterest was a way to sort out one’s subjectivity, to place one’s attentive focus on exactly those elements of one’s focus that are normatively relevant and ultimately normatively justificatory when rendering a Judgment of Taste. To repeat myself, Kant moved from the lesser “what” questions to the deeper “how” questions. And while the jury may still be out on whether Kant was successful in his aesthetic realist endeavors – that in aesthetic judgments there is something to be right or wrong about – there is no question that he took the foci on both subjectivity and on disinterestedness to new heights of philosophical sophistication.

Kant's Enduring Influence

It is difficult to imagine where we might be in aesthetic and art theoretic conversations without Kant. One might argue that we would be in the same place we are, because aesthetics and art theory – properly and as a matter of fact – follow the world of art, artists, art appreciators and art critics and not the other way around. As Modern Art evolved – ushered in by artists like Picasso, Duchamp, Stravinsky, Wright, and Eisenstein – one could argue (as I will indirectly below) that a subjective turn in the theory that co-evolved with the art was inevitable. Alternatively, one might argue that if Kant had not drawn us further down the path of a subjective focus, another philosopher or set of philosophers, following Hume, may have or perhaps would have. But the fact is that it was Kant who more than anyone established the path that focused on the *nature* of subjectivity as an enduring and fairly pervasive aspect of aesthetic conversation.

Contemporary theories of aesthetic and artistic value have largely focused on the experience of the work of art.⁴ Contemporary theories that speak to what makes an object or event a work of art have largely incorporated aspects that might well be described as sociological (Danto, 1964 and 1981; Dickie, 1974; Levinson, 1979). But the focus on subjectivity is not only to be found within the trajectories of these time honored conversations; subjectivity may be seen to have driven the advent and pursuit of what conversations we actually are having.

- What is the nature of aesthetic experience? This question is essentially about subjectivity, and it has been the focus of so much 20th century conversation, from Stolnitz as we saw above to George Santayana (1961), John Dewey (1934), and Monroe Beardsley (1969, 1981, and 1982).
- What is the nature of taste? How do we construct accounts of the value of aesthetic objects and/or art objects – theories or accounts dealing with specific instances of comparison of judgments – in the face of irreconcilable differences between the taste of judges? Theorists who advocate for aesthetic antirealism may do so precisely on these grounds.
- Do works of art have singular meanings or are they interpretable in a plurality of ways? Where do we focus to establish the correct meaning or meanings of works? Is there such a thing as the correct meaning or meanings of works? These sorts of questions have 20th

⁴ A good example: Goldman, 1995.

century answers that span the full breadth of possibilities, but one should not lose sight of the strength and popularity of the highly subjective facts taken by folks like Jacques Derrida or Stanley Fish (1982).

- What is the relationship between works of art and ethics? This conversation has picked up a great deal of attention over the last few decades (Eaton, 1992, 1997, and 2001; Carroll, 1996 and 2000; Gaut, 2007; Levinson, 1998; and Devereaux, 2004) and it has largely focused on the impact of works of art on the moral characters of those who attend to them. Such a focus on audiences and appreciators is resonant again with a subjective turn.
- Is the function of an object that happens to be a work of art relevant to its nature or its value as a work of art? While at odds with the disinterestedness tradition of which I claim Kant was the apex voice, the role of an artwork's function, I believe, is also indicative of a focus on the subject since functions necessarily involve reference to one putting the object to use. Marcel Duchamp's readymades are theoretically arresting precisely in view of the fact that they were (perhaps "were," perhaps "are") everyday functional objects. Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural artworks, if architectural works (including in Wright's case furniture) can be works of art, are only architectural artworks – and not sculptures – in view of the fact that they are functional. Tolstoy, Marx, and Mao all viewed art that is worthy to be worthy in view of its didactic, religious, or political function (as did Plato, but I can hardly claim that he was under the influence of the subjective turn that Kant influenced).
- What is the role of imagination in the construction of, or evaluation of, the aesthetic or art object? On at least one account of aesthetic value (Goldman, 1995), the construction of the world which is suggested by, but not fully furnished by, the aesthetic or art object necessarily involves a subjective imaginative contribution.
- What is the role of identification in the construction of, or evaluation of, the experience of an aesthetic or art object? Attenders to aesthetic objects and works of art on many occasions experience an identification with that object or work. These identifications can be personal – say, one identifies with the protagonist in a narrative work or with a certain place, time, or experience – or they can be with an idea or an emotion. Identifications can happen with an aspect of gender, sex, race, age, ability, capacity, ethnicity, nationality, religion, class, culture, politics, and the list may go on and on. Are such identifications – or associations – relevant to the description of the experience as an aesthetic or art

experience? Or relevant to the evaluation of either that experience or even of the object on which the experience is focused?

- Finally, I might go so far as to claim that the very focus on disinterestedness as an *entre* into, or a necessary component of, the proper aesthetic evaluation of an object or event is itself an indication of the subjective turn. To turn to an epistemic mechanism to manage an axiological matter – to turn to the adoption of a perspective in order to adjudicate value – is in itself indicative of a greater focus on the subjective. And that seems certainly the case with Kant's treatment and embedding of disinterest within his overall view of *Judgments of Taste*.

Again, perhaps all of this – all of these conversations, all of these theories – would have happened without the influence of Kant's *Third Critique*. But our reality is not that. Our reality includes the *Third Critique* and to speculate on the counterfactual, while perhaps academically engaging, may result in the temptation not to give Kant the credit he is due for the construction of his views on aesthetics, views that by all indications have had so great an influence as to allow us to claim that they sent us on new paths.

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Sobre abismos, pontes e travessias

On abysses, bridges, and crossings

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Abstract

Following the guiding thread given by the metaphors used in the title of this paper and which are recurrent in the texts of the philosopher Immanuel Kant himself as well as in most of his commentators', I selected some themes that the Critique of the Power of Judgment offers us to think about and which remain relevant today: system, critique, reflection, the sublime, and a certain concept of humanity. I have prioritized both Portuguese and Brazilian interpreters without disregarding French authors, everlasting allies, who inspire me since the beginning of my studies.

Keywords

Kant; *Crítica da Faculdade de Julgar*; conceito de humanidade; Iluminismos

Resumo

Servindo-me como fio condutor das metáforas que dão título a este trabalho e que são recorrentes nos textos do próprio filósofo, Immanuel Kant, e da maioria de seus/suas comentadores/ras, recortei alguns temas que a *Crítica da Faculdade de Julgar* nos oferece a pensar e que ainda permanecem atuais: o sistema, a crítica, a reflexão, o sublime e certo conceito de humanidade.

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Privilegiei os/as intérpretes portugueses/as e brasileiros/as, sem prescindir dos autores franceses, eternos aliados, que me inspiram desde o início dos meus estudos.

Palavras-chave

Kant; Critique of the Power of Judgment; concept of humanity; Enlightenment

Às minhas amigas queridas, Patrícia e Giorgia

Estamos hoje vivendo o desastre do nosso tempo, ao qual algumas seletas pessoas chamam de Antropoceno. A grande maioria está chamando de caos social, desgoverno geral, perda de qualidade no cotidiano, nas relações, e estamos todos jogados nesse abismo.
Ailton Krenak²

O pensamento moderno ocidental é um pensamento abissal.
Boaventura de Sousa Santos³

Cheio de mérito, mas poeticamente, vive o homem sobre esta Terra.
Friedrich Hölderlin⁴

I. Introdução

Entre a famosa e importante nota à Primeira Seção da *Crítica da Razão Pura* e a carta a Reinhold, de 28 de dezembro de 1787, na qual Kant noticiava que estava escrevendo uma “Crítica do Gosto”, muita coisa se passou. Em 1781, ao explicar seu gesto nada banal de chamar “*Estética Transcendental*” à primeira parte do seu tratado de *Filosofia Primeira*, Kant criticou a tentativa de Baumgarten de “submeter o julgamento crítico do belo a princípios racionais e elevar as regras do mesmo à condição de ciência”, como uma “tentativa vã” (KrV, AA 3-4: B 36).⁵ Até aquele momento, para Kant, a questão

² Krenak 2019, p. 72.

³ Santos 2007.

⁴ Hölderlin 2000, p. 209.

⁵ “Os alemães são os únicos a empregar hoje a palavra estética para denotar aquilo que os outros denominam crítica do gosto. Na base disso há uma esperança frustrada, que o brilhante analista Baumgarten abraçou, de submeter o julgamento crítico do belo a princípios racionais e elevar as regras do mesmo à condição de ciência. Mas essa *tentativa é vã*. Pois as ditas regras ou critérios são, segundo suas fontes mais importantes, meramente empíricas e não podem jamais servir, portanto, como leis determinadas *a priori*, pelas quais o juízo de gosto tivesse de pautar-se; é antes este último que constitui a verdadeira pedra de toque daquelas primeiras. Por isso é aconselhável ou deixar essa denominação novamente de lado e mantê-la naquela primeira acepção (com a qual estaríamos mais próximos da linguagem e do sentido dos antigos, junto aos

do gosto situava-se irrecorrivelmente fora do sistema transcendental, uma vez que suas regras não podiam almejar um lugar superior ao empírico, e, além disso, Kant constataria a impossibilidade de encontrar princípios *a priori*, que lhes concedessem a autonomia necessária a tudo que é digno do nome “transcendental”. Ao contrário de 1781, na carta a Reinhold, de 1787, Kant anuncia a “descoberta” de um novo princípio *a priori*, que forneceria matéria a investigar até o final de sua vida e cujo maior significado nada mais era senão a possibilidade da inclusão da questão do gosto no âmbito do sistema da filosofia transcendental. Cito esta carta emocionante:

Trabalho agora na *Crítica do Gosto*, por ocasião da qual foi descoberta uma nova espécie de princípio *a priori*, diferente dos precedentes. Pois as faculdades do espírito são três: faculdade do conhecimento, sentimento de prazer e de dor, e faculdade de desejar. Encontrei os princípios *a priori* para a primeira, na *Crítica da Razão Pura* (teórica), para a terceira, na *Crítica da Razão Prática*. Procurei-os também para a segunda, e mesmo que, uma vez, tenha considerado impossível encontrá-los, fui posto nesta via pela sistematicidade que a análise das faculdades consideradas anteriormente me fizera descobrir no espírito humano, e que me fornecerá matéria a admirar e a aprofundar, na medida do possível, suficiente para o resto da minha vida. (Kant 1986, p. 550)

Estendendo-me um pouco sobre essa correspondência de Kant, aproveito para apontar que Kant falava de uma “Crítica de Gosto”, e até, pelo menos, março de 1788 (a referência é outra carta a Reinhold de 7 de março de 1788), ele ainda continuaria a designar assim a sua obra. A maioria dos autores está de acordo com a hipótese de uma mudança ocorrida, no mais tardar, em maio de 1789, e que consistiu numa virada no próprio projeto teórico kantiano.⁶ Foi de novo numa carta a Reinhold (de 12 de maio de

quais era bastante conhecida a divisão do conhecimento em *aisthetá kai noetá* [o sensível e o inteligível]), ou partilhar a denominação com a filosofia especulativa e tomar a estética, ora no sentido transcendental, ora em um significado psicológico.” (Kant 2013, p. 72; grifos meus).

Embora discordemos totalmente (cf. Kulenkampff 1998), tenho de observar uma coincidência no modo como nós dois introduzimos nossos ensaios, recorrendo à nota da CRP e, em seguida, à Carta a Reinhold.

⁶ Aproveito para dar uma breve notícia sobre a cronologia da redação da CFJ, verificar Terra 1995, pp. 17-20. A partir de muitos estudos, sobretudo o de Giorgio Tonelli (“La formazione del testo della *Kritik der Urteilskraft*”), que se tornou referência, é possível estabelecer, não sem alguma controvérsia: 1) que a “Analítica do Belo” seria a parte mais antiga, provavelmente iniciada em setembro de 1787, logo após terminar de escrever a *Crítica da Razão Prática*; 2) a Primeira Introdução teria sido escrita entre a “Crítica do

1789) que o filósofo se referiu pela primeira vez a uma *Crítica do Juízo*, da qual a *Crítica do Gosto* passava a ser apenas parte. Portanto, foi muito próximo à publicação da primeira edição da *Crítica da Faculdade de Julgar*,⁷ isto é, em 1790, que Kant modificou seus planos e decidiu finalmente por uma obra que englobaria não apenas uma estética, mas também uma teleologia.

Assim, a Terceira Crítica não se reduz a um mero Tratado do Belo, muito embora ela contenha um inegável Tratado, que corresponde à “Analítica do Belo”, mas há a acrescentar, pelo menos, mais uma “Analítica”, a do Sublime, que se instaura, na verdade, como uma Estética de contestação ao belo, ou mesmo como uma Anti-Estética. Dizer que a CFJ compreende duas Analíticas, a do Belo e a do Sublime, ainda é dizer pouco ou quase nada do enorme esforço de sistematização de Kant, pois há a segunda parte, “Crítica da faculdade de julgar teleológica”, que foi privilegiada por tantos intérpretes,⁸ e as duas Introduções que expõem o interesse de Kant em unificar as faculdades humanas, que havia pouco ele mesmo as tinha separado: entendimento, razão e sensibilidade. A meu ver, não é à toa que ele tenha escolhido justamente a sua “Estética” para realizar este objetivo. Desde Platão, o belo é uma ideia problemática, digamos contraditória, porque sendo obrigatoriamente sensível não deixava de figurar no mundo inteligível das Formas. Responsável talvez por esta união, entre o sensível e o inteligível, é possível que tenha sido ela, a Beleza, a Ideia que inspirou o discurso que Diotima fez sobre o amor, que pode ser

Juízo Estético” e a “Crítica do Juízo Teleológico”; 3) a mudança entre a “Crítica do Gosto” e uma “Crítica do Juízo” teria ocorrido entre março de 1788 e maio de 1789; 4) finalmente, quanto à segunda Introdução, a análise da correspondência de Kant indica que ela teria sido enviada para publicação junto com o Prefácio no dia 22 de março de 1790.

⁷ Utilizarei aqui as duas traduções publicadas no Brasil: a *Crítica da Faculdade do Juízo* (trad. Valério Rohden e António Marques, Rio de Janeiro, Forense Universitária, 1993); e a *Crítica da Faculdade de Julgar* (trad. de Fernando Costa Mattos. Petrópolis, Vozes; Bragança Paulista, Ed. Universitária São Francisco, 2016). Designá-la-ei, a partir daqui, no texto principal, por “Terceira Crítica” ou pelas iniciais “CFJ”. Nas notas, identificarei as datas de publicação: “CFJ 1993”, para referir-me à tradução de Valério Rohden e António Marques, e “CFJ 2016”, à tradução de Fernando Costa Mattos.

⁸ Além de António Marques, a quem vou me dedicar mais adiante, destaco outro autor bastante especial para nós, brasileiros e brasileiras, porque deixou um importante legado, não só para o departamento de filosofia da Universidade de São Paulo, onde lecionou, durante mais de 30 anos, mas para toda a pesquisa e estudos kantianos no Brasil. Trata-se do saudoso Gérard Lebrun, cuja tese defendida em 1970, ainda na França, sob a orientação de Georges Canguilhem, *Kant e o fim da Metafísica*, também se debruçava sobre a parte teleológica da Terceira Crítica (informações extraídas da *Wikipedia*. [https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gérard_Lebrun](https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/G%C3%A9rard_Lebrun), acesso em 22/08/2020).

pensado como um conceito ou ideia geral de todas as uniões.⁹ Mas Kant não falará do amor. Kant é o filósofo das separações. Ou, se há um amor kantiano, será amor pelo sistema, pela ideia ou conceito geral de todas as separações (Figueiredo 2017, p. 25).¹⁰

Este desejo de sistematização não passou despercebido a nenhum leitor da CFJ: desde a intrépida e originalíssima interpretação desconstrutiva e mais externa (o melhor seria qualificá-la de subterrânea, subjacente ou que atinge quase o inconsciente) de Derrida (Derrida 1978), à qual me dedicarei aqui um pouco, até aquele que é reconhecidamente um dos mais importantes e talvez mais citados comentadores atuais da obra de Kant como um todo, o estadunidense Henry Allison, cujo livro excelente (Allison 2001) é exemplo de leitura que adota um ponto de vista interno e sistemático.¹¹ Esse livro, que tantas vezes me serviu de fio condutor, resolvi não o citar aqui uma vez sequer. Como fui convidada¹² a escrever um ensaio em português, decidi privilegiar autores portugueses e brasileiros (sem prescindir dos autores franceses, meus eternos aliados, pela mão de quem fui conduzida à Terceira Crítica e a quem aproveito para prestar minha profunda gratidão), os quais, muitas vezes, permaneceram à margem do comentário dominante – isolados, é provável, por causa de nossa querida língua,¹³ flagrantemente ignorada pelos não nativos.

⁹ Resumidamente, a dialética, para Platão (Sofista, 253 c), consistia numa ciência das uniões e das separações, quer dizer, numa ciência – melhor seria dizer: um método – capaz de nos orientar e nos tornar aptos a unir, combinar os gêneros afins, mas também dividir e separar os gêneros que não fossem concordes.

¹⁰ Não sem algum constrangimento, confesso, concedi-me o direito de repetir aqui, com alguma alteração, os parágrafos iniciais do segundo capítulo do meu livro.

¹¹ Repito aqui uma nota de rodapé (cf. Figueiredo 2017, p. 293), suscitada pelo desafio que me fez o professor Paulo César Duque Estrada (PUC-Rio), por ocasião de uma exposição que fiz sobre a Estética de Kant, num Colóquio organizado pela profa. Déborah Danowski, no Departamento de Filosofia da PUC-Rio, em 2002. Reconhecendo meu modo grosseiro, referi-me a, pelo menos, duas leituras sempre possíveis de, talvez, qualquer texto de filosofia: uma interna e imanente, mais preocupada com a lógica ou encadeamento das razões do texto; e outra mais externa, que põe o texto diante de, ou confronta-o com os problemas contemporâneos do leitor. Constata-se frequentemente um verdadeiro abismo entre essas duas vertentes de interpretação, que, embora sejam diametralmente opostas, nem por isso deixam de ser legítimas. A dificuldade de conciliação ou a irredutibilidade dos interesses de ambas as leituras acaba motivando aquela atitude mais comum, que varia da indiferença mútua até o desprezo recíproco, numa palavra: a atitude tão antifilosófica (ou pelo menos tão anticrítica) quanto a do preconceito... Diante dessa constatação, o professor Paulo César instigou-me a reconciliar aqueles dois tipos de leitura. Quero dizer a ele que continuo tentando construir este difícil caminho – será mais uma ponte a lançar sobre o *abismo*? – e que o presente texto, ao colocar lado a lado autores tão distintos como Jacques Derrida, Valério Rohden e Antônio Marques, pretende avançar um pouco na formulação do problema. Continuo, então, a dedicar a ele este meu esforço, talvez vão.

¹² Aproveito a oportunidade para agradecer a João Rodrigues Lemos, que me fez este generoso e honroso convite a participar deste número especial da Revista *Con-textos Kantianos*.

¹³ Sempre adotei como lema a famosa frase de Bernardo Soares (heterônimo de Fernando Pessoa) que não tem nada a ver com nacionalismos nem patriotadas, mas que exprime este sentimento de respeito e até de amor pela nossa língua: “minha pátria é a língua portuguesa!” Considero preciosa a preocupação em enriquecê-la e torná-la capaz de “pensar”. Parafraseando outro poeta da nossa língua portuguesa/brasileira, o

Voltando ao desejo kantiano de sistematização, é necessário dizer que ele só se cumpre na medida em que se compreenda uma relação que está implícita na própria distribuição dos capítulos da CFJ, aquela entre Teleologia e Estética. No ensaio já aqui citado que Ricardo Terra escreveu para introduzir um pequeno livro contendo a tradução das duas *Introduções*, ele levanta três hipóteses para justificar a necessidade da CFJ e que talvez sirvam para justificar também o projeto crítico-filosófico como um todo, quero dizer, a reunião daqueles dois temas (estética e teleologia) aparentemente desconexos:

a primeira é a descoberta do problema da finalidade; em segundo lugar, a emergência de novos temas como o gosto ou o organismo; e finalmente, a que é mais comumente não só reivindicada como explorada, que consiste na busca da sistematicidade, a tentativa algo desesperada do filósofo de encontrar uma passagem da razão especulativa para a prática. (Terra 1995, p. 23)

Hoje não apelarei para uma hipótese que formulei há mais tempo,¹⁴ inspirada por uma entre as muitas instrutivas lições de Heidegger, a de chamar a filosofia de “diálogo entre pensadores”, e que consistia em propor um inesperado diálogo entre Kant e *A Poética* de Aristóteles, tentando elucidar, ou, pelo menos, acrescentar mais um elemento na procura “algo desesperada”, como bem o disse Ricardo Terra, de uma justificativa a sustentar Kant na sua ingloria e muitas vezes mal compreendida junção entre a Estética e a Teleologia. O problema da reunião entre essas duas disciplinas (como chamá-las?), a Estética e a Teleologia, é somente mais um problema que vem somar-se ao da busca de uma passagem para o abismo que se abria entre os dois domínios da natureza (*Crítica da Razão Pura*) e liberdade (*Crítica da Razão Prática*).

cantor Caetano Veloso, afirmo que não é só em alemão que é possível filosofar, mas em português também, talvez o melhor seja dizer que é possível filosofar em qualquer língua.

¹⁴ Refiro-me mais uma vez ao capítulo já citado acima (nota 11), no qual defendi a possibilidade de um diálogo entre Kant e Aristóteles, recordando que o filósofo grego descrevia a lógica da mimese ou da tragédia (numa palavra: a lógica poética) como sendo inversa à ordem natural e à ética. Enquanto a natureza e a ética seguem a lei da causalidade, a ordem poética (mimética) seguiria, ao contrário, uma ordem teleológica ou finalista. (Cf. Aristóteles 1979, p. 246). A necessidade de pensar sobre esta forma de *vida* natural que é o organismo teria colocado Kant no caminho de outra lógica, a finalista, que caracteriza justamente o modo de proceder da arte?

II. A verdadeira Revolução Copernicana?

Estou muito próxima da interpretação deleuziana da filosofia crítica de Kant como uma “doutrina das faculdades” e da ênfase à descoberta da heterogeneidade das faculdades, ao afirmar que “um dos pontos mais originais do kantismo é a ideia de *uma diferença de natureza entre as nossas faculdades*” (Deleuze 1976, p. 36; grifos do autor). *Diferença* essa não só entre as faculdades, no sentido das relações¹⁵ que estabelecem entre o sujeito e o objeto, isto é, a distinção entre as faculdades de conhecer, desejar e de sentir prazer e desprazer; como *diferença* no sentido das fontes específicas de representações. Pondo-me inteiramente de acordo com Deleuze, mas também com Lebrun, e avançando um pouco, ousaria dizer que a verdadeira *Revolução Copernicana* não ocorreu com a mudança de perspectiva do objeto para o sujeito, conforme o próprio Kant a ela se referiu no Prefácio da segunda edição da *Crítica da Razão Pura* (CRP). Ali, estávamos limitados à esfera do conhecimento. Gostaria de defender uma Revolução Copernicana mais ampliada, que entende o kantismo como *inauguração de uma atitude crítica*, isto é, *para além da epistemologia* (Lebrun 1993a, p. 90),¹⁶ atitude essa que culmina na *Crítica da Faculdade de Julgar*. A meu ver, esse processo ou evolução se inicia com a ideia da heterogeneidade das faculdades que afeta não só a composição do sistema crítico kantiano, mas implica numa mudança do próprio conceito de ser humano.¹⁷

Tento explicar-me: acredito que foi uma intensa preocupação filosófica com o lugar marginal da faculdade da sensibilidade, que sempre gozou de “má fama”,¹⁸ na história da

¹⁵ Deleuze (1976) distingue dois sentidos da palavra “faculdade”: o primeiro diz respeito aos *tipos de relação*: “distinguimos tantas faculdades do espírito, quantos são os tipos de relações” (*op. cit.*, p. 13); já o segundo “designa uma fonte específica de representações. Distinguir-se-ão, pois, tantas faculdades quantas *espécies* houver de representações” (*op. cit.*, p. 18).

¹⁶ Debatendo outra questão – a de uma teologia reencontrada – Lebrun faz a seguinte observação que nos interessa muito aqui: “É um outro kantismo que se delineia. Um kantismo do qual a epistemologia não é mais senão um preâmbulo. Um kantismo para o qual o supra-sensível é uma linha de horizonte de traçado cheio (e não mais a sombra, ainda muito abstrata, de nossa finitude) – um além impenetrável, sem dúvida, mas somente para quem teima em viver na nostalgia da *theôria* e recusa-se a compreender que o conhecimento está longe de medir nosso poder de pensar. Pensar é algo bem diferente de determinar objetos naturais: o estudo do juízo reflexionante, demonstrando isso, libera-nos do ponto de vista teórico e dispõe-nos, portanto, a reconsiderar a obra crítica.” Um pouco antes, no mesmo ensaio, Lebrun chega a *opor* a atitude crítica à “rotina do comportamento teórico” (*op. cit.*, p. 73). Grifos meus.

¹⁷ Voltarei ao problema do conceito de ser humano na Conclusão deste texto.

¹⁸ Um possível eco desta consciência que Kant possuía do desprezo *filosófico* pela sensibilidade está na “Apologia da sensibilidade”. Ao comparar o respeito que todos têm pelo entendimento, do qual ninguém

Metafísica, o que levou Kant a aprofundar e desdobrar seus múltiplos e até revolucionários sentidos. Já na CRP, Kant reservara à sensibilidade, como participante da operação de conhecimento, uma posição digna e segura no Olimpo transcendental, entre as demais faculdades ditas “superiores”, tais como a razão e o entendimento. Ao contrário da tradição que sempre a considerou uma faculdade exclusivamente receptiva, passiva e, por causa disso, enganadora e culpada das nossas ilusões, Kant a elevou ao domínio transcendental, na medida em que situou justamente na sensibilidade, as intuições de tempo e de espaço, e não apenas as empíricas, mas também aquelas que são representações *a priori*¹⁹ ou formas puras.

Com outras palavras, com este gesto que só aparentemente é pequeno, e que consistiu em atribuir à sensibilidade o lugar de uma faculdade independente e fonte de representações específicas, assim como chamar de *Estética transcendental* à primeira parte de um tratado de *Filosofia Primeira*, Kant provocou um “sismo na Ontologia” (Lacoue-Labarthe 2000, nota 31, p. 271),²⁰ e instigou-nos a alterar, de forma inédita, o papel que a Estética havia tradicionalmente desempenhado. Ele modificou de maneira drástica a posição secundária – enquanto Ciência do Belo – que a Estética costumava ocupar no quadro das disciplinas filosóficas. Aqui, temos de lembrar que o nome de *Estética* para designar a *Ciência do Belo* já havia sido inventado por Baumgarten desde 1750. Como se

suspeita de sua “denominação de faculdade *superior* de conhecimento”, Kant conclui: “A sensibilidade, porém, tem má fama. Fala-se muito mal dela, por exemplo: 1) que *confunde* a faculdade de representação; 2) que é presunçosa, teimosa e difícil de dominar [...] 3) que até mesmo *engana*, e com ela toda cautela é pouca.” (Kant AA 07: 143 (Kant 2006, p. 43))

¹⁹ Como esclarece Deleuze: “*A priori* designa representações que não derivam da experiência [enquanto] transcendental designa o princípio em virtude do qual a experiência é necessariamente submetida às nossas representações *a priori*.” (Deleuze 1976, p. 27)

²⁰ O contexto dessa longa nota é o de uma discordância bastante relevante com seu grande amigo, Jean-Luc Nancy, que defendera (“L’Offrande sublime” in: *Po&sie*, no. 32, 1985) a posição de que *não* havia uma estética kantiana. Contra ele, Lacoue-Labarthe defende que existe *sim* uma “*estética* kantiana, sistemática e completa”, que é totalmente independente da “Estética Transcendental”, que resultou de um gesto insubmisso e irreverente, com relação à tradição filosófica: “Certamente, o gesto de Kant, ao apoderar-se do título de Baumgarten para designar uma filosofia primeira, não tem nada de indiferente – nem que seja pelo contraste com o gesto frouxo de Hegel, resignado, por falta de coisa melhor e em vista do uso dominante, a intitular ‘Estética’ a ciência ou a filosofia da arte. Mas esse gesto de Kant não é indiferente por causa do sismo que provoca na dita filosofia primeira: na ontologia. Considerado quanto ao objeto da primeira parte da *Crítica da Faculdade de Julgar*, ele é (antes) indiferente: uma teoria do gosto é o que perfeitamente se chama no século XVIII uma estética. O título (o nome) não liquida o caso (do conceito). De resto, a ‘Analítica do Belo’, como aquela do sublime, desenrola-se a título de ‘Analítica da faculdade do juízo estético’ e, portanto, a título da ‘Crítica da faculdade de juízo estético’, e não sem motivo elas são uma teoria do prazer proveniente do objeto belo ou do afeto (da emoção) sublime. Há sim uma estética kantiana, sistemática e completa.” (Lacoue-Labarthe 2000, p. 271)

sabe, na primeira parte da *Teoria transcendental dos elementos*, i.e., na *Estética Transcendental*, Kant trata de definir, pela primeira vez na história da filosofia, as representações de tempo e de espaço como intuições da sensibilidade. Esta revolução decorria principalmente do novo ponto de vista por meio do qual Kant distinguia as representações, assim como as faculdades. Contra toda tradição que, em sua época, diferenciava as representações sensíveis das inteligíveis por grau de clareza ou confusão, Kant passa a tratá-las segundo sua diferença específica. As intuições de tempo e de espaço são puras e, *a priori*, distintas, assim, tanto da sensação empírica e material quanto dos conceitos do entendimento.

Com a diferença das faculdades enquanto fonte de representações: entendimento, faculdade dos conceitos e sensibilidade, faculdade das intuições, Kant foi capaz de opor-se, ao mesmo tempo, ao racionalismo dogmático e ao empirismo os quais, “cada um à sua maneira, afirmavam uma simples *diferença de grau* (seja de clareza, a partir do entendimento; seja diferença de vivacidade a partir da sensibilidade).” (Deleuze 1976, p. 36) Assim, foi pela porta aberta por Kant que a sensibilidade conquistou sua posição de faculdade digna e autônoma, como fonte *específica* de representações (as intuições) e, por causa disso, recebida no âmbito do transcendental, ao lado das outras faculdades, do entendimento e da razão. Essa inédita *interrupção* kantiana dos graus de clareza e obscuridade resulta do princípio ao qual Kant se mantém fiel até o fim: a *irredutível* heterogeneidade das faculdades.

Talvez, esse “sismo” tenha sido aprofundado e complexificado ao longo dos anos 1781-1790, quando as faculdades sensíveis, como a imaginação e a própria sensibilidade começaram a reagir vingando-se da humilhação a elas imposta pelo homem racional moral. Mas, ao mesmo tempo e paradoxalmente, talvez por influência dos moralistas empiristas britânicos (Cf. Suzuki 2014, p. 7),²¹ o acirramento daquela grande mudança em favor da sensibilidade culmine no ano de 1785, com a publicação da *Fundamentação da Metafísica dos Costumes*, quando Kant descobre um tipo de sentimento *a priori*, que é o sentimento

²¹ Conforme as palavras do próprio autor, é somente “na filosofia de Hutcheson que se têm as condições decisivas para a modificação do sentido do fazer filosófico no século XVIII. Afirmando que a vida humana é mais conduzida pelo sentimento do que pela razão e interesse, Hutcheson, herdeiro e continuador de Shaftesbury, pôs em destaque muita coisa que não fazia parte do repertório ou era relegada ao pano de fundo: é assim que riso, humor, simpatia, sociabilidade, imaginação, ilusões pessoais e coletivas etc. recebem de Shaftesbury e dele sua *cidadania filosófica*.” (Suzuki 2014, p. 7 ; grifos meus).

de respeito. Com outras palavras, Kant descobre a possibilidade de um *sentimento*, verdadeiro móvel moral, conquistar uma *forma superior*, que nada mais é do que uma forma *a priori*. E isso é muito importante! Pois, como justifica Kant, embora a Filosofia divida-se apenas em duas partes: teórica e prática, as faculdades superiores são três (faculdade de conhecer, sentimento de prazer e desprazer e faculdade de desejar) (EEKdU e EKdU, AA 20: 246, CFJ, 2016, p. 60; e AA 05: 197, CFJ, 2016, p. 98, respectivamente). Não há dúvida de que houve uma espécie de *upgrade* do sentimento, que foi *elevado* a *faculdade superior* do espírito, do ânimo ou da mente (como quer que se traduza *Gemüt*).

Aqui, portanto, fica claro que a *matéria* sensível está irremediavelmente excluída, e não só do sentimento de respeito, mas também dos sentimentos de prazer e dor, em sua forma *superior*, porque que só assim – repetindo: só enquanto são formas *superiores* – eles são admitidos no clube transcendental. Na forma do objeto belo ou sublime, o que conta não é mais, exclusivamente, como na operação do conhecimento, a “intuição, que nos remete a objetos exteriores” (Deleuze 1976, p. 66). Então, à faculdade da sensibilidade acrescentou-se mais um novo significado: o de sentimento! (Deleuze 1976, p. 56)²² E a *forma* aqui não se reduz ao espaço-tempo, embora os objetos belos e sublimes se apresentem no mundo e na natureza, isto é, eles *não são desprovidos* das formas intuitivas do tempo e do espaço, claro, mas agora a esta forma *estética* também se *adiciona*, digamos assim, mais um sentido: o da reflexão. Assim, o objeto estético se torna na Terceira Crítica uma forma da “reflexão de um objeto singular na imaginação” (Deleuze 1976, p. 66). Mesmo sem contar com a teleologia, mantendo-nos nos restritos limites da *Estética*, estamos aptos a compreender a questão do *nome* da Terceira Crítica: embora contendo indubitavelmente uma *Estética* plena e sistemática, Kant recusa aquela denominação, i.e., de “*Estética*” para sua inteira última Crítica, pois provocaria um inevitável equívoco. Preferiu, então, adotar o nome pelo qual a conhecemos de *Crítica da Faculdade de Julgar* (CFJ).²³

²² Descrevendo a ação da lei moral sobre a sensibilidade, Deleuze adverte: “a sensibilidade é considerada aqui como sentimento, não como intuição; e o próprio efeito da lei é um sentimento muito mais negativo do que positivo, mais próximo da dor do que do prazer.” Grifos meus. Até que ponto essa sobreposição de sentidos não se relaciona com “a polissemia da palavra *sense* – senso, sentido e sentimento”, noção central da filosofia britânica do século XVIII (cf. Marilena Chauí apresentando o livro de Suzuki 2014)?

²³ Em vários momentos da Primeira e da Segunda Introduções, Kant se manifesta sobre a equivocidade do termo “estético”. Destaco: “A expressão ‘modo de representação estético’ é inteiramente inequívoca, se por

III. “Duas legislações, dois *domínios*, mas somente um *território*, o da experiência”²⁴

Não exatamente no início do seu ensaio “Parergon”, mas justamente antes da Seção II (cujo título dá nome a todo o ensaio), a partir da qual focalizará a Terceira Crítica, Derrida cita um longo e conhecido trecho (que eu ainda estendi) da Segunda Introdução, no qual Kant expõe de maneira bastante explícita a sua *reformulação moderna da ferida* (“o abismo intransponível”) típica ou essencialmente humana:

Ainda que haja um *abismo intransponível* (*unübersehbare Kluft* – traduzido em francês por “*âbime à perte de vue*”) entre o domínio do conceito da natureza, como domínio sensível, e aquele do conceito de liberdade, como domínio suprassensível, de tal modo que do primeiro ao último (através, portanto, do uso teórico da razão) *não há passagem possível*, como se fossem dois mundos tão distintos que o primeiro não pode ter qualquer influência sobre o último, este *deve*, no entanto, ter influência sobre o primeiro, *ou seja, o conceito de liberdade deve tornar efetivo, no mundo sensível, o fim fornecido por suas leis; e a natureza, por conseguinte, também tem de poder ser pensada de tal modo que a legalidade de sua forma concorde ao menos com a possibilidade dos fins que devem nela operar segundo leis da liberdade.* - Tem de haver, portanto, um fundamento da unidade (*Grund der Einheit*) do suprassensível, *que está no fundamento da natureza, com aquilo que o conceito de liberdade contém do ponto de vista prático; um fundamento cujo conceito, mesmo não servindo – nem do ponto de vista teórico, nem do prático – para um conhecimento do mesmo e, portanto, não possuindo um domínio próprio, torna todavia possível a passagem de um modo de pensar segundo princípios de um para o modo de pensar segundo os princípios do outro.* (Kant AA 05: 176, CFJ, 2016, p. 76. Toda a parte em itálico da citação foi omitida por Derrida 1978, pp. 42-43. Grifos meus.)

ela se entende a relação da representação com um objeto, como fenômeno, para o conhecimento do mesmo; pois nesse caso a expressão ‘estético’ significa que é inerente a essa representação a forma da sensibilidade (como o sujeito é afetado). Sendo esta, portanto, transferida inevitavelmente ao objeto (mas apenas enquanto fenômeno). Por isso podia haver uma estética transcendental, como ciência pertencente à faculdade do conhecimento. Há bastante tempo, porém, tornou-se habitual chamar a um modo de representação estético, isto é, sensível, também no sentido de que se entende com isso não a relação da representação com a faculdade de conhecimento, mas com o sentimento de prazer e desprazer.” (AA 20: 221-222, CFJ, 2016, p. 37)

²⁴ “Sabemos que há duas legislações, portanto, dois *domínios*, que correspondem à natureza e à liberdade, à natureza sensível e à natureza supra-sensível. Mas há somente um *território*, o da experiência.” (Deleuze 1976, p. 57; grifos do autor).

Quem poderia adivinhar, espantou-se Lebrun, a importância que o problema da heterogeneidade desses dois modos de pensar (*Denkungsarten*) adquiriu para Kant? E [no entanto/vf] a *Crítica do Juízo* não é “[...] senão o percurso dessa transição” (Lebrun 1993a, p. 69), construção dessa travessia! Diferentemente de Gerard Lebrun e de Ricardo Terra, Derrida não se espanta, não se comove, nem tem qualquer empatia pelo desespero de Kant! Ao contrário, a medir pelo estilo do seu ensaio, ousaria dizer, Derrida assume uma posição que é, em vários momentos, satírica,²⁵ quase sarcástica! Ele começa chamando a nossa atenção para o tom imperativo da tarefa: “a reconciliação se anuncia [...], se representa na Terceira *Crítica* sob a espécie de um *dever*, de um *Sollen* projetado ao infinito” (Derrida 1978, p. 42; grifo meu). Em seguida, Derrida zomba do projeto bem bolado que, levando em conta “todas as oposições irredutíveis que haviam sido determinadas pelas duas primeiras *Críticas*” (Derrida 1978, p. 43), Kant havia planejado, para “reduzir o ‘enigma’ do juízo estético e preencher uma lacuna, uma clivagem, um abismo (*Kluft*)”. Citando trechos do Prefácio à primeira edição, que eu nunca vira antes comentados, Derrida é *sempre original*, ele mostra um Kant apressado, preocupado com a sua idade,²⁶ embaraçado com uma natureza que “embaralhou os fios” (Derrida 1978, p. 51)²⁷ (na tradução em português – “a natureza tanto complicou”²⁸), no momento em que ele encerrava a sua obra crítica. O filósofo francês desdenha do apelo de Kant às “metáforas e analogias vizinhas” (Derrida 1978, p. 43)²⁹, a fim de ultrapassar o abismo. Derrida sublinha: “ainda se trata do imenso ‘abismo’ que separa dois mundos e da impossibilidade

²⁵ Não se trata de interpretação, é o próprio Derrida quem literalmente o diz, pois as palavras iniciais de seu ensaio são: “*c’est assez dire: abîme et satire de l’abîme*”/basta dizer: abismo e sátira do abismo.

²⁶ “Com isso, portanto, encerro toda a minha empreitada crítica. Passarei rapidamente à empreitada doutrinal para, na medida do possível, tomar de minha velhice o tempo que, de certo modo, ainda possa ser favorável a isso” (Kant, Prefácio à primeira edição, AA 05: 170; CFJ, 2016, p. 70:).

²⁷ “*Après avoir déploré que la nature ait mêlé les fils, au moment où il achève son oeuvre critique, en reconnaissant des lacunes et en projetant un pont par-dessus l’abîme des deux autres critiques, Kant parle de son âge.*”/Após haver lamentado que a natureza tenha embaralhado os fios no momento em que sua obra crítica termina, reconhecendo as lacunas e projetando uma ponte sobre o abismo das duas outras críticas, Kant fala de sua idade.

²⁸ “a grande dificuldade de solucionar um problema que a natureza tanto complicou” (Kant, Prefácio à primeira edição da CFJ, AA 05: 170; CFJ, 2016, p. 69). Derrida atribui esta grande dificuldade de Kant, quando ele trata da vida (o organismo, certamente) ou da arte.

²⁹ “*Plus bas, métaphores ou analogies voisines*”/Mais embaixo (significando no texto ambigualmente, na sequência do texto...), metáforas e analogias vizinhas.

aparente de lançar uma ponte (*Brücke*) de uma margem à outra.” (idem)³⁰ Para concluir, finalmente, que

a ponte não é *uma* analogia. O recurso à analogia, o conceito e o efeito da analogia são ou fazem a própria *ponte* – tanto na *Crítica* quanto na toda poderosa tradição à qual ela ainda pertence. A analogia do abismo e da ponte sobre o abismo é uma analogia para dizer que deve ter mesmo uma analogia aí entre esses dois mundos heterogêneos, um terceiro para passar o abismo, cicatrizar a hiância (*béance*) e pensar a distância (*écart*). Em suma, um símbolo. A ponte é um símbolo, ela passa de uma margem à outra e o símbolo é uma ponte.

O abismo pede a analogia – recurso ativo de toda a *Crítica* – mas a analogia se abisma sem fim desde o momento em que for preciso mesmo uma certa arte para descrever analogicamente o jogo da analogia. (idem)³¹

Ao omitir o final do parágrafo citado da Segunda Introdução, Derrida não cede qualquer espaço para o filósofo alemão distinguir a *operação*, que é a analogia, do símbolo, que nada mais pode ser senão um *efeito* daquele ato. Faz questão de exibir um Kant embaralhado com os termos “analogia” e “símbolo”. Ora, ao contrário do que afirma Derrida, Kant não estava dizendo que a “ponte é uma analogia”! A ponte, tanto quanto o *Übergang*, traduzido ora por passagem, ora por “transição” (Lebrun 1993a, p. 69), ou ainda travessia, é de fato um símbolo, *construído* à custa da *arte* ou do *jogo* (para usar as palavras de Derrida) da analogia. Travessia essa que nos permite passar “do ‘modo de pensar’ segundo a natureza ao ‘modo de pensar’ segundo a liberdade”.

Não se trata sequer de estabelecer uma relação de *influência recíproca*³² entre as duas concepções de natureza, uma traçada pelo entendimento e a outra, pela faculdade de

³⁰ “il est encore question de l’immense ‘abîme’ qui separe les deux mondes et de l’impossibilité apparente de jeter un pont (*Brücke*) d’une rive à l’autre.”

³¹ “Le pont n’est pas une analogie. Le recours à l’analogie, le concept et l’effet d’analogie sont ou font le pont lui-même – et dans la Critique et dans toute la puissante tradition à laquelle celle-ci appartient encore. L’analogie de l’abîme et du pont par-dessus l’abîme, c’est une analogie pour dire qu’il doit bien y avoir une analogie entre deux mondes hétérogènes, un tiers pour passer l’abîme, cicatrizer la béance et penser l’écart. Bref un symbole. Le pont est un symbole, il passe d’une rive à l’autre, et le symbole est un pont. L’abîme appelle l’analogie – recours actif de toute la Critique – mais l’analogie s’abîme sans fin dès lors qu’il faut bien un certain art pour décrire analogiquement le jeu de l’analogie.”

julgar. O próprio Kant manifesta-se explicitamente sobre essa impossibilidade, na medida em que essa influência afetaria a autonomia e a independência de cada um dos dois mundos, os quais devemos preservar longe de toda e qualquer “influência recíproca” (*wechselseitigen Einfluss*):

O domínio do conceito da natureza sob uma legislação, e aquele do conceito de liberdade sob a outra, *são inteiramente preservados de qualquer influência recíproca* – que um pudesse ter sobre o outro (cada qual segundo suas leis fundamentais) – graças ao grande abismo que separa o suprassensível dos fenômenos. O conceito de liberdade nada determina em relação ao conhecimento teórico da natureza; do mesmo modo, o conceito de natureza nada determina em relação às leis práticas da liberdade; e, nessa medida, não é possível lançar uma ponte de um domínio ao outro. (Kant EKdU AA 05: 195, CFJ, p. 96)

Se a argamassa artística para construir a ponte tiver de misturar as origens e, assim, desfazer as heterogeneidades e as diferenças entre os dois domínios, então, nada feito, pois essa construção deixará escapar aquela originalidade do kantismo, à qual se referiu Deleuze. A construção da ponte depende única e exclusivamente da analogia ou da lógica do *como se*, que aqui se mostra essencial. É ela que permite a convergência das faculdades humanas em torno da razão que, de acordo com Deleuze, é a faculdade da ficção (o que é importante distinguir de uma ilusão) e do *como se*. É ela que sempre diz: “tudo se passa como se...” (Deleuze 1976, p. 34) Já para Beckenkamp, a analogia, como “um precioso recurso”, está situada menos na razão e mais na “*faculdade do juízo reflexionante*” (Beckenkamp 2017, p. 224; grifos meus). Razão ou faculdade de julgar, o que vale é que uma ampla maioria de intérpretes concorda em indicar a Terceira Crítica como o lugar por excelência da utilização da analogia. Mesmo Derrida, na sua ambiguidade irônica, visando

³² Essa expressão é rica de consequências para vários intérpretes, por exemplo, para um autor como Ernst Cassirer (*Kants Leben und Lehre*). Como me ensinou uma longa nota de António Marques (*Organismo e sistema em Kant*. Lisboa, Editorial Presença, 1987, nota à p. 45), Cassirer a utilizou como parte de seu argumento objetivando privilegiar a parte teleológica em detrimento do estético. Na verdade, a palavra que Cassirer utiliza é *Wechselwirkung* (e não *wechselseitigen Einfluss*) cuja tradução, talvez, a mais correta, fosse “interação” ou “ação recíproca”. Mas é possível que o equívoco da tradução de Marques se deva à contaminação ou inspiração pela expressão usada por Kant exatamente neste trecho [Cf. 2ª Introdução AA 05: 195]: *wechselseitigen Einfluss*. Tanto Fernando Costa Mattos (CFJ, 2016, p. 96), quanto Valério Rohden e António Marques (CFJ, 1993, p. 39) traduziram-na igualmente por “influência recíproca”.

mostrar um Kant confuso, misturando alhos com bugalhos, aqui e ali, ao longo do seu ensaio, reconhece a importância da analogia para a CFJ.

O procedimento analógico “não é algo secundário na obra de Kant, mas ele cumpre uma função capital,” (Beckenkamp 2017, p. 210) que é a possibilidade de “*pensar o suprassensível*” (Beckenkamp 2017, p. 211; grifo meu). Trata-se de um “recurso de emergência para conceitos do suprassensível” (Kant, I., *Welches sind die wirklichen Fortschritte, die die Metaphysik seit Leibnizens und Wolff’s Zeiten in Deutschland gemacht hat?* (AA, 20: 280) *apud* Beckenkamp 2017, p. 212), ou ainda, com outras palavras, da apresentação de ideias da razão.³³ Como se sabe, a filosofia kantiana não se resume a uma mera teoria do conhecimento e, por isso, não se reduz à esfera delimitada pela CRP, isto é, pelos limites do conhecimento empírico e da apresentação esquemática das categorias do entendimento. A possibilidade de *pensar além* dos limites da experiência já era um “problema familiar a Kant, que ensaia já na *Crítica da Razão Pura* uma resposta recorrendo ao pensamento analógico” (Beckenkamp 2017, p. 217). Como esclarece Beckenkamp, “não nos aventuramos [...] a ir além dos limites da experiência possível. O que fazemos é olhar para trás [...] para aquilo que conhecemos [...] traçando depois certas relações analógicas entre o bem conhecido e o que nos escapa.” (idem) Seguindo ainda Beckenkamp, Kant teria reformulado o procedimento analógico tradicional, que consistia em estabelecer uma “semelhança imperfeita entre duas coisas”, propondo, de modo inédito, “uma semelhança perfeita de duas relações entre coisas totalmente dessemelhantes.” (ibidem, p. 218)

IV. “*Übergang*” como sistema ou como pensamento do limite?

É como um “empreendimento bastante paradoxal” (Lebrun 1993a, p. 93) que Lebrun apresenta a tarefa kantiana na Terceira Crítica: “a necessidade de mostrar que a total heterogeneidade das duas regiões (sensível e supra-sensível) não impede que haja

³³ Deleuze, aliás, recenseia, só na CFJ, quatro modos de apresentação das Ideias: 1. “O sublime que é a apresentação direta que se faz por *projeção*, mas que permanece negativa, apontando para a inacessibilidade da Ideia; 2. O interesse racional pelo belo, trata-se de uma apresentação indireta mas positiva, que se faz através do *símbolo*; 3. O gênio, mais uma vez a apresentação é positiva, mas, segunda, fazendo-se através da *criação* de uma ‘outra’ natureza; finalmente, 4. O modo teleológico, apresentação positiva, primária e direta, que se faz através dos conceitos de fim e de acordo final.” (Deleuze 1963, pp. 128-129).

comunicação entre elas.” (idem) Por conseguinte, é esse paradoxo que confere unidade à Crítica e “se não se considera esse projeto de sistematização”, o que explicaria, indaga o irreverente Lebrun, este “coquetel de ‘estética’ e de ‘biologia’?” (ibidem, p. 94)

Não tenho a menor condição de aprofundar-me sobre as raízes ou origens do problema³⁴ cujas soluções despontam na Terceira *Crítica*, como o fez António Marques, no seu belo e brilhante livro *Organismo e sistema em Kant*, no qual, perseguindo o fio condutor do importante conceito de “Totalidade” (*Totalität, Allheit*), apontou o “Apêndice da Dialética Transcendental” como o provável berço das questões que, só alguns anos depois, Kant viria a solucionar. Isso não me impede de concordar integralmente com a sua afirmação de que, na Terceira Crítica, efetiva-se uma mudança de perspectivas, desloca-se o olhar, sobre uma *mesma* natureza, vista sob o olhar teórico-cognitivo, na *Crítica da Razão Pura*, e de modo suplementar e jamais excludente, vista sob estético-reflexivo, na *Crítica da Faculdade de Julgar*. Que seja a mesma natureza “iluminada”³⁵ de modo diferente: artístico ou técnico (seguindo um conceito de finalidade), na CFJ, e mecânico (obediente à lei da causalidade), na CRP, ninguém há de discordar. É sempre valorizando o sentido sistemático que Marques chama de “pleno *Übergang*” a passagem de um modo de pensar a natureza a outro, mas além disso, “outra forma de pensar a relação geral – particular” (Marques 1987, p. 84).

Mesmo que a “importância da *passagem* para outra ideia de natureza” já tivesse sido reconhecida no Apêndice, Marques reserva à Terceira Crítica contribuições inéditas, “inovações” (idem), dentre as quais, como Beckenkamp, ele ressalta o juízo reflectinte (ibidem, p. 97).³⁶ É a este tipo de juízo que caberá realizar a “inversão do método canônico

³⁴ Pois é bom prevenir, o quanto antes, os leitores deste número especial da Revista *Con-textos*, dedicado à Terceira Crítica, que minha área de pesquisa é Estética e Filosofia da Arte e não a Filosofia kantiana! Por conseguinte, da obra de Kant, conheço só e exclusivamente a sua parte *estética*, nem sequer o conjunto da Terceira Crítica!

³⁵ Cf. Lebrun 1993a, p. 88: “Está se vendo: nada mudou, a não ser a iluminação, mas de tal sorte que outro relevo aparece.” Embora Lebrun estivesse tratando de outro problema, no caso, das ideias de Deus e de liberdade, no meu entender, essa observação aplica-se à Terceira Crítica como um todo. Nela, tratamos, geral e essencialmente, de uma “mudança de tom” (p. 88), de perspectiva ou de ponto de vista. O perspectivismo que foi sempre atribuído originalmente a Nietzsche mereceria talvez o monograma de Immanuel Kant.

³⁶ Acerca da tradução deste termo “juízo reflectinte”, cabe contar uma pequena história: Valério Rohden e (o mesmo) António Marques traduziram a expressão *reflektierende Urteilskraft* por “faculdade do juízo reflexiva”, na primeira tradução que foi publicada no Brasil da *Kritik der Urteilskraft* integral (Cf. CFJ, 1993). Antes dela, Rubens Torres Filho havia traduzido algumas partes [“Primeira Introdução à Crítica do Juízo”, a “Analítica do Belo” e “Da arte e do gênio (§§ 43-54)"] publicadas no volume *Kant II*, da Coleção *Os pensadores* (São Paulo, Abril Cultural, 1974). Rubens Torres cunhou o termo “Juízo reflexionante”, adotado,

das ciências físico-naturais, tão paradigmáticas nos Prefácios da primeira Crítica” (ibidem, pp. 97-98), criando uma “nova filosofia do particular”. Diferentemente da forma particular do Apêndice, que não tinha ainda saído “da esfera do lógico e do conceptual” (ibidem, pp. 96; grifos do autor), o organismo ou seres organizados que surgem como tema não só para Kant, mas para todo o século XVIII, obrigam um novo modo de aproximação que não pode prescindir de um conceito de fim. Canguilhem denominou este “método” de “método do modelo”, constituído por “modelos analógicos [que] foram e ainda são mais frequentemente utilizados [em biologia] do que os modelos matemáticos.” (Canguilhem, G. *Études d’Histoire et de Philosophie des Sciences apud* Marques 1987, p. 137)

A CFJ constitui um aprofundamento dos “processos de passagem”, ela avança na direção “de uma sistemática cada vez mais consistente e distanciada da aporética registrada no termo da Dialéctica Transcendental” (Marques 1987, p. 98), de acordo com Marques, que adere, por sua vez, à interpretação de Lehmann, para quem a filosofia transcendental realiza o plano de uma verdadeira “ciência do ‘Übergang’” (Lehmann, “Das Philosophische Grundproblem in Kants Nachlasswerk”. in *Beitrage zur Geschichte und Interpretation der Philosophie Kants apud* Marques 1987, nota à p. 99), conceito esse que “desempenha um papel em todos os escritos sistemáticos” (idem) e que surge, a cada vez que Kant atinge um novo “plano de consideração” (idem). Para Lehmann, num primeiro momento, o pensamento de Kant é “construtivo, [e] numa segunda [fase], reflexivo, emendando os erros da construção, fechando as ‘falhas’, recuperando as contradições, por onde depois novos princípios construtivos entram” (idem).

Em contraposição ao sistemático, talvez haja outro modo de conceber a *passagem*, apelando para uma lógica do paradoxo ou do limite, que consistiria em pensar não *acima* ou *além* do limite, visando ultrapassá-lo metafisicamente, mas, como nos sugere Beckenkamp, consistiria em pensar “*em cima do* ou *sobre o* limite” (Beckenkamp 2017, p. 168) do pensamento, movendo-se “*na fronteira* entre o que se pode conhecer e o que não nos é possível conhecer nem determinar cognitivamente” (idem; grifos meus). Esse modo

em 1995, pela equipe de tradutores que publicou as *Duas Introduções à Crítica do Juízo (op. cit.)* e também, mais recentemente, por Fernando Costa Mattos, CFJ, 2016. O leitor já deve ter percebido que preferi, entre as duas ou três opções fornecidas, o termo “reflexionante” (juízo reflexionante, faculdade de julgar reflexionante e assim por diante), a não ser como aqui, quando se trata de uma citação.

de pensar seria característico da aporética da coisa em si (Lebrun 1993a, p. 61),³⁷ mas também da faculdade do juízo reflexionante (Cf. Beckenkamp 2017, p. 224).³⁸ E os elos entre a atividade da reflexão e a obra *crítica* de Kant parecem ser quase uma evidência para uma grande maioria dos intérpretes. Por exemplo, Gérard Lebrun chamou a reflexão de verdadeiro “método da filosofia transcendental” (Lebrun 1993b, p. 393); Jean-François Lyotard a designou como “arma crítica” por excelência, e chegou a atribuir à reflexão “a possibilidade da filosofia crítica” (Lyotard 1993)!³⁹ António Marques identificou-as de maneira explícita: “Reflexão e crítica são conceitos que remetem um para o outro: num quadro da filosofia transcendental, a reflexão é crítica e a crítica é reflexiva.” (Marques 2002, p. 57)

Desde a *Crítica da Razão Pura*, a reflexão, lá chamada “transcendental”, tinha uma função inegavelmente crítica, uma vez que ela consistia na capacidade de discriminar e separar as representações, classificando-as segundo sua origem no entendimento ou na sensibilidade (KrV, AA 3-4: A 261, B 317; CRP, pp. 256-257). Lá já gozava de um direito exclusivo, não compartilhado por nenhuma outra faculdade, justamente, o direito de ir e vir entre as diferentes faculdades. Na Terceira Crítica, operando como um juízo reflexionante (estético ou teleológico), à reflexão acrescenta-se um novo sentido, que talvez nos interesse tanto ou mais que o primeiro, na CFJ, ela passa a *reunir* e *conectar* o inteligível com o sensível,⁴⁰ fazendo o papel de “cimento” da terceira margem,⁴¹ como alude Rubens Torres

³⁷ Analisando o conceito problemático de “coisa-em-si”, Lebrun formula como um paradoxo o modo de pensar kantiano. É uma alternativa duplamente negativa: nem podemos tomá-la como um “ultra-objeto”, nem podemos ignorar a sua presença: “o conceito de ‘númeno’, tal como exposto ao fim da *Analítica*, se encarrega de nos lembrar: que eu tenho, certamente, o direito, e mesmo o dever, de pensar *alguma coisa* fora do sensível, mas com a condição de não tomar jamais essa *alguma coisa* como um ultra-objeto (*Gegenstand*).” (Lebrun 1993a, p. 61 ; grifos do autor).

³⁸ Caracterizando a analogia como um “precioso recurso” – como acabamos de mencionar – da faculdade do juízo reflexionante, o autor conclui que “esta faculdade, aliás, poderia ser apresentada como a *faculdade da crítica* ou do pensamento *em cima do limite* do pensamento.” (Beckenkamp 2017, p. 224)

³⁹ Lyotard exprime com muita ênfase e em vários trechos de seu livro a importância da reflexão para a filosofia crítica de Kant. Pinço alguns desses trechos. Na p. 15: “A leitura que preconizo [...] admite, por conseguinte, que se a terceira Crítica pode cumprir sua missão de unificação do campo filosófico, não é, sobretudo, porque expõe no seu tema a Idéia Regulativa de uma finalidade objetiva da natureza, mas porque ela torna manifesta, a título estético, a *maneira reflexiva de pensar que está em operação no texto crítico inteiro*.” (Lyotard 1993, p. 15; grifos meus, tradução ligeiramente modificada). Na p. 35, Lyotard chega a atribuir à reflexão a própria possibilidade da filosofia transcendental de Kant: “Com a reflexão, o pensamento parece dispor de uma arma crítica completa. Pois a reflexão é o nome que leva, na filosofia crítica, a possibilidade dessa filosofia.” (Lyotard 1993, p. 35; tradução ligeiramente modificada).

⁴⁰ “é no juízo que se terá de investigar os fundamentos da conexão entre o inteligível (legislado pela razão) e o sensível (construído formalmente pelo entendimento). Mas como faculdade intermediária, a sua função é

rigorosa e poeticamente ao maravilhoso conto de um dos maiores escritores brasileiros, João Guimarães Rosa (Rosa 1972, pp. 31-37). Assim, ao invés de separar e discriminar, o juízo reflexionante parece habitar as fronteiras, os limites, as margens, as bordas do abismo e os “espaços vazios” (Cf. Beckenkamp 2017).⁴² Não por acaso, a meu ver, é também aí, por meio de outras palavras, “de um lugar que se anuncia privado de lugar” (Derrida 1978, p. 45), que Derrida, interpretando a CFJ, situa a arte, na articulação do membro intermediário (*Mittelglied*). Aí, continua Derrida, “afundamo-nos num lugar que não é nem prático nem teórico ou antes ao *mesmo tempo* prático e teórico. A arte (em geral) ou antes o belo, se tem lugar (*s’il a lieu*), inscreve-se aí.” (idem)

Num contexto semelhante, da distinção entre o dentro e o fora, interno e externo, Derrida está comentando uma das mais reconhecidamente frágeis passagens da CFJ, o §14 “Elucidação através de exemplos”, na qual, experimentando aquela “grande dificuldade” (*grosse Schwierigkeit*) (Kant, Prefácio à primeira edição da CFJ, AA 05: 170; CFJ, 2016, p. 69. Ver nota 41) – sempre que o assunto é vida ou arte⁴³ –, Kant apela para os exemplos de beleza artística. São exemplos infelizes, “insignificantes” (Kulenkampff 1998, p. 45),⁴⁴ como observa Kulenkampff, dos “ornamentos (*parerga*)”: “das molduras dos quadros, das vestes em estátuas ou das arcadas em torno dos palácios” (KdU, AA 05: 226, CFJ, 2016, p. 122). Kant divide os ornamentos em dois: “se não consiste ele mesmo na bela forma, e só é acrescentado, como moldura dourada, para favorecer por seu atrativo ou assentimento em relação ao quadro, ele então se denomina *decoração* e corrompe a beleza autêntica.” (idem)

conectar os dois mundos entre si, i.e., descobrir como é possível que o objeto natural seja estruturado a partir da liberdade ou como a moralidade pode configurar a natureza.” (Herrero 2006, p. 8)

⁴¹ “Uma faculdade sem território e que entretanto, nas ocasiões em que não está a serviço do entendimento nem da razão, nem por isso perde o sentido ou cai no vazio [...] Talvez possamos concordar com Lebrun quando ele afirma que essa faculdade, que fora da Crítica se dissolve num agregado de funções psicológicas, é a faculdade mesma de criticar. Nesse caso poderíamos dizer que de fato, antes da *Crítica da Faculdade do Juízo*, não faltava nada ao edifício crítico. Nada, a não ser o cimento.” (Torres 2008, p. 161)

⁴² “Uma característica fundamental da filosofia crítica [é] assegurar este *espaço vazio* no domínio teórico, justamente para poder dar conta dos pressupostos do domínio prático” (Beckenkamp 2017, p. 167).

⁴³ “*Dans l’art et dans la vie, partout où l’on doit, selon Kant, procéder à des jugements réfléchissants et supposer (par analogie avec l’art...) une finalité dont nous n’avons pas le concept, l’exemple précède*”/Na arte e na vida, em todo o lugar onde se deve, segundo Kant, proceder por juízos reflexionantes e supor (por analogia com a arte...) uma finalidade cujo conceito não temos, *o exemplo precede*. (Derrida 1978, p. 60; grifos do autor).

⁴⁴ O contexto do § 14 é o da tentativa de Kant purificar o juízo estético do belo, retirando dele todas as “condições” e por isso “apoia-se principalmente na chamada beleza livre do trivial e do ornamento. Isto não significa, no entanto, que os juízos de gosto puros se restrinjam à esfera do insignificante. É por motivos de exposição/apresentação que Kant se serve do arabesco e da decoração como modelos exemplares.” (Kulenkampff 1998, p. 45)

Fica evidente que é neste ponto precisamente que Derrida encontra o cerne e (ou será o pretexto? De qualquer modo) o título do seu longo ensaio (“*Parergon*”) sobre a Terceira Crítica. É ele que, estranhando, pergunta-se a si mesmo acerca do termo: “O que a arte teria a ver com isso [*parergon*, suplemento, falta interior]? O que isso nos daria a ver? faria ver? deixaria ver? deixaria fazer ver? ou se fazer ver?” (Derrida 1978, p. 67) Para lembrar e esclarecer num parêntesis, logo a seguir: “*Parergon* significa também o excepcional, o insólito, o extraordinário.” (idem) E depois, *à la* Heidegger (“o que é um sapato?”⁴⁵), perguntar ao próprio Kant: “o que é uma moldura?”, porque a moldura tinha sido indicada como exemplo de “beleza livre”, ao que Kant responde: “é um *parergon*, um misto de fora e de dentro, mas um misto que não é uma mistura ou uma meia-medida, um fora que é chamado ao dentro do dentro para constitui-lo de dentro” (Derrida 1978, p. 74).⁴⁶ A questão do dentro e do fora da obra de arte, “essa demanda (*requête*) permanente”, continua o filósofo francês, de “distinguir entre o sentido interno ou próprio e a circunstância do objeto de que se fala – *organiza todos os discursos filosóficos sobre a arte, o sentido da arte e o sentido* simplesmente, de Platão a Hegel, Husserl e Heidegger.” (ibidem, p. 53)⁴⁷

V. Conclusão ou outros abismos, desertos

Antes de concluir, sinto-me irrefreavelmente impelida a escrever um pouco sobre a situação global, sobre a imensa crise sanitária, replicada no Brasil, este país da periferia do capitalismo ocidental, que está, além disso, atravessando, inegavelmente, um de seus mais tristes momentos históricos, cuja frágil e “jovem democracia”⁴⁸ corre extremo perigo!

⁴⁵ “Escolhemos como exemplo um apetrecho conhecido: um par de sapatos de camponês. [...] Para fornecer esta ajuda, basta uma representação pictórica. Para tanto escolhemos uma conhecida pintura de Van Gogh, que pintou várias vezes calçado deste gênero. Mas o que é que há aí de especial para ver? Toda a gente sabe o que faz parte de um sapato.” (Heidegger 2004, p. 24)

⁴⁶ “‘*qu’est-ce qu’un cadre?*’, [il] répond: *c’est un parergon, un mixte de dehors et de dedans, mais un mixte qui n’est pas un mélange ou une demi-mesure, un dehors qui est appelé au-dedans du dedans pour le constituer em dedans.*”

⁴⁷ “*Cette requête permanente – distinguer entre le sens interne ou propre et la circonstance de l’objet dont on parle – organise tous les discours philosophiques sur l’art, le sens de l’art et le sens tout court, de Platon à Hegel, Husserl et Heidegger.*” (grifos meus).

⁴⁸ Palavras da ex-presidente do Brasil, Dilma Roussef, no seu histórico e premonitório discurso no dia 12 de maio de 2016, ao ser afastada do cargo da presidência por um injustíssimo e vergonhoso processo de *impeachment*: “O destino me reservou muitos desafios. Eu enfrentei vários desafios: o sombrio e terrível da ditadura... Enfrentei a dor indizível da doença... Mas o que mais dói agora, nesta situação que estou vivendo,

Escrever sobre essa crise que devasta o mundo e ameaça a humanidade como um todo põe-nos diante da inevitável e urgente pergunta: “quem somos nós, seres humanos?” Essa pergunta não deixa de repercutir a celeberrima quarta pergunta, sempre atual e nunca ultrapassada, que Kant fez no início das “Lições sobre Lógica”, após ter formulado no “Cânon da Razão Pura” as três outras, não menos famosas perguntas. Peço licença para retomá-las mais uma vez, do modo como José Henrique Santos as apresentou:

[A primeira pergunta] ‘que posso saber?’ [é] respondida pela *Crítica da Razão Pura* ao expor e legitimar os princípios da física matemática; em seguida, ‘que devo fazer?’, ou seja, ‘como agir?’, cuja resposta é dada pela *Crítica da Razão Prática* com sua ética do dever; e finalmente ‘que me é lícito esperar?’, que encontra solução nas conclusões da segunda parte da *Crítica da Razão Prática*. Falta a pergunta referente à *Crítica da Faculdade do Juízo*. No entanto, essas três questões deságuam numa interrogação mais geral, a saber, ‘que é o homem?’ (Kant, *Crítica da Razão Pura* (B 832) e *Vorlesungen über Logik* (AA, 09: 25) *apud* Santos 1998, p. 19)

Concordando com José Henrique Santos, poderia elencar inúmeros intérpretes que atribuem à Terceira Crítica a tarefa de responder, dentre as quatro, certamente, à pergunta mais difícil, quiçá irrespondível, a qual, aliás, arrego-me o direito de traduzir e perguntar: “quem somos nós, seres humanos?”, em vez de seguir o rigorismo da letra kantiana “que é o homem?”. Não haveria tempo para lidar com a complexidade do exemplo que Kant nos dá no §17 da CFJ, “Do Ideal da beleza”. Nele, o ser humano, enquanto um ente capaz de “determinar os seus próprios fins através da razão”, nos é apresentado como “um ideal de beleza” e até como “ideal da perfeição” (KdU AA 05: 233; CFJ, 2016, p. 129). Deixo o problema para outra oportunidade, aqui mais modestamente, extraio um conceito de “ser humano” de uma famosa passagem, 1º momento – do Desinteresse – da “Analítica do

é a inominável dor da injustiça, a profunda dor da injustiça, a dor da traição. São duas palavras terríveis: traição e injustiça. As forças da traição e da injustiça estão soltas por aí... O golpe não visa apenas me destituir... O golpe ameaça levar de roldão não só a democracia, mas também as conquistas que a população alcançou nas últimas décadas... Nossa jovem democracia, feita de lutas, feita de sacrifícios, feita de mortes, não merece isto [o golpe]... A luta pela democracia não tem data para terminar. É luta permanente... A democracia é o lado certo da história.”

Belo”, §5 da CFJ. Aí Kant estabelece que a satisfação⁴⁹ com o belo é *única e especificamente* humana, nem animais nem os entes exclusivamente racionais como os deuses ou imortais a experimentar. Essa passagem, na qual a sensibilidade e a estética são valorizadas como uma prerrogativa *humana*, em detrimento dos seres divinos ou estritamente racionais, foi muito valorizada, primeiramente por Schiller⁵⁰ e, depois, por Heidegger. Kant analisa e separa (como é sua conduta de praxe) os vários (pelo menos, três) tipos de complacência ou satisfação: com o agradável (sensível material), com o belo (reflexivo ou sensível formal) e com o bom (inteligível). A conhecida e, aliás, muito mal redigida passagem diz que:

O agradável vale também para animais irracionais; a beleza vale *apenas* para seres humanos, isto é, *para seres animais que são também racionais*, mas não somente enquanto racionais (espiritualmente, por exemplo), e sim como ao mesmo tempo animais; o bem, contudo, vale para todo ser racional em geral. (Kant KdU (AA, 05: 210), CFJ, 2016, p. 106; grifos meus)

No meu entender, mais uma vez, nesta definição de ser humano como “seres animais que são também racionais”, entra em ação a Revolução Copernicana e Kant interrompe aquela escala contínua que se comporta tradicionalmente de modo hierárquico e que, no caso, distribuiria os animais na base, no ponto mais baixo da escala, e os seres puramente racionais no topo, último degrau da escada; seres humanos, ocupando o lugar médio, intermediário, *entre* racionais e irracionais. Mas, como vimos, a ruptura kantiana é daquela “lógica da continuidade”. Aqui, mais uma vez, Kant distingue a partir da *diferença de natureza das faculdades* e até da heterogeneidade dos mundos, digamos assim, e nunca uma diferença ou escala de grau, da qual, em geral, decorrem hierarquias *ontológicas*! E

⁴⁹ Fernando Costa Mattos traduziu o termo *Wohlgefallen* por “satisfação”, CFJ, 2016, p. 106. Já Valério Rohden e António Marques optaram por “complacência”, CFJ, 1993, p. 55. (Grifos do autor).

⁵⁰ Como é sabido, para Schiller haveria três Estados, cujo desenvolvimento se daria não apenas ontogenética (história dos indivíduos) como filogeneticamente (história da espécie): Físico, Estético e Lógico. (Cf. Schiller 1990, p. 123) Mas seria somente no Estado Estético que o ser humano viveria na plenitude de suas faculdades e não *determinado* exclusivamente por uma única faculdade, seja a sensibilidade (no Estado Físico), seja o entendimento ou a razão (Estado Lógico/Moral). Assim pode-se reconhecer uma certa primazia do Estético com relação aos demais Estados.

isso tem consequências, claro! Por exemplo, só do ponto de vista teológico ou divino é que ser *sensível* é uma... *falha* ou inferioridade! Olhando do lado de cá, do lado humano, estar no território estético constitui um inegável privilégio, prerrogativa, acréscimo, ousaria dizer até um *excesso*, com relação aos seres exclusivamente racionais (como suponho que seja o caso de Deus) que, despossuídos da sensibilidade, são inaptos a qualquer experiência de prazer e dor! Distinguimo-nos dos animais, de um lado, e dos imortais, de outro, porque somos uma espécie de abismo, fratura ou ferida, o que é diferente de ser uma “falha” ou “falta”... Somos uma espécie cindida, como Kant muito bem definiu: habitantes de dois mundos, separados, também, por um abismo! Lembrando a epígrafe de Boaventura Santos, “o pensamento moderno ocidental é um pensamento abissal”.

Talvez o “pensamento abissal” seja mesmo o mais importante e triste (trágico?) legado da modernidade. Mas não nos deixemos abater, porque somos também esta ponte ou travessia em direção à qual convergem as três perguntas já mencionadas, cuja definição a esfera estética – que é certamente a única das esferas *específica e exclusivamente* humana – nos deixa entrever. Indo um pouco além da lição kantiana, peço socorro ao poeta, Hölderlin, que nos anuncia a modernidade como o tempo do “abandono dos deuses”. Se é verdade que não há definição de ser humano, senão na contiguidade com o divino, Hölderlin nos aconselha a sóbria atitude da “infidelidade aos deuses”, ou seja, a de afastarmo-nos do divino e voltarmo-nos à terra, agora, urgente e literalmente, que está ardendo, no Brasil, ainda que tarde!

Retornando à abundante interpretação desse ponto que relaciona a Terceira Crítica ao conceito de humanidade e à Antropologia, destaco o saudoso Valério Rohden.⁵¹ Para ele, também, a humanidade é um conceito central da CFJ. Além disso, Rohden nos brinda com uma interessante e inesperada (tão oportuna nos tempos de crise nos quais a humanidade adoece) analogia entre o acordo *interno* das faculdades humanas e o acordo entre os seres

⁵¹ A esse kantiano de raiz, o kantismo brasileiro deve uma profunda gratidão, não só porque ele foi o primeiro tradutor das três Críticas (no caso da *Crítica da Razão Prática*, sozinho; da *Crítica da Razão Pura*, com Udo Balduur Moosburger; da *Crítica da Faculdade do Juízo*, como já me referi aqui muitas vezes, com António Marques), como foi, além disso, um incansável militante da “causa kantiana” no Brasil. Tanto quanto eu saiba, dedicou toda a sua vida aos estudos sobre Kant e encorajou com magnetismo a pesquisa sobre Kant no Brasil. Há outros, muitos outros professores que merecem esse mesmo sentimento de gratidão, a lista seria longa, mas não posso deixar de mencionar aqui: Guido Antônio de Almeida, também brilhante tradutor de Kant para o português: *Fundamentação da Metafísica dos Costumes* e da *Lógica de Jäsche* e um dos pioneiros do pensamento kantiano no Brasil.

humanos, eu acrescento: um acordo *externo, social e político*. Cito uma passagem que me passou despercebida até recentemente:

Com base na solução da antinomia [do gosto], descobrimos que *o conceito de humanidade é o conceito a que o juízo de gosto remete constantemente de modo indeterminado*. Kant entendeu essa ideia indeterminada como a única chave para o deciframento da faculdade de juízo de gosto.⁵² E entendeu seu caráter supra-sensível como o ponto de convergência de todas as nossas faculdades *a priori*. Eu daria a esse ponto de convergência o nome de transcendentalidade do *Gemüt*. Se o *Gemüt* é, enquanto faculdade geral, o ponto de convergência de todas as nossas faculdades, e se o seu princípio é coextensivo ao conceito de humanidade, então o possível acordo de faculdades que funda o juízo do gosto é, ao mesmo tempo, um possível acordo dos homens entre si. É isto que se expressa no conceito de humanidade como fundamento estético de todos os juízos em geral. (Rohden 1998, p. 71; grifos do autor)

Repetindo: a analogia, proposta por Rohden, entre o acordo estético que está na base do sentimento de prazer que é, sempre bom lembrar, um *sentimento de intensificação de vida*,⁵³ e que acontece no *interior de um indivíduo*, com a possibilidade de ser estendido para um acordo entre seres humanos, essa analogia é mais do que oportuna, e nela pode-se vislumbrar até um sinal para uma solução à crise que vivemos. Porque estou certa de que a “travessia do deserto”, como foram as palavras de Ailton Krenak,⁵⁴ não poderá ser feita

⁵² Kant KdU B 238, CFJ, 2016, p. 238 *apud* Rohden 1998, p. 71. Ressalto a importância desta passagem, à qual Rohden se refere. É nela que Kant rejeita totalmente a possibilidade de um “princípio objetivo do gosto”: “Fornecer um princípio objetivo determinado do gosto, a partir do qual os seus princípios pudessem ser deduzidos, testados e provados, é absolutamente impossível, pois nesse caso não se trataria de um juízo de gosto. O princípio subjetivo, ou seja, a ideia indeterminada do suprassensível em nós, pode ser apenas indicado como a chave para o deciframento dessa faculdade que, mesmo no que diz respeito às suas fontes, se oculta de nós mesmos e não pode ser explicada de nenhum outro modo.” (grifos meus)

⁵³ Cf. famoso trecho do Primeiro Momento da “Análítica do Belo”: “Aqui, a representação se relaciona tão somente ao sujeito, *mais especificamente ao seu sentimento de vida*, sob o nome de prazer e desprazer, e este funda uma faculdade inteiramente peculiar de distinguir e julgar que em nada contribui para o conhecimento, mas apenas mantém a representação dada no sujeito em relação com a faculdade de representações como um todo, da qual a mente [*Gemüt* – traduzido acertadamente, na minha modestíssima opinião, por “ânimo”, Valério Rohden e António Marques, CFJ, 1993, p. 48] se torna consciente no sentimento de seu estado.” (KdU, AA 05: 204, CFJ, 2016, p. 100)

⁵⁴ “Vozes da Floresta” – Entrevista ao líder indígena, Ailton Krenak. Num determinado momento da entrevista, Ailton relata sobre a tentativa de remoção da Aldeia Krenak, que vive às margens do Rio Doce, o

pelos seres humanos, “tradicionalmente” (o que quer dizer aqui, pela Filosofia Moderna Ocidental, ou como é mais especificamente o nosso caso aqui, por um certo kantismo) considerados a partir do ponto de vista do “indivíduo”, como um “animal sensível e racional”, conforme crava a letra da CFJ, como acabamos de ler. Aqui, teremos de seguir a sugestiva ideia de pensar a partir do ponto de vista da “espécie como um todo”, enquanto “um ente no mundo (*Weltwesen*)”, ou talvez, como um habitante do planeta: um terráqueo.

Quando a ameaça se torna planetária, igualando norte, sul, leste e oeste, é inevitável fazermos o balanço e pensarmos, enquanto coletivo⁵⁵ (talvez, nunca o tenhamos feito!), enquanto o conjunto de uma espécie que pode estar em vias de extinção! Pensar sobre este conceito de ser humano; imaginar, talvez, numa “nova espécie”, numa completa “reconfiguração de mundo”, “*mundos a experimentar e não mais a colonizar*”,⁵⁶ como nos desafiou Ailton Krenak, líder indígena, na entrevista já citada acima. Porque, desta vez, não poderemos cometer os erros do passado e desperdiçar qualquer contribuição!⁵⁷ Sobretudo a que vem dos chamados “povos da floresta”, os quais, após serem tão desprezados e quase praticamente exterminados pela arrogância colonizadora europeia, acredito que sejam os que guardem uma das poucas chaves de solução, tábua de salvação, de sobrevivência da espécie humana e do planeta que tanto o capitalismo, o colonialismo e o patriarcalismo destruíram!

Por último, ainda gostaria de mencionar a proposta original de Patrícia Kauark-Leite e de somar-me a ela nos esforços para a tentativa de realização, efetivação histórica de uma renovada e urgente “acepção de iluminismo”, o iluminismo *poiético* (Kauark-Leite 2020), e *ousar fazer*, senão pelo menos, *participar* dessa necessária construção de outro mundo

mais afetado pelo criminoso desastre da cia. de mineração, Samarco, controlada pela Multinacional Vale S.A. (antiga Vale do Rio Doce), no qual foram derramados mais de 43 milhões de m³ de lama, em novembro de 2015. A essa tentativa de remoção, os indígenas responderam que não abandonariam as suas terras e aí permaneceram apesar da morte do rio. Diante da inevitável surpresa de todos, Ailton redarguiu: quando você vê um deserto você corre dele? – Não. Nós vamos atravessá-lo! (<https://www.google.com/search?q=ailton+krenak+vozes+da+floresta&oq=ailton+krenak+vozes+&aqs=chrome.1.69i57j0.9031j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>, acesso em 10/09/2020).

⁵⁵ Cf. “Espiral dos afetos – Ideias para adiar o fim do mundo” – Aliás, é enquanto um “*sujeito coletivo*” que Ailton Krenak se refere ao seu povo e aproveita para condenar o egoísmo e o individualismo típicos da sociedade capitalista (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUhCKS_UezM, acesso em 19/09/2020).

⁵⁶ Cf. Krenak, “Espiral de afetos”.

⁵⁷ Em aula magna ministrada no Centro de Estudos Sociais (CES), na Universidade de Coimbra, em 2017, Boaventura de Sousa Santos chamou de “Epistemologias do Sul” ao “conjunto de procedimentos que visam reconhecer e validar o conhecimento produzido ou reproduzido por aqueles que têm sofrido sistematicamente as injustiças provocadas pelo capitalismo, colonialismo e patriarcalismo”. Temos de livrar-nos dessas três pragas, antes que seja tarde demais!

possível, longe da colonização da mercadoria. Além da ciência, como Kauark sugeriu, vamos ouvir os antigos, ainda inauditos saberes e, “ousando criar”, modificar, declinar, disseminar e multiplicar o iluminismo crítico de Kant. Talvez, o “Iluminismo poiético”, na medida em que significa a criação de algo novo, possa abranger em si, por um lado, o aspecto político e prático da ação – o “Iluminismo *radical*” de Robert Hanna –,⁵⁸ por outro, o aspecto criador artístico e poético, de um “Iluminismo *poético*”, inspirado por outro kantiano português, Leonel Ribeiro dos Santos.

Aliás, creio que o lindo verso de Hölderlin, que usei como epígrafe aqui, “cheio de mérito, mas poeticamente, vive o homem sobre esta Terra”, nada mais seja senão a tradução de um conselho que o próprio Kant nos deu, numa passagem, frequentemente esquecida, da “Analítica do sublime”, a qual cito para terminar, pedindo desculpas aos leitores por este ensaio que ficou muito mais longo do que o aceitável:

Quando, portanto, denomina-se *sublime* a visão do céu estrelado, não se deve fundar esse julgamento nos conceitos de mundos habitados por seres racionais ou dos pontos iluminados que vemos enchendo o espaço sobre nós como os seus sóis, movendo-se em órbitas estabelecidas para eles em conformidade com fins; *deve-se apenas considerá-lo como o vemos, como uma grande abóboda que a tudo engloba*; e é somente nessa representação que devemos situar a sublimidade que o juízo estético puro atribui a esse objeto. Do mesmo modo, não devemos considerar a visão do oceano tal como o pensamos, enriquecendo-o com todos os tipos de conhecimentos (que, em todo caso, não estão contidos na intuição imediata) – [...] *deve-se antes considerá-la [a visão do oceano], como o fazem os poetas, segundo aquilo que nos mostram os nossos olhos* – se observado o oceano em repouso, por exemplo, como um claro espelho d’água, limitado apenas pelo céu, ou então, quando agitado, como um abismo que ameaça engolir a tudo – e, ainda assim, julgá-la sublime. (KdU, AA 05: 270; CFJ, 2016, p. 167; grifos meus)

⁵⁸ Dentro de um imenso Congresso Internacional, “Kant e a Ética do Esclarecimento: Raízes históricas e Relevância contemporânea”, em abril de 2019, ocorrido na cidade russa de Kaliningrado, antiga Königsberg, o professor independente, Robert Hanna, organizou uma das Seções, intitulada: “Kant e o Iluminismo radical”. O que estava em jogo na expressão de Hanna? – “A ação”, ele mesmo respondeu. Se o Iluminismo kantiano significou um “ousar saber” e um “ousar pensar por si mesmo”, o “Iluminismo Radical” de Hanna pretende acrescentar-lhe a dimensão da ação, isto é, parafraseando o famoso lema do Iluminismo kantiano: em vez do *sapere aude*, teríamos um *agere aude* (ousar agir).

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Response to my critics: In defense of Kant's aesthetic non- conceptualism

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Abstract

In this article I respond to objections that Matías Oroño, Silvia del Luján di Saanza, Pedro Stepanenko and Luciana Martínez have raised against my non-conceptualist reading of Kant's aesthetics. The objections are both, substantial and instructive. I first sketch my non-conceptualist reading of Kant's doctrine of judgments of taste and then turn to what I take to be the most important criticisms that these authors have put forward. Two difficulties with a non-conceptualist reading of Kant's aesthetics seem to be central: the cognitive status of judgments of taste and the representationalist capacity of aesthetic feeling as non-conceptual mental content. I respond to these and additional objections and defend my overall non-conceptualist interpretation of Kant's aesthetics against my critics. I argue that Kant's aesthetics is highly relevant for the debate over whether or not Kant is a (non-)conceptualist.

Keywords

Kantian non-conceptualism, judgment of taste, aesthetic feeling, aesthetic experience

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In his article “El (no)-conceptualismo de Kant y los juicios de gusto”¹, Matías Oroño critically discusses my paper “Kant’s Aesthetic Nonconceptualism”.² In that paper I defend a non-conceptualist reading of Kant’s aesthetics. Oroño dismisses my non-conceptualist account of judgments of taste and offers an alternative interpretation of Kant’s theory of aesthetic evaluation. In reaction to Oroño’s criticism of my paper and to his alternative account, *Con-Textos Kantianos* has published a series of articles that engage – partly critically – with Oroño’s interpretation as well as with my non-conceptual reading of Kant’s aesthetics.³ The objections Oroño raises against my reading as well as the critical discussion of my account in that series of articles are well-considered, thoughtful and challenging. Since I take them to be substantial and important for a proper understanding of Kant’s aesthetics and for his theory of cognition as such, I will, in what follows, defend my arguments against my critics. To start with, I will sketch, very briefly, though, my non-conceptualist reading of Kant’s theory of judgments of taste, then present Oroño’s objections against my reading and discuss them. I then turn to the aforementioned articles published in *Con-Textos Kantianos*, 9 especially to additional points their authors make. My aim is to show why a non-conceptualist reading of Kant’s aesthetics can be defended against their criticisms, although they raise well-justified objections that require further arguments on my part.

1. *A non-conceptualist reading of Kant’s theory of judgments of taste*

In the first *Critique* Kant still thought that it would not be possible to make aesthetics into a science as Baumgarten believed for judgments of taste rest on empirical (psychological) grounds rather than a priori principles:

The ground for this is a failed hope, held by the excellent analyst Baumgarten, of bringing the critical estimation of the beautiful under principles of reason and elevating its rules to a science. But this effort is futile. For the putative rules or criteria are merely empirical as far

¹ Oroño 2017.

² Heidemann 2016.

³ The critical discussion is introduced by Oroño (2019a). The review articles are: di Saanza (2019), Stepanenko (2019), Martínez (2019), and finally a response by Oroño (2019b).

as their sources are concerned, and can therefore never serve as a priori rules according to which our judgment of taste must be directed, rather the latter constitutes the genuine touchstone of the correctness of the former. (KrV A 21/B 35 Anm.)

This view changes dramatically in the third *Critique*, i.e., after the discovery of purposiveness as the a priori principle for reflective judgment. Now aesthetics receives the status of a 'science of taste' in the sense that aesthetic judgment estimates formal, i.e., subjective purposiveness by means of the feeling of pleasure and displeasure and hereby allows for judgments of taste. For the problem of non-conceptual content in Kant's aesthetics this turns out to be crucial. Since in order to be relevant for the problem of non-conceptualism as such, judgments of taste must exhibit cognitive quality and cannot just count as (linguistic) expressions of private aesthetic feeling (cf. KU, AA 05: 211). Judgments of taste would in fact be irrelevant for the problem of non-conceptual content if Kant would conceive them as such expressions, similar to Wittgenstein's observation that statements like 'I am in pain.' are nothing over and above the linguistic form of the expression of pain itself, namely 'ouch!'. But for Kant, judgments of taste are not to be understood as bare expressions of aesthetic feeling, e.g., like 'wow!' (in the sense of 'wow, what a beautiful sculpture'). Judgments of taste have, for Kant, cognitive quality, since they involve the working together of (universally valid) cognitive faculties, i.e., imagination and understanding (cf. KU, AA 05: 217-219). Of course, judgments of taste are not judgments of cognition and do not have objective validity. But they are cognitive judgments since they are not unregulated private exclamations of conscious aesthetic feeling.⁴ In a judgment of taste, Kant says, "we do not relate the representation by means of understanding to the object for cognition, but rather relate it by means of the imagination (perhaps combined with the understanding) to the subject and its feeling of pleasure or displeasure." (KU, AA 05: 203).

In Kant's aesthetics the feeling of pleasure or displeasure is about the mental state the perceiver is in rather than about the logical determination of a sensible given through concepts like in a judgment of cognition. This feeling occurs given the harmonious relation

⁴ On the important difference between *judgment of cognition* and *cognitive judgment* see below in more detail.

of understanding and imagination. In “Kant’s Aesthetic Nonconceptualism” I argue that since the aesthetic feeling is conceptually undetermined, it counts as non-conceptual content on which judgments of taste are based. Of course, from the fact that feeling of pleasure or displeasure is non-conceptual it does not follow that it is non-conceptual in the relevant cognitive sense of ultimately bringing about judgments of taste. For as the general debate on conceptualism and non-conceptualism in philosophy of mind and cognition has shown, in order for mental content to be cognitively relevant it must be representational, phenomenal and intentional. As I try to show in the paper, the feeling of pleasure as non-conceptual content in judgments of taste meets all of these three criteria. Very briefly: The feeling of pleasure is phenomenal since in the mental state of aesthetic feeling it is somehow for the subject to be in that state (see below section 2.6.). The feeling of pleasure is intentional since in that state the subject feels itself, that is, is directed toward itself: “Here the representation is related entirely to the subject, indeed to its feeling of life, under the name of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure” (KU, AA 05: 204).⁵ And most importantly, it is representational since in that state of feeling of pleasure the subject is representing the harmonious relation of understanding and imagination (see below section 2.5.). Therefore, judgments of taste are not judgments of cognition but they are cognitive. They are cognitive because they are possible only through the workings of cognitive faculties. The harmonious relation of these faculties elicits the feeling of pleasure. And the feeling of pleasure is the non-conceptual mental state on which the judgment of taste is based.

2. Oroño’s objections against the non-conceptualist reading of Kant’s theory of judgments of taste

In the following discussion of Matías Oroño’s criticism of my non-conceptualist reading of Kant’s aesthetics I focus on six objections that he raises in *El (no)-conceptualismo de Kant y los juicios de gusto*. Since Oroño confines himself to my reading of Kant’s theory of judgment of taste and does not consider the non-conceptualist

⁵ On phenomenality and intentionality of aesthetic experience cf. in more detail Turai (2020, chapter 3).

interpretation of Kant's doctrine of the aesthetic genius that I am also proposing in my paper, I shall not consider the letter either.

2.1. *Cognitive judgment and judgment of cognition*

The first important criticism of my interpretation is Oroño's (2017, pp. 95-96, et al.) objection that throughout my paper I illegitimately characterize judgments of taste as "cognitive" and that I confusingly speak of "the cognitive appreciation of the beautiful" (Heidemann 2016, p. 118). Oroño points out that judgments of taste do not count as judgments of cognition by referring to the classical place in the "Analytic of the Beautiful" (§ 1): "The judgment of taste is therefore not a cognitive judgment, hence not a logical one, but is rather aesthetic, by which is understood one whose determining ground cannot be other than subjective." (KU, AA 05: 203). Further, Oroño (2017, p. 96) correctly reconstructs my argumentation that judgments of taste can only be relevant for the debate about non-conceptual content if they are *cognitive* judgments in order to then show that judgments of taste are based on non-conceptual content. Oroño finds this reasoning unconvincing since Kant clearly denies that judgments of taste can count as judgments of cognition.⁶ Now, in my paper I am not claiming that judgments of taste are judgments of cognition. Quite the contrary, my claim is that judgments of taste are relevant for the debate about non-conceptual content only if they are cognitive which does not mean that they are judgments of cognition. The correct translation of Kant's standard term "Erkenntnisurteil" in the third *Critique* is "judgment of cognition". The translation as "cognitive judgment" is inappropriate because the predicate "cognitive" only indicates – for Kant – that the judgment involves cognitive faculties such as sensibility, imagination and understanding and their working together. This is clearly the case with judgments of taste since they rest on the harmony of imagination and understanding and the (non-conceptual) feeling of pleasure. But from the fact that a judgment is cognitive it does not follow that it is a judgment of cognition, i.e., a judgment that is objective because we "relate the representation by means of understanding to the object" (KU, AA 05: 203). In particular, for judgments of cognition the principles of the pure understanding apply as their transcendental conditions, which is not the case with judgments of taste. With respect

⁶ The same objection is made by di Saanza (2019, pp. 335-339) and Martínez (2019, pp. 353-355).

to judgments of cognition it must be possible to attribute certain quantitative, qualitative, and relational, especially causal properties to the object of cognition whereby these attributions are objective only in accordance with the transcendental conditions of the possibility of cognition. Judgments of cognition are therefore the product of the subsumption of what is given in sensible intuition, or what is spatio-temporally determinable, under a general rule, the transcendental principle of cognition. This subsumption is possible only by mediation of a (transcendental or empirical) schema provided by the schematism of imagination. This is not the case with judgments of taste. Judgments of taste are not the product of conceptual determination, i.e., logical subsumption of what is given in sensible intuition under a general rule or concept, but reflective such that mediation through a schema is not required either and not even possible. Still, judgments of taste involve cognitive activity of the imagination and the understanding which qualifies them as *cognitive judgments*.⁷

In connection with this Oroño (2017, p. 96) agrees with me that cognition essentially consists in the necessary cooperation of intuition and concept. Opposed to my view, however, Oroño puts forward that although intuition cannot be reduced to concepts and vice versa, this does not implicate that sensible intuition's immediate and singular reference can do without any conceptual activity. Oroño indicates, correctly as I think, that this is the main point of disagreement between us – a point that goes, of course, beyond Kant's aesthetics since it concerns the overall question of whether or not Kant is a non-conceptualist about mental content in general. Here I cannot develop a broad discussion of that question. But I would like to emphasize that in my paper I am claiming that in Kant's transcendental philosophy the cooperation of intuition and concept is a necessary requirement for objective cognition. I am not claiming that this is the case for cognition in general, especially not for aesthetic cognition or judgments of taste. It seems clear to me,

⁷ It is not quite clear to me why in the English translation of Kant's third *Critique* "Erkenntnisurteil" has been translated mostly as "cognitive judgment" and less often as "judgment of cognition" (KU, AA 05: 279-281, 288-9). In the original one exclusively reads "Erkenntnisurteil[e]" and if I am not mistaken the context does not justify why the translation should switch between "cognitive judgment" and "judgment of cognition". For the German retranslation of "cognitive judgment" would be 'kognitives Urteil' which evidently does not mean "Erkenntnisurteil" in the technical Kantian sense. Therefore, by classifying "judgments of taste" as "cognitive judgments" I clearly indicate in my paper that "judgments of taste" are different from "judgments of cognition". Cf. Heidemann (2016, pp. 128-130). I concede, though, that for the sake of precision I should have better not used the English translation "cognitive judgment" and rather stick to "judgment of cognition" when pointing out that "judgments of taste" are not "judgments of cognition".

though, that as a matter of fact, in objective cognition the direct reference to the object through sensible intuition must be retained since otherwise it is hard to see how to individuate objects by means of judgments like in the judgment “This flower is beautiful.” The issue here is not that judgments always take conceptual or linguistic form. Judging is, for Kant, *conceptual* but prelinguistic. So, from the fact that judgments of taste are conceptual or linguistic expressions it does not follow that aesthetic cognition, too, is conceptual all the way down. I shall take this point up again further below.⁸

2.2. *Categorical determination and judgments of taste*

Oroño (2017, p. 98) also maintains that I am not explaining in what sense judgments of taste are categorically determined. I can see his point, although this is actually not what I wanted to say. A judgment like “This flower is beautiful.” can be read as a judgment of perception if we abstract from the predication “is beautiful”. In this case what I am focusing on is that there is an object in my visual field and this object is a flower. Here categories are clearly operative as Oroño's accepts. But I did not want to argue that in a judgment of taste an object (e.g., the beautiful flower) is categorically determined (cf. Heidemann 2016, pp. 124-5). For the judgment of taste is about the “feeling of pleasure and displeasure” (KU, AA 05: 209) that elicits the predication “is beautiful” through the free play of imagination and understanding. Kant is not explicit on how the free play is performed. But since it takes place in inner sense and since feeling as mental state is the object of “inner sense” (KU, AA 05: 218), the cognitive operations of the understanding must be conceived as some kind of categorical determination, although we cannot say what they look like. For the free play of imagination and understanding is not chaotic but, in some way, formally structured (cf. KU §§ 10-14) which can only be explained through the understanding being active. And the kind of activity that the understanding exercises here is categorical synthesis which is in line with Kant's general view that categories are logical functions conceived as determinations of intuition (cf. Prol. AA 4: 300, 322ff.). Clearly, there is no categorical determination or logical subsumption going on in aesthetic cognition or judgments of taste such that an object is somehow cognized like in objective cognition. But since the activity of the understanding consists

⁸ See also di Saanza (2019, p. 340) for a similar view.

essentially in synthesizing of what is given in intuition and since synthesis is possible only according to rules, i.e., categories, categories must be somehow operative in aesthetic cognition, too, although, as Kant says, “without a concept of the object” (KU, AA 05: 217). The way Kant lays this out is certainly not satisfying since he is not sufficiently clear on this important point. To me, however, it appears at least conclusive that in, e.g., aesthetic evaluation of a painting the perceiver playfully puts together structures and combines them in multiple ways such that the feeling of pleasure is occasioned under the rudimentary influence of the understanding. But this remains problematic for conceptualists and non-conceptualists alike.⁹

2.3. Communicability of judgments of taste

Another major objection against my non-conceptualist reading of Kant’s aesthetics consists in Oroño’s critique (2017, pp. 97-8) that I am misreading Kant’s conception of universal communicability. Whereas I argue that universal communicability applies to judging in general such that also judgments of taste must be universally communicable, Oroño claims that although judgments of taste must in fact be universally communicable in order to avoid scepticism, this does not mean that judgments of taste refer to objects like judgments of cognition do. For the object of a judgment of taste is a mental state, i.e., aesthetic feeling brought about through the free play of imagination and understanding. Therefore, in the case of the judgment of taste nothing is predicated about an object, e.g., a beautiful flower, and as a consequence universal communicability in judgments of cognition and judgments of taste is not the same. It is not clear to me, how this argument speaks against non-conceptualism. But maybe what Oroño has in mind is that judgments of taste are not objectively referential and in order for mental content, and by implication non-conceptual mental content, to be cognitively relevant it must be objectively referential. Since judgments of taste are not objectively referential their supposed non-conceptual content is cognitively irrelevant. As I am explicitly stating in my paper, I fully agree with Oroño that the object of a judgment of taste is the aesthetic feeling: “The feeling of pleasure or displeasure, however, cannot be objective in the same sense as a logical

⁹ This seems to be also the case for the conceptualist account of di Saanza (2019, p. 342).

cognitive judgement. For an aesthetic feeling is about the subjective state the perceiver is in, given the affection through the representation she has, rather than about the logical determination of a sensible given through concepts such as in a cognitive judgement.” (Heidemann 2016, p. 124). If this is true, especially if in a judgment of taste, no conceptual determination is operative (KU, AA 05: 217), then this seems to speak in favor of non-conceptual content that receives a specific role in aesthetic experience, i.e., the role of grounding those judgments. The problem then is for Oroño to make sense of the non-conceptual aesthetic feeling in aesthetic experience.

2.4. The universality of judgments of taste

Oroño (2017, p. 98) raises a similar objection against my understanding of universality of judgments of taste. Accordingly, Kant distinguishes between universality or universal validity of judgments of cognition and the mere pretension that judgments of taste are equally valid for everyone who is equipped with the same cognitive faculties. Here again the criticism is that I am not sufficiently clear about this difference and even confounding universal validity and pretension of universal validity. The difference is obviously a crucial one and my impression is that I did make it sufficiently clear: I not only state that “[...], both, logical cognitive judgements and judgements of taste lay claim to universality, the former in the objective sense, the latter in the subjective sense.” (Heidemann 2016, p. 126). I also specify that

[...] the subject of aesthetic evaluation is entitled to claim that the satisfaction is universal and “consequently he must believe himself to have grounds for expecting a similar pleasure of everyone” (KU, AA 05: 211). Thus judgements of taste are supposed to be universally valid. The kind of universality in play here cannot count as objective universality because aesthetic universality “cannot originate from concepts”, “for there is no transition from concepts to the feeling of pleasure or displeasure” (KU, AA 05: 211). Although it is not a private judgement and hence is valid only for the author of that judgement, a judgement of taste cannot lay claim to objective but only to “subjective universality” (KU, AA 05: 212). (Heidemann 2016, p. 131)

In my explication of that difference I am not quoting the phrase as Oroño is rightly expecting me to do, and which makes all the difference: “through the judgment of taste (on the beautiful) one ascribes [“ansinnen”] the satisfaction in an object to everyone, yet without grounding it on a concept” (KU, AA 05: 214). But I think the difference between both, objective and subjective universality is obvious in my account, especially that since Kant’s wants us to treat a judgment of taste *as if* it were objectively true and that everyone is called upon to endorse (cf. Heidemann 2016, p. 133). Here again it is not entirely clear to me how this terminological issue affects my argument for Kant’s aesthetic non-conceptualism since that judgments of taste are not objectively universal does not imply by itself that they are conceptual all the way down. For as I shall show further below subjective universality is compatible with non-conceptual content being representational.

2.5. Representation and aesthetic feeling

A highly questionable aspect of my non-conceptualist interpretation is, according to Oroño (2017, pp. 99-100), my claim that judgments of taste, or the feeling of pleasure as I would prefer, is representational. As mentioned in section 1 above, I define three criteria that mental content must meet in order to be cognitively relevant. The crucial and most challenging criterion is that mental content must be representational, as both of us agree. Oroño objects that in contrast to my claim judgments of taste, although involving representations, are not representational, more precisely do not represent the harmony of imagination and understanding. For the harmony is the ground of the feeling of pleasure but the feeling itself does not *represent* the harmony. Therefore, even if it were true that the feeling of pleasure is not conceptual, it cannot count as representation of the harmony and therefore my argument for the representational character of aesthetic feeling and its non-conceptuality does not go through.¹⁰ I would like to respond to this important point in two ways: First, from the fact the harmony of the faculties is the ground of aesthetic feeling it does not follow, at least not conceptually, that the aesthetic feeling cannot represent the harmony. As I see it, ‘ground’ can only signify that it brings about the

¹⁰ For a similar objection see di Saanza (2019, p. 340).

feeling. The 'aesthetic feeling' is then cognitively related to its ground in inner sense such that it would not have arisen if the harmony would not have been occasioned. The ground is, of course, different from its effect, here the feeling, nonetheless this does not seem to imply that the effected feeling is only a receptive mental occurrence that is somehow related to its ground. It is the special character and the cognitive role of the feeling that explains why it is representational with respect to harmony even though the latter is its ground. This is obvious from my second response: With respect to the representational character of feeling as non-conceptual content, the crucial point is that we only know about the harmony of the faculties because of the feeling of pleasure. By being conscious of or experiencing pleasure we are automatically (maybe unconsciously) aware of that harmony as its ground. The absence of the ground (harmony) implicates the absence of the effect (feeling). But why is feeling representational? In addition to the reasons that I have presented in my paper (Heidemann 2016, pp. 128-130), I would like to give the following specification. The point of dispute here is not that feeling is mental content that we can be aware of. The crucial question rather is whether feeling as (non-conceptual) mental content is representational (with respect to harmony). In contemporary philosophy and specifically in the debate over non-conceptualism in philosophy of mind and cognition it has been widely accepted that mental content is representational if it has accuracy conditions, i.e., it must be possible to distinguish between an accurate and an inaccurate representation of the mental content in question. Is this the case with respect to feeling? At first glance it isn't, since feelings do not have accuracy (or even truth) conditions. In Kant's aesthetics, however, this is different. For here the feeling of pleasure does have such conditions for Kant specifies that aesthetic feeling only occurs under the condition of the harmony of the faculties. Again, Kant is not specific about what the harmony itself exactly looks like since it is not conceptually determined in any objective sense, although the understanding is operative in the free play. This is also the reason for why the representation of the aesthetic feeling in inner sense is subjective rather than objective like in judgments of cognition. I therefore hold onto my claim that aesthetic feeling is non-conceptual mental content that is capable of representing its ground, i.e., the harmony of the faculty of imagination and understanding, because as mental content it has relevant accuracy conditions since it obviously makes a difference for the awareness of aesthetic feeling whether the faculties are in harmony or not. That accuracy conditions apply here is made possible through the

faculty universalism, i.e., Kant's view that all humans share the same cognitive faculties in the same way.

2.6. First person experience and aesthetic evaluation

In my non-conceptualist reading of Kant's aesthetics, I make the case that for Kant aesthetic experience is essentially dependent on the first-person-perspective such that in order to aesthetically evaluate a work of art it is the evaluating, judging person who must have first-hand experience of the work that he or she judges. Thus, in aesthetic evaluation the judging person cannot rely on heteronomous sources, e.g., reports by third persons, but must itself experience the work. Furthermore, if aesthetic evaluation depends on the first-person standpoint it cannot be carried out by conceptual or logical proof which is by definition independent of any individual perspective. This, too, I argue, supports my non-conceptualist reading since phenomenal experience of one's own state of mind like aesthetic feeling cannot be conceptually described and therefore is non-conceptual. Oroño dismisses this reasoning because the first-person perspective is insufficient for evidencing non-conceptual content, not least because the judgment of taste is an expression of a feeling and does not represent an object. In section 2.5. I have indicated why I think aesthetic feeling is in fact (subjectively) representational. Along these lines I would also like to respond to this objection. To start with, Kant clearly says that aesthetic experience cannot rely on "the approval of others" and "that what has pleased others can never serve as the ground of an aesthetic judgment." (KU, AA 05: 284) Aesthetic experience must draw on first-person-experience. In order to illustrate this Kant makes use of a telling analogy:

Someone may list all the ingredients of a dish for me, and remark about each one that it is otherwise agreeable to me, and moreover even rightly praise the healthiness of this food; yet I am deaf to all these grounds, I try the dish with my tongue and my palate, and on that basis (not on the basis of general principles) do I make my judgment. (KU, AA 05: 285; Kant's emphasis)

The point Kant makes here is very similar to Thomas Nagel's argument in *What is it like to be a bat?* In that article Nagel develops an argument for the irreducibility of phenomenal experience, of so-called qualia-consciousness that we experience when we, e.g., perceive the specific red colour of a sunset or the unique taste of the sweetness of a candy. The argument consists of three steps: First Nagel specifies two features of consciousness: The one is that "an organism has conscious mental states if and only if there is [...] something it is like *for* that organism". (Nagel 1974, p. 436) This is what Nagel calls the "subjective character of experience". (Nagel 1974, p. 436) The reason why conscious experience is subjective can be explained by the second feature: "every subjective phenomenon is essentially connected with a single point of view". (Nagel 1974, p. 437) Therefore, a physicalist theory cannot explain the subjectivity of consciousness since it is by definition an objective theory that is completely detached from a single point of view. To put it in another way: Conscious experience like seeing the red colour or tasting the candy is something that I cannot know objectively, since it is something that I can know exclusively from my own case, without being able to conceptualise it. The second step of the argument tries to show that the subjectivity of consciousness is undeniably a fact about what it is like to be an organism, e.g. a bat. To this end Nagel takes it for granted that bats have phenomenal experiences. He invites us to imagine what it is like to be a bat, a creature which experiences the world by echolocation. Of course, Nagel argues, we can imagine having poor vision and spending the day hanging upside down by ones feet in an attic. But whether we can imagine that from our human perspective is not the question. What we want to know is what it is like for a bat to be a bat. To get to know that is not possible for us because we cannot take up a bat's subjective conscious experience since our imagining being a bat is tied to our single human points of view and can never reach what it is like for the bat itself. Nevertheless, we have to acknowledge the *fact* that bats have subjective conscious experience though human imagination and concepts are not able to grasp exactly what it is like to be a bat for a bat. In the third step of the argument Nagel depicts the position he holds with regard to facts. He calls it "realism about the subjective domain", a form of realism that acknowledges "the existence of facts beyond the reach of human concepts" (Nagel 1974, p. 441). This conception of realism is specifically a metaphysical realism, according to which reality does not coincide with what

we are able to think is real or grasp conceptually. Metaphysical realism rather is the view that reality goes beyond of what we can describe. There is no doubt for Nagel that there are facts which humans never will possess the requisite concepts to represent. Kant clearly rejects metaphysical, or in his own terms, transcendental realism. But Kant would clearly acknowledge this reasoning with respect to subjective aesthetic experience as non-conceptual. As a matter of fact, aesthetic experience is, for Kant, first-person experience since there are no conceptual tools that make it possible to describe that experience. The experience (aesthetic feeling) is therefore non-conceptual although it is factual for it is somehow for the subject of that experience to be in the mental state of aesthetic feeling, a state that is a subjective mental fact beyond conceptual grasp. Kant's insistence on first-person aesthetic experience therefore supports my non-conceptualist reading of his aesthetics.

3. *Further objections against the non-conceptualist reading of Kant's aesthetics*

In addition to the objections raised by Oroño I will, in what follows, discuss some of the criticisms of my non-conceptualist reading of Kant's aesthetics that have been put forward in the aforementioned series of articles published in *Con-Textos Kantianos*, 9. All of those criticisms are very considerate and helpful. Here I do not have the space to respond to all of them in detail and will restrict myself to those objections that I take to be most threatening for my account. This does not mean that the objections I am not considering in this response in detail are irrelevant.

3.1. *Concept, intuition and non-conceptual representation*

In his contribution "La persistencia de los conceptos. Un comentario sobre una objeción de Matías Oroño a Dietmar Heidemann" Pedro Stepanenko joins and elaborates on Oroño's critique that from irreducibility of intuitions to concepts non-conceptualism does not follow, to put it differently, from the acknowledged fact that intuition qua *repraesentatio singularis* cannot be reduced to concept qua *repraesentatio generalis* it cannot be inferred that intuition is a cognitive mode that allows for non-conceptual

representation of objects. In his discussion Stepanenko (2019, p. 346), first, very helpfully reconsiders the recent debate on Kant and non-conceptualism, and points to the difficulty that Kantian (non-)conceptualism might not stand for what the contemporary (analytic) debate conceives as (non-)conceptualism.¹¹ Now like Oroño, Stepanenko contends that it is the nature of intuition that ultimately justifies why on the judgmental level non-conceptual mental content is conserved. For this reason, there arises a conflict in my reading, he argues, between the claim that non-conceptual content is cognitively relevant only if it can be preserved on the judgmental level, and the view that intuition is irreducible to concepts, hence to any judgmental structure. In this context he makes the additional point that in order to substantiate this view I should have presented a definition of mental content. It is in fact the understanding of mental content that he considers to be at the heart of the problem (Stepanenko 2019, pp. 346-7).

In response to these astute considerations, I would like to point out that I am not claiming that since intuition cannot be reduced to concept, Kant must count as a non-conceptualist. This would be a much too simple argument. The crucial point is that intuition qua non-conceptual content can only be cognitively relevant if it meets a certain set of criteria that warrant how it can have justificatory *force*. As argued above, the most important one is the condition that non-conceptual content must be representational. With respect to this requirement in particular, Stepanenko reminds us of the famous *dictum* of the first *Critique*: “Thought without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.” (KrV, A 51/B 75). In a nutshell, it is from this dictum that it gets clear that intuitions without concepts cannot refer to anything at all.

It seems to me that this is not correct. Let's briefly look at how Kant comes to argue that intuition and concept are different in kind and why their difference implies that intuition is representational. From Kant's essay *Concerning the Ultimate Foundation of the Distinction of the Directions in Space* (1768) it is evident that in order to claim that thoughts without content are empty, and intuitions without concepts are blind, one must show the ultimate difference between intuition and concept. The crucial argument here is that given incongruent counterparts it is not the case, as Leibniz thought, that a complete

¹¹ I am glad that Stepanenko mentions this concern. I fully agree with him that there is the danger of confounding traditions. A next step of the debate might therefore consist in a substantial self-reflexive discussion about similarities and differences between the traditions in play.

conceptual description of objects leads to the numerical identity of these objects if the descriptions are identical. This is not true, according to Kant, since in intuition incongruent counterparts remain numerically distinct objects as spatial representation (intuition) shows. I cannot discuss Kant's argument here at length. But since he comes back to it later at several other places when clarifying the difference between intuition and concept (like in *De mundi, Prolegomena*) this seems to be still a relevant move for him. Why is it? Because it shows that it is possible to represent objects merely on the basis of intuition without concepts since as incongruent counterparts show we can still refer to numerically distinct objects and refer to them in cognitively relevant ways. The reason for this is, as Kant demonstrates later in his (semi-)critical works, that intuition is *repraesentatio singularis* rather than *generalis*. This does not show that objective cognition is possible solely through sensible intuition but that we can represent and numerically distinguish objects in space (whether their position in space is right- or left-handed etc.) independently of the use of concepts. For conceptual descriptions do not suffice to distinguish incongruent counterparts in space. Therefore, intuition as *repraesentatio singularis* is, in principle, representational, as I argue in my paper. This needs, of course, to be referred to the context of Kant's aesthetics but it seems to me that Stepanenko's intellectualist account of Kant's distinction between intuition and concept does not hold.

3.2. *Non-conceptual content and the genius*

In her contribution: "Kant y el no conceptualismo" Luciana Martínez takes up various criticisms already raised by Oroño such as the objection that judgments of taste are not cognitive or do have cognitive value. There are two points assessed by Martínez that I would like to consider here a little further. Martínez (2019, pp. 355, 358) objects that I am not explaining the criteria for non-conceptual content that I define. I accept this criticism but would just like to hint at the general debate on non-conceptual content where these criteria have been established. Although this is a fair enough point, I cannot develop the entire arguments for why these criteria apply.¹² The second important criticism Martínez (2019, pp. 353-355) makes is that in my paper I do not integrate my claims about the

¹² It cannot be ruled out that these criteria need to be revised.

genius' non-conceptual making of artwork into my overall argument. More specifically I do not relate them to the doctrine of the judgment of taste and ignore its systematic function within Kant's aesthetics. I am not sure whether this is the case. It seems to me that in my paper I discuss the genius' non-conceptualism to quite some extent, especially with respect to the question whether the way of production of art by the genius entails non-conceptual elements or even is non-conceptual all the way down. With respect to aesthetic ideas this is certainly the case because Kant repeatedly emphasizes aesthetic ideas exceed any conceptual grasping. He even says that an "aesthetic idea" is

that representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e., concept, to be adequate to it, which, consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible. One readily sees that it is the counterpart (pendant) of an idea of reason, which is, conversely, a concept to which no intuition (representation of the imagination) can be adequate. (KU, AA 05: 314)

I am not taking Kant's doctrine of the aesthetic genius to stand for his non-conceptualism in any positive sense. This is because the genius' cognitive behavior does not result in any objective cognition discursive cognizers could have. This doctrine is therefore merely complementary to Kant's doctrine of the judgment of taste. On the other hand, Martínez does not provide any concrete arguments against my view that because aesthetic ideas are not discursive or linguistically expressible in ordinary judgments like judgments of taste, they are non-conceptual. To my claim that the alleged genius' cognition lays claim to non-conceptual mental content discursive cognizers cannot have, she does not respond in detail. – As I said before, I take the objections raised by the authors considered here to be very enlightening and serious threads to my non-conceptual reading of Kant's aesthetics. But what I am missing in all of their contributions is a conclusive explication of why Kant repeatedly underscores (cf. KU, §§ 5, 6, 8, 9, 16, 17, 22) that

judgments of taste are *without concept* if it is true, as they believe, that judgments of taste are conceptual whatsoever.¹³

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On Aesthetic Judgments and Contemplative Perception in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*

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Abstract

The paper argues that much of Kant's largely formalistic account of aesthetic appreciation stands on the idea that the judger is able to engage with the object of her judgment purely sensibly and hence non-conceptually or non-cognitively. This is to say that the judger must be able to ground her judgment on the immediate sensory affection by the object (which makes her judgment an aesthetic judgment of sense) or on the object's sensible form (which makes her judgment an aesthetic judgment of taste). The paper also argues that these two purely sensible grounds, accessible in the aesthetic examination of objects, underlie the feeling involved in such judgments. In broader terms, the paper outlines how Kant's account of aesthetic judgment suggests what might be called a contemplative model of perception.

Key words

Aesthetic Judgment; Contemplation; Form; Intuition; Sensation

1. Introduction

I argue, in what follows, that much of Kant's account of aesthetic appreciation, as presented in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* in particular, stands on the idea that the judger is able to engage with the object of her judgment purely sensibly and hence non-conceptually or, as one might also want to put it, non-cognitively (*pace* e.g. Janaway

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1997). Put differently, I want to underline that for Kant the possibility of certain kinds of judgments depends on purely sensuous or formalistic outlook on things, and that such an outlook implies conceptually unmediated sensible content. By such content Kant means, roughly, the way a thing looks or sounds, or is represented to look or sound, which can be understood either as a representation of the immediate sensory affection by the thing or its sensible structure, composition or form (*Gestalt, Form*).

In aesthetics, such a position implies formalism. That said, I suspect that Kant's complex theory in the third *Critique* completely fits formalism or any other common label or "ism". Formalism nevertheless has its place in aesthetic evaluation, at least in certain contexts, and I think this is also true of Kant (see e.g. Zangwill 2001). Instead of arguing for a formalist interpretation of Kant, however, my goal in what follows is to examine some of the basic tenets of Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment, and while some of these tenets do support a formalist reading of Kant's aesthetics, they are perhaps more illustrative of Kant's views on perception underlying his aesthetic theory more generally. Relatedly, I will speak about aesthetic appreciation in two senses: as a matter of palate and the like, or "the taste of the senses" (*KU*, 5:214), on the one hand, and as a matter of taste in the 18th century sense of the term, or "the taste of reflection" (*ibid.*), on the other. Kant's formalist tendencies have to do with the latter, but the former is, I think, equally illustrative of Kant's overall position.

I begin, in §2, by examining the ground of aesthetic judgment, which can be understood in two ways, namely either as a feeling or as that which prompts the feeling. The latter kind of ground can be either a mere sensation (which makes the judgment an aesthetic judgment of sense) or intuition (which, at least ideally, makes the judgment a pure aesthetic judgment of taste). In §3, I examine what it means to engage with objects merely sensibly, as suggested by both kinds of aesthetic judgment. In §4, I show how such a stance on objects not only suggests what I call a contemplative model of perception but finds further support from Kant's views on contemplation and aesthetic reflection. In the concluding remarks, I consider briefly how the contemplative model of perception, as suggested by the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, might connect with Kant's theory of cognition as presented in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

2. Grounds of Aesthetic Judgments

Kant famously lays out his account of aesthetic judgement in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Many things Kant says in that book suggests that Kant's view on aesthetic appreciation of nature and art can be considered to be more or less formalistic. One of the things that points to this direction is the idea that the cognitive subject must be able to represent the object of her aesthetic judgment without basing her representation on concepts in order to get the required kind of satisfaction out of the object in question (see e.g. *KU*, 5:219). A more explicitly formalistic demand is that "beauty [...] should properly concern mere form" (Kant 2000b, p. 108; *KU*, 5:223).

Many commentators have been puzzled about these requirements. If, for example, the non-conceptuality of aesthetic judgment is taken to mean that in order to make aesthetic judgments we must abandon all our conceptual understanding of the things we make judgments about, then Kant's position may indeed appear as absurd (e.g. Cohen 2002, p. 2). One might want to add to this that here we are speaking of judgments, and one of the core features of Kant's theory of cognition is that the human thinker is more than anything a maker of judgments the constituents of which are concepts or other judgments (A69/B94; B141). It might therefore be considered trivially true that all kinds of judgments are in some sense conceptual and trivially false that judgments could be made without the application of concepts, or the faculty of concepts also known as understanding, for that matter.¹ In a similar vein, the "mere form" requirement may suggest some kind of "empty cognitive stock" on the part of the judge, which some commentators find utterly implausible (see e.g. Janaway 1997, pp. 459-460; Wollheim 1980, p. 33 and *passim*).

Still, there are reasons to attribute the idea of non-conceptual engagement with objects to Kant without confusing him for Schopenhauer, for example (*pace* Janaway 1997, 461-463).² The first thing to acknowledge is that the idea of the non-conceptuality of aesthetic judgment ultimately concerns the *ground* of judgment (or so I wish to argue). By the ground of aesthetic judgment Kant sometimes means feeling (e.g. *KU*, 231). Accordingly, any such judgment has to do with the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, understood either as a particular feeling or the faculty responsible for feelings (see e.g. *EEKU*, 20:224; *KU*, 5:196). And for Kant feelings are non-cognitive states that concern objects' influence on us rather than objects as such (see e.g. *V-Met/Arnoldt* aka *Metaphysik Vigilantius*, 29:1009).

This, however, is not the end of story. To identify the ground of aesthetic judgment straightforwardly with (dis)pleasurable feeling and leave it at that would be to overlook another crucial point about the ground of aesthetic judgment (cf. e.g. Janaway 1997). The further thing to acknowledge is that which enables the feeling. As Kant repeatedly suggests, although he is not always explicit about it, this feeling-enabler is that which is sensibly present to the judge, namely the "representation through which the object is given (not through which it is thought)" (Kant 2000b, p. 115; *KU*, 5:230). By such a representation, Kant must mean what he calls intuition (*Anschauung*). Kant also speaks of the "form of the purposiveness of an object" as the ground of the judgment of taste (Kant 2000b, p. 106; *KU*, 5:221). As I read this phrase, Kant means, basically, the object's spatial form or structure, although the phrase also contains the further idea that aesthetically praiseworthy objects arouse a peculiar kind of sense of purposiveness as we examine them (I will return to both of these topics below).

¹ Kant himself reminds his reader about this by adding in a footnote that "a relation to the understanding is always contained even in the judgment of taste" (Kant 2000b, p. 89n; *KU*, 5:203*).

² Janaway thinks that 'wholly non-conceptual engagement' fits Schopenhauer's view but not Kant's (Janaway 1997, pp. 471-472). For Schopenhauer's view on ordinary perception versus aesthetic perception, see Vandenabeele 2015, pp. 33-49.

For now, the most important thing to acknowledge is that the feeling is but a consequence or effect (see also A29/B44) of a certain kind of response allowed by (a certain kind of examination that targets) the object as it is given to us. In other words, the touchstone of aesthetic judgment is not just feeling as such, but a specific manner of representation of the object on which the feeling itself is grounded. Here there are two alternatives: either the feeling is grounded on *sense-sensation* or the feeling is grounded on *sense-intuition*, as the distinction is put in the 1794-95 lectures on metaphysics, where Kant briefly explains his aesthetic theory as well (Kant 2001, p. 479; *V-Met/Arnoldt* aka *Metaphysik Vigilantius*, 29:1009-1010).

The distinction between sense-sensation and sense-intuition maps quite neatly onto Kant's distinction between two kinds of aesthetic judgment. As far as Kant's theory of judgment in general is concerned, the central new thing in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* is of course the distinction between determining and reflecting judgment. Undoubtedly, the most discussed variant of reflecting judgment is the judgment of taste, a special kind of subjectively yet universally valid judgment concerning the beautiful—e.g. “This rose is beautiful.” As everybody familiar with the third *Critique* knows, such a judgment is also known as reflecting aesthetic judgment in distinction to reflecting teleological judgment. However, even though it is not uncommon in the literature to identify aesthetic judgment with the reflecting variety (see e.g. Kukla 2006, p. 6n10; Pillow 2006, p. 255; Longuenesse 2000, pp. 168-169n4), there is also non-reflecting aesthetic judgment, namely the aesthetic judgment of sense—e.g. “This wine tastes nice.” As opposed to reflecting aesthetic judgments, non-reflecting aesthetic judgments are supposed to express merely a private viewpoint on objects, which need not be anything more than an expression of personal (dis)liking or “agreeableness”.

Most importantly for the present purposes, aesthetic judgments of sense—or judgments of sensation, as Kant at one point calls them (*KU*, 5:288)—are ultimately based on sensation, understood as the *matter* of perception (A167/B209). By contrast, the possibility of the judgment of taste, although necessarily feeling-bound, ultimately stems from the object's *form* (*Gestalt, Form*). This also means that such a judgment depends on intuition (see also *V-Met/Arnoldt* aka *Metaphysik Vigilantius*, 29:1010)—i.e. the kind of representation or operation of the mind that gives us spatiotemporally structured somethings with their distinctive *Gestalten*.³

³ This is not to say that aesthetic judgments of sense or sensation would not depend on intuition too. On the contrary, sensations being the material components of empirical intuitions (see also e.g. *Anth*, 7:143*), not only are sensations parts of representations of objects, but they can only be delivered (so to speak) through intuition. Insofar as the distinction between the two kinds of aesthetic judgments is concerned—especially since Kant sometimes seems to identify sensation with feeling—the crucial thing to my mind is that sensations proper prompt the feeling of (dis)pleasure expressed in an aesthetic judgment of sense but are not identical with the feeling. As Kant explains in the *First Introduction*: “Thus an aesthetic judgment is that whose determining ground lies in a sensation that is immediately connected with the feeling of pleasure and displeasure. In the aesthetic judgment of sense it is that sensation which is immediately produced by the empirical intuition of the object” (Kant 2000b, p. 26; *EEKU*, 20:224). On the further issue of whether sensations as such are representational or not, see esp. Jankowiak 2014.

Unsurprisingly, then, Kant calls aesthetic judgments of sense material aesthetic judgments in distinction to formal aesthetic judgments also known as judgments of taste (*KU*, 5:223; see also *EEKU*, 20:224). As will be elaborated in what follows, in the case of formal aesthetic judgment, the pleasurable mental state required for a successful judgment can only arise from attending the form of the object, not from thinking it under some concept. In a similar vein, to make a material aesthetic judgment, you must base your judgment on sensations—i.e. “the matter of the representations” (Kant 2000b, p. 108; *KU*, 5:224)—produced by the object (as it affects your palate, for example), not on what you happen to know about it. Indeed, it must be this non-cognitive or non-conceptual stance towards objects from which Kant’s theoretical need to distinguish between “merely” aesthetic judgments (see e.g. *EEKU*, 20:223) and knowledge-aiming, cognitively determining judgments originates.

3. Attending to the Given

The non-cognitive dimension of aesthetic judgments alluded to in the previous section does not need to mean that such judgments, as judgments, are purely sensuous. On the contrary, it should be clear that we cannot make and utter the judgment “This rose is beautiful” without being perfectly aware that we are examining a rose, and this requires concept-application like any judgment. In the same vein, it would be odd to insist that making a certain kind of judgment about a particular rose would require that we abandon all our knowledge and beliefs about roses.

Accordingly, the kind of contemplative perception suggested by Kant in his aesthetic theory most likely does not mean that the overall cognitive state of the subject must be totally concept-free at a certain moment. It sounds more plausible that the subject, while possibly perfectly understanding that she is looking at a rose, succeeds in also regarding the object only according to those features that are not concept-bound. Kant himself alludes to such a situation in his lectures, when he tells his students how the existence of a house may pain him on grounds presented by his understanding—presumably, because of what he knows about its past—yet continue to please him as far its form is concerned (*V-Met/Arnoldt* aka *Metaphysik Vigilantius*, 29:1009-1010).

What I take to be crucial is that the judger ought to ground her judgment on the sensation itself, if the judgment is supposed to be a material aesthetic judgment. Similarly, the judger ought to ground her judgment on mere intuition, i.e. the kind of representation that provides the form, if the judgment is supposed to be a formal aesthetic judgment, as it appears to be the case in Kant’s example. Otherwise, the judgment is either not aesthetic at all or the judgment is not a pure and free aesthetic judgment, i.e. it might still be a judgment of adherent or relative beauty (*KU*, 5:229-230) or “a partly intellectualized judgment of taste” (Kant 2000b, p. 117; *KU*, 5:232-233). Similarly, if an aesthetic judgment is mixed with interest, it is not pure but partial (*KU*, 5: 205).

The main point is that the judger could not make fully-fledged aesthetic judgments unless she had access to purely sensible grounds. In other words, in order to make material aesthetic judgments, the judging subject must be able to attend to tastes, smells, colors, sounds and textures, and perhaps also joys and sorrows and the like, insofar (and only insofar) as these are sensed or felt. For example, the manner a specific red color looks like, or the taste of coffee (and its taste alone), could serve as proper grounds of such judgments. An actual material aesthetic judgment thus is, basically, both an indication of how something tastes to me, for example, and an indication of the fact that my attending to this particular sensation caused by certain object comes with pleasure or displeasure (see also e.g. *V-Met-L2/Pölitz*, 28:586). In a similar vein, for formal aesthetic judgments to be possible, the judger must be able to attend to the object's *Gestalt* and ground her judgment on this and only this. For example, the spatial constitution of the house (see *V-Met/Mron*, 29:1009) could serve as such a ground of judgment insofar as the object is considered merely formally yet sensibly, that is, without basing the judgment on the material features provided through sensation or features attributed to the object when thinking it under some concept or the other.

Such material or formal yet merely sensible features of objects should be strictly distinguished from features such as size or length, understood as measures based on some unit. Indeed, merely sensible features of objects should be kept apart from any such properties attributed to the object through which we come to understand what *kind* of an object it is—including, in particular, what *purpose* the object might serve (e.g. *KU*, 5:221, 226-227).⁴ Certainly, concepts are necessary for understanding and experiencing objects this way—ultimately, you would need both the categories and empirical concepts for that. For example, when you think of the rose as a certain kind of organic complex that has this or that feature, you employ at least the categories of Plurality and *substantia et accidens*, but also the empirical concepts of rose and plant.

It is, however, equally crucial to distinguish features accessed via sense-sensation and sense-intuition from any such features determined through concepts. In particular, it does not seem to be the case that, for Kant, the categories or empirical concepts would have anything to do with the exact way things look, sound, taste, feel or smell purely sensibly speaking—in their empirical uniqueness, as it were. Indeed, not only are the categories a class of a priori concepts, but apparently all concepts for Kant are representations that “[contain] only the common characteristic (leaving out what is particular)” (Kant 2000b, p. 345; *KU*, 5:484). By contrast, for you to make an aesthetic judgment you will have to base your judgment on the particular or otherwise your judgment is ruined.

There are many ways to ruin an aesthetic judgment. To try and base your judgment on pre-established rules, to base your judgment on testimony, to base your judgment on generalizations, or more generally and more closely to the point just made, to base your

⁴ Again, the non-pure judgments of taste, which “presuppose [...] the concept of what the object ought to be” (Kant 2000b, p. 114; *KU*, 5:229) would be an exception.

judgment on concepts are all ways to ruin a judgment if the judgment is supposed to be truly an aesthetic judgment (*KU*, 5:215-216, 231-232, 285-286). As far as the judgment of taste is concerned, to be interested in the existence of the object (i.e. to desire it) would be a yet another way to ruin the judgment (see e.g. *KU*, 5:209). Indeed, the disinterestedness criterion—according to which you must attend to the object for its own sake—might just as well be the most central feature of Kant’s theory of aesthetic evaluation. I do not think that the notion of disinterestedness is crucial for understanding the more general idea behind Kant’s account of aesthetic judgment and contemplative model of perception, however.

More crucially for our purposes, as Kant writes when he explains that judgments of taste are independent of perfection as well, basing an aesthetic judgment on concepts is simply something we cannot do, because

if one were to call confused concepts and the objective judgment that is grounded in them aesthetic, one would have an understanding that judged by sense or a sense that represented its object through concepts, both of which are self-contradictory. (Kant 2000b, p. 113, *KU*, 5:228)

Here, Kant partly reiterates one of the basic points of his view about the human mind, according to which the faculties of understanding and sensibility are separate capacities whose cognitive functions and contributions are unexchangeable and irreducible to one another (see e.g. A51-52/B75-77). At the same time, it seems that he also wants to make a very simple point, which is that the very notion of aesthetic judgment would be a misnomer if it would require as its ground something that cannot really be sensible (*sinnlich, ästhetisch*) in the end. In the quote, “confused concepts” are such a thing: even if confused or lacking in clarity and distinctness, they are nevertheless concepts, not sensible representations.

To put it differently, the ground of aesthetic judgment must be something that is left out from the conceptual determination of the object, and the maker of an aesthetic judgment about the object must pay attention to just this something, which Kant identifies with a feeling, on the one hand, and the way the object shows itself to the senses, on the other. For Kant, taste in particular requires the capacity to abstract from conceptual determination, or as he explicates his position using an expert’s knowledge of plants as an example,

even the botanist, who recognizes in [the flower] the reproductive organ of the plant pays no attention to this natural end if he judges the flower by means of taste. (Kant 2000b, p. 114, *KU*, 5:229)

Of course, “paying no attention to natural ends” can be seen as a further point, but the botanist example at least partly repeats the main point made above: namely, that in order to make certain kind of judgments, you must be able to limit your attention to certain things available to you and not let other things, such as your knowledge base, come in the way of

your appreciation of the object. As one might also want to put it, conceptual knowledge is irrelevant for aesthetic appreciation (Budd 2002, p. 11n14).⁵

More technically put, to attend to the object's form, as required by the judgment of taste, is to apprehend the object in mere intuition.⁶ Crucially for current purposes, as Kant says explicitly in the Section VIII of the Introduction to the third *Critique*, apprehension (*Auffassung*, also *apprehensio*) takes place "prior to any concept" (Kant 2000b, p. 78; *KU*, 5:192). Though he also suggests that usually the goal of apprehension is "to unite the intuition with concepts for a cognition in general" (*ibid.*), clearly such a unification is something that need not happen. He repeats the very same point in his lectures in the 1790s when he remarks that understanding *can* connect with intuition or the "representation through the senses" (Kant 2001, p. 480; *V-Met/Arnoldt* aka *Metaphysik Vigilantius*, 29:1010). Most importantly for the present purposes, as Kant suggests in the third *Critique*, uniting intuition with the concept(s) of the object furnished by understanding must not happen insofar as the grounding of an aesthetic judgment is concerned. Instead, since the ultimate ground of judgments of taste depends on (or indeed is) intuition, which is the "representation through which the object is given (not through which it is thought)" (Kant 2000b, p. 115; *KU*, 5:230), you are supposed to apprehend the object by targeting it as it is given to you merely sensibly.

Apprehension involves the power of imagination, which Kant identifies with the faculty of intuition in the third *Critique* (e.g. *KU*, 5:190). As he further explicates in the lectures: "All objects of sense-intuition or the power of imagination are also objects of the aesthetic power of judgment" (Kant 2001, p. 480; *V-Met/Arnoldt* aka *Metaphysik Vigilantius*, 29:1010). Thus, whatever we "intuit" is a potential object of aesthetic judgment—including, apparently, imagined objects too.

In addition to sense-intuition and the power of imagination, the procedure for finding out whether an object is beautiful also involves understanding. This is a delicate issue. As Kant infamously has it, we are supposed to recognize the beauty of the object when our imagination and understanding are in "harmony" as we attend to the object disinterestedly. Accordingly, beauty is not exactly an objective feature of the object itself, but a feature of our own mental constitution that may or may not end up in a certain kind of state in the apprehension of a certain kind of object (see e.g. *KU*, 5:211). For example, if I judge that the rose is beautiful, even though I do attribute beauty to the object, ultimately this means that this particular rose has the power to produce a certain kind of pleasurable mental state in me as I examine the rose. To this extent, judgments of taste are like any aesthetic judgments.

⁵ Budd writes: "Aesthetic appreciation of a bird's song appears to be the same before and after you learn which type of bird it is, or whether you know it is a song thrush, say, and how a song thrush looks, at rest or in flight." To my mind, this formulation captures Kant's non-cognitive view of free beauty perfectly.

⁶ I shall concentrate on the formal aesthetic judgments for the moment, but basically the same applies to material judgments based on sense-sensation, since it is through intuition that we access sensible objects, and as empirical, intuition always contains sensation as well.

Much ink has been spilled on the harmony of the faculties.⁷ I am suspicious, however, how much really rests on this rather speculative-sounding notion. To skip a detail or two, I take Kant's key point to be simply this. As we examine an object, we may encounter "a certain purposiveness" (Kant 2000b, p. 120n; *KU*, 5:236*) in the way we confront the object, although this purposiveness has nothing to do with any of the ends attributable to the object. Rather, the purposiveness in question is "a purposiveness of the representational state of the subject" (Kant 2000b, p. 112; *KU*, 5:227). Crucially for current purposes, however, such a purposiveness without external purpose—ultimately reflecting the fact that objects regarded as beautiful nonetheless seem as if they were designed for our faculties—rests on the objects' perceptual shape (*Gestalt*) or form (*Form*) (*KU*, 5: 279).⁸ The task of the imagination is to observe the perceptual form as if the imagination was merely playing with the object, which also implies that the imagination is not restricted by concepts (*KU*, 5:230). In the process, understanding does not—or is not let to, as it were—fulfill its usual cognitive function of uniting intuition with concepts, at least not insofar as the grounding of aesthetic judgment is concerned.

Again, the minimized involvement of the faculty of understanding need not mean that we must totally ignore our beliefs and knowledge about the observed objects. As adult human beings with complex conceptual repertoires, something like that would indeed be easier said than done. Besides, we judge the rose to be beautiful in our examination of it—we do not simply gaze at it. However, it seems to me that this observation would still be beside Kant's main point, which is that it must be possible for us to access what is merely sensibly given to us as we engage with objects, or otherwise we could not make properly grounded aesthetic judgments about them. It may thus sound, paradoxically, that we need to cognitively abandon everything else in the aesthetic examination of objects and that we do not need to do so because we cannot.

Maybe the following example helps to ease this apparent tension. Suppose there is a table in front of you. As you look at its rectangular shape, you also attend to the sensation that you get when you feel its surface with your hand. In addition to this, suppose you think what a smooth table it is—much smoother than your previous table, say. None of this means, however, that the exact way you feel the smoothness of the table would somehow disappear from you when you attend to its rectangular form or compare the texture of this table to the texture of that other table you recall from memory. Instead, you have got yourself a full-blown experience that makes all these things and aspects available to you. At the same time, these different things and aspects are perfectly distinguishable and detachable from the all of it, including their sources. For example, the smooth texture felt haptically against your fingertips as such is detachable from the shape-perception of the tabletop, just as the judgment about the two tables is detachable from the sensations you

⁷ For more on the harmony of the faculties, including an excellent overview of different types of interpretation, see Guyer 2002.

⁸ As Kant remarks in the lectures, the form "is subject to sensible or pure intuition" (Kant 2001, p. 480; *V-Met/Arnoldt* aka *Metaphysik Vigilantius*, 29:1010). Kant can be read here as pointing out that the form is ultimately conditioned by the a priori intuition of space. This will turn out important in the concluding remarks of this article.

had when you touched them, just as both of these instances of perception are detachable from remembrance. Most importantly, all these different aspects and stances towards objects can in their turn serve as grounds of judgment.

Let me draw another example from pictorial arts. Basing your judgment on the form of the drawing does not obviously require that you leave the colors unattended. Indeed, it would be next to impossible to visually perceive anything like that. As Kant himself rightly emphasizes, the colors actually help us attend to the object (*KU*, 5:225-226). At the same time, Kant would insist that in order to make a formal aesthetic judgment about the drawing, you cannot base your judgment on colors or color-sensations. Instead, you must base your judgment on the form of the object—in this case, more specifically, on the drawn figure—provided through your sense-intuition of the object. Similarly, if it is a material aesthetic judgment that you are making, then you must base your judgment on the sense-sensations that accompany the intuition of the object. Crucially for understanding Kant's aesthetic theory and the view of perceptual examination of objects at its background, only by having access to such grounds can we have something to merely reflect and contemplate upon. Next, we shall turn to these two notions.

4. Contemplation and Mere Reflection versus Conceptual Thinking

As I argued in the previous section(s), Kant's view of aesthetic judgment depends on the idea that we can attend to the sensibly given, whether that originates in sense-sensation or sense-intuition (as Kant called sensations and intuitions in one of his lectures). Kant himself stresses this by distinguishing between representations through which the objects are given and representations through which the objects are thought (*KU*, 5:230). The kind of representing through which we attend to the sensibly given might be called a purely aesthetic examination of objects. In the case of material aesthetic judgment, this would mean attending to the way the object affects the senses in sensation. In the case of formal aesthetic judgments, purely aesthetic examination would require attending to the form of the object given in intuition.

To this extent, the kind of judgment we make depends on what we are attending to. It can also be that we do not attend to some of the perceptual aspects at all, although they are still "there" all the time. This can also be due to our physical constitution. Kant alludes to this at one point in the *Anthropology*, when he states that "sight comes nearer to being a *pure intuition* (the immediate representation of the given object, without admixture of noticeable sensation)." (Kant 2009, p. 268; *Anth*, 7: 156) As one might also put it, we can alternate our focus on the material and formal aspects of perceptual content, depending on which kind of judgment we are aiming at. Since Kant mostly discusses the kind of aesthetic judgment that targets the formal aspects, i.e. the judgment of taste, let us focus on it for the time being.

In the third *Critique*, when Kant analyzes the concept of sublime,⁹ he alludes to the distinction between purely aesthetic representing and thinking as follows:

[W]e must not take the sight of the ocean as we think it, enriched with all sorts of knowledge (which are not, however, contained in the immediate intuition), [...] rather, one must consider the ocean merely as the poets do, in accordance with what its appearance [*Augenschein*] shows[.] (Kant 2000b, p. 152; *KU*, 5:270)

As I read this passage, for a poem to be sublime, it must reflect the way the subject of the poem—here, the ocean—shows itself to the eye (*Augenschein*), which in turn must have a special kind of effect on us. In particular, the poem, to be a sublime representation of nature, is not supposed to reflect our knowledge of nature. As Kant points out, such knowledge is not available to us immediately in intuition, implying in addition that a successfully sublime poem must reflect just that, namely, what is “contained in the immediate intuition.”

The more general point Kant wants to emphasize with this distinction is, again, the difference between judging “on the basis of what he has before his sense” and judging “on the basis of what he has in his thoughts” (Kant 2000b, p. 116; *KU*, 5:231). As should be clear by now, aesthetic judging is of the former kind. The archetype of such judgment is the judgment of taste, which Kant also describes as contemplative:

[T]he judgment of taste is merely contemplative, i.e., a judgment that, indifferent with regard to the existence of an object, merely connects its constitution together with the feeling of pleasure and displeasure. But this contemplation itself is also not directed to concepts; for the judgment of taste is not a cognitive judgment (neither a theoretical nor a practical one), and hence it is neither grounded on concepts nor aimed at them. (Kant 2000b, p. 95; *KU*, 5:209)

For the purposes of this paper, the most crucial thing in the passage—beside the already made points that aesthetic judgment must not be grounded on concepts and that aesthetic judgment is not even aimed at conceptual understanding of objects—is the following phrase: “this contemplation itself is also not directed to concepts.” As I read him, by this Kant wants to underline that the act of contemplation itself must be non-conceptual, not just the feeling involved.

As we have seen, judgments of taste require that the imagination can play freely with the object, which involves apprehending the object in mere intuition. Now, for Kant, thinking about the object would require bringing the object under concepts and letting the faculty of understanding determine the act of apprehension, i.e. the way the intuition is to be united with concepts. However, as we have seen, this need not happen and indeed must not happen if the imagination is to remain in the kind of state that is required for grounding a judgment of taste. In other words, you are not supposed to bring the object under

⁹ For a detailed analysis of Kant’s view on the sublime, see Crowther 1989.

concepts with respect to those sensible features upon which your aesthetic judgment is to be based, most notably the object's *Gestalt*.

More generally, all of the above suggests what can be called a contemplative model of perception. Such a view suggests that the perceiving subject is presented with things to look at and listen to—and so on and so forth for the rest of the sensory modalities—and, most importantly, to aesthetically reflect upon. Such a stance also requires that concepts do not come in the way of contemplation (or, say, mere tasting, if it is a material judgment that is at stake). More technically put, contemplation can carry on as long as concepts are not being used to actively determine the content of perception. As a matter of fact, such a stance seems to be demanded by the possibility of aesthetic power of judgment itself. As Kant wrote in the longer, unpublished introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*,

for the logical power of judgment intuitions, even if they are merely sensible (aesthetic), must first be raised to concepts in order to serve for cognition of the object, which is not the case with aesthetic power of judgment. (Kant 2000c, p. 46; *EEKU*, 20:247)

We have already provided reasons to think that the kind of proto-cognitive situation, where intuitions are not “raised to concepts”, consists in apprehension that remains merely contemplative. As one might also put it, contemplation comes very close to apprehension done for its own sake. Kant also coins such an operation as “mere reflection on a given intuition” (Kant 2000b, p. 197; *KU*, 5:320). One might also describe such a merely reflecting or mirroring stance as follows. In full-blown contemplation, it is as if our thoughts about objects escape us and we let our sensibility lead the way. However, even then it is certainly not the case that the objects themselves escape us. In other words, Kant's view suggests that merely contemplative perception or reflection is nevertheless “objectual”. In above, we tried to concretize this idea with the table example: even if you were thinking about the old table, you could still perceptually attend to the new table, and indeed merely sensibly.

Such an interpretation, as unorthodox as it may be, has some benefits, among them the fact that it leaves plenty of room for the idea that our sensible representations of objects remain richer in content than our thoughts about those very same objects. Indeed, perhaps in some cases we simply fail to achieve a determinate or precise enough conceptual determination of the object no matter how hard we try. In the third *Critique*, Kant alludes to such a possibility with the notion of inexponible (*inexponibele*) intuition, by which he means intuition that gives us more than we can express linguistically (*KU*, 5:314, 342-343; see also Makkreel 2002, p. 240).¹⁰ As far as the faculties are concerned, this also means that sensibility, the faculty of intuition and imagination, can provide us with representations of objects that we simply cannot capture, at least not thoroughly, in a

¹⁰ To be precise, Kant uses the term ‘representation of imagination’, but as we have seen, by this he means intuition. He also calls such inexponible or ineffable sensible representations aesthetic ideas, the counterparts of which are ideas of reason, i.e. concepts that cannot be demonstrated sensibly (*KU*, 5:342-343).

determinate thought—representations that the understanding cannot fully grasp, i.e. synthesize according to concepts. As Kant and many others would have it, the realms of art and nature are full of objects that can provide us with such representations. Moreover, as one might put it, this ineffable character of aesthetic experience, if anything, makes these objects aesthetically valuable.

5. Contemplative Model of Perception and the *Critique of Pure Reason*

One question that arises in light of the above is the compatibility of the purely contemplative account of perception with Kant's views in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.¹¹ This is not the time and place to dive deep into the thorny debate about the role of non-conceptual content and the like in Kant's theory of cognition, however.¹² Instead, let me try to show, in a brief and general fashion, how the contemplative model of perception suggested above can be regarded as fully compatible with Kant's views in the *Critique of Pure Reason* without, say, assuming that Kant changed his views between the first and the third *Critique*.

Perhaps the most important thing to acknowledge is that one of the core features of Kant's account of aesthetic examination or contemplation is that it is not even supposed to be an activity that aims at cognition (see *KU*, 5:209). Indeed, one of Kant's main points in making the distinction between aesthetic and cognitive judgment in the first place must be that only cognitive judgment is grounded on a definite rule or principle, which for Kant involves bringing the object of judgment under a concept.¹³ Key parts of the *Critique of Pure Reason* deal exactly with the latter kind of cognition-aiming activity. However, key parts of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* do not.

Another thing to keep in mind at this point is that the non-conceptual dealings with objects, as required by contemplation, only need to imply that the objects are not epistemically assessed insofar as grounding one's aesthetic judgment is concerned. Put this way, one might claim that in order to judge aesthetically, you must focus on the particular

¹¹ Janaway, for example, uses the slogan "intuitions without concepts are blind" (A51/B75) to question a purely formalistic reading of Kant (Janaway 1997, p. 472). Guyer, in turn, points out in the editorial notes to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* that making cognitive judgments about objects requires the categories, which is supposed to have the consequence that "even the most common cognitive experience depends upon concepts" (Kant 2000b, 372n47). A variation of this claim is that object-individuation is only possible with concepts or that we could not even be conscious of objects without applying determinate concepts to them (Guyer 2002, pp. 179-180). For contrast, see e.g. Allais 2009.

¹² For more on this, see e.g. Heidemann 2016.

¹³ Some commentators seem to think that in aesthetic judging the object of judgment must be brought under some concept, it is just that it is indeterminate which concept it is, or that the concept itself is indeterminate (see Guyer 2002, pp. 165-166). To my mind, at least two things get mixed in these interpretations. Firstly, concepts being involved in judgment or the overall examination of objects is one thing, to (not) ground one's judgment on concepts is quite another. Secondly, when Kant speaks of an indeterminate concept as a ground of the judgment of taste, he refers to "supersensible substratum" as something that we can think of as underlying the appearances, including ourselves (Kant 2000b, pp. 215-216; *KU*, 5:339-340; see also *KU*, 5:196). Such a viewpoint, however, clearly is not something that features in every actual judgment but something that belongs to Kant's more general explanation of the universality of judgments of taste (see also Guyer 2002, p. 176n34).

object offered to you by the senses (see *KU*, 5:186; cf. *Anth* 7:145), and, moreover, in the way that lets you attend to the exact way the object appears to you. Kant's use of the term *Augenschein*, which he contrasts with a thought about objects, is particularly telling in this context. Another revealing passage can be found from the so-called *Dohna-Wundlacken Logic*, where Kant is recorded to have said: "E.g., tasteful poetic descriptions of regions, which produce only intuition, do not serve at all for cognition, are only cosmetic" (Kant 1992, p. 444; *V-Lo/Dohna*, 24:706). And here is yet another illuminating passage from the third *Critique*: "Beauty in nature [...] is ascribed to objects only in relation to reflection on their outer intuition, thus only to the form of their surfaces [...]" (Kant 2000b, 246; *KU*, 5:375).

Again, such a non-cognitive view on objects that centers on "the form of their surfaces" is clearly something that is not at stake in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where Kant, as far as his theory of cognition is concerned, ultimately analyzes cognitive (objective) judgment. Just as importantly, nowhere in the first *Critique* Kant says that concepts or judgments have something to do with the exact way objects present themselves to the senses. Some commentators seem to think that perceptual content is "contaminated" by concepts according to Kant, but I do not think that this is at all the case, and many things Kant says in the third *Critique* is a case in point.

Kant hints at what I have called the contemplative model of perception in other places as well. In the first *Critique*, Kant suggests time and again that objects are *given* in intuition—or as we put it above, that mere intuition is already an objectual representation (see also e.g. McLearn 2016, pp. 99-100; Okrent 2002, p. 94). In addition, Kant suggests that synthesis as such is but a mere effect of imagination (A78/B103), which too stands in opposition with the idea that all kinds of representational activity would require synthesizing the manifold of intuition according to the concepts of understanding. In support of this, Kant also points out that "in itself the synthesis of imagination [...] is nevertheless always sensible, for it combines the manifold only as it appears in intuition, e.g., the shape of the triangle" (A124). This passage, which I take to be crucial in understanding Kant's views on perception, can be read as suggesting that the way an object shows itself purely sensibly speaking falls outside the scope of what Kant is trying to explain about synthesis in the first *Critique* (see also e.g. Laiho 2020).

Moreover, as Kant points out in the metaphysics lectures, the faculty of understanding deals with objects in general terms: "It represents only the object in general, without looking to the manner of its appearance" (Kant 2001, p. 256; *V-Met/Mron*, 29:888). Similarly, in another lecture, Kant points out that "the logical power of judgment judges the object not as such in intuition but rather through reason alone" (Kant 2001, p. 480; *V-Met/Arnoldt* aka *Metaphysik Vigilantius*, 29:1010). Accordingly, as far as our conceptual and cognitive understanding of objects goes, it seems that we must present the objects in a way that abstracts from the exact manner the objects appear to our senses. This in turn suggests that in fully cognitive dealings with objects we need to ground our representations on objects' shared features (see also e.g. *Log*, 9:58). In contrast to this,

arguably any such generalizable, rule-indicating property is something on which *not* to ground one's aesthetic judgment. Rather, aesthetic judgments are grounded on sheer particularity that lacks that kind of general or universal projectability (see also Cohen 2002, p. 3). This is intimately related to Kant's point that there are no rules of taste, the point being that if there were such rules, the beauty of the object would not only be generalizable and suitable for testimony, but beauty would also indicate a genuine property of an object, which, however, is exactly what Kant denies (e.g. *KU*, 5:211).

To press on the point, the fact that we express our aesthetic appreciation of objects with concepts—including putting the general label 'beautiful' on them—does not need to undermine the idea that the basis of aesthetic appreciation has little to do with concepts. What the contemplative model of perception suggests is that the grounding elements of aesthetic judgments—either the sensible form of the object or its immediate effect on the senses, together with the feelings that follow or accompany them—are utterly non-conceptual features of our experience and have to remain so in order to serve as proper grounds of aesthetic judgment.

To put it differently, as Kant implies in the lectures, the aesthetic power of judgment has to do with the determination of the object of senses "according to the laws of sensibility" (Kant 2001, p. 480; *V-Met/Arnoldt* aka *Metaphysik Vigilantius*, 29:1010). The case of aesthetic examination being ultimately governed by the laws of sensibility can be seen as largely analogical with Kant's analysis of the so-called incongruent counterparts.¹⁴ The basic idea of that analysis is that the exact spatial configuration of such counterparts—your left and right hand, for example—and the way they occupy their places in space reveals something that our concepts cannot account for. Instead, the ultimate difference of such counterparts is grounded in space (see esp. *Prol*, 4:285-286). Most importantly for the purposes of this paper, you may think about your hands as you like, yet the very thing that makes you treat them as uniquely different remains independent of your thoughts about them. Similarly, in aesthetic judging, even though making an actual aesthetic judgment features concepts, the very thing you base your judgment upon remains independent of any concepts. In other words, the ground of your aesthetic judgment is (and indeed must be) something purely sensible—just as the very difference between the two otherwise seemingly similar hands.

It could be argued further that it is indeed space that provides the ultimate support for Kant's universalistic theory of taste, according to which we may demand agreement in matters of taste, though no-one can prove the truth of their judgment.¹⁵ The argument might go roughly as follows. Space is shared by all human judges. Judgments of taste are grounded on the sensible forms of objects. These forms or *Gestalten* are grounded in space. If you and I manage to ground our individual judgments only on such formal features of

¹⁴ For more on incongruent counterparts, see e.g. Hanna 2008.

¹⁵ Of course, it might be, and probably is, difficult to extend the idea of space or spatiality being the ultimate basis of aesthetic appreciation to all kinds of artworks. Then again, at the core of Kant's theory one finds natural objects, rather than artworks, as the paradigm objects of aesthetic appreciation, which might ease that difficulty somewhat.

objects, we can claim to have achieved a universal standpoint on them (at least humanly or “subjectively” speaking; see A26/B42). This is because regarding objects this way has its roots in that which allows us to represent them (or indeed any spatial objects) in the first place. Of course, the aesthetic examination of objects also needs to have a specific effect on the mind to have the objects count as beautiful, the universality of which we cannot ascertain in the same way. However, this factor is external to the purely sensible representational ground given in the object’s form, which ground is there regardless of whether we assess the object’s beauty or not.

As a final remark, let me repeat that the above findings do not mean that the judger needs to be in a non-cognitive state altogether when she aesthetically examines and appreciates an object. This is to say, among other things, that the judger does not need to completely cease to conceptualize the object—if she did, she would not be a judger anymore, but just a gazer. At the same time, aesthetic judgments are grounded not only on feeling but on a representational content—be it a sense-intuition or sense-sensation—that by itself must be wholly non-conceptual, and must also be so taken, for it to serve as a proper kind of ground for aesthetic judgment. As should be clear by now, this kind of representational content is the exact way the object appears to the senses as the object is examined purely aesthetically or contemplatively. Such an examination, which by itself does not depend on concepts at all, must not only be possible according to Kant but seems to tell us something deeply true about a certain—albeit very limited—type of aesthetic appreciation of objects more generally.

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Kant, Celmins and Art after the End of Art

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Abstract

One typically thinks of the relevance of Kant's aesthetic theory to Western art in terms of Modernism, thanks in large part to the work of eminent critic and art historian Clement Greenberg. Yet, thinking of Kant's legacy for contemporary art as inhering exclusively in "Kantian formalism" obscures a great deal of Kant's aesthetic theory. In his last book, Arthur Danto suggested just this point, urging us to enlarge our appreciation of Kant's aesthetic theory and its relevance to contemporary art, because, for Danto, "Kant had two conceptions of art." In this essay, I support and build on Danto's claim that there are really two conceptions of art at work in Kant's third *Critique*, and that the second conception offers a non-Modernist/formalist way that Kant's aesthetic theory remains relevant to post 1960s art (art "after the end of art" in Danto's terms). My ultimate aim is to highlight another facet in the continuing relevance of Kant's aesthetic theory to post-Abstract Expressionist contemporary art, namely, the explicit attention to the *differential aesthetic values of nature and art respectively*. I shall do this by putting it in dialogue with the art practice of Latvian-American artist, Vija Celmins (1938-) whose illustrious career since 1960s has made her an 'artist's artist' but who has also recently garnered much wider attention with a retrospective titled "To Fix the Image in Memory." Celmins takes up artistically a problematic that is quite central philosophically to the concerns of the third *Critique*, and thus her work illustrates (even if unconsciously) another way in which Kant's aesthetic theory is of great continuing relevance to the artworld today.

Key words

Kant, Danto, Celmins, nature, art, contemporary art, beauty, sublimity

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I. Introduction

When one thinks of the relevance of Kantian aesthetic theory to Western art, one typically thinks of Modernism, that is, the tendency (especially in the visual arts, starting arguably with Van Gogh and Gauguin) toward greater abstraction and preoccupation with the materials and process of art making itself over the hitherto fundamental concern of artists with mimetic representation (Danto, 1997: 7-8). This dominant association between Kantian aesthetics and Modernism is due largely to the eminent critic and art historian, Clement Greenberg, who, following in the line of British critics Roger Fry, and Clive Bell, embraced and promoted “Kantian formalism” in art. Abstract Expressionist painters such as Piet Mondrian, Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, and Barnett Newman, among others, seemed to Greenberg be taking a leaf out of the *Analytic of the Beautiful* with their emphasis on artistic-formal concerns, thus constituting for him the true *avant-garde* of painting in the mid-20th c.¹

Yet, thinking of Kant’s legacy for contemporary art as inhering exclusively in formalism obscures a great deal of Kant’s aesthetic theory. In his last book, *What Art Is*, Arthur Danto suggests just this point, urging us to enlarge our appreciation of Kant’s aesthetic theory and its relevance to contemporary art, because, for Danto, “Kant had two conceptions of art” (Danto, 2013: 117). The first conception is indeed formalist and in Danto’s terms, “ornamentalist” (and includes wallpaper borders, free musical fantasias, and in general visual works of art that display taste but lack ‘spirit’[*Geist*]), but the second is proto-Romantic: It is art with ‘spirit,’ that is, art which embodies aesthetic ideas. While the former notion of art marks out similarities between works of art and the “free beauties of nature,” the latter notion marks out those works which stimulate to a much greater extent our cognitive powers, pushing the boundaries of thought via the subject’s free play with sensible presentations of rational ideas.

Despite Danto’s quasi-Hegelian “end of art” thesis—meaning, of course, the end of the “grand narrative of art” with Warhol’s *Brillo Boxes* (a work that opens the floodgates on what can legitimately be called ‘art’), *not the end of artmaking* or the value of art *tout court*—he argues for the ongoing relevance, and in fact, the *universal, perennial relevance* of Kant’s second view of art. It is the one that captures the essence of post 1960s, more conceptual art, and the one that accords with Danto’s own (admittedly partial) definition of art as “embodied meaning.”² Thus, Danto hypothesizes, if Kant himself (equipped with only his late 18th -early 19th c. experience of art) were to be taken to see a contemporary exhibit such as David Hammons’ installation of spotlighted fur coats on stands slathered

¹ See for instance, Clement Greenberg’s essay “Avant-Garde and Kitsch” (Greenberg, 1989).

² Although often misunderstood as a partisan of the Institutional Theory of art (formulated by George Dickie), Danto puts forth an essentialist view of art first in *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Danto, 1981: 195), and refines the view in Ch. 11 of *After the End of Art* (Danto, 1997) as follows: there are two necessary (but perhaps not jointly sufficient) conditions for something to be a work of art. Namely, to be a work of art is to be (i) about something, and (ii) to embody its meaning.

with paint, it is likely that Kant would not recognize this as a work of art. Notwithstanding, the crucial thing for Danto is that Kant's own *second conception of art*--as the embodiment of aesthetic ideas--along with the benefit of 200 additional years of the history of art, would indeed see Hammons' 'artfully defiled' fur coats as art!³

My aim in this paper is to defend and build on these Dantonian thoughts about the continuing relevance of Kant's aesthetic theory to post-Abstract Expressionist contemporary art. My first task is to offer textual support for Danto's claim of two conceptions of art in Kant's third *Critique* (not being primarily an historian of philosophy, Danto offers very little evidence for this claim in his chapter). Next, I shall highlight another major Kantian contribution related to these two conceptions of art, namely, the explicit attention to the *differential aesthetic values of nature and art respectively*. And I shall draw out this important Kantian aesthetic legacy for contemporary art by putting it in dialogue with the art practice of Latvian-American artist, Vija Celmins (1938-), an artist who has been well respected in the artworld since the 1960s as 'an artist's artist,'⁴ but who has only recently garnered wider attention and critical acclaim with a retrospective jointly organized by curators at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (2018-2019, titled "To Fix the Image in Memory").

As I shall argue in what follows, Celmins' work—much of which focusses on what she calls the 'redescription' of natural objects and environments such as the ocean, the starry night sky, river stones, spiderwebs, the surface of shells, sometimes from photographs and sometimes from direct observation of nature, can be understood as a sustained artistic meditation on what distinguishes the aesthetic values of art from those of nature. Especially in her sculptural works *To Fix the Image in Memory I-XI* (1977-1982) and *Two Stones* (1977/2014-16)—where she displays pairs of perceptually indiscernible stones, one found, one made—we can see her as taking up from Marcel Duchamp's readymades in a manner similar to Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* (1964), but now with an exclusive focus on the "readymades" of nature.⁵ The perceptually indiscernible copy or "redescription" in Celmins' case is not a provocation about what if anything distinguishes a work of art from a common manufactured artefact (Duchamp) or from an ordinary product of consumer Capitalism (Warhol), rather, Celmins, on my interpretation, goes back to the original remit

³ Diarmuid Costello (Costello, 2008: 245) actually anticipates and recommends Danto's own embrace of what I'm calling Kant's second conception of art. He argues, that "[b]oth Danto and Kant can be seen as proponents of expressionism in the philosophy of art, to the extent that both hold works of art to embody, and thereby express, the mental states (broadly construed to encompass beliefs, attitudes and feelings) of those that created them and, if successful, to dispose their viewers to a similar state. Moreover, both appeal—explicitly, in the case of Danto, implicitly in the case of Kant—to a conception of metaphor in their account of what a work of art is."

⁴ Art historian, Christina Bryan Rosenberger (Rosenberger, 2019: 79-80) stresses this point, on account of Celmins' mastery of many media.

⁵ According to art historian Frances Jacobus-Parker (Jacobus-Parker, 2018: 85-89), Celmins was influenced by Wittgenstein in calling her process "redescribing" of photographs (especially in the case of her drawings and paintings of the ocean and the starry night sky) rather than "copying" or "reproducing".

of Western art—the imitation of nature, ‘Aesthetics 101’ as it were.⁶ Taking up from Duchamp she forges an alternative path to the one that taken by Warhol, inviting us to contrast how we value a natural object, like a lovely, smooth, dappled stone, from how we value its painstakingly, artistically constructed twin. In raising these questions about how we aesthetically value nature versus art, Celmins takes up artistically a problematic that is quite central philosophically to the concerns of the third *Critique*, and thus her work illustrates (even if unconsciously) another way in which Kant’s aesthetic theory is of great continuing relevance to the artworld today.

II. Two conceptions of art?

One of the first mentions of works that we and Kant’s contemporaries would generally class as works of fine art in the 3rd *Critique* comes in section 16 where he distinguishes “free beauty” [freie Schönheit] from “merely adherent beauty” [die bloß anhängende Schönheit]. As is well known to Kant scholars, the former type “presupposes no concept of what the object ought to be” whereas the latter type “does presuppose such a concept and the perfection of the object in accordance with it.” (Ak. 5: 229).⁷ Among free beauties, natural objects figure prominently.

Importantly for this inquiry, however, works of art also factor among the free beauties that Kant lists in this section: “designs à la grecque, foliage for borders or on wallpaper ... and music fantasias (without a theme), indeed all music without a text.” (Ak. 5:229). These works of art are also appreciated along the lines of free natural beauties, for we don’t seem to appreciate them under the description of a concept—not even under the concept of “work of art”—nor by virtue of how well they attain to the perfection of their kind. Rather, it seems for Kant, we enjoy such designs and music without a text for their formal qualities alone. It is noteworthy that works of art (at least prima facie) also factor among Kant’s examples of sublime objects, e.g. the pyramids of Egypt and St. Peter’s in Rome (Ak. 5: 252), though Kant stresses that the paradigm cases of the sublime involve “raw nature” (Ak. 5:253).⁸ So long as the pyramids and St. Peter’s cathedral are appreciated for their formal qualities alone (in this case, their overwhelming scale, which makes them from a certain vantage point seem formless or contra-purposive for our cognitive faculties), they

⁶ In a laudatory review in *Artforum*, Jordan Kantor (Kantor, 2019: 171) makes a similar point, writing “Here [with respect to *To Fix the Image in Memory I-XI*] it is as if Celmins has taken the initial assignment of Western aesthetics—to imitate nature—literally.”

⁷ All citations to the third *Critique* utilize the Guyer and Matthews translation *The Critique of the Power of Judgment* (Kant, 2000 [1790]) with parenthetical notations to the standard Akademie edition.

⁸ Strictly speaking, Kant says that we err in calling “some object of nature sublime, although we can quite correctly call very many of them beautiful” (section 23; Ak. 5:245) and that only the human mind itself is truly sublime.

can arguably be numbered among “free sublimities” along with vast and/or overwhelming natural environments.⁹

Yet, all of these mentions of works of art that constitute free beauties or free sublimities occur before Kant gets down to the business of discussing fine art (in section 43). Up to this point, he seems to be operating with a notion of a work of art that allows for appreciation of art in the same manner as a free beauty (or sublimity) of nature. This is a notion of a work of art that is formalist and even in the case of the “designs à la grecque” or “foliage for borders or for wallpaper” one might call, after Danto, “ornamentalist.” This is the notion of the work of art that was so influential for and through Clement Greenberg.

Kant finally defines *schöne Kunst* around section 44 of the third *Critique*. When he does, he seems to give a definition of fine art that would *exclude* these previously adduced examples from the category. In this section, the necessary ingredients for beautiful art are “imagination, understanding, spirit and taste [Einbildungskraft, Verstand, Geist und Geschmack]” (Ak. 5:320). This requires some unpacking.

Taste, is “merely a faculty for judging” the beautiful in either nature or art, and artists can cultivate their tastefulness in producing art, e.g. through “acquaintance with ancient languages, wide reading of those authors considered to be classical, history, etc.” (Ak. 5:305), but for the production of beautiful art, in addition to taste, the artist must also have *genius* “the inborn predisposition of the mind through which nature gives the rule to art” (Ak. 5:307). And the key aspect of genius for the production of genuinely beautiful art is *spirit*. In its “aesthetic significance,” spirit is “the animating principle in the mind” that is, “that which purposively sets the mental powers into motion” or play (section 49, Ak. 5:313). Putting a bit more flesh on the bones of “spirit,” Kant explains it as the “faculty for the presentation of aesthetic ideas” (Ak. 5:314). And an aesthetic idea is a “representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e. concept, to be adequate to it...” (Ak. 5:314).

Kant’s full account of a work of beautiful (fine) art is actually quite revisionist. One might ordinarily suppose a painting or a poem to be a work of beautiful art if it is elegant and pleasing, even if it lacks the “je ne sais quoi” of *spirit*. But Kant is clear on this: if it *lacks spirit*—that is, if the work lacks aesthetic ideas, which occasion much thinking--it is not a work of beautiful art at all on Kant’s second conception of art as the art of genius. The work may have taste, it might please even universally, but insofar as it does not animate the mind through aesthetic ideas, it is *not* a work of beautiful/fine art.

This second conception of art—the official one—has ramifications for the first, unofficial conception that Kant seems to have been employing before section 43. “Designs à la grecque” and “foliage for borders or on wallpaper” and even “musical fantasias”—the examples he furnished of free artistic beauties—would not, it seems, pass muster with this

⁹ There has been a lively debate among Kant scholars as to whether Kantian aesthetics should make a place for pure artistic *sublimity*. See (Abaci, 2008 & 2010), (Clewis, 2010), (Wicks, 1995), and (Pillow, 2000).

second conception of fine art. They seem precisely to be tasteful works, beautiful ornaments perhaps, but not the kinds of works that contain *spirit*; that is to say, they are not the kinds of works that occasion much thinking. Thus, it seems that there really are two working conceptions of fine art in Kant's text: (1) the earlier one, which is **the formalist/ornamentalist rather non-cognitive, unofficial conception**, and (2) the **official one, which is a highly cognitive one**—where the work animates the mind with a rich array of thoughts even if these cannot be summed up in any determinate concept, in language—because the work has spirit in addition to taste.

These two conceptions of art correspond to what Aviv Reiter and Ido Geiger have identified (though not uncontroversially¹⁰) as Kant's two, distinct conceptions of beauty: (1) non-conceptual natural beauty and (2) conceptual, adherent, artistic beauty. Reiter and Geiger sum up the first conception as follows:

[i]n judging, we simply express our immediate pleasure in a particular shape. In this precise sense, the judgment is singular, purely aesthetic, and thus not conceptual. Indeed, people judging aesthetically would probably not characterize their aesthetic pleasure as the feeling that an object is somehow cognitively significant. Nevertheless, on Kant's analysis, it turns out that there is a noteworthy correlation between the shapes that arouse pure aesthetic pleasure and the forms of natural kinds" (Reiter & Geiger, 2018: 80).

The second conception of beauty, the beauty of fine art, for Reiter and Geiger "does not fit the definition of beauty put forward in the *Analytic* without emendation. Specifically, and with some noteworthy exceptions, it is not typically to form alone that we respond in beautiful works of art" (Reiter & Geiger, 2018: 83). Rather, it is to the aesthetic presentation of ideas of reason, especially on the subject of the "breadth and variety of human freedom" (Reiter & Geiger, 2018: 96) to which we respond in the beauty of art.

Now, in distinguishing two types of *beauty* in Kant, Reiter and Geiger, do not claim that all works of art must partake in the latter, adherent type. In the above-quoted passage, they allude to "some noteworthy exceptions" of works of art to which we do respond in the manner of free natural beauties, namely, to form alone. Thus, they hold that some works of art (e.g., musical fantasias and music without a text generally) do constitute artistic examples of free beauty, the beauty paradigmatic of nature (Reiter & Geiger, 2018: 87).

¹⁰ There is a rather large secondary literature on this issue of whether there are two distinct (even if related) notions of beauty in Kant's aesthetic theory, or whether, ultimately, they are reunited into one. Arguing, I believe successfully, for more distinctness recently are (Reiter & Geiger, 2018), (Halper, 2020), and much earlier (Gotshalk, 1967). By contrast, stressing the ultimate unity of natural and artistic beauty are (Rueger, 2007), and (Guyer, 2006).

What I'd like to suggest, though, is that Danto was right to press the issue further in seeing such free-beauty artistic examples as evidence of **another conception of art altogether at work in the third Critique**. If musical fantasias do not contain spirit—and it seems at least on Kant's account that they really don't, for they are appropriately appreciated for their temporal-formal qualities not for their cognitively rich aesthetic ideas—then they do not have the beauty paradigmatic of artistic beauty, and, therefore, **they really cannot be art on the second conception of fine art on offer (in sections 43-51)**. Nonetheless, they do seem to be considered examples of art in Kant's text, and thus bespeak a first, unofficial conception of art (the conception of the *Analytic of the Beautiful/Analytic of the Sublime*). It seems we have good textual grounds, then, to conclude that Kant really does have two conceptions of art in the third *Critique*.

One reason why it is important carefully to distinguish between Kant's two conceptions of art, which run roughly parallel to Kant's two conceptions of beauty, is that Kant makes a rather large deal out of the moral importance of the appreciation of *natural beauty* over artistic beauty.¹¹ Although artistic beauty is important for promoting “the cultivation [Cultur] of the mental powers for sociable communication” (Ak. 5:306) and brings the rational ideas closer to perception (via their aesthetic embodiments) (Ak. 5: 314), it is *natural beauty* (and one might make a case for natural sublimity as well) that seems to hold greater *moral importance* for Kant, overall.

The main textual evidence for this comes in section 42, “On the intellectual interest in the beautiful,” where Kant contrasts the lovers of beautiful art with the lovers of beautiful nature. He “gladly concede[s] that the interest in the beautiful in art ... provides no proof of a way of thinking that is devoted to the morally good or even merely inclined to it” (Ak. 5:298) whereas he does “assert that to take an immediate interest in the beauty of nature ... is always a mark of a good soul, and that if this interest is habitual, it at least indicates a disposition of the mind that is favorable to the moral feeling.” (Ak. 5:299).

Kant goes so far as to say that even if *the forms* of art were to surpass those of nature in their beauty,

[i]f a man who has enough taste to judge about products of beautiful art ... gladly leaves the room in which are to be found those [artistic] beauties that sustain vanity and at best social joys and turns to the beautiful in nature, in order as it were to find here an ecstasy for his spirit in a line of thought that he can never fully develop, then we would consider this choice of his with esteem and presuppose in him a beautiful soul, to which no connoisseur

¹¹ Whether Kant *did* make this distinction in the moral value of natural beauty versus artistic beauty is not really disputed by Joseph Cannon (Cannon, 2011:113), but Cannon argues that Kant *should not* have made such a distinction “because his account of fine art as the joint product of the ‘natural gift’ of genius and the discipline of taste commits him to the claim that artistic beauty expresses ... a harmony between nature and freedom.”

and lover of art can lay claim on account of the interest that he takes in his objects (Ak. 5:299-300).

The ultimate reason for why it is morally better to be a lover of natural over artistic beauty, for Kant, is that the lover of natural beauty takes an interest in the signs that nature seems to give via its beauty that it “contains in itself some sort of ground for assuming a lawful correspondence of its products with our satisfaction that is independent of all interest (which we recognize a priori as a law valid for everyone, without being able to ground this on proofs).” (Ak. 5:300). In other words, the lover of natural beauty takes an interest in the aesthetic hints that nature is amenable to our moral ends. Only *nature’s* beauty—not the beauty of art—can show “some trace” or “give[s] a sign” that we will be able to realize our moral ends in this world (Henrich, 1992). By contrast, the beauty of art can only bespeak “at best social joys” (Ak. 5:300).

To drive the point home, Kant contrasts perceptually indiscernible birdsongs, one made by an actual nightingale “in a lonely stand of bushes, on a still summer evening, under the gentle light of the moon” and the other by “a mischievous lad who knew how to imitate this song (with a reed or a pipe in his mouth) just like nature” (Ak. 5:302). In this case, there is a trick afoot: a landlord wants to charm his guests with the song of the bird and arranges to have the kid hide in the bushes. But, Kant believes, “as soon as one becomes aware that it is a trick, no one would long endure listening to this song, previously taken to be so charming ... It must be nature, or taken to be nature by us, for us to be able to take such an immediate interest in the beautiful, and even more so if we are to be at all able to expect of others that they should take this interest in it...” (Ak. 5:302).

Thus, when it is a question of rendering a pure judgment of taste, it doesn’t matter whether the song is produced by an actual bird or a mischievous lad. The disinterestedness of a pure judgment of taste means that the *actual existence* of the beautiful object—and, accordingly, whether it is natural or artistic, is beside the point--only the perceptual form matters. But from the perspective of the moral interest we take in beauty, that the beauty emanates *from nature itself* is crucial, insofar as we are keen to read the purposive signs that nature (not art) seems to be sending.

III. Vija Celmins

In a manner reminiscent of Kant’s two perceptually indiscernible birdsongs, the Latvian-American contemporary artist Vija Celmins, has displayed paired river stones—one found and one painstakingly hand made in each pair—in a work titled *To Fix the Image in Memory I-XI* (1977-82).



Fig. 1. Vija Celmins, *To Fix the Image in Memory I-XI* (1977-82), Museum of Modern Art, New York. ©Vija Celmins, Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery

Celmins collected these “rather beautiful” stones in New Mexico, along the Rio Grande, and over the course of approximately 5 years, she cast them in bronze and meticulously hand-painted the surfaces to render astoundingly identical twins of the stones. She describes these pairs in Duchampian terms as “readymades and makes” (quoted in Alteveer, 2018: 159). More recently, Celmins has added another, solo set of paired stones to this series, titled simply *Two Stones* (1977/2014-16).

The superficial game here is to tell the real from the copy. And when I saw these works displayed at Celmins’ recent retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Met Breuer, many spectators were happily and wondrously engaged in doing just this, even though there was nothing at the exhibit to let us know if we had gotten it right! And certainly, Celmins entices us to engage in this looking and guessing, writing that “[the stones are] an invitation to look harder than you would look, normally ... And so, somebody goes by and has a double take on it, and maybe a little smile comes out of it” (quoted in Garrels, 2018: 19).

But the more profound task at hand is to figure out what these displayed, “readymade and made” paired stones *mean*. And for that, the artist herself offers few hints. She admits that the spectator is left to her own devices in an interview with artist Ken Price where she asserts, “I don’t mind talking about making work. What it is supposed to mean is what I can’t talk about. Can you give rational explanations of your work?” In another interview, she cites Brancusi—a model of artistic-discursive reticence—saying that “art should be like a well-planned crime” meaning: “you don’t discuss it before, and you don’t talk much about it afterward either” (quoted in Garrels, 2018: 235).

So, what could these works mean?

Unlike Kant’s birdsong example, Celmins is not, like the landlord, trying to trick us into taking a fake stone for a real one. Although she certainly has the visual-art equivalent of the lad’s bird-impersonation skillset, in her works, she makes no secret at all of the artistic copies lurking among the natural stones. On the contrary, she draws our attention to the “madness” of one of the paired stones by displaying it *alongside* the natural, found stone.

A clue as to what is going on here comes from Celmins’ description of the natural stone as a “readymade” and the bronze, painted copy as the “made.” And it is fruitful to think through her practice with Duchamp’s conceptual provocations in mind. Indeed, according to Met Curator, Ian Alteveer, “Duchamp was a particularly important figure to Celmins, for both his conceptual rigor and his radical philosophy regarding the readymade, [and] Celmins has adopted and transformed this gesture for her own purposes” (Alteveer, 2018: 159).

Recall that the readymades of Duchamp were factory or artisanally-manufactured objects such as urinals, bottle racks, and snow shovels, sometimes modified [and signed R. Mutt in the case of *Fountain* (1917)] and sometimes simply displayed *qua* art, without modification. The Dada provocation in the case of Duchamp goes something like the following: ‘This is art! Why? Because I, the artist, say it’s art. Bourgeoisie be damned--this is finally what art has become, ha!’¹²

In Celmins’ case too, by her own account, there is something playful and even a bit Dada-absurdist in her “constellation” of paired stones, writing,

¹² Art theorist Thierry de Duve presents a rather different interpretation of the readymades. For de Duve, Duchamp’s readymade signifies artistic restraint—restraint from painting—in light of the desuetude of the professional artist’s traditional *métier* in the age of mechanical reproduction. But it also involves, for de Duve, genuine *aesthetic choices*--notwithstanding Duchamp’s descriptions of readymades as ‘visually indifferent’ and ‘anesthetic’—for “[a]bsolute visual indifference is something impossible, and Duchamp left in his writings many clues showing that he was aware of that.” (De Duve, 1996: 294 and see especially chapters 3 & 5). I agree with Paul Crowther, however, that “whether the readymade can carry the burden of signifying this restraint [from painting] is an enormously difficult question. Certainly de Duve makes a case, but it is one which substantially underestimates the significance of the readymades as ironic and critical [anti-art and anti-aesthetic] gestures.” (Crowther, 1997: 412).

I developed this desire to try and put them [the found river stones] into an art context ... sort of mocking art in a way, but also to affirm the act of making: the act of looking and making as a primal act of art (quoted in Garrels, 2018: 17).

However, Celmins' "readymades" (the natural stones) are importantly different from those of Duchamp: they aren't made by any human artisan, they are "made" by nature. Paradoxically, this means that they really aren't *readymades* at all—they are simply found among the profusion of lovely river rocks scattered along the Rio Grande. It is only if one employs a notion akin to the Celestial Artisan, that these stones count literally as "readymades." And Kant, for one, did think along these lines, for as sketched above he held that natural beauty invites the lover of nature to "find ... an ecstasy for his spirit in a line of thought that he can never fully develop," namely, that there is "a lawful correspondence of its products" and our moral interests as human beings. Thus, for Kant, although we may not conclude (as a matter of theoretical knowledge) that the natural world is designed/made by a benevolent creator and is therefore not hostile to our moral ends, natural beauty does give us a *hint* that this is the case. Although I don't think that Celmins' work suggests this particular link between natural beauty and moral-theology, I do think that drawing our attention to the "readymade" status of natural objects does invite reflection on the way nature "makes" things in a manner that is rather different from the way an artist like Celmins makes things.

As she puts it in the above-quoted passage, the pairs of stones centers attention on the "the act of looking and making as a primal act of art" (emphasis mine). These intentional acts of art are implicitly opposed to nature's way of "making," which seems by contrast *unintentional*: These particular natural stones were not formed by a human action, but rather by a geological *happening*. Further, nature's way of "making" involves *millennia*, a mind-bogglingly long process of shaping by the forces of the river, by the heat of the sun, and a host of other natural forces operating at the glacial speed of geologic time. From these came the beautiful stones, with their fortuitously pleasing if irregular, dappled patterns, which could be appropriated into a work of (human) art in the late 20th c. By contrast, the artistically made stones were created *intentionally*, by a human mind and body, that is, by an artist who looked closely and painstakingly "redescribed" the natural stone over the course of a few years (a rather long time for art, but certainly not *millennia*).

Yet, what is the point of this comparison between the "making" of nature and the "making" of art? On the one hand, there seems to be an uplifting message about the power of that primal act of art—looking and making. One might reflect with awe on the fact that a human artist is just as capable of creating, and further has the advantage of *capturing*, these beautiful natural forms and *fixing them in individual and collective memory*. *Pace* Kant, then, perhaps this work signals that in the contest between natural and artistic beauty, the latter is actually more wondrous for its revelation of human power.

But, on the other hand, along more Kantian lines, Celmins may also be drawing our attention to the greater value of the natural stone. It alone has an aura of “age value,” for it and not its copy testifies to millennia of geological processes, to the wonder that there is something rather than nothing, and to the fact that some things in our world seem ‘as if’ designed to please us. Might the painstaking copy attest not so much to the power of human intelligence and creativity then, but the frailty of human “making” insofar as it takes enormous artistic effort to make an indiscernible copy of something so promiscuously available on any rocky riverbed around the world? Doesn’t human creative power really pale in comparison to nature’s great fecundity of beautiful forms?

I think all of these thoughts may be sparked by Celmins’ work and attest to the fact that she has created genuine works of fine/beautiful art on Kant’s second conception: These are works with *spirit*, that is, they embody aesthetic ideas, which stimulate much thought—particularly on the nature/art relationship--without one being able to sum up those thoughts adequately in language.

These are also highly original works: With this focus on the nature/art relationship, Celmins’ “readymade and made” pairs are also quite different from another artist who took up the Duchampian project, Andy Warhol. In the case of Warhol’s *Brillo Boxes* the “made” is a perceptually indistinguishable copy of a *commercial product* (the readymade Brillo box that one might find in the 1960s on any supermarket shelf). But Warhol didn’t display the commercial, ordinary Brillo box alongside his artistically fashioned copies. Rather, the “made” *Brillo Boxes* were exhibited on their own in the gallery. Thus, unlike Duchamp, Warhol’s provocation was to display *a copy* of a commercial object as a work of art—rather than displaying the manufactured article itself *qua* art—so that the “made” on display was perceptually indistinguishable from the ordinary object (the readymade), which remained, blissfully unaware of its Doppelgänger, as it awaited purchase on the supermarket shelf. The key difference in Warhol’s provocation, versus that of Duchamp, it seems to me, has to do with late Capitalism. Building on Duchamp, *Brillo Boxes* says something like this: ‘Nowadays, you can’t tell the difference between a work of art and an ordinary, banal, commercially ubiquitous *consumer product*. Art has entirely lost its aura, its aesthetic appeal can now collapse into that of the mundane Brillo box carton in a supermarket. Anything, no matter how banal, no matter how crassly consumerist, can be a work of art.’

By contrast, Celmins seems to be taking a somewhat different path than that of Warhol. Her route from Duchamp is decidedly not in the commercial, pop direction. In fact, she’s going back the basics and the original assignment of Western art, namely, the *imitation of nature*. She is self-consciously working in a mimetic-representational lane, as suggested in an interview with Phong Bui, publisher and artistic director of *The Brooklyn Rail*:

Only later did I come to understand that **we... [artists are] all stuck in between Cézanne and Duchamp**. Cézanne was probably the greatest painter ... And there is Duchamp, who was not a great painter, but was a wonderful thinker about art. He really opened up the new century to artists who would never have gone in that direction. (quoted in Garrels, 2018: 230, emphasis added).

On my interpretation, the path that Celmins takes with her paired stones is actually to bring Cézanne and Duchamp into a fruitful dialogue. Like Cézanne, Celmins' aim is to imitate (or "redescribe") nature, as generations of Western artists before and after Cézanne have done. I shall come back soon to how she confronts this traditional aim with Duchamp soon, but first allow me to supply a bit more backstory.

To Fix the Image in Memory I-XI (1977-1982) and *Two Stones* (1977/2014-16) can be seen as a kind of narrative culmination in Celmins' long career of redescribing *natural* objects and environments in particular. Although she started her career with still life paintings of ordinary manufactured objects lying around her studio (a space heater, a lamp, an envelope), beginning in 1968 she took on a new subject that would preoccupy her through the 1970s, *the ocean*. From photographs of the Pacific Ocean that she took off the Venice Pier near her studio in Los Angeles, Celmins made a long series of painstaking, all-over (horizonless) graphite drawings of the precise, undulating waves of the ocean. In the 1970s Celmins focused on images of the rocky, desert floor and her main subject of the 1990s was the starry night sky, with a large number of redescrptions of spider webs as well. It has only been quite recently that Celmins has focused on making perceptually indiscernible copies of artefacts—old-fashioned children's school slates, and antique books—otherwise, for most of her career her iconography has focused on natural objects and environments.

It is also important to note that while Celmins' subjects are often the paradigmatically sublime ones of nature—the starry night sky, the ocean, the desert—the works that she produces are quite different from Romantic paintings (e.g. those by Caspar David Friedrich) or the American Sublime painters of the Hudson River School in that they *don't seem to aim to provoke a sublime response* in the viewer. The scale of her works is quite modest (most of the ocean drawings are about 18" x 22" in size) in contrast to American sublime painters like F.E. Church, whose *Heart of the Andes* measures a gigantic 5' 6" x 9' 11". And in an interview at the Tate Modern which put her work into dialogue with that of J.M.W. Turner, she writes, "I think we [Turner and I] both like wildness—the wilderness, the impossible image to capture and wrestle onto that small piece of paper." (quoted in Garrels, 2018: 247-8). But the main aim for Celmins is to not overwhelm or awe the viewer with that wildness—as Turner strove to do in some of his later, more sublime works—but rather painstakingly to wrestle that complex, sometimes vast image onto an eminently human-scaled piece of paper, canvas, or a bronze cast.

In all of the cases of natural subjects other than the stones, however, she was “re-describing” nature from photographs, but displaying the “mades” without the source photos (let alone the natural sources) side-by-side. We had to take her word for it, and judge by the uncanny similarity of the drawings or paintings in the series, that she was faithfully re-describing the natural source.

It’s only with the paired stones that we can really see for ourselves how much the “made” stone looks like the “found/readymade” natural stone. Like Duchamp then, with the paired stones Celmins draws our attention precisely to the question of the nature of art—what is a work of art? Why can’t a “readymade” stone be or become at least a part of a work of art? But by mixing in Cézanne—that is, by putting the painterly practice of observing and re-describing nature alongside the “readymade” of nature, she asks additionally the following sorts of questions: What is the difference between natural and artistic beauty? What is the difference between natural and artistic “making”? These are questions which Duchamp and Warhol—with their emphasis on manufactured “readymades” and copies of commercial products, respectively--did not thematize.

IV. Conclusion

In this essay, I have aimed to support Danto’s claim that there are really two conceptions of art at work in Kant’s third *Critique*, and that the second conception offers a non-Modernist/formalist way that Kant’s aesthetic theory remains relevant to post 1960s art (art “after the end of art” in Danto’s terms). Thanks to the illuminating work of Aviv Reiter and Ido Geiger (among others), these two conceptions of art can more clearly be seen as related to two distinct conceptions of beauty in Kant’s aesthetic theory: free beauty (which is a response to form alone, paradigmatically to forms of natural kinds such as flowers, foliage, birds and crustaceans) and adherent beauty (which is not merely a response to form, but also, to the concept of what the object is supposed to be), paradigmatically, a work of art that aims to present some determinate content especially of the “breadth and variety of human freedom” (Reiter & Geiger, 2018: 96). Next, I offered an overview and interpretation of the work of Vija Celmins, focusing on her iconography—typically beautiful and sublime natural objects and environments—and her artistic practice of “re-description” in various media (drawing, painting, sculpture), but especially her perceptually indiscernible pairs of stones, one found and one made.

On my view, these sculptural works in particular culminate a genial narrative that she is building on the conceptual foundation of Duchamp: Celmins’ art practice offers a parallel but distinctly different narrative to that of Warhol, which highlights another important legacy of Kant’s aesthetic theory for contemporary art. That is, in addition to the formalism and the notion of art as the embodiment of ideas, Kant puts forward what one might call *an*

aesthetic environmentalism, for in the contest between the beauty of nature and the beauty of art, morally speaking, Kant sees the value of nature as more important. Thus, for moral reasons, it is more important to cultivate people's habits of appreciating the free beauties of nature over works of fine art.

Celmins—whose art practice has developed, in Danto's terms, after “the end of art”—arguably (*pace* Danto) continues the grand narrative by presenting a novel comparison between art and nature. She sets up, artistically, a kind of competition between them; unlike Kant, however, Celmins' work is not clear on whether art or nature has greater moral and aesthetic value. This ambiguity is to be expected and applauded: After all, Celmins' paired stones are not works of philosophy, they are works of art, and a work can only count as a genuine work of genius on Kant's second (official) conception of art if and only if it sparks a free play with aesthetic ideas. Celmins' artworks problematize and unleash, in an attentive spectator, a train of thoughts concerning the distinct aesthetic experiences and values on offer in art and nature, without being able to sum up these thoughts in determinate concepts and language. The result—on both Kantian aesthetic theory and Danto's philosophy of art—is a truly genial contemporary work of art.¹³

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Can Kant's Aesthetics Accommodate Conceptual Art?

A Reply to Costello

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Abstract

Diarmuid Costello has recently argued that, contra received opinion, Kant's aesthetics can accommodate conceptual art, as well as all other art. Costello offers an interpretation of Kant's art theory that demands from all art a minimal structure involving three basic "players" (the artist, the artwork, the artwork's recipient) and three basic "actions" corresponding to those "players." The article takes issue with the "action" assigned by Costello's Kant to the artwork's *recipient*, namely that her imagination generates a multitude of playful thoughts deriving from or in any other way relating to the concept or idea that the artist has instilled in the artwork and that the artwork transmits to the recipient. It is argued that the "proper" recipient of conceptual art may very well have a multitude of thoughts that are all *irrelevant* to the concept or idea the artist has instilled in the artwork, even if the artwork has transmitted that concept or idea to the recipient. This shows that Kant's art theory, as presented by Costello, cannot accommodate conceptual art. I conclude by suggesting that either one of two amendments to the theory's account of the recipient's experience could enable it to accommodate conceptual art.

Key words

Kant; conceptual art; ideality; kindred thoughts; aesthetics; Costello

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1. Introduction

Can Kant's aesthetics accommodate conceptual art? The standard view in the artworld, influenced by the work of the prolific art critic Clement Greenberg, is that it cannot (Greenberg 1986-1993, 1999). Greenberg presented Kantian aesthetics as an instance of *aesthetic formalism*, the view that an object is art *solely* because of the intuitable aesthetic attributes of its sensible form rather than because of any intellectual content or idea it might possess (Wood 2005, p. 158).¹ For the formalists "art is made [solely] to be looked at" (Wood 2002, p. 15) and its affect is the aesthetic *feeling*, which is an element opposed to thoughts or ideas.² Wood puts it well, when he writes that in aesthetic formalism there is an "exclusive focus on the aesthetic," to wit, on the artwork's sensible form (Wood 2002, p. 28). *Conceptual art*, by contrast, is usually understood as that kind of art that "foregrounds art's intellectual content, and the thought processes associated with that content over its form" (Costello 2007, p. 93). Historically, conceptual artists reacted against "claims that painting 'appealed to eyesight alone', that visual art's 'primordial condition' was that it is made to be looked at" (Wood 2002, p.28), and emphasized the *ideas* that come to the fore in artistic experience (without, of course, denying the existence of the artwork's sensible form). As Wood expresses it, in conceptual art "the Idea was king" (Wood, 2002, p. 33) - contrastingly, it may be said that in formalism "the sensible form (the aesthetic) was king" - and in the famous words of Kosuth (cited in Wood 2002, p. 35), "the actual works of art are the ideas." Lewitt, equally famously, writes that "in conceptual art the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work" (Lewitt, 1967, p. 12). These characterizations of "aesthetic formalism" and "conceptual art" are incompatible, hence the deduction that Kantian aesthetics (which Greenberg takes to be an instance of aesthetic formalism) cannot accommodate conceptual art.

In a couple of essays published in the second half of the 2000s (Costello 2007, 2009), Diarmuid Costello made a convincing case *against* Greenberg's identification of Kant's aesthetics with modern aesthetic formalism. Indeed, that Kant understands the artwork as an aesthetic *idea* that "prompts much thought" (CJ 5, p. 314)³ or, again, "give[s] the imagination a momentum which makes it think" (CJ 5, p. 315) gives a decisive blow to that identification. It follows that the above "deduction" must be rejected and the question "can Kant's aesthetics accommodate conceptual art?" can be raised once again.

In those same essays Costello defends an affirmative answer to the question. He does this by providing an interpretation of Kant's art theory and arguing that this theory, so

¹ Consider here Ad Reinhardt's "formalist" assertions that "art as art" is "emptied and purified of all other-than-art meanings," that the less art relates to thought the better for it, and that "art as art" contains "no ideas" as its "essence" (Reinhardt 1953, 1962). This attitude goes back to Clive Bell's and Roger Fry's "formalism," who isolated the essential feature of art as "form," "significant form" for Bell, "expressive form" for Fry. As Wood observes, "for modernists, it is not too much to say that the aesthetic was the be-all and end-all of art, its unique and proper area of competence" (Wood 2002, p. 26)

² "[M]odernism [i.e. modern aesthetic formalism] had been an art of sensation, something that aspired to undercut learning and language at the level of the emotions" (Wood 2002, p. 33).

³ I cite Kant's *Critique of Judgment* using the standard Academy pagination and the abbreviation *CJ*. The translation is Pluhar's. I use the Pluhar (Hackett) instead of the standard Guyer and Matthews (Cambridge University Press) translation of the *Critique of Judgment* because it is the translation Costello uses.

interpreted, applies to conceptual art in the same way it applies to all other art. Despite the novelty of Costello's essays and their importance concerning the attempt to bring Kant's aesthetic theory in dialogue with modern art, there has not been, as far as I know, even a single discussion of them. In the present article I take issue with Costello's affirmative answer to the question and endeavor to convince the reader that Kant's art theory, as presented by Costello, applies neither to conceptual art nor to all other art. Nevertheless, I conclude by arguing that, if Costello's Kant accepts either one of two amendments to his art theory, the latter can be said to be able to accommodate all art, including conceptual art.

A number of things should be noted before I commence. First, it must be emphasized that I am not interested in judging the correctness of Costello's interpretation. So, I will not examine whether or not his interpretation survives scholarly scrutiny. My sole concern is whether Costello's interpretation, *accepted as it is*, justifies his affirmative answer to our question. So, the title question should be understood to mean, more precisely, "can Kant's aesthetics, *as interpreted by Costello*, accommodate conceptual art?"⁴

Second, as it will become apparent, Costello's Kant understands art as involving three basic "players": the artist, the artwork, and the artwork's recipient (spectator, listener, etc.). He also understands their basic "action" as follows:

- (a) the artist creates the artwork and instills therein an idea;
- (b) the artwork affects the recipient through the "aesthetic attributes" of its sensible form and thereby transmits the artist's idea to her mind;
- (c) the recipient "expands" that idea into a multitude of playful thoughts that are "kindred" or "related" with that idea.

Each of these "actions" is a *necessary condition* of art and therefore if an object is to be labelled an *artwork*, each of these "actions" must be satisfied. It is *not* stated that these "actions" are also sufficient conditions, so there may be also other elements that need to be materialized before one is able to label an object "art," according to Kant. However, an examination of the sufficient conditions of art in Kant's art theory will have to wait for another occasion.

Third, although the whole discussion is based on my understanding of Costello as suggesting or implying that the above conditions are necessary conditions of *art*, the objection I will raise against his position would undermine it even if he took those conditions to be necessary conditions of *beautiful* or *good* or *successful* art. This is so because the counterexamples I will provide are not threatened in any way by the supposition that Costello regards the paradigmatic examples he provides in support of his

⁴ Costello's interpretation of Kant's art theory is controversial (as pretty much everything is in Kant scholarship) in that it understands Kantian aesthetic ideas as concepts or ideas that are received first as images and then as thoughts via the artworks' sensible form. A similar interpretation can be found in Rogerson 2008. A contrasting interpretation is Wood's (Wood 2005, pp. 151-170), which takes Kantian aesthetic ideas as being images that are *completely* free of concepts. For an excellent discussion of the debate see Rogerson 2008, pp. 7-24.

argument as works of beautiful or good or successful art rather than simply as works of art.⁵

Fourth, to answer fully the question “can Kant’s aesthetics accommodate conceptual art?” one must examine *each* of the aforementioned three “actions” *in relation to conceptual art*. In the present article, though, I will take the first two “actions” as granted and focus solely on the third. Therefore, my critique of Kant’s art theory, as interpreted by Costello, targets neither Kant’s conception of the artist’s activity nor how he views the artwork’s affecting the recipient *but rather only how he understands the experience of the artwork’s recipient*. It follows that no objection to my argument can be raised that addresses either the thesis that the artist causes the presence of an idea in the artwork or the thesis that the recipient’s thoughts are caused by the artwork. It cannot be suggested, for example, that the recipient’s thoughts could have a different source than the artwork. These claims, which are by no means unproblematic, are simply taken for granted here and hence the reader should simply go along with them.

The focus of the paper is the “action” of the recipient of conceptual art. This “action” is that the recipient “expands” the idea she receives causally from the artwork into a multitude of playful (loose, not fully developed) thoughts that are “kindred” or “related” with that idea. The term “recipient” will throughout signify the recipient of art who pays full attention to her artistic experience and is not absent-minded or in an illusory or indifferent state of mind and, moreover, does not impose her own individual practical or theoretical interests on this experience, namely who is truly “disinterested” in the Kantian sense (CJ 5, pp. 204-205). This is a “proper recipient” of art (or, if you will, of beautiful or good or successful art). The reader should understand the term “recipient” to mean throughout “proper recipient” in the specific sense I have just explained. I am not interested in “improper recipients” and all specific recipients thematized in the paper will be “proper” ones.

I proceed as follows. Section 2 presents Costello’s interpretation of Kant’s art theory. It is stressed that for Costello’s Kant *any given* “proper” recipient of an artwork has a multitude of playful thoughts (caused by the artwork) that are *kindred* with the particular idea the artist has instilled in that artwork. Section 3 makes the point that there are “proper” recipients of art other than conceptual art whose imagination generates a multitude of playful thoughts that are *irrelevant* to the particular idea the artist has instilled in the artwork. Section 4 argues that conceptual art is no different from all other art on this issue: there are “proper” recipients of conceptual art whose imagination generates a multitude of thoughts that are *irrelevant* to - or, if you will, *not* “kindred” with - the artwork’s ideal content. Therefore, Costello is wrong: Kant’s aesthetics cannot accommodate conceptual art. Section 5 discusses a rejoinder Costello could offer to the conclusion of the previous section. It is argued that the rejoinder must be rejected. Finally, in section 6 I discuss two amendments to the Kantian art theory and claim that either one of them could enable it to accommodate conceptual art, as well as all other art.

⁵ This observation settles a worry raised by an anonymous reviewer of *Con-Textos Kantianos*. In relation to this see also footnote 9 in this paper.

2. Costello's Interpretation of Kant's Art Theory

In this section I present Costello's interpretation of Kant's art theory (Costello 2007, 2009). The basis of Kant's art theory, according to Costello, is the claim that artworks are "aesthetic ideas" (Costello 2007, p. 101; Costello 2009, p. 128). Kant defines "aesthetic idea" as follows:

[By] an aesthetic idea I mean a presentation of the imagination which prompts much thought,⁶ but to which no determinate thought whatsoever, i.e., no concept, can be adequate, so that no language can express it completely and allow us to grasp it. (CJ 5, p. 314)

The claim that the artwork is an aesthetic *idea* determines the artwork in a twofold manner, namely with respect to its content and with respect to the way it presents that content through its sensible form (Costello 2007, p. 101; Costello 2009, p. 128). (The adjective "aesthetic" in the term "aesthetic idea" refers to the *form* of the artwork (rather than to its content).) Let me discuss these two aspects in turn:

(i) With respect to its *content*, the artwork is determined either as a complete concept or as an idea. (a) A *complete concept* is an everyday concept whose objects can be presented in intuition but which, as soon as it becomes an artwork's content, acquires "a completeness that experience itself never affords" (Costello 2007, p. 101). At this juncture, Kant refers to the poet who ventures to give concepts such as death, envy, love and fame that *are* exemplified in experience "sensible expression in a way that goes beyond the limits of experience, namely with a completeness for which no example can be found in nature" (CJ 5, p. 314). (b) An *idea* is a mental element whose object cannot be presented in intuition, such as the idea of freedom (Costello 2007, p. 101; Costello 2009, p. 128). Kant writes that, when their content is an idea, artworks "do at least strive toward something that lies beyond the bounds of experience and hence try to approach an exhibition of rational concepts [i.e. ideas]" (CJ 5, p. 314). There is, then, a difference between complete concepts and ideas: while complete concepts have objects that are intuitable, ideas have objects that are not intuitable. There is also a similarity between them: they are both totalities or wholes, capturing everything there is to capture concerning something (e.g. death or freedom). It is this totality that is missed when complete concepts are presented in intuition. Ideas, in their turn, are never presented in intuition. The artwork has the ability to present to the mind an approximation of the totality of both complete concepts and ideas through the mediation of sensible form. This brings us to the issue of the presentation of the content of the aesthetic idea.

⁶ Wood goes from Kant's claim that an aesthetic idea is a mental presentation to which no concept is adequate to his own claim that an aesthetic idea is "free from any concept" (Wood 2005, p. 165). But how can a presentation that, as Kant here says, "prompts much thought" be "free from any concept?" Not surprisingly, Wood takes this claim back at the end of his chapter on art, writing that aesthetic ideas "give a kind of sensuous expression to moral or religious *ideas* that properly speaking transcend the capacity of our senses to represent them" (Wood 2005, p. 168, my emphasis).

(ii) With respect to *the way it presents its content* through its form, the artwork is determined as an object that “expands” the concept or the idea it has as its content “by virtue of the indirect means through which [it] embod[ies] [it] [i.e. the concept or idea] in sensible form” (Costello 2007, p. 101). In other words, the artwork, by means of its sensible form, “expands” the concept or the idea it has as its content. Crucially, this “expansion” refers to the relation the recipient has to the artwork’s content: the latter is “expanded” *in the recipient’s mind*. The “expanded” concept or idea is *not* identical with the complete concept or the idea that is the artwork’s content. It amounts only to a process of *approximating* it, hence Kant’s claim that no concept can be adequate to the aesthetic idea (the artwork). As noted, neither the complete concept (as *complete*) nor the idea can have a presence in intuition. Yet, what distinguishes the artwork regarding its content’s presentation is that through its “aesthetic attributes” (i.e. its sensible form) it leads the recipient’s imagination to generate a potentially endless series of thoughts (hence Kant’s claim that “an aesthetic idea [...] prompts much thought”) relating to the complete concept or the idea that is the artwork’s content. The phrase “expanded concept or idea” refers exactly to this “endless relating.” As Kant puts it, through its “aesthetic attributes” (sensible form) the artwork expresses its content’s “implications” and “kinship with other concepts” (CJ 5, p. 315). These characterizations are crucial for our forthcoming discussion. For Costello’s Kant, the endless series of thoughts the recipient’s imagination generates are (somehow) *implied* by the complete concept or the idea that is the artwork’s content and are *kindred* concepts. The important thing for us is that for Costello’s Kant the thoughts the recipient has - thoughts which have been caused by the artwork - have a “kinship” with the concept or the idea of the artwork. To say the least, what the recipient thinks when she is affected by the artwork *concerns* or is *about* - in one way or another - the particular concept or idea the artist has instilled in the artwork. This *aboutness* is peculiar to the art theory Costello ascribes to Kant.

Note here, also crucially, that when Costello’s Kant speaks of *the* recipient’s experience, he means *any given* recipient’s experience (Costello 2007, p. 103). “The recipient” is the general “proper” recipient, *any given* person who has “proper” experience of a real artwork. So, Kant’s art theory, as interpreted by Costello, contends that *any given* “proper” recipient’s imagination generates an endless series of thoughts which are kindred with the artwork’s conceptual or ideal content.

To clarify what it means for the artwork to be an aesthetic idea, Kant gives the example of an artistic depiction of “Jupiter’s eagle with the lightning in its claws” (CJ 5, p. 315). According to the above, this artwork must contain an idea, which is then “expanded” in the recipient’s mind when she experiences the artwork’s “aesthetic attributes.” This idea, Kant tells us, is the idea of God’s majesty (CJ 5, p. 315). The “expansion” is possible because the artwork’s “aesthetic attributes” (its form) have a certain *affinity* with what Kant calls the “logical attributes” of the complete concept or the idea which is the artwork’s content, in this case the idea of God’s majesty. This affinity has the specific character of “a *metaphorical* expression” of the logical attributes “through which [metaphor] we are encouraged to envisage God’s majesty in the light of the thoughts provoked by Jupiter’s

eagle, thereby opening up a rich seam of further associations” (Costello 2007, p. 102). Recall here that this “rich seam of further associations” is (somehow) implicated by or derived from the idea comprising the artwork’s content and, therefore, that the “associations” are “kindred” with one another *and with the idea*. The “associations” are *about* or *of* the particular idea the artist has instilled in the artwork. As Kant himself puts it,

aesthetic attributes [...] prompt the imagination to spread over a multitude of kindred presentations that arouse more thought than can be expressed in a concept determined by words. These aesthetic attributes yield an *aesthetic idea* [whose] proper function is to quicken [or enliven; *beleben*] the mind by opening up for it a view into an immense realm of kindred presentations. (CJ 5, p. 315)

Artworks, then, as aesthetic ideas, are distinguished from other things by their capacity to present complete concepts or ideas in intuition through their “aesthetic attributes” (sensible form) in such a way that, as noted in the above excerpt, “the imagination is spread over [an endless] multitude of kindred presentations.”

To clarify this even more, Costello adds another example to Kant’s own: a consideration of Delacroix’s *Liberty Leading the People to Victory* (1830) (Costello 2007, p. 102; Costello 2009, p. 129). The content of this well-known painting, Costello tells us, is the idea of freedom. Its “aesthetic attributes” bring forth – metaphorically – this idea in such a way that any given “proper” recipient’s mind initiates a potentially endless stream of thoughts *about freedom*. This is Costello’s own application of Kant’s theory to Delacroix’s painting:

[Delacroix’s painting] is a sensuous embodiment of the idea of freedom. The aesthetic attributes through which freedom is personified in the guise of “Liberty,” and shown leading her people to victory (fearlessness, spontaneity, resoluteness, leadership, all attributes of an active self-determining will) while holding a flag, symbol of freedom from oppression, aloft in one hand and clutching a musket in the other, serve to “aesthetically expand” the idea of freedom itself. By presenting freedom metaphorically in the guise of “Liberty” in this way, freedom is depicted concretely as something worth fighting for, indeed, as something requiring courage and fortitude to attain. Through the expression of ideas in this way, Kant claims, works of art “quicken the mind” [...]. [A]esthetic ideas stimulate the imagination to range freely and widely over an “immense realm of kindred presentations.” As such [aesthetic ideas], works of art stimulate the mind, albeit in a less structured way than determinate thought, by encouraging us to think *about such ideas* in a new light. (Costello 2007, pp. 102-103, my emphasis)

Costello specifies here that the “expansion” of the complete concept or the idea in the recipient’s mind is “less structured” than the development of a concept by means of philosophical or scientific thinking (cf. Wood 2005, p. 166). The mental “associations” that the recipient’s imagination generates are “freely” interconnected, that is, in a playful, interrupted, undeveloped or underdeveloped, loose manner. Yet, we should always

remember that this “free” relationality or interconnection is not as free as to ever break the relation or “kinship” (the *aboutness*) with the complete concept or the idea that is the artwork’s content. The “kind of free-wheeling, associative play in which the imagination moves freely and swiftly from one partial presentation of a concept to another” (Costello 2007, p. 103) remains always tied to the complete concept or the idea the artwork has been infused with. This is why Kant labels the “free play” generated by the artwork “the free play of imagination *and understanding*.” The understanding maintains a connection to the imagination’s “spread[ing] over a multitude of kindred presentations that arouse more thought than can be expressed in a concept” (CJ 5, p. 135) precisely by securing that the multitude of presentations the imagination generates is a multitude of *kindred* presentations or, as Costello puts it, “*partial* presentation[s] of a [i.e., *one*] concept” (Costello 2007, p. 103; for more on the “free play” understood in this way see Rogerson 2008, pp. 20-23). In the words of the above long quotation, artworks cause us to think “in a new light” but always “about *such* ideas.”

The “immense realm of kindred presentations” (CJ 5, p. 315) that the “free play of imagination and understanding” generates in any given “proper” recipient’s mind gives rise to a “feeling of life” in that recipient. This is a “feeling of mental vitality” that mirrors the feeling the artist had when she made the artwork, that is, when she created an aesthetic idea (Costello 2007, p. 103; Costello 2009, p. 131). What enabled the artist to create an aesthetic idea and thereby both acquire and pass on to the recipient “the feeling of life” is her “genius”. Genius is a faculty of the mind that, as Kant puts it, “discover[s] [aesthetic] ideas for a given concept” and “hit[s] upon a way of expressing these ideas that enables us to communicate to others [...] the mental attunement [...] those ideas produce” (CJ 5, p. 317). As Costello has it, “genius [...] is the ability to ‘communicate’ the free play of the faculties [...] and thereby occasion a similarly enlivening cognitive play in the work’s recipient” (Costello 2007, p. 103). It is also important, though, that genius “communicates” the free play of the faculties without getting out of the boundaries of the “given concept” for which it develops the aesthetic idea.

This, in a nutshell, is what Costello’s Kant thinks about art: the artwork is created by an artist who instills in it or maybe associates it with a particular concept or idea in such a way that its “aesthetic attributes” (i.e., its sensible form) cause any given “proper” recipient’s mind to generate an immense multitude of *kindred* thoughts, to wit, thoughts (somehow) deriving from or implied by that particular concept or idea and hence being *about* or *of* it. This account of art involves three basic “players”: the artist, the artwork, and the recipient; and three basic “actions”: the artist’s creating the artwork and instilling a particular idea in it, the artwork’s affecting the recipient aesthetically and transferring this idea to her mind, and the recipient’s “expanding” the idea into a multitude of playful thoughts that are kindred with (that are about or of) that particular idea.

Costello argues that Kant’s art theory, *so interpreted*, can accommodate conceptual art, as well as all other art (Costello 2007, 2009). This simply means that, like all other art (or beautiful or good or successful art) does, conceptual art involves minimally (and, therefore, necessarily) the aforementioned three basic “players” and three basic “actions.” In what

follows I grant Costello's Kant the claim that art (or good art etc.) minimally involves these "players." I also grant him the basic "actions" of the artist and the artwork (although they actually face several philosophical difficulties and objections [see Schellekens 2017]). I focus on the third basic "action" – the "action" of the *recipient* – and argue that Kant's account of it, as presented by Costello, can be challenged both as an account that supposedly applies to conceptual art and as an account that supposedly applies to all other art (or good art etc.).

3. Why the Kantian Art Theory cannot Accommodate *All Art other than Conceptual Art*

In the present section I argue that Kant's account of the recipient's experience, as presented by Costello, is false as an account that supposedly applies to *all* art other than conceptual art. Recall that for Costello's Kant the "proper" recipient's experience, consisting of kindred thoughts, is a necessary condition of art and is caused by the artwork. As seen, Costello supports his interpretation of Kant with two examples: any given "proper" recipient's experience of the artistic depiction of Jupiter's eagle and any given "proper" recipient's experience of Delacroix's *Liberty*. I will show that the examples do not hold and that this proves that Kant's account, as presented by Costello, cannot be said to apply to *all* art other than conceptual art.

Before I focus on the examples, let me note the important point that Costello himself acknowledges that the question what art fundamentally involves has very little to gain from answers given by the artists *qua* artists:

[T]he art world [...] [has the] unfortunate tendency to take works of art at their producer's word, when artists are about as interested, and hence potentially as *unreliable*, guides to their own artistic achievement as one could hope to find. (Costello 2007, p. 111, n. 43)

This means: what the artists say about what makes their work art (or beautiful or good or successful art) should not be accepted uncritically or as the final word on the matter. Costello does well to point this out, because if he did not, the Kantian art theory he proposes would immediately collapse. For the *formalist* artist claims that what makes an object art are *solely* its "aesthetic properties," its sensible form, rather than any conceptual or ideal content. Since Kant's art theory, as presented by Costello, (a) contradicts aesthetic formalism and (b) aesthetic formalism would be true, according to what "formalist" artists claim, the Kantian theory would not be universal, as it claims to be.

Costello's point regarding the value of the artists' statements is relevant here because it applies also to the issue of the recipient's experience. Whether Kant's account of this experience is true or false should be decided by considering, not the claims of the artists, but rather the logical or rational facts about such an experience. With this caveat in mind, let us now turn to Costello's examples.

Recall that Kant's art theory, as presented by Costello, demands that *any given* "proper" recipient has the specified experience. I will now refer to possible cases - in fact, *really*

possible cases (to use a Kantian notion), because they can be materialized in the present world without any alterations - that undermine the necessity of this demand.

First, let us posit a recipient called Doris. Doris observes and reflects on an artistic depiction of Jupiter's eagle with the lightning in its claws. She is not absent-minded, is very serious about artistic appreciation, and has absolutely no practical or theoretical interest that could cloud her judgment in this case. She is, therefore, fully "disinterested" (in the Kantian sense) and a "proper" recipient of art. Yet, while in this occasion Doris's imagination generates several thoughts, playfully connected with one another, *these thoughts are completely unrelated to the idea of God's majesty*. What she actually thinks of is the idea of the dominance of nature over man. She also thinks of the kingdom of birds and the endless variety of their species. This gives rise to her having multiple thoughts on the concept "bird" and the concept "flying." The important thing is that while Doris does indeed have a multitude of playfully interconnected thoughts, as the Kantian theory demands, these thoughts exhibit no relation whatsoever to the artwork's particular content. Since it cannot be denied that this is Doris's real experience of the depiction of Jupiter's eagle, does it follow that this depiction is not art, as the Kantian account would have us believe? (Recall that for Costello's Kant the "proper" recipient's experience is *caused* by the artwork and consists of thoughts that are *kindred* with the idea of the artwork. This is a necessary condition of art.) Yet, if Costello's Kant claimed this, there would be a contradiction, because the example has been used by him precisely in order to clarify what it means for an object to be art (or good art etc.): Costello's Kant would in this instance claim both that the depiction of Jupiter's eagle is art and that it is not art.

Second, let us posit another actual recipient called Steven. Steven is a historian of art and is therefore aware that when he experiences Delacroix's *Liberty*, he should think of freedom in a variety of ways. Yet, when Steven visits the museum this morning and comes face-to-face with Delacroix's masterpiece, his mind thinks of anything but freedom: he thinks of the nature and concept of colour, his childhood friends and the concept of friendship, the anatomy of the human body and the concept of body in general, and many other things *irrelevant to the idea of freedom*. Steven was in this occasion very focused on his artistic experience, was not absent-minded or in a state of illusion, and no practical or theoretical interest of his interfered with his experience in any way. He was, therefore, a "proper" recipient. Does this experience of a "really possible" recipient show, as Costello's Kant would have us believe, that Delacroix's painting is not art? Again, an affirmative answer would generate a contradiction, for Costello has used the example precisely in order to clarify what it means for an object to be art (or good art etc.): Costello's Kant would in this instance claim both that Delacroix's painting is art and that it is not art.

The above two cases are meant to show that the Kantian account of the recipient's experience, as presented by Costello, cannot accommodate *all* art other than conceptual art. Recall that for Costello's Kant the "proper" recipient's mind is caused by the artwork to have a stream of playful thoughts that are *kindred* with the complete concept or the idea the artist has instilled in the artwork. Such kinship (or "aboutness") is, moreover, a necessary condition of art. The above counterexamples have shown that there is art (or good art etc.)

affecting some recipients in such a way that they have a multitude of thoughts, playfully interconnected, that are *irrelevant* to the artwork's particular conceptual or ideal content. This result does not exclude the possibility of a positive answer to the question "can Kant's aesthetics accommodate *conceptual art*?". Yet, it has now been made clear that Kant's aesthetics, as interpreted by Costello, can be said to accommodate conceptual art *only* if there is something about conceptual art that *prevents* any given "proper" recipient's imagination from generating a multitude of playful thoughts *that are all irrelevant to the complete concept or the idea that is the conceptual artwork's content*. To this issue I now turn.

4. Why the Kantian Art Theory cannot Accommodate Conceptual Art

In the present section I argue that Kant's account of the recipient's experience, as presented by Costello, is false regarding conceptual art. To show that Kantian aesthetics *can* accommodate conceptual art, Costello considers *Index 01*, also known as *Documenta Index*, the most famous work of Art & Language, exhibited first in 1972 (Costello 2009, pp. 130-131). This is how Costello describes the artwork:

Documenta Index consists of a cross-referenced index of the group's writings on art to that date and of the relations between them. [It] originally took the form of eight small filing cabinets, displayed on four grey plinths, consisting of six tray-like drawers each, containing both published writings and unpublished writings [...]. These were hinged one on top of the other in a series of nested sequences determined alphabetically and subalphabetically in terms of their order and degree of completion. The cabinets and their contents were displayed together with an index listing their contents in terms of three logical relations (of compatibility, incompatibility, and incomparability) believed [by Art & Language] to obtain between them. The [index] was papered directly onto the walls of the room in which the cabinets were displayed [...]. (Costello 2009, p. 130)

Costello's point is that the basic requirements of Kant's art theory are satisfied by *Index 01* and the experience it gives rise to. Its content is the idea of an exhaustive catalogue, instilled in it by Art & Language, its creator (Costello 2009, p. 130). Its sensible form, namely the artwork's "aesthetic attributes," embodies that idea and causes the recipient's imagination to generate a multitude of playful thoughts *concerning or relating to the idea of an exhaustive catalogue* (Costello 2009, p. 130).⁷ The thoughts are *about* or *of* that particular idea. Costello stresses that this multitude of thoughts only approximates the idea of an exhaustive catalogue because, first, the logical relations between the exhibited writings are endless and, second, the production of writings by Art & Language continues after the exhibition (which means that *Index 01*, at any moment of its existence after the

⁷ Note that all conceptual artworks, according to Costello, exhibit aesthetic attributes (they are not sheer ideas). This is not undermined by the fact that *Index 01* was meant by Art & Language to involve *reading*; see Wood 2002, p. 49.

exhibition, does not present an exhaustive catalogue). This agrees with Kant's account of the artwork as an aesthetic idea.

For our purposes, the important thing in Costello's account of *Index 01* is that he insists, in accord with his interpretation of Kant's art theory, that the immense realm of thoughts generated in any given "proper" recipient's mind by the artwork consists of "kindred" thoughts, to wit, thoughts *concerning or relating to the idea of exhaustive cataloguing*. Here is how he characteristically puts it:

[By] bringing all this together in sensible form, this apparently austere work of art opens up a potentially limitless array of imaginative associations: to lists, taxonomies, and typologies; to attempts at self-documentation, self-reflexivity, and (ultimately) to ideals of complete self-knowledge or transparency; to conversation, collaboration, interaction, study, and learning; and, of course, to various regimes of archiving, cataloguing, and the like. As such this work "expands" the idea it embodies in ways consonant with Kant's presentation of aesthetic ideas. (Costello 2009, p. 131)

The expression "and the like" Costello employs here is characteristic of how Costello's Kant would think of the "expansion" of the content of *Index 01* in any given "proper" recipient's mind: it would consist of a multitude of thoughts that are relevant to or derive from - that are about or of - the idea of exhaustive cataloguing. Costello's understanding of *Index 01* apparently relates to the actual historical motivation of Art & Language to make the artwork a manifestation of "the 'continuum', the system, the structure-as-whole," "a kind of generic work," rather than a static moment of a whole (Wood 2002, p. 29).

This view of the experience generated causally by *Index 01* to a "proper" recipient is undermined if we consider the case of Michelle, a "really possible" "proper" recipient of this artwork. Let us posit that Michelle, who is a true lover of all things art, was there at the original exhibition of *Documenta Index* in Kassel in 1972. She was immediately hooked and spent hours examining the work's various pieces and properties and reflecting on it as a whole. "This is great art," she told herself. Yet, all that time she spent observing the artwork she actually never entertained even a single thought about or relating to cataloguing. Her stream of thoughts developed in a direction altogether different from the one described by Costello. At the very beginning she thought about writing and the "everyday concepts" of a sentence, a word, a syllable, and a letter. "Why do capital letters exist anyway?" she wondered. She then suddenly thought that writing is futile and that humans would better spend their time swimming rather than writing. She started having visions of the deep blue of the ocean and the endless variety of its animal species. While opening one of the six drawers of one of the eight small metal filing cabinets, her mind wandered into the depths of the ocean, seeing a sea cave after a sea cave, sharp rocks emerging from copses of pale green seaweed. Every time Michelle threw her gaze at the index on the wall, she thought of the stars filling the sky dome above the ocean during starry nights. She found herself reflecting on the concept of matter and the idea of infinity. To make a long story short, Michelle's experience of *Index 01* supplied her with a multitude of thoughts about the ocean, its animal species, and its environment, as well as

about writing, humanity, and infinity, rather than about cataloguing. It should be emphasized that Michelle was, by all counts, a “proper” recipient of *Index 01*: she was not absent-minded or in an illusory state of mind, she was fully “disinterested,” focused, and immersed in the experience provided by this great piece of art.

Does Michelle’s experience of *Documenta Index* show, as Costello’s Kant would have us believe, that this work is not art? (Recall that for Costello’s Kant the artwork causes kindred thoughts to the “proper” recipient’s mind and that this is a necessary condition of art.) Again, there is a contradiction here: on the one hand, Kant’s art theory, as presented by Costello, suggests that, given Michelle’s experience, *Index 01* is not art; on the other hand, Costello employed this example in order to show that Kant’s art theory accommodates conceptual art. Similar contradictions would be generated with respect to *any* piece of conceptual art. For there is no conceptual artwork for which it can be said that no “really possible” “proper” recipient can experience it in such a way that her mind would generate a multitude of thoughts that are irrelevant to its conceptual or ideal content.⁸

In this section I have argued that Kant’s art theory, as interpreted by Costello, cannot accommodate conceptual art. The reason for this is that while that theory demands that the “proper” recipient of a conceptual artwork is led by it to have a multitude of thoughts concerning or relating to that artwork’s conceptual or ideal content (“kindred thoughts”), this recipient may very well have a multitude of thoughts that are irrelevant to that content.

5. A Rejoinder and its Rejection

In the present section I consider and reject a rejoinder Costello could offer. The rejoinder is that Michelle’s experience does not amount to an experience of conceptual art (or, simply, to an experience of art or good art etc.), but rather to an experience of aesthetic formalism (which, for Costello’s Kant, is not art or good art etc.). This is so because, the assumption would be, if we exclude non-causal explanations of thinking, the recipient’s mind could have a multitude of thoughts that are *irrelevant* to the artwork’s content *only* through its being affected by a concept-less or idea-less sensible form. That is to say, Costello would reject outright the suggestion that a person who is affected by a complete concept or an idea aesthetically and whose thoughts result from this affection could have a multitude of thoughts that have nothing at all to do with that concept or idea.

The following steps show why the rejoinder fails. *First*, Costello cannot deny that it is “really possible” for Michelle to have the experience we described or that Michelle is a “proper” recipient of conceptual art (or of art or of good art etc.), for there is nothing illogical or irrational regarding such stipulation. *Second*, since Costello himself labels

⁸ As I noted in the Introduction to this paper, the same contradictions would arise even if Costello’s Kant gave us necessary conditions of *beautiful* or *good* or *successful* art instead of simply necessary conditions of *art*. The problem would have to do with Costello’s own admission that *Index 01* is beautiful or good or successful art. That he would indeed admit this follows from his thesis that *Index 01* is accommodated by the Kantian art theory. So, if he thinks that the Kantian art theory concerns beautiful or good or successful art, he *must* think that *Index 01* is beautiful or good or successful art. Michelle’s example would then show that Costello’s Kant affirms both that *Index 01* is good etc. art and that *Index 01* is not good etc. art.

Index 01 art (or good art etc.), he must accept that it is its idea or concept (rather than solely its sensible form) that causes an array of thoughts in a “proper” recipient’s mind. *Third*, since Michelle is indisputably a “proper” recipient of *Index 01* and since *Index 01* is indeed art (or good art etc.), it is necessary that the idea or concept of *Index 01* has caused the thoughts that compose Michelle’s experience. *Fourth*, it follows that Michelle’s experience does amount to an experience of conceptual art (or to an experience of art or good art etc.) and, therefore, that the rejoinder fails.

These considerations show that the characterization of Michelle’s experience as a collapse into aesthetic formalism can be avoided and that, in general, conceptual art is compatible with the causal generation of a multitude of thoughts in the recipient’s mind that are irrelevant to the content of the artwork. Nevertheless, the rejoinder has been based on the assumption that if the recipient’s mind is affected by an idea or concept (the artwork’s content), it cannot - through this affection - develop thoughts that are absolutely irrelevant to that idea or concept. Michelle’s experience shows this to be possible, but no *explanation* has been offered as to how exactly it is possible. Until such an explanation is provided the rejoinder still has some force. I suggest an explanation in the next section.

Although Costello has told us that conceptual artists’ views about conceptual art are philosophically unreliable, it is interesting⁹ to note that there are conceptual artists who ask for a recipient’s experience of conceptual art that certainly can accommodate Michelle’s experience.¹⁰ I will briefly describe the relevant views of three “first-generation” conceptual artists: Helio Oiticica, Sol Lewitt, and Daniel Buren.

Oiticica describes conceptual art as exemplifying “a totally anarchic position,” in the sense that it allows the recipient’s thinking a maximum “degree of liberty” (Oiticica 1966). Such liberty amounts to the recipient’s being offered “innumerable possibilities” of thinking. Oiticica suggests that the idea included in the conceptual artwork does not hinder *in any way* the recipient’s thinking: it can take *any* direction *whatsoever*. As he notes, conceptual art does not seek “to impose upon him [i.e. the recipient] an ‘idea’ [...], but [only] to give him a simple opportunity to participate, so that he ‘finds’ there [i.e. in a conceptual artwork] something he may want to realize.” The aim of conceptual art, Oiticica insists, is not to make us think what the artist had in mind but rather to make “man” think “within himself and [realize] his vital creative possibilities.” It is *all* about “the freedom of ‘choosing’ of anyone to whom participation is proposed.”¹¹

⁹ I do not assign any argumentative value to these views, precisely because this would be considered as unacceptable by Costello. My argument against his interpretation would go through even if the artists’ views were missing. Nevertheless, there is some value to my mentioning them: it is shown that the experience I describe in the three counterexamples is not a fiction or even a rarity, but rather an experience that is well-known to conceptual artists and even accepted or promoted by some of them.

¹⁰ There are, however, also other conceptual artists who ask for an experience closer to Costello’s terms. See Costa, Escari, and Jacoby 1967 and Piper 1967.

¹¹ In another text from the same period, Oiticica suggests something different: “the individual to whom the work is addressed is invited to complete the meanings proposed by it – it is thus an open work” (Oiticica 1967, p. 41). Nevertheless, he immediately stresses that conceptual art does not deny the artwork’s *complete* “openness,” in the sense that the recipient becomes its creator, to wit, that she thinks through it *whatever* she likes. See Oiticica (1967, p. 41, my emphasis: “Experiences of both an individualized and a collective nature

Lewitt makes it clear that the conceptual artist must ensure that “the physical and emotive power of the form” does not overpower “the idea of the piece” (Lewitt 1967, p. 15). This “idea of the piece” has originated in the artist’s mind and has directed her in making the artwork. Yet, when he turns his attention to the recipient or “the viewer,” Lewitt states that

it doesn’t really matter if the viewer understands the concepts of the artist by seeing the art. Once out of his hand the artist has no control over the way a viewer will perceive the work. (Lewitt 1967, p. 14)

So, Lewitt does not ask from the recipient of conceptual art to think *only* “the concepts of the artist” or even to think them *at all*: she is free to think *whatever*. What is important is *only* that “it is the objective of the artist who is concerned with conceptual art to make his work mentally interesting to the spectator” (Lewitt 1967, p. 12) and that “conceptual art is made to engage the mind of the viewer rather than his eye or emotions” (Lewitt 1967, p. 15). *Pace Costello’s* understanding of the experience of conceptual art, Lewitt suggests that this “engagement of the mind” can be achieved even if the recipient of conceptual art does not understand “the concepts of the artists,” that is to say, even if the recipient follows a stream of thought that is irrelevant to the complete concept or the idea the artist has instilled in the artwork.

Finally, in an interview conducted by Georges Boudaille, Buren emphasizes that “the observer” has the power to “anonymize” or “neutralize” the artwork and thereby find and reflect on only herself in the artistic experience (Boudaille 1968, p. 69). In this case, “a fantasy would be projected, a personal view would take precedence over what is shown” (Boudaille 1968, p. 70) – that is, the fantasy and personal view of the recipient. In fact, when pressed by Boudaille’s relentless questioning, Buren clarifies that this is also the conceptual artist’s aim, to wit, to give the recipient the freedom to provide her own interpretation – *whatever* this is – of the artwork: “it is understood that the thing to be viewed must signify itself *without the help of the creator*, regardless of the relevance or the beauty of this individual’s [i.e. the creator’s] personal view” (Boudaille 1968, p. 70). To achieve this, Buren employed the technique of repetition, which can “depersonalize [...] the thing displayed” and turn it into something “neutral, anonymous, and [which] refers to nothing but itself” (Boudaille 1968, p. 70). The conceptual artist, Buren insists, “[does] not want to force the spectator” to think a particular idea (Boudaille 1968, p. 71) but only to force him “to reflect” (period!) (Boudaille 1968, p. 69). Indeed, when Boudaille expresses a view similar to Costello’s, namely that for conceptual art “the artist [...] obliges the spectator to adopt his thought patterns” and that “he leads, channels the spectator’s thoughts down the route that he wishes,” Buren describes such behaviour as “an attack on the mind of the individual” and complains that “it forces [the recipient] to have the same

tend towards increasingly more open propositions in the sense of this participation, *including those which tend to give the individual [i.e. the recipient] the opportunity to “create” his [own] work.*”

dream as [the artist]" (Boudaille 1968, pp. 72-73). Conceptual art behaves in an altogether different way, Buren concludes: it does not "insult" the recipient by imposing ideas on her. It rather presents her with "something neutral" so that she can become "free" and "choose" for herself (Boudaille 1968, pp. 74-75).

6. Two Amendments to the Kantian Art Theory

I end the article by suggesting that either one of two amendments to the Kantian art theory, as presented by Costello, would enable it to accommodate all art, including conceptual art. Note, however, that this would hold only under the condition that the artist's and the artwork's "actions" are as Costello's Kant says they are: the artist *causes* the idea in the artwork and the artwork *causes* the thoughts of the recipient. There are several philosophical problems associated with the way Costello's Kant determines these "actions," but the preceding discussion has been developed under the condition that those determinations are, in one way or another, true. We have thus been able to illuminate the question of whether Kant's aesthetics can accommodate conceptual art solely *from the perspective of the recipient's "action."* The discussion of the two amendments is meant to be sketchy and to function as a prelude to future work on this issue. One thing that needs to be examined but that, due to space limitations, will not be examined here is whether these amendments are compatible with other fundamental tenets of Kantian aesthetics. Having this caveat in mind, let us now see what the amendments are.

(1) The first amendment is that the Kantian art theory, instead of asking that *any given* "proper" recipient has multiple playful thoughts that are kindred with the particular conceptual or ideal content of the artwork, rather asks that *at least one* recipient has multiple thoughts in this way. With this amendment the Kantian theory can accommodate all art. This is so because in exactly the same logical way we posited a "really possible" recipient who has multiple thoughts that are irrelevant to the artwork's conceptual or ideal content, we can logically posit for *any given* artwork a "really possible" recipient who has multiple thoughts that are *kindred* with that artwork's conceptual or ideal content. This amendment changes the Kantian art theory from (a) a theory that assigns the title "art" (or, if you will, "beautiful" or "good" or "successful art") to an object only if *all* "proper" recipients of this object have multiple playful thoughts that are kindred with the conceptual or ideal content of the object to (b) a theory that assigns that title to an object even if *only one* "proper" recipient of this object has multiple thoughts in this way.

(2) The second amendment is more complicated and, therefore, more philosophically interesting than the first. It is that the Kantian art theory, instead of describing the content of the various artworks solely in terms of a variety of particular complete concepts or ideas, describes it also in terms of a single general idea or concept that encompasses *all* possible thoughts.¹² In this way, it would be established that, as the Kantian theory

¹² Compare this with Rogerson's description of the suggestion that "when Kant claims a 'free' harmony [of imagination and understanding] is a harmony without rules, perhaps he should really say that the manifold is rule governed but when we engage in aesthetic appreciation we do not care which rule it is" (Rogerson 2008, p. 10) or that "we can talk about a manifold being rule governed [...] and yet insist that the harmony of the

demands, *any given* “proper” recipient’s multitude of thoughts are *kindred* with the artwork’s conceptual or ideal content. I suggest that this idea or concept can be *the idea of idea* or *the concept of concept*.

Note that each artwork still contains a *particular* idea or concept. Delacroix’s *Liberty* does, under our current assumption, have the content of the idea of freedom. Nevertheless, besides being the idea of *freedom*, this idea is also the *idea* of freedom: embedded in it is the idea of idea or, if you will, its *ideality*. When the artist creates the artwork and thereby instills a complete concept or an idea in it, she *also* instills the most abstract idea or concept, the idea of idea or the concept of concept, ideality or conceptuality, therein. Since *all* thoughts are ideas or concepts, they are *all* kindred with the artwork’s conceptual or ideal content.¹³ In this way, the Kantian art theory avoids counterexamples such as Doris’s, Steven’s, and Michelle’s experience: it avoids the accusation that some “proper” recipients can have a multitude of playful thoughts that are *irrelevant* to the artwork’s content.¹⁴ With this amendment, *all* thoughts a “proper” recipient could have are *relevant* to that content.

Schellekens is baffled by the fact that

many conceptual artists make a point of putting all the interpretative onus on the spectator.¹⁵ How often are we told, after all, that a specific artwork’s meaning rests entirely in our hands; that “it means whatever you want it to mean?” (Schellekens 2017)

Schellekens is baffled because she thinks that if you claim, as conceptual artists do, that a conceptual artwork is fundamentally determined by “the idea central to the artwork” and that such artwork causes the thoughts of the “proper” recipient, there has to be only one appropriate interpretation of it, namely that which captures that “central” idea (Schellekens 2017). That is to say, a state of “indeterminacy,” as she calls it, namely a state in which recipients have different interpretations of the work and even interpretations that assign a meaning to the artwork that is completely different from the one the artist has assigned to it, is foreign to the essential determination of conceptual art in terms of its content being an idea that is transmitted to the recipient. As she puts it,

faculties is free in the sense that aesthetic judging abstracts from the specific rule employed to unify the manifold” (Rogerson 2008, p. 11).

¹³ It is because there should be a *kindred relation* between the concept or idea the artist has instilled in the artwork and the stream of thoughts the recipient’s mind generates that what Guyer has called the “multicognitive” interpretation of the recipient’s experience in the Kantian art theory does not work. This interpretation has it that Kant’s conception of the recipient’s experience is that she can apply several different concepts to the manifold of sensations provided by the artwork. See Guyer 2006, p. 166. The application of different concepts, however, does not establish the required “kindred” connection between the idea or concept that the artwork embodies and the concepts employed by the recipient. The element of ideality or conceptuality, by contrast, does establish such a connection.

¹⁴ It is not only relevance or kinship that is gained by this modification, but also universality or a “shared” element, which is also significant for Kant.

¹⁵ In fact, it is not only (some) conceptual artists who hold this view. It seems to be a commonplace among artists. Harold Cohen, a computer artist, for example, writes: “I regard artworks as meaning generators that evoke meaning in the viewer rather than inform the viewer what someone else, some artist remote in time and culture, intended to communicate” (Cohen 2008, p. 44).

whilst conceptual art certainly seems to rest on something like [...] interpretative plurality [...], it is not obvious how a kind of art that presents itself as an idea can, in reality, accommodate such indeterminacy. (Schellekens 2017)

For Schellekens, the view of many conceptual artists that conceptual art can legitimately lead to experiences composed of thoughts that are all *irrelevant* to the *particular* idea the artist has instilled in the artwork generates an irresolvable “conundrum”:

The conundrum can be put in the following terms. If the conceptual work is the idea, it seems reasonable to assume that artistic interpretation will consist primarily in coming to understand that idea (which is conceded by the artist to the artwork considered as such). In other words, if we take conceptual art's dematerialization claim seriously, we are left with a notion of interpretation which is relatively constrained to the artist's intention and to the claim that that intention determines *the* appropriate or correct interpretation for that particular work.

As we have seen, though, we are often encouraged by conceptual artists to take the interpretative exercise into our own hands, so to speak [...]. We are, in other words, asked to combine the idea of art as idea with the claim that we can, as spectators, convey an entirely new and fresh interpretation onto an artwork that is nothing but an idea which, by definition, needs to be about or concerned with something. So, if the idea is the art, then how can my idiosyncratic interpretation of that idea be anywhere near valid? It seems, then, that in order to be coherent, conceptual art must give up either the claim that the actual artwork is nothing other than the idea, or the claim that the interpretative onus lies on the viewer. (Schellekens 2017)

In truth, however, conceptual art does not need to give up *any* of these claims, for they are *not* incompatible. The idea the conceptual artist instills in the conceptual artwork is composed of *two* elements, its *particular* theme and its *general* character as idea. The conceptual artist does not demand that we think her particular idea (although we can do so) but only that we think (period!). Thinking can be done in many particular ways and can be about a variety of themes, so there is no one “correct” or “valid” interpretation of a conceptual artwork. Yet, if an artwork fails to make *any* recipient have a multitude of playful thoughts about *any* subject-matter, if *all* recipients *simply* admire the aesthetic attributes of its sensible form, then it cannot be said that this artwork is really a *conceptual* artwork – and, according to the Kantian art theory, as presented by Costello, it is not at all an *artwork* (or, if you will, a beautiful or good or successful artwork). When Lewitt, therefore, writes that “in conceptual art the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work,” he does not mean – as Schellekens understands him to mean – that the idea's particular theme (what the idea is *of* or *about*) is the conceptual artwork's most important aspect, but rather that the artwork's most important aspect is the idea's *ideality*. Conceptual art is there to make us think, not to make us think about a *given* particular idea. The conceptual artist Mel Bochner refers approvingly to the following passage from James Gibson's *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems*:

The structure of an artificial optic array may, but need not, specify a source. A wholly invented structure need not specify anything. This would be a case of structure as such. It contains information, but not information *about*, and it affords perception but not perception *of*. (Cited in Bohner 1967, p. 26)

Now we understand perfectly why a conceptual artist would approve this thought. It is because the important thing in conceptual art is the idea's ideality or the concept's conceptuality, not what it is about or of. Precisely because what matters most in conceptual art is this ideality or conceptuality, conceptual art is *obliged* to place the interpretative onus on the recipient. Thus, conceptual art, *pace* Schellekens, does not contradict itself when it claims both "that the actual artwork is nothing other than the idea" and "that the interpretative onus lies on the viewer."

In section 5 I claimed, *contra* Costello's rejoinder, that one's holding that a "proper" recipient of a conceptual artwork can have a multitude of thoughts that are *irrelevant* to the artwork's particular conceptual or ideal content does not lead to conceptual art's collapse into aesthetic formalism. I argued that this is so because, *pace* Costello, the presence of *such* a multitude of thoughts in the recipient's mind does not exclude its being affected by the *idea* that is present in the artwork. The discussion in the present section has provided an *explanation* of the asserted compatibility of (a) the recipient's mind having a multitude of thoughts that are *irrelevant* to the artwork's particular conceptual or ideal content and (b) that mind's being affected by that particular content. The explanation is that (a) and (b) are compatible because what affects the "proper" recipient's mind is not only the particular theme a particular content expresses but also the general character of that particular content as idea or concept, namely its ideality or conceptuality. When Art & Language declared as their mission the production of the artwork as "the 'continuum', the system, the structure-as-whole," as "a kind of generic work" (Wood 2002, p. 49), what they had in mind was not the expansion of the "system" of a particular idea or concept but rather the expansion of the "system" of ideality or conceptuality as such.

It may be objected that by placing the interpretative onus on the recipient conceptual artists make it hard to explain why there are actually different pieces of conceptual art and why artists choose the different objects or forms they actually choose to "embody" their ideas or concepts. This "problem," though, is non-existent because the conceptual artist's leaving the recipient absolutely free to determine her own interpretative pathway *by no means* entails that the artist should have no interest in presenting her own particular idea in the way she deems best. The issue of the interpretative freedom of the recipient does not affect the issue of the expression of the artist. It is impossible for the artist to create an artwork without having a *particular* idea or concept in mind: the realization of (the universal) ideality or conceptuality always requires its particularization, its expression as a particular idea or concept. The artist is driven by the particular idea or concept she desires to express, but this does not entail that the artist should demand the recipient to think this particular idea or concept. Differences in the materials used or in the form of the artwork

are perfectly explainable from the side of the conceptual artist: each conceptual artist aims at finding the best means for the expression of their particular idea or concept and/or for creating the most intriguing-for-thought experience for the recipient. In neither of these cases there is an entailment of either an absolute uniformity of artistic creation or the rejection of a stream of irrelevant thoughts in the recipient's mind. The objection supposes that if conceptual artists place the interpretative onus on the recipient, they should not worry about different means and forms of artistic expression. This supposition is simply false for, first, artists still have a desire to express their own particular idea or concept in the best way possible *for their own satisfaction* and hence some means and forms will be better suited for their purposes than others, and, second, some means and forms are better than others *in making the recipient think* (whatever she will actually think) *in an expanded fashion*.

7. Conclusion

I have argued that Kant's aesthetics, as interpreted by Costello, cannot accommodate conceptual art. The reason for this is that, contra what Kant's art theory, as presented by Costello, demands, a conceptual artwork may *cause* some of its "proper" recipients to have a multitude of playful thoughts that are *irrelevant* to the idea the artist has instilled in that artwork. I have claimed that this does not collapse conceptual art into aesthetic formalism because a multitude of thoughts *can* result from the "proper" recipient's mind being *affected* by an *idea* whose particular theme is *irrelevant* to those thoughts. I have concluded that either one of two amendments to Kant's art theory, as presented by Costello, could enable Kantian aesthetics to accommodate conceptual art. The first amendment asks for the Kantian theory to apply, not to *any given* "proper" recipient of conceptual art, but only to *at least one* such recipient. The second amendment asks for the Kantian art theory to determine the idea the artist instills in the artwork not only in terms of its particular theme but also in terms of its general character, its ideality. This second amendment clarifies that the reason conceptual art does not collapse into aesthetic formalism even if the "proper" recipient's mind generates a multitude of thoughts that are irrelevant to the idea the artist has instilled in the conceptual artwork is because the "proper" recipient's mind is affected by the *sheer ideality* of that idea. In this way the causality between the artwork and the recipient is maintained. Conceptual art aims at making us think (period!), not at making us think about what the artist thought when she created the artwork. Whether these two amendments are compatible with other basic tenets of Kant's aesthetics is a puzzle for future work.¹⁶

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A New Look at Kant's Genius: a Proposal of a Multi-componential Account

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Abstract As numerous scholars pointed out, Kant's account of genius suffers from internal inconsistency, primarily due to the contradictory way in which Kant talks about the relation between imagination and taste in artistic production. What remains unclear is whether taste and genius work in concord in order to produce beautiful art, or whether one or the other takes charge. In this paper I look at this challenge, and I offer an interpretation of how Kant conceives of genius. I argue that the gift of genius is multi-componential, including the capacity to maximize imagination's productivity as well as the capacity to develop taste to the point where one can extract the rules for art production, internalize them and implement them in one's own original and exemplary artistic production. By analyzing specific claims Kant makes in relation to beautiful art, primarily his account of poetry, I extrapolate further aspects of artistic genius, which relate to his capacity to create artworks imbued with moral and cognitive significance, and which enable the awakening of genius in other artists.

Key words

Kant, genius, beautiful art, imagination, aesthetic ideas, taste

1. Challenging Aspects of Kant's Genius

Kant defines beautiful arts as "necessarily (...) arts of genius" (§46).¹ In doing so, he wants to separate art from other domains of human actions, primarily science and crafts, and he

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wants to keep a close bond between art and nature without reducing art to instinctive effects. Most importantly, he wants to show that creation of beautiful art is not a matter of mechanical production, while also maintaining that art has to be made in compliance with some rules, though not to the point where these rules are consciously followed and implemented by the artist. His solution is to claim that nature endows certain of its 'favorites' with a natural talent, a gift of genius, which he defines as "the inborn predisposition of the mind (*ingenium*) through which nature gives the rule to art" (§46). On his view, one cannot learn how to be an artist, will it, or in any other way induce a talent for artistic creation. Unless one is given the gift of genius, one cannot create beautiful art.

Given such a relevance of genius, it is confusing that throughout the few paragraphs dedicated to fine art in the third *Critique* (§§43-54) Kant develops two mutually incompatible accounts of it. According to the 5:310 account, "genius can only provide rich *material* for products of art; its elaboration and *form* require a talent that has been academically trained, in order to make a use of it that can stand up to the power of judgment". On this account, genius, as productive capacity, is capable of providing the material for the work, but its elaboration, i.e. the skill needed to formally arrange this material and present it in an actual product, is a matter of hard work, practice and training that remains outside of a domain of genius and falls under the jurisdiction of taste. However, on the 5:317 account, "genius really consists in ... finding ideas for a given concept on the one hand and on the other *hitting upon the expression* for these" (§49, 5:317, my emphasis). On this conception, genius incorporates the capacity to come up with the material, as well as to create formally appropriate works of art, and it does so without being taught or instructed on how to achieve this.

The crucial difference in the two accounts of genius arises from the confused and contradictory way in which Kant talks about the role of taste in artistic creation.² If taste is external to genius, as stated in 5:310, then it is unclear how genius can give the rule to art, given that "to be rich and original in ideas is not as necessary for the sake of beauty" as it is conformity to the power of judgment, i.e. to taste (5:319). But if taste is internal to genius, as stated in 5:317, it is unclear how to understand Kant's repeated claims regarding the need to practice and develop one's taste, given that one cannot influence on the gift itself but is born with it. More importantly, if taste is internal to genius, how should we understand Kant's claim that taste is "the discipline (or corrective) of genius" and that genius "must be sacrificed" if there is a conflict between taste and genius in the product of

¹ All references to Kant are from his *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, (KU), *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, edited by Paul Guyer and translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (2000). Following Kant, I will refer to an artist via the male pronoun he. Unless stated otherwise, the term artist refers to the nature's favorites, i.e. one given the gift of genius, who is solely capable of producing beautiful works of art or fine art (rather than mechanical art). The term genius refers to the gift of nature.

² Allison refers to this as a matter of 'internal consistency' in Kant's account; see his 2001. See also Wicks 2007, Ostaric 2006, Rogerson 2008, Zammito 1992. I tackle this inconsistency by wondering whether taste is internal to genius (Allison's thick conception) or external to it (thin conception).

beautiful art (§50)? This ambiguity raises a challenge: which of the two conceptions is the one that Kant wants to present as his account? More to the point, the challenge is to explicate what precisely the gift of genius is.

In what follows, I approach this challenge by analyzing both conceptions of genius. I argue that, given Kant's overall theory of art, we should prefer the 5:317 account, and I give an interpretation of it that is less vulnerable to Kant's explicit rejection of it in §50. My main point is that the gift of genius is a multi-componential one, including a capacity to develop imagination's productivity to the point at which it becomes creative and produces aesthetic ideas, and the capacity to develop taste to the point where it enables one to create original and exemplary works of art. Furthermore, such works are endowed with cognitive and moral value and contain the capacity to awaken the talent of other gifted artists. On this view, art has an important cultural and educational value, and the artist (endowed with genius), as the one who is solely capable of creating art, has extremely important role in humanity's overall development.

2. The 5:310 Account

Kant develops his account of genius against two paradigms dominant in his days: the one which saw an artist as entirely 'possessed' by nature, oblivious to his own powers; and the one according to which an artist is the 'possessor' of his talent, capable of taking charge of his own artistic impulses.³ The midway that Kant ends up developing sees artist as 'possessed' in the sense that he is given the talent (rather than being capable of developing or learning it), but also as the 'possessor', in the sense that he becomes a master of this talent and takes charge in the process of creation. The challenge for us is to understand, given Kant's ambiguous and contradictory writing, how these two aspects interact in artistic creation. Clarifying that will help us understand what the gift of genius consists of.

According to Kant's first elaboration, "Genius can only provide rich *material* for products of art; its elaboration and *form* require a talent that has been academically trained..." (5:310, original emphasis). In subsequent parts, Kant elaborates on 'academically trained talent' and ultimately relates it to the capacity to make judgments regarding the work grounded in taste.⁴ The emerging picture of a genius is one in which genius and taste come

³ I rely here on the multiple secondary sources on Kant's third *Critique* in order to situate a debate about genius into the context that was relevant to Kant. I take notions of 'possessor' and 'possessed' from Oštarić (2006), but see also Kivy 2001, 2003 and Bruno 2010. Some interpreters claim that Kant develops his account with the intention of refuting the *Sturm und Drang* conception of genius, according to which it consists of an unconstrained, instinctive creative power of imagination (see primarily Zammito 1992 for this interpretation). Allison (2001) suggests that, in order to properly interpret Kant's view, we should take into account historical accounts of genius dominant in Kant's days. Unfortunately, here I cannot extend my research thus far and I will limit myself to Kant's third *Critique*. Unfortunately, for reasons of space, I also have to neglect some of the claim Kant makes in his *Anthropology* regarding the genius.

⁴ See in particular 5:312, where Kant writes: „To give this form to the product of beautiful art, however, requires merely taste, to which the artist, after he has practiced and corrected it by means of various examples of art or nature, holds up his work, and after many, often laborious attempts to satisfy it, finds the form that

apart: genius is only capable of providing rich material for artistic creation, and the actual arrangement of that material is designated to taste, which is outside of genius' control and thus external to him.

On this account, the gift of genius consists in its capacity to come up with 'rich material' and to induce an artist to begin with his creation. I will refer to this process as genius' capacity to generate an artistic vision, which manifests itself in a spontaneous and indeterminate awareness of the artist that there is something in his mind that he wants to express, which he did not initiate consciously and voluntarily. Coming up with this vision is beyond the reach of an artist, which is why he cannot explain where his ideas come from or will them or call upon them by his own volition. However, once he becomes aware of it, he forms an intention to express it – after all, as Kant states, “art always has a determinate intention of producing something” (5:306). My suggestion is that this intention develops as a consequence of artistic vision. The intention however is not an intention to produce something determinate, as that would be a mechanical kind of creation, one that is in accordance with a determinate concept, whose product would not count as beautiful art.⁵ Rather, on this reading, genius is the talent for coming up with 'rich material', that, as artistic vision formed spontaneously and involuntarily in the mind of an artist, induces him to initiate the process of artistic creation whereby this vision gets expressed in a concrete work of art.

Once such intention is produced and the artistic creation is initiated, an artist becomes more and more in control of what he is doing, since he needs to *find* the best form to the product of beautiful art. I emphasize the need to *find* the best form, as it implies that this particular aspect of artistic production is under voluntary control of an artist, unlike the generation of artistic vision. Kant therefore describes artistic process as “production through freedom, i.e. through a capacity for choice that grounds its actions in reason” (§43). I suggest that 'a capacity for choice' relates to the actual process of creation, within which an artist has to make a series of judgments regarding his work, ranging from the techniques he wants to use to concrete details of his work such as motives, their formal arrangement, composition etc. All these choices are ultimately related to the exercise of taste, which is why Kant sees taste as another necessary component of artistic creation, though a component which has to be practiced and academically trained. Such training takes place against examples (models) of the older generations: works of art are exemplars from which young artists learn and against which they develop their own talent. As Kant explains, one can only develop one's talent if one has been touched by a work of another

contents him...“ (§48). For the claim that taste is the capacity to judge, see §40, where Kant claims that “One could even define taste as the faculty for judging...” and §48, where he states that “Taste, however, is merely a faculty for judging, not a productive faculty...”.

⁵ Note however that Kant occasionally departs from his claim that beauty (including beautiful art) does not presuppose a concept, for example in §48, 5:311 and in §49, 5:318. This is one of the several ambiguities related to his account of beautiful art, but sorting it out is beyond the scope of this paper.

genius; when ideas embedded in a work arouses his own spirit.⁶ On the 5:310 account, once one's talent has been aroused, he has to engage in laborious and time-consuming process of practice, so that he can develop this talent. In this process, one develops a taste so that it becomes "the discipline (or corrective) of genius" by "introducing clarity and order into abundance of thoughts" (5:319).

Given all the hard work that an artist needs to put into his creation after the vision has been developed, he is not passive in the process of art creation. Kant ultimately claims that artistic creation is "not a matter of inspiration or a free swing of the mental powers, but a slow and painstaking improvement" (5:312). In other words, spontaneously developed artistic vision over which an artist has no control induces him to express it and at this point, as the creation of a work begins, artist takes charge over his mastery: he becomes an active maker. That is the core of artistic creation – yet, as Kant himself laments, "how this is possible is hard to explain" (5:309). Before we tackle this 'hardship', let us take a deeper look at what Kant means by 'rich material'. This is relevant, in that on both conceptions of genius its capacity to provide this material is undisputed.

3. Genius' Rich Material: Aesthetic Ideas and Aesthetic Attributes

The backbone to Kant's critical project in epistemology, ethics and aesthetics is the supposition that the same cognitive faculties function in everyone in roughly the same way. However, when it comes to artists, they are somehow different: as nature's favorites, they can come up with beautiful works of art, which is something that cannot be accomplished sans the gift of nature. So what is it that differentiates an artist from the rest of us? How is he different?

One obvious candidate here is imagination: given the relevance of imagination in experience of beauty generally, it seems that those who are solely capable of creating beautiful art will be different with respect to their imagination. And given the relevance of aesthetic ideas (hereafter AIs) in Kant's account, it is just as plausible to try to account for the artistic creation by linking imagination, in its productive capacity, to the generation of AIs.⁷ However, explicating the nature of artistic creation via an artist's capacity to generate AIs is not precise enough. Given the textual evidence in 5:314, where the notion of AIs is first introduced, it is not obvious that Kant relates AIs *exclusively* to the imagination of an artist. Throughout 5:314 he gives a rather detailed account of productive imagination *in all of us* when he states that imagination is powerful in creating another nature, "out of the

⁶ See 5:309: "Such a skill cannot be communicated, but is apportioned to each immediately from the hand of nature, who needs nothing more than an example in order to let the talent of which he is aware operate in a similar way." This idea is further developed in 5:318: "the product of genius... is an example, not for imitation ... but for emulation by another genius, who is thereby awakened to the feeling of his own originality..."

⁷ Donald Crawford does so when he states that "genius manifests itself in the creation and presentation of aesthetic ideas, which result from the exercise of productive imagination" (Crawford, 2003, 161). See also Matherne 2016.

material which the real one gives it". As he claims, "we entertain ourselves" in this way "when experience seems too mundane to us", and we do so "in accordance with principles that lie higher in reason" (my emphasis). Thus, we can all transform the material that nature gives us "into something entirely different". Kant further states that "such representations of imagination" are called "ideas". Whether or not here he means ideas *generally* or *aesthetic* ideas is unclear, but given his overall terminology, and the relevance of AIs for art (which I discuss below), I take him here to be referring to AIs. Thus, I am skeptical over the claim that only an artist can generate AIs.⁸

There is another reason, a practical one, for us to suppose that everyone, not only artists, can generate AIs. Recall that on Kant's view, the cognitive capacities operate roughly the same in all of us, which explains why we can share judgments and understand one another.⁹ This presupposition does not exclude differences among the individuals, but if generation of AIs were *solely* the capacity of an artist, it would be unclear how the rest of us can engage with his creations – particularly, if, as I discuss below, art is a manner of communication whereby artist's ideas get communicated to the audience. Thus, what differentiates an artist from the rest of the community is not his capacity to generate AIs but, rather, the particular manner in which he does so. To anticipate my account of genius, what is distinctive about an artist's generation and expression of AI is the precise form that AIs obtain when expressed by an artist and the impact these ideas have once they are expressed in a work of art and experienced by other artists and the audience. Before I elaborate on each of this in particular, let us look more closely at AIs.

Kant first relates AIs to what he calls spirit. The notion of spirit is introduced in §43 where Kant refers to it as that which "alone animates" the work. Here he criticizes those who think that creation of art is a mere play free of all compulsion: sans this compulsory element, the spirit "would have no body and would entirely evaporate" (5:304). In §49 Kant reintroduces the notion of spirit, in the context within which he sets up to explain 'faculties of the mind that constitute genius'. Though he first talks about spirit being in the work of art ("A story is accurate and well organized, but without spirit"), he later defines it as "the animating principle in the mind", thus shifting the perspective from the work to the mind (though without explicating whose mind he is referring to). The animation itself is described as something that "purposively sets the mental powers into motion, i.e. into a play that is self-maintaining and even strengthens the powers to that end". In order to achieve this animation, Kant explains, the animating principle uses a 'certain kind of material'. He defines this principle as "nothing other than the faculty for the presentation of AI", adding immediately that by an AI he means "that representation of imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thoughts, i.e., concept, to be adequate to it" (5:314).

⁸ Allison gives us another reason to doubt the claim that only an artist can generate AIs by drawing our attention to the fact that beauty in nature is also defined as an expression of AIs (see Allison 2001, p. 286).

⁹ See Kemal, in particular his analysis of deduction of judgments of taste (pp. 83-85).

This explanation helps us understand what Kant means by spirited works: these are works that move us and incite us to engage in ‘much thinking’, though without providing us with any ‘determinate thoughts’, i.e. concepts under which to subsume these thoughts. The contemplative process initiated by the experience of a work is an ongoing process of reflection “that no language fully attains or can make intelligible.” This is in accordance with his definition of fine art as art whose satisfaction is one of reflection: the satisfaction that artistic experience provides is related to the cognitive processes that we engage in as a result of how spirited work affects us. Spirited works are works which manage to move us reflectively because of the manner in which they incite us to contemplation. Later we will see why Kant claims that the outcome of such reflections are ‘kinds of cognition’.

“One readily sees”, Kant further claims, “that [an AI] is the counterpart (pendant) of an idea of reason, which is, conversely, a concept to which no intuition (representation of the imagination) can be adequate”. (5:314). While it is easy to read this as Kant shifting from describing the impact of AI (‘occasion much thinking’) to accounting for what they are (‘counterpart of an idea of reason’), there is another way to read this statement. First, Kant here emphasizes the operative similarity between aesthetic ideas and rational ideas. He brings AIs in connection to intellectual *ideas* not because of their ‘content’ (what they stand for or represent) or manner of presentation, but because of the similarity in how they ‘animate the mind’, i.e. how they induce and organize the reflective processes. Like rational ideas, which, as heuristic principles, guide our understanding and determine our empirical cognition, so too operate aesthetic ideas: they organize our thought processes in experiences of beauty.¹⁰ In doing so, they, like, ideas generally, tend to go beyond the given nature and to seek for a sort of unity (we will see Kant’s precise wording in 5:314 below).

Second, the claim that AIs are counterpart to rational ideas gives us a way in which to envision them: unlike rational ideas, which lack representational properties, aesthetic ideas are imbued with them. That is why Kant explains that AI consists of a bunch of representations that cannot be subsumed under one definite concept, or captured via linguistic expression. The freedom of imagination, its productive power, is evident in its capacity to generate ‘manifold of representations’ and to thus animate the powers of mind, sans providing a ‘nameable’ concept for these representations. In subsequent paragraphs, Kant refers to these representations as aesthetic attributes and describes that aspect of how AIs manifest themselves by using the phrase ‘wealth of thought’. First however he exemplifies his claims by stating that

The poet ventures to make sensible rational ideas of invisible beings, the kingdom of the blessed, the kingdom of hell, eternity, creation, etc., as well as to make that of which there are examples in experience, e.g. death, envy, and all sorts of vices, as well as love, fame,

¹⁰ It is important to keep in mind that for Kant, experiences of beauty have direct relation to our epistemic endeavours of understanding the natural world, and moral endeavours, of exercising our moral duties. See Kemal 1992; Murray 2015; Ostarić 2006, 2010; Rogerson 2008, Wicks 2007.

etc., sensible beyond the limits of experience, with a completeness that goes beyond anything of which there is an example in nature, by means of an imagination that emulates the precedent of reason in attaining to a maximum;... (5:314).

This description of what a poet presents ('makes sensible') via his poems is, I suggest, the most elaborate account of AIs, in terms of their *representational content*. Representational content of AIs reveals two relevant features of them: first, as I explain in more details in the sixth section, they relate to the particular subject/theme nexus that is expressed in a work of art, i.e. to what artworks are about.¹¹ Second, notice that the examples Kant adduces here are parallel to all of the constituents of human cognitive faculties. Rational ideas are embedded in reason, and provide normative and practical directions on how our understanding is to pursue its empirical investigations. Categories of understanding are necessary elements in empirical cognition and 'all sorts of vices' are at the centre of our moral life. Thus, the examples of AIs enlisted here show us that we cannot think of AIs as linked solely to moral or solely to rational ideas; they are inclusive of all that we have at our disposal for cognitively and morally making our way around the world.¹² More importantly, they are parallel to those concerns that humans have in virtue of being humans, with particular set of cognitive faculties: rational ideas organize our manner of thinking about ourselves and our world, and categories of understanding dictate our conceptual repertoire which we apply to the empirical world, as we go about in our everyday experience. This reinforces my practical reason for doubting the claim that only an artist can express AIs: if that were so, the audience could not understand artworks or recognize what it is that they are about, because they could not recognize the thematic concerns put forward by the work, and would lack the cognitive capacities to relate to them.

Kant's analysis of AIs in this part gives us reasons to conclude that a difference between productive functioning of human imagination generally and of an artist's imagination is one of a degree, not of a kind. Notice how Kant states that the poet makes AIs sensible 'beyond the limits of experience, with a *completeness that goes beyond anything of which there is an example in nature*, by means of an imagination that emulates the precedent of reason in attaining to a maximum'. The artist, it seems, presents ideas and concepts (namely, rational ideas and categories of understanding) in a very particular manner: by making these ideas so rich, that they go beyond the experience. Artistic presentation of AIs, in other words, is different than that of a non-gifted individual because it is only in the artistic presentation that they are presented with such richness.

¹¹ I develop this notion in Vidmar Jovanović 2020.

¹² It is important to stress this, given that traditionally, AIs were interpreted either as analogue to moral ideas, or to rational ideas. The dispute was finally settled by Samantha Matherne's "inclusive interpretation" (see Matherne 2013). In addition, see Kuplen (2019) and Vidmar Jovanović (2020) who recognize the inclusiveness of AIs and incorporate this inclusiveness into their accounts of Kant's view on fine art. On my part, the inclusive interpretation has a further consequence, in that art is no longer relevant solely for its moral content (as for example Wicks seems to suggest; see his 2007, 124) but for the overall contribution it makes to our conceptual and knowledge repertoire.

Kant gives us another reason to claim that the distinction between artist's imagination and that of ordinary man is one of a degree, not of a kind. After explaining what a poet 'ventures to make sensible', Kant states: "it is really the art of poetry in which the faculty of AIs can reveal itself in its full measure. This faculty, however, considered by itself alone, is really only a talent (of the imagination)." (5:314). The claim that 'in the art of poetry the faculty reveals itself *in its full measure*' suggests that productivity of imagination is gradational, and reaches its maximum in poetry. This implies that people differ with respect to how productive their imagination can be, with the artists, and particularly poets, being those whose imagination has the greatest capacity for productivity. In other words, the gift of nature, the genius, consists in enabling the imagination to reach maximum in its productivity. Thus, what separates an artist from the rest of us is the degree to which his imagination is productive: unlike those lacking the talent, artist's imagination reaches 'its full measure'. Only a genius can make certain things 'sensible beyond the limits of experience' and with a 'completeness that goes beyond anything experienced'.

Having thus exemplified what the poet does, Kant refers to the imagination as *creative*, and explains that creative imagination "sets the faculty of intellectual ideas (reason) into motion, that is, at the instigation of a representation it gives more to think about than can be grasped and made distinct in it" (5:315). Here we see another aspect of the genius' talent, as the maximum of imagination's productivity, its creative moment, is evident in how it moves reason into contemplative mode: those who lack geniality cannot 'set the faculty of intellectual ideas into motion', i.e. they cannot induce a wealth of thoughts via their way of presenting AIs. This is why those who lack the talent cannot generate works endowed with spirit.

In 5:315 Kant offers a further explanation of imagination's creativity, in explaining how precisely it represents its ideas: in the form of what he calls aesthetic attributes (hereafter AAs). As he states, AAs are "forms which do not constitute the presentation of a given concept itself, but, as supplementary representations of the imagination, express only the implications connected with it and its affinity with others" (5:315). In this sense, AAs are contrasted to logical attributes, which are contained by the concept itself and adhere to the logical rules. The first example Kant gives is that of "Jupiter's eagle with the lightning in its claws" which stands as an attribute of the 'powerful king of heaven', and of a peacock, which stands for "the splendid queen of heaven". Neither the Jupiter's eagle nor the peacock "represent what lies in our concepts of the sublimity and majesty of creation", explains Kant, but "something else". This 'something else' is as far as Kant goes in explaining AAs, but such an ambiguity is to be expected, given that AAs express something unnamable, something beyond the limits of experience. Therefore, Kant shifts to explaining their *modus operandi*, which should also be read as a description of the process of the animation of the cognitive powers in the audience. On my interpretation, this

particular impact that artistic portrayal of AIs has on the audience is yet another relevant aspect of the genius: those without the gift cannot thus influence the spectators.

As Kant says, what AAs represent “gives the imagination cause to spread itself over a multitude of related representations, which let one think more than one can express in a concept determined by words; and they yield an aesthetic idea, which serves that idea of reason instead of logical presentation” (5:315).¹³ To illustrate the process in which attributes yield an idea, Kant again relies on examples from poetry. He cites “the great king” who represents the “rational idea of cosmopolitan disposition at the end of life” via the image of a sun which “has completed its daily course” but nevertheless “still spread[s] a gentle light across the heaven”. As Kant explains, a description of a sun’s gentle ray representing “good deeds” we should leave behind as we die is the outcome of imagination’s recollection of everything agreeable in a beautiful summer day. He thus illustrates artistic creation as a process in which imagination manages to combine and arrange various motives from experience (i.e. from the given) and transfer them into something lying beyond the experience. Arguably, those lacking the talent cannot do so; they either do not chose the proper motives or they fail to transform them ‘into something new’, thus failing to inspire the pleasure of reflection in the audience. This is why unspirited works of art seem dull, trivial and familiar: the motives chosen and the manner in which they are presented do not invite the audience to reflect on what the work presents.

Kant’s account of AAs and their giving rise to AIs sheds further light on genius and artistic creation. On my reading, genius’ rich material relates to its capacity to generate AAs, which, combined in certain way, animate the mind and give rise to AIs. On this account (5:310 – 5:316), the talent consists in genius’ capacity to come up with the proper kinds of AAs, but their actual arrangement does not fall under genius’ control – it is only in 5:317 that Kant in fact unites genius and taste, only to open himself to further contradictions down the line. Thus, the 5:310 account sees genius as only providing powerful material for the creation of art and it excludes taste from the domain of genius. And while the way in which the genius provides this material, and the kind of material that it provides, is helpful in explaining the difference between artists and the rest of us, the account is problematic for several reasons.

First, if genius is explicated only in terms of the rich material, it is not clear how it provides the rule to art. The rule relates to how something is to be done, rather than to the expressive or representational features that the product has. So on this account, genius cannot provide the rule to art. A further problem for this account is the fact that Kant himself diminishes the relevance of genius’ rich material, i.e. AIs, when he asserts that “works which are rich in material are inspired, but not beautiful” (§50); only those works

¹³ Kant reinforces this by adding that AAs “give imagination cause to spread itself over a multitude of related representations” and they generate the spirit of a work, a spirit which gives imagination “an impetus to think more, although in an undeveloped way, than can be comprehended in a concept, and hence in a determinate linguistic expression.” (5:315).

which are in line with the taste are beautiful. This is inconsistent with his overall view of “beauty as expression of AIs” (§51), not to mention with his claim that art is only possible if one possesses the genius. Therefore, the 5:310 account does not fit well within Kant’s theory. Let us then move to the 5:317 account.

4. The 5:317 Account

Having exemplified AAs and their yielding of AI, in the second part of the §49 Kant recapitulates his claims regarding genius. However, the account he offers here is a significant expansion of genius’ talent in comparison to the one he developed throughout 5:310 – 5:316. In 5:317 Kant states that genius “really consists in the happy relation, which no science can teach and no diligence learn, of finding ideas for a given concept on the one hand and on the other hitting upon the *expression* for these”. It is at this point, notice, that Kant explicitly states that genius consists in finding ideas *and* in ‘hitting upon the expression’ of these ideas. Thus, genius and taste come united, and this union does not depend upon academic training: in line with his previous statement about art being the product of genius, Kant now argues that ‘no science can teach and no diligence learn’ a genius how to create his works.

While this account nicely incorporates Kant’s crucial claims regarding genius (genius is an inborn predisposition of the mind which gives the rule to art) by making activities of taste part of the gift itself, the account is inconsistent with Kant’s repeated claims regarding the condition of academic training, which, as explained above, enables one to develop one’s taste and to create art by making a series of judgments regarding one’s creation. Such inconsistency leaves us with a problem: how are we to accommodate the academic training requirement with the gifted artist who generates his art out of his own nature, yet without making conscious judgments in the process? Furthermore, how are we to accommodate this account with Kant’s statements in §50, where he explicitly dismisses the relevance of genius and gives supremacy to taste in artistic creation, calling it “the discipline (or corrective) of genius”?¹⁴

In order to answer this, we first need to look more closely at 5:317 account, particularly at the notion of expression that Kant here emphasizes. Expression itself is relevant for Kant because it is connected to his account of communication. On his view, communication, as expression of one’s judgments and sentiments, is central to our humanity and has an important role in development of community. As he sees it, art itself is a form of expression: notice that his ‘division of beautiful arts (presented in §51) is built upon the analogy with forms of expression.¹⁵ Furthermore, in discussing the form of a work of art –

¹⁴ It is here in particular that Kant emphasizes the importance of taste, “like the power of judgment in general”, when he describes it as “clipping [genius’] wings and making it well behaved or polished”, giving “genius guidance as to where and how far it should extend itself”. Taste is here awarded as the factor which makes “the ideas tenable, capable of an enduring and universal approval”.

¹⁵ See Wicks 2007 for elaboration of this analogy.

which, recall, falls under the prominence of taste – Kant states that it is a means by which beautiful representation “is universally communicated” (§48). On this view, the form of a work of art matters not only because it is a sole object of aesthetic judgment but because it enables an artist to communicate his ideas. For this reason, Kant often describes the experience of art as one in which an artist *communicates* his ideas. This aspect is emphasized in 5:317, when Kant explains that the happy relation of understanding and imagination is secured when the union between the ideas and their expression is such that, through it,

the subjective disposition of the mind that is thereby produced, as an accompaniment of a concept, can be communicated to others. The latter talent is really that which is called spirit, for to express what is unnamable in the mental state in the case of certain representation and to make it universally communicable ... that requires a faculty for apprehending the rapidly passing play of the imagination and unifying it into a concept ... which can be communicated without the constraint of rules. (5:317)

These several lines hold a key to Kant's explanation of the ‘hardship’ involved in artistic creation, understood as a form of communication. ‘The subjective disposition of the mind’, I argue, is the artistic vision produced once that imagination's creative endeavors result in generating a bunch of AAs, thus invoking a specific image standing for an AI. That is why Kant refers to AAs as ‘an accompaniment of a concept’ – recall that attributes are forms which do not constitute the presentation of a given concept that understanding demands, but are nevertheless related to it because the imagination provides them to the understanding, in order to give rise to the thought about the concepts which, due to their indeterminacy, cannot be verbalized. Here it is explicated that the aim of the artist – what he referred to previously as the intention to produce something – is to communicate his particular way of conceptualizing specific AIs. Although the artist doesn't know why or how such particular ‘wealth of thought’ is generated by his imagination, as Kant now explains, his talent, the spirit, relates to his capacity to ‘apprehend’ such a play of thought, to unify it into a concept and to communicate it to others, without adhering to some pre-existing rules. Notice that Kant here refers to the ‘talent’ which enables one to communicate the ‘subjective disposition of the mind’ as an ‘accompaniment of a concept’, i.e. as an idea of reason or category of the understanding. Since the communication is related to the form of ‘subjective disposition’, Kant here states that taste, which enables such communication, is itself a talent, namely nature's gift of genius. On this account, the gift of genius includes a capacity to organize the material, i.e. ‘the unnamable’ so that it can be communicated. As I will now show, it is with respect to that communication that the 5:317 account allows itself to include the academic training requirement, and to properly balance imagination and taste in a product of art.

First however, a word regarding the spirit. Namely, it may be questionable why artistic creation in its entirety cannot be explained by this quote alone, i.e. by relating geniality to

the spirit itself.¹⁶ This proposal is particularly plausible when we look at the entire explanation given here by Kant, who clearly understand spirit, at least in 5:317, as a talent which incorporates expressing

what is unnameable in the mental state and communicating it further, i.e. as faculty for apprehending the rapidly passing play of the imagination and unifying it into a concept (*which for that very reason is original and at the same time discloses a new rule, which could not have been deduced from any antecedent principles or examples*), which can be communicated without the constraint of rules. (5:317, my emphasis)

My reasons for focusing on the relation between genius and taste, to the exclusion of spirit, relate to the fact that spirit, even in this most elaborate explanation as presented here, does not tell us much about the actual process of art-creation, only about the process I referred to as the generation of artistic vision. In other words, description of spirit does not say much about the very faculties that Kant sees as relevant for art-creation in addition to the creative imagination, most notably taste and understanding. Furthermore, the description of spirit presented here eliminates the condition of academic training, relating artistic creation almost entirely to the operation of a spirit.¹⁷ Yet, this is not in line with Kant's overall view of art – recall that Kant explicitly rejects such art as beautiful, calling it inspired. Kant repeatedly warns against freedom of spirit as described here; in §43 he argues that without “something compulsory” the spirit “would evaporate”, and in §47, he ridicules those who only rely on spirit (rather than on training) by referring to them as those who are ‘parading around on a horse without stagers’. Academic training relates to one's capacity to extrapolate and adduce the rules for art, and it is not clear that the spirit in 5:317 does that. Rather, it seems that the spirit can generate the rules ‘out of the blue’ without deducing them from any antecedent principles or examples. But Kant has already demonstrated that “the rule must be abstracted from the deed, i.e. from the product, against which [an artist] may test [his] own talent, letting it serve [...] as model not for copying but for imitation” (§47. 5:309) – this capacity, after all, is part of the hardship of artistic creation he sets out to explain! Most importantly however, if 5:317 account of spirit was sufficient to explain the genius, it would remain unclear why Kant insists on the role of taste in §50. In other words, even if genius can be equated with spirit, we still need to provide an explanation for the role of taste in artistic production. Thus, it is more plausible to understand spirit in 5:317 as related to the imagination's creative capacity, which as we know, can generate new rules when it comes to concepts, such which ‘could not have been deduced from any antecedent principles or examples’ because they are not logical. These rules relate to the imagination's productivity, to the kind of material it generates in order to represent a given concept, not to the form eventually given to the work of art once that an artist takes charge over his creation and begins expressing his vision.

¹⁶ I am thankful to my reviewer for pressing me on this point.

¹⁷ Arguably, as Zammito (1992) argues, that is precisely what Kant wanted to refute in his criticism of *Sturm und Drang* conception of genius.

5. Genius and Communication through Art

Remember that for Kant, the talent for art “cannot be communicated” verbally, and it cannot be instructed. Rather, the skill for art, the talent, is “apportioned to each immediately from the hand of nature” and to make it operative, one “needs nothing more than an example” (5:309). As Kant explains, “the ideas of the artist arouse similar ideas in his apprentice if nature has equipped him with similar proportion of mental powers. The models of beautiful art are thus the only means for transmitting these to posterity...” (5:309). By ‘ideas of the artist’ Kant must mean AIs as captured and expressed in a work of art. This means that *a work of art* has the capacity to inspire the talent of another gifted artist, rather than any verbal instruction that an artist could produce. The genius thus “gives rise to a school” (5:318), i.e. establishes a particular artistic practice, a manner of creation which becomes a role model to other artists. As Kant sees it, at the bottom of such practice is a “methodological instruction in accordance with rules, insofar as it has been possible to extract them from those products of spirit and their individuality” (5:318).

I take this to imply that genius includes the capacity to extract the rules for art from original and exemplary works and, through artist’s nature, modify them into something new, original and exemplary in its own right, that he incorporates into his creations. It is important to emphasize originality and exemplarity, since, for Kant, these are important features of genius’ creations: what he brings into existence is original, since he produces it from his own nature. However, since there is “original nonsense” which cannot count as beautiful art (5:308), Kant is quick to add another condition that a work of genius must satisfy: it must be exemplary, meaning that others must recognize it as worthy of artistic attention, and that it must inspire others to use it as a model against which to develop taste. This is the crucial aspect of artistic creation, because, recall, it is through the genius that nature gives the rule to art. Extracting such rules *in the process of developing one’s talent, and in light of that talent*, is, again, something that only one with the genius can do – or so I claim. Thus, a solution to the ‘hardship’, as defined above, is to recognize that the gift of genius includes the talent to extract the rules of art from exemplars and to incorporate them into one’s capacity to give form to what is otherwise inexpressible, sans copying others. In Kant’s words, the rule must be abstracted from the deed, i.e. from the product, against which [an artist] may test [his] own talent, letting it serve [...] as model not for copying but for imitation” (§47). Because the artist himself doesn’t know where his capacity to do so comes from, he cannot explicate it, but in light of his talent, he can act upon it. Awakening the talent awakens the capacity to extract the rules, internalize them and turn them into something original and exemplary, channeled through individual nature of each genius, which thus finds expression in his work. Under this interpretation, it is easy to see why Kant insists that “the gift of nature must give the rule to art” (5:309) even though an artist cannot explain where such rule comes from.

The implication of my interpretation of 5:317 is that taste (in artistically relevant sense) becomes an inherent aspect of genius and works with it, rather than being external to it.

While everyone can imitate works of genius and thus try to extract rules for art, only those with the talent can do this successfully. In other words, taste can only develop in artistically relevant manner if one is given the gift of nature and if one engages in practice and improvement, having been touched by the relevant exemplars. Just as imagination's productivity comes in degrees and reaches its maximum in those with genius, so too does the capacity to develop taste in artistically relevant manner.

My interpretation implies that we should not read the 5:317 account to mean that the genius 'hits the expression' out of blue – recall that artistic creation is not a matter of “free swing” of mental powers. That would surely be too naïve and greatly oversimplified, and would dismiss Kant's repeated insistence on training and on the relevance of exemplars, not to mention what he calls “preparation and foundation for beautiful art” (5:305).¹⁸ What I am suggesting is that part of what genius includes is a capacity to develop taste via training, so that the products of such creation are works of beautiful art. In other words, while everyone can practice and train, only nature's favorites can eventually reach the excellence needed for creation of art. In that sense, the natural gift is the necessary and sufficient condition for art-creation, one that ‘no science can teach and no diligence learn’. Thus, the 5:317 account is not in tension with the academic training requirement, nor with the claim that one cannot learn how to be an artist.

Under the interpretation I offer here, on which genius includes the capacity to develop taste in artistically relevant manner, the inconsistency between 5:317 and §50 can also be mitigated. Kant's claim that taste acts as “corrective” of genius does not necessarily imply that taste overpowers imagination, rendering it entirely irrelevant. Rather, it is the responsibility of taste to arrange ideas in manner which makes them “tenable, capable of an enduring and universal approval” (5:319). As I argue, taste can only do this, provided one has the talent, i.e. one is a genius. Only then will one develop a capacity to organize ideas so that one creates beautiful art rather than original nonsense, mechanical art or art which lacks spirit. Sans that capacity, one's work might be ‘rich and original in ideas’ and thus inspired, but, as Kant sees it, such work will not animate the mind. If ideas are presented in a random, haphazard, formless way, they fail to provide the pleasure of reflection because they fail to accompany representations as kinds of cognition. In other words, works which are rich in ideas but lack formal arrangement are not works in which ideas are rendered sensible. Such works are examples of miscommunication between an artist and his audience. This is why I argued above that genius is evident not in generation of AIs but in particular manner in which they are expressed, and in the impact these ideas have once they are expressed. We already saw that one such impact relates to their capacity to generate talent in gifted artists; in the next part we will see the impact of genius' work on the audience.

¹⁸ Kant states: “... for the beautiful art in its full perfection much science is required, such as, e.g., acquaintance with ancient languages, wide reading of those authors considered to be classical, history, acquaintance with antiquities, etc...” (5:305).

6. Genius's Art and the Satisfaction of Reflection

Kant defines successful artistic communication as one in which an artist manages to express his ideas (i.e. to formally arrange his work) so that this expression, embedded in a work, is “adequate to the thought and yet not detrimental to the freedom in the play of mental powers” (5:313). The latter condition is a condition of beauty generally: beauty is only possible in the course of a free play of mental powers, when imagination is liberated from the strict rules of reason. The implication here is that a work of art has to mobilize mental powers into free harmony. But what is meant by the first condition, that a work be “adequate to the thought”? From the perspective of an artist, this implies that he successfully ‘apprehended the rapidly passing play of the imagination’, and has ‘unified it into a concept’. From the perspective of the audience, I suggest, the claim that successful works of art are ‘adequate to the thought’ should be brought in connection with Kant’s overall claim that beautiful art has a “reflective power” of judgment as its standard and that its pleasure is one of reflection. In other words, beautiful art is adequate to the thought, rather than to the senses, when it incites the audience to reflect on what it expresses, i.e. on the concept that the artist communicated via his work. However, this only happens when a work has a proper form, since, recall, a beautiful representation of an object is “really only the form of the presentation of a concept by means of which the latter is universally communicated” (5:312). Unless the work has this form, it will fail to be ‘adequate to the thought’, i.e. it will fail to animate the mental powers and provide pleasure of reflection. This is why Kant sees taste as “clipping the wings” of imagination’s productivity.

Just how strong this demand is for Kant is most evident in §52, where Kant argues that “in all beautiful art, what is essential consists in the form... where the pleasure ... *disposes the spirit to ideas*” (5:326, my emphasis). Here Kant adds that “if the beautiful arts are not combined ... with moral ideas... they serve only for diversion” leaving the mind “dissatisfied” with itself and making one feel “useless and dissatisfied” (5:326). I take this to imply that the form of a work of art is not, as generally interpreted by the formalists, relevant per se, but for the future purpose it serves, namely, ‘disposing the spirit to ideas’ and ‘animating the mind’. This is relevant because in the absence of the proper formal arrangement, the ideas themselves will lack the power to bring forward a pleasure of reflection. For this reason, less successful works of art are considered trivial or dull: they do not animate the mind and do not invoke AIs in the audience. We tend to pass such judgments on such works not because they deal with subject/theme nexus that is not considered reflection-worthy, but because they do so in a manner which does not move us or invite us to grapple with its complexity: to put it in Kantian terms, such works do not provide pleasure of reflection.

In addition, the way Kant characterizes the role of form in successful works of art in §52 helps us settle the longstanding controversy regarding Kant’s apparent embracement of

formalism, at the expense of art's cognitive or moral relevance.¹⁹ Traditionally, Kant was interpreted as a formalist, namely as someone who attaches the value of art to its form. This isn't surprising, given how often Kant stresses the centrality of form in judgments of beauty. However, what §52 helps us see is that, in art, form is relevant because of the way in which it animates the mind, i.e. because of the way in which art touches us cognitively.²⁰ The precise nature of such cognitive impact is described in §53, where Kant details the impact of poetry – that art form, recall, where the productivity of imagination riches its maximum. Kant states that poetry “owes its origin almost entirely to the genius” and in the least to examples, and he goes on to provide a rather extensive account of how poetry affects the mind. As he says, poetry “expands the mind” and it

strengthens the mind by letting it feel its capacity to consider and judge of nature, as appearance, freely, self-actively, and independently of determination by nature, in accordance with points of view that nature does not present by itself in experience either for sense or for the understanding, and thus to use it for the sake of and as it were as the schema of the supersensible (5:326).

What Kant establishes here is a direct link between poetry and metaphysics. Kant states that in experience of poetry, our minds are induced to consider those ideas which are usually hidden from our direct experience, although, as rational ideas, they structure that experience and make it possible. He thus reinforces his claims, regarding the creativity of imagination, according to which it transforms the given nature “in accordance with principles that lie higher in reason” (5:315).

Uniting poetry and metaphysics in this manner should not surprise us, given Kant's repeated descriptions of the impact of AAs in cognitivist's terms.²¹ Notice also that the examples he provides of what a poet makes sensible in his poetry (i.e. what I previously referred to as representational aspect of AIs) corresponds to what, in philosophical theories on the value of art, is discussed as subject/theme nexus of a work: that aspect of our experience of the world that an artwork is about. In great works of art such subject/themes nexuses are of “relatively deep significance to human life” (John 2016, p. 295). As Lamarque and Oslen state in discussing the value of literature, literature (and art generally) deals with *humanly important topics*, those which matter for our human experience, such as identity, determinism, faith, love, etc. (Lamarque and Oslen 1994, p. 265). These are precisely the examples that Kant uses in elaboration on poetic enterprise. What poets aim to present in their work is identical to the issues that our minds are constituted to pursue,

¹⁹ See Carroll 2008 for an analysis of Kant's formalism. For cognitivist's interpretations of Kant's theory, see Crawford, 1974; Guyer, 1994; Kuplen 2019; Matherne, 2013; Pillow, 2006; Vidmar Jovanović 2020.

²⁰ See my 2020 for examples.

²¹ By ‘cognitivist's term’ I primarily want to emphasize Kant's repeated insistence on art having the capacity to inspire reflection; animate the mind, occasion much thinking and invite moral ideas. I use the notion of cognitivism as it is currently being used in discussions on the cognitive value of art. While it does not follow, on Kant's view, that art delivers concrete propositional truths about the world, it does follow that it can aid us in our cognitive pursuits. In claiming this, I join the company of the authors listed in fn 19. I am grateful to my reviewer for pressing me on this point.

and to the questions we necessarily pose, given the concepts in our understanding. This implies that art is in alliance with our cognitive pursuits, i.e. that it is a powerful and resourceful instrument for conducting such pursuits.

This statement finds a double support in Kant's account of fine art, when we join AIs' representational content (i.e. their relation to rational and moral ideas and categories of understanding) and their *modus operandi* (the way they animate the mind and inspire much thinking). First, what the poet represents in his work corresponds to those 'humanly important topics' that are at the backbone of our cultural, social life and individual experience within which we search for meaning and value. It is a natural predisposition of our minds to ponder about these topics, as the categories of understanding organize our experience into a unified whole according to the dictates of reason. Furthermore, the way in which spirited works move us – by animating the cognitive powers according to the principles which lie higher up in reason and by thus expanding the concepts – explains art's capacity to intellectually touch us, and to leave us with a sense of having gained new, profound awareness of whatever it is that art brings to view via its thematic concerns. That is why Kant defines beautiful art as one which provides the pleasure of reflection and accompanies representations as kinds of cognition.

There is however another important aspect of artistic creation that can be extracted from Kant's §53. Having provided us with a link between poetry and metaphysics, Kant claims that poetry "plays with the illusion which it produces at will, yet without thereby being deceitful; for it itself declares its occupation to be mere play, which can nevertheless be purposively employed by the understanding for its own business" (5:327). Notice that Kant here explicitly grounds the epistemic reliability of poetry; precisely that of its features that Plato so famously denied, when he argued that poetry is thrice removed from the truth, deceptive, and composed by inspired poets who only pose as knowledgeable ones. On Kant's view, it is quite the opposite: while it might seem that poetry is no more than a mere play, it is in fact serious and helpful to the understanding, whose task is, recall, empirical cognition. Thus, poetry is linked to our metaphysical endeavors initiated by reason, it serves understanding in its empirical pursuits, it invites moral ideas, and it does so in an epistemically reliable manner. That is what the gift of genius enables at its best.

7. Concluding Remarks

Tracing Kant's clues as to what a genius can do either from his explicit statements about genius or from his writings on fine art, I argued that as a gift of nature, genius, includes the following components:

(i) a capacity to develop imagination's productivity to its 'full measure' (5:314), which enables it to become creative and to summon AAs (5:315) so as to give substance to otherwise ineffable AIs (5:315), that is, rational and moral ideas and concepts derived from experience (5:314),

(ii) a capacity to extrapolate rules of art from another genius' product (5:309, 5:312), and thus develop one's taste to the point where it establishes new ways of creation and thus gives the rule to art by creating original and exemplary works of art (5:308, 5:312).

I argued that, given Kant's claim regarding the shared cognitive faculties, all humans have the capacity for productive imagination and for development of taste, but that only those who are nature's favorites and have been given the gift of genius, can in fact develop these capacities to the point where they can create beautiful art. In other words, while people generally can express AIs in some form, only an artist endowed with genius can give such expression, i.e. form, to these ideas, so that his work

(iii) inspires the pleasure of reflection (5:305) by animating the cognitive powers of the mind (5:313), thus enabling cognitive engagements with the world in epistemically reliable manner (5:327)

(iv) invites moral ideas (5:326)

(v) touches other artists by awakening their genius, thus giving rise to schools (5:318).

On the interpretation I am offering, genius incorporates (i) – (v) of the capacities listed above. It is a gift that 'keeps giving' in the course of a time; it does not enable one to produce one's products 'out of the blue', without any preparation, hard work, practice and conscious deliberation. As inborn predisposition of the mind, the gift of genius enables one to constantly grow and develop as one keeps creating art. To put it bluntly, the gift of nature does not imply that one automatically produces beautiful art. Rather, it is a potential to develop cognitive functions to the point when one is capable of creating beautiful art, provided one dedicates oneself to that. As with other talents, without training, hard work, trial and errors and constant investment of time and energy, that talent too will fade and become unproductive.

As I argued, the apparent contradiction in the two accounts of genius disappears once we recognize that part of the gift includes the capacity to master taste so that it enables one to create beautiful art which can inspire other artists while also delivering cognitive and moral benefits to the audience. Such interpretation is responsive to the fact that taste, as a capacity to judge, is shared by everyone and thus is not unique to the genius, but it also respects the fact that not everyone's taste is equal, and that not everyone can create beautiful art. Such interpretation is also sensitive to the fact that genius doesn't know where the rule of art comes from, even though he can give the rule to art via his artistic products. In the process of artistic creation, genius acts upon the artistic vision developed in his mind, as he searches for the best form in which to express such vision. As the vision is generated, so too is artist's intention to express it. Once he becomes aware of such subjective disposition of his mind, he takes charge over what he is doing, and makes the choices he feels fit to express his ideas, i.e., he makes judgments of taste. And although he cannot explain why some particular choice (of color, of motives, shapes, rhyme etc) is a

good one, he can sense it as good, as 'hitting' the expression'. As his taste develops, he becomes better and better at it, which is evident in his works. Kant's sensibility to such improvement is evident in his example of the young poet: though originally he doesn't see why others dislike his poems, as he develops his talent via practice and masters his taste, his creations become better.

Given that my interest here is narrowly defined to genius, I did not consider the wider context of the third *Critique*, such as Kant's overall concerns for beauty and exploration of reflective judgment. Although not all of my claims regarding the genius are explicitly supported by what Kant says in the third *Critique*, my account fits coherently not only with Kant's overall view of art, but with our artistic and critical practices as well. According to my interpretation, geniality comes in degrees, as does an artist's capacity to create truly successful works of art. Kant's awareness of such 'degrees of success' that different works exhibit is evident in his hierarchical ordering of art, as well as in his use of the phrase "beautiful art in its full perfection" (5:305). An obvious implication of this phrase is that the expression of beauty can be less than fully perfect. We recognize such degrees when, to give but few example, we recognize a development of an artist's excellence throughout his lifetime, from one work to another, or when we recognize that certain artists are by far more accomplished and original than some others.

Throughout the third *Critique*, Kant keeps going back and forth between uniting and disuniting taste and genius. While such inconsistency is perplexing, perhaps we should not dismiss it as a slip of pen of a philosopher hurling towards completion of his work, but should rather look at it as indicative of our artistic practices. Recognizing that genius includes the capacity to maximally develop one's taste as well as one's productive imagination is consistent with variations in artworks related to form and content. We can recognize works of art where an artist experiments with the form more so than with the subject/theme nexus, but we also appreciate the value of introducing certain themes into otherwise stable formats. Kant was sensitive to that fact, even though he gave slight preference to the mastery of form. On the whole however, just like in our artistic practices so in the third *Critique*, we value the most, as does Kant, those artists who can introduce exemplary novelties along both of these axes.

As nature's favorite, genius stands out in Kant's overall view of humanity. The analysis of poetry reveals manners in which beautiful art provides pleasure of reflection, and it explains why Kant claims that beautiful art accompanies representations as kinds of cognition. Due to the inherent link between subject/theme nexus of art and the inborn predispositions of our minds to ask certain question and wonder about specific concepts, art is, on Kant's view, revealed as a natural tool which enables us to probe such questions in a pleasing way. This is what grounds its cultural and educational value. Genius, as the

one who is solely predetermined, by nature, to create such products, is thus of great relevance for humanity's development and progress.²²

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“uma certa falta de urbanidade”.

As hesitações de Kant a respeito da música

“a certain lack of urbanity”.

Kant’s Hesitations About Music

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Resumo

O presente artigo explora a ambivalência das posições de Kant a respeito da música. Procura-se mostrar, por um lado, o modo como elas se enquadram no contexto da reflexão filosófica moderna acerca desta arte e, por outro, a sua pertinência no contexto da estética kantiana, que justifica as hesitações de Kant em classificar a música como bela ou agradável, arte ou mero entretenimento, beleza livre ou beleza aderente, cultura ou natureza.

Palavras-chave

música, arte, linguagem, subjectividade, cultura

Abstract

This paper explores Kant’s ambivalent views on music. It aims to show, on the one hand, how these ambivalences are in line with the modern philosophical reflection on this art; on the other hand, to show their place within Kantian aesthetics, a place that justifies Kant’s hesitations as whether to classify music as beautiful or agreeable, art or mere enjoyment, free or dependent beauty, culture or nature.

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Key words

music, art, language, subjectivity, culture

1.

As considerações de Kant a respeito da música são escassas, e dão conta de um conjunto de ambivalências que se procurará explorar aqui. Elas manifestam-se, por exemplo, na hesitação de Kant quanto ao valor estético da música quando comparada com o das outras artes, ou ainda quanto aos efeitos da música sobre o sujeito, ou os sujeitos, que a escutam. Se, por vezes, Kant elogia a música e a componente formal que faz dela uma bela arte, outras vezes condena-a como um simples jogo de sensações que pertence apenas ao domínio do que é agradável. Do mesmo modo, na terceira *Crítica*, Kant tanto escreve que a música “move o ânimo do modo mais variado”, como declara que da música “não sobra nada para reflexão” porque as suas impressões são “transitórias” (KdU, §53, AA 05: 329-330).¹ Sobre a música parece, assim, cair continuamente uma série de suspeitas que procuraremos esclarecer neste artigo: a suspeita de que a música não é uma arte, a suspeita de que a música remete o sujeito para o universo privado das suas sensações, a suspeita de que a música é vazia de sentido, a suspeita de que ela é perigosa porque ameaça a liberdade dos ouvintes.

As reservas de Kant têm motivações filosóficas profundas, que vão muito para além de meras idiossincrasias biográficas do autor das três *Críticas*, e que Kant partilha com outros autores, antigos e modernos. É certo que, a crer nos seus biógrafos, Kant nunca mostrou especial gosto pela música, não tocava nenhum instrumento e parecia preferir fanfarras militares e canções populares à música erudita (Parret 1992); sabemos também, pelo testemunho de Borowski, confirmado pelo próprio Kant (Borowski / Jachmann / Wasianski 1985, pp. 18-19), que os cantos dos reclusos da prisão vizinha à sua casa o perturbavam ao ponto de ter exigido à polícia que os presos fossem obrigados a fechar as janelas sempre que cantavam; e é também verdade que Kant não faz qualquer menção a compositores como Haydn ou Mozart, que foram seus contemporâneos e cujas obras se tornaram célebres durante o seu tempo de vida. No entanto, como se procurará mostrar, apesar da reconhecida ignorância musical de Kant, do episódio algo impiedoso com os prisioneiros e da reduzida atenção que dedica a esta arte, as suas considerações sobre ela justificam a influência que Kant exerceu, e continua a exercer, no interesse da filosofia por esta arte, e também na tendência que tem sido ultimamente designada como “filosofia da música”. Mais precisamente, como se irá esclarecer, apesar da “desproporção” entre o

¹ As citações da *Crítica da faculdade de julgar* seguem a tradução portuguesa de António Marques e Valério Rohden, Kant, I. (1982), *Crítica da faculdade do juízo*, introdução de António Marques, tradução e notas de António Marques e Valério Rohden, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda. A tradução das citações da *Antropologia segundo um ponto de vista pragmático* são da nossa responsabilidade.

espaço dedicado à música na terceira *Crítica* e a influência dessas páginas, em especial, na tendência conhecida por “formalismo musical” (Kivy 1991), as hesitações, reservas ou mesmo suspeitas de Kant acerca da música dão conta da ambivalência essencial que parece ser constitutiva desta arte, e que Kant não foi de modo algum o único a problematizar. Assim, e a despeito das relevantes diferenças que separam o seu pensamento sobre a música do de outros filósofos, as considerações de Kant parecem estar em linha, não apenas com a interpretação, digamos, mais estrita e dita “formalista” da música, mas com as preocupações e o interesse que a filosofia dedicou a esta arte, e muito em particular a filosofia moderna.

Esse interesse — inédito na história da filosofia — deveu-se certamente a razões de ordem histórica, que apenas podemos aqui indicar de modo muito sucinto e necessariamente incompleto, mas que convém ter em mente quando se considera o que Kant diz da música e a influência directa ou indirecta das suas considerações, quer sobre os filósofos, quer sobre os musicólogos ou mesmo sobre os compositores que se lhe seguiram. São razões que dizem respeito, por um lado, aos desenvolvimentos da história da música ocidental dita clássica ou erudita (Johnson 2015), entre os quais cumpre destacar a tendência para a composição de peças exclusivamente instrumentais, ou seja, de obras que, ao contrário das obras de música sacra, escrita para acompanhar rituais religiosos, ou da música operática, indissociável de um libreto, não recorria a textos cantados ou recitados. A importância crescente desta tendência — não praticada, como é sabido, na Antiguidade —, pareceu legitimar as pretensões da música a afirmar-se como uma arte autónoma porque independente de sentidos ou conteúdos religiosos, políticos ou outros, de tal modo que a música puramente instrumental ou, como também veio a ser chamada, a “música absoluta”, acabou sendo considerada como uma manifestação da liberdade ou da emancipação desta arte em relação a ideias, projectos ou poderes extra-musicais, e portanto como uma expressão da verdadeira essência da música (Dahlhaus 2006; Bonds 2014; Ginsborg 2017).

Por outro lado, é também certo que a ideia da emancipação ou autonomização da música se enquadra no entendimento filosófico mais alargado da arte e das artes na modernidade, entendimento esse que consagrou a Estética como disciplina, e do qual se pode dizer que Kant foi, em grande medida, o fundador. Assim, às razões relativas ao desenvolvimento da história da música ocidental moderna que justificaram um interesse filosófico sem precedentes por esta arte, acrescem ainda razões relativas à própria história da filosofia deste período (Hermand/Richter 2006), tais como a referida emergência da Estética, mas também o protagonismo de dois problemas centrais para a reflexão filosófica moderna, a saber, o problema da linguagem e o problema da subjectividade (Bowie 2009; Steinberg 2004; Johnson 2015).

No que diz respeito à linguagem, a sua problematização filosófica na modernidade decorreu em grande medida, como é bem sabido, da exploração da ideia de que as línguas

são criações humanas, compostas por uma pluralidade de convenções arbitrárias, sujeitas a mudanças históricas e a particularidades culturais, geográficas ou outras, e, portanto, insusceptíveis de fornecer uma adequação exacta aos fenómenos que as palavras nomeiam, exprimem ou comunicam (Bowie 2007, pp. 46-78). É neste contexto que filósofos como Schopenhauer, por exemplo, se voltam para a música e para a possibilidade de esta arte fornecer a solução para uma comunicação ou expressão mais adequada, menos arbitrária ou até mais verdadeira de sentidos e realidades que não são linguisticamente transmissíveis. A música, e muito em especial, mais uma vez, a música puramente instrumental ou desprovida de palavras, textos ou discurso verbal, ganha, portanto, um valor expressivo, e até cognitivo, sem precedentes na história da nossa cultura. Esse valor assenta, porém, num estranho paradoxo, pois é porque a música não fala que ela parece conseguir dizer aquilo que a linguagem não é capaz de exprimir (por exemplo, no caso de Schopenhauer, a verdade inefável, conceptual ou linguisticamente indizível, e até filosoficamente inexprimível, da Vontade). O paradoxo consiste, então, no facto de a compreensão da natureza não linguística da música implicar a ideia de que a música é uma linguagem (Johnson 2015, pp. 236-274), seja ela uma linguagem dos afectos (Kant), uma linguagem metafísica (Schopenhauer) ou um jogo de linguagem (Wittgenstein).

Quanto ao problema da subjectividade, ele implica tanto a problematização do *cogito* cartesiano, quanto da noção de indivíduo (Steinberg 2004, pp. 4-7). Pois, embora Descartes tenha contribuído de modo decisivo para a compreensão do contraste entre a interioridade subjectiva e a realidade externa, a teorização filosófica moderna acerca da experiência subjectiva revelou a inadequação da ideia de um sujeito auto-consciente, transparente apenas para si próprio e totalmente independente do mundo exterior. De facto, à consideração da experiência de uma existência separada em relação à totalidade do mundo empírico, a filosofia moderna pós-cartesiana acrescenta a descoberta da subjectividade como um âmbito ainda inexplorado, senão mesmo desconhecido, composto por elementos não conscientes e não transparentes, mas opacos à racionalidade e à introspecção, e continuamente vulnerável a mudanças e influências exteriores. A reflexão filosófica moderna acerca da subjectividade irá tematizar esta descoberta e explorar o seu potencial crítico da categoria cartesiana do *ego cogito*, e pensará o sujeito como uma entidade dinâmica, instável e difícil de determinar com clareza, irreduzível a uma descrição objectiva, factual ou conceptual, de modo nenhum imune ao mundo que o rodeia, e que, em grande medida, o determina. Em vez de idêntico a si próprio e acessível por um exercício de introspecção, o sujeito filosófico moderno constitui-se, portanto, como um contínuo esforço de auto-determinação que é, ao mesmo tempo, um processo contínuo de auto-descoberta composto por movimentos e estados anímicos como o desejo, o questionamento, o sentimento, a expectativa, a angústia, etc.

Ora, um dos motivos da atenção inédita que a filosofia moderna concedeu à música foi a crescente convicção de que, ao contrário das outras artes, a música expressava justamente esta vida subjectiva problemática e dificilmente racionalizável e categorizável. A música surge, neste contexto, como a arte que acede e exprime de modo adequado o

mundo e a verdade interior do sujeito, ou seja, aquele mundo e verdade que não encontram uma correspondência fiel em cada um dos diferentes domínios da existência e da experiência, e que parece susceptível de um incessante alargamento ou expansão. É também neste contexto que a defesa da autonomia da música contribui para estabelecer, por exemplo, entre os autores do Romantismo Alemão ou nas obras de Beethoven, a ideia de que a música é a única expressão adequada da vida subjectiva, quer dizer, das experiências dificilmente definíveis de sentir, pensar ou querer, e de uma cada vez mais complexa relação entre o Eu e o mundo. Para estes e outros pensadores modernos, a música torna-se, então, tanto a linguagem, como a experiência da subjectividade, o que não significa apenas que a música fala (ao sujeito e do sujeito), mas também, por assim dizer, que ela pensa, reflecte, recorda e até se escuta a si mesma.

Todo este contexto histórico-filosófico onde a música ganha um protagonismo sem precedentes pode, então, resumir-se do seguinte modo: a música desestabiliza as fixações linguísticas, culturais, racionais e filosóficas estabelecidas, fazendo-nos experimentar os limites destas últimas e, apresentando-nos, simultaneamente, a possibilidade de alargar esses mesmos limites no interior da experiência possível.

2.

Ao contexto histórico-filosófico que determinou o interesse da filosofia moderna pela música, acresce, evidentemente, e para o que aqui nos importa, o próprio contexto da estética kantiana, que procura fornecer um enquadramento conceptual ao já referido estatuto ambivalente da música. É nesse contexto que Kant parece hesitar, na terceira *Crítica*, em classificar a música como bela ou agradável, como beleza livre ou aderente, como arte ou mero entretenimento, como cultura ou natureza, como composição formal ou mero jogo de sensações.

Para esclarecer o alcance destas hesitações, importa começar por recordar a caracterização do sentido da audição na *Antropologia segundo um ponto de vista pragmático*, texto em que, como foi já assinalado (Reed 1980), a ambivalência das posições de Kant relativamente à música encontra um relevante análogo. Kant parece aí hesitar entre associar a audição aos sentidos “objectivos” do tacto e da visão ou aos sentidos “subjectivos”, e, portanto, inferiores, do paladar e do olfacto (ApH, §16, AA 07: 154). Por um lado, Kant considera — positivamente — que a audição partilha com a visão uma natureza mediata, pois em ambas as sensações dependem de um *medium* (a luz, no caso da visão, o ar, no caso da audição), estando, por isso, menos dependentes ou mais livres das afecções do órgão sensorial (olho e ouvido) do que o que acontece nos casos do tacto, do paladar e do olfacto. Por outro lado, e também positiva ou objectivamente, tal como a visão, a audição é capaz de perceber objectos à distância, não carecendo de grande proximidade ou mesmo de um contacto físico directo do nosso corpo com eles: os

sons são “objectivos” porque a sua presença “se espalha em todas as direcções” (ApH, §19, AA 07: 156). No entanto, a objectividade da audição revela simultaneamente a sua proximidade com o sentido mais subjectivo, o olfacto, que Kant considera como sendo “o mais ingrato” e “mais dispensável” de todos os sentidos (ApH, §22, AA 07: 158). São três as razões deste juízo sobre o olfacto: por um lado, as sensações olfactivas são intrusivas ou mesmo impositivas e, assim, “contrárias à liberdade” e à sociabilidade (ApH, §21, AA 07: 158), não podendo o sujeito escolher ser ou não afectado por elas; em segundo lugar, elas são “passageiras” e “transitórias”, o que faz do olfacto um sentido “indigno de ser cultivado ou refinado” (ApH, §22, AA 07: 158); em terceiro lugar, e mais gravemente, o olfacto é um sentido eminentemente subjectivo porque não admite distância entre as sensações e o órgão sensorial por elas afectado, e porque as sensações olfactivas confinam o sujeito em si mesmo uma vez que, a seu respeito, é quase impossível “entrar em acordo com outros”.

Ora, de acordo com Kant, estes três aspectos negativos são comuns aos odores e às sensações sonoras, pois, apesar da sua “objectividade”, também estas últimas são contrárias à liberdade e à sociabilidade porque impõem a sua presença sobre o sujeito, também elas são “passageiras” e “transitórias” e, por essa razão, também elas dificultam qualquer “acordo com os outros”. Na *Antropologia*, a audição parece, assim, oscilar entre objectividade e subjectividade, mediação e imediatez, independência ou coincidência do sujeito com as sensações sonoras. Se, por um lado, e tal como as impressões visuais “objectivas”, os sons indicam um distanciamento do sujeito em relação aos objectos que impede a confusão entre o mundo interno ou subjectivo e o mundo externo, garantindo a liberdade do sujeito que escuta relativamente ao que é escutado, por outro lado, os mesmos sons partilham com as sensações olfactivas uma natureza transitória e passageira, intrusiva ou impositiva, não raro indesejada e contrária à liberdade, à sociabilidade e à sua comunicabilidade.

A oscilação entre a objectividade e a subjectividade das sensações sonoras é também manifesta na *Crítica da faculdade de julgar*, onde o problema de saber se elas são uma indicação de liberdade e sociabilidade ou da ausência destas últimas parece acompanhar sempre as hesitações de Kant acerca da música e da escuta musical. Muito em particular, e indo mais directamente ao encontro das preocupações centrais da terceira *Crítica*, a discussão sobre a música e o seu valor estético decorre, em grande medida, da discussão acerca da privacidade das sensações sonoras ou da possibilidade de nelas poder, pelo contrário, estar em jogo algum tipo de comunicabilidade, e, preferencialmente, uma comunicabilidade universal. Nos termos da terceira *Crítica*, esta segunda possibilidade dependeria da existência, na música, de um elemento formal acerca do qual fosse possível reflectir e comunicar, garantindo que a música é, efectivamente, uma arte ou uma bela arte, quer dizer, que a música é irreduzível a um mero jogo de sensações agradáveis. Contudo, é justamente esta ideia, a suspeita de que a música pode consistir num simples jogo de sensações agradáveis, que Kant não parece conseguir despedir completamente.

O problema de saber se, na música, estão em causa sons entendidos como sensações que remetem o sujeito para uma privacidade que o isola e sobre a qual não é possível nenhum acordo com outros, ou se, ao invés, nela está em causa qualquer coisa de ordem formal surge no contexto da distinção entre o belo e o agradável. Nos §§6 e 7, Kant distingue os juízos do agradável e da beleza fundando os primeiros num “sentimento privado” (KdU, §7, AA 05: 212) e os segundos num comprazimento que é atribuível, e mesmo exigível, a outros. Como exemplo do juízo do agradável, Kant refere a preferência pelo som dos instrumentos de sopro ou pelo som dos instrumentos de corda, que agradam ora a um, ora a outro sujeito, sugerindo a privacidade da sua percepção, quer dizer, remetendo essa preferência para os sentidos e sensações do sujeito, e reduzindo o som dos instrumentos à sua mera materialidade. No §14, Kant esclarece ainda que os juízos de agrado ou desagradado são “juízos dos sentidos (juízos materiais)” ou “empíricos”, enquanto os juízos de beleza são “formais” ou “puros”, constituindo estes últimos os “autênticos juízos de gosto” (KdU, §14, AA 05: 223). Aqui, porém, e ao contrário do que acontecia no §7, Kant admite a possibilidade de as sensações sonoras (como a do som do violino) poderem ser julgadas belas se forem “puras”, quer dizer, se disserem respeito, não à matéria das sensações, mas à sua “forma”, que é aquilo que, delas, “com certeza pode comunicar-se universalmente” (KdU, §14, AA 05: 224). Para apoiar esta possibilidade, Kant considera o ponto de vista da Física e as teses de Euler², segundo as quais os sons não seriam “simples sensações”, mas vibrações isócronas do ar com uma intensidade regular, perceptíveis não apenas pelos seus efeitos sobre os nossos órgãos auditivos, mas pelas faculdades cognitivas do entendimento e da imaginação e pelo modo como estas atentariam nessa regularidade ou, como Kant prefere dizer, nesse “jogo regular” (KdU, §14, AA 05: 224). De acordo com esta hipótese, “o elemento puro” da sensação “significa que a uniformidade da mesma não é perturbada e interrompida por nenhum modo estranho de sensação e pertence meramente à forma”, ou seja, a pureza ou a regularidade das vibrações indicaria uma forma invariável, pura e, portanto, não privada, sobre a qual seria possível exercer uma “reflexão”, quer dizer, o jogo livre das faculdades (KdU, §14, AA 05: 224).

A esta possibilidade acresce ainda, no mesmo parágrafo §14, um argumento que parece resgatar não apenas os sons, mas também a música, do risco de resvalar para a esfera da mera agradabilidade e, portanto, da mera materialidade, da mera sensorialidade e correspondente privacidade. O mesmo argumento legitimaria, assim, a defesa de que a música é susceptível de suscitar juízos de gosto ou de beleza, ou seja, de que a música é, ou pode ser, arte ou de que a música pertence às belas artes. O que distingue estas últimas, escreve Kant, “não é o que deleita na sensação, mas simplesmente o que apraz pela sua forma” (KdU, §14, AA 05: 225). E tal como, nas artes plásticas, o que apraz pela sua forma é o desenho e não as cores, assim também, na música, não são os “tons agradáveis

² Sobre as teorias de Euler e a sua influência do pensamento sobre a música na terceira *Crítica*, cf. Giordanetti 2001.

do instrumento”, mas “a composição” que constitui “o verdadeiro objecto do juízo de gosto puro” (KdU, §14, AA 05: 225). Quer isto dizer que, no que à música diz respeito, se ela é uma arte bela, o que nela suscita a reflexão estética e o jogo livre do entendimento e da imaginação é o seu elemento formal, ou seja, não os seus efeitos sobre os nossos sentidos, mas aquilo a que Kant chama a “composição” e que consiste num “jogo das sensações (no tempo)” (KdU, §14, AA 05: 225).

Admitindo, então, com a ajuda do ponto de vista da Física, que os sons não são “simples sensações, mas já determinações formais da unidade de um múltiplo” (KdU, §14, AA 05: 224), e que há na música (no som do violino) um elemento formal ou puro, Kant parece conseguir garantir à música uma dignidade estética e artística que a protege de se degradar num mero entretenimento agradável aos sentidos insusceptível de uma autêntica reflexão estética, dada a privacidade que o caracteriza. Dito de outro modo, é a forma na música — a “composição” — que a impede de se reduzir a um mero jogo de sensações agradável ao ouvido, um jogo que apenas entretém a audição remetendo o ouvinte para a esfera privada e incomunicável das suas sensações. A forma depura, se o podemos dizer assim, a música da mera sensorialidade e da matéria das sensações, libertando-a do domínio dos sentidos e abrindo-a ao exercício das faculdades cognitivas, que define os juízos reflexivos e os distingue dos de agradabilidade.

No entanto, a abertura da música à reflexão a partir de uma hipótese explicativa da Física sobre os sons implica simultaneamente a conveniência da música, não apenas, ou não tanto, ao uso reflexivo, mas ao uso determinante das faculdades cognitivas. Ou seja, a possibilidade de a forma ou composição sonora corresponder a um jogo regular e, portanto, invariável e constante, passível de ser conhecido de um ponto de vista científico e até, como irá tornar-se mais claro, de um ponto de vista matemático, torna o acesso a essa regularidade mais próximo de um acesso cognitivo do que estético, no sentido que a terceira *Crítica* dá a estes termos. E embora no §14 Kant pareça não considerar esta consequência do que aí defende a respeito do elemento formal na música, a *Observação Geral sobre a primeira secção da Analítica* do §22 sugere precisamente que, quando a forma bela — e também a forma sonora bela ou a música — é concebida como um “jogo regular”, ela presta-se preferencialmente ao uso cognitivo das faculdades da qual a *Crítica da faculdade de julgar* se propõe separar os juízos estéticos.

Defende aí Kant que o prazer na regularidade diz respeito ao entendimento e não ao gosto, e que, no jogo livre das faculdades com a beleza, a conformidade a regras deve ser “evitada”, na medida em que ela constitui uma coerção do entendimento sobre a imaginação (KdU, §22, AA 05: 242). Ora, o que caracteriza o juízo estético ou de gosto é que, nele, a reflexão não visa o conhecimento, mas a “simples contemplação do objecto”, na qual “o entendimento está ao serviço da imaginação e não esta ao serviço daquele” (KdU, §22, AA 05: 242). Assim, a liberdade e a pureza que a forma, entendida como “jogo regular”, concedia à música e à beleza no §14 parecem agora comprometer a liberdade da imaginação e o próprio estatuto do exercício das faculdades que a forma musical bela

suscita. Pois agora Kant mostra que uma regularidade pura ou, como ele escreve, “rígida” e “matemática”, é sentida como uma coação do entendimento sobre a imaginação que impede o jogo livre reflexivo entre as duas faculdades. Acresce ainda, como Kant não deixa de precisar, que o efeito da regularidade sobre a imaginação é o exacto oposto do comprazimento e da vivificação do ânimo que está em causa na reflexão:

Todo o rigidamente regular (o que se aproxima da regularidade matemática) tem em si o mau gosto de não proporcionar nenhum longo entretenimento com a sua contemplação (...) [e] produz tédio. (KdU, §22, AA 05: 242)

Uma regularidade formal rígida ou pura, torna-se, então, enfadonha do ponto estético pela simples e boa razão de que ela apenas admite a sua própria repetição. No caso da música isso parece tão claro, que Kant chega a admitir que há mais “beleza”, porque há “mais liberdade”, no canto dos pássaros “que nós não podemos submeter a nenhuma regra musical”, do que no canto humano “executado segundo todas as regras da música; porque enfadamo-nos muito com o último, se ele é repetido frequentemente e por longo tempo” (KdU, §22, AA 05: 243).

Assim, se a pureza da forma liberta a música da impureza das sensações, como é defendido no §14, demasiada pureza formal, demasiada exactidão matemática ameaça a liberdade do juízo estético sobre ela, ameaça a reflexão com a determinação. Como a declaração sobre o canto dos pássaros sugere, quase por absurdo, se os juízos de beleza que a música suscita se fundam na forma ou na composição musical que dota os sons de regularidade, quer dizer, de um padrão matematicamente calculável ou determinável sobre o qual se exerce o entendimento, essa regularidade não pode, contudo, ser absoluta ou rígida, sob pena de se tornar cansativa, quer dizer, esteticamente desinteressante, maçadora, ou indiferente ao ouvinte, que a deixa, simplesmente, de escutar. Dito ainda de outro modo, se a forma, a composição ou o “jogo regular” implica uma ordenação rígida e matemática dos sons e das sensações sonoras, se ela lhes confere invariabilidade, calculabilidade, uma exactidão que garante que a sua percepção não é uma mera sensação privada, mas algo objectivo e até passível de ser cientificamente conhecido, Kant parece, contudo, reconhecer que deve haver limites para a pureza do elemento formal na música, limites para a regularidade do “jogo de sensações (no tempo)” em que a música bela consiste, limites para a matemática na música.³ Mais precisamente ainda, e como, uma vez mais, o exemplo do canto dos pássaros convida a pensar, Kant parece reconhecer que, para

³ Daqui parece também decorrer que há limites para o formalismo estético de Kant, para o seu “pitagorismo” musical ou para a redução do musical ao numérico, redução essa que eliminaria a experiência sensorial em que a escuta musical também consiste. Ou seja, do ponto de vista de Kant, o prazer na experiência estética da música não pode provir simplesmente da compreensão da relação matemática entre as notas, da *ratio* calculável e reprodutível que fascinou os pitagóricos, para os quais, como é sabido, a harmonia era a expressão sonora de uma proporção exacta entre os intervalos musicais, apreendida ou percebida não pelos sentidos, mas pelo espírito do ouvinte. Sobre o contraste entre as perspectivas kantiana e pitagórica do matemático na música, e sobre as consequências do mesmo contraste, tanto nas considerações de Kant acerca dos efeitos da música sobre o sentimento vital do ânimo, quanto na sua rejeição de um certo tom “enaltecido” ou “oracular” da filosofia recente, cf. Madrid 2012. Agradeço aos revisores a indicação deste estudo.

ser bela, e para ser arte, a música requer um certo grau de irregularidade ou de liberdade formal, a qual, de acordo com este mesmo exemplo, pode ser encontrada, não numa obra artística, numa qualquer peça ou composição musical, mas numa sonoridade natural, na ordenação irregular e sempre cambiante, porque viva, da natureza “livre”. A música parece, então, admitir, e até exigir, se ela é bela, uma peculiar “liberdade” — uma liberdade análoga à “liberdade” dos animais, quer dizer, da animalidade não matematizada e não matematizável, não domesticada pelas regras do entendimento e, por essa mesma razão, tão livre e aprazível quanto ameaçadora da racionalidade, e talvez da humanidade.

Resumindo, então, o que foi dito até aqui, a hesitação da *Antropologia* entre considerar a audição como um sentido objectivo ou subjectivo com as consequências indicadas acima parece prolongar-se na terceira *Crítica*, onde Kant hesita entre considerar que a música é agradável ou bela, que ela suscita apenas sensações ou, pelo contrário, juízos puros de gosto e uma reflexão estética autêntica; para dissolver (ou complicar) a hesitação, Kant recorre à noção de forma ou de composição musical, a qual, por um lado, liberta a música da arbitrariedade e da privacidade das sensações, enquanto, por outro lado, tolhe a liberdade da imaginação no jogo reflexivo das faculdades; não satisfeito com estes paradoxos, no §14 Kant admite ainda que essa mesma liberdade é favorecida na escuta do canto dos pássaros, quer dizer, de uma “música” que é “bela” e “livre”, mas que, de acordo com os argumentos avançados anteriormente, não é arte, pois carece de composição ou de forma.

3.

As contradições parecem não conhecer fim. E Kant prolonga-as quando, no seguimento do §14, acrescenta ainda que se a forma liberta a música (e, em rigor, toda a arte) da sua redução ao sensorial, a forma é também o que garante liberdade em relação a qualquer determinação conceptual, ou seja, ela é o garante daquilo a que Kant chama uma “beleza livre”. Assim, tal como o juízo do agradável se distingue do do belo, também o juízo da “beleza livre” se distingue do da “beleza aderente” porque é independente de qualquer conceito do que o objecto deva ser:

No julgamento de uma beleza livre (segundo a mera forma) o juízo de gosto é puro. Não é pressuposto nenhum conceito de qualquer fim (...) mediante o que seria limitada a liberdade da faculdade da imaginação, que joga por assim dizer na observação da figura. (KdU, §16, AA 05: 229-230)

A forma, portanto, não apenas depura ou liberta a beleza em relação à matéria agradável das sensações, como garante a sua liberdade de qualquer conteúdo conceptual determinado.

Kant rejeita, então, que os juízos de gosto puros, fundados na forma bela, que é, ou deve ser, independente de todo e qualquer conceito — quer dizer, que não é uma representação, uma ilustração, uma imitação ou uma expressão de outra coisa, e por isso

“apraz por si mesma”⁴ —, que os juízos de gosto puros sejam conceptualmente determinados e que o sentimento da beleza esteja subordinado a algo como o reconhecimento e a identificação conceptual do que é representado ou exprimido na forma bela. Contudo, a independência de uma determinação conceptual, quer dizer, a pureza formal que garante a liberdade ou a autonomia do juízo estético, parece trazer consigo uma nova ordem de riscos para a música e para a nossa apreciação da música. Estes riscos são sugeridos — a-problematicamente — por Kant quando fornece alguns exemplos de beleza livre “que aprazem livremente e por si”, ou seja, independentemente de qualquer conceito:

Assim, os desenhos *à la grecque*, a folhagem para molduras ou sobre papel de parede etc., por si não significam nada: não representam nada, nenhum objecto sob um conceito determinado, e são belezas livres. Também se pode contar como da mesma espécie o que na música se denomina fantasias (sem tema), e até toda a música sem texto.” (KdU, §16, AA 05: 229)

A surpreendente sugestão de Kant é, aqui, a de que uma liberdade, digamos assim, absoluta ou ilimitada da forma bela em relação a qualquer determinação conceptual torna essa mesma forma *insignificante*. Ou seja, o que Kant sugere sem, contudo, o problematizar, é que, quando independente ou autónoma em relação a todo e qualquer conceito, a forma bela corre o risco de não se parecer com nada, de não significar nada, de não representar nada. E embora esta consequência não seja problematizada, parecendo, pelo contrário, ser até valorizada por Kant nesta passagem, ela traz à luz uma nova suspeita em relação à música, e em particular, em relação à música “sem tema” e “sem texto”, a saber, a de que a música só é arte se for beleza livre e independente, ou pura, de determinações conceptuais (de “temas” e “textos”), mas, uma vez livre de determinações conceptuais, a música “não significa nada”, ou seja, torna-se vazia de sentido, desprovida de significação, tão irrelevante quanto um simples elemento decorativo.

Isto não significa, porém, que Kant entenda que a música é inócua, quer dizer, que ela nos é efectivamente indiferente ou que ela não tem quaisquer efeitos sobre nós. Muito pelo contrário, como se procurará ainda esclarecer, Kant reconheceu que a música tem efeitos sobre nós, e efeitos, na verdade, muito poderosos sobre o nosso corpo e sobre o nosso espírito, aos quais não somos de modo nenhum imunes. Mas acontece que esse poder é, ou pode chegar a ser, ambivalente, e nessa medida ele constitui um problema ao qual toda a filosofia foi, desde Platão, sensível, e com o qual a filosofia moderna não

⁴ Esta ideia inspirará decisivamente o formalismo musical de Eduard Hanslick e a já referida noção de “música absoluta”. Na obra intitulada *Do belo musical*, Hanslick defende que a beleza de uma peça musical é idêntica à sua forma sonora e, portanto, imanente à própria obra, ou seja, não dependente de conteúdos extramusicais veiculados por um texto. A famosa declaração do musicólogo reza assim: “O único e exclusivo conteúdo e objecto da música são formas sonoras em movimento.” (Hanslick 2002, p. 42). Sobre a musicologia de Hanslick, cf. Grey 2011. Para uma refutação das interpretações estritamente formalistas da estética kantiana, cf. Ginsborg 2011 e Friedlander 2015, 36-39.

deixou de se confrontar, procurando formulá-lo de diversos modos. É que se a música é, ou pode ser, libertadora — se ela pode libertar-nos das necessidades físicas para as morais (Rousseau), libertar-nos para a reflexão e o livre jogo das nossas faculdades (Kant), libertar-nos das “dores da individuação” (Nietzsche), libertar-nos do idêntico para a diferença (Adorno) —, ela é, ou pode tornar-se, igualmente coerciva para a nossa liberdade, pode tornar-se impositiva e até autoritária — tratando-nos como meros “corpos sonoros” (Rousseau), condicionando os nossos pensamentos e movimentos (Kant), agindo sobre nós “demoniacamente” (Kierkegaard) ou como um “narcótico” (Nietzsche), fazendo da escuta um movimento “regressivo” e assim promovendo formas de “barbárie” (Adorno).

Ora, para esclarecer o modo como esta contradição é tematizada por Kant, importa recordar o que foi já indicado atrás acerca da comparação dos sons com os odores na *Antropologia*, e muito em particular acerca do seu efeito intrusivo e “contrário à liberdade” no sentido da audição. O que Kant ali sugere é que nós estamos sujeitos à sonoridade porque, ao contrário dos nossos olhos, os nossos ouvidos não podem simplesmente furtar-se aos sons que os afectam, pois, na bela formulação de Pascal Quignard, “acontece que as nossas orelhas não têm pálpebras” (Quignard 2000, p. 105). Ao contrário das percepções visuais, os sons invadem-nos sem, por assim dizer, serem convidados ou pedirem licença para entrar. E, neste sentido, os sons, e também os sons musicais ou a música, podem ser sentidos como uma ameaça à nossa liberdade e integridade psíquica, como um perigo de invasão e ocupação do nosso espaço mental, agindo a despeito, ou mesmo contrariamente, à nossa vontade de não ouvir, como Kant terá porventura sentido que agia o canto dos presos seus vizinhos. Além disto, e como foi, aliás, desde sempre sabido na nossa e em outras culturas, do mesmo modo que pode condicionar a nossa liberdade psíquica, a música pode condicionar também a nossa liberdade física, ou seja, os movimentos do nosso corpo. A música disciplina, controla, orienta os movimentos e os gestos, regulando-os, limitando-os ou uniformizando-os, quer dizer, intensificando, suavizando ou ritmando a energia natural do corpo como acontece, por exemplo, na música militar, religiosa, de celebração política, e também na música dita ‘comercial’.

Este aspecto disciplinador, manipulador ou, numa versão mais edificante, e mais moderada, da mesma questão, educador e até sociabilizador dos movimentos humanos é indicado por Kant no §44 da terceira *Crítica*, quando refere aquilo a que chama a “música de mesa” (*Tafelmusik*). Kant sugere aí um uso positivo da música, no qual esta não é entendida como bela arte ou arte livre, mas como mera “arte agradável” que suscita o prazer dos sentidos e que pertence à espécie que deleita “a sociedade à mesa” (KdU, §44, AA 05: 305) (Ak V, 305; §44). Nessas ocasiões, escreve Kant, o espírito dos convivas está disponível apenas para “o entretenimento momentâneo e não para uma matéria sobre a qual se deva demorar para reflectir ou repetir”, pelo que a música

deve entreter, somente como um rumor agradável, a disposição dos ânimos à alegria e, sem que ninguém lhe conceda a mínima atenção, favorece a livre conversação entre um vizinho e outro. (KdU, §44, AA 05: 305)

De acordo, então, com esta passagem, em vez de remeter o sujeito para a privacidade das suas sensações, ou seja, em vez de isolar o sujeito e ameaçar a sua liberdade, Kant admite que a música agradável pode ser útil como instrumento de sociabilização desde que ela se reduza a um mero “rumor” ao qual “ninguém presta atenção”. Dito de outro modo, a insignificância indigna de atenção — a pobreza formal, poderíamos talvez dizer, ou a irrelevância estética da composição musical — torna a “música de mesa” capaz de favorecer a conversação entre os convivas de um banquete mantendo-os civilizadamente sentados à mesa, quer dizer, suscitando e preservando uma certa disposição anímica e uma determinada contenção corporal. A insignificância estética esconde, portanto, um poder: o poder de condicionar os comportamentos e os pensamentos, o poder de impor e manter determinados limites, os limites das chamadas ‘conveniências sociais’ no interior das quais os indivíduos não excedem uma certa medida, a medida que está inexplicitamente reservada a cada um — por exemplo, a medida do volume da voz, da amplitude dos movimentos, do espaço que se ocupa, do tempo que se toma e se concede a si e aos outros... Neste sentido, pode entender-se que a música é civilizadora, pois ela regula os comportamentos domesticando ou impondo limites às nossas tendências naturais, à liberdade instintiva dos nossos gestos e dos nossos movimentos corpóreos e anímicos, tornando possível um convívio pacífico, regrado ou moderado entre os indivíduos.

Acontece, porém, que este poder, a acção civilizadora da música, corre sempre o risco de se transformar no seu contrário, quer dizer, num condicionamento não apenas físico, mas também psíquico ou mental, uma vez que, como Kant sublinha, distraindo ou entretendo os ânimos e impedindo-os de se concentrarem nos seus pensamentos, a música de mesa anula, ou pode anular, a possibilidade da reflexão. Não sendo certamente esta a característica que Kant pretende pôr aqui em relevo, o §44 alude, porém, de modo aparentemente inadvertido, ao potencial coercivo da música sobre os corpos e os espíritos quando acrescenta que a música de mesa pertence àqueles “jogos que não comportam nenhum interesse para além de deixar passar imperceptivelmente o tempo” (KdU, §44, AA 05: 306). O risco deste, como dos outros jogos de sociedade que Kant tem em mente, quer dizer, dos jogos que têm em vista a socialização e um convívio moderado pelas regras e convenções que caracterizam e tornam possível a vida social, é o risco da perda da consciência da passagem do tempo por parte do jogador, quer dizer, o risco da sua alienação no interior de um tempo artificialmente regulado, que é, na verdade, um tempo artificialmente suspenso.

Assim, se agora Kant reconhece a virtude civilizadora da música quando esta não é arte ou bela arte detentora de uma forma, mas um simples “rumor agradável” que disciplina ou domestica os corpos e os espíritos tornando-os sociáveis ou educados, Kant

parece não deixar de pressentir, ainda que positivamente, um efeito contraditório com este último, a saber, o efeito potencialmente alienante que a mesma música pode ter sobre os ouvintes. A esta contradição podemos ainda acrescentar uma outra, decorrente do que é dito no §14, e não menos significativa para a compreensão da amplitude da ambivalência da música: se, neste §44, a música é louvada pela sua ação civilizadora, e se nele Kant destaca a utilidade da música quando esta se coloca ao serviço daquilo a que podemos chamar uma certa ordem ou regularidade social, esta virtude contrária, de modo muito evidente, aquela que Kant identificava, no §14, no canto dos pássaros, ou seja, contrária a “liberdade” natural e animal que é o contrário da disciplina e da ação reguladora da civilização, e por isso mesmo imprópria para se sentar conosco à mesa num banquete.

Na *Crítica da faculdade de julgar*, o canto dos pássaros parece, então, representar algo como o avesso ou o pólo oposto da “música de mesa”, e os dois pólos parecem perfazer a ambiguidade constitutiva da música e do pensamento de Kant sobre a música. Pois se esta oscila sempre entre forma e sensação, beleza e agrado, arte e entretenimento, sociabilidade e privacidade, dela é também própria a oscilação entre natureza e cultura. Por isso mesmo, ao elogiar a “beleza” e “liberdade” do canto dos pássaros, ao elogiar a beleza da música natural e animal, Kant louva o que na música é contrário às convenções, contrário à ordem e às regras estabelecidas, contrário às conveniências sociais e ao potencial civilizador desta arte. E se este elogio é certamente conforme à ideia de belo natural que Kant defende na terceira *Crítica*, ele não deixa de assinalar o que, na música, é desregrado ou avesso a regras, o elemento excessivo que nela de algum modo resiste ou desafia os limites, o seu lado, digamos, inconveniente ou menos civilizado. Este elemento algo inquietante da música era, de resto, já familiar aos antigos, e foi indicado na cultura grega através do mito das sereias (que, como convém lembrar, não eram originalmente peixes, mas aves). Mais perto de nós no tempo, e refletindo sobre experiências que Kant não poderia ter antecipado, Adorno foi o filósofo que mais atenção prestou ao poder culturalmente destabilizador da música, mostrando que se a música é digna de figurar entre as artes, e se, enquanto tal, ela depende do desenvolvimento de uma cultura, talvez não seja possível suprimir o seu sempre latente potencial de barbárie, quer dizer, o elemento indomesticável, selvagem e desregulador, a natureza excessiva e sem regra, na qual, provavelmente, toda a música radica.

4.

Será, então, a música uma arte?

Kant procura responder a esta pergunta nos §§51 e 53 da terceira *Crítica*, onde retoma a ideia de que a música é um mero jogo de sensações, e onde a ambivalência das suas posições sobre a música parece atingir um paroxismo. Classificando as artes a partir da definição de beleza como “expressão de ideias estéticas” (KdU, §51, AA 05: 320), Kant propõe, no §51, que essa classificação deve ser feita por analogia com o modo de expressão que os homens usam para comunicarem entre si e com os elementos de que eles

se servem para se exprimirem, a saber, a palavra, o gesto e o tom. Kant estabelece assim uma hierarquia entre três espécies de artes: as artes ligadas às palavras — a oratória e a poesia, que ocupam o lugar cimeiro —, as artes figurativas — a pintura, a escultura e a arquitetura — e, em terceiro lugar, a espécie que Kant designa como “a arte do belo jogo de sensações” sonoras e visuais, que diz respeito “à proporção dos diversos graus da disposição (tensão) do sentido a que a sensação pertence”, e à qual pertencem a música e aquilo a que Kant chama a “arte das cores” (KdU, §51, AA 05: 324). Na definição desta terceira espécie de arte reaparece, então, a ambivalência aparentemente irresolúvel acerca da subjectividade ou objectividade das sensações auditivas de que a *Antropologia* dá conta, e que Kant havia já problematizado nos §§6, 7 e 14 da terceira *Crítica*. Assim, e uma vez mais, no §51 Kant reformula as suas hesitações sobre os sons, declarando que sobre estas sensações

não se pode decidir com certeza se têm por fundamento o sentido ou a reflexão [...] Isto é, não se pode dizer com certeza se uma cor ou um tom (som) são simplesmente sensações agradáveis, ou se é já em si um jogo belo de sensações e se como tal traz consigo, no julgamento estético, um comprazimento na forma. (KdU, §51, AA 05: 324)

As consequências desta indecidibilidade são as que resultavam já das considerações dos parágrafos anteriores: se o prazer na audição da música decorre dos efeitos da vibração do ar sobre os órgãos sensoriais, então esse prazer é da ordem do agrado e não de um juízo de beleza sobre uma forma; se, pelo contrário, o prazer resulta do “matemático na música” e de um juízo “sobre a proporção dessas vibrações”, então as sensações não são “simples impressão dos sentidos”, mas o “efeito de um julgamento da forma no jogo de muitas sensações” (KdU, §51, AA 05: 325). Da diferença entre estas possibilidades dependeria, mais uma vez, a definição da música como “arte agradável” ou “inteiramente como bela arte”, mas Kant volta a deixar a questão em aberto. Seja como for, a música não parece sair muito favorecida desta classificação das artes, ocupando o último lugar da hierarquia e voltando a cair sobre ela a suspeita de não passar de um mero “jogo de sensações” e de pertencer mais à esfera privada do agradável do que à esfera universal e universalmente comunicável da beleza. No entanto, no §53, uma surpreendente interpretação desta comunicabilidade universal parece vir contrariar as suspeitas acerca do valor estético da música e, não menos surpreendentemente, resgatá-la da agradabilidade, da sensorialidade e da privacidade que justificavam, no §51, a ocupação do último lugar na hierarquia das artes.

O §53 é dedicado à comparação do valor estético das belas artes, e Kant considera dois critérios de comparação diferentes, a saber, “o movimento do ânimo” que cada arte suscita e “a cultura que elas alcançam para o ânimo”, ou seja, a promoção do “alargamento das faculdades que na faculdade do juízo têm de concorrer para o conhecimento” (KdU, §53, AA 05: 328 e 329). Kant começa por examinar a poesia, justificando a sua posição no topo da hierarquia das artes com a ideia de que a poesia “alarga o ânimo” e põe “em liberdade a faculdade da imaginação”, oferecendo-lhe uma forma que

conecta a apresentação [de um conceito dado] com uma profusão de pensamentos à qual nenhuma expressão linguística é inteiramente adequada e portanto eleva esteticamente às ideias (KdU, §53, AA 05: 327).

A poesia é, então, a arte mais elevada, pois, mais do que todas as outras artes, ela suscita a reflexão estética sobre uma forma, alargando e fortalecendo o ânimo na medida em que “permite sentir a sua faculdade livre, espontânea e independente da determinação da natureza” (KdU, §53, AA 05: 327) e também de determinações linguísticas ou conceptuais. Acontece, porém, acrescenta Kant, que “se o que importa é o movimento do ânimo”, a arte que se deve seguir à poesia é “a arte do som”, a *Tonkunst*, quer dizer, a música (KdU, §53, AA 05: 328). A razão desta súbita dignificação da arte sobre a qual pesava até agora a suspeita de se reduzir a um simples jogo de sensações é a de que, “embora ela fale por meras sensações sem conceitos [...] contudo, ela move o ânimo do modo mais variado” (KdU, §53, AA 05: 328). Quer então dizer que, não comunicando conceitos porque não recorre a palavras, mas apenas a sons, e mesmo correndo o risco de redundar num mero jogo agradável com as sensações, a música cumpre o critério de suscitar o movimento do ânimo porque *a música fala*. E que ela fale por meras sensações não parece agora constituir um risco ou um problema, mas uma vantagem, uma vez que é justamente porque não recorre à linguagem verbal ou conceptual que a música está livre para exprimir aquilo a que Kant vai chamar neste parágrafo “uma inominável profusão de pensamentos” [*einer unnenbaren Gedankenfülle*] (KdU, §53, AA 05: 329). Este aspecto parece, então, autorizar a hipótese de que, apesar de todas as suas hesitações, Kant atribui à música algum valor e que esta arte tem um interesse maior do que poderia parecer à partida porque, afinal, dela é própria uma comunicabilidade particular que a dota de um valor estético comparável ao da poesia. Mais precisamente ainda, Kant vai considerar aqui que a música é uma “linguagem”, e não uma linguagem qualquer, mas uma “linguagem universal de sensações compreensível a todos os homens” (KdU, §53, AA 05: 328).

Ora, dadas todas as hesitações precedentes, a primeira questão que se coloca é, evidentemente, a de saber, como é que uma linguagem universal pode ser composta por sensações, ou como é que as sensações podem constituir uma linguagem universalmente compreensível, se as sensações são privadas e, portanto, incomunicáveis. Por outro lado, interessa também esclarecer como é que a música pode ser uma linguagem, se ela não recorre, como a poesia, a conceitos, ou seja, se ela carece de palavras. Dito de outro modo, neste contexto parece legítimo perguntar que tipo de linguagem tem Kant em mente quando se refere a uma linguagem que não é conceptual, que não é discursiva ou verbal, que é “linguagem de sensações” e mesmo uma “linguagem dos afectos”.

As respostas devem ser procuradas no entendimento que Kant dá aqui à noção de “linguagem universal”. Esta universalidade explica-se por aquilo que Kant considera que a música tem em comum com a linguagem discursiva, ou seja, não os conceitos ou as palavras, mas a sonoridade ou a tonalidade, quer dizer, o som ou o tom que é comum às notas musicais e à língua falada. Kant esclarece melhor o que tem mente escrevendo que

cada expressão da linguagem possui no conjunto um som que é adequado ao seu sentido; este som denota mais ou menos um afecto daquele que fala e reciprocamente também o produz no ouvinte, incitando também neste último a ideia que é expressa na linguagem com tal som. (KdU, §53, AA 05: 328)

Ou seja, o que é expresso na verbalização dos pensamentos, ou na tradução dos pensamentos em palavras não se comunica apenas pela significação dos termos ou conceitos utilizados, mas pelo afecto patente no som ou no tom com que aqueles são proferidos. Ao sentido do que é verbalizado é, portanto, adequado, não apenas um conceito, mas um som que, como Kant escreve, “denota um afecto daquele que fala”. Este som ou tom, a sonoridade do discurso verbal possui, então, uma natureza musical e Kant chama-lhe “modulação”, definindo-a como “uma linguagem universal das sensações compreensível a cada homem”. E o que isto implica, em última análise, é que a modulação sonora das palavras ou dos conceitos comunica ideias, comunica um “sentido”, pois ela “produz no ouvinte” o “afecto daquele que fala” e “incita [no ouvinte] a ideia que é expressa na linguagem por tal som”. Assim, desta linguagem não propriamente verbal, mas sonora e afectiva, é própria uma universalidade que não decorre do poder de conceptualizar, mas daquilo a que poderíamos chamar a sua musicalidade, quer dizer, o poder de sonorizar, o poder de modular uma ideia através da sonorização dos afectos. Dito ainda de outro modo, Kant sugere que é a modulação ou a tonalidade que é expressiva do sentido do que é dito e compreendida por quem escuta, pelo que essa mesma modulação ou tonalidade é tão comunicável, e talvez até mais comunicável, talvez até universalmente comunicável, quanto os conceitos. Por outro lado, é também a modulação sonora que é responsável por suscitar o movimento do ânimo, pois, na música, é ela que fomenta a reflexão, ou que suscita, como Kant escreve, “uma inominável profusão de pensamentos”. Assim se explica, então, a analogia entre a linguagem e a música a partir da sonorização dos afectos ou da modulação, e assim torna-se também compreensível o valor que a música tão surpreendentemente adquire, levando Kant a concluir que

assim como a modulação é a linguagem universal das sensações (...), a arte do som exerce esta linguagem no seu inteiro ênfase, a saber como linguagem dos afectos, e assim comunica universalmente (...) a ideia estética de um todo interconectado de uma inominável profusão de pensamentos. (KdU, §53, AA 05: 328-329)

Portanto, “se o que importa é o movimento do ânimo”, a música parece, então, salvar-se da agradabilidade e da privacidade de que era antes suspeita, transferindo-se para o pólo oposto destas últimas ou para a comunicação universal, quer dizer, passando do último para o segundo lugar da hierarquia das artes. Assim, se a poesia, que é a forma mais elevada de arte, “alarga o ânimo libertando a imaginação” e apresenta “uma profusão de pensamentos à qual nenhuma expressão linguística é inteiramente adequada”, quer dizer, se a poesia comunica “universalmente” sem “conceitos determinados”, Kant parece, contudo, sugerir que existe uma outra forma de comunicação universal sem conceitos determinados e que é a “linguagem dos afectos”, a modulação sonora na qual a música

consiste, e da qual a própria poesia depende intimamente. Por esta razão, e a despeito de todas as hesitações anteriores, Kant escreve muito explicitamente que a música “comunica ideias estéticas”, quer dizer, ideias que “não são conceitos, nem pensamentos determinados” e que, por isso mesmo, não dão apenas muito que sentir, mas que pensar.

No entanto, esta não é a última palavra da terceira *Crítica* sobre a música. Pois, se o critério para a comparação do valor das artes não for o movimento do ânimo que elas suscitam, mas

a cultura que elas alcançam para o ânimo e tomarmos como padrão de medida o alargamento das faculdades que na faculdade do juízo têm de concorrer para o conhecimento, então a música possui entre as artes belas o último lugar (assim como talvez o primeiro entre aquelas que são apreciadas simultaneamente segundo o seu agrado), porque ela joga simplesmente com sensações. (KdU, §53, AA 05: 329)

O que isto significa, então, é que, ao contrário do que parecia umas linhas antes, apesar da universalidade que Kant acaba de atribuir à música, e apesar até do estatuto de “linguagem universal”, a música não fica definitivamente redimida de resvalar para um simples jogo de sensações. Mais ainda, do ponto de vista do segundo critério de comparação entre o valor das artes, as artes figurativas precedem “de longe” a música, na medida em que

realizam um produto que serve aos conceitos do entendimento como um veículo duradouro e por si mesmo recomendável para promover a unificação dos mesmos com a sensibilidade e assim como que promover a urbanidade das faculdades de conhecimento superiores. (KdU, §53, AA 05: 329)

Ou seja, ao contrário do que acontece com a música, das obras de arte figurativas resulta uma forma durável, um “veículo duradouro” sobre o qual os conceitos do entendimento podem continuar a procurar jogar livremente com a sensibilidade e a imaginação. Dito de outro modo, graças a este “produto”, digamos assim, estável ou fixo, é possível repetir a experiência estética de pinturas, desenhos, gravuras, esculturas ou formas arquitectónicas, quer dizer, é possível voltar a elas e renovar a experiência reflexiva que elas suscitam, renovar o jogo livre, harmónico ou “urbano” das faculdades cognitivas. Pelo contrário, se a música suscita também ela uma reflexão estética, como Kant acaba de reconhecer, essa reflexão tem por base, não um “veículo duradouro”, mas sensações sonoras, quer dizer, sensações evanescentes sem qualquer suporte fixo, estável ou duradouro. Por isso, como Kant escreve — recordando-nos da inexistência, à sua época, de música ‘fixada’ ou ‘estabilizada’ em gravações discográficas e disponível fora do contexto de um concerto —, se as artes figurativas causam uma “impressão duradoura”, a música apenas causa uma “impressão transitória”, pois o que é próprio da música é passar, transitar, e desaparecer (KdU, §53, AA 05: 330).

A música não contribui, então, para a cultura do ânimo porque ela não se fixa em lado nenhum, porque ela se extingue mal aparece, porque ela é inerentemente instável e resiste a fixações. A instabilidade e a transitoriedade da música tornam, portanto, do ponto

de vista de Kant, a nossa relação com ela mais arbitrária do que com a pintura ou a escultura porque é uma relação insusceptível de ser repetida, renovada, e assim também discutida, comparada, eventualmente até revista ou questionada. Por outro lado, se a “objectividade” das sensações visuais permite retomar a reflexão estética não apenas na presença, mas também na ausência física das formas belas através da sua “reevocação” ou recordação, com a música isso não parece a Kant ser possível porque as sensações sonoras “se extinguem completamente” do nosso espírito, sendo ainda que “quando são inadvertidamente repetidas pela imaginação, são mais enfadonhas do que agradáveis” (KdU, §53, AA 05: 330). Do mesmo modo, a música “não suporta a repetição reiterada sem produzir tédio” (KdU, §53, AA 05: 328), pois, em vez de suscitar o movimento do ânimo, o efeito da sua repetição provoca em nós, como Kant já tinha referido anteriormente, o seu contrário, quer dizer, enfado, indiferença ou até aversão.

A conclusão é, então, a de que, embora constitua uma linguagem universal, “ajuizada pela razão, [a música] possui valor menor que qualquer outra das belas artes” (KdU, §53, AA 05: 328). No §53, o veredicto de Kant torna-se, portanto, claro e inapelável: a música “é certamente mais gozo que cultura”, dela “não sobra nada para a reflexão” (KdU, §53, AA 05: 328), ela não contribui para o cultivo e a “urbanidade” do ânimo. Mais explicitamente ainda, escreve Kant, sem qualquer margem para ambiguidades,

é inerente à música uma certa falta de urbanidade (*hängt der Musik ein gewisser Mangel der Urbanität an*) [...] ela estende a sua influência além do que dela se pretende (à vizinhança) e assim como que se impõe, por conseguinte causa dano à liberdade de outros estranhos à sociedade musical; as artes que falam aos olhos não fazem isto, enquanto se pode apenas desviá-los quando não se quer aceitar a sua influência. (KdU, §53, AA 05: 330)

Assim, mesmo admitindo que há na música um elemento libertador, quer dizer, mesmo admitindo, como se viu acima, que ela alarga o ânimo e liberta a imaginação, e reconhecendo embora que a música comunica, como as outras artes, ideias estéticas, as derradeiras considerações que Kant faz na terceira *Crítica* sobre a música parecem, não obstante, confirmar a suspeita de que a música alberga sempre uma ameaça à liberdade, e que nela se esconde, portanto, o contrário da cultura e da “urbanidade”. Como foi indicado acima, se a música é “transitória” e dela “não sobra nada para a reflexão”, a música não é, contudo, sem consequências para o nosso corpo e o nosso espírito, e ela tem o poder de nos deixar à mercê do seu acontecer, obrigando o ouvido e o ânimo a mover-se ao seu sabor. Este aspecto distingue-a das outras artes, pois a música impõe a sua presença sonora (o seu volume, a sua duração, o seu ritmo, a sua pulsação...) e força os ouvintes a suportarem-na, quer o queiram, quer não. Assim, se ela liberta — das regras, dos conceitos, das convenções, da consciência do passar do tempo —, ela pode igualmente coagir e exercer violência sobre a nossa liberdade, pois a sua instabilidade constitutiva, a sua resistência à fixação num veículo objectivo ou exterior às sensações que suscita, torna a sua presença

arbitrária e imprevisível, fá-la escapar ao controlo dos ouvintes, acarretando aquilo a que Kant chama “uma certa falta de urbanidade”.

Que a música carece de urbanidade significa, portanto, que há nela algo de incivilizado, de inconveniente ou de mal-educado, que ela aparece (como o canto dos pássaros) sem ser convidada, e se demora impondo a sua presença e desestabilizando, ou podendo desestabilizar (como no caso do canto dos reclusos vizinhos de Kant), uma certa ordem subjectiva e intersubjectiva, perturbando, ou podendo perturbar, os limites ou as regras que garantem a harmonia do sujeito consigo mesmo e com os outros. Da música parece ser próprio, como se indicou já, um excesso ou desregramento, um certo desrespeito pelas regras e convenções, um elemento que se opõe à civilidade e à civilização, o qual convive, como se viu também acima, com o potencial civilizador da mesma arte. Esta dualidade é constitutiva da natureza inerentemente ambígua da arte dos sons, que os gregos tanto associaram ao já referido mito das ameaçadoras das sereias, como ao mito de Orfeu, o músico domesticador da animalidade selvagem, e dos efeitos da sua violência em nós.

A mesma ambivalência constitutiva parece ter também sido compreendida por Kant, que ora refere o poder que a música tem de suscitar e manter um convívio civilizado entre os seres humanos, ora lhe reprova a sua falta de urbanidade nas últimas considerações que dedica a esta arte na *Crítica da faculdade de julgar*. No final do §53, e à maneira como fará na *Antropologia*, Kant compara os efeitos da música aos efeitos do odor de um lenço perfumado que alguém tira do bolso para se assoar, e que se espalha em todas as direcções, coagindo os que estão próximos a suportá-lo. Se este gesto se tornou “fora de moda” (KdU, §53, AA 05: 330) porque os seus efeitos coercivos determinaram uma reprovação social, a terceira *Crítica* parece sugerir que a música justifica porventura a mesma reprovação, ou que os seus efeitos exigem, pelo menos, a imposição de alguns limites. Kant não chega a propor a proibição da música, como chegou a pedir à polícia de Königsberg que proibisse os seus vizinhos de cantar (apenas conseguindo que fossem obrigados a fechar as janelas); mas de algum modo a sua ideia antecipa, mais uma vez de um modo que não deixa de nos surpreender, a invasão algo bárbara da música no espaço público nos nossos dias.

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Can everything be beautiful? Pan-aestheticism and the Kantian puzzle of the free play of the faculties

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Abstract

My contribution deals directly with the problem of Kant's apparent commitment to pan-aestheticism, which is in particular attached to the task of explaining the possibility of the free play of the faculties. The aim is to provide an overview of the ways in which this problem can be confronted and eventually solved. In this regard, one way to deal with this problem consists in revisiting the assumption that the free play of the faculties is to be understood as simply occurring without presupposing any concept. By contrast, one can fully endorse Kant's commitment to pan-aestheticism and hence focus on how Kant's account explains the fact that one does not actually experience everything as beautiful. Both of these alternatives, I firmly reject. By remarking upon the merely reflecting status of judgments of taste, I explain why Kant's account of taste does not lend itself to pan-aestheticism.

Key words (TNR 11)

Kant; pan-aestheticism; judgments of taste; the free play of the faculties; reflecting judgment.

Introduction¹

Within the Kantian studies on the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*² the problem of pan-aestheticism³ is well-known. Contributions regarding especially the relation drawn by Kant

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between taste and cognition cannot avoid facing this problem, which is in particular attached to the explanation of the notion of the free play of imagination and understanding. According to Kant, the latter implies the capacity of the imagination to schematize without concepts, though in agreement with the conditions of cognition in general. In this regard, the free play of the faculties is commonly explained as a state of mind which fulfills all of the conditions of cognition except that of the application of a concept for the determination of the object. Moreover, Kant declares that the free play of the faculties is a relation of the representative faculties which is required by cognition in general, so as to justify the claim to universal validity of judgments of taste. If the free play of the faculties is to be understood as requisite for cognition in general, then why does not every cognizable thing elicit the very feeling of the free play of the faculties and hence not be found beautiful?

Kant's eventual commitment to the view that everything can be beautiful is often rejected as counter-intuitive or at least as inconsistent with the assumption of taste as a faculty which discriminates what is beautiful from what is not. For this reasons, such a conclusion is often found to be absurd. As a result, it is rejected by assuming that Kant cannot have submitted it, not even by implication. This line of argument is, however, not satisfying. First of all, if one considers that on Kant's account the predicate beautiful refers by definition to a feeling, which is the very peculiar feeling of the free play of faculties, and hence that it is referred to the subject rather than to the object, then it seems at least legitimate to ask whether, given this fundamental statement, every object cannot be seen as being potentially beautiful. This may or may not be true for Kant's account of the beautiful, but I assume that it is certainly not an absurd conclusion from which Kant must be divorced at any cost.⁴

On the basis of this assumption, my contribution directly confronts the problem of Kant's apparent commitment to pan-aestheticism and aims first of all to provide an overview of its source within Kant's critique of taste and of the main attempts to deal with it. In what follows I will consider two of these attempts. The first solves the problem of pan-aestheticism upstream, by revisiting the claim that the free play of the faculties is to be understood as simply occurring without presupposing any concept. In this account, the free play of the faculties is explained as a state of mind satisfying all of the conditions of cognition in a way which, instead of excluding the application of a concept, is regarded as additional to what is required for the ordinary cognition of the object by means of concepts. By contrast, the second fully endorses the conclusion according to which

² All references to Kant's works are to Kant's *Gesammelte Schriften* (Kant 1900 et seqq.), commonly referred to as the *Akademieausgabe* (AA). In the present contribution, citations refer mainly to Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (KU, Volume 05 of the *Akademie* edition) and to the unpublished Introduction to the third *Critique* (EEKU, Volume 20). The standard citations from the *Akademieausgabe* are followed by the number of the relative page of the consulted English translation: Kant, I. (2000), *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, translated by P. Guyer and E. Matthews, edited by P. Guyer, Cambridge University Press, New York.

³ The term "pan-aestheticism" is used by Rebecca Kukla (2006, p. 28)

⁴ Ted Cohen defends the plausibility of pan-aestheticism and of Kant's eventual commitment to it in similar terms (Cohen 2002, p. 4).

everything can be beautiful. By individuating special circumstances under which exclusively the free play of the faculties can be explicitly felt, this approach explains why one does not actually experience everything as beautiful. However, I reject both of these attempts. With regard to the first, I argue that according to Kant's descriptions, the free harmony of the faculties is to be understood as occurring independently of any application of concepts, and hence it cannot be taken as fulfilling any cognitive aim, not even in an additional way. With regard to the second proposal, I argue that the free harmony of imagination and understanding is to be distinguished from the ordinary agreement of the faculties required by cognition.

In the last section, I propose a third way, which while accepting the explanation of the free play of the faculties as fulfilling the subjective condition of cognition without the presupposition of concepts, nonetheless explains why Kant's account of taste does not lend itself to pan-aestheticism. In fact, the free play of the faculties entails an aesthetic specificity and it is the result of a specific act of judging. The latter is merely reflecting, that is, it is not meant to satisfy any cognitive aim, and it is ultimately dependent on peculiar forms apprehended by the imagination.

I.

The importance of the notion of the free play of the faculties within Kant's critique of taste can hardly be overestimated. An object, Kant states, is judged to be beautiful in virtue of its capacity to elicit the feeling of the free play of the faculties in the subject, rather than in virtue of certain features. Even though the free harmony of the faculties can actually be defined as the "key" notion of the critique of taste, Kant's explanations remain obscure: for instance, Kant explicitly describes it as implying the capacity of the imagination to schematize without concepts (KU, AA 05:287 / 167); a statement, among others, which leaves the reader with the task of explaining how this is possible, especially on the basis of Kant's exposition of the ordinary operations of the imagination within his theory of cognition exposed in the first *Critique*.

As it is known, Kant's very first concern in the *Analytic of the Beautiful* is to distinguish judgments of taste from cognitive judgments. Judgments of taste are aesthetic judgments, hence their determining ground is a feeling rather than a concept of the object. However, judgments of taste are to be differentiated from merely aesthetic judgments, which are grounded on the sole feeling of affection for the object. In fact, judgments of taste share with cognitive judgments the claim to universality and necessity (KU, AA 05:191 / 77). Clearly, if judgments of taste were grounded on the mere feeling of pleasure, then these claims would remain unexplained. Thus, in order for this pleasure to legitimately claim to universality, it must rest not on merely subjective conditions, as it is the case of the pleasure of the senses, but on a state of mind which can be universally communicable. Since according to Kant only cognition can be universally communicable, then:

The subjective universal communicability of the kind of representation in a judgment of taste, since it is supposed to occur without presupposing a determinate concept, can be nothing other than the state of mind of the free play of the imagination and the understanding (so far as they agree with each other as is requisite for a *cognition in general*). (KU, AA 05:218 / 103)

A similar argument can be found with regard to the explanation of the claim to necessary validity exposed by Kant in the fourth moment of the *Analytic of the Beautiful*. The claim to necessary validity sheds light on the idea of common sense as the subjective principle of judgments of taste, which is defined as “the effect of the free play of the cognitive faculties” (KU, AA 05:238 / 122). By assuming this definition, it is possible to see the involvement of the free play of the faculties within the argument regarding whether or not one has good reason for presupposing a common sense.⁵ Kant’s argument is that common sense is to be taken as the necessary condition of the universal communicability of cognition. As Kant argues, this is the case because the subjective condition of cognition can be universally communicable only under the presupposition of a common sense. Within this framework, “subjective condition of cognition” refers to the optimal agreement of imagination and understanding with regard to cognition. As Kant specifies, this disposition of the faculties can exclusively be felt, a specification which supports the identification of the very subjective condition of cognition with the free harmonious agreement of the faculties grounding judgments of taste.

The strategy carried out by Kant in order to justify the claims of taste is to explain them as due to the fact that the feeling of pleasure is the expression of a state of mind which is required by cognition in general as its subjective condition.⁶ Despite the initial apparent neat distinction between judgments of taste as aesthetic judgments and logical judgments, the comparison between judgments of taste and cognitive empirical judgments is thus revealed to be crucial for the understanding of the possibility of judgments of taste. Within Kant’s theory of the reflecting power of judgment, it seems in particular that the claim to universality and necessity of judgments of taste has the same ground as the one of cognitive judgments, namely an act of judging resulting from the shared operations of apprehension and reflection on a given object which put the imagination and the understanding in agreement independently of any particular concept.⁷ In this regard, Kant holds that since

⁵ See Henry Allison (2001) and Linda Palmer (2011) for a different consideration of the involvement within this argument of the common sense considered as the effect of the free play of the faculties.

⁶ “A subjective condition of cognition [...] would be one that is somehow necessarily involved in representation, but does not determine the objects represented, not even these objects considered as phenomena.” (Allison 2001, p. 116). Allison contrasts the subjective condition of cognition with the objective ones (pure intuitions and categories) exposed in the first *Critique*. However, this issue is highly controversial. For the purposes of this paper, the question of whether the free play of the faculties presupposes pure conditions of cognition is left aside.

⁷ Beatrice Longuenesse (2006) clearly demonstrates why a comparison between judgments of taste and empirical cognitive judgments is particularly helpful.

the judgment of taste is not determinable by means of concepts, it is grounded only on the subjective formal condition of a judgment in general. The subjective condition of all judgments is the faculty for judging itself, or the power of judgment. This, employed with regard to a representation by means of which an object is given, requires the agreement of two powers of representation: namely, the imagination (for the intuition and the composition of the manifold of intuition), and the understanding (for the concept as representation of the unity of this composition). (KU, AA 05:287/167)

The free play of the faculties appears to be conceived by Kant as the formal condition of all judgments and hence of the faculty itself of judgment. In this respect, the free play of the faculties can be more precisely described as the very explanatory notion of the merely reflecting status of judgments of taste. The reflecting power of judgment does not subsume the beautiful form under a concept but rather reflects on it and this very act of reflection elicits the pleasure grounding a judgment of taste. Within this framework, the reflecting power of judgment, whose task is to find an universal for the given particular, requires an agreement between the imagination and the understanding which, however, cannot be conceived as guided by concepts, as would be required by the determining power of judgment. Kant describes this agreement as “a subjective correspondence of the imagination to the understanding without an objective one”, which is characterized by “a lawfulness without law” (KU, AA 05:241 / 125). In turn, this implies that on the one hand the imagination in its freedom schematizes independently from concepts, while on the other that this act of the imagination occurs in a way which is found by the reflecting power of judgments to be in agreement with the requirement for unity and lawfulness of the understanding.⁸ In a very famous passage from the first Introduction Kant clearly summarizes this idea:

A merely *reflecting* judgment about a given individual object, [...], *can be aesthetic* if (before its comparison with others is seen), the power of judgment, which has no concept ready for the given intuition, holds the imagination (merely in the apprehension of the object) together with the understanding (in the presentation of a concept in general) and perceives a relation of the two faculties of cognition which constitutes the subjective, merely sensitive condition of the objective use of the power of judgment in general (namely the agreement of those two faculties with each other). (EEKU, AA 20:223-4 / 26)

While the “objective use of the power of judgment” presupposes the application of a concept to the manifold of intuition synthesized by the imagination, the free play of the faculties as the ground of judgments of taste as merely reflecting judgments does not require any concept to occur. Thus, it is often considered as that very relation between the

⁸ For a detailed articulation of the notion of “lawfulness without a law”, see Hannah Ginsborg (1997).

faculties as required by the power of judgment in general *minus* that which would otherwise make it objective, namely the fulfillment of the purpose of cognition by means of the application of a concept. As a result, Kant remarks that the state of mind underlying judgments of taste is that of the perception, by means of a feeling, of the fulfillment of the subjective conditions of the power of judgment. In turn, this is decisive for his explanation of the claims of taste:

Someone who feels pleasure in mere reflection on the form of an object, without regard to a concept, rightly makes claim to the assent of everyone else, even though this judgment is empirical and is an individual judgment, since the ground for this pleasure is to be found in the universal though subjective condition of reflecting judgments, namely the purposive correspondence of an object (be it a product of nature or of art) with the relationship of the cognitive faculties among themselves (of the imagination and the understanding) that is required for every empirical cognition. (KU, AA 05:190 / 77)

Meaningfully, this last passage highlights that the pleasure felt in the mere reflection, that is, the feeling of the free play of the faculties, is grounded on the very subjective condition of the reflecting power of judgment. The latter, Kant concludes, requires the purposive suitability of objects for our cognitive faculties and hence seems to be needed not only as condition of judgments of taste, but also in order for empirical cognition to be possible in the first place.

II.

On the basis of Kant's descriptions of the free play of the faculties a common interpretation has established. Paul Guyer has denominated the traditional explanation given of the free harmony of the faculties as the "precognitive account" (Guyer 2006).⁹ According to such an account, the free play of the faculties is a state of mind which fulfills all of the conditions of cognition except that of the application of a concept. According to this reading, the free play of the faculties can be conceived as being requisite for cognition in general, for it satisfies the subjective condition of cognition without producing any cognition at all, hence without determining the object by means of concepts. The free play of the faculties is then understood as a requisite not only for judgments of taste to justify their claims, but also as a very requisite of the reflecting power of judgment in general and hence of empirical cognition.

This result is intriguing, but highly problematic. The acknowledgment that the free play of the faculties is requisite for empirical cognition as well as for judgments of taste sets the stage for the problem of pan-aestheticism. If one fully endorses the idea that the free play

⁹ For instance, under this category of precognitive accounts fall the interpretations provided by Meerbote (1982), Henrich (1992), Ginsborg (1990, 1997), and Guyer (1997).

For the purposes of the present paper, I am leaving aside the so-called "multicognitive" account which is however discussed by Guyer (2006) together with the precognitive account.

of the faculties is the very subjective condition of cognition, then it seems that every cognizable thing should presuppose this state of mind and hence elicit the very feeling of the free play of the faculties, for every cognizable object seems to satisfy the conditions required in order to make a judgment of taste. In this regard, Guyer writes:

The obvious —and often recognized —problem with the precognitive approach is that on this approach it may seem as if *everything* ought to be beautiful, or at least capable of being found beautiful. That is, if our feeling of beauty in a given manifold is a response to the fact that it satisfies a condition that must be satisfied in every case of cognition, even if it does not satisfy *all* of the conditions that must be satisfied for actual cognition, then why don't we experience beauty in every case of cognition? (Guyer 2006, p. 172)

Here Guyer seems to distinguish two possible claims of pan-aestheticism deriving from precognitive accounts:

1) “Everything ought to be beautiful”. According to precognitive accounts, the condition of judgments of taste is a condition that must be satisfied in order to have any cognition whatsoever, that is, every case of cognition always satisfies the condition of judgments of taste; it follows that every cognizable object should elicit the very feeling of the free play of the faculties and hence be beautiful; but since there are objects—in fact, the majority of them —that we perceive as ordinary, then it is pretty counter-intuitive to claim that everything is beautiful. In fact, this formulation of pan-aestheticism claims more exactly that all objects *ought* to be found beautiful, as to make manifest that we do not actually perceive all objects as beautiful, which is however precisely what seems apparently inexplicable within a precognitive approach to the free play of the faculties.

2) “Everything [is] at least capable of being found beautiful”. Guyer does not specify how such a formulation of pan-aestheticism derives from precognitive accounts, but from a precognitive point of view one could argue, that the reason why we don't experience beauty in every case of cognition is for instance that the actual application of a concept to the manifold synthesized by the imagination modifies the perception of the object, which otherwise would have elicited pleasure and been considered beautiful; this does not however prevent one from claiming that Kant's account implies that all objects are *potentially* beautiful, that is, they can all be found beautiful.

This slightly different formulation of the problem accounts more effectively for the fact that one does not *actually* find all objects beautiful. In this regard, precognitive accounts should “explain why we are pleased, indeed especially pleased, with a state of mind that falls short of satisfying all of the conditions for ordinary cognition” (Guyer 2006, p. 165), which is precisely what according to Guyer they fail to do. In other words, if one accepts the precognitive account then one has to clarify why some objects *actually* elicit the feeling of the free play of the faculties while other objects fail to satisfy this potentiality. Rather than exposing Kant to a counter-intuitive conclusion, this second formulation of pan-aestheticism represents a genuine challenge to his account of taste.

III.

A first way to confront Kant's eventual commitment to pan-aestheticism is to solve this problem upstream, by rejecting the main premise of the precognitive account, that is the very "precognitive" idea that the aesthetic response depends on a cognitive state of mind which occurs prior to and independently from the application of determinate empirical concepts. In so doing it revisits the role of concepts within the aesthetic judging and hence the relation between the free play of the faculties and cognition. This is a central issue within Kant's account of taste since the reader of the third *Critique* cannot but notice Kant's insistence on the supposed non-conceptuality of judgments of taste. In this regard, it has been noted that there are philosophical difficulties attached to it, namely judgments of taste, like any kind of judgments about objects, should involve the identification of the object by means of determinate empirical concepts. If it were so, then Kant's non-conceptuality claim regarding judgments of taste should be revisited together with the precognitive assumption regarding the free play of the faculties.

This line of argument is clearly exposed by Guyer (2006). After Guyer's initial rejection of the precognitive approach as subjected to pan-aestheticism, he goes on to criticize it more seriously as contrasting with the main premises of Kant's account of cognition, according to which there cannot be any conscious representation of an object without the application of some determinate empirical concept to the manifold of intuition presented by the imagination to the understanding.¹⁰ Thus, according to Guyer, judgments of taste cannot but presuppose ordinary empirical concepts. Accordingly, the harmony of the faculties cannot be understood as simply involving the absence of ordinary determinate concepts of objects, as the precognitive approach suggests. As a result, Guyer proposes a new approach to the free play of the faculties, namely the so-called "metacognitive" account. (Guyer, 2006)

On Guyer's metacognitive account, the harmonious play of the faculties required as a condition of judgments of taste and the aesthetic experience of beauty is understood *in primis* as a state of mind in which the manifold of intuition, synthesized by the imagination and thus presented to the understanding, is recognized as satisfying the rule dictated by the corresponding concept on which both the synthesis of the imagination and the identification of the object depend; this is to say that the beautiful object is first of all a cognized object and this, according to Guyer, cannot be otherwise. In addition to this fundamental requirement, the metacognitive account explains the free play of the faculties as a state of mind in which it is felt that the requirement for unity demanded by the

¹⁰ In so claiming, Guyer excludes the possibility of a manifold unified by the sole pure concepts, for he denies that the categories alone are able to be applied to the sensible manifold independently from the mutual application of an empirical concept, since according to him, categories are to be understood as merely the forms of determinate concepts and hence can be applied to intuition only through determinate empirical concept. It is not possible to discuss this issue within the bounds of this article, as it would require a direct consideration of Kant's theory of cognition, as well as the debate on non-conceptualism. For the purposes of this contribution I refer in particular to Vanzo (2012) and Heidemann (2017).

understanding is not only fulfilled, but satisfied in a way that goes *beyond* what is normally required for the ordinary cognition of the object.¹¹ Guyer then concludes :

A beautiful object can always be recognized as an object of some determinate kind, but our experience of it always has even more unity and coherence than is required for it to be a member of that kind, or has a kind of unity and coherence that is not merely a necessary condition for our classification of it. (Guyer 2006, p. 183)

As to how his metacognitive account provides a solution to the question of pan-aestheticism, Guyer seems at least to presuppose that it does so successfully:

We could not make such judgments, although we surely do, unless our aesthetic judgments were compatible with our ordinary classificatory judgments, and gave expression to the way in which some objects but not others occasion a free play of imagination and understanding that goes beyond the relation between them that is required for ordinary cognition. (Guyer 2006, p. 183)

By means of the explanation of the free play of the faculties as an extra-ordinary fulfillment of the very same conditions of cognition, thus included the application of empirical concepts, Guyer seems to argue that the harmony of the faculties cannot then to be regarded as a state of mind required by any act of cognition. Rather, it occurs in determinate cases, when, according to Guyer, the kind of unity of the object goes beyond the very requirement for unity demanded by the understanding and fulfilled by means of concepts. In other words, from the contingent occurrence of the free play as an extra-ordinary state of mind, it does not derive that everything can be found beautiful.

It is right to remark upon Kant's no-concept requirement not being taken as claiming that judgments of taste do not involve concepts at all. However, such a remark need to be further articulated. First of all, it must be noted that Guyer considers as paradigmatic examples of judgments of taste exclusively those employing concepts of the subjects of predication, as for instance the famous example: "This rose is beautiful". This assumption is meaningful because Guyer does not seem to recognize the judgment "*This* is beautiful" as a good example of judgment of taste; however, Kant does not provide any example of a judgment of taste having this form, any more than he provides reasons for excluding this kind of formulation. This sheds light on the fact that with regard to the subjects of judgments of taste, one can always recognize the object as, for instance, a flower and hence to apply to the object at issue a determinate empirical concept. However, by definition, the

¹¹ Rachel Zuckert seems to provide a similar account of the beautiful object by claiming that "the representation of the object as an individualized, unified whole transcends discursive conceptual cognition." (Zuckert 2007, p. 230) For her part, Stephanie Adair claims that the "activity of pure aesthetic judgment [...] is stimulated by the intuitional excess that was apprehended in the givens of the object, but not recognized in its concept." (Adair 2019, p. 288)

beautiful does not really require to be recognized as an instantiation of a certain kind, that is to be subsumed under a concept, in order to be found beautiful. In this regard, Kant clearly claims that judgments of taste are not *grounded* on concepts and hence that pleasure in the beautiful is not *determined* by concepts; this means that the ascription of beauty to an object on the basis of the feeling of pleasure which it occasions, is not due to the concept of the object. It must be then emphasized that this eventual recognition of the beautiful object under a determinate empirical concept is possible as long as the concept is not intended as determining ground of the pleasure. In turn, this is possible because in judgments of taste concepts that are actually applied to the object do not function “as” concepts, as Zuckert suggests. In other words, concepts are not employed so as to determine and classify the object, but rather in an “indicating” way which makes any eventual application irrelevant: in aesthetic experience concepts could be well taken as being used for the indication of the individual beautiful object without being responsible for its unification as a *beautiful* object. (Zuckert 2007, pp. 199-201)¹² The way in which concepts are employed matters: Kant’s account of judgments of taste rules out the ordinary use of concepts either as rules for the imaginative synthesis, hence for the unification of the manifold of intuition in the representation of a unified object, or as marks grounding the ascription of a concept to the subject of predication.

If it is necessary to account for “some use” of concepts within the aesthetic judging, then the questions at stake are how the free play of the faculties must be understood and whether the precognitive account must be rejected, as Guyer suggests. With regard to the metacognitive account, the claim that the free play of the faculties takes place beyond ordinary cognition of the object does not fully explain how it is supposed to be possible in the first place and how it can justify the claims of taste.¹³ But more seriously, it does not seem to provide a strikingly consistent explanation of Kant’s descriptions of the free play of faculties. This seems to be the case *in primis* with regard to Kant’s statement on the harmonious relation of the faculties as satisfying the conditions for a “cognition in general”. How is the free play of the faculties to be understood with regard to the satisfaction of the conditions of a cognition in general, as opposed to determinate cognition if, again, the conditions for the cognition of the beautiful object are actually fulfilled, as Guyer seems to claim? According to Guyer, the subject feels that the form of the object

¹² Guyer holds a similar view in his *Kant and the Claims of Taste*: “The use of the referring expression ‘this rose’ may serve to pick out the object of attention but does not provide the basis for calling it beautiful.” (Guyer 1997, pp. 132) For her part, Dorit Barchana-Lorand claims: “Yet even Kant’s famous example of a flower as an object of beauty falls short from complying with the conditions he himself sets for beauty. Once we regard an object as a “rose” we evaluate it in relation to an end.” (Barchana-Lorand 2002, p. 323)

¹³ When addressing the problem of reconciliation in his *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, Guyer is skeptical with regard to the explicative force of an metacognitive reading of the free play of the faculties: “it might be suggested that what Kant’s account of aesthetic response describes is actually a sense of coherence in an object which goes beyond the unities imposed by whatever concepts apply to it, rather than one which occurs without the application of any concepts at all. But this proposal too would represent a break with the first *Critique*’s strict association of unity of consciousness with the application of concepts to objects.” (Guyer 1997, p. 87)

fulfills the conditions of cognition more than it is required for that ordinary cognition itself. But Kant's descriptions of what the fulfillment of the conditions of cognition in general by means of the state of mind of the free play of the faculties could mean does not seem to presuppose any *actual* fulfillment of cognition whatsoever, not even in an additional way. Kant seems rather to suggest the indeterminacy of the fulfillment of such conditions, which prevents the object from being actually determined.

Moreover, it is unclear to what extent the metacognitive account would be able to explain the very freedom of the imagination: "since the freedom of the imagination consists precisely in the fact that it schematizes without a concept" (KU, AA 05:287/167), then if a concept is needed to be applied to the manifold of intuition constituting the form of the object, the imagination cannot but be taken as schematizing *according to* concepts rather than independently of them. Here again, the problem is that of grasping how this "without concepts" is to be taken. In this regard, Guyer would argue that the imagination can still be consistently conceived as free from concepts since the form apprehended is not adequately unifiable by the concepts of the understanding and rather goes "beyond" what would be required for this mere conceptual unification. However, my suggestion is that this can be intended as implying either the absence of empirical determinate concepts or the irrelevance of an eventual application of empirical concepts with regard to the imaginative synthesis in a basically precognitive sense. Both the approaches support the idea that no concept at all can guide, at least totally, the imaginative activity and hence concur to the unification of the form of the object, for which the imagination alone is to be considered responsible.

Ultimately, the precognitive idea seems though to be more adequate, if one considers the explicative role played by the free play of the faculties within Kant's theory of the reflecting power of judgment and in particular of judgments of taste as merely reflecting judgments. In a nutshell, as explicated in the first section, the free play of the faculties cannot be considered as meta- or extra-cognitive, because such understanding would not be able to account for the merely reflecting status of judgments of taste. The reflecting power of judgment, "which has no concept ready for the given intuition" (EEKU, AA 20:223-4 / 26), in order to form empirical cognition requires an agreement between the faculties such as to satisfy independently of concepts the conditions for a cognition in general. In the aesthetic case, such agreement is explicitly felt by means of a feeling of pleasure because the form presented by the imagination it is found by the reflecting power of judgment as fitting the requirements for unity and lawfulness of the understanding for the possibility of cognition. In the Deduction, Kant has, moreover, explicitly regarded the state of mind of the free play of the faculties as the very subjective condition of the power of judgment in general which implies the idea that all judgments presuppose such an agreement; it is precisely in virtue of this presupposition that judgments of taste, albeit aesthetic, claim to be valid for everyone. As a result of these considerations, it seems more appropriate to understand the free play of the faculties in a "precognitive" sense rather than in the metacognitive way suggested in this section. Thus, the metacognitive solution of pan-

aestheticism is excluded and the question of whether in Kant's account everything can be beautiful is still at stake.

IV.

An alternative way to deal with pan-aestheticism consists in taking seriously Kant's description of the free play of the faculties provided by precognitive accounts and hence in claiming that indeed every cognizable object elicits the very pleasure determining judgments of taste. In this way, such an approach fully accepts the challenge of explaining why every object does not actually satisfy the potentiality to be found beautiful. A famous and controversial passage from the published Introduction is often cited in support of this approach:

To be sure, we no longer detect any noticeable pleasure in the comprehensibility of nature and the unity of its division into genera and species, by means of which alone empirical concepts are possible through which we cognize it in its particular laws; but it must certainly have been there in its time, and only because the most common experience would not be possible without it has it gradually become mixed up with mere cognition and is no longer specially noticed. (KU, AA 05:187 / 74)

According to this view, having got used to this feeling, we no longer perceive it, but we can become aware of it, that is, we can explicitly feel it only under the special circumstance of a pure aesthetic experience: the pleasure of the free play of the faculties makes us attentive to a fundamental feeling of pleasure which accompanies every act of reflective judgment.¹⁴ Indeed, Kant defines the pleasure of the free play of the faculties as a pleasure "of mere reflection" (KU, AA 05:292 / 172) which is as such "inevitably shared by all of our reflections (i.e., we feel it whenever we perform reflective judgments)." (Barchana-Lorand 2002, p. 317) By referring to the pleasure of the beautiful as a pleasure of reflection Kant appears to support the precognitive reading of the free play of the faculties together with the implication of pan-aestheticism:

Without having any purpose or fundamental principle for a guide, this pleasure accompanies the common apprehension of an object by the imagination, as a faculty of intuition, in relation to the understanding, as a faculty of concepts, by means of a procedure of the power of judgment, which it must also exercise for the sake of the most common experience: only in the latter case it is compelled to do so for the sake of an empirical objective concept, while in the former case (in the aesthetic judging) it is merely for the sake of perceiving the suitability of the representation for the harmonious (subjectively purposive) occupation of

¹⁴ Guyer points out that in this passage Kant may not be referring to the characteristic pleasure of judgments of taste but rather to a different kind of pleasure probably involved in the cognitive application of the reflecting power of judgment, see Guyer 2006, p. 173.

both cognitive faculties in their freedom, i.e., to sense the representational state with pleasure. (KU, AA 05:292 / 172)

Thus, such fundamental pleasure is to be regarded as an essential, non-cognitive component of reflecting judging, which, as precognitive accounts state, “precedes any cognition of the object and merely lays out the conditions for cognition”. (Barchana-Lorand, 2002, p. 316) Within this framework, an object is found beautiful, that is, the free play of the faculties is explicitly felt and hence grounds a judgment of taste exclusively under particular conditions rather than in every case of empirical cognition, namely if one contemplates an object with disinterested pleasure.¹⁵

Another way to articulate this point is to appeal to the capacity of abstraction and to argue that, in Kant’s account, the aesthetic appreciation is possible as distinct from the actual production of empirical cognition by means of the mere operation of reflection as long as it would be possible to abstract from the actual application of a determinate concept, so as to contemplate the mere form of the object. (Budd 2001) According to this view it seems then that the very characteristic mark of the free play of the faculties with regard to the relation of the faculties required for empirical cognition consists in the different role played by concepts within the two acts of judging. If the difference between cognitive judgments and judgments of taste depends exclusively on the guiding role played by concepts with regard to the imaginative synthesis (Longuenesse 2006, p. 205), and if one could any time abstract from cognition of the object, then everything cannot but be considered as potentially beautiful.

Kant’s text seems to support the idea according to which it is always possible to abstract from the conceptual determination of the object and hence to actually feel the pleasure it elicits. Kant seems to address the issue when, with respect to the distinction between free and adherent beauty, he makes the famous example of the botanist and claims:

A judgment of taste in regard to an object with a determinate internal end would thus be pure only if the person making the judgment either had no concept of this end or abstracted from it in his judgment. (KU, AA 05:230-1 / 114-5)

Even though Kant seems to be supportive of the idea that everything can be beautiful and that we may actually find something beautiful as long as we abstract from the conceptual determination of the object, Kant’s account is not clear as to what extent it is possible to abstract from a cognitive point of view in order to judge the object aesthetically according to the requirements of taste. For instance, Kant clearly denies such a possibility with regard to some cases of adherent beauty, i.e., churches, horses, human beings. According to Kant, such things cannot but be judged according to the concept of their end and hence no

¹⁵ “Why is it that we do not consider every object of sense to be beautiful, is fully resolved in the first moment of the “Analytic of Taste”. [...] Regarding the first moment’s claim for disinterestedness, this should be taken not as merely a quality of the aesthetic judgment but as the reason for it. *When we judge something to be beautiful we do so because we are disinterested with it.*” (Barchana-Lorand 2002, p. 322)

abstraction from this concept would be permitted. Ultimately, it seems that Kant's unclarity with regard to this issue cannot be avoided:

His invocation of a lawful faculty (the productive imagination), which however is not governed by laws, inherently precludes an explanation of the circumstances and manner of performance of that faculty. [...] no way is forthcoming of specifying in some detail the reasons for which conformity triggering disinterested pleasure arises (when it does). (Meerbote 1982, p. 85)

Such explanations of why we do not actually perceive the feeling of the free play of the faculties with regard to every object seems to imply Kant's commitment to a view which explains the possibility of beauty by means of a peculiar aesthetic attitude that the subject must adopt in order to perceive beauty, a view which however Kant does not explicitly submit. (Guyer 2006, p. 172) In this regard, a different kind of objection to the problem of Kant's eventual commitment to pan-aestheticism is the one which appeals to the beautiful object. In fact, it may be that some but not all objects can elicit the free play of the faculties and hence be beautiful, because only some but not all object present a form which is felt to fulfill the intellectual requirements for unity and coherence without the application of any concept. This objection can be seen as being provided by Kant's argument in favour of the right to presuppose a common sense as the subjective principle of taste (§21), where the free play of the faculties receives an explanation in terms of the optimal proportion of the disposition of the representative faculties with regard to cognition in general. According to Kant, the "disposition of the cognitive powers has a different proportion depending on the difference of the objects that are given" (KU, AA05:238 / 123). However, it is not clear how this reference to the optimal proportion is to be taken. In fact, Kant holds, for instance, that the pleasure in the beautiful

must necessarily rest on the same conditions in everyone, since they are subjective conditions of the possibility of a cognition in general, and the proportion of these cognitive faculties that is required for taste is also requisite for the common and healthy understanding that one may presuppose in everyone. (KU, AA 05:292-3 / 172-3)

This passage suggests that ultimately the same proportion seems to be required by both cognition and taste. Hence, the remark upon the optimal proportion, instead of providing an argument against pan-aestheticism, would rather support Kant's implicit commitment to it. Besides, what Kant defines with regard to the beautiful object is only its suitability to elicit the free play of the faculties in the subject, in virtue of which its form is judged as purposive. As to how the form of the object should present itself in order to be found beautiful, it remains unclear. As a result, it is difficult to conceive how the reference to the form of the object can alone imply some constraint on the determination of an object as beautiful. In fact, the mere representation of the form can only consist in the elements of the manifold of intuition apprehended by the imagination and capable of being unified by

the understanding: it will then present the spatial and temporal structure of the object intuited and combined by the imagination, such as to be unifiable by the understanding. This explanation does not provide any determination of the beautiful form which would consist just in those elements — the ones apprehended by the imagination and organized in a way suitable for the requirement for unifiability demanded by the understanding — which all cognizable objects have.¹⁶ It is then hard to determine how the solution could lie in the object itself of taste, since it is not clear to what extent the beautiful object contributes to Kant’s critique of taste in the first place.¹⁷

To conclude, this second way of dealing with pan-aestheticism accepts Kant’s commitment to the view that everything can be beautiful as a consequence of a precognitive interpretation of the free play of the faculties, thus focusing on the explanation of why one does not perceive everything as beautiful. Despite Kant’s lack of clarity with regard to this issue, which would alone represent a good argument to be skeptical towards this conclusion, there is a more fundamental difficulty attached to this reading, namely the very derivation of pan-aestheticism from a precognitive approach to the free play of the faculties. The apparent necessity of such an implication derives, as I will argue, from an unidirectional explanation of the notion of the free play of the faculties. In fact, on the one hand the possibility of the free lawfulness of the imagination should be indeed explained by referring to Kant’s theory the reflecting power of judgment in general as involved in the formation of empirical cognition, however, on the other hand, it is essential to consider the free harmony of the faculties as the very determining ground of judgments of taste *qua* aesthetic judgments, hence in its very aesthetic specificity.¹⁸ By

¹⁶ Ultimately, “the concept of proportion only expresses the requirement that, for both knowledge and aesthetic response, a manifold must be seen as a unity.” (Guyer 1997, p. 286)

The first reaction to this result is to conclude that Kant fails to explain “in virtue of what character of a form the imagination and understanding, in engendering a representation of it, engage in the free harmonious play that is indicative of finding something beautiful.” (Budd 2001, p. 256) In this regard, Malcom Budd further comments: “There is a sense in which this question cannot be answered. For it is clear that Kant believes that it is impossible for there to be a formula or principle the application of which to objects would identify all and only beautiful forms. Accordingly, the question cannot be answered by a specification of the intrinsic nature of beautiful forms.” (Budd 2001, p. 256) However, this is not to be considered as a gap within his account of taste, which does not intend to provide a theory of taste, but rather a transcendental critique of it. See for instance KU, AA 05:170 / 57-58 and KU, AA 05:286 / 166.

¹⁷ See Barchana-Lorand’s clear articulation of this issue (Barchana-Lorand 2002).

¹⁸ Keren Gorodeisky distinguishes an “extra-aesthetic” approach to the free play of the faculties and an “aesthetic” one. (Gorodeisky 2011) She holds that even though a proper explanation of the free play of the faculties has to give reasons both for its distinctive aesthetic nature and its relation to cognition, a proper account of the free harmony of the faculties should prefer the “aesthetic” explanation, which “explains why aesthetic judgement, but not cognitive judgement, is based on a free agreement of the faculties in terms of what is special about beauty, that is, in distinctively aesthetic terms. In contrast, an extra-aesthetic approach uses primarily non-aesthetic terms to reconstruct the free mental activity that Kant ascribes to judgements of taste. Such an approach does not explain what it is in beautiful objects as beautiful that calls for a free agreement of the faculties.” (Gorodeisky 2011) Even though I consider the author’s concern as illuminating, I regard these two approaches as integrable with each other rather than as exclusive; in other words, the free

focusing exclusively on Kant's justification of the claims of taste, which shows the conformity of the free play of the faculties with the conditions of a cognition in general, the aesthetic specificity of the free play of the faculties cannot but take second place to the apparent urgency of explaining why everything is not actually perceived as aesthetically pleasing; an issue which remains highly controversial due to Kant's lack of clarity, as this section tried to make clear. As a result, the precognitive account should be combined with a specific comprehension of what is then aesthetically peculiar about the free play of the faculties. I argue that without raising this point, the problem of pan-aestheticism would remain partially unclarified. Moreover, by means of a direct investigation into the aesthetic specificity of the free play of the faculties, the crucial role played by Kant's reference to the beautiful object will receive a decisive clarification.

V.

The aim of this last section is to show that there is a third way in which the problem of pan-aestheticism can be faced, and ultimately that it is the most appropriate one. On the one hand, this alternative view maintains the precognitive assumption regarding the free play of the faculties and, on the other hand, it claims that the latter does not lend itself to pan-aestheticism. In this regard, it considers the view according to which everything can be beautiful as a conclusion resulting from a sole consideration of the cognitive aspect of the free harmony of the faculties, which has in fact both a cognitive and an aesthetic aspect. (Gorodeisky 2011, p. 417) The source of confusion which leads to the conclusion of Kant's commitment to pan-aestheticism consists in misunderstanding the distinction Kant makes between the *logical* reflecting power of judgment, responsible for the formation of empirical concepts, and the *aesthetic* reflecting power of judgment, that is, taste, on the other hand. (Makkreel 2006, pp. 224-5; Gorodeisky 2011, p. 419) In particular, the latter distinction within Kant's discussion of the reflecting power of judgment should provide a hint on how to grasp the aesthetic peculiarity of the free play of the faculties, just as it had a decisive role in supporting the precognitive approach. In this regard, I argue that the free play of the faculties is a state of mind to be considered as different in kind from the relation of the faculties which is required for cognition, although it satisfies its subjective conditions.

In a nutshell, the very specificity of the free play of the faculties consists in the freedom of the imagination. Neither determining judging nor the logical kind of reflecting judging involves an activity of the imagination, which, despite its lawfulness, can be described as free. Even though the logical reflecting power of judgment does not presuppose any concept of the object so that the synthesizing activity of the imagination cannot be thought of as being directly guided by conceptual rules, it still cannot be considered as involving the free harmonious relation of the faculties. As Ginsborg points out, the formation of a concept always corresponds to its first application (Ginsborg 1997, pp. 69-70), so that

play of the faculties still requires an extra-aesthetic reading in order to grasp its exemplarity with regard to the condition required by the logical reflecting power of judgment for the possibility of empirical cognition.

within the problematic framework of the formation of empirical concepts for which the reflecting power of judgment is responsible 1) the imagination cannot be conceived as genuinely free from concepts; 2) the imagination is not in agreement with the intellectual conditions for the exhibition of a concept in general, but rather its synthesizing activity satisfies the conditions required for the very application of a determinate concept. In this regard, the free harmony of imagination and understanding is not however to be intended exclusively as due to the absence of conceptual determination, or in other words, the absence of conceptual determination must be seen as aesthetically peculiar. In this last section, I try to articulate this claim and to show that there are compelling reasons supporting the distinction of the free play of the faculties from the ordinary agreement of imagination and understanding involved in the formation of empirical cognition.

First of all, it should be considered that despite Kant's insistence on the conformity of the free play of the faculties with the subjective condition of cognition so as to justify the claims of taste, he is not willing to reduce the aesthetic peculiarity of judgments of taste to cognition and its requirements.¹⁹ In fact, not only do judgments of taste fail to produce any cognitive determination of the object, but more fundamentally they are not aimed at cognition at all in the first place.²⁰ Essentially, this remark supports the consideration of the free play of the faculties as an agreement of imagination and understanding which is different in kind from the one required by the reflecting power of judgment for the purpose of cognition. In this regard, Fiona Hughes proposes to distinguish between the "cooperation" of the faculties and their "harmony" as respectively involved in cognitive judgments and in judgments of taste. In particular, she meaningfully holds that: "The harmony such judgments display is a special case of the cooperation of the faculties necessary for any cognition." (Hughes 2007, pp. 263-264) In this way, it seems possible to explain both the familiarity and the specificity of the free play of the faculties with regard to the agreement of imagination and understanding required for the possibility of empirical cognition. Moreover, by distinguishing in this way between the two states of mind it is possible, according to Hughes, to argue that Kant's definition of the free harmony of the faculties as fulfilling the subjective condition of cognition is necessary not only to provide a ground for the claims of taste, but also ultimately to highlight the very requirements of the logical reflecting power of judgment. In other words, the harmony of the faculties could count as exemplary for the initial condition of possibility of cognition, which can be only shown in judgments of taste, since in cognitive judgments the cognition-oriented cooperation of the faculties is masked by the actual fulfillment of the cognitive aim. (Hughes 2007, p. 262)

¹⁹ Kant's concern in preserving the specificity of taste can be traced in the establishing of the very autonomy of the feeling of pleasure and displeasure within the faculties of mind. See for instance EEKU, AA 20:206 / 11 (Gorodeisky 2011 and 2019).

²⁰ This remark not only suggests that there is an aesthetic specificity of judgments of taste which needs to be emphasized, but also eventually avoids a common interpretation of judgments of taste as reflecting judgments which merely fail to produce cognition (*cf.* Longuenesse 1998, p. 164).

The free play of the faculties can be then effectively taken as shedding light on the non-aesthetic agreement of the faculties necessary for the reflecting power of judgment. As an advantage, this reading may provide a further interpretation of Kant's intriguing suggestion of a pleasure which used to be felt in the comprehensibility of nature in its empirical order, which "requires a study to make us attentive to the purposiveness of nature for our understanding in our judging of it." (KU, AA 05:187 / 74) Hence, this could actually explain to what extent the aesthetic experience of the beautiful counts as "an experience in which the basic pleasure of reflection is revealed" (Barchana-Lorand 2002, p. 319), namely on the condition that such a "revelation" depends on the contingent occurrence of a state of mind which merely exemplifies the functioning of the representative faculties within the act of sole reflection as carried out by the logical reflecting power of judgment.

As it is known, unlike the case of the determining power of judgment, the activity of the reflecting power of judgment does not presuppose concepts. In this regard, Kant states that the condition for the comprehension of the form apprehended by the imagination under a concept must be individuated by the reflecting power of judgment by means of reflection "on a rule concerning a perception" (EEKU, AA 20:220 / 23).²¹ The state of mind requisite for such a process is that of a relation between the faculties as required by the power of judgment in general. This involves a comparison between the actual relation of the faculties in the given perception with the one required for the effective exhibition of a concept. Within this framework,

If, then, the form of a given object in empirical intuition is so constituted that the *apprehension* of its manifold in the imagination agrees with the *presentation* of a concept of the understanding (though which concept be undetermined), then in the mere reflection understanding and imagination mutually agree for the advancement of their business, and the object will be perceived as purposive merely for the power of judgment, hence the purposiveness itself will be considered as merely subjective; for which, further, no determinate concept of the object at all is required nor is one thereby generated, and the judgment itself is not a cognitive judgment. –Such a judgment is called an *aesthetic judgment of reflection*. (EEKU, AA 20:220-1 / 23)²²

²¹ According to Ginsborg's account, since the rule for the imaginative synthesis is normally due to concepts, in the case of their formation it could be given by the normative exemplary activity of the imagination itself, which takes its synthesizing operation to be as it ought to be, i.e. as if it were due to a determinate rule. (Ginsborg 1997)

²² Kant makes the same point in the published Introduction, see KU, AA 05:190 / 76. In this framework, I disagree with Barchana-Lorand's interpretation of Kant's line of argument here. She holds that "the 'if' here denotes the logical condition, and not a contingency of this pleasure's occurrence." (Barchana-Lorand 2002, p. 320) Such an argument is meant to prove that "the feeling of pleasure mentioned above is always present in the operation of reflective judgment." (*Ivi.*) By contrast, I argue that Kant here is precisely specifying a peculiar condition for the phenomenon of the free play of the faculties, whose occurrence is essentially contingent. Hence, a thesis such as that of pan-aestheticism cannot be derived from the contingency of the occurrence of the free play of the faculties.

It seems that the key to grasp the very functioning of the reflecting power of judgment with regard to the production of empirical concepts is to consider the case of merely reflecting judgments which, as Hughes points out, makes explicit what the mere state of mind of sole reflection on a given form consists of. The case of aesthetic judgments of reflection is then in this sense paradigmatic. In this regard, Kant holds moreover, that judgments of taste as merely reflecting judgments are “grounded *only* on the subjective formal condition of a judgment in general”, which is “the faculty for judging itself”. (KU, AA 05:287 / 167 my emphasis) Unlike cognitive judgments, only judgments of taste are *solely* grounded on a mere act of judging:

since no concept of the object is here the ground of the judgment, it [the agreement of the faculties] can consist only in the subsumption of the imagination itself (in the case of a representation by means of which an object is given) under the condition that the understanding in general advance from intuitions to concepts. [...] taste, as a subjective power of judgment, contains a principle of subsumption, not of intuitions under *concepts*, but of the *faculty* of intuitions or presentations (i.e., of the imagination) under the *faculty* of concepts (i.e., the understanding), insofar as the former *in its freedom* is in harmony with the latter *in its lawfulness*. (KU, AA 05:287 / 167-8)

While cognitive judgments are the result of a determinate agreement between the faculties as due to a determinate act of subsumption of intuitions under concepts as performed by the power of judgment, the free harmony of the faculties achieves the conformity with the subjective conditions of cognition, hence “the well-proportioned disposition that we require for all cognition” (KU, AA 05:219 / 104) as a result of a general and hence undetermined subsumption of the faculties themselves.

Ultimately, the distinction between the free play of the faculties and the ordinary cooperation required for the possibility of empirical cognition clarifies to what extent Kant’s reference to the beautiful object contributes to the issue of pan-aestheticism. In this regard, the previous section pointed out that 1) the disposition of the faculties depends on the given object; 2) the free play of the faculties sets imagination and understanding in an optimal disposition with regard to cognition in general, which can only be felt; 3) however, the analysis of the notion of the optimal disposition concluded that it is the same proportion which is required by both cognition and taste. On the basis of the previous considerations, it is possible now to see how this may be possible, namely by considering the two agreements of the faculties, hence the proportions of their disposition, as a result of two different acts of judging. In the free play, the representative faculties are set in the very same proportion in which they are supposed to be in order for empirical cognition to be possible, hence for the actual application of an empirical concept, which ultimately provides the manifold of intuition with the kind of unity required for cognizing the object. In the case of the beautiful, however, the act of judging occasioned by the form of the

object is merely reflecting, hence the result is a judgment of taste because reflection on that particular form apprehended by the imagination finds this latter as already accomplishing the intellectual requirements for unity and lawfulness independently of concepts. As a result, it is felt with pleasure and the object judged as purposive with respect to the reflecting power of judgment.²³

It is right then to claim that since the disposition of the faculties depends on the objects given to us in intuition, then exclusively some but not all objects can elicit the feeling of pleasure due to the free play of the faculties. However, as already pointed out, one should not expect from Kant's account of taste more than this sole remark, since it leaves undetermined in virtue of which properties an object is to be judged as beautiful. It can only be presumed that the beautiful form should be such as to make it particularly pleasant for the understanding to subsume the manifold apprehended by the imagination under concepts in general, for it provides by itself some kind of unity which would be normally guaranteed by the application of a concept.²⁴ Thus, the free harmony of the faculties can be finally described as consisting precisely in "the facilitated play of both powers of the mind [...] enlivened through mutual agreement" (KU, AA 05:219 / 104). Thus, again, the fact that the aesthetic unity is performed without concepts does matter, since the very possibility of being perceived without concepts by means of a disinterested pleasure depends finally on the individual form at issue. In other words, the capacity of the imagination to present a form which is contingently found by the power of judgment to be in agreement with the intellectual requirement of unity without producing any cognition cannot but be determined by the aesthetic specificity of the object.

Conclusion

The claim that everything is potentially beautiful seems to follow from Kant's account of judgments of taste as grounded on the feeling of the free play of the faculties, which in turn seems to be a common condition for both taste and cognition. The strategy to determine whether Kant's account is to be committed to the claim that everything can be beautiful has been that of challenging Kant's need to explain the free and yet harmonious play of the faculties in terms of a state of mind satisfying the subjective condition of cognition. In this regard, the metacognitive attempt to revisit Kant's claim on the non-conceptuality of judgments of taste has been rejected in favour of a precognitive explanation of the free play of the faculties. Finally, even though the free play of the faculties does not presuppose

²³ It should be noted, as Guyer does, that the harmony of the faculties as subjective condition of cognition is not met insofar as a given manifold is merely *unifiable*; rather the subjective condition of cognition is obtained insofar as a given manifold synthesized by the imagination is actually perceived as *unified*, for a manifold to be unifiable is a necessary condition for any mental activity, cognitive or aesthetic whatsoever. (Guyer 1997, p. 76)

²⁴ According to Ralf Meerbote, the condition of the beautiful form is a "structure of the manifolds which make manifolds amenable to subsumption under concepts *überhaupt*." Moreover: "What Kant appears to have in mind are at least the general requirements of orderliness or orderability and lawfulness of elements of any manifolds." (Meerbote 1982, p. 79). See also Budd (2001, p. 258).

any conceptual determination of the object in a precognitive sense, it has been argued that it also does not lend itself to pan-aestheticism. In fact, it has emerged that the free play of the faculties has to be kept distinct from the ordinary cooperation of the faculties required by the reflecting power of judgment for the possibility of empirical cognition. In particular, the activity of the imagination cannot be considered as free within any act of the power of judgment, either determining or reflecting, which is aimed at cognition. Moreover, Kant's argument explicitly shows that the beautiful object contributes crucially to the solution of the problem of pan-aestheticism, so that it can be concluded that the only circumstances under which the pleasure of the free play of the faculties can be elicited are those determined by the perceived object, even though the latter cannot be conceptually determined. Thus, pan-aestheticism cannot follow from Kant's account of judgments of taste. Even though it could be accepted that everything is potentially beautiful by explaining why everything is not actually felt as such, this would not represent a consistent conclusion to be drawn from Kant's account of judgments of taste, for the very freedom of the imagination is not involved in cognition and hence does not occur every time an object is cognized.

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Schematism and Free Play: The Imagination's Formal Power as a Unifying Feature in Kant's Doctrine of the Faculties

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Abstract

The role of the imagination within Kant's Critical framework remains an issue for any attempt to unify the three *Critiques* through the Doctrine of the Faculties. This work provides a reading of the imagination that serves to unify the imagination through its formal capacity, or ability to recognize harmony and produce the necessary lawfulness that grounds the possibility of judgment. The argument of this work exists in 2 parts. 1) The imagination's formal ability is present, yet concealed, as early as the Schematism in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and reaches its fullest exposition in instances of harmonious free play in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. 2) This formal capacity is key to not only demonstrating the imagination as an original, unified, and independent faculty across Kant's Critical framework, but also serves as grounds for the purposiveness of nature – a key aspect of Kantian aesthetics.

Key words

Imagination, Purposiveness, Reflective Judgment, Schematism, Harmonious Free Play

I. Introduction

The role of the imagination within Kant's Critical framework and its value as a faculty alongside the understanding and reason has remained an open question in not only Kantian scholarship but even within Kant's own works. Despite the contentious status of the

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imagination, there are several features of the imagination that serve as a ground for any investigation into this mysterious aspect of Kant's transcendental project. First, the imagination is most immediately recognized in its role in the synthesis of sense data with the concepts of the understanding. That is, Kant clearly intended the imagination to bear a close relationship with the faculty of the understanding. Second, the imagination retains a certain connection to sensibility, which is seen not only in its ability to prepare sense material for conceptual application but also its role in aesthetic judgment, which is primarily sensible as a felt reaction to beauty and the sublime. Finally, as demonstrated in Kant's treatment of aesthetic and teleological judgments, there is a connection between the imagination and reason. What these features of the imagination suggest is a broader 'Doctrine of the Faculties' at work within Kant's Critical system – a doctrine that requires an analysis of the relationships between understanding, reason, and the imagination.¹

That Kant intends for this relationship to be neither static nor uniform across the *Critiques* is clear. Each Critique offers a different orientation of the faculties. That is, the relationship between understanding, reason, and the imagination will differ in the uses of pure reason, practical reason, and judgment. Further, it is important to note that while each faculty provides a certain legislative role,² this does not mean that the other faculties cease to be useful, or have no role to play under the direction of another faculty; rather, each faculty maintains a particular and irreducible character regardless of its use in pure reason, practical reason, or judgment. To understand Kant's transcendental project is to understand these orientations between the faculties since they and their relation to each other are the sources of our representations. As such, this doctrine provides a way to not only work through each particular Critique, which is a benefit in itself, but it also sheds light on an important unifying thread across all three texts and brings the full value of Kant's project to the foreground.

¹ Here I am using Gilles Deleuze's conception of the 'Doctrine of the Faculties' as a way of unifying Kant's three *Critiques*. Deleuze considers of 2, related, ways that faculties can be understood. 1) There are faculties of mind that relate to relations between representations, object, and subject. Faculties in the 1st sense are the 'faculty of knowledge,' 'faculty of desire,' and 'feeling pleasure and pain.' 2) There are faculties that serve as sources for representations. Respective of the faculties in the 1st sense, these are the understanding, reason, and the imagination. See Deleuze 1984. Unless specifically noted, I will be speaking of faculties in the 2nd sense.

² For the present interest in simplicity, I will set aside the peculiar case of the imagination, which will then serve as focus of this entire work.

With this broad sketch, we can now begin to consider the particular issue of this work, the role of the imagination within Kant's Critical framework. A clear and unified picture of each faculty is key to not only understanding each Critique in an individual sense but developing a unified picture of all three texts as well. Therefore, in this work I intend to demonstrate a connection between the imagination in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and *The Critique of the Power of Judgment* that will serve as a way to dispel the mystery behind this transcendental faculty and provide a more unified picture of the imagination across Kant's Critical philosophy.

In this paper, I will argue that the imagination demonstrates an essential formal capacity, the ability to produce its own forms or lawfulness. Further, this formal capacity is key to provide a unified picture of the imagination that both maintains its status as an independent faculty and maintains its unity as a faculty from the first *Critique* to the third *Critique*. This formal capacity can be seen, albeit in the service of the understanding, in the 'Schematism' section of the *Critique of Pure Reason*; and, this formal capacity can be later more clearly recognized in the imagination's harmonious free play in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Together, I argue, this formal capacity from one text to another provides the key to establishing the imagination as an independent and unified faculty across Kant's Critical philosophy.

II. The First *Critique* Imagination – Transcendental Deduction and Schematism

The imagination emerges in the Transcendental Deduction as a faculty capable of mediating between our sensible capacities and the understanding in the subjective deduction, and as the grounding for the connection between cognition and the unity of apperception in the objective deduction. However, the Deduction focuses on the logical foundations for this process, or on the possibility of a unity between apperception, concepts, and the intuited manifold. What is of particular interest is how this actually occurs in the formation of experience. That is, how it comes to be that a concept can be applied to a representation of an object and taken into the consciousness to form experience. So, while the Deduction establishes the imagination as part of the foundation for this possibility, along with the unity of apperception as grounding the affinity between consciousness and cognition, it is the Schematism that considers the application of the

concepts to actual experience. That is, once Kant has established the necessary lawfulness of nature in terms of the understanding, and grounded its connection in the unified consciousness, the next step was to show how this can be applied to the production of real, objective, experience. Towards this end, we will begin by considering Kant's chapter in the *Critique of Pure Reason* titled, "On the Schematism of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding." While this chapter is included in the first *Critique* as an element of judgment, I find it to be especially useful in further clarifying the power of the imagination and additionally serving as a springboard into the imagination in the third *Critique*.³

Kant expresses the requirement for the unity of intuitions and concepts as, "the concept must contain that which is represented in the object that is to be subsumed under it," but Kant also notes, "pure concepts of the understanding, however, in comparison with empirical (indeed in general sensible) intuitions, are entirely un-homogeneous, and can never be encountered in any intuition" (Kant 2000, A137/B176). Therefore, there must be a 'third thing', to use Kant's words, that guarantees the homogeneity, or fit, between what is intuited by sensibility and the concepts of the understanding. Otherwise, there is no guarantee that the concept contains what is represented by the object sensibly, therefore rendering the concept empty. This third thing, however, must in some sense be, at once, both amenable to the sensible representation *and* the concept or, as Kant says, "**intellectual** on the one hand and **sensible** on the other" (Kant 2000, A138/B177). Considering Kant's description of the imagination in the Deduction, the faculty of the imagination fits too well into these parameters to simply be a coincidence.⁴

Let us first turn to the role of the imagination in the formation of schema. In the Schematism, we see a definition of both the schema and schematism:

pure concepts *a priori*, in addition to the function of the understanding in the category, must also contain *a priori* formal conditions of sensibility (namely of the inner sense) that contain the general condition under which alone the category can be applied to any object. We will call this formal and pure condition of the sensibility, to which the use of the concept of the understanding is restricted, the

³ I share this reading of the schematism chapter with Sarah Gibbons. In *Kant's Theory of Imagination*, she writes, "The Schematism turns our focus away from the nature and role of the categories as forms of unity in judgment to the problem of *how* it is possible to apply them to material that is sensibly intuited." See Gibbons 1994, p. 53.

⁴ To be brief, the imagination in the Deduction serves as the mediating faculty between the sensible world and our concepts. The imagination prepares the sensible manifold for conceptual application, thereby acting as a mediator between our otherwise empty concepts and the otherwise blind arrangement of sensibility.

schema of this concept of the understanding, and we will call the procedure of the understanding with these schemata the **schematism** of the pure understanding (Kant 2000, A139/B178-A140/B179).

Schemata contain the sensible conditions for the application of the concept to the object of representation. Much like Kant's claims in the Subjective Deduction, sensible intuitions need to be shaped into an amenable form for our conceptual apparatus. Here, we are given schemata as the actual features that bridge the gap between represented objects and our concepts. That is, the Schematism moves from the logical processes of the faculties into the actual application of concepts onto objects of experience. Essentially, it is the same process from the Deduction to the Schematism – the formation of cognition; however, this distinction serves to not only clarify the purpose of the Schematism but sheds light on the function of the imagination as well. It is also worth noting here that Kant indicates a procedure, schematism, in which the understanding operates upon a schema of a represented object. The imagination comes into play when Kant specifically names the schema as “always only a product of the imagination” (Kant 2000, A139/B178-A140/B179) That is, like in the A-Deduction, the imagination's activity is once again made clear not simply as a mediating factor between our sensibility and concepts, but as grounding their necessary unity, since the schema, as a product of the imagination, contain the formal conditions for the application of a concept to an object of sense. However, unlike the Deduction, the imagination in the Schematism focuses on the real unity between sensibility and the concepts, or a concept's ability to be actually applied to an object of sense, rather than the necessary conditions grounding their application.⁵ To reiterate the point for emphasis, the schema provided by the imagination are not then a mediating, incomplete image somewhere between sense and concept. Rather, they are the forms of the imagination that condition the unity of sense and concept, making their homogeneity possible. Or, we can understand the form here as that which serves to guarantee the fit between sensible object and concept. In this way, Kant's formulation of schemata provides an early example of what, I argue, the imagination exhibits fully in the third *Critique* –the ability to provide the formal conditions for experience. Certainly, this capacity is limited

⁵ Gibbons also notes this point, claiming that the Schematism represents a ‘reorientation’ of the Deduction towards the objective reality of concept-application. Another possible way to phrase this comes from Eva Schaper's “Kant's Schematism Revisited,” where the emphasis is moved from the connection of the unity of apperception and knowledge to knowledge and the ‘givenness’ of sensible intuitions. See Gibbons 1994 and Schaper 1964

and subsumed in the cases outlined in the Schematism; however, the Schematism lays the groundwork for the workings of the imagination in Kant's later explanation of reflective judgment in the third *Critique*.

There will be more to say on the connection between the imagination's role in the Schematism and its relation to aesthetic judgments later. For now, the importance of the imagination through its role in the Schematism demonstrates its position as an independent faculty within the framework of the first *Critique*. That is, Kant reiterates at the beginning of the Schematism that there is a gap between the application of concepts to sensible objects, a gap that reflects the problem in the Deduction, as that between the grounding of sensibility and thought.⁶ In the Deduction, the imagination's synthetic capacities served to bridge the gap; in the Schematism, the imagination's ability to form schemata to guarantee the relation between concept and sensible object provided a similar connection. Viewed in this way, the Schematism demonstrates an overlooked power of the imagination, a capacity that is veiled by its relation to the understanding in the formation of cognition. However, I argue that this capacity still represents a formal capacity that can be seen with more clarity later in the Critical project. That is, the imagination in the Schematism reveals a form-shaping capacity to sensible experience that reflects its treatment as an independent and unified transcendental faculty that retains its essential functions across the *Critiques*.⁷

Concluding the section with my analysis of the Schematism, I suggested that the Schematism demonstrates the imagination as a form-shaping faculty through its focus on the application of concepts to objects. While Kant does not represent the full power of the faculty of the imagination in any section of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the ground is there for a highly involved faculty that goes beyond reproduction and mere facilitation between sensibility and the understanding. Instead, the imagination is a critical, unifying faculty for the possibility of experience, demonstrated in its grounding of pure

⁶ From the Schematism: "Now pure concepts of the understanding, however, in comparison with empirical (indeed in general sensible) intuitions, are entirely un-homogenous, and can never be encountered in any intuition." See Kant 2000, A137/B176.

⁷ A second benefit that is related to the imagination and its treatment in Kant scholarship is that it indicates an over-emphasis on the B-Edition to the detriment of the A-Edition that dissolves this link between the Deduction and Schematism. The imagination's central role is apparent in both the A-Deduction and both editions of the Schematism. I contend that dissolving this connection risks the adoption of a 'Janus-faced' interpretation of the imagination that strongly divides the imagination between its role in the first and third *Critiques*. We can see this in Rudolph Makkreel's approach to schema and reflective judgment in *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant*. This division ultimately leads to Makkreel's view as a risk of splitting the imagination into two separate faculties, a faculty of schema and another faculty of interpretation. See Makkreel 1990.

apperception with the lawful manifold. Put another way, the imagination as early as the Schematism demonstrates an active, productive capacity in the formation of cognition, rather than simply acting as a reactive facilitator between sense and the understanding. Further, in terms of the real application of concepts to representations, it demonstrates a limited form-shaping capacity, albeit at this early stage in the service of the understanding. This is the extent of the imagination that we can read from the first *Critique*. We will see in the following sections how Kant brings about the full determination of the imagination in the third *Critique*. This complete demonstration will reveal that the imagination serves a formal role in aesthetic judgments.

III: Schematism and the Bridge between Pure Reason and the Power of Judgment

I will now turn to the task of bridging the gap, so to speak, between the imagination as it appears in the Deduction and Schematism, and the imagination in its fullest capacity in the third *Critique*. Since Kant does not directly discuss schematization in the third *Critique*, my claim that this provides a bridge between the two texts requires clarification before moving onto the imagination in reflective judgment. Earlier, I argued the Schematism is related to the Deduction on the grounds that the latter deals with the possibility of applying concepts to intuition, while the former deals with their actual application. In this way, schemata make possible the homogeneity between sensible objects and our concepts, without being reduced to either component. Another way to put this is that schemata make sensibility rule-governed by serving as the necessary condition unifying the heterogeneous aspects of our experience, namely sensibility and the concepts of the understanding. As Kant writes in the Introduction to the *Analytic of Principles*:

The peculiar thing about transcendental philosophy is this: that in addition to the rule (or rather the general condition for rules), which is given in the pure concept of the understanding, it can at the same time indicate *a priori* the case to which the rule ought to be applied... it must at the same time offer a general but sufficient characterization of the conditions under which objects in harmony with those concepts can be given, for otherwise they would be without all content, and thus

mere logical forms and not pure concepts of the understanding (Kant 2000, A135/B174-A136/B175).⁸

In the Schematism, which directly follows, Kant offers these conditions for the actual application of concepts to sensible objects, where the sensibly given is sufficient in reference to the concepts, thereby giving them content and significance. What Kant indicates as a requirement then for the actual application of concept to sensible object is a ‘condition’ for harmony between the object and our concept. That is, Kant is making the fairly uncontroversial claim that if there is sensibility on one end and the concepts of the understanding on the other, then there must be some condition which makes possible their synthesis into experience. With that harmony between sensibility and concept, experience is possible.⁹ The faculty responsible for recognizing and making use of instances of this harmony, I argue, is the imagination.

This does not mean, however, that the Schematism is the final word on the imagination’s power within Kant’s framework. It is merely the final word on the imagination’s power within cognition. It does, however, provide an avenue for the imagination beyond the limits of cognition in the first Critique. To clarify, the imagination’s role in the Schematism is to offer instances of harmony for the application of a concept of the understanding. This is general power of judgment as Kant conceives of it in the *Critique of Pure Reason* as, “the faculty of **subsuming** under rules, i.e., of determining whether something stands under a given rule or not” (Kant 2000, A132/B171). The third *Critique* – *The Critique of the Power of Judgment* – has more to say on the subject of judgment. Judgment in the Schematism was guided by a rule towards the goal of applying a concept of the understanding to an object of sensibility. However, now crossing the gap from the imagination in the Schematism to the imagination of reflective judgment, Kant puts us in the position to consider the imagination, not merely as the faculty guided by the goals of the understanding but guided by something entirely different. Yet, as the

⁸ Gibbons also points out the relationship between the concepts and the given just before the Schematism. She writes, “Schematism, the, specifies not (conceptual) rules, but the conditions for the recognition of *instances*; it does so by specifying the conditions under which the (spatio-temporal) *given* is ‘in harmony’ with the categories. See Gibbons 1994, p. 61.

⁹ A point of clarification: Here I am speaking of harmony in a more general sense, which I believe Kant is using in the above passage. This language is a little difficult because Kant later speaks of a specific harmony between the faculties of the imagination and understanding in free play. I do not contend that the specific harmony of free play is required to generate experience, but a more general sense of harmony, which ensures sufficient homogeneity between sensibility and concept to form experience.

same faculty of the Deduction and Schematism, it maintains a connection with the sensible given and the harmony between the given and the concepts.

Before going into my consideration of the imagination in the third *Critique*, it is important to explain why the gap between the imagination in the Deduction and Schematism, and the imagination in reflective judgment needs to be bridged at all. I contend that without a bridge between the imagination as a synthetic faculty of the understanding and the imagination as a free faculty in reflective judgment, there is a risk of splitting the imagination into two distinct faculties, where the operations of the imagination in the Deduction and Schematism illuminate nothing in terms of free play. What is at stake if we do not consider this bridge is twofold: 1) It puts in jeopardy the establishment of a unified picture of the imagination across Kant's Critical framework; and 2) it ignores the key functions of the imagination in the first *Critique* as a synthesizing faculty and as the faculty at work overcoming the gap for the real application of concepts to objects of experience. Both of these are important features of the imagination that ultimately shed light on what Kant hopes to achieve for the faculty in the third *Critique*.

We see this hard division of the imagination in Makkreel's interpretation of the imagination. That is, in order to gain access to a free and independent imagination, Makkreel sees fit to largely sever the connection between the imagination across the first and third *Critiques*. Beyond the textual implications that bring into question the unity of Kant's Critical framework, my concern goes further in suggesting that Makkreel's reading splits the imagination into two separate faculties. That is, the interpretive imagination of the third *Critique* retains no link with the schematizing imagination of the first *Critique*. We can begin to see this towards the beginning of his analysis of the imagination in the third *Critique*. Makkreel writes, "the extent to which the conditions of the first *Critique* can be transferred to the third *Critique* is limited by the different functions assigned to the imagination in its aesthetic setting" (Makkreel 1990, p. 49) Under the conditions of aesthetic judgment, the imagination is not restricted to remaining the handmaiden of the understanding, or simply providing a reading of sensibility amenable to our conceptual application. However, Makkreel takes the next step to claim that the actions of the imagination in the first *Critique* are not really applicable to the imagination in the third *Critique* is questionable to the effect of suggesting that if they exhibit different functions to

the point of not being applicable across different experiences, they may not be the same faculty.

The root of Makkreel's division is the imagination's synthetic activity in the construction of sensible experience. Recall that in the formation of experience, the imagination is subsumed by the goals of the understanding to shape sensible material into an image that can under conceptual ordering. Makkreel takes this to be the synthetic capabilities of the imagination, evinced by the quote, "The fact that Kant concludes that all synthesis is a function of the understanding means only that imagination is subservient to the understanding insofar as it synthesizes" (Makkreel 1990, p. 42). Therefore, any synthetic activity of the imagination is evidence of the imagination being subsumed by the understanding. Therefore, Makkreel must make a clean break between the imagination as a synthetic faculty and the imagination as an interpretive faculty. That is, the interpretive imagination must not demonstrate any of its synthetic capacities in the case of aesthetic experience.¹⁰ This is a problem because in the first *Critique*, the imagination is revealed to us through its synthetic capacities, or its ability to synthesize sense material into an image for the understanding. That is, in the explication of his doctrine of the faculties, Kant introduces the imagination as a faculty for synthesis. To remove this aspect of the imagination for aesthetic judgments risks the continuity of the imagination as a single faculty between its cognitive capacities and its aesthetic employment.¹¹

To conclude this section, I will remark on how my view avoids a sharp division between the first and third *Critiques*, thereby providing a more comprehensive and unified picture of the imagination within Kant's framework. The key feature to this is recognizing that the imagination in the Schematism demonstrates a form-bringing capacity, even while in the service of the understanding. In the connection between sensible objects and their

¹⁰ See Makkreel 1990, p. 48. Makkreel notes that "Kant makes no use of the term 'synthesis' in discussing the imagination's role in aesthetic apprehension and aesthetic comprehension[.]"

¹¹ There are a few points that serve to harden Makkreel's division of the imagination in cognition and in aesthetic judgment. The first is the rather limited view that Makkreel carries in terms of synthesis as strictly a function of the understanding. This limited view is the result of Kant's own opacity on the issue of synthesis, rather than any mistake on Makkreel's part. Comparing the discussion of synthesis in the A- and B-Editions, Kant appears to waver between the imagination and the understanding as the source of synthetic activity. The A-Edition, however, provides the more general aspects of synthesis, while the B-Edition focuses on the synthesis required for empirical, or sensible experience.

Second is his consideration of schemata as "semantical rules," that anticipate "certain basic formal patterns" provided by the categories. See Makkreel 1990, p. 41. The order picked up by the imagination is the result of the understanding. Makkreel goes on to describe this relationship in terms of linguistics. The concepts provide the grammatical rules that the semantic functions of the imagination merely recognize, rather than the imagination itself providing the link between the rules and their application. See also, Butts 1993.

concepts, the imagination, through the schemata, offers the conditions under which the objects can be reconciled with our concepts. These, as I have already argued, are not the rules themselves, which are the result of the understanding, but rather the conditions for the applications of these rules.¹² So, even in the first *Critique*, we can determine a form-bringing capacity of the imagination, even when guided by the specific rules of the understanding. It is a power granted to the imagination in judgment; and, the first *Critique* simply describes it in terms of empirical judgment. This capacity will carry over into reflective judgment, as we will see in the following section. What is worth noting for now, however, is that taking into account the form-bringing capacity of the imagination avoids the need to draw a strong division between the imagination in two of Kant's key texts. This 1) supports my claim that the imagination represents a unified and comprehensive faculty across Kant's framework, and 2) demonstrates the importance of the imagination as a form-bringing faculty in that it not only exhibits this ability in the third *Critique*, which we will soon see, but also earlier in the first *Critique*.

IV. Reflective Judgment, Aesthetic Judgment and the Imagination's Formal Role

The previous section offered the form-shaping capacity of the imagination in the Schematism as the bridge connecting its function for cognition in the first *Critique* to its abilities for reflective judgment in the third *Critique*. My view has the benefit of providing not only an independent capacity for the imagination, but also avoided a possible division of the imagination suggested by Makkreel's interpretation. Therefore, I argue for a faculty of the imagination that demonstrates its own capabilities that are independent of the understanding and a faculty that is unified across Kant's Critical framework. The feature that both reveals the independent aspects and serves as a connection through Kant's framework is the imagination's ability to bring form to judgment, whether that role is bringing relevant sense data for conceptual application in the formation of cognition, or, as we will see, in reflective judgment. Now, we will see how the imagination's form-bringing ability is revealed as a power of the independent imagination and not simply a function in

¹² Compare this to Makkreel's position where, "the schemata of the imagination can be said to anticipate [the formal patterns of the understanding] in terms of particular types of object-attribute relations." In Makkreel's reading, the imagination is merely recognizing, rather than forming the conditions for the homogeneity required in the Schematism. See Makkreel 1990, p. 41.

service of the understanding. This is done through Kant's conception of reflective judgment in the Introduction to the third *Critique*.

In the Schematism, the imagination's activities are directed by a rule of the understanding. That is, the imagination's power to provide form is determined by its role to ground the conditions for the application of a concept to the sensible manifold. This, however, is not the final word on the power of the imagination, as exhibited in reflective judgment. Briefly, reflective judgments are distinguished from cognition in that no rule, or concept, is previously given. Rather, a reflective judgment begins at the particular and searches for a universal. This is different from the mechanism of cognition, which presents a concept to guide the imagination, as we saw with its schematic activity. In instances of reflection, however, there is no concept to determine the activity of the imagination. Instead, reflective judgment reflects on the connection, or fit, between our conceptual apparatus in general with sensible intuitions. Therefore, reflective judgment reveals not a new capacity of the imagination, but one that is merely obscured by the determinate aspects of cognition.¹³ It is the general accord between our conceptual apparatus and sensible nature that is the subject of the imagination's activity in reflection. As such, the imagination maintains its ability to produce the conditions for the connection between sensibility and the understanding but does so guided by its own general lawfulness rather than by a determined concept of the understanding. The role of the imagination remarkably remains the same. Reflective judgment maintains the form-shaping capacity of the imagination that appears in the Schematism; however, under reflective judgment, this ability to produce, or shape, the formal condition for the connection between our concepts and sensible intuitions is not determined by a concept. It is an expression of the imagination's formal role, now independent of the understanding.

With the imagination's freedom in reflective judgment described in general, we can now discuss a specific type of reflective judgment, namely aesthetic judgments. Kant describes these as judgments where "in the mere reflection understanding and imagination mutually agree for the advancement of their business," and "for which, further, no determinate concept of the object at all is required nor is one thereby generated, and the

¹³ This ties in with my earlier connection of the schematism with reflective judgment through the form-shaping capacities of the imagination. Gibbons makes a similar claim in stating, "schematism itself...depends on the suitability of thought to intuition and the capacity to exhibit that fit. Hence, the subjective conditions of judgment are still at issue even in the subsumptive activities of determinant judgment." See Gibbons 1990, p. 83.

judgment itself is not a cognitive judgment” (Kant 2008, 20:221). There are two points here that tie back into my earlier explication of the imagination’s formal capacities. First, aesthetic judgment maintains an agreement, or harmony, between the imagination and understanding, just as there was with cognition. However, and this is the second point, this agreement is not based on the concept. That is, the imagination is not guided in its capacities by a concept of the understanding; rather, the imagination engages in mutual advancement with the understanding.¹⁴ Like in the Schematism, the imagination recognizes harmony between sensible nature and a system of order; however, unlike the Schematism, this harmony is independent of any specific concept of the understanding. The understanding, if you recall, provides the order for the imagination in the Schematism. Kant points to this ground between the imagination and the understanding when points out before the quoted passage above that in an aesthetic judgment, the apprehension of the manifold by the imagination agrees with the concept of the understanding, yet the specific concept is undetermined.¹⁵ This frees the imagination from the guidance of the understanding while retaining its earlier capacity to recognize harmony between sensibility and our conceptual order. In this way, aesthetic judgments represent the first time that the imagination’s dual role capacity is revealed without the laws of the understanding obscuring its true activity.¹⁶ In short, even without the concept acting as a force of proof for the imagination’s activity, the form of its amenability to nature is still recognized and produced, as we see in aesthetic judgments. Further, it is in this reflective activity that we can see the power of the imagination’s ability to shape form, or conditions, that unify the sensible manifold with our concepts.

Before continuing into the formal role of the imagination and its abilities in terms of harmonious free play, it is worth noting a potential objection with this position. The potential objection is that in providing a formal aspect of experience, the imagination demonstrates a particular law, or rule – an ability Kant strictly reserves for reason and the

¹⁴ This is ultimately what Kant refers to as the harmonious free play between the imagination and understanding.

¹⁵ See Kant 2008, 20:220-221.

¹⁶ At A141/B180-1 of the Schematism, Kant claims that the form of the schematism of the understanding and appearances can be unveiled only with difficulty. More notably, he writes “We can say only this much: the **image** is a product of the empirical faculty of the productive imagination, the **schema** of sensible concepts (such as figures in space) is a product [...] of pure *a priori* imagination[.]” The function of the imagination in the schematism remains hidden through its necessary connection with a concept of the understanding. This is markedly different in cases of aesthetic judgment, where there is no determination by the understanding.

understanding. I admit that the imagination in its formal role reveals a *lawfulness*, while not a specific law, as would be the case of the understanding.¹⁷ That is, the imagination is engaged in *reflective* judgment, and thereby demonstrates the lawfulness of this capacity. As we saw, the form provided by the imagination in aesthetic judgment is not determinate in the same manner as the law provided in cognition. In this way, the imagination is not legislative in the same sense as the understanding. Instead, the harmony between the imagination's lawfulness in reflective judgment and the understanding in aesthetic judgment points beyond the experience of nature as a mechanism and to an artistic view of nature.¹⁸

This section has demonstrated that reflective judgment best reveals the formal capacity of the imagination due to the lack of determination by a concept of the understanding. That is, reflection shows a capacity of the imagination that is fundamental, even though it is largely hidden in cases of cognition. This ability of the imagination is its capacity to recognize harmony between the sensible manifold and our conceptual ordering and shape the grounds or conditions for their unity. Reflective judgment, and aesthetic judgment in particular, provided an opportunity to see this as a power of the imagination through its lack of a determinate concept. Further, the imagination's ability to independently shape the form for aesthetic judgment resulted in a kind of lawfulness for our capacity of reflective judgment. It is the nature of this lawfulness that will show the full extent of the imagination's formal capacity made evident in the case of nature's purposiveness and the free harmony of the faculties.

V. Nature's Purposiveness and the Lawfulness of the Imagination

The previous section referenced the mutual agreement between the imagination and understanding in cases of aesthetic judgment in order to solidify the connection between the form-shaping power of the imagination in service of the understanding and the free formal powers demonstrated in aesthetic reflection. Now, I will examine this mutual

¹⁷ Here I distinguish my position from a 'Ginsborgian' perspective, which may claim the imagination's activity is especially purposive for the understanding, though no concept is applied. I argue the 'Ginsborgian' connection is not necessary for aesthetic reflection and that aesthetic forms are not merely purposive toward cognition. Rather, the harmony indicated in aesthetic reflection is the result of forms in nature, as recognized by the imagination, being amenable to our conceptual ordering. See Ginsborg 1997.

¹⁸ Ostaric alternatively describes the outcome of aesthetic judgment as, "grasping that the lawfulness of the imagination is consistent with the discursive demands of the understanding... and, moreover, that the connections of the imagination move well beyond those demands." See Ostaric 2017, p. 1394.

agreement in terms of the imagination and understanding as faculties, and what is revealed as valuable for aesthetic judgments.

Imagination in its formal capacity demonstrated it was capable of producing form, or its own lawfulness, without the determination of a concept. This, of course, does not mean the imagination is unfettered in aesthetic reflection to spontaneously produce forms at its will; rather, the imagination retains its unique position as a faculty rooted both in sensibility and our conceptual ordering – a position that it holds from the first *Critique*. The idea of the imagination demonstrating lawfulness in aesthetic reflection does not exclude the presence of a concept. Rather, the difference between a reflective judgment and a determinate judgment in this regard is the force of proof carried by the concept. That is, in reflective activity like aesthetic judgment, the concept carries no force of proof. For example, we might say a rose is beautiful, but it is not the concept ‘rose’ itself that proves this judgment. We do, however, still utilize the concept ‘rose’ to determine a sensible experience, even though the experience exceeds the concept. What is more interesting, however, is that the imagination’s relation to sensibility also serves as a guide, even in aesthetic judgment, since the products of the imagination remain sensible.¹⁹ It is this connection that will bring into focus the benefit of the imagination’s lawfulness in reflective judgment as revealed through its dual role.

Aesthetic judgment, as a result of judgment’s reflective capacity, requires a principle. However, unlike cognition, where the concept determines the judgment, aesthetic reflection receives its guiding principle from itself, namely the purposiveness of nature.²⁰ Nature’s purposiveness, stated briefly, is the principle that nature itself is ordered in a manner that is amenable to our power of judgment. That is, nature, independent of our conceptual ability to order experience, follows a discoverable and lawful pattern. Kant expresses this as, “**Nature specifies its general laws into empirical ones, in accordance with the form of a logical system, in behalf of the power of judgment**” (Kant 2008, 20:216). This principle, however, is not meant as an objective determination of sensible nature. Instead, it is a principle adopted by our faculty of judgment for its own use to

¹⁹ Ostaric argues this point by claiming that “although the interpretive power of the imagination shows some elements of spontaneity, its products are still presentations of sensibility, to wit, combination of perceptions into images (synthesis of apprehension), and combinations of images (synthesis of fictive faculty).” See Ostaric 2017, p. 1394.

²⁰ See Kant 2008, 20:211- 216, “On the Reflecting Power of Judgment” for Kant’s argument for reflection’s ability to give its law to itself, i.e., its ‘heautonomy.’

facilitate reflection. So, judgment adopts the principle of nature's purposiveness in order to carry out reflective activities, like aesthetic reflection. Let us consider how the principle of purposiveness then fits into my picture of the imagination's formal capacity in aesthetic judgment.

The imagination, across Kant's Critical framework as I have argued, deals with the connection between sensible nature and our experience, be it directed by a concept or by another form of lawfulness. Reflection adopts a principle that presupposes the lawfulness of nature for its own activity. I claim that this principle of nature's purposiveness is the lawfulness of the imagination, or the result of its activities as revealed in aesthetic judgment. The imagination cannot make its own laws; however, the principle of purposiveness is not a law in the same sense as those prescribed by reason or the understanding. In fact, the principle of purposiveness fits the kind of lawfulness that I have been arguing for the imagination in its formal role. First, it determines nothing about the object. The claim is not that nature *is* purposive, but simply that nature can be reflected upon *as if* it were purposive. Second, and more important to my position, it is revealed in the exact manner as the imagination's formal capacity. That is, where we found harmony between intuition and concept, we found the form-bringing capacity of the imagination. This capacity was brought into focus through reflection, where there was no concept to guide the imagination, yet the connection was still possible.

For the principle of purposiveness, again, the point of focus is the connection between sensible intuition and our conceptual apparatus in general, which is then brought into relief by the lack of a determining concept. It is the imagination in its directed formal role that makes the possibility of connecting sense and concept possible in the first place, as seen in the Schematism. Now, with the principle of nature's purposiveness, we see the full expression of this ability in the form of this lawfulness in reflective judgments. Staying true to the imagination as a faculty that retains a tie to sensibility, this lawfulness is not an expression of the imagination itself, but one of nature as if it were an independently ordered system. That is, the inspiration for reflective judgments, like aesthetic judgments, must still be the result of sensible nature; however, once taken by the imagination in its form-shaping capacity, the lawfulness demonstrated is the product of reflective judging, guided by the form given by the free imagination. So, given the capacity of the imagination as both a sense-shaping and form-shaping faculty, we can ground the principle of

purposiveness within our transcendental faculties, since it is the imagination in its sensible and formal roles that make possible the revelation of this principle through the capacity of reflective judgment.

It is important to note that Kant does not specifically mention the imagination in the formulation of the principle of reflection. However, I argue that the principle of purposiveness is the result of the imagination's formal capacity by carrying over the capacities of the imagination from its role in the first *Critique* to reflective judgment in the third *Critique*. In the Deduction the imagination provides the transcendental conditions for the unity of sensibility and concepts of the understanding. The Schematism reveals the imagination as further providing the grounds for the actual application of a concept to sensible intuition. Reflective judgment reveals the underlying assumption at work in the previous capacities of the imagination, namely that there are points of harmony between sensible nature and our ability to order experience based on our conceptual apparatus. The difference, I have argued, is the presence of a concept as a force of proof.²¹ Absent that concept, we still find the principle of purposiveness active in reflective judgment; only now, it is rightfully shown as a result of the imagination's ability to harmonize sensible nature and either a concept of the understanding, or the principle of reflection. To clarify, the principle of purposiveness made possible by the imagination's dual role is the result of viewing the imagination as a faculty that grounds the unity, transcendental or actual, between sensibility and the understanding. My position demonstrates consistency for the imagination across Kant's framework that can only be adopted if we consider the imagination in its formal role where it not only provides the sensible material for aesthetic reflection but also the form for the principle of purposiveness in reflective judgment, or nature's amenability to being governed by rules independent of our understanding.

VI. Harmonious Free Play and the Imagination's Formal Capacity

With the principle of purposiveness acting as the rule for aesthetic judgment, we are now in a position to consider how the imagination's formal capacity brings the form provided

²¹ This position initially appears to agree with a more Ginsborgian view, where reflection is a prior condition for cognition, and where the intuited object is found to be especially amenable to our cognition. My view differs in that the harmony discovered between sensible object and our conceptual apparatus exceeds cognition rather than simply exemplifying it.

by this rule to aesthetic judgments. Further, since aesthetic judgments are special in that, while not determined by a concept of the understanding, they still require the presence of a concept. This unique position requires that the imagination in this dual, sensible and formal, capacity relate to the understanding without being subsumed by it, as it is in cognition. Therefore, the relation between the imagination and understanding in aesthetic judgment is distinct from their activities in the first *Critique*. How Kant describes this new relation as one of harmonious free play and this play between the faculties and the imagination's dual role is the subject of the current section.

I will begin briefly with a description of harmonious free play as it appears in the third *Critique*. Kant distinguishes an aesthetic judgment of reflection from an aesthetic judgment of sense based on the source of the pleasure. While judgments of sense are based on the immediate representation of the object, Kant writes, "in the aesthetic judgment of reflection, however, it is that sensation which the harmonious play of the two faculties of cognition in the power of judgment, imagination and understanding, produces in the subject insofar as in the given representation the faculty of the apperception of the one and the faculty of presentation of the other are mutually expeditious" (Kant 2008, 20:224). The pleasure in an aesthetic judgment is the result, not of the object itself, but the harmony of the imagination and understanding. In addition, rather than the imagination being subsumed under the rules of the understanding, we find in aesthetic reflection a 'mutually expeditious' relationship.

This mutually expeditious relationship is key not only in revealing a free, non-hierarchical, relationship between the imagination and understanding, but also in suggesting another lawfulness made possible by the imagination, since it is capable of a mutual relationship with the essentially law-giving understanding. We find support for this aspect of the imagination later in the third *Critique* when Kant writes, "Thus only a lawfulness without a law and a subjective correspondence of the imagination to the understanding without an objective one – where the representation is related to a determinate concept of an object – are consistent with the free lawfulness of the understanding... and with the peculiarity of a judgment of taste" (Kant 2008, 5:241). Here Kant points out the inherent lawfulness in aesthetic judgments, but specifically points to this lawfulness as existing in the correspondence of the imagination and the understanding. The lawfulness demonstrated in harmonious free play is not a result of the understanding

alone, but a shared aspect of both faculties. That is, the imagination makes possible an applicable lawfulness, which we recognize as the principle of purposiveness, in free play that harmonizes with the lawfulness of the understanding.²² We find additional evidence for this independent lawfulness in the First Introduction. Kant writes:

If, then, the form of a given object in empirical intuition is so constituted that the **apprehension** of its manifold in the imagination agrees with the **presentation** of a concept of the understanding (though which concept be undetermined), then in the mere reflection understanding and imagination mutually agree for the advancement of their business, and the object will be perceived as purposive merely for the power of judgment (Kant 2008, 20:221)[.]

The imagination in harmonious free play apprehends the manifold of the object. This is its usual operation upon sensibility. However, in terms of the presentation of the object, or the application of a concept to an object, harmonious free play yields the object as merely purposive for the power of judgment. Explained otherwise, in aesthetic reflection the object is judged as purposive not to the understanding but to the power of judgment, whose principle is the result of the imagination's form. So, rather than the absence of a rule due to the indeterminacy of a concept, harmonious free play reveals a different sort of lawfulness, namely the principle of purposiveness, which is made possible by the formal capacities of the imagination. In this way, harmonious free play exhibits the ability of the imagination to provide the formal component of an aesthetic judgment through the object of the judgment's presentation as purposive for the power of judgment.

Imagination's dual role as the provider of content and form for aesthetic judgment is a controversial claim, but not one without textual basis in the third *Critique*.²³ The above passages suggest a power of the imagination as a formal faculty in harmonious free play;

²² Gibbons makes a similar, but arguably weaker claim about the lawfulness of the imagination in free harmony. She writes, "The imaginations exhibitions are not lawless or chaotic, but their order is only recognized as lawful in the harmony produced with the understanding in its recognition of these forms as (freely) lawful[.]" The difference between my position and that of Gibbons' is that she requires the understanding to recognize the imagination's forms as lawful. I claim that the imagination brings its own, independent, lawfulness produced from nature in the form of the principle of purposiveness. See Gibbons 1994, p. 93.

²³ There are instances where space for this view have been opened. Gibbons 1994 and Ostaric 2017 are examples of views that are amenable to my position. Gibbons explores the possibility of the imagination as a conceptual faculty within the third *Critique*. Ostaric argues for a lawfulness of the imagination in free play and the primacy of the imagination in aesthetic judgments. Kumar 2018 offers a potentially non-cognitive avenue for the interpretation of free play, but ultimately fails to link such an interpretation with the goals of the third *Critique* in bridging the gap between nature and reason.

however, they lack the explicit mention of the imagination as a formal faculty. While Kant states that the formation of rules and laws are reserved to the understanding and reason, there is some degree of oscillation on this very point. As such, it is worth bringing these passages to notice before concluding my assessment of the imagination's dual role in harmonious free play. In the section of the Introduction titled 'On the Aesthetic Representation of the Purposiveness of Nature,' Kant specifically mentions the imagination's capacity to apprehend forms outside of its subsumption by the understanding. He writes:

If pleasure is connected with the mere apprehension of the form of an object of intuition without a relation of this to a concept for a determinate cognition, then the representation is thereby related not to the object, but solely to the subject, and the pleasure can express nothing but its suitability to the cognitive faculties that are in play in the reflecting power of judgment, insofar as they are in play, and thus merely a subjective formal purposiveness of the object. For that apprehension of forms in the imagination can never take place without the reflecting power of judgment, even if unintentionally, at least comparing them to its faculty for relating intuitions to concepts. Now if in this comparison the imagination (as the faculty for *a priori* intuitions) is unintentionally brought into accord with the understanding, as the faculty of concepts, through a given representation and a feeling of pleasure is thereby aroused, then the object must be regarded as purposive for the reflecting power of judgment (Kant 2008, 5:189-190).

Forms of an object can be apprehended without the determinate concept of the understanding, thereby becoming purposive only to the power of judgment. However, these forms must be apprehended by a faculty, which must in these cases be the imagination. The imagination, unlike the understanding in this context, cannot apprehend forms without the reflective power of judgment. However, given the imagination's dual capacity, this can be easily worked through by reaffirming the principle of purposiveness, the rule for reflective judgment, as the result of the imagination. Therefore, the imagination's limitations here are overcome by its ability to ground, or make possible, the lawfulness of reflective judgment, i.e., the principle of purposiveness. The forms revealed through the principle of purposiveness are then put into use by the imagination's second ability to compare intuitions with concepts. So, the imagination, through its own principle, fashions the forms and brings them into comparison with our concepts. Free play then is

the bringing into accord the results of the form-apprehending imagination with the understanding as the faculty of concepts. Given the above passage from the third *Critique*, I argue that we can form a picture of the imagination that not only furnishes aesthetic judgments with the intuition to be compared with concepts, but the forms as well.

The effects of this position in terms of aesthetic judgment can be understood by going back to the source of the imagination's ability to ground the principle of purposiveness. The imagination recognizes forms in nature that exceed the anticipated fit between our concepts and the sensible intuition. Therefore, the imagination does not schematize as it does for cognition, but rather shapes a form to more adequately represent this supposed natural order to the judging subject. Since this order cannot be fully conceptualized, the imagination operates on the assumed lawfulness of nature in providing this form, thereby adopting its own principle of purposiveness that then acts as the principle for all reflective judgment. If this were the final word on aesthetic judgments, then they might appear as peculiar, perhaps interesting, but ultimately peripheral accidents of human experience. However, harmonious free play becomes the vital piece of Kant's aesthetics in that it brings the supposed lawfulness of nature into relation with the understanding in what should be a very surprising manner. As we have seen in Kant's descriptions, this interaction of the imagination's formal product with the understanding is, in special cases, harmonious or mutually enlivening.

While more can be said on the pleasure of this interaction, since this work is intended to open the way for a sensible and formal picture of the imagination, what is important is the overall meaning of this harmony from the standpoint of the possibility of bridging the gap between nature and reason. Certain natural forms are found by the imagination to be capable of harmony with our own conceptual ordering without submitting to the specific rules of the understanding. What this suggests, albeit indeterminately in cases of aesthetic reflection, is that there may be an order in nature that is more than merely indifferent to human experience.²⁴ Nature suggested through the imagination's discovery of this order is ordered in a way that agrees with the experiences and demands of our faculties, despite the gulf that Kant finds between nature and reason. This not only reveals the value of aesthetic reflection in general but also highlights the role

²⁴ Kant does note that there are cases where the independent order of nature is not only not amenable, but explicitly hostile to our conceptual ordering. These cases are examples of the sublime.

of the imagination in bringing this order to our awareness. Since the understanding's concepts are removed from sensible nature, it cannot grasp this order outside of the imagination's activity. Further, the imagination's formal capacity provides the added ability to not only prepare the sensible manifold for conceptual application, but also its ability to bring its own formal products, inspired by the possibility of nature's own order, to our awareness in harmonious free play. As I have noted, this brings the possibility of bridging the chasm between nature and reason into view. Further, it moves aesthetic reflection from an interesting facet of human experience to a fairly substantial feature of humanity's place within nature. The further application of this link is beyond the scope of this paper; however, what I have sought to demonstrate is the possibility of this connection at the transcendental level of the faculties. By connecting the recognition of nature's order to the imagination in its formal as well as its sensible role, I have argued the transcendental ground for not only the principle of purposiveness in reflective judgment but the possibility of the bridge between nature and reason.

VII. Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that the Schematism demonstrates the imagination as a form-shaping faculty through its focus on the application of concepts to objects. While Kant does not represent the full power of the faculty of the imagination in any section of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the ground is there for a highly involved faculty that goes beyond reproduction and even mere facilitation between sensibility and the understanding. In terms of the real application of concepts to representations, it demonstrates a limited form-shaping capacity, albeit in the service of the understanding. This is, however, the extent of the imagination that we can read from the first *Critique*. The imagination's activity in the Schematism provided a basis for understanding its power in reflective judgment and served as a bridge between the first and third *Critiques*. We saw this power come to the forefront in aesthetic judgment as the imagination demonstrated its dual role in providing the form for the judgment in addition to its recognized ability to provide the sensible content for all judgments. Aesthetic reflection revealed a lawfulness in the form of the principle of purposiveness, a principle adopted by reflection that suggests nature as independently ordered and not merely the result of a mechanistic construction of the understanding.

Rather than this staking out a domain for the imagination, like that of the understanding in cognition, this lawfulness served as a point of reflection on the harmony exhibited between the form inspired by nature and those of the understanding. The result of his harmony, presented in incidences of pleasurable free play, was the recognition of not only an order existing in nature but also that order's amenability to humanity's rules and laws. In this way, aesthetic judgments given my position directly refer back to the stated goals of the third *Critique* that aesthetic reflection is to serve as a bridge between the domains of nature and reason, or our sensible existence and moral demands. As such, I consider the formal capacity of the imagination as vital to a comprehensive view of Kantian aesthetics that meets the requirements that Kant sets for this particular type of judgment. In addition, I have shown that not only does it provide a strong interpretation of aesthetic judgments, but it also serves to connect the imagination as a faculty across Kant's framework, thereby avoiding either a deflation of its abilities or a division of the faculty. I have argued then we have the imagination as a unified faculty from the Schematism of the first *Critique* to the harmonious free play of the third *Critique*. This was achieved through its newly identified formal capacity that, in addition to providing the sensible content for our judgments, is also capable of providing a formal lawfulness as well. Further, we have a view of the imagination that is able to return to the original goal of the third *Critique*, which is to reveal, albeit indeterminately, an accordance between nature and reason that points further to the achievement of the human moral project within the sensible realm. While this specific subject offers additional avenues for further consideration, I have revealed the ground for the imagination to serve as the formal faculty guiding this endeavor through its formal and sensible roles in aesthetic judgment. As such, the imagination's formal capacity provides a viable and attractive position for not only considerations of aesthetic judgment, but as a view for the imagination in Kant's overall Critical framework.

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The Cipher of Nature in Kant's Third Critique: How to Represent Natural Beauty as Meaningful?

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Abstract

What is it that we encountered with in our aesthetic experience of natural beauty? Does nature “figuratively *speaks* to us in its beautiful forms”,² to use Kant’s phrasing in the third *Critique*, or is it merely our way of *interpreting* nature whether this be its purpose or not? Kant does not answer these questions directly. Rather, he leaves the ambiguity around them by his repeated use of terminology of ciphers when it comes to our aesthetic experience in nature. This paper examines Kant’s terminology of ciphers in the *Critique of Judgment* and demonstrate through it the intimate link aesthetic experience in natural beauty has with human morality. A link whose culmination point is embodied in the representation of beauty as a symbol of morality.

Keywords

Aesthetic experience; Aesthetic judgment; *Critique of Judgment*; Figurative language; Morality; Natural beauty

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² *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 5:301. Emphases mine. All citations from Kant are according to the Akademie edition by reference to volume and page number: the *Akademie Ausgabe* (AA), *Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, edited by *Königlich Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften* (29 vols. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1900). I use the following abbreviations: CJ = *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Rel = *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*.

“Beautiful things *show* [anzeigen] that human beings fit in the world”

Kant, *Reflexionen zur Logik*, n. 1820A, 16:127³

Introduction

One of Kant's most occult insights regarding our aesthetic experience in the third *Critique* is reflected in his repeated use of terminology of ciphers (this terminology includes, inter alia, terms such as: hint, trace, sign, mark, guideline, *Ahnung*),⁴ suggesting our experience of beauty is so cryptic that it requires the intervention of *interpretation*. Thus, Kant inquired into the “true interpretation [Auslegung] of the *cipher* [Chiffreschrift] by means of which nature figuratively *speaks* to us in its beautiful forms”.⁵

The notion of *Chiffreschrift* and the term *Auslegung* incline us to think along narrowly exegetical lines, making something obtuse into something comprehensible and conclusive, as in a process of bringing to light a meaning concealed in an object.⁶ While it is true that Kant's terminology, in principle, tends to the idea of interpretation in this conventional manner, in the aesthetic experience of natural beauty Kant's reference to the “interpretation of the cipher of nature” proceeds in an *opposite* direction to that required by signs or symbols of a given language. It does not follow the usual path “from a clear knowledge of letters to the discovery of their meaning”, to use Gernot Böhme's words “but – if expressed in these terms – inversely, from the meaning *experienced* to the discovery of the letters” (Böhme, 2017, p. 97). Thus, it seems to suggest a conception of interpretation as essentially open.

However, interpretation is not open in the sense of being arbitrary or offering up just any meaning, nor by endlessly adding new meanings to old ones. Rather, its openness consists in *attuning* us to certain ideas, i.e., moral ideas, which no language can fully attain.⁷

³ Quoted in Arendt 1992, p. 30, emphasis mine. In this paper I demonstrate how the idea that Kant is expressing around 1770 in the above quote is ‘cashed out’ and transfigured in his transcendental philosophy in the *Critique of the Power of Judgement* (1790). I thank Johannes Haag for illuminating this point for me.

⁴ In several instances, especially with the difficult word *Ahnung*, I have opted to leave the term in the original German. The concept *Ahnung* (often translated as “presentiment” or “suspicion”, and sometimes even as “aesthetic sense” e.g., see K. Richter's introduction to his translation of J. F. Fries 1989, p. 11) is of special interest to me because I believe it best conveys the significance of Kant's use of cipher in the context of aesthetic experience, particularly of natural beauty. I elaborate on the term *Ahnung* in section 2. of this paper.

⁵ CJ, 5:301. Emphases mine.

⁶ Just before the above quote Kant uses also the term *Deutung* to indicate our need to provide an explanation to aesthetic judgment of natural beauty. Cf. CJ, 5:301.

⁷ This description is employed by Kant on aesthetic ideas, see: “[B]y an aesthetic idea, (...), I mean that representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e., concept, to be adequate to it, which, consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible.” CJ, 5:314. I see a great affinity between aesthetic and moral ideas however I do not

The vast majority of scholars tend to disregard Kant's reference to 'cipher' or 'language of nature'.⁸ Kant himself seems to be backed down from his remarks by giving them the status of an analogy (i.e., his famous *als-ob* terminology) at least in the way we interpret nature, whether this be its purpose or not.⁹ By shifting the focus back to the terminology of ciphers in the third *Critique*, I wish to show aesthetic experience in natural beauty as intimately linked with themes that are considered 'cryptic' in Kant's moral philosophy, such as the realizability of moral ideals in the natural world, moral progress, the moral proof for the existence of God, and the supersensible substratum of both human nature and nature at large.¹⁰

My intention is *not* to crack the mystery by bringing us closer to a true interpretation of the cipher of nature, but rather to delve into its necessity for our aesthetic experience of natural beauty as one of its essential features.¹¹ I will argue that it is from this vantage point of our experience *in* nature that it is possible to extend our reflections beyond the boundaries of nature to nature as a whole and to the assumption of a final end of nature as Kant argues further in the 'Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment'.¹²

I proceed as follows: I start by examining *nature's figurative language* in the 'Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment'. Particularly I am interested in the link Kant draws between beauty and morality through the notion of "hint" [*Wink*]. The very existence of beauty in nature, Kant argues, gives us *actual* hints that nature is hospitable to human morality.¹³ I wish to understand the peculiarity of the hint as an encrypted form of communication that does not rely upon analogical relation, unlike the symbol, for instance, but prepares the ground for it. Why are beautiful forms necessarily perceived as *hints* when we experience them aesthetically? And how can a mere hint be granted genuinely significant to the domain of morality?

address it in the present paper. For an elaborative account of aesthetic ideas and their similarities to moral ideas see Makkreel 1990, pp. 111-129.

⁸ Exceptions in this regard are Angelica Nuzzo (Nuzzo 2008, pp. 229, 242); Andrew Chignell, (Chignell 2008, pp. 99-110); Eli Friedlander, (Friedlander 2015, p. 92); Michel Chaouli (Chaouli 2017, pp. 101-109).

⁹ CJ, 5:302.

¹⁰ In the present paper I focus primarily on the 'cryptic' aspect of aesthetic experience itself. I have treated extensively its intimately related themes listed above in my 2019 paper (Godess-Riccitelli 2019, pp. 117-144).

¹¹ As opposed to some scholars that signal the language of ciphers in the third *Critique* as offering a romantic reading of Kant, see in particular Chaouli 2017, I do not intend to point to aesthetic judgment as a mystical experience. Rather, I wish to claim precisely on what basis this experience allows us to represent [*darstellen*] nature as meaningful to us.

¹² This possibility being due, *inter alia*, to the idea of culture presented within the context of natural teleology (as the ultimate end of nature). I discuss this theme extensively in my 2017 paper. (Godess-Riccitelli 2017, pp. 107-115).

¹³ CJ, 5:300.

I then turn to the 'Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment'. I examine Kant's claim that there *must* be a certain presentiment [*Ahnung*] of our reason, or a hint [*Wink*] given to us by nature that we could, by means of the concept of the ultimate end of nature, be led *beyond* our reflection on natural purposiveness to "the highest point in the series of causes".¹⁴ I wish to dwell on the connection between *Ahnung* and *Wink*, arguing that the fact that nature is giving us *Wink* is supported and complemented by an *Ahnung* of our reason.

Finally, I propose that nature's language of ciphers presented in the third *Critique* (in both its parts) suggests a preparatory link to Kant's moral theology by granting a complementary outlook on notions associated with it from nature's perspective.¹⁵ I suggest that in the cipher of nature Kant implies that human beings have something more concrete than the ideality of the postulates to indicate that practical reason could be satisfied. For, it points towards nature's underlying accord with our moral vocation. We can find a *ground* for this underlying accord only insofar as we take the natural *existence* of beautiful objects, which serve our cognitive end, as *a kind of evidence* that nature is hospitable also to the realization of our ultimate moral end.¹⁶

1. Nature's Figurative Language

In order for us to be able to appreciate Kant's description of nature as possessing its own (figurative) language we must first, to use Friedlander's phrasing, attentively elucidate "the inner articulations of the *grammar*"¹⁷ of the aesthetic judgment so as to make evident that Kant captures central aspects of our *experience* of beauty" (Friedlander 2015, p. 6). Stated differently, our task is to elaborate Kant's aesthetic vocabulary from the *expression* of the judgment: 'this (this rose, this nightingale's song, this landscape) is beautiful' – which articulates the entirety of our aesthetic experience – towards the question of *what* exactly it communicates.

Whereas the *expression* of the judgment is perhaps what is most identified with Kant's aesthetics, its meaning remains deeply enigmatic: when I judge a flower to be beautiful, I predicate something *about* the object in front of me. Nonetheless, being beautiful is not a fact about the flower in the same way that having a certain number of petals is a fact about it. "The aesthetic judgment", using again Friedlander's words "is to be understood *over and above* the assertion (which is always a determinate state of affairs),

¹⁴ CJ, 5:390.

¹⁵ E.g., the postulate of God, moral faith, and the highest good. The way we can ultimately point to these objects of practical reason is through symbolization. My point is that nature's language of ciphers paves the way for these symbolic presentations.

¹⁶ Cf., CJ, 5:300.

¹⁷ My emphasis

insofar as it presents or opens a *space of meaning* in the reflection on the object” (Friedlander 2015, p. 31).

This implies that in judging something to be beautiful, we do not try to understand beauty in the conventional sense of communicating a certain content about the object. But our very *engagement* with the object must induce our susceptibility to that “*space of meaning* in the reflection on the object”. The idea is that the very *act* of articulating the experience of beauty, by uttering ‘this is beautiful’, is in itself an expression of beauty. Thus, more than what aesthetic judgment actually communicates, what it is supposed to convey must be *presented* (instead of merely being said).¹⁸ The point is that this kind of presentation always presents *more* than what is actually given to the senses in perceiving the object since it is the presentation of a form: a form of purposiveness.

A Crucial Hint: Subjective Formal Purposiveness (SFP)

In section VII of the published introduction to the third *Critique* Kant argues that natural beautiful objects satisfy the fundamental subjective purpose of cognition without being brought under a determinate concept, particularly of any determinate end. Thus,

[T]he pleasure [in natural beauty] can express nothing but its *suitability* to the cognitive faculties that are in play in the reflecting power of judgment, [...] and thus merely a *subjective formal* purposiveness of the object.¹⁹

The principle of SFP is a condition in which a fundamental purpose of the judging subject is satisfied in such a way that it is accompanied by a feeling of pleasure. This pleasure, Kant argues, is the only kind of sensation that we do *not* automatically transform into a predicate of objects and thus interpret exclusively as a *sign* of our own mental condition.²⁰

The main point for our purpose is that we do not merely identify or heuristically discover the form of purposiveness *in* the object, but we also, at the same time, make it present by our *engagement* with the object.²¹ More specifically, this principle of SFP is not revealed in any teleological reflection but in natural beauty *itself*. For it is natural beauty that

reveals to us a technique of nature, which makes it possible to represent it [nature] as a system in accordance with laws the principle of which we do not encounter

¹⁸ Cf. Friedlander 2015, p. 32; Chaouli 2017, p. 20.

¹⁹ CJ, 5:189-190, emphasis mine.

²⁰ CJ, 5:191.

²¹ As Kant famously argues in the published introduction: “one cannot determine *a priori* which object will or will not suit taste, *one must try it out*” CJ, 5:191. Second emphasis is mine.

anywhere in our [...] understanding.²²

In §23 Kant states that natural beauty “carries with it a purposiveness in its form, through which the object seems as it were to be predetermined for our power of judgment, and thus constitutes an object of satisfaction in itself”.²³ This means that because we have an *actual experience* of natural beauty, our judgment must adopt *as its own* principle the view that nature sets out its empirical laws for the purpose of judgment. In other words, it is as if natural beauty was designed with a view of our own cognitive faculties. “And it is precisely this fact”, as Eckart Förster puts it clearly in his 2002, “that underlies Kant’s ‘discovery’ that natural beauty ‘reveals’ to us a formal purposiveness of nature with regard to *our* power of judgment” (Förster, 2002, p. 10).²⁴

Kant’s basic idea is that even though natural beauty is not actually *in* nature, it is intuitively given by certain objects of experience that we judge as if nature *itself* is being purposive to our faculties. This means, that in exhibiting beauty, from nature’s perspective, nature is actually presenting its *own* subjective purposiveness, i.e. its purposiveness with respect to our faculties. From the aesthetic judge’s perspective, in presenting the purposiveness of nature, it is as if she becomes an integral part of nature since her aesthetic experience of the object is simultaneously an experience of her own capacities i.e., the capacity to judge.²⁵ It turns out that the principle of SFP indicates a meeting point between nature’s form and our own, as it were, for nature is now perceived as suitable for our capacities.

“The question is only”, Kant asserts “whether *there is* such a representation of purposiveness at all”.²⁶ He then goes on to elaborate:

What is strange and anomalous is only this: that it [SFP] is not an empirical concept but rather a *feeling* of pleasure (consequently not a concept at all) which, [...] is nevertheless [...] connected with its representation, just as if it were a predicate associated with the cognition of the object.²⁷

Kant’s point is that the connection between purposiveness and feeling of pleasure is not merely psychological but has a necessary and *a priori* character.²⁸ What we feel pleasure in is the accordance between nature and those faculties of the mind that made that contingent accordance possible. Stated differently, in Angelica Nuzzo’s articulation “What we feel pleasure in is the possibility of attributing *meaning* to the world we experience, and thereby of *responding* to its manifestations in our own *human way*” (Nuzzo 2008, p. 243).

²² CJ, 5:246.

²³ CJ, 5:245.

²⁴ Cf. CJ, 5:193.

²⁵ I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for clarification on this point.

²⁶ CJ, 5:189.

²⁷ CJ, 5:191, emphasis mine.

²⁸ Hence its unique universality.

To turn, in light of this, to the language of nature, it can be said that by presenting its own formal purposiveness, natural beauty already contains a crucial hint. We are able to make it explicit “in our own *human way*” only because it is already there. Thus, the fact that our encounter with natural beauty produces a feeling of aesthetic pleasure, indicates that nature’s hint is being received and responded to as a meaningful language.²⁹

But what is it that we encountered with exactly in our aesthetic experience of natural beauty: are we experiencing the actual *hint* of nature? Or are we experiencing nature *as* giving us hints? The first question implies that every experience of beauty already contains hints. The second implies that every human being is such that they are capable of taking these hints.

Taking a Hint

As stated, the principle of SFP of nature is described as being revealed only by aesthetic judgment concerning natural beauty. Nonetheless, in Kant’s account natural beautiful objects are not merely subjectively purposive for cognition, they are *also* subjectively purposive for practical reason, in the sense of serving the interest of morality without being subsumed under any determinate moral concept. Thus, Kant asserts that “to take an *immediate interest* in the beauty of *nature* [...] is always a *mark* [*Kennzeichen*]³⁰ of a good soul”.³¹

The idea is that, similar to the pure moral interest we have in the highest good as the final object of practical reason, which does not involve any personal interest and is thus universal, we have an intellectual interest in natural beauty.³² The point I find intriguing in this context is Kant’s enigmatic terminology in describing the intellectual interest in natural beauty as a *mark* of a moral soul. His emphasis is on the fact that this “mark” - later Kant employs similar terms e.g.: hint, trace, sign, cipher -³³ comes from nature *itself* and is expressed through its beautiful forms.

We are accustomed to thinking of hints, traces, signs, marks as evidence of something that has already materialized or happened (think of ruins, remains, fossils, etc.). But what do these notions mean for future possibilities? In what ways can natural beautiful

²⁹ The fact that nature gives us hints in a *figurative* way, i.e. through its beautiful objects, means that nature can ‘correspond’ with us in a way that our imagination understands. In other words, in presenting SFP, natural beauty exhibits the characteristics that make it able to become meaningful to us through our imagination. Cf. Nuzzo 2008, pp. 229, 242.

³⁰ My emphasis.

³¹ CJ, 5:298-299.

³² In the context of natural beauty, the idea of universality is articulated through the universal agreement that the judgment of the beautiful demands of everyone “as if it were a duty”. CJ, 5:296.

³³ CJ, 5:300-301.

objects indicate the realizability of our moral vocation? Moreover, how does this *figurative* language of nature enable us to reflect on something that *cannot* in principle be represented, i.e., our moral end?

The answer lies, I wish to suggest, in the idea of SFP of nature. The point is that when we take nature to “give a hint”, “show some trace”, “give a sign”, or “figuratively speak to us in its beautiful forms”³⁴, to use some of Kant’s formulations, what is finally at stake is the idea that

[N]ature [...] in its beautiful products shows itself as art, not merely by chance, but as it were intentionally, in accordance with a lawful arrangement and as purposiveness without an end, which latter, since we never encounter it externally, we naturally seek within ourselves, and indeed in that which constitutes the ultimate end of our existence, namely the moral vocation.³⁵

When we relate to nature as giving us hints, we in fact *embody* the idea that natural beauty reveals itself as having SFP. That is the decisive hint in which nature “shows itself as art”: it reveals itself as something made “as it were intentionally”. Stated differently, what nature shows in its beautiful products is that it is not organized “by chance”, but made in the way art is made, namely, according to a structure we know from purposes, “a lawful arrangement”, yet without there being an actual, determinable purpose in play.³⁶

The crucial point for our purpose is that this form of purposiveness presented in nature’s beautiful products is revealed by our engagement with nature through our aesthetic experience, as aforesaid, which, in turn, indicates the significance of the *existence* of the beautiful object in nature. More precisely, it shows the (pure) *interest* we have in the existence of beauty in nature.

The idea is that natural beauty is not merely beauty that we find in nature randomly “by chance” as it were, it is rather beauty that contains in itself something of what nature *means* to us.³⁷ Thus, in taking an intellectual interest in natural beauty man experiences pleasure not only in the *form* of natural beautiful objects but also in their actual *existence*, even though “no sensory charm has a part in this and he does not combine any sort of end with it”.³⁸ It is in this way in which we actually *sense* that nature itself is giving us hints of its possible correspondence with “the ultimate end of our existence” namely, our moral vocation.³⁹

In Kant’s words:

³⁴ CJ, 5:300-301.

³⁵ CJ, 5:301.

³⁶ Cf. Chaouli 2017, p. 96.

³⁷ CJ, 5:302. Cf. Friedlander 2015, p. 62.

³⁸ CJ, 5:299.

³⁹ CJ, 5:301.

[S]ince it also interests reason that the ideas (for which it produces an immediate interest in the moral feeling) also have objective reality, i.e., that *nature should at least show some trace* [*Spur zeige*] or *give a sign* [*Wink gebe*] that it contains in itself some sort of ground for assuming a lawful correspondence of its products with our satisfaction that is independent of all interest [...], *reason must take an interest in every manifestation* [*Äußerung*] *in nature of a correspondence similar to this*; consequently the mind cannot reflect on the beauty of *nature* without finding itself at the same time to be interested in it. Because of this affinity, however, this interest is moral.⁴⁰

Kant's claim is that in exhibiting natural beauty, nature becomes an object of interest of our practical reason since it presents "a lawful correspondence of its products with our satisfaction",⁴¹ i.e. it exhibits *in nature* a SFP that is similar to the interest of practical reason, namely the moral satisfaction in the striving for our highest human end.⁴² What is of interest for us in the beautiful object is, thus, not merely its form but its very *presence* in nature. This is what makes it an intellectual interest in the beautiful that is freely provided by nature.^{43 44}

The question is, how are we to *interpret* this intellectual interest in beauty? Kant himself is led to worry that his own interpretation of the matter may seem "too studied to be taken as the true interpretation [*wahre Auslegung*] of the cipher by means of which nature figuratively speaks to us in its beautiful forms".⁴⁵ Kant is referring here to his explanation of aesthetic judgement of the beautiful in terms of their affinity with moral feeling so they can be related *analogically*.

The decisive point is that when we experience the cipher of nature we are *not yet* engaged in analogical presentation. For, there is a difference between *having* an intellectual interest in the beautiful and giving it *articulation*.⁴⁶ The thing that nature shows us in its beautiful forms is not a piece of *knowledge* about its structure or about our existence, but rather a *hint* whose decipherment remains occult.⁴⁷ Let me demonstrate this with Kant's

⁴⁰ CJ, 5:300. All emphases except the last one, viz. *nature*, are mine.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² i.e., the highest good.

⁴³ Think of Kant's example of the pleasure and interest we take in the nightingale's song, which completely vanishes when we discover that it is an artificial imitation. "It must be nature" Kant argues "or taken to be nature by us, for us to be able to take such an immediate interest in the beautiful". CJ, 5:302

⁴⁴ The complementary aspect of this argument is the appearance of nature in art, which Kant develops in §§43-46, §57. I do not address the question of 'art as nature' in the present paper. For an elaborative account of Kant's treatment of art see Guyer 1994, pp. 275-285.

⁴⁵ CJ, 5:301.

⁴⁶ While the articulation of the intellectual interest requires culture and perfection of one's abilities, *having* an intellectual interest is integral to the very fact of (practical) reason.

⁴⁷ The hint of nature carries the suggestion that Kant's analogical presentation in the 'Dialectic of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment' - by describing beauty as the symbol of morality - has already been presented in the 'Analytic of the Beautiful' - the difference is that in the latter it is being *experienced*. We are

examples of colors and tones that cannot be illustrated analogically but perceived merely as hints.

Mere Colors

In §42 Kant underpins the affinity between the intellectual interest we take in natural beauty and the moral interest we have in the final object of practical reason, the highest good, via the examples of colors and tones. He writes:

[Colors and tones] are the only sensations which permit not merely sensory feeling but also *reflection on the form* of these modifications of the senses, and thus as it were contain a *language* [*eine Sprache*] that nature brings to us and that seems to have *higher meaning* [*höhern Sinn*].⁴⁸

Kant discerns colors and tones as the *only* sensations that constitute the ‘language of nature’. According to Kant the uniqueness of these sensations lies precisely in allowing “not merely sensory feeling but also *reflection on the form* of these modifications of the senses”.⁴⁹ In other words, colors and tones enable us to reflect on the *form* of their own operative mode on the senses, rather than being perceived as mere effects. I focus here mainly on the instance of colors while my aim is to point out its relation to the SFP of nature.⁵⁰

In §14 Kant argues that “a mere color, e.g. the green of a lawn, [...] is declared by most people to be beautiful in itself” although it seems to have at its basis merely the *matter* of the representation, viz. simply sensation, “and on that account deserved to be called only agreeable”.⁵¹ Kant’s idea is that judging a color to be beautiful demands abstracting it from its charm and emotion as a “mere sensation” and regarding it in its formal aspect. Thus, in contrast to the effect of sensory pleasure, we experience it as aesthetic pleasure, namely, the pleasure in the reflection on its form. Kant provides a physical explanation:

If one assumes, with Euler, that the colors are vibrations (*pulsus*) of the air immediately following one another [...], and, what is most important, that the mind does not merely perceive, by sense, their effect on the animation of the organ, but also, through reflection, perceives the regular play of the impressions (hence the

experiencing it via the presentation of nature’s SFP, which hints at the realizability of the highest good. More on this in section 3.

⁴⁸ CJ, 5:302. Emphases mine.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ It should be noted that for Kant human perception of color and tone is similar, thus my suggestion regarding colors can be valid for tones as well. For an elaborated account on Kant’s treatment of tones in the third *Critique* see: Matherne 2014, pp. 129-145.

⁵¹ CJ, 5:224.

form in the combination of different representations) [...], then colors [...] would not be mere sensations, but would already be a formal determination of the unity of a manifold of them, and in that case could also be counted as beauties in themselves.⁵²

Simply put, when we treat colors according to Euler's theory,⁵³ i.e. as (empirically) *real* spatio-temporal entities manifested in sensation,⁵⁴ we can for example see the green of the lawn as intrinsically beautiful, namely as having a form.⁵⁵ This means that having a representation of a color is more than just a function of sheer receptivity of the senses being causally affected in one way or another. The main point for our purpose is that in order to play a role in judgments of beauty the 'real existence' of colors must be taken into the expanse of reflection, otherwise they will fall under the rubric of determinate judgments. The expanse opened by reflection on natural beauty is what Kant refers to as the purposive form of the object.

The point I wish to stress is that recognizing a formal aspect in colors is not enough in order for it to manifest the 'language' of nature. Rather, it has to be understood in terms of formal *purposiveness*. As stated above, nature's SFP is necessarily connected with our reflection on natural beauty, i.e. with our intellectual interest in beauty. Since that intellectual interest is directed solely to the existence of nature's *correspondence* to our faculties,⁵⁶ it follows that the most significant feature in our aesthetic experience is expressed in the mere charms [*Reize*] in beautiful nature, e.g. in colors (and tones) "which are so frequently encountered" Kant states "as it were *melted together* [*zusammenschmelzend*] with the beautiful form".⁵⁷

A mere color, in this regard, is viewed as being part of the SFP of nature, whose very existence *hints* at nature itself as having a purpose that conforms to our faculties. As such, one would not be able to appeal with pure color *analogically* to the domain of morality, or to moral ideas for that matter. But the formal aspect of colors could be, as it

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Kant never fully settles the question whether he thinks Euler's theory is correct. Indeed, following the above quotation he lays down his formalist strictures against counting colors (or tones) as elements of beauty. However, in subsequent sections especially in §42 he seems to endorse Euler's theory by describing colors and tones as "the *only* sensations which permit [...] reflection on the form of [the] modifications of the senses" CJ, 5:302, emphasis mine.

⁵⁴ Instead of referring to Newton's physical theory, which treats seeing colors as a mere result of causality of light. The causal effects of sheer receptivity are precisely what Kant has ruled out from being universally communicable. For elaboration, see Friedlander 2015, p. 89; Berger 2009, pp. 38-45.

⁵⁵ By 'form' Kant clearly means the perceptual form of an intuition as opposed to the matter of intuition. For, in order for an aesthetic judgment to be universally communicable, it must have as its ground not a mere sensation but rather a spatio-temporally organized manifold of sensation.

⁵⁶ This correspondence is reflected in the spontaneous activity of free play between imagination and the understanding.

⁵⁷ CJ, 5:302, emphasis mine.

were, that dimension through which nature itself *can* “speak to us”, i.e. communicate with us, “in its beautiful forms”. Because it does so *figuratively*, however, this communication remains cryptic to us yet in a way “that seems to have *higher meaning*”.⁵⁸

That is the sense in which “the white color of the lily” to use one of Kant’s examples of colors “seems to dispose the mind to ideas of innocence”.⁵⁹ There is no analogical relation here, where the same rule of reflection is applied on two different objects,⁶⁰ but rather a complete openness that the color grants us of an expanse of *meaning* in the reflection on the object.⁶¹

It follows, that when Kant affirms that colors (and tones) are sensations that “as it were contain a *language* that nature brings to us and that seems to have *higher meaning*”, which he then refers to the moral domain, the significance lies not in *what* this higher meaning may consist in, but *in* its very existence. Yet, as the sentence that follows makes evident, such higher meaning is not simply given, it is, rather, achieved: “At least this is how we *interpret* nature, whether anything of the sort is its intention or not”.⁶²

Does this mean that the beautiful forms we experience in nature that manifest our attunement with it, are in fact traces and hints of a higher, moral meaning of the world? Or is the fact that “this is how we *interpret* nature” means that the hints we find in nature are no more than accidental effects of mindless mechanism? I wish to examine these questions in proceeding from the beauty of nature to its purposeful arrangement in the ‘Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment’.

2. Nature’s *Wink* and Reason’s *Ahnung*

In the ‘Critique of Teleological Power of Judgment’ Kant suggests we follow yet another ‘hint’ which comes from nature itself. Such a hint is signaled by the assumption of the concept of “natural purpose” [*Naturezweck*]. In order for us to be able to regard our moral vocation as a real possibility, or as Kant puts it “to step beyond nature and even connect it to the highest point in the series of causes”, Kant argues that we must first attempt to discover “where that stranger [*Fremdling*] in natural science, namely the concept of natural ends, leads”.⁶³ Nature’s hint [*Wink*], in this sense, is supposed to indicate to us a supersensible basis for reflection upon our condition as sensible rational

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ As Kant famously argues in §59.

⁶¹ The idea of openness emerges most clearly around the notion of aesthetic ideas and entails thinking about an object “without it being possible for any determinate thought [...], which, consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible”. CJ, 5:314.

⁶² CJ, 5:302, emphasis mine.

⁶³ CJ, 5:390.

beings.

The idea is that the meeting point between nature and morality lies in the new possibility of thinking of the concept of natural purpose by means of reflection that conjoins our sensible and intelligible nature. It follows that nature's hint to us is accompanied and complemented by a 'presentiment' [*Ahnung*] of our reason, because reason is now learning to recognize itself as *part* of nature and to think in a way that is attuned to it.⁶⁴ I wish to elaborate the relation between nature's *Wink* and reason's *Ahnung* by focusing on the concept that is indeed a "stranger" in natural science, namely the concept of "natural ends".

Where Natural Ends Leads

We form the concept of 'natural ends', in Kant's account, on an analogy with the production of man-made objects according to their purpose. The idea is that in order for us to *not* regard nature's causality as a blind mechanism, we must *represent the possibility* of objects in it teleologically, i.e., as ends.⁶⁵ Kant argues that teleological judgments as such are required, *not* to provide a theoretical explanation on natural ends⁶⁶ but simply to recognize their existence.⁶⁷

Stated differently, the concept of 'natural ends' suggests that our capacity for purposeful action is irreducibly involved in our capacity for *making sense* of nature (or of parts of nature, e.g. organisms, for that matter). The idea is that the two activities: making sense of human action and making sense of organisms both rest on the same reflective structure, namely on our capacity for recognizing the form of purposiveness.

If in the 'Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment' we referred to the form of purposiveness of nature as opening the space of meaning in the reflection of the object, that is, as the opening of that dimension through which "nature figuratively *speaks* to us in its beautiful forms",⁶⁸ the concept of 'natural ends' suggests that there are objects in nature that *open up to us*, in the sense of their ability to become part of our experience, only when we recognize their affinity with objects made purposively by us. To this extent, as I

⁶⁴ Cf. Nuzzo 2008, p. 229.

⁶⁵ See: "we adduce a teleological ground when we [...] *represent the possibility* of the object in accordance with the analogy of such a causality (like the kind we encounter in ourselves), and hence we conceive of nature as *technical* through its own capacity" CJ, 5:360.

⁶⁶ Kant is referring here mainly to living organisms.

⁶⁷ The point is that even though it is *our* way of observing nature and conceiving objects in it, the presentation of purposiveness in this regard is nevertheless *objective*. This means that when we intuitively construct certain natural objects in imagination according to the concept of purposiveness, we actually observe *real* purposiveness *in* nature.

⁶⁸ CJ, 5:301.

suggested earlier, *reason can recognize itself as part of nature and to think in a way that is attuned to it.*

The important point here is *not* that we cognize natural objects as having the form of our reason.⁶⁹ Rather, Kant affirms that organic nature *elicits* or *induces* our employment of an *idea* of reason. Thus, when Kant says: “It must therefore be a certain presentiment [*Ahnung*] of our reason, or a hint [*Wink*] as it were given to us by nature, that we could by means of that concept of final causes step *beyond* nature”⁷⁰ he seems to suggest that there is something *more* in organic phenomena than the systematic structure that we discover in nature in general by way of our understanding. For, we *experience* certain objects (e.g., “crystal formations, various shapes of flowers, or the inner structure of plants and animals”)⁷¹ as not fitting into nature conceived mechanically and that they accordingly *intimate* an origin outside it: a supersensible ground for the object.⁷²

Stated differently, natural ends do not lead us to knowledge or cognition of anything transcendent in its transcendently *real* essence, as it is in itself. But we have, rather, an ‘*Ahnung*’ that there is a transcendent ground of the non-sensible form of appearances, i.e., the form of purposiveness. Since this form is not sensible, we are entitled to suppose that the purposive form exhibited in organic nature corresponds with the form of its (noumenal) grounding. The form of the grounding, in turn, can be cognized only as it is manifested in natural objects and it is thus a mere *hint*.

The question is how our teleological judgment of certain objects in nature is induced by “a certain *Ahnung* of our reason” or a hint “given to us by nature”, to the possibility of going beyond nature and even “connect[ing] it to the highest point in the series of causes”⁷³

Beyond Mechanical Causality

In the ‘Antinomy of the Power of Judgment’ Kant presents the difference between mechanism and teleology of nature in their logic of causality. The antinomy goes as follows:

⁶⁹ For ‘the purposiveness of nature’ or of objects in nature is a *regulative* principle rather than constitutive in that it does not state how nature really *is* but only presents itself as a principle that we must follow in exploring nature. Thus, we cannot infer from it whether plants or animals really are formed internally as we think of them. Cf. CJ, 5:388.

⁷⁰ CJ, 5:390.

⁷¹ CJ, 20:217

⁷² Cf. §70 the second maxim of the power of judgment in the antinomy suggesting that there are “particular experiences [of natural organisms] that *bring reason into play* in order to conduct the judging of corporeal nature and its laws in accordance with a special principle”. CJ, 5:386, emphasizes mine.

⁷³ CJ, 5:390.

Thesis: All generation of material things and their forms must be judged as possible in accordance with merely mechanical laws.

Antithesis: Some products of material nature cannot be judged as possible according to merely mechanical laws (judging them requires an entirely different law of causality, namely that of final causes).⁷⁴

This “representation [*Vorstellung*]” of the antinomy, as Kant refers it, means to show that while the only way to a “proper cognition of nature” is made of mechanistic explanations, when it comes to human reason the use of teleology is inevitable.⁷⁵ Thus, while it is indeed our “obligation to give a mechanical explanation of all products and events in nature [...] as far as it is in our capacity to do so” Kant stresses that we must at the same time never “lose sight of the fact that those which [...] we can in spite of those mechanical causes, subject to investigation only under the concept of an end of reason, must in the end be subordinated to causality in accordance with ends”.⁷⁶

Notice that the two opposing theses Kant presents as the antinomy contain assertions not about nature itself but about the ways we form judgments on nature, which Kant refers as no more than a “guideline” [*Leitfaden*] enabling us to *sense* that nature forms a unity under empirical laws.⁷⁷ This guideline is not aimed at producing theoretical knowledge, as aforesaid, what it gives us, instead, is an *Ahnung*.

The term *Ahnung* is notoriously difficult to translate. The Cambridge translation to the third *Critique* chooses ‘presentiment’. Other scholars offer ‘inkling’,⁷⁸ ‘suspicion’,⁷⁹ ‘intimation’.⁸⁰ All translations capture the fact that *Ahnung* goes beyond traditional conceptions of rational explanation. In the present context of the ‘Teleology’, as we have seen, *Ahnung* is complemented by a *Wink* that it might be possible to go beyond a purely naturalistic study of nature in terms of mechanical causality.

The interesting point is that although an *Ahnung* is not constituting of knowledge in itself, it nevertheless remains within the domain of pure reason, see: “a certain *Ahnung* of our reason”,⁸¹ and is directed towards future discovery. This ambiguous characterization of the term *Ahnung* manages to combine the theoretical *impossibility* of having knowledge about the final end of nature *together* with the rational faith of being able to arrive at

⁷⁴ CJ, 5:387.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ CJ, 5:415.

⁷⁷ CJ, 5:386, 390.

⁷⁸ Chaouli 2017, p. 235.

⁷⁹ Nuzzo 2008, p. 229.

⁸⁰ Beyleveld & Ziche 2015, p. 937.

⁸¹ CJ, 5:390.

insight about it.⁸²

That is the beginning of an answer as to how, when we judge certain objects in nature to be purposeful, we feel encouraged by “a certain *Ahnung* of our reason” or a hint “given to us by nature, that we could by means of that concept of final causes step beyond nature and even connect it to the highest point in the series of causes”.⁸³ The part that still in need of clarification is: towards *what* these *Ahnung* and *Wink* indicate us, and more generally for what purpose do we need to regard nature as having its own *language*?⁸⁴

3. Conclusion: Towards Moral Theology

In the ‘General Remark on the Teleology’ Kant sums up the ‘Teleology’ section by arguing that the concept of natural purposes leads us “beyond the boundaries of nature” since through it we in fact extend our teleological reflections to nature as a whole and to the assumption of a final end of nature.⁸⁵ This concept of natural purposes, Kant stresses “can never be given *a priori*, but only through experience, but which nevertheless *promises* [*verheißt*] a concept of the original ground of nature which among everything that we can conceive fits only the supersensible”.⁸⁶

Kant further clarifies that this kind of teleology (natural teleology) “does not suffice for theology”.⁸⁷ Because when we apply the concept of a natural purpose to the final end of nature, or to its supersensible ground, for that matter, we take a concept that derives its meaning from the context of human agency and apply it to something we do not and cannot know independently. Thus, Kant argues that natural teleology can only give us a *hint* that “we could by means of that concept of final causes step beyond nature and even connect it to the highest point in the series of causes”.⁸⁸

However, even though it is indeed a mere hint, its significance lies in the openness of the dimension towards *what* it may be directed. My point is that the idea of natural purposiveness - although it cannot give us *objects* that go beyond what can be given in intuition⁸⁹ should nonetheless be viewed as pertaining to the very possibility of the

⁸² Cf. Beyleveld & Ziche 2015, p. 938.

⁸³ CJ, 5:390.

⁸⁴ As opposed, for instance, regarding the hints we find in nature as mere explanation of nature as correspondent to our needs.

⁸⁵ CJ, 5:476.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, emphasis mine. The ‘promise’ for a supersensible ground of nature that comes from nature itself can be easily included among the ‘cipher’ notions I have presented thus far due to the similar structure they share.

⁸⁷ CJ, 5:480.

⁸⁸ CJ, 5:390.

⁸⁹ e.g., the supersensible ground of nature, the highest good, or God.

practical dimension of our final moral end, i.e., “the highest point in the series of causes”.⁹⁰

This last point is even more pronounced in the ‘Aesthetics’ section. As we have seen, aesthetic judgment demonstrates that nature is purposive with respect to our faculties through the SFP exhibited by natural beautiful objects. This is, I wish to argue, nature’s crucial hint for us suggesting that in judging nature as beautiful we also judge that nature is here *for us*. The pivotal point here is that even though Kant is clear that this is only our *interpretation* of nature, it nevertheless provides more than the ideal notion of the postulates. This is because our interpretation is based on nature’s own appearance to us.⁹¹ Thus, we are warranted in judging natural beauty as a “cipher by means of which nature figuratively *speaks* to us”.⁹²

The ‘language of nature’ in this regard can at best be seen as a suggestive or inspiring language that enables us to reflect on certain objects in nature in a way that we can then connect with certain rational ideas. Stated differently, natural beauty suggests (in occasioning pleasure in us) that nature is not indifferent to us but can be seen as already pertaining to the domain of morality. The linguistic dimension of nature consists in the fact that this kind of subjective experience has to be communicable, i.e., that there must be a dimension of interpretation or configuration of the mere figurative aspect of nature to something that can be made explicit on the one hand yet remains conceptually indeterminable on the other.

The critical point is that we can make it explicit because it is already there, in nature. This is the sense in which I have suggested that the cipher of nature offers a kind of *evidence* that the work of nature is aimed at our moral vocation. For it shows that the dialectic that otherwise precludes the satisfaction of practical reason, is already in the process of coming undone. This explains why Kant says, that “reason must take an interest in every manifestation [*Äußerung*] in nature of a correspondence similar to this”.⁹³ Given that reason (in this case the reference is to practical reason) has to strive to realize its objects, Kant says that it is crucial for us to have *experiences* that indicate that these objects are indeed realizable.

Notice Kant’s choice of words in this context to the ‘traces and hints’ of nature as the *Äußerung der Natur* which can be translated as an ‘expression’ or even ‘utterance’ of nature thus reinforces the idea of the linguistic dimension of nature.⁹⁴

However, as far as these experiences in nature go, they cannot get us all the way through. That is, they do not get us to the unconditioned final end that practical reason

⁹⁰ CJ, 5:390.

⁹¹ Cf. Sweet 2013, p. 211.

⁹² CJ, 5:301.

⁹³ CJ, 5:300.

⁹⁴ See full quote on page 8.

seeks, as it cannot be exhibited, by its definition, in intuition. These experiences can thus only 'indicate' or 'hint' to us, as it were, that this end is coherent and *could* have objective reality. My point is that this hint we experience in nature, being part of nature's language, prepares the ground for Kant's treatment of beauty as a *symbol* of morality which stands as the culmination of 'The Dialectic of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment'.

The idea is that beautiful nature presents us with SFP, which is the hint towards the realizability of the highest moral end – the highest good. Stated differently, the hint nature gives us allows us to *articulate* how beauty is a presentation [*Darstellung*] of the morally good. What we have here is a way of representing [*darstellen*] nature as meaningful to us.⁹⁵ Only then do we have a ground to make *analogical* presentation thus to regard beauty as a symbol of morality.⁹⁶

The symbolization articulated in the form of analogical relation *is* the true groundwork for Kant's moral theology as he puts it later in the *Religion*: "We always need a certain analogy with natural being in order to make supersensible characteristics comprehensible to us".⁹⁷ My point is that in order for us to be able to make such analogical presentation we must configure our aesthetic experience of mere hints and ciphers *in* nature. This allows us to use certain objects in nature viz., natural beautiful objects, also *as* symbols.⁹⁸

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⁹⁵ See my opening quote from Kant's *Reflexionen*: "Beautiful things *show* [*anzeigen*] that human beings fit in the world". *Reflexionen zur Logik*, n. 1820A, 16:127.

⁹⁶ Cf. Chignell 2010. Chignell refers to the hints we find in nature as another sort of symbolization-relation, see: "Beauty entices in us by giving us symbols [...] of transcendental ideas" (Chignell 2010, p. 206). While I am in complete agreement that Kant's language of hints and symbols are inseparable, I *do* hold that there is a substantial difference between them. According to my reading natural beauty cannot "give us symbols" directly from itself, as it were. We must configure our experience in order to be able to make analogical presentation out of it. What natural beauty *does* give us are hints that we can make explicit by using them as a symbol.

⁹⁷ Rel., 6:65n.

⁹⁸ I thank two anonymous reviewers for carefully reading my paper and for their helpful suggestions and comments.

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Striving: Feeling the sublime

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Abstract

In what follows, I will try to show how the sublime reveals a fundamental aspect of the subject as a human being: a striving to comprehend the absolute. Although at first this striving appears to lead to a futile pursuit – we cannot represent the absolute – we ultimately succeed in presenting it (as a symbol or in art), thus re-affirming the fundamental role of intuition for the human being: the need to make our notions, concepts and ideas tangible. The sublime thus appears to be in close relation to an aesthetic idea, symbols and art, manifesting a profound kinship between reason and the imagination.

Key words

Sublime, feeling, imagination, reason, sensibility, striving, human being.

Introduction

Being human involves being able to appreciate, or rather feel, beauty. This is something that pertains to human beings alone: “Beauty,” Kant writes in the KU, “is valid only for human beings, i.e., animal but also rational beings, but not merely as the latter (e.g., spirits), rather as beings who are at the same time animal” (KU, 5: 210¹). Next to beauty, I

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¹ All references to Kant’s works follow the electronic edition of the University of Bonn, available online at: <https://korpora.zim.uni-duisburg-essen.de/kant/>. Abbreviations follow the *Siglenverzeichniss* in “Kant-

would like to add the feeling of the sublime. The sublime discloses a fundamental aspect of being human – one that is even more fundamental than beauty: It reveals a being that strives to transcend its boundaries. This is a being that is neither animal nor rational (or both animal *and* rational) and that strives to attain something that not only evades its grasp but was perhaps never destined to be grasped in the first place: the absolute. It is, after all, the absolute that reason presupposes in all its endeavors pertaining to theoretical knowledge (in the KrV) and to the aesthetic judgment of the sublime (in the KU).

It is interesting to see what – if anything – this striving delivers: If what the subject is striving for is to know (reason) or represent (imagination) the absolute, then this effort proves futile: The sublime is, after all, a testament to this failure. Nevertheless, the subject will, in the end, manage to present – rather than represent² – the absolute, producing an aesthetic idea (KU, 5: 314) or a symbol (KU, 5: 351). I will try to show that, through the sublime, Kant ultimately vindicates sensibility in the aesthetic (he)autonomy³ of the subject. Thus, the sublime not only constitutes a passage from nature to freedom⁴ but manifests the sensible being's constant endeavor to render its notions – concepts and ideas – tangible. It is only through (or in) intuition – either direct (e.g. constructing concepts) or indirect (presenting concepts through symbols) – that we are able to comprehend.

I will first investigate the feeling that the human being's striving produces, which on my view is the feeling of the sublime. This feeling reflects reason's need for and pursuit of – one way or the other – the absolute. I will then proceed to investigate the intense, almost tragic, relation between the imagination and reason. In the KpV, the imagination – and more generally, sensibility – appears to be absolutely subordinate to reason in reason's effort to transcend all sensible inclinations that might influence morality. In the KU, by contrast, there is a shift in the way that reason relates to the imagination: Reason appears to have softened its voice, letting the imagination taste its own freedom and leading to what I

Studien, Philosophische Zeitschrift der Kant-Gesellschaft". Unless indicated otherwise, all translations follow the Cambridge Edition of the Complete Works of Immanuel Kant.

² A preliminary remark: Unless indicated otherwise, I use the word "representation" as a synonym for image and the word "presentation" as a translation of *Darstellung* (see also: Helfer, 1996: pp. 9-50). Although there may be some conceptual confusion in the way Kant uses the word *Vorstellung* – after all, everything is a *Vorstellung* in some sense, representation being the higher genus (KrV, 4: 203) – the contrast I wish to make is that between image and presentation. *Darstellung* is not synonymous with image, although it involves visual aspects. It is rather a method or a rule akin to the construction or exhibition of concepts in the intuition (KU, 5: 351), a remark that I will elaborate on in what follows.

³ On this reading, reflective judgment in particular, and the power of judgment more generally, appears to be what defines the human being par excellence because it is with the help of the power of reflection that the human being orientates itself in thought – and, subsequently, in the world. More importantly, however, it is in reflection that the human being comes to terms with its sensibility in its entirety: not only intuition but feeling, both being sensible modifications of the subject's situation.

⁴ Guyer (1990) proposes that we read the KU as an introduction to and elaboration of *feeling* as the bridge between nature and freedom. Although I agree that feeling is the link between nature and freedom, feeling nevertheless pertains to a human being – a point Guyer never elaborates on. Furthermore, and although the KU does *fit into a moral framework* (Guyer, 1990: p. 139), what I will try to show is that the aesthetic enjoys a certain (he)autonomy in its own right.

call the vindication of sensibility (paraphrasing Kant's apology for sensibility (APH, 7: 143)). In the final section of the paper, I will try to show what vindicating sensibility might mean: As hinted above, vindicating sensibility means acknowledging that the subject must present all its concepts and ideas, directly or indirectly, in intuition if it is to comprehend them – if it is to obtain some correlate or other for its thinking. This is what being human – that is, having a body or sensibility – ultimately amounts to.

Striving

Reason is driven by a propensity of its nature to go beyond its use in experience, to venture to the outermost bounds of all cognition by means of mere ideas in a pure use, and to find peace only in the completion of its circle in a self-subsisting systematic whole. Now is this striving grounded merely in its speculative interest, or rather uniquely and solely in its practical interest? (KrV, 3: 518)

In this regard the sublime feeling is only the irruption of and thought of this deaf desire for limitlessness. (Lyotard, 1994: p. 55)

There is an interesting parallel between the KrV and the KU, or rather between reason and the imagination, in the two *Critiques*: Both reason and the imagination suffer; they feel a need to overstep their boundaries, and it is this need that leads them to a futile and illusory venture into metaphysics, the dark night (WDO, 8: 137), the *broad and stormy ocean, the true seat of illusion* (KrV, 3: 236). It is this illusion that they will ultimately have to sacrifice if they are to secure a legitimate use: Reason must give up its aspirations to know what lies beyond experience, and the imagination must abandon its own aspirations to represent it. Even though this may be a painful sacrifice, both will prevail, having to re-orientate their function and field of enquiry, disclosing thus their true vocation, the supersensible. This striving, however, is the manifestation of freedom, the freedom to transcend all boundaries.

As we read in the KrV:

For whatever might be the highest degree of perfection at which humanity must stop, and however great a gulf must remain between the idea and its execution, no one can or should try to determine this, just because it is freedom that can go beyond every proposed boundary. (KrV, 3: 248)

What is thus revealed is an asymmetry between an idea of reason and our nature; we always fail to obtain knowledge or to represent or realize this idea of reason: There is an unbridgeable gap that we strive to close. It is in this striving that reason produces its very own principle – the idea of the absolute – and certain feelings: respect, but more

importantly the sublime.⁵ Before enquiring into the kinship between respect and the sublime – and subsequently, morality and aesthetics – however, I would like to sketch an analogy between reason's fate and the fate of the imagination.⁶

There is a peculiar fate that both reason and the imagination share: Both aspire to obtain more than what is possible; both venture into illusion, striving to obtain knowledge or to represent the absolute; both fail and, ultimately, sacrifice their aspirations, delimiting their use, before securing a legitimate claim over their territory, a territory revealed by their striving (to transcend their boundaries). Reason grounds its transcendental principle in its striving to ascend to even higher principles, and the imagination experiences how this striving feels – in the sublime.⁷

In the opening to the Preface to the first edition of the KrV (1781), we find a rather perplexed reason entangled in the incomplete and impossible task of transcending experience and the sensible to secure knowledge of god, immortality, and freedom:

Human reason has the peculiar fate in one species of its cognitions that it is burdened with questions which it cannot dismiss, since they are given to it as problems by the nature of reason itself, but which it also cannot answer, since they transcend every capacity of human reason. (KrV, 3:007)

Even though this is an impossible task (impossible because reason can never acquire knowledge of its ideas), it is one that reason necessarily sets for itself – it is its peculiar fate. Moreover, it is its *right*: Reason has the right to presuppose the supersensible (or rather, supersensible ideas) as its correlate or field of enquiry:

But now there enters *the right* of reason's *need*, as a subjective ground for presupposing and assuming something which reason may not presume to know through objective grounds, and consequently for *orienting* itself in thinking, solely through reason's own need, in that immeasurable space of the supersensible, which for us is filled with dark night. (WDO, 8: 137. Also: KrV, 3: 021)

⁵ Angelica Nuzzo rightly points out the kinship between “respect” and the “sublime” in the context of the aesthetic. She describes “respect” as the feeling produced by consciousness of striving towards ideas (Nuzzo, 2008: pp. 312-3); I would add that striving to represent ideas produces a sublime feeling.

⁶ We can expand the proposed analogy between the KrV and the KU to include the KpV or, more generally, Kantian morality, using as a guiding thread the notion of striving – it is reason that is at work everywhere, after all. We strive to grasp the absolute in theory; we strive to promote the highest good (KpV, 5: 84) and to be virtuous (MS, 6: 409) in morality; we strive to represent the absolute in reflection and aesthetic judgment. We strive for an idea that remains – and must remain – unattainable: the idea of the system of knowledge; a postulate or an ideal in morality, and an idea in aesthetics. With this noted, I will remain within the confines of the KrV and the KU in an effort to underline the striking analogy between reason and the imagination.

⁷ Following Zuckert (2007: p. 77), who points out to the First Introduction of the Critique of Judgment, we should acknowledge that the imagination (and the power of judgment) *strives* to ‘rise from intuitions to concepts’ under the guiding principle of *purposiveness*; I am referring however to a different ‘striving’; A striving towards an indeterminate idea (Ibid. p. 316), but, more importantly, the feeling that this striving produces – and this relates, primarily, to the feeling of the sublime.

Reason thus finds itself in the pursuit of something impossible, striving to acquire knowledge of its ideas. But if its ideas are to have a purpose or a legitimate use, reason will have to sacrifice its aspirations to objective knowledge of god, the immortality of the soul, and freedom and must acknowledge these ideas as nothing more than subjective principles – although they are necessary, indeed a priori necessary, not only for theoretical cognition (grounding the necessary idea of a system of cognitions and knowledge as regulative principles)⁸ but, more centrally, for its practical use (grounding morality). It is thus by sacrificing its aspirations to theoretical knowledge that reason can make an absolute claim to its power over nature and ground morality:

Thus, I had to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith; and the dogmatism of metaphysics, i.e., the prejudice that without criticism reason can make progress in metaphysics, is the true source of all unbelief conflicting with morality, which unbelief is always very dogmatic. (KrV, 3: 019)

Before reason can secure the legitimate use of its ideas – most notably the idea of a free causality that Kant introduces in the third antinomy of pure reason in the KrV, the touchstone of morality – it must find its way through illusion – a necessary and unavoidable illusion, as necessary and unavoidable as its struggle to transcend experience. This illusion consists in hypostasizing the absolute in its various forms – an absolute subject, an absolute totality (the world) and an absolutely necessary being. In other words, reason strives to obtain knowledge of its ideas as if they were objects of experience – which they are not.⁹

Reason must dispense with its own illusions – namely, transcendental illusion – if it is to obtain self-knowledge, delimit its use, and acknowledge that its ideas are not objects of possible experience but subjective principles – principles that have a legitimate use in theoretical cognition as regulative principles and, more importantly, as indispensable to its practical use.

The imagination faces a similar fate: Under the voice of reason (KU, 5: 254), the mind seeks to represent the absolute (totality),¹⁰ and the imagination, striving to transcend its

⁸ See “Anhang zur transscendentalen Dialektik” (KrV, 3: 426). The relation between reason and the power of judgment runs deeper than the feelings they produce – via the imagination – namely the sublime. Purposiveness and systematicity in the KU presuppose reason, building on what in the KrV was only an Appendix to the Dialectic: Reflective judgment thus appears to acquire (theoretical) reason’s logical and transcendental use, disclosing the principles underlying reason’s claim to systematicity – a claim that Kant had explained only logically in the KrV (especially A657/B685ff). See also: Brandt (1989) and Guyer (1990a).

⁹ Knowledge is not a synonym for cognition: We are free to think whatever we like as long as we don’t contradict ourselves, but being able to grasp or think something is not tantamount to knowing it. Knowledge is bound to the possibility of experience that presupposes the categories and the a priori forms of intuition (KrV, 3: 017).

¹⁰ Reason is the faculty of the unconditioned, or the idea of totality or the absolute; I take all these terms to be synonymous in that all three presuppose reason’s demand for completeness: “So, the transcendental concept of reason is none other than that of the totality of conditions to a given conditioned thing. Now since the

limits, ventures to do so as well. Although the imagination will fail, it is nevertheless this striving that will lead it beyond representation, allowing our mind to grasp – and feel – an idea that transcends experience:

But now the mind hears in itself the voice of reason, which requires totality for all given magnitudes, even for those that can never be entirely apprehended although they are (in the sensible representation) judged as entirely given, hence comprehension in *one* intuition, and it demands a *presentation* for all members of a progressively increasing numerical series, and does not exempt from this requirement even the infinite (space and past time), but rather makes it unavoidable for us to think of it (in the judgment of common reason) as *given entirely* (in its totality). (KU, 5: 254)

The feeling of the sublime *pertains* to our state of mind and does not depend on the object; nevertheless, we attribute the concept of the sublime to nature and its objects. In doing so, there arises an illusion, that of sublime nature:

Thus, the feeling of the sublime in nature is respect for our own vocation, which we show to an object in nature through a certain subreption (substitution of a respect for the object instead of for the idea of humanity in our subject), which as it were makes intuitable the superiority of the rational vocation of our cognitive faculty over the greatest faculty of sensibility. (KU, 5: 257)¹¹

It seems almost inevitable that we should hypostasize what is nothing more than a subjective perspective. But isn't this what critical philosophy must do? Guide us – time and again – through illusion? Nevertheless, it is worth noting that we conceive of everything – primarily – as an object (of possible experience), something tangible. We

unconditioned alone makes possible the totality of conditions, and conversely the totality of conditions is always itself unconditioned, a pure concept of reason in general can be explained through the concept of the unconditioned, insofar as it contains a ground of synthesis for what is conditioned" (KrV, 3: 251). Whereas the KrV uses syllogism as reason's vehicle to ascend from the conditioned to the unconditioned, the KU traces the analogous movement of the imagination.

¹¹ The question raised by Clewis (2009: p. 57) is whether the subreption, the illusion that we relate the sublime to an object or nature, is a necessary feature of the sublime. He says that it need not be so since the sublime reveals *freedom* (Ibid.) – not some sort of transcendental, that is, necessary, illusion. It is true that Kant never establishes a critical remedy for the subreption of the sublime in a fashion similar to the Transcendental Dialectic; nevertheless, we must *reflect* on the sublime feeling to comprehend its true nature, namely, that it belongs to the mind and not nature – that is, we need to re-orientate our attention from the object to the mind. This implies that the illusion has a remedy similar to the transcendental one; it demands a re-orientation of our focus, from objects or the world to the function of the mind. But is it unavoidable? If illusion is inherent to reason and reason is at play in the sublime, it is hard to see how illusion cannot be necessary when experiencing a sublime feeling: It appears that the subject tends to hypostasize or attribute everything to the world (either natural or supersensible). But the critique is just this: a reminder or a *constant* struggle against reason's (and the imagination's) pretention to know (or feel) an *object*, something belonging to the world as an object of possible experience (see also Lyotard: 'The critique must always remind thought what it can and cannot know or do in its constant effort to overstep the possibility of experience.' (Lyotard, 1994: p. 56). Hypostasizing ideas or concepts seems unavoidable, but now this fact (the fact that the subject hypostasizes its notions) reveals something more fundamental about the subject: We need – one way or another – to intuit our notions, either directly by constructing them or indirectly by providing symbols or producing aesthetic ideas for them. We will ultimately need some intuition to render our notions comprehensible (this is what being sensible or human consists in) (see also Kirwan, 2006: pp. 99-107). But, as the critic teaches us, we need to acknowledge what belongs to an object of possible experience and what is nothing but a symbol or an analogy, something subjective.

must learn to dispel the illusion and rise above the tangible, and what the sublime reveals, in our present investigation, is *our* vocation, the supersensible – this time, however, not as an idea of reason, as is the case in the KrV, but as a feeling.

To be sure: Our vocation is to become rational and to transcend the sensible. We may as well be on our way towards morality – and this is indeed the case regarding aesthetic judgment. Nevertheless, on closer scrutiny, we discover that the idea of reason that is at play within the sublime is, principally, the idea of humanity – not the theoretical idea of science or system, nor morality. While we have already encountered in the beautiful the idea of a *sensus communis*, that is, the idea of a common sense we share with all other human beings, through which we come to think with and against others within a community (KU, 5: 293), it is in the sublime that the *idea* of humanity is finally disclosed, grounding an idea that is unique to the reflective power of judgment. The idea of humanity thus appears to offer a genuine passage from nature to freedom, a passage that nevertheless lays claims to its own (he)autonomy. And this passage involves the human being.

The being is not yet a rational agent; nor is it (just) the subject of knowledge. It is rather a perspective, that of a corporeal being. It is not just the embodied subject (obviously, this is the case); it is furthermore a subject that grasps the possibility of an a priori idea, that of humanity, and what pertains most intimately to it: feeling. The KU is an enquiry into the possibility of an a priori feeling, after all, and to feel is to have a body:

[Moreover] it cannot be denied that all representations in us, whether they are objectively merely sensible or else entirely intellectual, can nevertheless subjectively be associated with gratification or pain, however unnoticeable either might be (because they all affect the feeling of life, and none of them, insofar as it is a modification of the subject, can be indifferent), or even that, as Epicurus maintained, *gratification* and *pain* are always ultimately corporeal, whether they originate from the imagination or even from representations of the understanding: because life without the feeling of the corporeal organ is merely consciousness of one's existence, but not a feeling of well- or ill-being, i.e., the promotion or inhibition of the powers of life; because the mind for itself is entirely life (the principle of life itself), and hindrances or promotions must be sought outside it, though in the human being himself, hence in combination with his body. (KU, 5: 278)

Kant in the above passage juxtaposes the mere consciousness of one's existence with feeling of the corporeal organ; both however will ultimately have to refer to the human being as an entirety, that is, mind and body. The KU is thus an enquiry of the subject as a corporeal being – at least the aesthetic judgment.

Feeling sublime

I am not interested in reconstructing a Kantian theory of emotions or feelings; what I want to underline is the possibility of an a priori feeling that pertains to a corporeal being that

strives to rise above its nature. I am referring to pleasure and displeasure and, in particular, to the sublime, which captures both aspects of the faculty of pleasure. Striving reveals a fundamental need or lack (displeasure) regarding both reason and the imagination, a need that is ultimately remedied (pleasure).

Is this need a *rational* feeling, as Alix Cohen (2018) maintains?¹² More profoundly, can it *justify* the positive or regulative use of ideas, as she claims?

Considering the above, that is, the fact that feeling pertains to a corporeal being, these questions ultimately appear misplaced: I would rather ask, “Can reason produce a feeling?” Clearly it can, but until the KU we didn’t know – and nor did Kant, for that matter – that an a priori feeling was even possible (with the exception of respect – a point to which I will have to return).

But then what does striving feel like?

I want to claim that this need or pursuit is reflected in the sublime; it is in the feeling of the sublime that Kant reveals how reason effects a feeling on sensibility – the imagination – that is not the moral feeling but one that pertains to a corporeal being. It is through the sublime that we *feel* we are lacking something¹³ – feel a need; it is through the sublime that we feel the pain *because* of this need, and at the same time we soothe this pain the moment we grasp (think) that we are capable of transcending the sensible, thus revealing our supersensible vocation, revealing an idea of reason (we should add that we soothe the pain or comfort ourselves through art and an aesthetic idea – but this is a claim I cannot venture to explore here).

It is not just or primarily the imagination that tries to fulfil reason’s demand – the imagination is, after all, nothing but reason’s instrument; it is the entire mind that hears the voice of reason, and what this voice compels it to do is to comprehend the absolute in one intuition – via the imagination. We are facing the sensuous, or rather the aesthetic aspect of the antinomy of reason, and it is sublime (KU, 5: 254).¹⁴

¹² In WDO, Kant refers to “reason *feeling* its own need” (WDO, 8: 136; my emphasis). Even if we concede – like we do here – that reason does feel, this is not tantamount to *justifying* reason’s use of its ideas, as Alix Cohen claims (2018). In other words, we cannot ground reason’s ideas in a feeling. If reason’s need *justifies* anything, it is its unrest or its flight over and beyond the possibility of experience; its venture into the “immeasurable space of the supersensible, which for us is filled with dark night” (ibid.). Reason’s felt need (WDO, 8: 140) is shows nothing more than its *insight into its lack* [...] *the drive of cognition it effects* (WDO, 8: 140). This need or feeling must be reflected on if we are to reveal the source of reason’s need (which is the demand for the absolute). We must, in other words, reveal reason’s peculiar (logical) structure – the syllogism – which allows it to grasp the absolute and the idea as its own particular principle. What justifies reason’s right, in other words, is the demand for the absolute and the structure of syllogism. It sounds rather odd to say that a feeling *determines* reason’s movement. Granted: we must reflect upon this feeling, but this doesn’t mean that feeling *justifies* anything.

¹³ Lyotard describes this lack as *nostalgia* for Forms and Ideas (we could add: for the absolute) (Lyotard, 1994 : p. 75).

¹⁴ We might (in an awkward kind of way) say that we feel an antinomy of reason– and this feeling is sublime. We could further relate the antinomy to the sight of the starry heavens; to comprehend the universe is, after

Reason compels the imagination to respond to its pursuit, leading the latter towards a striving of its own, pushing it beyond the sensible. If the logical use of reason – in which reason continuously ascends, with syllogism as its vehicle, to more general principles until it grasps the idea of a totality – can find an analog it is here, in the movement of the imagination, which is also the mind’s movement.

But what does a sublime feeling signify?

The feeling of the sublime has a twofold structure: We first feel displeasure or pain – when the imagination fails to comprehend¹⁵ the absolute in a single intuition; but in failing to do so, we are able to grasp, secondly, a presupposition that evades all intuition, the absolute, thus producing pleasure, albeit indirectly: Our mind is overwhelmed with the feeling of its supersensible vocation:

[The feeling of the sublime] is a pleasure that arises only indirectly, being generated, namely, by the feeling of a momentary inhibition of the vital powers and the immediately following and all the more powerful outpouring of them; hence as an emotion it seems to be not play but something serious in the activity of the imagination. Hence it is also incompatible with charms, and, since the mind is not merely attracted by the object, but is also always reciprocally repelled by it, the satisfaction in the sublime does not so much contain positive pleasure as it does admiration or respect, i.e., it deserves to be called negative pleasure. (KU, 5: 245)

The above description and the twofold structure of the sublime brings to mind the feeling of respect.

There is a structural analogy between respect and the sublime in that both are described first and primarily as negative feelings that nevertheless produce, albeit indirectly, a positive feeling or pleasure (KpV, 5: 73). In both respect and feeling we find pleasure in the intellectual or supersensible: in an idea of reason. But what is the nature of this

all, to strive towards representing a totality, the world. I will have more to say on the sight of the starry heavens in what follows.

¹⁵ Kant elaborates on the difference between apprehension and comprehension in KU, §26: “To take up a quantum in the imagination intuitively, in order to be able to use it as a measure or a unit for the estimation of magnitude by means of numbers, involves two actions of this faculty: *apprehension* (*apprehensio*) and *comprehension* (*comprehensio aesthetica*). There is no difficulty with apprehension, because it can go on to infinity; but comprehension becomes ever more difficult the further apprehension advances, and soon reaches its maximum, namely the aesthetically greatest basic measure for the estimation of magnitude. For when apprehension has gone so far that the partial representations of the intuition of the senses that were apprehended first already begin to fade in the imagination as the latter proceeds on to the apprehension of further ones, then it loses on one side as much as it gains on the other, and there is in the comprehension a greatest point beyond which it cannot go” (KU, 5: 252). What emerges from the above passage is a contrast between the apprehension of a magnitude, that is, a numerical progression that can proceed to infinity, and the comprehension of the same magnitude in a single intuition or a whole. Although it is obvious that the imagination fails to comprehend (not apprehend) magnitudes that supersede a certain limit, it is precisely at this limit, *which the imagination strives to surpass*, that we feel the sublime. This is *aesthetic comprehension*, where the imagination comprehends a plurality at a glance and unites, or rather tries to unite, this plurality in a single intuition (Makkree, 1984. Also: Gasche, 2003). It is at this point that reason comes into play and the mathematical infinite is transformed into an idea (see: Rogozinski, 1993).

affinity? Does respect have priority, such that the sublime is, ultimately, subsumed under morality and respect? Isn't it Kant who, after all, related the two? The sublime aligns itself with the practical ideas of reason (KU, 5: 265), preparing us to *esteem something* (*etwas*), to respect it (*hochzuschätzen*) (KU, 5: 267) – even nature. But the sublime is akin to *enthusiasm* rather than respect (KU, 5: 272); respect may be sublime, but sublime is not identical to respect.

Be that as it may, the sublime in the KU constitutes a genuine aesthetic passage from nature to freedom that is neither theoretical nor practical. This passage from theory to practical reason presupposes sensibility or human nature; we must address the human being as a whole,¹⁶ not just one of its faculties, as the possibility of this passage. This means that there is no one faculty that constitutes a common ground of the subject; if there is one, we might want to point to the faculty of reflective judgment not as a common ground but as the possibility of the critique itself in that it is through transcendental reflection that we assign given representations to their appropriate faculties (aa04: 173). We cannot follow Rogozinski, who, following Heidegger, acknowledges the imagination as the possibility of the a priori unity of the faculties (Rogozinski, 1993: pp. 134-5).¹⁷ If we are to recognize the subject as (he)autonomous, we need to address it as a whole. We need to address our finitude, and this involves primarily addressing the corporeal being – a being that intuits and for which intuition constitutes the possibility of supplementing not only the categories of the understanding with objectivity but, in addition, the ideas of reason with intuitions, without running the risk of mysticism or superstition (KU, 5: 275).¹⁸

¹⁶ On this reading, we might acknowledge the human being per se as the passage or the bridge between nature and freedom; the sought-after unity of the faculties might therefore lie within the human being. Or, to paraphrase Katerina Deligiorgi (2004), it is in the KU that we encounter a being that integrates different aspects of itself, “passive and active, being finite and also capable of setting ends – and of our experience, as part of the natural world and responsive to it as we set ends in accordance to our own idea” (Deligiorgi, 2014: p. 32).

¹⁷ In Rogozinski's interpretation (1993), everything revolves around the imagination; i.e. we hardly encounter reason, even where it might be expected that we should. Rogozinski says that “the imagination demands totality,” but this can't be so: It is reason at work, demanding that the imagination comprehend totality; it is the *voice of reason that the mind hears* (KU, 5: 254).

¹⁸ One is tempted to say that the KU is not a treatise about the *transcendence* of finitude – given that, as Makkreel (1984) points out, the sublime suspends temporality – but a treatise about what it actually means to be finite, or sensible. And this does not involve only *time* but *space* as well: We are after all, as corporeal beings, primarily in space!

A glimpse at the starry heavens

In fact, when we have completely filled our dispositions with such observations and with what has been brought out previously, then the sight of a starry heaven on a clear night gives a kind of pleasure which only noble souls experience. In the universal stillness of nature and the tranquility of the mind, the immortal soul's hidden capacity to know speaks an unnamable language and provides inchoate ideas which are certainly felt but are incapable of being described. If among thinking creatures of this planet there are malicious beings who, regardless of all incitements which such a great subject can offer, are nevertheless in the condition of being stuck firmly in the service of vanity, how unfortunate this sphere is that it could produce such miserable creatures! But, on the other hand, how lucky this sphere is that a way lies open, under conditions which are the worthiest of all to accept, to reach a blissful happiness and nobility, something infinitely far above the advantages which the most beneficial of all nature's arrangements in all planetary bodies can attain! (NTH, 1: 367-8)

It is not just the moral law that produces the feeling of the sublime (via respect) on Kant's view; it is the sight of the starry heavens as well.

We read in the KpV:

Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence, the more often and more steadily one reflects on them: *the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me*. I do not need to search for them and merely conjecture them as though they were veiled in obscurity or in the transcendent region beyond my horizon; I see them before me and connect them immediately with the consciousness of my existence. The first begins from the place I occupy in the external world of sense and extends the connection in which I stand into an unbounded magnitude with worlds upon worlds and systems of systems, and moreover into the unbounded times of their periodic motion, their beginning and their duration. The first view of a countless multitude of worlds annihilates, as it were, my importance as an *animal creature*, which after it has been for a short time provided with vital force (one knows not how) must give back to the planet (a mere speck in the universe) the matter from which it came. (KpV, 5: 162)

There is something majestic in the sight of the starry heavens in the above passage: The *unbounded magnitude of worlds and systems*; at the same time however, the image of the starry heavens reveals the insignificance of my animal nature – it annihilates me; the representation thus of the starry heavens functions primarily on a level akin to morality rather than aesthetics.

The same image returns in the KU, but this time Kant's voice has changed; the sublime feeling is there, but now what emerges is a different understanding of the intuition of the heavens – an aesthetic one:

Thus, if someone calls the sight of the starry heavens *sublime*, he must not ground such a judging of it on concepts of worlds inhabited by rational beings, taking the bright points with which we see the space above us to be filled as their suns, about which they move in their purposively appointed orbits, but must take it, as we see it, merely as a broad, all-embracing

vault; and it must be merely under this representation that we posit the sublimity that a pure aesthetic judgment attributes to this object. (KU, 5: 270)

We should add: One must not ground the sight of the starry heavens in any concept whatsoever, even reason's practical ideas. We have shifted – or rather Kant has shifted – our attention from morality to aesthetics and from practical reason to reason per se as the source of the idea of the absolute; more importantly, Kant has shifted our attention to the feeling that this striving towards the absolute produces.¹⁹ We need no longer experience our place within the heavens as insignificant; we just feel the sublime. We cannot intuit or construct the world as a totality in our intuition – this is impossible; nevertheless, we can estimate it aesthetically.²⁰ We might say: We feel reason's ascent towards the absolute; we feel the antinomy and resolve it, aesthetically.²¹

Reason has, finally, embraced the imagination – and subsequently the human being. This wasn't always the case: Reason was previously described as being hard on sensibility, exercising its undisputed dominion over it.

In the KpV, reason appears to exercise a rather raw violence upon the sensible, humiliating it:

Humiliation on the sensible side – is an elevation of the moral – that is, practical – esteem for the law itself on the intellectual side. (KpV, 5: 79)

Kant here refers to inclinations, arrogance and vain self-love (KpV, 5: 86), rejecting them as grounds for determining the will, that is, morality or practical reason. Still, the human being is something that must be humiliated, struck down, if we are to become moral beings. It seems that this being is nothing but a self-loving arrogant being that needs to be

¹⁹ It is interesting to see how an aesthetic judgment works: *We choose* to see the representation of the skies without interest – to reflect is, after all, to assign a given representation to a specific power, be it the understanding, reason or, in the KU, the power of judgment (see KrV, 03: 214). And this reflection depends upon *our* perspective: “The satisfaction in the object depends on the relation in which we would place the imagination: namely, that it entertains the mind by itself in free activity” (KU, 5: 270-1). Kant repeatedly speaks of the effect of the object upon us as an occasion for setting in motion our faculties (KU, 5: 218 / 5: 256) – and this holds both for the KU and for the KrV (3: 027). It is an occasion that brings forth in consciousness the workings of our mind.

²⁰ Is the fact that we cannot construct the concept of a totality – or the absolute – tantamount to a formless object? Do we, in other words, experience the sublime when looking at an object *without* form? Kant does indeed suggest this, but it may not be exclusively the case that we feel sublime when gazing upon something formless. Formlessness may refer either to a lack or an excess.

²¹ Kant's exposition of the sublime follows the structure and divisions of the Antinomy of pure Reason; that is, he divides the sublime into the mathematical and the dynamical, alluding to pure reason per se – not practical reason. But the structural analogy with the antinomies runs even deeper. The mathematical sublime poses the question of an infinite magnitude and resolves this problem, as it were, aesthetically. We comprehend the infinite aesthetically (KU, 5: 256); that is, we estimate the absolute aesthetically (although we can never construct the concept of the absolute in intuition). The same holds for the dynamical sublime: We feel our power to transcend nature and the numerous threats it poses (5: 260); we thus appear to *feel* our freedom, our independence, in a way that is analogous to securing the concept of a free causality in the third Antinomy of pure Reason.

humiliated not only to overcome its inclinations but also to find its proper place in the world – its triviality.

We saw above that even the sight of the heavens is destined to diminish the animal being:

The first view of a countless multitude of worlds annihilates, as it were, my importance as an *animal creature*, which after it has been for a short time provided with vital force (one knows not how) must give back to the planet (a mere speck in the universe) the matter from which it came. (KU, 5: 162)

But that is exactly what I am: I am, above all else, an animal, or rather a corporeal being.

One might object that in the KpV Kant must be resolute if he is to ensure that what determines our will is nothing but the moral law; in the KU, by contrast, Kant describes the interaction of the faculties as being either playful or serious. Nevertheless, the sublime feeling of the starry heavens need not annihilate us. We need no longer be humiliated. Indeed, in the KU Kant no longer speaks of humiliation; rather, he speaks of sacrifice.²²

Practical reason restricts or humiliates every natural inclination, ultimately humiliating the human being (KpV, 5: 74), exhibiting the horrific face of reason’s dominion over the sensible. In the KU, by contrast, reason, through the imagination, chooses a different path. To be sure, the violence is still here, but this time it is an ambiguous violence – even the imagination does violence to time, or our inner sense (KU, 5: 259). This resembles a drama, an ordeal, or some sort of sublime experience where we learn that we need to sacrifice the unrestrained freedom of our imagination if we are to disclose and – more importantly – to respond to our vocation. We feel sadness or pain, suffering a loss. It is a loss that the imagination does not suffer alone, though; we feel our inability to comprehend totality or the infinite, and although we are elevated, reconfirming reason’s supremacy over sensibility, reason has nevertheless changed, having already suffered its own loss: its pretension to obtain theoretical knowledge of the absolute (KU, 5: 219).

²² This shift in reason’s perspective – from humiliation in the KpV to sacrifice in the KU – is an important witness to Kant’s gradual understanding of the role that sensibility plays. We are already familiar (from the KrV) with the priority of “sensation” as *representation standing under the genus in general*, that is, representation in general; “sensation” refers to the modification of the state of the subject, prior to “cognition” (KrV, 4: 203). This means that, prior to any act or exercise of our cognitive powers, cognition, or knowledge, the subject is modified while encountering experience (KrV, 3: 027). A perception (*perceptio*) that refers to the modification of the subject’s state is a sensation (*Empfindung*). In the KrV, sensation is “the effect of an object on the capacity for representation, insofar as we are affected by it.” In the KrV, Kant does not yet entertain the possibility of the effect of the subject upon itself, or, if he does, he does not acknowledge any necessary grounds pertaining to feeling (*Gefühl*) – “feeling,” in other words, is a modification of the subject and its subjective constitution of mind (*Zustand*) and can be different for different people (KrV, 4: 035). This is no longer the case in the KU, however: Feeling appears to acquire a necessary and universal – albeit subjective – status, and it does so by presupposing the possibility of universal communicability. It is not enough to acknowledge that the subject feels; what is required is that this feeling can be communicated. Next to “sensation” we should thus add “feeling” as a modification of the subject. The KU shows that feeling can be grounded a priori. Failing to discern this shift in Kant’s thought, as Angelica Nuzzo appears to do, for example (Nuzzo, 2008: pp. 312-3), obscures the aesthetic (he)autonomy of the subject that I have defended thus far.

Either way, the true target was probably a different one all along: It was not the human being per se but rather its inclination towards self-love (but this will not become clear before the KU). We read in the KpV:

All the inclinations together (which can be brought into a tolerable system and the satisfaction of which is then called one's own happiness) constitute regard for oneself (*solipsismus*). This is either the self-regard of *love for oneself*, a predominant *benevolence* toward oneself (*Philautia*), or that of *satisfaction with oneself*, (*arrogantia*). The former is called, in particular, *self-love*; the latter, *self-conceit*. Pure practical reason merely *infringes upon* self-love, inasmuch as it only restricts it, as natural and active in us even prior to the moral law, to the condition of agreement with this law, and then it is called *rational self-love*. But it *strikes down* self-conceit altogether. (KpV, 5: 73)

This is the same demand that an aesthetic judgment of beauty makes, and the sublime reinforces, against our sensible interest or our interest in general – let us keep in mind that the sublime is not just without purpose, like beauty; it is even counter-purposive:

The beautiful prepares us to love something, even nature, without interest; the sublime, to esteem it, even contrary to our (sensible) interest. (KU, 5: 265ff)

If a judgment of taste is to demand apriority, necessity and universality, then it must rise above egoism, aesthetic egoism, and become pluralistic,²³ acquiring a universal voice (KU, 5: 278).²⁴

Nevertheless, the encounter between reason and imagination remains problematic when it comes to aesthetic judgment: The imagination proves unable to comprehend its object after all. This is perhaps not unexpected since reason is at work operating as a presupposition of the imagination and guiding the latter with its ideas, which not only do not correspond to any possible intuitions or experience but must remain without any – if we are to avoid mysticism or fanaticism. This means that the imagination cannot represent an idea of reason. Still, Kant speaks of – a rather odd – *negative presentation*:

There need be no anxiety that the feeling of the sublime will lose anything through such an abstract presentation, which becomes entirely negative in regard to the sensible; for the imagination, although it certainly finds nothing beyond the sensible to which it can attach itself, nevertheless feels itself to be unbounded precisely because of this elimination of the limits of sensibility; and that separation is thus a presentation of the infinite, which for that very reason

²³ As we read in Kant's Anthropology: "Egoism can contain three kinds of presumptions: the presumption of understanding, of taste, and of practical interest; that is, it can be logical, aesthetic, or practical. [...] The aesthetic egoist is satisfied with his own taste, even if others find his verses, paintings, music, and similar things ever so bad, and criticize or even laugh at them. He deprives himself of progress toward that which is better when he isolates himself with his own judgment; he applauds himself and seeks the touchstone of artistic beauty only in himself" (Anth, 07: 129–130).

²⁴ Communicability is the corollary of the universality that a concept of the understanding or a law of reason reflects – although communicability is only a subjective a priori representation, it grounds the necessity and universality of an aesthetic judgment (KU, 5: 238, 5: 293). We thus claim to speak in a universal voice, demanding that everyone ought to agree with us; this does not mean that everyone actually does. Nevertheless, it is the a priori necessity of communicability that grounds a priori aesthetic judgments.

can never be anything other than a merely negative presentation, which nevertheless expands the soul. (KU, 5: 274)

We may thus be unable to *represent* the absolute we can, however, *present* it in a *negative* fashion; this sounds rather vague!

Vindicating sensibility

Perhaps there is no more sublime passage in the Jewish Book of the Law than the commandment:
Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image, nor any likeness either of that which is in heaven, or on the earth, or yet under the earth, etc. (KU, 5: 274)

After experiencing such a devastating failure, unable to comprehend in one intuition totality or the infinite – the absolute – the imagination appears to finally be at peace, free, unbounded in reason’s embrace;²⁵ the price it had to pay was to renounce representation (Kant speaks of a “negative presentation,” something that is empty).

To safeguard the absolute and retain its non-intuitive character, we must appeal to a negative presentation (if we are to avoid enthusiasm and mysticism); yet, as I hope to show, one way or another we will ultimately need to present the absolute in intuition – not as an image or a representation, but as a symbol; negative in that it does not correspond to anything; still, a presentation in that it is the product of the imagination.

Contrasting an image or a representation with the (transcendental) workings of the imagination is not new to Kant; we saw in the KrV that a schema – the product of transcendental imagination – is something like a monogram of *pure a priori imagination*. It is not an image, but rather the rule of synthesis of the imagination:

We can say only this much: the image is a product of the empirical faculty of productive imagination, the schema of sensible concepts (such as figures in space) is a product and as it were a monogram of pure a priori imagination, through which and in accordance with which the images first become possible, but which must be connected with the concept, to which they are in themselves never fully congruent, always only by means of the schema that they designate. The schema of a pure concept of the understanding, on the contrary, is something that can never be brought to an image at all, but is rather only the pure synthesis, in accord with a rule of unity according to concepts in general, which the category expresses, and is a transcendental product of the imagination. (KrV 3: 136)

²⁵ To be unbounded or without limits is not tantamount to being without form; the sublime – according to Kant’s hint (KU, 5: 245) – is usually related to the formless. I prefer to interpret “formless” or the “unbounded” as “without limits,” however, not as “without form,” following both Gasche (2013) and Kant’s suggestion (ibid.).

“Monogram” is also the word that Kant uses to describe how the imagination operates within the rather ambiguous notion of a “sensible ideal” in the Transcendental Dialectic of the KrV:

That is how it is with the ideal of reason, which always rests on determinate concepts and must serve as a rule and an original image, whether for following or for judging. It is entirely otherwise with the creatures of imagination, of which no one can give an explanation or an intelligible concept; they are, as it were, monograms, individual traits, though not determined through any assignable rule, constituting more a wavering sketch, as it were, which mediates between various appearances, than a determinate image, such as what painters and physiognomists say they have in their heads, and is supposed to be an incommunicable silhouette of their products or even of their critical judgments. These images can, though only improperly, be called ideals of sensibility because they are supposed to be the unattainable model for possible empirical intuitions, and yet at the same time they are not supposed to provide any rule capable of being explained or tested. (KrV, 3: 384-5)

A sensible ideal is obviously related to reason – being an ideal – but, at the same time, it is a creature of the imagination. Being a creature of the imagination, the sensible ideal is discredited as incommunicable, unattainable as a model, incapable of providing rules for explaining or putting to the test. Strictly speaking it is not an ideal, and if it bears the name *ideal* it does so *improperly*. The sensible ideal is sharply contrasted to the idea and ideal of reason, where the idea *gives a rule* (completeness) and the ideal provides the archetype or original image (ibid.) of a thing *in individuo* (ibid.). This is to be expected:

To try to realize the ideal in an example, i.e., in appearance, such as that of the sage in a novel, is not feasible, and even has about it something nonsensical and not very edifying, since the natural limits which constantly impair the completeness in the idea render impossible every illusion in such an attempt, and thereby render even what is good in the idea suspect by making it similar to a mere fiction [...] (ibid.)

One could venture to ask what an archetype or an original image *looks* like, but Kant never elaborates on the notion of an original *image*.

It appears that in the KrV the imagination has nothing whatsoever to do with the representation (even more, the presentation) of an idea or an ideal of reason; even the slightest effort to render an idea tangible (i.e. an appearance) is deemed illusory. What is striking, however, is that the features that render the sensible idea a fiction or a creature of the imagination reappear in the KU under a different light. Artistic expression is no longer incommunicable; nor is the absence of an explanation or, more importantly, a determinate rule a problem (Zammito, 1992: p. 285).²⁶ This is exactly what an aesthetic judgment

²⁶ Zammito (1992) writes that the real problem is the possibility of an a priori or transcendental grounding of feeling. In the KrV, Kant appears not to entertain such a possibility (either neglecting feeling or denying such a possibility). It is only after 1789 that the possibility of a transcendental ground of feeling begins to emerge, culminating in the KU.

refers to: It does not determine anything or set an objective universal rule, but it is nonetheless a priori and necessary, and, more importantly, it is no longer a fiction.

Not only does the ideal of beauty become *the sensible manifestation of an idea* (Angelica Nuzzo, 2006: p. 300), i.e. beauty as the symbol of morality (KU, 5: 351), but, in addition, there emerges the notion of an aesthetic idea (KU, 5: 232) as the *standard* or *criterion* by which we judge an object aesthetically, supplementing theoretical reason with an aesthetic standard or criterion (something like an archetype to which we measure all other images). The sublime does set such an aesthetic standard, and reason has at last found the aesthetic counterpart to its ideas.²⁷

Following Martha Helfer (1996), we could say that, as the presentation of the rule of the imagination's synthesis, the negative presentation manifests our striving to present the idea of reason (Helfer, 1996: p. 45).²⁸ We will soon find out, however, that we are able to present an idea – our striving – not only negatively but also positively: through an aesthetic idea (and consequently, art).

Kant not only welcomes an aesthetic idea but endows it with a force that is equal to that of an idea of reason:

An *aesthetic idea* cannot become a cognition, because it is an *intuition* (of the imagination) for which a concept can never be found adequate. An *idea of reason* can never become a cognition, because it contains a *concept* (of the supersensible) for which no suitable intuition can ever be given.

Now I believe that one could call the aesthetic idea an *inexponible* representation of the imagination, the idea of reason, however, an *indemonstrable* concept of reason. Of both it is presupposed that they are not entirely groundless, but rather (in accordance with the above explanation of an idea in general) are generated in accordance with certain principles of the cognitive faculty to which they belong (the former according to subjective principles, the latter to objective ones). (KU, 5: 342)

An aesthetic idea – this creature of the imagination – resembles a sensible ideal in that it cannot be determined by any concepts, but this time it can be explained – referring to the reflective power of judgment. It has apriority, necessity and universality; that is, it is communicable and sets an (ideal) rule, albeit only paradigmatically. In the KU, the aesthetic idea no longer mediates between various images but rather appears to mediate between various concepts, expanding thought to what is an inexhaustible concept, thus resembling the indefinite character of reason's ideas:

[...] by an aesthetic idea, however, I mean that representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e., *concept*, to be

²⁷ Gasche (2013) goes as far as to claim that the idea of totality or an idea of reason is already at play throughout the entire aesthetic judgment (including beauty).

²⁸ See also: Zuckert, 2007 : p. 316.

adequate to it, which, consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible. – One readily sees that it is the counterpart (pendant) of an *idea of reason*, which is, conversely, a concept to which no *intuition* (representation of the imagination) can be adequate. (KU, 5: 314)

An aesthetic idea eludes language, even comprehensibility – but it is no longer akin to an *incommunicable silhouette*, like the sensible idea. It is rather what moves thought, enlarging it:

Now if we add to a concept a representation of the imagination that belongs to its presentation, but which 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, then in this case the imagination is creative, and sets the faculty of intellectual ideas (reason) into motion, that is, at the instigation of a representation it gives more to think about than can be grasped and made distinct in it (although it does, to be sure, belong to the concept of the object). (KU, 5: 315)

The key to understanding the above is to appreciate the significance of exhibition (*Darstellung*) in the KU.

We already know from the KrV that to exhibit (*darstellen*) an object is to construct it a priori in intuition. This is the case with mathematics: We construct or exhibit a priori in intuition the concept of a triangle, for example (see KrV, 3: 032 / 3: 468), and this is possible because space is an a priori intuition. Far from being an image or a representation, e.g. a picture or an image of a specific triangle, exhibiting (a triangle) is an act or a process by which the imagination mediates between intuition and understanding to present a concept in concreto; it is, moreover, a rule of synthesis, construing the triangle as a singular presentation of the concept “triangle”:

The schema of the triangle can never exist anywhere except in thought, and signifies a rule of the synthesis of the imagination with regard to pure shapes in space. (KrV, 3: 136)²⁹

The mediating role of the imagination between intuition and understanding and its affinity with the power of judgment does not become clear, though, until the KU.

Here, Kant uses the general concept of “hypotyposis” to subsume both schema and symbol under it; the schematism and symbolization are two of the most prominent features of imagination:

All *hypotyposis* (presentation, *subjecto sub adspectum*), as making something sensible, is of one of two kinds: either *schematic*, where to a concept grasped by the understanding the corresponding intuition is given *a priori*; or *symbolic*, where to a concept which only reason can think, and to which no sensible intuition can be adequate, an intuition is attributed with which the power of judgment proceeds in a way merely analogous to that which it observes in

²⁹ Kant never identifies presentation with synthesis, but it is safe to identify presentation with the act of the imagination; the schema thus becomes almost synonymous with presentation. This is made clear in the KU, where *hypotyposis* is identified with presentation (either schematic or symbolic) (KU, 5: 351 / §59) (see also Arno Schubach, 2017).

schematization, i.e., it is merely the rule of this procedure, not of the intuition itself, and thus merely the form of the reflection, not the content, which corresponds to the concept. (KU, 5: 315)

“Hypotyposis,” as a general feature of the power of judgment and the imagination, captures an important feature of transcendental philosophy: a need to make something sensible or tangible and, consequently, the importance of sensibility. Although Kant refers to the power of judgment – it is the power of judgment that subsumes, determines and reflects, after all – it is nonetheless obvious that it is the imagination that is at work when producing schema and, by analogy, symbols.³⁰

What emerges thus far is a constellation of interrelated family concepts: an aesthetic idea, a symbol, and the sublime.³¹ Their affinity lies, on the one hand, in that they presuppose reason and its a priori principle of the absolute or totality: All manifest the striving (the sublime) and, ultimately, the achievement of the imagination in presenting an idea of reason (aesthetic ideas and symbols present the absolute, albeit indirectly). On the other hand, they presuppose the imagination in its productive power.³² The sublime is the feeling produced by the imagination’s failure to represent totality and the subsequent revelation of its freedom; both aesthetic ideas and symbols are manifestations or presentations of the imagination’s freedom in that it produces a presentation that mobilizes thinking, expanding it to an inexhaustible multitude of concepts (KU, 5: 314 / KU, 5: 352) and thus resembling an idea of reason.

Although reason’s ideas cannot be directly presented, or represented, they welcome an indirect presentation as aesthetic ideas or symbols. One way or another, we presuppose a tangible presentation or image that can comprehend – directly or indirectly – every given concept or idea, and it is the imagination that, having suffered the sacrifice of its representing power, recovers as the creative or productive power par excellence. It is in the face of the imagination that sensibility and, ultimately, the human being are finally vindicated.

Thus, imagination emerges as a *self-active* (KU, 5: 240), productive, and creative power that seems to possess a freedom in its own right, one that allows it to finally step beyond nature, creating another one:

The imagination (as a productive cognitive faculty) is, namely, very powerful in creating, as it were, another nature, out of the material which the real one gives it. We entertain ourselves with

³⁰ The role of the imagination in transcendental philosophy deserves a separate exposition. Here I rely on Horstmann’s analysis (2018). See also the work of Eliane Escoubas, where both the imagination and the power of judgment function as mediating terms between Kant’s dichotomies (Escoubas, 1993: p. 56).

³¹ As Makkreel (1997) notes, the sublime foreshadows an aesthetic idea in that it demands an aesthetic comprehension of totality. See also Martha B. Helfer (1996).

³² It is a hidden “kraft,” as Kant says in the KrV (4: 101), within the depths of the human soul. I think that, following the movement of the imagination in the KU, we remove its almost mystical mantle and see it for what it is: the imagination’s creative power.

it when experience seems too mundane to us; we transform the latter, no doubt always in accordance with analogous laws, but also in accordance with principles that lie higher in reason (and which are every bit as natural to us as those in accordance with which the understanding apprehends empirical nature); in this we feel our freedom from the law of association (which applies to the empirical use of that faculty), in accordance with which material can certainly be lent to us by nature, but the latter can be transformed by us into something entirely different, namely into that which steps beyond nature. (KU, 5: 314)³³

Although what the imagination initially feels is *a deprivation of its freedom* – in the aesthetic judgment of the sublime (KU, 5: 269) – it ultimately responds to its sacrifice and feels a sublime pleasure: It is here that the spirit's or mind's (*Gemüt*) free activity is manifested:

Aesthetic purposiveness is the lawfulness of the power of judgment in its *freedom*. The satisfaction in the object depends on the relation in which we would place the imagination: namely, that it entertains the mind by itself in free activity. (KU, 5: 271)

Conclusion

In this paper, I have tried to show how the KU sets in motion the mind or spirit (*Geist*); I have claimed that the spirit mobilizes itself while striving to overstep all boundaries in its effort to comprehend the absolute; it is in this striving – experienced as feeling in the sublime – that we disclose our vocation and, at the same, the idea of humanity; we can thus speak of a striving human being but also of a being that must strive to become human. Both efforts converge in taste, and the sublime is the feeling that reflects this pursuit – the asymmetry between idea and nature and our effort to attain the idea over and above our nature.

The human being of the KU is no longer a suffering being like that in the KpV; it is not a being that must not only rise above its sensibility but also struggle against it in its effort to become the rational agent of morality, free from its inclinations. No, the human being of the KU is one that embraces its sensibility – vindicates it (through the imagination). It is a being that needs to intuit concepts and ideas to be able to comprehend them – and ultimately, itself. More importantly, it is a being that is in constant movement.

On the one hand, the epistemological or transcendental subject of knowledge – despite being spontaneous – synthesizes according to rules of the understanding; the conditions of the possibility of experience and its objects secure knowledge of the world – a rather static or stable image of the world. On the other hand, the practical subject of morality – despite being free – must conform to the moral law (if it is to act rationally). Both subjects, the theoretical and the practical, result in a certain solidification; the aesthetic subject, by contrast – if I may call it that – seems rather unsolidified, liquefied, seems to be in motion,

³³ See also 7: 167ff. (§28. On the power of imagination).

to embrace paradoxical notions such as purposiveness without purpose or something that repels and yet attracts at the same time (the sublime).

Beauty animates the spirit's powers (KU, 5: 222 / 5: 239); it is the sublime, however, that sets the spirit in an almost frantic motion (KU, 5: 247). It vibrates it; it repels and at the same time attracts it: It allows it to feel the abyss. In the imagination's effort to comprehend the absolute it discovers its own freedom, and although reason prohibits us from representing the absolute, the imagination ultimately succeeds in presenting – rather than representing – it. Art or an aesthetic idea sets the spirit in motion and lets it feel pleasure in its freedom (EEKU, 20: 238 / KU, 5: 247 / KU, 5: 328-9).

Reason in the KrV experienced a similar dizziness in its effort to conceive of a comprehensive notion of all knowledge and concepts (the idea of totality), ascending to higher and higher principles until it grasped (in its own movement of the syllogism), its appropriate principle – the idea. But it is in the KU that we feel this ascent: It is not reason but rather the imagination that sets out to transcend every boundary in its effort to represent the idea of reason. Its failure (producing a negative feeling) is at the same time its achievement: The imagination feels its limitlessness and, ultimately, its freedom (producing at the same time a positive feeling) – and this feeling is the sublime. What is more, its failure and its negative feeling is, at the same time, a positive one since we do not only grasp our supersensible vocation but we ultimately succeed in presenting (as an aesthetic idea) the idea of totality, securing, this way, pleasure.

Reflecting thus on the feeling of the sublime we reclaim the human being as a whole, both rational and animal, that is, corporeal; a being that strives to obtain the absolute and finally succeeds, albeit only aesthetically.³⁴

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³⁴ I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their suggestions and comments that helped improve this paper.

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Exploring the Deduction of the Category of Totality from within the Analytic of the Sublime

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Abstract

I defend an interpretation of the first Critique's category of totality based on Kant's analysis of totality in the third Critique's Analytic of the mathematical sublime. I show, firstly, that in the latter Kant delineates the category of totality — however general it may be — in relation to the essentially singular standpoint of the subject. Despite the fact that sublime and categorial totality have a significantly different scope and function, they do share such a singular baseline. Secondly, I argue that Kant's note (in the first Critique's metaphysical deduction) that deriving the category of totality requires *a special act of the understanding* can be seen as a 'mark' of that singular baseline. This way, my aesthetical 'detour' has the potential of revealing how the subjective aspects of object-constitution might be accounted for in the very system of the categories (of quantity) itself.

Key words

The mathematical sublime, totality, category, object, singularity.

Introduction

My purpose is to show how an account of the mathematical sublime, as expounded by Kant in the third Critique, can give rise to a more focused take on Kant's notion of totality

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(i.e., allness) in the first Critique’s metaphysical deduction of the categories.¹ It goes without saying that the categories of quantity have already been scrutinized profusely. More often than not, however, interpretations fail to delineate what totality — the third moment of the categories of quantity — exactly amounts to. To make sense of Kant’s metaphysical deduction of the category of totality, one must undoubtedly consider its derivation from (one or several of) the pure functions of judgment.² Yet the widespread debate as to from which function of judgment — the universal or the singular one — the category of totality must be derived, and how such a derivation should be understood, seems to stand unconnected to the question as to what categorial totality *is*. That Kant might envisage a specific *kind* of totality, is too often left implicit.

In function of further disentangling this issue — an entire project indeed — I propose to make a start with the question what categorial totality could or should *not* be. In the spirit of Kant’s own stance towards negativity as a constitutive, hence positive philosophical force, I propose to accordingly delineate categorial totality.³ To that end, I find inspiration in Kant’s account of the mathematical sublime as a form of totality that is, namely, by no means categorial.⁴

¹ This paper joins the established scholarly project set to investigate the epistemological relevance of the first part of the third Critique, allowing for, in the words of Kukla, a ‘retrospective re-reading’ of the first Critique (Kukla 2006, p. 23). See, for instance, Longuenesse (Longuenesse 1998; 2005), Ginsborg (Ginsborg 1990; 2019) and Kukla (Kukla 2006). From these endeavors, however, the sublime is often remarkably absent. The spirit of this paper is in that sense perhaps closest to Pillow, who contends that the sublime is tied to “the uncanny Other ‘outside’ our conceptual grasp” and that it thereby, *nonetheless*, “advances our sense-making pursuits even while eschewing unified, conceptual determination” (Pillow 2000, p. 2). I also agree with Zuckert when she argues that the sublime, “as an experience of human cognitive limitations, [seems] pertinent to Kant’s theoretical project of critique, namely his attempt to delimit the scope of human knowledge” (Zuckert 2019, p. 102).

² In the metaphysical deduction of the first Critique Kant derives the twelve pure categories of the understanding — which account for the constitution of the object — from the twelve forms of judgment. This derivation is at the heart of his transcendental idealism, as it aims to show the *a priori* character and pure origin of the categories, i.e., that they cannot be derived from experience, but instead must be derived from the general laws of thinking. Apart from that, the metaphysical deduction describes the basic features of the system of the categories, considering how the categories relate to each other in each group (see *KrV*, B 91-116).

³ See, e.g., the first Critique’s Table of Nothing (*KrV*, B 346-9) as an exposition of what *does not* count as an object, hereby at the same time disclosing what *does*.

⁴ One may wonder if this choice is really best suited for the methodology of negatively delineating categorial totality. Another, perhaps more obvious strategy to achieve such a negative delineation would be to compare categorial totality, developed as a pure *concept* of the understanding, not with the mathematical sublime, but with totality as an *idea* of reason — this is De Vleeschauwer’s interesting yet volatile suggestion (De Vleeschauwer 1931, p. 59). In this regard, it is important to note that such a strategy is grafted on the assumption that the faculty of pure reason is — supposedly quite unlike the understanding — detached from the faculty of sensibility. Contrary to the understanding, namely, reason has a less limited or even un-limited extension. In that sense, totality as an idea of reason could indeed serve to negatively delineate totality as a category of the understanding, whereby the latter could be distinguished from the former by reference to its necessary relation with sensible intuitions — necessary, namely, in function of constituting objects. Such a methodological choice would, however, have a much harder time pinpointing *how* discursive faculties *can* (and must) relate to sensibility. Indeed, so does the third Critique suggest that, apart from a determining (e.g., categorial) relation of totality to sensible intuitions, there can also be a reflecting (e.g., sublime) one. This means that the different notions of totality can be delineated not only by asking *whether* they must be related to sensibility, but also *how* they are related to it. In function thereof, investigating categorial totality by

Kant's account of the mathematical sublime does two interesting things for my purposes. Firstly, it engages with a kind of totality that is indeed not categorial — with a kind of totality that is, in other words, *supposedly* not epistemologically relevant. Secondly, in said engagement Kant nonetheless presupposes some kind of 'common ground' between the mathematical sublime as a form of aesthetical totality on the one hand and categorial (epistemological) totality on the other hand. In that regard, I argue that the Analytic of the sublime can be read as subtly indicating points of convergence and divergence prevailing between the mathematical sublime and the category of totality, allowing to shed a new light on the latter. My analysis of the points of divergence is centered around Kant's indications that the mathematical sublime must involve the idea of *absolute* totality, giving way to the qualification that categorial totality requires relativity and limitation. Then I move on to identify points of convergence, centered around Kant's prominent yet underexplored claim that, in the end, "alle Größenschätzung der Gegenstände der Natur ist zuletzt ästhetisch (d. i. subjectiv und nicht objectiv bestimmt)" (*KU*, AA 05: 251.17-19). In what follows, I take this to imply that although categorial and sublime totality are significantly different, their origin is seemingly identical — both originate, namely, in the essentially singular position of a judging subject.

From this, I move on to indicate how reading the Analytic of the sublime along these lines substantially contributes to the study of the metaphysical deduction of the category of totality. More precisely, I try to shed a light on Kant's remark that deriving the category of totality requires 'a special act of the understanding' (*KrV*, B 111). This leads me to defend the claim that Kant's system of transcendental logic is in fact marked by the singularity involved in categorial totality.

(I). The Sublime

(A). Reflecting and Determining Judgments

Studying the sublime is to engage with the power of judgment in its capacity as an autonomous faculty. This means, first of all, that one deals with the power of judgment as

looking at the mathematical sublime promises to yield much more specific insights than would a mere investigation of totality as an idea of reason. As for the mathematical sublime, we will see that the totality at play here is intricately connected to sensibility and imagination as much as the category of totality is (as for the latter, see the first Critique's Transcendental Deduction (*KrV*, A 95-130/B 116-169) and the chapter on the Schematism (*KrV*, B 176-187)). In both cases, however, the intricate connection is seemingly established *in a highly unique and different manner*. As a consequence, such a juxtaposition allows for a more focused delineation. To delineate categorial totality by comparing it with totality as an idea of reason would, by contrast, not bring us as far, since in the latter case it seems that there is no intricate relation to sensibility *to begin with* — but this is only an assumption, not unworthy of further investigation. Fortunately, however, as the experience of the sublime cannot be understood without at the same time explaining the role of reason in it (cf. *infra*), the *idea* of totality must in either case be addressed by my analysis. To delineate *categorial* totality by way of a comparison with *sublime* totality is therefore still to compare it with the *idea* of totality. Thus, my methodology by no means sidelines the faculty of reason.

operating solely in accordance with its own *a priori* principle, namely the principle of purposiveness. This concerns what Kant calls the *reflecting* power of judgment, essentially tied to the subjective feelings of pleasure and displeasure. On this subjective basis, relations with other faculties can be maintained, evoking the aesthetical judgments of the beautiful and the sublime, treated by the first part of the third Critique (*EEKU*, AA 20: 248.13-250.18).

Only when the power of judgment makes use of *a priori* principles proper to *other* faculties, operating schematically instead of technically, are we dealing with its *determining* capacity. Already in the first Critique, it is in fact the power of judgment that warrants the subsumption of specific intuitions under general concepts, respectively delivered by sensibility and the understanding. By way of this, the sensible given is determined by the discursive categories, bringing about the constitution of the object.

More crucially, however, if the general or determining element is absent, there is still *judgment* at play. What remains, namely, is the power of judgment *überhaupt*. If only the specific is available to the power of judgment, the latter searches for something general that can be considered adequate with regard to the specific. This quest, stipulated in the third Critique as the *reflecting judgment*, is therefore to be called the *proper*, more *basic* power of judgment. In a sense, the structure of the reflecting judgment underlies the structure of the determining judgment — and not the other way around. The latter is, as it were, a dressed-up version of the former. According to Longuenesse, this asymmetrical relation between them is essential (Longuenesse 1998, pp. 162-66). In line with her, I contend that an account of the determining judgment must be guided by an account of the reflecting one.

Moreover, I agree with De Vleeschauwer when he suggests that the mind — whether or not the general element is available to the power of judgment — is in fact not quite *satisfied* with the mere determination of the sensible given in function of constituting an object (De Vleeschauwer 1931, pp. 315-317). The mind, namely, also wonders about the meaning and significance of these given appearances themselves. Determining judgments only account for why certain appearances become constituted as objects, not for why these appearances are themselves given. And the faculty of the understanding, from which the determining categories flow, is not accommodated for tackling this concern. In function thereof, precisely the reflecting judgment, resorting to the principle of purposiveness, must be put in motion. If nature is approached by the principle of purposiveness, given appearances can be seen, for example, as necessarily belonging to the natural world as a whole.

(B). Sublimity and Purposiveness

The judgment of sublimity fully adheres to this principle of purposiveness. It entails the treatment of the sensible given insofar as it does *not* qualify for object-constitution or

conceptual determination. Kant is adamant, already in the First Introduction to the third Critique, that sublimity has a purposiveness of its own: “Gleichwohl würde das Urtheil über das Erhabene in der Natur von der Eintheilung der Ästhetik der reflectirenden Urtheilskraft nicht auszuschließen sein, weil es auch eine subjective Zweckmäßigkeit ausdrückt, die nicht auf einem Begriffe vom Objecte beruht” (*EEKU*, AA 20: 250.15-18).

The sublime involves, more precisely, the feeling of the “innern Zweckmäßigkeit in der Anlage der Gemüthskräfte” (*EEKU*, AA 20: 250.14). As for these *Gemüthskräfte*, the judgment of the sublime entails, moreover, that the given appearances of nature must serve a purposiveness with regard to our faculty of reason. This purposiveness is manifested by the reflecting capacity to represent a sublimity (*eine Erhabenheit*) in objects that is strictly speaking not to be represented in them. According to Kant, namely, the judgment of sublimity presupposes *Geistesgefühl* — the feeling of *spirit* (*EEKU*, AA 20: 250.33-34).

At the beginning of his exposition of the sublime (*KU*, AA 05: 244-247),⁵ we learn that the beautiful is characterized by a concern for the form of the object in its *limitation*, while the sublime is (or can also be) characterized by a concern for the formlessness of the object as it is *unlimited*.⁶ More crucially, the mathematical sublime entails unlimited formlessness that serves *nonetheless* to be thought as a totality (*Totalität*). Unlike the beautiful, the (mathematical) sublime is seen to be developed as a primarily quantitative issue, predicated on a conception of totality not involving limitation. Considering the sublime as a totality precisely by reference to the absence of limitation — namely, as constitutive for the kind of totality involved — is, according to Kant, to deal with totality *as an idea of reason*: “so daß das Schöne für die Darstellung eines unbestimmten Verstandesbegriffs, das Erhabene aber eines dergleichen Vernunftbegriffs genommen zu werden scheint” (*KU*, AA 05: 244.27-29). And whereas the judgment of beauty is often seen as a ‘predicate’ of the object contemplated, this cannot so easily be said of the judgment of the sublime. As already mentioned, Kant does not hesitate to contend that the objects we call sublime in fact only serve for the presentation of sublimity as a feeling of *Geist*. He therefore unforgivingly concludes: “[s]o kann der weite, durch Stürme empörte Ocean nicht erhaben genannt werden (*KU*, AA 05: 245.35-36). This potentially frustrating statement cannot be understood in isolation from Kant’s remark that the limitlessness represented in the object is nonetheless (*doch*) — in other words quite paradoxically — *thought* as a totality. Indeed, “denn das *eigentliche* Erhabene kann in keiner sinnlichen Form enthalten sein” (*KU*, AA 05: 245.31-32; italics added). To represent limitlessness in an object as a totality is something that simply denies the bounds of our sensibility. Technically speaking, this means that it is inappropriate to call empirical objects like seas sublime, no matter how unlimited their width may seem. An incredibly wide sea is never

⁵ As it is my aim to further disentangle the notion of totality, be it preliminarily, I concentrate here on the mathematical sublime, although the dynamical sublime (treated by §§28-29) should not necessarily count as irrelevant.

⁶ Quite contrary to the Guyer-Matthews translation, Kant himself writes that “das Erhabene ist dagegen *auch* an einem formlosen Gegenstande zu finden [...]” (*KU*, AA 05: 246.24-25; italics added). In this text, however, I deal with the sublime in this specific capacity of formlessness nevertheless thought as a totality.

really unlimited. It is only potentially *giving rise* to a felt absence of limitation, in which case it is legitimately called sublime in the mathematical sense.

As if to make up for the limitation proper to sensible presentations of objects, the reflecting mind is encouraged or tempted (*angereizt*) to leave sensibility behind and to occupy itself “mit Ideen, die höhere Zweckmäßigkeit enthalten” (*KU*, AA 05: 246.03-05). Kant nuances that the sublime entails, in that sense, the use — or perhaps rather *misuse* — of sensible intuitions “um eine von der Natur ganz unabhängige Zweckmäßigkeit in uns selbst fühlbar zu machen” (*KU*, AA 05: 246.24-25). So quite in line with its reflective rather than determinative origin, sublimity should not so much be considered as the predicate of an object, as it should be considered as entailing the subject’s attempt to feel its own supersensible nature. This means, as Zammito (Zammito 1992, p. 300) rightly pinpoints, that in seeking the supersensible in the sensible object of nature, sublimity fundamentally involves what Kant calls *Subreption* — namely the “*Verwechslung einer Achtung für das Object statt der für die Idee der Menschheit in unserem Subjecte*” (*KU*, AA 05: 257.22-23). By way of this ‘subreptive’ move, the sublime experience does the impossible: it makes our supersensible nature literally sensible or *anschaulich* (*KU*, AA 05: 257.26).

For Kant, the judgment of sublimity in no way concerns *aboutness* regarding the object, this much is clear. What he is after, is to lay bare how judging objects aesthetically stands in relation to the feeling of the sublime (*KU*, AA 05: 247.04-05). The suggestion seems to be that to have a certain grasp of objects in a merely aesthetical way — i.e., a grasp of objects not configured to determining judgments of cognition — can give rise to acknowledging the presence in ourselves of yet another discursive power, a power, moreover, that explicitly transgresses any ‘sensible’ grasp. The sublime involves the annulment of what occasions it to begin with — indeed, the sublime experience must *start* from sensibility but *move away* from it at the same time. This dynamic, though seemingly paradoxical, is essential. It allows for setting the Kantian faculties up against each other so that their various features, possibilities, and limitations can be explored — without exclusion of the understanding.

I propose, namely, that the judgment of the sublime points to a certain inadequacy not only of the determining functions of the faculty of the imagination, as Kant himself indicates (*KU*, AA 05: 258.15-16), but also of the determining functions of the faculty of the understanding. In what follows, I argue that a further delineation of the category of totality — as a central concept of the understanding — can emerge from a delineation of sublime totality. I argue, more precisely, that the category of totality is unfit for representing the constitution of overly vast objects insofar as they transgress the comprehensive powers of the imagination, and that this inadequacy clears the room for a totality bringing with it the feeling of sublimity. This juxtaposition of categorial and sublime totality proves, eventually, to disclose something about the nature of the former (and the epistemological significance of the latter).

(II). Kant's Multilayered Account of the Estimation of Totality

(A). Differentiating between Numerical and Aesthetical Estimation of Totality

In paradoxically beginning with as well as moving away from sensibility, the true face of the sublime is revealed. This peculiar dynamic lays the groundwork for Kant to characterize the mathematical sublime, in §25, as a totality that is absolutely great or *schlechthin groß* (KU, AA 05: 248.05). In that regard, Kant qualifies that “Groß sein [...] und eine Größe sein, sind ganz verschiedene Begriffe (*magnitudo* und *quantitas*)” (KU, AA 05: 248.05-07). This distinction between *Groß sein* and *eine Größe sein* is of importance. To say that something is great (or small, or medium-sized, etc.) belongs, says Kant, to the power of judgment proper, as this predication does not consider *how* great something is. How great something is, namely, is a mathematical judgment of *quantitas*, which pertains to the faculty of the understanding. *Groß sein* concerns the merely subjective (be it universally communicable), non-mathematical judgment *that* something is great.

Seemingly, *Groß sein* is synonymous with *magnitudo*, while *eine Größe sein* is synonymous with *quantitas*. In keeping with the first Critique, *quantitas* is concerned with the question *how* great something is. It is a comparative, numerical concept of the understanding. In the first Critique, however, the same comparative concept of *quantitas* is also explicitly differentiated from *quantum* (see *KrV*, B 202-203, B 205). Yet in the first Critique, *quantum* is presented as synonymous with *eine Größe sein* and not, as logic would dictate, with *Groß sein*. And in the Analytic of the mathematical sublime, the difference between *quantum* and *quantitas* is often left implicit.

I propose to solve this initial problem by specifying the dichotomy between *Groß sein* and *eine Größe sein* in terms of a trichotomy. First of all, namely, *Groß sein* — or *magnitudo* — is not a concept of the understanding, whereas *quantitas* and *quantum* are. In the first Critique, *quantum* is defined as *eine Größe* involving “das Bewusstsein des mannigfaltigen Gleichartigen in der Anschauung überhaupt, so fern dadurch die Vorstellung eines Objects zuerst möglich wird” (*KrV*, B 203). *Quantum*, therefore, corresponds here with the category of totality (which is defined by Kant as “[...] die Vielheit, als Einheit betrachtet” (*KrV*, B 111). Cf. *infra*). *Quantitas*, on the other hand, is defined as *die Größe* that concerns “die Antwort auf die Frage: *wie* groß etwas sei” (*KrV*, B 205; italics added). Therefore, I suggest that what is called *quantitas* is nothing but *quantum* in comparison with another *quantum* insofar as the latter is considered as a measure (cf. *infra*).⁷ Both can be seen as standing in opposition to *Groß sein* — to simply being great — which pertains to the power of judgment proper.

⁷ Guyer and Matthews (2000) have chosen to translate *eine Größe sein* with ‘to be a magnitude’ and to translate *Groß sein* with ‘to be great’, leaving behind the concept of *quantitas* and attributing the English translation of *magnitudo* to the latter’s opposite. In the English language, this makes sense, but it does

Kant suggests that we must interpret the judgment of the sublime, involving that a certain totality be *absolutely* great (i.e., great without comparison), as a continuation of this merely subjective, non-categorical judgment. Both the judgment that something is simply great and the judgment that something is absolutely great escape the mathematical take on size, which involves a conceptual unit of measure (*Maße*) that enables numerical comparison (*KU*, AA 05: 249.28-33). Technically speaking, however, the latter modality of mathematical estimation is always at the horizon of the mind:

Hier sieht man leicht: daß nichts in der Natur gegeben werden könne, so groß als es auch von uns beurtheilt werde, was nicht, in einem andern Verhältnisse betrachtet, bis zum Unendlich=Kleinen abgewürdigt werden könnte; und umgekehrt nichts so klein, was sich nicht in Vergleichung mit noch kleinern Maßstäben für unsere Einbildungskraft bis zu einer Weltgröße erweitern ließe. Die Teleskope haben uns die erstere, die Mikroskope die letztere Bemerkung zu machen reichlichen Stoff an die Hand gegeben (*KU*, AA 05: 250.13-20).

What Kant appears to suggest, in other words, is that the mind will always consider the mathematical comparison of *quanta* in terms of size to be an option. Judging, then, that something is simply great or perhaps even absolutely great counts as a kind of suspension of this otherwise very present aspiration of the mind. But although both suspend the mathematical take on the size of totalities, to say that something is *great* is not entirely the same as to say that something is *absolutely great*. A possible way of distinguishing between them is connected to the fact that the absolutely great functions as an idea belonging to the faculty of reason, whereas the simply great only flows from the power of judgment proper.

Both of these estimations of size, however, are grounded in their opposition to *quantitas*. On the one hand, the judgment that *x* is simply great is grafted on the suspension of the otherwise inescapable condition that everything in intuition must be *suitable* for numerical comparison qua size. On the other hand, the judgment that *x* is absolutely great involves, furthermore, that *x* is not only great, but great “über alle Vergleichung” (*KU*, AA 05: 248.09-10). Contrary to *Groß sein*, namely, *schlechthin Groß sein* does not even *qualify* for comparison, hence for being considered as *quantitas*. This forces the power of judgment in question to escape the bounds of intuition altogether, installing a play between the power of judgment and the faculty of reason. Only this specific configuration is constitutive of the experience of the sublime, as “[n]ichts [...] was Gegenstand der Sinnen sein kann, ist, auf diesen Fuß betrachtet, erhaben zu nennen” (*KU*, AA 05: 250.21-22).

Such a play, alliance, or plain cooperation between the power of judgment and the faculty of reason seems to obstruct the former’s possible alliance with the faculty of the understanding. Indeed, the power of judgment cannot at the same time be combined with

complicate things a bit. To avoid any misunderstandings, I have chosen not to use the English term ‘magnitude’ in this text.

concepts of the understanding — amounting to numerically comparative (or mathematical) estimation of size — and with ideas of reason, amounting to absolute estimation of size.

In all of these cases, however, the faculty of the imagination plays an essential role. As for the sublime, Kant maintains that there is “[...] in unserer Einbildungskraft ein Bestreben zum Fortschritte ins Unendliche, in unserer Vernunft aber ein Anspruch auf absolute Totalität” (*KU*, AA 05: 250.22-24). This striving of the imagination, together with reason’s claim to absolute totality, is ratified precisely by the very inadequacy (*Unangemessenheit*) of the power of judgment for estimating the size of things of the sensible world (*KU*, AA 05: 250.25-26). This very inadequacy is due to the fact that the power of judgment is here considered as a reflecting judgment, hence a judgment *without* making use of concepts of the understanding. So, to Kant’s contention that the power of judgment is inadequate for estimating the size of *quanta* one must add the qualification that this is only so *without the help of the understanding*. This inadequacy, thus tied to the exclusion of the understanding, then prompts to “die Erweckung des Gefühls eines übersinnlichen Vermögens in uns” (AA 05: 250.26-27). The reflecting power of judgment resorts to this feeling, then, to accommodate for its own inadequacy.

(B). *Connecting Numerical and Aesthetical Estimation of Totality — A Singular Baseline*

Kant opens §26 (*KU*, AA 05: 251, and further) with a subtly different approach to the distinction between the two basic ways or types of estimating sizes, only one of which he deems to be required for the experience of sublimity. Now, as §25 already disclosed, in order to know *how* great something is, one must make use of the mathematical type of estimation. Numbers, relative to a standard of measurement, allow for mathematical comparison of totalities. Mathematical estimation of size is therefore *conceptual*, while aesthetical estimation occurs merely in intuition, or *with the eye*. In §26, however, Kant suggests that the former — transcendently grounded in the first Critique’s category of totality — is somehow *dependent* on the latter. The distinction holding between them is, apparently, by no means hermetical.

Kant maintains that any numerical estimation according to a unit or standard of measurement also requires the determination of a *basic* measure if it is to be objective. He seems to suggest, in that regard, that finding and using such a basic measure, by way of which the activity of measurement can take place, can never be accomplished by mathematical-numerical estimation in the latter’s purely *logical* capacity. Kant subtly states, namely, that any basic measure must be predicated on what can be captured immediately in one intuition:

Allein da die Größe des Maßes doch als bekannt angenommen werden muß, so würden, wenn diese nun wiederum nur durch Zahlen, deren Einheit ein anderes Maß sein müßte, mithin mathematisch geschätzt werden sollte, wir niemals ein erstes oder Grundmaß, mithin auch keinen bestimmten Begriff von einer gegebenen Größe haben können. Also

mu[ß] die Schätzung der Größe des Grundmaßes bloß darin bestehen, daß man sie in einer Anschauung unmittelbar fassen und durch Einbildungskraft zur Darstellung der Zahlbegriffe brauchen kann (*KU*, AA 05: 251.10-17).

I take it, therefore, that mathematical estimation is to be distinguished from logical estimation, whereby the former is only partially grounded in the latter, since a basic measure delivered by the faculty of sensibility is required as well.⁸

Herewith, Kant interestingly brings the two types of estimation, mathematical and aesthetical, together. Kant is adamant, furthermore, that “alle Größenschätzung der Gegenstände der Natur ist zuletzt ästhetisch (d. i. subjectiv und nicht objectiv bestimmt) (*KU*, AA 05: 251.17-19). Contrary to logical estimation, for which there is no greatest measure, as it is a merely theoretical construct of the understanding, the aesthetical estimation of totality is in that regard necessarily constrained by the *singular* position of a sensory subject. Therefore, one should in fact extract three types of estimation from the Analytic of the mathematical sublime: (i) logical estimation; (ii) aesthetical estimation; (iii) and mathematical estimation, whereby (iii) seems to be a combination of (i) and (ii).

It is quite pertinent to note that for the mathematical estimation of size, considered in its purely logical capacity, there is “kein Größtes (denn die Macht der Zahlen geht ins Unendliche); aber für die ästhetische Größenschätzung giebt es allerdings ein Größtes” (*KU*, AA 05: 251.20-22). When the unlimited logical estimation of size transgresses the limits of an aesthetically basic measure, what ensues is the feeling of sublimity: “und von diesem sage ich: daß, wenn es als absolutes Maß, über das kein größeres subjectiv (dem beurtheilenden Subject) möglich sei, beurtheilt wird, es die Idee des Erhabenen bei sich führe” (*KU*, AA 05: 251.22-25).

Despite the opposition between aesthetical and mathematical estimation — an opposition that is indeed constitutive of the feeling of sublimity — Kant does in fact also contend, quite strikingly for my purposes, that mathematical estimation must not be understood as *fully* distinct from the aesthetical one. If mathematical estimation is partly grounded in aesthetical estimation, like Kant does indeed suggest, I take this to mean that the former *rests* on the latter so as to make its numerical concepts objective. The singularity of the purely aesthetical estimation of size comes forward as a baseline for the estimation of both sublime and mathematical totality.

Some scholars, however, might refuse to accept this subtle intertwinement. Allison, for example, puts much more weight on the qualification that “the reflecting judgment that *something is simply great* does not serve for a logical, that is, mathematically determinate, estimation of magnitude, but only for an aesthetic one” (Allison 2004, p. 312). Although this is not wrong *per se*, Allison does give the impression that subjective estimation, that is to say estimation *with the eye*, can in no way (partially) underly, or even be seen as plainly

⁸ See *KU*, AA 05 251.09, 254.17, where Kant mentions *logische* Größenschätzung. However, only rarely does Kant distinguish between *logische* and *mathematische* Größenschätzung consistently and explicitly. One must infer from the context which one is at play. But in the end, *logische* Größenschätzung is seemingly nothing but *mathematische* Größenschätzung *as conceived in isolation from* imagination and sensibility.

relevant for mathematical estimation. All the while Allison admits, in relation to mathematical estimation, that “the basic unit of measure must itself be determined merely aesthetically” (Allison 2004, p. 316), yet is hereby not lead to acknowledge that between aesthetical and mathematical estimation a connection should nonetheless be presupposed. His account stubbornly adheres to the hermetical distinction between the two types of estimation. I would say that such is only superficially valuable. More specifically, my analysis clarifies that a hermetical distinction, if any, must rather be presupposed to hold between (i) mathematical estimation in its purely logical capacity and (ii) aesthetical estimation, with (iii) mathematical estimation standing in between. Unfortunately, Allison seems to equate (i) and (iii). Allison specifies, moreover, that “the demand for totality” proper to the sublime comes with “an additional requirement for which the understanding has no need, namely, comprehension in one intuition (...)” (Allison 2004, p. 230). Here, Allison sharply disconnects estimation of totality on the level of the understanding from any aesthetical, singular grasp of the object whatsoever. I take this to be the result of his un-attentive equation of (i) and (iii). To lay bare the epistemological relevance of Kant’s account of the sublime is of course not Allison’s objective. Perhaps his otherwise lucid account is thus not damaged by sidelining Kant’s suggestion that mathematical estimation is, in a way, reliant on aesthetical estimation. Nonetheless Allison’s account does block the way to conceive of mathematical estimation of size and, in a second move, categorial totality, as partially reliant on the singular position of a subject’s sensory, comprehensive capacities.

(C). The Singularity of the Imagination

Now, to further substantiate and elaborate on my hypothesis that mathematical estimation of totality, if it is to be objective, must share such a subjective ‘baseline’ with aesthetical estimation, I must also address the role of the power of the imagination. In that regard, Kant adds quite lucidly: “Die Einbildungskraft schreitet in der Zusammensetzung, die zur Größenvorstellung erforderlich ist, von selbst, ohne daß ihr etwas hinderlich wäre, ins Unendliche fort; der Verstand aber leitet sie durch Zahlbegriffe, wozu jene das Schema hergeben muß” (*KU*, AA 05: 253.28-31).

Now, Kant adds that if the imagination — proper to the subjective determination of estimation just discussed — is *not* guided by the understanding, therefore *not* providing a schema, and thus advances to infinity without hindrance, the mind listens to the voice of reason in itself (*KU*, AA 05: 254.09). As a matter of fact, the imagination’s unhindered advancement to infinity is theoretically close to the idea of absoluteness. This theoretical kinship between infinity and absoluteness is due to our faculty of reason: “Das gegebene Unendliche aber dennoch ohne Widerspruch auch nur denken zu können, dazu wird ein Vermögen, das selbst übersinnlich ist, im menschlichen Gemüthe erfordert” (*KU*, AA 05: 254.35-37). Indeed, in the first Critique Kant contends that, as to infinity, “die successive Synthesis der Einheit in Durchmessung eines Quantum niemals vollendet sein kann” (*KrV*,

B 460). Precisely because the categorial synthesis of infinity into an object cannot be *completed*, infinity can only be considered as an absolute totality thought by reason.⁹

Interestingly enough, due to its logical capacity, mathematical estimation (see *KU*, AA 05: 254.10) is, much like the imagination's apprehensive powers, capable of proceeding infinitely as well. However, in line with its need for a subjective basic measure, mathematical estimation of totality seems in turn to be without objective value if not related to the *comprehension* carried out by imagination:

Anschaulich ein Quantum in die Einbildungskraft aufzunehmen, um es zum Maße oder als Einheit zur Größenschätzung durch Zahlen brauchen zu können, dazu gehören zwei Handlungen dieses Vermögens: Auffassung (*apprehensio*) und Zusammenfassung (*comprehensio aesthetica*). Mit der Auffassung hat es keine Noth: denn damit kann es ins Unendliche gehen; aber die Zusammenfassung wird immer schwerer, je weiter die Auffassung fortrückt, und gelangt bald zu ihrem Maximum, nämlich dem ästhetisch=größten Grundmaße der Größenschätzung. [...] so verliert sie auf einer Seite eben so viel, als sie auf der andern gewinnt, und in der Zusammenfassung ist ein Größtes, über welches sie nicht hinauskommen kann (*KU*, AA 05: 251.32-252.09).

Whereas in §25 the singular baseline of mathematical estimation was explained in terms of aesthetical estimation, it is now explained in terms of the faculty of the imagination. When the imagination's subjective, intuitive attempts at comprehension perish under the understanding's conceptual stride towards infinite numerical progression, *both* loose something: the imagination obviously finds itself obliged to pull comprehension back into apprehension, giving way to the feeling of sublimity, while the understanding hereby loses its relation to the object of intuition. Namely, the infinite progression of numerical measures is one thing; its imaginative schematization *in relation to the singularity of sensible intuitions* so as to generate a unified, hence totalized object, is another.

In a sense, the sublime is due to the imagination's natural advancement to infinity as much as to its failure to comprehend this self-produced infinity as a totality without the aid of another (discursive) faculty. Therefore, Kant maintains that although nature is called

⁹ Yet on Crowther's "austere reading" the role of the infinite would be redundant here (Crowther 1989, pp. 104-106). On Crowther's account, reason would not require additional theoretical support from the imagination's stride to infinity in order to develop totality. Here, Crowther maintains quite unproblematically that reason is able to attain totality without the imagination's help. However, he also argues that this involves "comprehension of the phenomenal totality of any given magnitude in a single whole of intuition—that is, irrespective of whether or not it is to be used as a measure in the estimation of magnitude" (Crowther 1989, p. 101). This is flawed because in the Analytic of the sublime Kant intends to connect reason's idea of totality to the sensible dynamics of the imagination (e.g., in the latter's stride to infinity); and more importantly, because Crowther confuses the concept of totality as a concept of the understanding with totality as an idea of reason, as Allison rightly remarks (Allison 2004, p. 397). In this regard, agreeing with Crowther would be a step back in attempting to analyze the notion of totality. I do however completely agree with Crowther when he contends, quite in line with my aim, and pace Allison, that "while Kant discusses this process [of apprehension and comprehension] only in relation to the attempt to present infinity as an absolute measure, it must also apply in relation to our attempts to grasp the phenomenal totality of *any* object in a single whole of intuition" (Crowther 1989, p. 102). I want to stress, however, that this still requires a thorough differentiation of (i) totality conceived by the understanding from (i) totality conceived by reason.

sublime when the intuition of its appearances prompts to the idea of infinity, he qualifies that such cannot take place except “durch die Unangemessenheit selbst der größten Bestrebung unserer Einbildungskraft in der Größenschätzung eines Gegenstandes” (*KU*, AA 05: 255.16-18). If the imagination is tied to numerical concepts of the understanding, the estimation of the size of an object can be successful. This ‘successful’ estimation then makes a resort to reason redundant. This informs us that only the annulment of the imagination’s alliance with the understanding can yield an alliance with the faculty of reason, thus installing the experience of the sublime.¹⁰ In this regard, Vandenaabee specifies the experience of the sublime as a ‘limit experience’ (Vandenaabee 2015, p. 85). This is crucial, but I want to add that the experience of the sublime comes forward, more specifically, as necessarily accompanied by the acknowledgement of the limitations of our *faculties*, namely of sensibility, the understanding, and between them the power of the imagination. The sublime experience rests on the feeling of the limitations and inadequacies of these faculties, immediately heralding a role for the faculty reason, and its accompaniment by yet another feeling — the feeling of *Geist* (*EEKU*, AA 20: 250.33-34). The *limitlessness* that accompanies the sublime owes, in other words, much to the fact that it is at the same time grounded in *an experience of limit*.

(III). Sublime and Categorical Totality

(A). From Mathematical Estimation to the Category of Totality

But let us take things a bit further. I read Kant’s account of sublime totality not only as revelatory with regard to the understanding’s mathematical estimation of totality. It could also reveal something about the *category* of totality itself. What kind of totality is the first Critique’s metaphysical deduction concerned with? What transcendental procedure might be presupposed to underly the derivation of this category? These problems, so I propose, are close to Kant’s account of the singular baseline of mathematical estimation of size just discussed. Let me first reiterate a key point with regard to the imagination: “Anschaulich ein Quantum in die Einbildungskraft aufzunehmen, um es zum Maße oder als Einheit zur Größenschätzung durch Zahlen brauchen zu können, dazu gehören zwei Handlungen dieses Vermögens: Auffassung (*apprehensio*) und Zusammenfassung (*comprehensio aethetica*)” (*KU*, AA 05: 251.32-35).

At first glance, it seems that the process of apprehending and comprehending quanta so as to *estimate* their size is the only epistemological issue Kant is concerned with in the Analytic of the sublime. Arguably, however, this imaginative process is as much applicable to *estimating* quanta by intuitively taking them up, as it is applicable to categorially *constituting* them. Kant continues, namely, that “[...] die Zusammenfassung

¹⁰ In that sense, I fully agree with Smith when he contends that “[a] sense of the infinite only comes through an imaginative release (after an initial tension) [...]” (Smith 2015, p. 115).

wird immer schwerer, je weiter die Auffassung fortrückt, und gelangt bald zu ihrem Maximum, nämlich dem ästhetisch=größten Grundmaße der Größenschätzung (*KU*, AA 05: 252.01-03). It seems that the subjective requirement of comprehension, on which the understanding must predicate itself so as to make mathematical estimation possible, is equally applicable to the *constitution* of these quanta *themselves*. So I agree with Crowther when he argues that the process of apprehension and comprehension “must also apply to our attempts to grasp the phenomenal totality of any object in a single whole of intuition”, in spite of the fact that Kant only discusses said process “in relation to the attempt to present infinity as an absolute measure” (Crowther 1989, p. 10).

The power of the imagination is, in either case, incapable of attaining categorial (conceptual, discursive) totality *by itself*. Only upon combining its powers with the understanding is the comprehension produced by the imagination able to give rise to *categorial* totality, hence to the conceptual determination of intuitions as objective totalities. As mentioned already, however, maintaining the opposite is equally accurate. In discussing the estimation of size, the Analytic of the sublime suggests that this joint act of comprehension — namely in reference both to the understanding and to the imagination — can never be completely ‘taken over’ by the understanding. As the imagination is itself grafted on a purely aesthetical estimation of objects, it cannot keep matching basic measures with the ever-progressing numerical concepts of the understanding. In attempting to comprehend ever vaster objects, the imagination fails to meet the needs of the understanding. As a consequence, the imagination and the understanding are eventually seen to be disconnected, making space for the imagination to engage in a play with the faculty of reason instead. In categorially constituting empirical objects as totalities, the understanding must somehow be accompanied by the imagination. What happens, namely, when imaginative comprehension inevitably reaches its subjective limit in the ever-progressing (logical-numerical) estimation of vast objects? Seemingly, what the understanding *loses* in this procedure, is exactly its capacity to *constitute* those overly large quanta as *totalities*, that is to say, as *objects*.

Judging *that* something is a *quantum* or totality, says Kant, “läßt sich aus dem Dinge selbst ohne alle Vergleichung mit andern erkennen: wenn nämlich Vielheit des Gleichartigen zusammen Eines ausmacht” (*KU*, AA 05: 248.17-19). In the first Critique, Kant says something similar, describing the category of totality as “nichts anders als die Vielheit, als Einheit betrachtet” (*KrV*, B 111). If this act of ‘con-stitution’ fails, the feeling of the mathematical sublime ensues. The claims at absolute totality pertaining to the judgment of the sublime entail, namely, that it is precisely *not the case* that a certain homogenous plurality (“Vielheit des Gleichartigen”) can be synthesized as one object (“zusammen Eines ausmacht”) (*KU*, AA 05: 248.17-18). In sublime totality, the unity involved is merely *thought* — it is not concerned with a synthesis of the plurality involved. In fact, it completely sets aside said plurality, necessarily overcoming it. In case of objects judged and felt to be absolutely large, namely, the imagination fails to comprehend the very plurality involved. But this failure must be credited to the category of totality as well

— it is, so to speak, equally inappropriate to do the job. The felt inadequacy of the imagination to present vast *quanta* as totalities, giving way to the experience of the sublime, also informs us (be it partially) about the nature of the understanding. In the feeling of the sublime, what is veritably lost is not merely the possibility of mathematical estimation of *quanta*, but — so I argue — also the very legitimacy and suitability of the category of totality itself.

The Analytic of the sublime reveals that the aspirations of the understanding are extensively influenced by its inevitable collaboration with the imagination and that it too involves a limit-experience. Kant's account of the mathematical sublime can thus be read as establishing a more fine-grained analysis of categorial totality. Exploring the intricate interdependency between the numerical concepts of the understanding and the imagination, in juxtaposition with the purposive play between the imagination and reason, serves to be a valuable avenue of research, not only for explaining the latter pair, which is of course its established function in the Analytic of the sublime, but also for delineating the former.

Both categorial totality and sublime totality are, each in their own specific way, grafted on the imagination and the power of judgment. With regard to categorial totality, both the understanding's and the imagination's tendency towards infinity, be it numerically for the understanding and apprehensively for the imagination, must be constrained and limited. Quite crucially, "the constraint *is* the possibility" (Van de Vijver & Noé 2011). Quite surreptitiously, however, in a violent harmony with reason the power of judgment sees in the imagination's tendency towards infinity a way to escape said limitation, suggesting the potentiality of a totality that is *absolutely* great. These insights can now be applied to a more *systematic* and *specific* aspect of the category of totality: its metaphysical deduction.

(B). Kant's transcendental logic of the categories

The categories that flow from the faculty of the understanding are entirely inherent to it. This means that they cannot be derived from anything else than the understanding. At the same time, these categories are related *a priori* to that with which they stand in complete opposition, namely the manifold of intuition, provided by the faculty of sensibility. The categories relate to the manifold of intuition, more precisely, by *synthesizing* it into the unity of an object (*KrV*, B 102-103). Without the categories, the manifold of intuition cannot attest to the unity proper to the object, cannot be anything else than a manifold. Therefore, the *unity* of categorial synthesis must be fully 'distinct from' or 'external to' the *manifold* provided by intuition.

The externality of the categories is guaranteed by their being derived from the functions (or forms) of judgment. These functions are themselves only *formally* directed at unity. Because of this, the categories are *also* formal, non-intuitive or discursive in nature

(*KrV*, B 93). But one must keep in mind that the categories are nonetheless synthetical — *directed* at intuitions.¹¹

From this peculiar, yet properly transcendental dynamic follows a rather dazzling problem. One wonders, namely, what it means for a formal, discursive, and general system, like the one of the categories, to be developed with constant eyes to its ‘material’, sensible, and essentially singular counterpart. In what follows, I suggest — on the basis of my reading of the Analytic of the mathematical sublime — that the otherwise general system of categories manages to inscribe, in the system itself, an anticipation of this singular counterpart (quite apart from but not unrelated to the fact, of course, that the categories do require schematization, carried out not by the faculty of the understanding but by the power of the imagination).¹² I develop the idea, more precisely, that Kant’s compelling insertion of the *special act of the understanding* into the system of categories, at least on the level of quantity, counts as a transcendental ‘mark’ of said anticipation.

(C). *The Special Act of the Understanding*

While spinning out the basic elements of the metaphysical deduction of the categories in the first Critique, Kant adds that every third category depends on a specific ‘combination’ of the first two categories of its group. For the categories of quantity, this means — as mentioned already — that the category of totality is “nichts anders als die Vielheit, als Einheit betrachtet” (*KrV*, B 111). That is, the category of totality is *the result* of a specific combination of the first two categories of quantity: unity on the one hand, and plurality on the other. Kant, seemingly anticipating potential objections to this rather unorthodox feature of his logic, adds that “Man denke aber ja nicht, dass darum die dritte Kategorie ein bloß abgeleiteter, und kein Stammbegriff des reinen Verstandes sei” (*KrV*, B 111). Kant

¹¹ Despite this ‘directedness’, the transcendental logic of the categories is seen as solely general in nature because it solely rests on the general functions of judgment. To say that the categories are *general* is yet another way to say that they are unlike intuitions. Intuitions are, namely, not general but *singular*. Kant makes clear that knowledge ‘is’ either intuition or concept, adding that the former relates to the object directly and is therefore singular (*einzel*) while the latter relates to the object indirectly through marks or characteristics (*vermitteltst Merkmals*) that can hold for different objects in general (*KrV*, B 377).

¹² In the Schematism chapter, Kant tries to show how the faculty of the understanding and the faculty of sensibility could be reconciled, given the fact that their representations (*Vorstellungen*) are completely heterogeneous. At that point in the Critique, it is still unclear how categories *can* be ‘applied to’ (*angewandt auf*) intuitions, although it is clear (from their transcendental deduction) that they *must*. He seeks, thus, for a third power that can ‘mediate’ between the two faculties: “Nun ist klar, dass es ein Drittes geben müsse, was einerseits mit der Kategorie, andererseits mit der Erscheinung in Gleichartigkeit stehen muss, und die Anwendung der ersteren auf die letzte möglich macht. Diese vermittelnde Vorstellung muss rein (ohne alles Empirische), und doch einerseits intellektuell, andererseits sinnlich sein. Eine solche ist das transscendentale Schema” (*KrV*, B 177). Only the power of the imagination, says Kant, can vouch for such representations. In this paper, however, I make the claim that the system of categories, which pertains to the faculty of the understanding alone (and not to the power of the imagination), is *itself* anticipatory of said relation to sensibility, i.e., of its schematization. How my claim here — that the system of the categories *itself* anticipates schematization — could relate to the *still* necessary procedure of schematizing these categories surely requires more in-depth textual analysis of the first Critique’s Analytic of concepts and principles.

qualifies, namely, that ‘deriving’ each third category requires a “*besonderen Actus des Verstandes*” (*KrV*, B 111) or special act of the understanding, thus conferring them with an originality of their own. With regard to the category of totality (*Allheit*), Kant illustrates this important point by giving the example that “[...] der Begriff einer Zahl (die zur Kategorie der Allheit gehört) [ist] nicht immer möglich, wo die Begriffe der Menge und der Einheit sind (z. B. in der Vorstellung des Unendlichen)” (*KrV*, B 111). However, with these very brief lines, Kant’s explanation of the special act of the understanding comes to an end. No more clarification appears to be offered in the metaphysical deduction of the categories. Yet by taking at hand the Analytic of the sublime, the significance of this quite underexplored clause can be further interpreted. My analysis is twofold.

First, it is crucial to note that whereas infinity delineated sublime totality positively in the Analytic of the sublime, it does so negatively for categorial totality in the metaphysical deduction. Indeed, although infinity does imply a combination of the categories of unity and plurality, it does so *without* requiring a special act of the understanding. Therefore, Kant concludes that infinity cannot belong to the category of totality. But the reverse applies as well: whereas Kant puts forward number (*Zahl*) as ‘belonging’ to categorial totality (namely, as requiring a special act to combine unity and plurality), he treats it negatively in delineating the scope of sublime totality (cf. *supra*). There appears to be some kind of symmetrical opposition between sublime and categorial totality in terms of the inclusion and exclusion of number and infinity.

Now, quite essentially, this means that if the category of totality would nevertheless have to include infinity — that is, would not require a special act of the understanding — it would not be a category anymore, but an idea of reason. In that case, it would, namely, not only have a heterogenous relationship with sensibility — which is a necessary feature of both categories and ideas — but it would also cease to be *valid* for sensibility. It would, thus, cease to be *synthetical*. Or put differently: if the category of totality would include infinity, it would not qualify for schematization by the power of imagination. This, as we saw, is due to the imagination’s inadequacy to intuitively comprehend infinity, motivating the power of judgment to transgress sensibility whatsoever, thus engendering a play with reason *instead of the understanding*. In that sense, the exclusion of infinity from the category of totality is contingent on the limited comprehensive capacities of the imagination, an insight that is a direct consequence of my reading of the Analytic of the mathematical sublime. By spelling out more thoroughly the connection between the imagination and infinity, the Analytic of the sublime appears to be offering a more elaborate explanation of the necessity of something like a special act of the understanding for deriving the category of totality.¹³

¹³ See Borboa, who argues that this *special act of the understanding* functions as the central principle of Kant’s deduction of every third category (Borboa 2018). His approach finds inspiration in Kant’s discussions with Johann Schultz on the necessity to include these third categories in the Table. In the first Critique, Kant states that the combination of every first category with the second of its group should give way to the third (*KrV*, B 110). In his letter to Schultz from February 17th, 1784, I take it that Kant defends this triadic dynamic as inseparable from the essentially transcendental instead of merely general (or formal) nature of the derivation (*Br*, AA 10: 366-367). Borboa’s main contribution, in attempting to find a principle for this

Secondly, I interpret the Analytic of the sublime to be an attempt to interweave this exclusion of infinity (and absolute totality) from the category of totality to the hypothesis, argued for in the second part of this paper, that *objective* estimation of totality is always accompanied by *subjective* determination. I argued, namely, that even numerical estimation of totality presupposes the subject's capacity for comprehension, and that this should also hold for the constitution of the object as a totality. The latter could imply that the special act of the understanding not only accounts for the heterogeneous yet *a priori* valid relation between the category of totality and the faculty of sensibility in view of the former's schematization. It could also mean that the special act of the understanding counts as an *a priori* anticipation, on behalf of the understanding, of the essential singularity proper to this schematization. On that exegetical line of thinking, the Analytic of the sublime contributes substantially to the idea that the derivation of the category of totality, while concerned with a formal and discursive account of the determination of *quantum*, could indeed autonomously prelude its relation to intuition. This allows to interpret the faculty of the understanding, insofar as it delivers the necessary conditions of possibility of the object in terms of totality, to call for a *special act* precisely because it must be able to account *a priori* for the singularity involved in relating itself to intuitions, thus even *before* schematization is in order.

I am not suggesting that the first Critique does not already testify profusely to the inclusion of said singularity into the activities of the understanding. That it does, goes without saying, for instance in its groundbreaking account of objectivity as heterogeneously (i.e., intuitively and discursively) constituted. Testifying to this is the following, all-encompassing statement of Kant's in the Transcendental Dialectic: "Nicht dadurch, daß ich bloß denke, erkenne ich irgend ein Object, sondern nur dadurch, daß ich eine gegebene Anschauung in Absicht auf die Einheit des Bewußtseins, darin alles Denken besteht, bestimme, kann ich irgend einen Gegenstand erkennen" (*KrV*, B 406). However, in the metaphysical deduction of the categories, the possibility that the *system* of categories might *itself* be anticipating singularity, remains implicit. The Analytic of the sublime does

transcendental derivation, consists in the suggestion that it must be every third form of judgment that combines the first two categories in generating the third category. For the categories of quantity, this means that the *singular* judgment combines the category of unity (as derived from the universal judgment) with the category of plurality (as derived from the particular judgment) to generate the category of totality. From a formal logical perspective — i.e., the presumed 'default mode' of the faculty of the understanding — such a derivation must count as a *special act* indeed. Yet the fact that this special act is nonetheless carried out by the understanding — which proceeds only in a *general*, discursive manner — might nonetheless indicate the latter's potential to systematically anticipate its *own* singular — i.e., non-general — capacities. Quite fundamentally, this would mean that my exploration of categorial totality from within the Analytic of the sublime — extensively drawing on the power of the imagination and sensibility — is far from incompatible with accounts that focus, on the other hand, on the specificity of the logic behind the functions of judgment and the categories they are related to. But Borboa's suggestion is particularly interesting because it is potentially on par with my hypothesis (cf. *supra*) that mathematical estimation (and constitution) of *quanta* can be dissected into (i) a moment of logical estimation, (ii) a moment of aesthetical estimation, and (iii) a moment of 'proper' mathematical estimation, whereby (iii) requires a combination of (i) and (ii). I propose that here too a singular moment — namely, (ii) — is connected to a universal moment — namely, (i) — in relation to a certain totality — namely, (iii). But these issues require further research.

seem to make plausible, however, that the subject's singular 'range' is already at the heart of Kant's exposition of the categories, the pure concepts of the understanding otherwise counting as completely general. Or, to say it with Pierobon, one must consider that "[l]'organisation architectonique de l'entendement témoigne de ce qu'il est fondamentalement orienté vers l'expérience sensible, *même en son usage logique où justement abstraction en est faite*" (Pierobon 2005, p. 315; italics added).

Thus, the Analytic of the sublime is not only relevant for delineating categorial totality, but hereby also for investigating the procedure of object-constitution (insofar as the category of totality is involved), connecting the often-fragmented insights of the first Critique. In this respect, the third Critique pinpoints better than the first what is at stake in the latter's metaphysical deduction. In a slightly speculative exegetical vein, it allows for establishing a connection between the previous citation (i.e., *KrV*, B 406) and the following: "Nicht das Bewußtsein des bestimmenden, sondern nur das des bestimmbaren Selbst, d. i. meiner inneren Anschauung (so fern ihr Mannigfaltiges der allgemeinen Bedingung der Einheit der Apperception im Denken gemäß verbunden werden kann), ist das Object" (*KrV*, B 407). From my reading of the Analytic of the sublime, this much overlooked contention of Kant's, suggesting that the object *is* the determinable self, namely that object-constitution always involves subject-constitution, can be seen not only to *complete* — as it obviously does in the first Critique — but also to fundamentally *underly* the metaphysical deduction of the category of totality, be it under the guise of a special act.¹⁴

¹⁴ It could be argued (although I cannot substantiate it here) that my interpretation of the special act of the understanding (i.e., as a mark of the singularity pertaining to the category of totality) might also hold for the other classes of categories. The special act is required, according to Kant, to derive all third categories: the category of limitation must be considered as reality combined with negation; community, as the reciprocal causality of substances; necessity, as existence given by possibility. This paper does not purport to defend that the special act entails a mark of singularity in all of these derivations. It only tries to substantiate that this might be the case for the category of totality. In itself, this should not be a problem, since Kant does not give the impression that the special act must be of identical nature in all of its instances. Kant only states that the understanding must posit a special act in order to derive the third categories, highlighting that the latter involve a 'constraint' pertaining to the transcendental rather than merely formal logical countenance of their derivation. Regarding the third category of quality, however, it occurs to me that the special act might very well testify to singularity. As Borboa has it, to acquire the category of limitation (in an infinite judgment), it does not suffice to have a mere combination of reality (in an affirmative judgment) with negation (in a negating judgment). Indeed, something can be positively affirmed of a subject (e.g., that it involves pleasure) and something else can be negated of that same subject (e.g., that it is a vice, by opposing virtue), but then "the positive and negative determinations are not combined so as to oppose each other and yield a limitation" (Borboa 2018, p. 524). By stating, however, in an infinite judgment, that the soul is non-mortal (*nichtsterblich*), a certain negation (a negative predicate) is itself positively affirmed of a subject. Kant interestingly adds that, hereby, an infinite space of possible predicates is opened up — "dem übrigen Raum ihres Umfangs" (*KrV*, B 97). Judging that the soul is *nichtsterblich* gives a negative direction to positively delineating this subject according to other predicates. This direction can then be further articulated by adding that the soul is also, e.g., timeless or spaceless, etc. In that sense, subsuming a subject under a negative predicate has positive effects that are as yet undetermined, merely encircling a field of *determinability* for the subject. Crucially, however, it appears to me that the conceivability of such an undetermined predicative space calls for assuming a singular position within this predicative space. The category of limitation arguably indicates, namely, that one can only *gradually* determine a subject in terms of predicates, and that this positive endeavor can only be put in motion by negatively giving direction to a certain infinite realm, explored step-by-step. But this interpretation is evidently in need of further investigation.

Conclusion

By virtue of the fact that the Analytic of the sublime largely bypasses the faculty of the understanding, that is, largely treats it negatively, a sharper delineation of the latter's category of totality could be achieved. What the category of totality consists of, is tied to the conditions of possibility of the *object*. Insofar as totality *cannot* be an object, the reflective power of judgment is free to engage in a play with reason instead of the understanding, so installing the feeling of sublimity. More specifically, I highlighted the *relative* and *limited* countenance of categorial totality in opposition to the *absolute* and *infinite* countenance of sublime totality.

On that basis, I moved on to stipulate that in the Analytic of the sublime, mathematical estimation of totality is revealed not only to be grounded in conceptuality, but also that in order to obtain its rightful objectivity, it must be grafted on imaginative, subjective determination — in other words, that it must also be *singularly* grounded. Furthermore, I considered the singular aspects of object-constitution to be accounted for by the understanding in the very *system* of the categories of quantity itself. My reading of the Analytic of the sublime lead me to interpret the *special act of the understanding* — insofar as it is required to derive the category of totality — as essentially tied to the limited comprehensive powers of the imagination and the determination of the subject.

This way, my aesthetical detour contributes to the study of Kant's epistemology by proposing that the category of totality is not only to be necessarily complemented by imaginative subjective determination in order to qualify for object-constitution, but that this category could be understood as fundamentally marked by it *itself*.

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Matters of Taste: Kant's Epistemological Aesthetics

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Abstract

This paper is concerned with what I believe is the epistemological mission of Kant's doctrine of taste. The third *Critique* inherits two problems from the first. The evident one is that the categorical constitution of nature must be complemented with the notion of purposiveness. The less evident one is that the transcendental theory of experience needs a common sense in order to secure a common objectivity. The judgment of taste, conceived of by Kant as a 'cognition in general' not restricted to either the particular subject or the particular object, offers a solution. It turns out to be a judgment that cannot be made without assuming the purposiveness of nature and the uniformity of the cognizing subjects.

Keywords

Epistemology, Purposiveness, Solipsism, Common Sense

1. Introduction

In §21 of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment (CPJ)*, Immanuel Kant first states that empirical cognitions must "be able to be universally communicated, for otherwise they would have no correspondence with the object", then concludes that a "common sense [...] must be able to be assumed [...], as the necessary condition of the universal

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communicability of our cognition” (5: 238-39).¹ This is puzzling both because Kant unexpectedly adds a new item to the list of the conditions of experience – in the *Critique of Pure Reason (CPR)* there is not even a hint that common sense has such a role to play –, and because common sense otherwise figures as a principle of taste. There is a similar double puzzle in the two Introductions. The transcendental principle of nature’s purposiveness, though basically identical in its function with what was a regulative idea of reason in the *CPR*, is still markedly new in that it now belongs to the reflecting power of judgment, itself a newcomer to the elite group of the higher cognitive faculties. And the principle, though originally presented with an eye to securing the coherence of experience, does not remain restricted to this cognitive use but serves as the *a priori* ground of the judgments of taste, too. Correspondence and coherence being the complementary criteria of empirical truth, the two puzzles might add up to the intuition that Kant’s taste has an epistemological mission.

The relation between aesthetic judging and empirical cognition has become a chief focus of Kant exegesis. But commentators sharply disagree over how exactly his account of the judging of the beautiful as a mental act is to be interpreted in order for it to be(come) a viable account of aesthetic experience. My paper does not take sides in this debate, nor does it offer yet another interpretation.² Partly because I could not say anything new, partly because what my paper does offer is more or less neutral with respect to those differences. And chiefly because I have a conjecture that I cannot, of course, prove: most of the difficulties with Kant’s doctrine of taste (such as the so-called ‘everything is beautiful’ problem) stem from its being intended both as a theory of aesthetic judging and as the completion of a twofold epistemological job that remained unfinished in the *CPR*. What I can do is try to explain why I think that this doctrine can be read as the continuation of an epistemological project (and why I cannot contribute to solving those difficulties as ones of an aesthetic theory proper).

In Section 2, I show how the *CPJ*’s Introductions transform the principle of nature’s purposiveness, which Kant first tries – but fails – to establish towards the end of the *CPR*. As a principle of cognition, purposiveness remains regulative. As a principle of taste, however, it gets not only a new function but a new status, too, becoming the *sine qua non* of judgments of taste, a point I will only indicate at the end of the section. Section 3 is an extended commentary on a perhaps surprising passage of the *CPR*, which suggests that transcendental idealism cannot avoid a kind of solipsism. I will argue that this can be seen as truly following from Kant’s position: objective truth becomes contingent, because different subjects can ‘make’ objects out of their perceptions in different ways. My main argument comes in Section 4. It is based on the simple idea of taking seriously Kant’s

¹ References beginning with the volume number 5 or 20 are to the third *Critique* (Kant 2000), those beginning with A and/or B are to the first (Kant 1998).

² This is why I make a single reference here to the five books I admire the most: Guyer 1979, Allison, 2001, Hughes 2007, Zuckert 2007, Ginsborg 2015 (the subtitle of my paper is meant as a twisted allusion to the title of Hughes’s book). For a typological overview of interpretations, see Guyer 2005, where he at the same time revises his earlier approach. Küplen (2007, Ch. 3) adds two more categories to the typology.

claim that aesthetic judging, as a “cognition in general” (5: 217 and *passim*), is the condition of objective cognition. The solipsism problem emerging in the *CPR* calls for an epistemic common sense, which, however, cannot be established within the theory of experience itself. It is only judgments of taste – as involving a “cognition in general” – that, since their very possibility entails the claim to universal assent, make it necessary to assume the existence of a cognitive constitution common to “all subjects” (5: 224) and operative in “all cognition” (5: 219). Analogously, the principle of nature’s purposiveness remains too weak until there appears on the scene a type of judgment, that of taste, which, since its universal validity requires an *a priori* ground, cannot be made without presupposing that the whole of nature is purposive. I will finish with some critical remarks concerning the notion of “cognition in general” in order to highlight a shortcoming of the doctrine of taste, which I think results from its epistemological commitment, and which Kant himself seems to realize in his doctrine of art.

2. Purposiveness 2.0

Contrary to what its title suggests, the *CPR*’s Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic is by no means of secondary importance compared to what has already been settled.

If among the appearances offering themselves to us there were such a great variety – I will not say of form (for they might be similar to one another in that) but of content, i.e., regarding the manifoldness of existing beings – that even the most acute human understanding, through comparison of one with another, could not detect the least similarity (a case which can at least [or well: *wohl*] be thought), then the logical law of genera would not obtain at all, no concept of a genus, nor any other universal concept, indeed no understanding at all would obtain, since it is the understanding that has to do with such concepts. The logical principle of genera therefore presupposes a transcendental one if it is to be applied to nature [...]. According to that principle, sameness of kind is necessarily presupposed in the manifold of a possible experience [...], because without it no empirical concepts and hence *no experience would be possible*. (A653-54/B681-82, my italics)

Experience is at stake again; or still. The Analytic did only half the job by demonstrating that the appearances are “similar” in their “form”, the categories, these pure concepts being the *a priori* synthetic functions that unite representations in one consciousness. As mere forms, however, they do not determine the particular “content” of experience. Kant’s initial formulations, in the first six pages of the Appendix, suggest that the regulative use of pure reason is aimed at a *post factum* systematic unity of empirical cognitions. The passage just quoted reveals a more profound dimension. While it is partly about something trivial – empirical concepts presuppose regular similarities among things –, it also sets a daunting task: the Appendix should repeat, *mutatis mutandis*, the feat of the Analytic, i.e., transform

the logical structure of thinking, this time its rational systematicity, into the transcendental structure of nature.

Kant presents what he wants to establish in different but compatible versions. One of them is a triad of principles: “sameness of kind” or “homogeneity”, “variety”/“specification”, and “affinity”/“continuity” (A657-58/B685-86), where the third principle mediates between the first two. Another version is that “the highest systematic unity” of experience can be attained “by means of the idea of the purposive causality of the supreme cause of the world” (A688/B716). Kant first tries to introduce affinity in the A-Deduction, there as a transcendental principle underlying the association of perceptions. The examples he gives, though somewhat fantastic, show that it is basically the stability of natural kinds that needs to be secured. “If cinnabar were now red, now black, now light, now heavy, if a human being were now changed into this animal shape, now into that one, if on the longest day the land were covered now with fruits, now with ice and snow, then my empirical imagination” could not connect these perceptions together (A101-02). Once you identify a thing, on the basis of some its perceivable features, as falling under a certain concept, the rest of its features also must display the marks and obey the rules included in that concept. Kant believes that affinity, as the “objective ground” that makes appearances “associable” (A121-22), follows from the transcendental unity or identity of the apperception (A113-14, A122-24). However, as he himself emphasizes in the same passages, the unity of the thinking ‘I’ is strictly nothing more than numerical. It necessarily manifests itself through the categories, as the formal functions of synthesis, but that is all. Just as the ‘I’ can comprehend “the unity [...] of a fable” (B114), so too can it synthesize representations in a nice categorial syntax on the one hand, but in a semantically incoherent manner on the other. Of course, if I witness a fable-like event in what I otherwise believe is a well-ordered nature, I will think twice before I synthesize my perceptions in a public utterance meant to be an objective judgment of experience. But I can do so without falling into transcendental schizophrenia.

To return to the Appendix, the invocation of the “case” that Kant says “can well be thought” – nature as a totality of radically individual entities without any generalizable similarities whatsoever – is misleading. This extreme chaos, but only this one, would indeed make all experience impossible. The Appendix should be concerned with and about the more moderate (and easier-to-think) case in which the order of nature and the stability of empirical concepts are merely relative – in which there are experiences, in plural, but there is no unified experience. The Analytic demonstrates that the correspondence criterion of empirical truth, “the agreement of cognition with its object” (A58/B82), cannot be met without “transcendental truth, which precedes all empirical truth and makes it possible” (A146/B185), and which takes shape in the categories and the synthetic *a priori* principles built on them. The Appendix adds to this a second and distinct criterion, that of coherence: “the systematic connection that reason can give to the empirical use of the understanding [...] guarantees its correctness” (A680/B708). A judgment of experience is true if its conceptual components express a right perceptual and verbal identification of the intuitive

content *and* if it fits into the coherent body of empirical knowledge (for the difference between words and concepts, see A728/B756). Ideally (and normally), the two criteria are fulfilled at once. But the categories being mere forms, the contentual order of nature and the consequent overall coherence of experience are not already given with, but complementary to, the legislation of the pure understanding. Where can they be derived from?

Unsurprisingly, the Appendix does not use the apperception argument, which did not work in the A-Deduction. Nor does it have any better argument, however. Kant begins by claiming that what is needed is “a transcendental principle of reason” that “make[s] systematic unity not merely something subjectively and logically necessary, as method, but objectively necessary” (A648/B676). But he then implements, overtly contradicting himself, a string of restrictions that drastically diminish the efficacy of the principle. He calls it a “merely regulative principle or maxim”, a “*principium vagum*” (A680/B708), a “subjective principle” (A666/B694), a “method” (A668/B696), and he famously uses an “as if” as a leitmotif in the second part of the Appendix: “the speculative interest of reason makes it necessary to regard every ordinance in the world as if it had sprouted from the intention of a highest reason” (A686/B714). The dilemma is clear and unresolvable. On the one hand, only a constitutive principle would be strong enough to impose systematic order on nature, yet it falls under a critical ban, as it would either require the speculative certainty of the existence of God – which Kant has just annulled –, or, in terms of the triad of principles, it would have to rest on the knowledge that *all* possible objects of experience are interconnected in a universal kinship that makes all manifoldness the diversification of an original unity; from the human point of view of discursive cognition, this would translate into a pyramidal order, with the super-concept of ‘something’ at the tip and the individuals at the bottom, the interim layers representing the species, genera, families, etc. On the other hand, a regulative principle, while critically tenable, is simply too weak to ensure order in nature. In the Ideal chapter, which already contains much of what the Appendix develops in more detail, Kant even calls the “as if” principle a “merely heuristic” one (A616/B644). A heuresis does not entail that it will prove true when applied.³

Of course, Kant can say that what makes an experience an experience is that it fits into a system. But, with God in brackets, and the unity of apperception being such that it does not exclude the possibility of logically incoherent empirical syntheses, he cannot transfer this conception of experience onto “the appearances offering themselves to us”. It is not just that logically incoherent judgments of experience are possible. ‘Normal’ ones can always be made, too, without having to rely on the principle that the whole of possible experience is coherent. Yet the Appendix indicates, negatively, a solution. Reason, by its very nature, strives for the systematic unity of empirical cognitions, but, in contrast with the categories,

³ Kant’s “teaching [...] is extremely self-contradictory, wavering between a subjective and an objective interpretation of the Ideas of Reason” (Kemp Smith 1923, p. 547).

its essential systematicity does not count as an *a priori* condition under which alone empirical judgments are possible, because it belongs to a faculty which is not involved in ‘primary experience’, in the very act of bringing intuitions to concepts: “pure reason leaves to the understanding everything that relates directly to objects of intuition or rather to their synthesis in imagination” (A326/B382-83). All I have said is not, of course, meant to question the utility of the regulative maxims in natural science. But this is a far cry from their transcendental validity. The latter would require a kind of ‘primary experience’ that cannot be made without a principle of systematicity.

“[F]or all things in nature empirically determinate concepts can be found”: this the first – and most compact – version of “the principle of reflection on given objects of nature” in the *CPJ* (20: 211). Remarkably, the Introductions do not say a single word about how the new project relates to the old one. Is it a supplement? An alternative? A replacement? I take it to be the third, although Kant mentions the regulative principles and their empirical use in the short Preface (5: 167-68). What is certain is that the two projects are very similar and very different at the same time. Kant adds a long footnote to that first formulation, stressing that while the principle may seem “to be tautological and to belong to mere logic”, it in fact is “a synthetic and transcendental proposition”, for logic as such “teaches us nothing” about

whether for each object nature has many others to put forth as objects of comparison, which have much in common with the first in their form [...]; rather, this condition of the possibility of the application of logic to nature is a principle of the representation of nature as a system for our power of judgment, in which the manifold, divided into genera and species, makes it possible to bring all the natural forms that are forthcoming to concepts (of greater or lesser generality) through comparison. (20: 211-12n)

As can be seen (from several other passages, too), the core problem has not changed. Concepts, rules, laws require comparability, which, in turn, requires the pyramidal order of nature: “the comprehensibility of nature and the unity in its division into genera and species [is that] by means of which alone empirical concepts are possible” (5: 187), possible in the ‘strong’ sense that they meet the criterion of coherence. Objects can “be causes in infinitely many ways”, but “each of these ways must [...] have its rule” or “law” (5:183): an empirical judgment referring to whatever particular causal occurrence must also represent a rule or law and must thereby meet the criterion of coherence. What has changed, however, is that Kant has apparently realized that nature is to be alienated from logic before it can be reconquered transcendently. In a similar spirit, he keeps emphasizing that experience begins with intuitions and perceptions (see, e.g., 20: 213, 5: 186, and see as well the splendid description, in §77 of the Teleology, of how discursive cognition works amidst contingency). Also, Kant writes more explicitly and at much more

length about what is otherwise trivial, namely the insufficiency of the categories to determine the contentual order of nature. And while he imports various terms from the Appendix of the *CPR* (such as specification and affinity), the new approach is a full-blown theory under the heading of purposiveness. As these and other points have already been commented on extensively, I do not go further into the details here.⁴

The most spectacular change is coupled with a no less evident continuity, however. The most obvious explanation for why purposiveness becomes a transcendental principle of the reflecting power of judgment is that this faculty is directly involved in empirical cognition, whereas reason is not. But this explanation is not yet sufficient regarding the fact that the Introductions repeat the old restrictions. Kant defines a “transcendental principle” as one that represents “the universal *a priori* condition under which alone things can become objects of our cognition at all” (5: 181). However, the principle remains “subjective” (5: 185 and *passim*), “regulative” (20: 151, 5: 197), a “maxim” (20: 205, 5: 184), “a heuristic principle” (20: 205); the second Introduction brings back the theological “as if” motif (5: 180), and Kant even adds that the principle stems from a human “need” (20: 214, 5: 186, and *passim*), which is the equivalent of what was “the interest reason” in the *CPR*.

Does all this mean that the Introductions simply substitute one faculty for another, but otherwise leave the validity and the potency of the purposiveness principle unchanged? It seems that they are compelled to do so. After all, the most important factor also has not changed. “The concept of purposiveness is not a constitutive concept of experience at all [...]; for it is not a category” (20: 219-20). If so, however, then it has not gained anything in status. Indeed, it is not even clear what the point is in formulating and especially in calling transcendental a principle which the power of judgment “prescribes [...], not to nature (as autonomy), but to itself (as heautonomy) for reflection on nature” (5: 185). Unlike reason, the reflecting power of judgment is the chief agent of discursive cognition. Why does discursive cognition have to order itself to operate according to its own structure?

The first key to seeing how the new project works is to understand what it means that it takes place in a new critique. “Philosophy can be divided into only two parts, the theoretical and the practical”, and within this system “everything that we might have to say about the proper principles of the power of judgment must be counted as belonging to the theoretical part” (5: 179). The critical system, however, reflects Kant’s triadic conception of the mental household. The first two *Critiques* having laid down the “*a priori* principles” for “the faculty of cognition” and “the faculty of desire”, respectively,

⁴ For a recent collection of essays dealing with various aspects of Kant’s conception of the lawfulness of nature, see Massimi and Breitenbach (eds) 2017.

there remains among the properties of mind in general an intermediate faculty or receptivity, namely the **feeling of pleasure and displeasure**, just as there remains among the higher faculties of cognition an intermediate one, the power of judgment. What is more natural than to suspect that the latter will also contain *a priori* principles for the former? (20: 207-08, *cf.* 5: 176-79)

The intermediate position of both the pleasure and the power of judgment is a somewhat arbitrary idea of Kant, but this is not so important here. His argument for wedding them is that both are subjective:

while in the **division of faculties of cognition through concepts** understanding and reason relate their representations to objects, in order to acquire concepts of them, the power of judgment is related solely to the subject and does not produce any concepts of objects for itself alone [*für sich allein*]. Likewise, [...] the feeling of pleasure and displeasure is only the receptivity of a determination of the subject, so that if the power of judgment is to determine anything for itself alone, it could not be anything other than the feeling of pleasure. (20: 208)

This ‘itselfness’ of the reflecting power of judgment, namely, that “for itself alone” it “does not produce any concepts of objects”, is a crucial motif. The Introductions mostly describe it as a faculty that “seeks concepts to empirical representations” (20: 212n) and applies a principle for the sake of this search. But it turns out that this whole cognition business is not an adequate expression of its true nature. According to its true nature, “the power of judgment” is a “faculty” which “serves only for connecting and which hence cannot provide any cognition of its own [*für sich*]” (20: 246). And the most basic form of this “connecting” links exactly those two faculties that were left without the direct support of pure reason in the *CPR*. “The power of judgment [...] considered by itself [...], as a separate power of cognition, considers only two faculties, imagination and understanding”, not in an act of conceptual object-cognition, to be sure – that would be contrary to its true nature –, but “as in relation in a representation prior to any concept” (20: 233), i.e., in a pre-conceptual aesthetic judging.

Thus the *par excellence* mental act that the power of judgment performs or orchestrates “for itself alone” and without “produc[ing] any concepts” is nothing else than its working as taste. And the pleasure it “is to determine” is the pleasure in the beautiful. From this it follows that it is in its purest form, as taste, that the power of judgment can join the exclusive club of the higher cognitive faculties: “by the aesthetic power of judgment as a special faculty necessarily nothing else can be meant than the **reflecting power of judgment** (20: 249). For most of the Introductions, the *a priori* legislation of the power of judgment appears to consist in applying purposiveness as a principle of cognition (PP_C) to

nature; this is the best developed idea in both texts. But it turns out that with PP_C alone the power of judgment does not yet qualify as a higher faculty. “[W]hat [viz. the critique of the power of judgment] cannot enter into the division of philosophy can nevertheless enter as a major part into the critique of the pure faculty of cognition in general if, namely, it contains *principles that are for themselves fit neither for theoretical nor for practical use*” (5: 176, my italics). PP_C is perfectly fit for theoretical use; indeed, it is unfit for anything else. The twist is that the purposiveness principle has a higher function as well, serving as a principle of taste (PP_T). A judgment of taste

wins a claim to universality and necessity, as merely reflective judgment, through the relation of the subjective purposiveness of the given representation for the power of judgment to that *a priori* principle of the power of judgment, of the purposiveness of nature in its empirical lawfulness in general, and thus an aesthetic reflecting judgment can be regarded as resting on a principle *a priori* (although it is not determining), and the power of judgment in it can be justified in finding a place in the critique of the higher pure faculties of cognition. (20: 243)

These higher “faculties are called pure because they are legislative *a priori*” (5: 179). So whereas PP_C as such could belong to the theoretical part of philosophy, PP_T endows purposiveness with the dignity of a truly *a priori* principle, by becoming – as I will show in more detail in Section 4 – the *sine qua non* of a certain type of judgment, or, if I may use the expression in an extended sense, of a kind of ‘primary experience’: aesthetic experience.

3. Touch/stone

In the Canon of Pure Reason, Kant makes a distinction between conviction and persuasion. The latter is merely subjective.

Truth, however, rests upon agreement with the object, with regard to which, consequently, the judgments of every understanding must agree [...]. The touchstone of whether taking something to be true [*des Fürwahrhaltens*] is conviction or mere persuasion is therefore, externally, the possibility of communicating it and finding it to be valid for the reason of every human being to take it to be true; for in that case there is at least a presumption that the ground of the agreement of all judgments, regardless of the difference among the subjects, rests on a common ground, namely the object. (A820-21/B848-49)

The second sentence would be a bit more streamlined if there were a single word in English for *Fürwahrhalten*. But even so, it sounds overcomplicated. Why does Kant not simply say that the external “touchstone” of whether a judgment is true is the object itself, and that the agreement of the subjects rests on this “common ground”? Why does he (have to) say that even the “presumption” of there being a common object requires the consensus “of every human being”? Transcendental idealism (TI) seems to have an unpleasant side effect: a kind of solipsism.

Far be it from me to pretend that I know what TI exactly is. Nor do I want to deny that what the above passage implies, namely, that objective truth becomes a matter of intersubjective consensus, is not exactly a commonplace of critical philosophy. But the passage is there, and it is too elaborate to be dismissed as a momentary confusion. So I would like to point out that it is not impossible to read it as Kant’s response to a problem he can think of as inherent in TI.

As far as I know, Kant nowhere uses the word ‘solipsism’ in epistemological context. But he does use a synonym term: ‘egoism’. Although, and this might be of some interest, the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* is his single published work in which he mentions egoism, otherwise he deals with it only in his university lectures. In the *Metaphysik Mrongovius*, dating from 1782–83, he characterizes it as follows:

Egoism is when someone maintains that there is nothing present outside him, but rather everything that we see is mere illusion; and whoever maintains this is an egoist. Egoism can be dogmatic or skeptical. Many have maintained skepticism in earnest, and that is feasible if one maintains namely that all grounds to the contrary are not yet adequate. The egoist says: in dreaming I also imagine a world, and am in it, and nevertheless it is not so. Can it not also be the same with me when awake? But against this is that dreams do not connect with each other, rather I now dream this, now that, but when awake appearances are connected according to general rules. [...] I cannot refute the egoist by experience, for this instructs us immediately only of our own existence. We do experience mediately that other things are there through the senses; but the egoist says that in these senses there lies only the ground by which we would become aware of appearances. But they would be nothing in themselves. (Kant, 1997, 29: 927)

Apparently, TI and egoism overlap in a crucial respect. That what we “become aware of” are “appearances”, “nothing in themselves” for us, is something on which Kant agrees with the egoist: “objects [...] are nothing in themselves without [the] subjective conditions” of

intuition, space and time, “in relation to which therefore all objects are mere appearances” (A48-9/B66).⁵

An important distinction must be made with respect to what kind of solipsism TI leads to. On the one hand, Kant’s argument that self-consciousness entails the consciousness of things existing outside the mind – presented first in the Criticism of the Fourth Paralogism, then, in the B-edition, as the Refutation of Idealism – makes TI the opposite of solipsism. The “transcendental idealist” is “a dualist”, because he is “an empirical realist” at the same time (A370). On the other hand, however, the necessary corollary of self-consciousness is not, properly speaking, a collection of objects, a ready-cooked objectivity, but only “something persistent in perception” (B275), “something real in space [...], or the material of all objects of outer intuition”, or simply “Something”; and “it is perception through which the material must first be given for thinking objects of sensible intuition” (A373-75). Objects of cognition are a next step, so to speak, they are made out of this perceptual material. But how does this making happen if “space itself with all its appearances, as representations, is only in me” (A375)?

Now cognition of objects can be generated from perceptions, either through a mere play of imagination or by means of experience. And then of course there can arise deceptive representations, to which objects do not correspond, and where the deception is sometimes to be attributed to a semblance of the imagination (in dreams), sometimes to a false step of judgment (in the case of so-called sense-deceptions). In order to avoid the false illusion here, one proceeds according to the rule: **Whatever is connected with a perception according to empirical laws, is actual.** (A376)

This is one version of the dream argument, which appears in the *Mrongovius* passage, too, and which Kant repeats several times (see, e.g., A112, A492/B520-21, and *Proleg.* [Kant 2002] 4: 290). But it does not work. How do I know in advance what is in accord with “empirical laws”? All I know is that certain empirical laws have been valid up to now. Am I entitled to say that something which I perceive is not “actual” simply because it contradicts what I have got accustomed to?

In the proof of the Second Analogy, Kant explains how the subjective succession of perceptions becomes transformed into an objective causal relation:

⁵ Though solipsism is not a hot topic in Kant scholarship, Massimi (2017) also interprets the Canon passage in terms of solipsism. Heidemann (1998) investigates Kant’s idealism in the historical context of egoism. For solipsism in Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, and others, see Avramides 2001, Chs. I-VI. – For the variety of approaches to TI, see Schulting and Verburgt (eds) 2011 as well as Allais 2015, Pt. One.

One quickly sees that, since the agreement of cognition with the object is truth, only the formal conditions of empirical truth can be inquired after here, and appearance, in contradistinction to the representations of apprehension, can thereby only be represented as the object that is distinct from them [*im Gegenverhältnis (...) könne vorgestellt werden*] if it stands under a rule that distinguishes it from every other apprehension, and makes one way of combining the manifold necessary. That in the appearance which contains the condition of this necessary rule of apprehension is the object. (A191/B236)

This passage is extremely important for two (related) reasons. First, it describes the birth of the object, the *Gegenstand*, in a way which could reconcile the two poles that make TI so difficult to understand, namely, that the appearances are both outside and inside the mind: in objectivizing my perceptions, I externalize my representations, oppose them to myself (in the sense of *obicio*). Second, this operation promises to create a common object, one which is “distinguish[e]d from every other apprehension”, too. But Kant’s line of thought is circular again. The “object” is supposed to be the result. How can it already serve as the “necessary rule of apprehension”? Or does Kant mean something like a “formal” object?

In the *Prolegomena*, Kant develops a complete doctrine, that of judgments of perception and judgments of experience, in order to show how the (dynamical) categories elevate the subjective associations of perceptions to objective syntheses. Whereas the former “do not require a pure concept of the understanding, but only the logical connection of perceptions in a thinking subject”, the latter

always demand [...] special *concepts originally generated in the understanding*, which are precisely what make the judgment of experience *objectively valid*.

All of our judgments are at first mere judgments of perception; they hold only for us, i.e., for our subject, and only afterwards do we give them a new relation, namely to an object, and intend that the judgment should also be valid at all times for us and for everyone else; for if a judgment agrees with an object, then all judgments of the same object must also agree with one another [...]. (*Proleg.* 4: 298)

It can be seen, first, that Kant is definitely concerned with the change from subjective to objective and common validity. But it can also be seen, second, that he fails to give a sufficient account of it. The requirement that there be, in the case of judgments of perception, a “logical connection of perceptions in a thinking subject” begs part of the question, because it presupposes that the subjective association of perceptions kindly anticipates a ‘normal’ conceptual relation. This makes the change from subjective to objective validity a smooth transition. But it is not clear what the categories add to experience if their use must be preceded by the “logical connection of perceptions”, or if

that which a “judgment of experience” goes “beyond” is “the sensory intuition and its logical connection (in accordance with which the intuition has been rendered universal through comparison in a judgment)” (*Proleg.* 4: 304). And, more importantly here, it is just as unclear what makes this “logical connection” and universalization possible, and not simply possible, but possible in a way such that the resulting object is the same for everyone.

Is it the “material of all objects of outer intuition”? If so, then this material must already be conceived of as a structured and binding objectivity, which would amount to a massive realism hardly consistent with TI.

[C]onsider the following: If the sun shines on the stone, it becomes warm. This judgment is a mere judgment of perception and contains no necessity, however often I and others also have perceived this; the perceptions are only usually found so conjoined. But if I say: the sun *warms* the stone, then beyond the perception is added the understanding’s concept of cause, which connects *necessarily* the concept of sunshine with that of heat, and the synthetic judgment becomes necessarily universally valid, hence objective, and changes from a perception into experience. (*Proleg.* 4: 301n)

But what if I do not perceive that the stone “becomes warm”, while someone else does? What could rule out this possibility and the ensuing headache of conflicting judgments of experience? Both of us rely on our respective perceptions, both of us are able to objectivize them in accordance with the numerical unity of the apperception, and neither of us is able to touch the stone (let alone the sun) as a thing in itself, independently of its being perceptually represented.

What the first person plural in phrases like “representations in us” (A371) refers to is not a single collective ego, a super-subject, but a multitude of individual subjects. While the categories delineate the universal structure of the human understanding as such (or so Kant believes), sensing and perceiving individuate “us”. One of the more than few necessities not included in the formal legislation of the pure understanding is that anything that shows some traits of being a stone must get warm in sunshine. A “stone”, say, a “granite [...] might differ in its internal constitution from every other stone which nevertheless look[s] just like it” (20: 216n). As is obvious, the problems discussed in the preceding and the present section are closely linked. What I called a kind of solipsism would diminish to a merely practical difficulty if TI included the certainty of the contentual regularity of the appearances. There would still be conflicting judgments, but disputes could be settled based on constant “empirical laws”; it would be possible to determine which judgment is correct, which perception is veridical, and which object is “actual”. “[S]pace is nothing other than a mere representation, hence only what is represented in it can count as real, and

conversely, what is given in it, i.e., represented through perception, is also real in it” (A375-76). This could serve as a motto for TI. But, due to the equation of being real with being perceptually represented, neither the process nor the theory of the making of objects can circumvent the individual minds and their ability to objectivize the “Something” they perceive in different ways.

It is this problem that the passage quoted above from the Canon chapter seems to respond to: by making objective truth a function of intersubjectivity. The “object” ceases to be the external “touchstone” of *Fürwahrhalten*, the “common ground” that determines how everyone must perceive and judge it. Everyone has their own object, because what they posit as the object and what their judgment refers to is nothing but the objectivization of their representations. In the absence of a commonly accessible object as such, the truth of an empirical judgment becomes dependent on “the possibility of communicating it and finding it to be valid for the reason of every human being”; i.e., that which counts as object is the common reference, not of a common cognition, but of a preceding universal consensus. That is why, strictly speaking, this consensus yields no more than just “a presumption that the ground of the agreement of all judgments, regardless of the difference among the subjects, rests on a common ground, namely the object”.

But, alas, even the “presumption” is hopelessly distant. Suppose that I somehow revise my perception and come to agree with my fellow judge that the sun warms the stone. In order to be able to at least presume that our agreement rests on the object, we should reach out to “every human being”. Quite a task, not least because some human beings are already dead, while others are yet to be born. And even if we managed to poll all of them and find a truly universal consensus concerning the stone, this is just one out of, well, many objects (or object-wannabes). The “possibility” of *actually* communicating empirical judgments to everyone is actually an impossibility. Critical philosophy needs to find a solution more viable than that doubly endless poll. Perhaps it can try to relocate the “common ground” that used to be the object into the subjects.

The universal communicability of the sensation (of satisfaction or dissatisfaction), and indeed one that occurs without concepts, the unanimity, so far as possible, of all times and peoples about this feeling in the representation of certain objects: although weak and hardly sufficient for conjecture, this is the empirical criterion of the derivation of a taste, confirmed by examples, from the common ground, deeply buried in all human beings, of unanimity in the judging of the forms [*der Formen*] under which objects are given to them. (5: 232-33, the definite article before “forms” is my insertion)

Though not the easiest sentence ever written by Kant, it seems to say that the aesthetic unanimity that can be detected empirically by looking at the “examples” does not as such prove the existence of “the common ground”. And also, that this ground has a role broader

than just facilitating aesthetic consensus: it provides for the “unanimity in the judging of the forms under which objects are given”. Not “certain objects”, not beautiful things – objects. §17, which the quote is from, is the last section of the Third Moment. Still, its “common ground” probably has something in common with that of the Fourth Moment: in making a judgment of taste, “one solicits assent from everyone else because one has a ground for it that is common to all” (5: 237). This common ground, here already called common sense, is the medium of the universal communicability of a tasteful mental state which, in turn, is

4. “Suited to cognition in general”

“Cognition in general” is a central notion of the doctrine of taste (‘doctrine of taste’ refers to §§ 1-22 and 30-40 as well as to the relevant sections of the Introductions). Either this term or one of its derivatives appears almost every time when Kant attempts to describe aesthetic judging. I say ‘attempts’ because his formulations are perplexingly vague and diverse; they sound like variations on a missing theme. “Cognition in general” first occurs in §9, but its *entrée* is less than amazing. If a judgment of taste is to be universally valid, it must have to do with cognition, but if its “universal communicability [...] is to be conceived of merely subjectively, namely without a concept of the object”, it must express “a state of mind that is encountered in the relation of the powers of representation to each other insofar as they relate a given representation to **cognition in general**” (5: 217). Why equate subjectivity with generality? Why equate a mental act that does not yield a conceptual determination of its particular content and does not make it an object with the lack of particularity?⁶ Kant goes on to add that the imagination and the understanding enter a “subjective relation suited to cognition in general”, and “any determinate cognition [...] always rests on that relation as its subjective condition” (5: 218).

As an important (though isolated) observation in §18 shows, Kant is aware that taste has no principle proper. A judgment of taste is the “example of a universal rule that one cannot produce [*die nicht gegeben werden kann*]” (5: 237). Aesthetic judging cannot be formalized, it can only be grasped in its particular instances (the same pertains to the power of judgment: this is why general logic could not give it precepts in the *CPR*, A132-35/B171-74). But the critique of taste is written “from a transcendental point of view [or with a transcendental intention: *in transzendentaler Absicht*]” (5: 170), which means that it must transcend the particular instances and “produce” a rule. Kant finds a way out of this situation by making the instance the rule: by making aesthetic judging a “cognition in general”. The passage that perhaps best (or worst) illustrates this can be found in the First Introduction. Kant claims that aesthetic judging involves a comparison between the “actual” relation of the imagination and the understanding and “the relation [...] in which

⁶ For Kant, conceptual consciousness and object-consciousness are the same: “**object** [...] is that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is **united**” (B 137). This means that, strictly speaking, the beautiful is not an object.

they must stand in the power of judgment in general”, but the alleged comparison results in a bizarre identification that transforms the representation of the beautiful into the representation of something as something: “the **apprehension** of [a] manifold in the imagination agrees with the **presentation** of a concept of the understanding (though which concept be undetermined [*unbestimmt welches Begriffs*])” (20: 220-21).

What I called the derivatives of this notion are as follows: (a) “faculties of cognition in general” (5: 286, translation corrected to plural), (b) “a judgment in general” (5: 287), (c) “the power of judgment in general” (5: 286 and *passim*), (d) a reflection of this faculty “by means of which it strives to rise from intuitions to concepts in general” (20: 249), and (e) “the lawfulness of the understanding in general” (5: 241). Unsurprisingly, it is in the Deduction that the transcendental inquiry reaches the maximum of abstraction and formalization. In search of a “justifying ground [*Rechtsgrund*]”, the Deduction follows the “guideline” of considering “only the formal peculiarities”, the “logical form” of the judgment of taste (5: 287), or of “abstract[ing] from all its content” (5: 281). But what begins as a methodological abstraction soon turns into the event of aesthetic judging: the latter itself appears as a completely content-neutral form. The only phrase missing from the above list is ‘imagination in general’. But only the phrase is missing. “Taste, as a subjective power of judgment, contains a principle of subsumption, not of intuitions under **concepts**, but of the **faculty** of intuitions or presentations (i.e., of the imagination) under the **faculty** of concepts (i.e., the understanding)” (5: 287). This principle of connecting the faculties *qua* faculties is dubious, to say the least. The experience of the beautiful seems to be become the judging of whatever: (f) “the judging of a sensible object in general” (5: 290). And it is a judging by whomever, to be sure: judges of taste represent “mankind in general” (5: 301).

The thesis that “cognition general” is the condition of determinate cognition also has different versions, but each of them strengthens the impression that what happens in aesthetic judging somehow underlies all cognition of objects. Kant mentions the “universality of the subjective conditions of the judging of objects” (5: 218); “the subjective condition of cognizing” (5: 238); “the subjective condition of all judgments”, which turns out to be “the faculty of judging itself, or the power of judgment” (5: 287); “the subjective conditions of the use of the power of judgment in general” (5:290); “the subjective, merely sensitive condition of the objective use of the power of judgment in general (namely the agreement of those two faculties [the imagination and the understanding] with each other)” (20: 223-24).

The generality and the condition status of aesthetic judging do not necessarily imply that everything is beautiful.⁷ The correspondence of the imagination and the understanding “prior to any concept” (5: 289) is a structural moment which must be present in ordinary cognition, as a point of equalization between the two faculties, but which normally remains unnoticed, whereas in aesthetic judging the subject specifically becomes aware of it. In this

⁷ For a debate specifically about this problem see Shier 1998 and Wenzel 1999.

perspective, the judging of the beautiful, as a “cognition in general”, is not identical with, but eminently representative of, what takes place in all cognition, and the beautiful is specific in that it occasions the realization of that pre-conceptual harmony as such. This (or something like this) is what Kant seems to mean at the end of §9, where he emphasizes that the representation of the beautiful can by itself, “without comparison to others”, be in “agreement with the conditions of the universality that constitutes the business of the understanding in general” and bring “the faculties of cognition into the well-proportioned disposition that we require for all cognition” (5: 219), then in §21, where he says that there is a proportion of the mental disposition which is “optimal” for the activity of the faculties “with respect to cognition (of given objects) in general” (5: 238), as well as in the first paragraph of the General Remark after the Exposition (5: 240-41).

What is important for me here is that aesthetic judging involves a mental constellation that is not restricted to the judging of particular objects but extends to “all cognition”, even though it need not always (and usually does not) make itself noticeable or felt. According to the standard explanation – which is identical with the one Kant gives in §9 –, aesthetic judging must be a “cognition in general” because this is how it can aspire to subjectively universal validity. I will argue for a different approach: Kant needs aesthetic judging as a subjectively yet universally valid “cognition in general” because this is how aesthetics can lend a hand to epistemology.

I began by remarking that the introduction of common sense as a condition of cognition is an unexpected move by Kant in §21, since the *CPR* does not know of common sense as such a condition. But it is perhaps even more unexpected in the light of the *Prolegomena*. In §40 of the *CPJ*, Kant identifies taste with common sense (meaning that taste becomes its own principle, which might sound odd, but in fact accords with the above observation concerning the peculiar exemplarity of its judgments). More precisely, he identifies it with “a kind of *sensus communis*”; the other kind is the “common human understanding” (5: 293). Now it is this common sense that appears in the *Prolegomena*, where it has another name, too, *gesunder Menschenverstand* (“sound common sense” in the English translation),⁸ and where Kant fiercely criticizes its advocates, the philosophers of the Scottish School of Common Sense, saying that what they claim to be immediately certain knowledge lacks universality and necessity, and cannot be used to beat off David Hume’s skepticism. Transcendental philosophy alone can save the concept of causality and other *a priori* concepts (see *Proleg.* 4: 369-71 and 257-60).⁹

The *CPJ*’s newly found aesthetic common sense is thus a superior version of something which Kant seven years earlier declared insufficient as a weapon against the late colleague who had awakened him from his dogmatic slumber. But Hume’s ghost is still haunting.

⁸ To make the picture even more colourful, the Hungarian phrase for this common taste translates as ‘sober reason’. – For a comprehensive analysis of the different meanings and roles of *sensus communis* in Kant’s writings, see Zhouhuang 2016.

⁹ For Kant’s reception of the common-sense philosophy, see Kuehn 1987, pp. 167-207.

Recall, in the *Metaphysik Mrongovius* Kant says that egoism can be “skeptical”, and admits that he “cannot refute the egoist by experience”. According to the first sentence of §21, “Cognitions and judgments must, together with the conviction that accompanies them, be able to be universally communicated, for otherwise they would have no correspondence with the object: they would all be a merely subjective play of the powers of representation, just as skepticism insists” (5: 238). I cannot analyze here in detail the argument of §21, nor would that make much sense, because I could not say anything new about it. Just in a nutshell, the universal communicability of cognitions presupposes that of “the mental state, i.e., the disposition of the cognitive powers for a cognition in general”; “this disposition cannot be determined except through the feeling (not by concepts)”; therefore, the feeling itself must be universally communicable, too; this, in turn, “presupposes a common sense”, so “the latter must be able to be assumed, and indeed without appeal to psychological observations, as the necessary condition of the universal communicability of our cognition, which is assumed in every logic and every principle of cognition that is not skeptical” (5: 238-39).

It might seem that §21 has nothing to do with aesthetics. It does not even mention taste. But taste does appear here in the disguise of “cognition in general”.¹⁰ And in §22, which is again explicitly about taste, Kant calls “common sense” a “principle of the possibility of experience”, though he leaves it open whether it is “constitutive” or “regulative” (5: 240). The question decisive of the role and significance of §21 is how to read the phrase “for otherwise” in the first sentence. It could be read as referring to *faits accomplis*: cognitions are universally communicable, because they do correspond with their objects, and *there is* an epistemic common sense, since the universal communicability of cognitions entails or presupposes its existence. In this case, the section’s argument is a sort of external support for the doctrine of taste: aesthetic reflection being a “cognition in general”, its theory can rely on something that otherwise belongs to epistemology. But even apart from the fact that transcendental philosophy has up to now been completely silent about that epistemic common sense, such a reading disregards the problem spotlighted by the passage quoted above from the *CPR*’s Canon chapter. What I called there a kind of solipsism is not qualitatively different from the “skepticism” of §21. It too is “a merely subjective play of the powers of representation” in that the subjective objectivizations of perceptions do not produce a common objectivity: because they do not simply reproduce an already given objectivity, which, if it existed, would also be ‘sensed’ commonly. §21 – and the whole encounter of epistemology and aesthetics in the *CPJ* – must be read the other way round: it is the theory of empirical cognition that gets support from that of taste.

At the end of Section 2, I differentiated between two functions of the purposiveness principle. A similar distinction can be made here between common sense as a principle of cognition (CS_C) and common sense as (a principle of) taste (CS_T). A non-solipsistic or

¹⁰ This is why I do not think that the question whether the common sense of §21 is an aesthetic or a cognitive one is really a question. Most recently, Matherne (2019) has argued for the second option.

non-skeptical conception of experience obviously requires that there be CS_C. It requires “the unanimity in the manner of sensing [*Einhelligkeit der Sinnesart*]” (5:240), which is a synonym for common sense. This “unanimity” alone can guarantee that the subjects will perceive whatever they perceive in an identical manner, which, in turn, guarantees the ‘commonness’ of the cognitions made of these perceptual contents. With respect to CS_C, however, Kant seems to have three equally bad options.

First, he cannot convert to common-sense realism or to any kind of exclusively or even just predominantly realistic ontology and epistemology; that would amount to denying TI and destroying metaphysics. Second, the assumption of CS_C cannot rely on what I think Kant means by “psychological observations”, i.e., on empirical, historical evidence, on statistical data showing the agreement among so many people on so many objects; this consensus, however broad, is a far cry from what could only be – and hence cannot be – confirmed by what I above described as a doubly endless poll. Third, and most importantly in the present context, there is a complication that seems impossible to overcome in a transcendental idealist epistemology. While it is true that a non-solipsistic *conception* of experience requires CS_C, it is also true that the *practice* of experience is possible, at a limited scale (if I may put it so awkwardly), without CS_C. It is possible because an empirical judgment as such is always limited. Limited both to some particular content and to some judging persons. The judgment that “the sun *warms* the stone” is about this particular stone and this particular occasion of sunshine, even though it can also be meant as an instance of universal laws. Anyone who makes this judgment is, or should be, aware – depending on whether or not they have already read the *CPR* – that the alleged “object” of the judgment is but the objectivization of their actual perceptions. Still, they take what they make as an objective experience – how else? They are happy if they get “confirmation” from “others” (5: 216) who likewise perceive the same stone as becoming warm and make the same judgment of experience. But, again, they all are, or should be, aware that it is not the object itself that this agreement is based on. They know that this is just an intersubjective consensus. And they also know that it would be extremely hard to find out whether “every human being” (5: 219) makes (or has ever made, or will ever make) the same judgment.

To put the third point somewhat differently, CS_C as such is not a transcendental condition under which alone experience, in the limited sense outlined here, is possible. If someone asks me what I think guarantees the objective validity of an empirical judgment of mine, including the certainty that others will agree with me, I cannot, as a fan of Kant, reply either by resorting to pure realism or by adducing historical evidence. But, worse, I also cannot say that I am not able to make that judgment, to unite perceptions in my consciousness and objectivize them, without there working in me a principle (CS_C) according to which everyone is compelled to perceive and judge the thing in question – let alone everything – in an identical way.

Enter taste to save the day with/as CS_T. Its judgments are doubly unlimited. First, though always occasioned by a particular object, they decouple from this object both in that they are not about the object, but about how “the subject feels itself as affected by the representation” (5: 204) – this is the first tenet the Analytic of the Beautiful lays down –, and in that this feeling turns out to be that of a “cognition in general”: of a mental state that, regardless of its particular content, is the condition of every determinate objective cognition. In this respect, judgments of taste are about “a sensible object in general”. Second, they are also unlimited in that they demand universal assent: they are made in the name of “mankind in general”. Since, according to that first tenet, judges of taste cannot even think of trying to base their demand on objective criteria, they have no choice but to look in themselves for something to be declared universally communicable, able to be shared by everyone. And the only thing they can find is “cognition in general”.

In the *Metaphysik Mrongovius*, the paragraph after the passage quoted above begins with this sentence: “Dualism (pluralism) is opposed to egoism” (Kant, 1997, 29: 928), the word *Pluralismus* being written above *Dualismus* in the manuscript. Indeed, both are at place here. Dualism fits here because TI entails the existence of things outside the mind. Pluralism fits here because it means that cognitions and their objects should be common to all. But how to achieve that? “If the judgment of taste must not be counted [*gelten muss*] as **egoistic**, but necessarily [...] as **pluralistic**, then it must be grounded in some sort of a *priori* principle” (5: 278).

According to the Deduction, the “problem of the critique of the [aesthetic] power of judgment belongs under the general problem of transcendental philosophy: How are synthetic *a priori* judgments possible?” (5: 289) A judgment of taste involves an *a priori* synthesis. Of course, this apriority does not mean that it could be known in advance, before any (aesthetic) experience, whether or not an object will cause satisfaction. “It is an empirical judgment that I perceive and judge an object with pleasure.” If “it is not the pleasure” itself, then it must be “**the universal validity of this pleasure** perceived in the mind as connected with the mere judging of an object that is represented in a judgment of taste as a universal rule for the power of judgment, valid for everyone”, and the judgment “that I find it beautiful, i.e., that I may require that satisfaction of everyone as necessary” is already “an *a priori* judgment” (5: 289). But, again, the pleasure to be declared universally valid is the feeling of a “cognition in general”. Taste

can be directed only to the subjective conditions of the use of the power of judgment in general (which is restricted neither to the particular kind of sense nor to a particular concept of understanding), and thus to that subjective element that one can presuppose in all human beings (as requisite for possible cognitions in general),

so, ultimately, a “judgment of taste [...] asserts only that we are justified in presupposing universally in every human being the same subjective conditions of the power of judgment that we find in ourselves”, provided “that we have correctly subsumed the given object under these conditions” (5: 290).

This is not necessarily the first answer that I, even as a fan of Kant, would give if someone asked me ‘What do you think is the only thing that a correct judgment of taste asserts?’ Anyway, what Kant has found is a real transcendental jewel. The difficulty relating to CS_C, namely, that the particular instances of experience do not warrant its assumption – because they are doubly limited, and because it is not impossible to make judgments of experience without having to think that everyone else will perceive and objectivize the given content, let alone everything, in the same way –, this difficulty is over now. I cannot ever use the predicate ‘beautiful’ without consciously exemplifying CS_T, i.e., without consciously assuming, through an *a priori* synthesis, that the working of the cognitive faculties that I feel in myself is the same as they work in everyone else. Common sense, the whole of it, is established, because if CS_T is established, then – but only then – CS_C becomes established, too. If “cognition in general” must be assumed to be universally valid, then the universality of the determinate cognitions conditioned by it must be assumed, too.

Note well, this solution is one which TI permits. Objectivity remains dependent on individual minds. Common sense is not realistic, it does not entail that there is a given objectivity that must be sensed commonly, in the same way by everyone. A judgment of taste only assumes this sameness in the sphere of “cognition in general” – but assumes it as the condition of its own possibility. This is the most that can be achieved within the framework of TI. The jewel Kant has found is a type of judgment that cannot be made other than as a blow to solipsism/skepticism: without necessarily assuming the uniformity of the human constitution that is at work in all cognition. The “difference among the subjects”, which, as a difference among too many subjects capable of producing too many diverse objects, not so long ago threatened to block even the “presumption” of a common world, is not a concern anymore for the transcendental theory of experience. In practical terms, there might still be cases in which the subjects disagree over what the object is. As a matter of principle, however, their difference has been overwritten by “unanimity”.

The Introductions can be interpreted in an analogous manner, with only two notable differences. First, here it is the notion of subjective purposiveness that connects the epistemic and the aesthetic. With respect to what goes on in the mind in (or as) the judging of the beautiful, the descriptions “harmony of the faculties” and “subjective purposiveness” are interchangeable, purposiveness being nothing but an intentionally or quasi intentionally effectuated harmony, as a unity in diversity. As a quality of aesthetic judging, subjective purposiveness refers both to the imaginative, pre-conceptual synthesis of a manifold of intuition and to the agreement of the faculties. The second difference is a shift in perspective. CS_T had to secure the cognitive uniformity of subjects. What I above called

PP_T must secure the uniformity of objects in their cognizability. The link between the two projects is, unsurprisingly, the notion of “cognition in general”, which remains central in the Introductions, too, and which, as I have argued, extends to everyone and everything. (This centrality of the notion is why it is not necessarily a mystery of the *CPJ* that the judgments of taste have two different *a priori* principles, common sense and nature’s purposiveness, in one and the same book.) The underlying logic being identical, I confine myself to enumerating the essential points.

The problem with PP_C is that, while it is required for the coherence of experience, it cannot break out of the status of a regulative principle; the necessity with which it is assumed is that of a “need”. Like in the case of CS_C, Kant has three non-options to endow PP_C as such with a deeper necessity and to make it more than a nominally transcendental but in fact superfluous principle, which orders discursive cognition to do what it does. First, he cannot return to ontotheology. Second, the sounder-than-heuristic validity of PP_C cannot be based on statistical evidence, here on the knowledge that experience has already proven so coherent (or that nature has already shown itself to be so well-ordered). Third, and again most importantly: as it was clear already in the *CPR*, though systematicity might be a must in the *conception* of experience and nature, coherence is not an *a priori* condition of individual judgments of experience. It is not just that incoherent experiences cannot be ruled out. Everybody can say (though probably nobody says) that in making a ‘normal’ judgment of experience they took care to act in accordance with the discursive structure of human cognition, but nobody can say that they would not have been able to make that particular judgment without assuming that the *whole* of nature is purposive.

With the notion of aesthetic reflection as a subjectively purposive mental state and as a “cognition in general”, however, Kant can easily take the decisive step. “Judgments of taste [...] lay claim to necessity and say, not that everyone does so judge [...] but that everyone **ought** to so judge, which is as much as to say that they have an *a priori* principle for themselves” (20: 238-39). It is their very “possibility” that “presupposes an *a priori* principle” (5: 191). What makes the step from PP_C to PP_T so easy is that the cognitive, concept-oriented employment of the reflecting power of judgment is a direct continuation of its aesthetic use. The most compact version of PP_C, as “the principle of reflection on given objects of nature”, was “that for all things in nature empirically determinate concepts can be found” (20: 211). The harmony of “the imagination” and “the understanding” satisfies “the subjective, merely sensitive condition of the objective use of the power of judgment in general” (20: 223-24): the elementary condition of conceptualizability.

What could be more obvious than that the judgment of taste is to be based on the principle of purposiveness? As already quoted, it

wins a claim to universality and necessity, as merely reflective judgment, through the relation of the subjective purposiveness of the given representation for the power of

judgment to that *a priori* principle of the power of judgment, of the purposiveness of nature in its empirical lawfulness in general, and thus an aesthetic reflecting judgment can be regarded as resting on a principle *a priori*. (20: 243)

To complete the analogy, this ‘aestheticization’ amounts to a transubstantiation. Unlike in the case of common sense, here Kant clearly says what it means for the purposiveness principle to gain this aesthetic function. “The concept of purposiveness is not a constitutive concept of experience at all [...]; for it is not a category” (20: 219-20). But a “higher faculty” is one which “contains **constitutive** principles *a priori*”, and “for the feeling of pleasure and displeasure it is the power of judgment” that has such a principle (5: 196, *cf.* 5: 197). Judgments of experience (in the ‘primary’ sense) are possible without PP_C – judgments of taste are impossible without PP_T. Purposiveness is established.

This solution, too, is one which can be given within TI. To PP_C as such, the critical restrictions still apply. It remains regulative etc. It is not about what nature *is*; this kind of validity is reserved for the categories. But taste jumps in to help again. In making a judgment of taste about natural beauty, i.e., in performing an act of “cognition in general”, I cannot but presuppose the purposiveness of nature, this being the only way to demand universal assent: the only way to make such a judgment at all. And I do so all the easier because, as I proceed in the Introductions, the difference between what I might have thought to be two separate attitudes to nature – cognitive and aesthetic – gradually disappears, at least at the level of principles. Towards the end of the published Introduction, i.e., chronologically speaking, towards the end of the *CPJ*, Kant once for all obliterates my distinction between PP_C and PP_T:

the aesthetic power of judgment [...] alone contains a principle that the power of judgment lays at the basis of its reflection on nature entirely *a priori*, namely that of a formal purposiveness of nature in terms of [*nach*] its particular (empirical) laws for our faculty of cognition, without which the understanding could not find itself in it. (5: 193, translation modified)

This is one of the reasons why I think that the epistemological mission prevents Kant’s doctrine of taste from becoming a genuine theory of aesthetic judging. I simply cannot imagine that whenever I make a judgment of natural beauty, I should mobilize in myself a principle according to which “for all things in nature empirically determinate concepts can be found”.

This can be my fault. As a second reason, however, there would be a crucial question that Kant does not answer, indeed, does not even ask. If aesthetic reflection, as a “cognition in

general”, is the condition of determinate cognition, why does it not materialize into a determinate cognition? If it is, as all its descriptions suggest, a pro-conceptual act, why does it not lead to cognition? “The **beautiful** [...] requires the representation of a certain **quality** of the object, which also can be made intelligible and brought to concepts (although in the aesthetic judgment it is not brought to concepts)” (5: 266, translation modified). Why is this quality not brought to concepts if it could be? The pleasure in the beautiful “has a causality in itself, namely that of **maintaining** the state of the representation of the mind and the occupation of the cognitive powers without a further aim. We **linger** over the contemplation [*Betrachtung*] of the beautiful because this contemplation strengthens and reproduces itself” (5: 222, translation modified). This is a very important observation, but the self-maintaining character of pleasure remains a marginal motif. Relatedly, the doctrine of taste does not say anything essential about what it calls (but only calls) the free play of the faculties. I say ‘relatedly’ because play is that autotelic and self-maintaining activity, and if Kant pushed this point, he could hardly maintain his condition thesis, the cornerstone of his epistemologically driven theory of taste. A condition is like a threshold. It must be possible to move on from it to that which depends on it, and the latter must occur if the condition is there. By contrast, play is purposive in and for itself.¹¹

Interestingly, however, Kant picks up the question of play in his doctrine of art, where “cognition in general” and its derivatives are completely missing, save for a single mention of “the power of judgment in general” in connection with “taste” (5: 319). But taste has already lost its primacy due to the sharp distinction, at the end of §48, between what is artistically valuable and what is merely tasteful (5: 313). Immediately after that, already in §49, Kant claims that it is an “aesthetic idea” that “sets the mental powers into motion, i.e., into a play that is self-maintaining and even strengthens the powers to that end” (5: 313). Then he gives a definition that reads like a denial of what he wrote some fifty pages earlier: “an aesthetic idea” is “that representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e., **concept**, to be adequate to it, which, consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible (5: 314). It might seem a mistake to make a comparison between the two sentences. The latter, which denies conceptualizability, is in the doctrine of art, whereas the former, which asserts the same, is in the doctrine of taste, whose protagonist is fixated on natural beauty and is inherently unable to deal with anything intentionally meaningful, at least as pure taste (which, incidentally, makes it a rather anachronistic entity in 1790). But Kant takes a further step in §51: “Beauty (whether it be beauty of nature or of art) can in general be called the expression of aesthetic ideas”, even though in the first case the judging is “a mere reflection on a given intuition, without a concept of what the object ought to be” (5: 320).

¹¹ Wachter (2006, pp. 88-120) gives an excellent analysis of this problem.

Obviously, it would not be easy to associate “much thinking” with the contemplation of a “hummingbird” (5: 290), and, just as obviously, even a much larger and possibly more beautiful bird is not a fatal threat to ornithology. Nevertheless, the very extension of the notion of aesthetic ideas to nature introduces an element to the judging of natural beauty which, on the one hand, should have been part of the doctrine of taste – as the answer to the question that Kant neglects to ask there –, but which, on the other hand, retroactively questions its epistemological mission. Originally, “mere reflection” is the same as “cognition in general”. In §51, however, it must be understood as a self-prolonging contemplation, as a ‘lingering’ which maintains itself because the beautiful, in the very “quality” that makes it beautiful, resists conceptualization and prevents discursive cognition from doing what it normally does, from registering the content of intuition as an instance of a concept.¹² Compared to *this* play of the imagination and the understanding, which is driven by the “impetus to think more, although in an undeveloped way, than can be comprehended in a concept” (5: 315), conceptual determination is a loss rather than a gain readily anticipated by the intuition. Can you say that *this* play is that which “any determinate cognition [...] always rests on [...] as its subjective condition” (5: 218)? If I am not completely wrong, and if this last question signals a real tension within Kant’s aesthetic theory – one between its epistemological mission and its somewhat belated commitment to providing a credible account of the encounter with the beautiful –, then it could at the same time serve as the starting point for another paper, which would be concerned with the moral significance of an aesthetic experience that suspends its subject’s conceptual control over reality, natural or man-made.

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¹² As Longuenesse puts it (1998, p. 164): “What makes judgments [of taste] *merely* reflective is that in them, the effort of the activity of judgment to form concepts *fails*. And it fails because it *cannot* succeed.”

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Las aporías de la apariencia
Modernidad y estética en el pensamiento de Kant

The aporias of appearance
Modernity and aesthetics in Kant's thinking

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Abstract

El objetivo de este trabajo es demostrar, en primer lugar, que el problema de la verdad no se encuentra completamente ausente en la estética kantiana y que no lo está, en segundo lugar, porque la autonomización de la dimensión estética es pensada a partir de una experiencia de la unidad de la subjetividad. A los fines de demostrar estos dos puntos, procuro reconstruir, en primer lugar, el contexto epistémico de la *KU*. En un segundo momento, me remito a la delimitación kantiana de la autonomía del juicio del gusto y finalmente reviso aquellos momentos en los cuales Kant va más allá de sus propias pretensiones. Aquí me refiero especialmente a la idea de un acuerdo espontáneo entre las facultades cognoscitivas en la medida en que ella revela la imbricación de la determinación de la autonomía del juicio estético con problemáticas de carácter extraestético que remiten a la posibilidad de una autolegitimación de la modernidad.

Key words

Estética; Subjetividad; Modernidad

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The aim of this work is to demonstrate, firstly, that the problem of truth is not completely absent from Kantian aesthetics, and secondly, that this is so because Kant conceives of the autonomization of the aesthetic realm on the basis of a unified subjective experience. In order to demonstrate these two points, I first reconstruct the epistemic context of the KU. Subsequently, I refer to the Kantian delimitation of the autonomy of judgments of taste, and finally, I review those moments in which Kant steps beyond his own claims. Here I am referring especially to the idea of a spontaneous agreement between the cognitive faculties insofar as it reveals that the determination of the autonomy of aesthetic judgement overlaps with problems of an extra-aesthetic nature that refer to the possibility of a self-legitimization of modernity.

Aesthetics - Subjectivity - Modernity

1. Introducción

En un artículo de 1973 Rüdiger Bubner criticaba las estéticas marxistas del siglo XX por su tendencia a subordinar la dimensión estética a problemas de orden filosófico (Bubner, 1973: 38-7). Desde su perspectiva, la tradición materialista de Walter Benjamin y Theodor Adorno cometía en este punto el mismo error que era posible reprocharle a la hermenéutica filosófica de Hans Georg Gadamer. Este error consistía en la tendencia a subordinar el análisis del ámbito estético a la necesidad de desarrollar una respuesta para problemas de orden filosófico. Para Bubner, tanto las líneas materialistas como las perspectivas hermenéuticas violentaban, de este modo, el principio de la autonomía estética, ya que su interés por el arte dependía de la voluntad de recuperar una noción de verdad que había devenido inalcanzable desde el punto de vista filosófico.

Sin embargo, la subordinación de la esfera estética a problemáticas de carácter filosófico no era la única dificultad que descubría Bubner en las perspectivas estéticas del siglo XX. Concebir la belleza artística como manifestación sensible de la verdad suponía, además, asumir una noción metafísica de obra de arte que resultaba altamente problemática. Esta noción provenía de la filosofía hegeliana y permitía sostener el valor simbólico de la belleza. No obstante, ella había sido puesta en cuestión por los movimientos vanguardistas, en la medida en que estos habían convertido al arte en un evento y al espectador en uno de los ejes centrales del propio acontecimiento artístico.

La respuesta de Bubner tanto frente a la colonización filosófica del fenómeno estético como a la crisis del soporte ontológico de la manifestación sensible de la verdad, suponía una rehabilitación de la estética kantiana. Desde su punto de vista, el análisis kantiano de las condiciones de posibilidad de la experiencia estética tenía la ventaja, frente a las tradiciones hermenéuticas o materialistas, de que permitía conservar la autonomía de la dimensión estética sin tener que hacerse cargo de una concepción de la obra de arte que ya había sido superada tanto en el plano filosófico como en términos artísticos.

La propuesta de Bubner no se destacaba por su carácter progresista, ni en términos filosóficos ni en lo que se refiere a sus preferencias artísticas. No obstante, su concepción estética tuvo un gran impacto en el ámbito de la estética filosófica alemana, hasta el punto de que, desde finales de los años 70, la referencia a la experiencia estética se volvería ineludible dentro de los trabajos especializados sobre el tema. Esta tendencia se reflejó

incluso en la teoría crítica, para la cual la constitución interna de la obra de arte había desempeñado hasta el momento un papel político determinante.

Sin embargo, no es posible ni asumir sin más la interpretación de la estética kantiana sobre la cual se sostiene la defensa que hace Bubner de la experiencia estética, ni desconocer tampoco lo que estaba en juego en la referencia de las filosofías del arte de fines del siglo XVIII y comienzos del XIX al concepto de verdad. Según intentaré mostrar, resulta imposible depurar la estética kantiana de todo posible contenido de verdad y desvincular, de esta forma -como pretendía Bubner-, la “estética” de la “filosofía del arte”¹, porque Kant piensa la propia autonomía de la dimensión estética a partir del modelo de una subjetividad unificada. No obstante, esta referencia a la idea de una subjetividad unificada no es un lastre del cual la filosofía kantiana debería haberse librado, a los fines de poder desarrollar una concepción no metafísica de la autonomía de la dimensión estética. Por el contrario, lo que hace de la estética *el pensamiento moderno* por excelencia es justamente esta referencia interna de la apariencia estética a la noción de subjetividad. Pues la suspensión estética de los órdenes veritativos y normativos reproduce las condiciones de surgimiento de la subjetividad autónoma y permite tematizar, de esta forma, las aporías que son propias de aquella.

A los fines de demostrar el modo en que estética y filosofía del arte se conectan en la estética kantiana procuraré reconstruir, antes que nada, el contexto epistémico en el cual se inscribe la *Crítica de la facultad de Juzgar*. En este contexto me referiré tanto a la crisis de la concepción estética clásica como a algunos de los motivos que pudieron haber dado lugar a ella (2). En un segundo momento, me haré alusión a las discusiones estéticas que se encuentran en el trasfondo de la delimitación kantiana de la autonomía del juicio del gusto (3). Posteriormente, revisaré aquellos momentos de la tercera crítica en los cuales Kant parece superar la pretensión de realizar una delimitación del juicio estético. En este punto, no me referiré tan solo a la pretensión kantiana de establecer un vínculo entre belleza y moralidad, sino también a su concepción del juicio estético como acuerdo espontáneo de las facultades cognoscitivas (4-7). Creo que ya aquí puede advertirse hasta qué punto la propia determinación de la autonomía del juicio estético se encuentra imbricada con asuntos de carácter extraestético que, como anticipé, remiten al problema de la subjetividad y a la pregunta más general acerca de la legitimidad de la época moderna.

2. Los orígenes de la crisis

Si bien podría parecer paradójico, no sería inadecuado situar los orígenes de la estética como disciplina en el ocaso mismo del dominio de lo bello. Las causas de la decadencia de la concepción clásica de la belleza son difíciles de circunscribir. No obstante, no es posible

¹ Por medio de estos conceptos se hace alusión a la conocida distinción entre *estética* y *filosofía del arte* que introdujeron autores tales como Hermut Kuhn (1966: 15-144) o Peter Szondi (1974: 285s). La estética abordaría el problema artístico desde el punto de vista de la sensibilidad o de la recepción. En tal sentido, una estética no debería tener por objeto necesario el arte, porque el centro de su interés se encuentra en la experiencia estética propiamente dicha. Una filosofía del arte, en cambio, se hallaría orientada a analizar, como su nombre lo indica, la obra de arte y a descubrir en ella un posible contenido de verdad o un contenido de carácter significativo.

sobredimensionar la repercusión sobre el ámbito estético del proceso de temporalización que se inicia hacia mediados del siglo XVIII.² De hecho, la emergencia de una concepción irreversible de la temporalidad pone en cuestión aquella articulación entre mecanicismo y teleología que había hecho posible la teoría biológica del siglo XVII y sobre la cual se había construido la idea de una *belle nature*.³ La temporalización de la experiencia impide continuar remitiendo los diferentes momentos del desarrollo de un ser vivo a un germen originario y obtura, de esta forma, la posibilidad de garantizar el carácter teleológico de las formas orgánicas (Lepenes, 1978: 16-8; Foucault, 1984: 137). En tal sentido, la nueva concepción de la temporalidad obliga a limitar las pretensiones nomológicas al ámbito inorgánico y vuelve inconcebible, por lo tanto, aquellas fundamentaciones de la belleza artística que tomaban como punto de referencia la conformidad a fin del orden natural. En el nuevo contexto, la reflexión estética se enfrenta, entonces, con una situación de carácter paradójico: dado que el orden natural desconoce en el fondo toda forma de organización, el arte solo podría conservar su relación con la naturaleza si renunciara a pensarse en términos propiamente estéticos.

Pero las causas de la crisis de la noción tradicional de belleza no pueden ser reducidas a los cambios de orden epistémico. Como pone en evidencia Joachim Winckelmann hacia 1755, a la imposibilidad de interpretar en términos estéticos la nueva concepción de la naturaleza que se dibujaba desde mediados del siglo XVIII, se le suma la abstracción y fragmentación de las relaciones sociales del capitalismo naciente. Así, aunque aun cuando Winckelmann no haga referencia al plano económico propiamente dicho, no solo se remite a las diferencias climáticas a la hora de explicar la contraposición entre el arte antiguo y el moderno. Desde su perspectiva, la magnificencia del arte griego resulta dependiente de la libertad política del mundo griego, de la misma manera en que el estado decadente del arte moderno encuentra su causa en el despotismo feudal y la fragmentación política que es propia de la Alemania de la época. Para Winckelmann, es justamente esta situación la que solo deja abierta para los modernos la posibilidad de una imitación directa del arte griego como recuerdo de una naturaleza bella que de otro modo se hubiese hallado irremediablemente perdida. “La única forma para nosotros de volvernos grandes, incluso inimitables, si es posible, –sostenía el historia del arte antiguo– es la imitación de los antiguos... particularmente los griegos” (Winckelmann, 1969: 4).

El diagnóstico acerca del carácter prosaico de las relaciones sociales propias de la modernidad fue compartido por numerosos autores de finales del siglo XVIII, entre ellos Johann Wolfgang Goethe, el pastor protestante Daniel Jenisch y el joven filólogo Friedrich

² Entre los elementos que es necesario mencionar a la hora de dar cuenta del progresivo abandono de la noción clásica de la temporalidad merecen una atención especial sucesos tan dispares como el descubrimiento de nuevos yacimientos fósiles (Kupke, 1990: 241-259), el terremoto de Lisboa (Marquard, 2008: 205-215) o la publicación de las investigaciones embriológicas de Caspar Friedrich Wolff (Wolff, 1966).

³ Nos referimos aquí al preformismo biológico, para el cual el desarrollo de los seres naturales consistía en un proceso mecánico a lo largo del cual maduraban una serie de disposiciones que se hallaban depositadas antes de la fecundación o bien en el óvulo o bien en el espermatozoide (Palti, 2001: 35-69).

Schlegel.⁴ No obstante, es probablemente Schiller quien logra determinar con mayor precisión la causa de la pérdida de belleza del mundo moderno. Como lo ponen en evidencia sus *Cartas sobre la educación estética de la humanidad*, la pérdida de belleza en el mundo moderno es el resultado de la desnaturalización del hombre a la que ha dado lugar la tendencia hacia la diferenciación de las esferas sociales, en general, y la división social del trabajo, en particular:

Aquella naturaleza multiforme de los Estados griegos, donde cada individuo gozaba de una vida independiente y [...] podía llegar a identificarse con el todo, cedió su lugar a un artificioso mecanismo de relojería, en el cual la existencia mecánica del todo se forma a partir de la concatenación de un número infinito de partes, que carecen de vida propia. Estado e Iglesia leyes y costumbres, fueron separadas [...] el placer se desvinculó del trabajo, el medio de su finalidad, el esfuerzo de la recompensa. Ligado eternamente a un único y minúsculo fragmento del todo, el hombre mismo evoluciona como fragmento; no oyendo más que el sonido monótono de la rueda que hace funcionar, nunca desarrolla la armonía que lleva dentro de sí, y en lugar de imprimir a su naturaleza el carácter propio de la humanidad, el hombre se convierte en un reflejo de su oficio, de su ciencia (Schiller, 1990: 147-9).

El lamento por la pérdida de belleza del mundo moderno puede encontrarse tanto en aquellos autores que critican las consecuencias no deseadas del proceso de modernización como en aquellos que añoran el retorno a un mundo aristocrático, en el cual la falta de urgencias económicas habrían hecho posible el cultivo simultáneo del cuerpo y del espíritu. No obstante, ya sea que interpretemos la crítica a la fragmentación en uno u en otro sentido, lo cierto es que la formación unilateral del hombre moderno no deja de tener repercusiones sobre el ámbito artístico, donde proliferan nuevas formas tales como la caricatura o el retrato. Estas tendencias reflejan un contexto social en el cual las figuras particulares sobresalen por su peculiaridad y se desintegran, a su vez, en trazos de carácter individual. De hecho, es justamente el peligro de una proliferación indiscriminada del detalle el que lleva a Winckelmann a redefinir el concepto clásico de imitación a los fines de apartarlo de la posible copia del estado empírico de la realidad. Al respecto sostiene el autor:

la imitación de lo bello de la naturaleza concierne a un objeto único o reúne las notas de diversos objetos particulares y hace de ellos un todo. El primer proceso implica hacer una copia semejante, un retrato. Es el camino que conduce a las formas y figuras de los holandeses. El segundo, en

⁴ Me refiero en este punto a la discusión que estalló en Alemania a raíz del ensayo de Jenisch “Sobre la prosa y la elocuencia de los alemanes” en el cual constataba, al igual que Goethe, la ausencia de aquellas condiciones políticas que hubieran hecho posible el surgimiento de un arte verdaderamente grande en Alemania. No obstante, a diferencia de Goethe, Jenisch no se manifestaba dispuesto a aceptar sin más esta situación e instaba a imitar a aquella nación que había devenido el “horror de los europeos”, es decir, a la Francia revolucionaria. A este debate se sumaría también Friedrich Schlegel, quien desestimaría irónicamente la preocupación de Jenisch frente a la falta de escritores clásicos alemanes, es decir, por el carácter prosaico de la poesía alemana, para asumir el desafío de redefinir el propio de clasicismo a los fines de incluir en él a un escritor paradigmáticamente prosaico, como Georg Forster (Jenisch, 1795: 249–259, Goethe, 1988: 239–244, Schlegel, 1967: 78–99).

cambio, es el camino que lleva al bello universal y a sus imágenes ideales. Este fue seguido por los griegos. (Winckelmann, 1969: 10)

3. Perspectivas dentro de la estética

Las reflexiones poéticas de Johann Christoph Gottsched se presentan como una de las últimas manifestaciones, en el plano artístico, de aquella articulación entre teleología y mecanicismo sobre la cual se sostenía la restauración temprano-moderna del orden mundano. Esto se refleja en el hecho de que Gottsched aún se encuentra en condiciones de asumir el carácter bello de la naturaleza y de inferir a partir de allí la necesidad de su imitación artística. Desde su perspectiva, Dios ha creado todo “según número, masa y medida” y la belleza artística puede definirse, entonces, a partir de la adecuación a dicho orden racional.

Las cosas naturales son bellas en sí mismas y si el arte quiere producir también algo bello, debe imitar el modelo de la naturaleza. La relación exacta, el orden y la armonía correcta de todas las partes, en la que consiste una cosa, es la fuente de toda belleza. La imitación de la naturaleza perfecta puede dar entonces a una obra artística la perfección por medio de la cual aquella guste y resulte agradable para el entendimiento. La desviación con respecto a este modelo, producirá siempre algo informe y contrario al gusto. (Gottsched, 1751:132)

No obstante, podría decirse que se trata de una remisión póstuma a la concepción clásica de la belleza en la medida en que, ya en el momento de su formulación, han desaparecido las condiciones históricas que hubieran podido brindarle sustento a la interpretación racionalista de la dimensión estética. Uno de los primeros síntomas de los efectos de la crisis epistémica de mediados del siglo XVIII lo constituye, paradójicamente, la definición de la estética como disciplina específica que realiza Alexander Baumgarten en 1750. En ella llaman la atención especialmente dos elementos. Por un lado, la remisión de la belleza al plano del conocimiento sensible y, por el otro, el reconocimiento de la especificidad de este último. Con respecto al primer punto baste recordar que uno de los objetivos fundamentales de la *Estética* de Baumgarten consiste en fundamentar las reglas de la poética clásica por medio de la referencia a la facultad de sentir. De esta manera, la belleza, que antiguamente había sido interpretada en términos miméticos, pasa a presentarse como la perfección de un tipo de conocimiento específico, esto es, del conocimiento sensible. Como el propio Baumgarten afirma en la definición de la estética, esta es la “*ciencia del conocimiento sensible*.” (Baumgarten, 2007: par.14)

Pero Baumgarten no solo remite de este modo la belleza al plano de las facultades subjetivas sino que, como muchas veces se ha señalado, le concede al conocimiento estético un carácter independiente. Por cierto, la facultad de sentir, pese a proveernos de un *conocimiento claro* (y no oscuro), que vuelve cognoscible la cosa representada, continúa ocupando, en tanto conocimiento *confuso* (y no distinto), un lugar secundario frente al conocimiento racional. En este punto, Baumgarten no se aparta mucho de la tradición racionalista de Leibniz, para quien el conocimiento sensible no permitía “enumerar una a

una las marcas que deberían ser suficientes para distinguir la cosa entre otras” (Leibniz, 1966:10), esto es, no permitía descomponer analíticamente los diferentes elementos que integran una determinada representación. No obstante, a diferencia de Leibniz, la intuición sensible no es para Baumgarten un “todavía no” del pensamiento racional, sino más una instancia de carácter análogo. El conocimiento sensible posee su propia lógica y se halla determinado por una función específica que consiste en representar la unidad de la multiplicidad sensible.

En este punto, cobra relevancia el problema de la temporalización, pues si la sensibilidad se encuentra en condiciones de ofrecer un conocimiento específico e irreductible a la racionalidad es justamente porque el giro hacia una concepción irreversible de la temporalidad ha reducido la experiencia científicamente aprehensible al ámbito mecánico y vuelto inconcebible el sostenimiento de un orden mundano y racional. En este contexto, la belleza en tanto perfección del conocimiento sensible, es decir, en tanto cualidad emergente de la organización inmanente del conocimiento sensible, asumirá un papel compensador y adquirirá un carácter relevante desde el punto de vista metafísico. Para la línea de pensamiento que se desprende a partir de aquí, la belleza se caracterizará por llevar a su máximo grado de expresión la armonía y el orden en la composición de las partes y ofrecerá, de esta forma, una imagen sensible tanto de la unidad de los objetos singulares (Ostermann, 1991:26-7) como de la articulación del universo en su totalidad.

Esta manera de asumir la crisis de la concepción mimética del arte encontrará su máximo grado de expresión en el pensamiento de Karl Philipp Moritz. Se trata de una estrategia que afirma la autonomía de la obra de arte hasta el punto de desligar sus cualidades estético-representativas de toda perspectiva mimética, pero sin renunciar por ello al valor cognoscitivo de las mismas. Como pone en evidencia la definición de la obra de arte como “conformidad a fin interna” (Moritz, 1962: 6), que propone Moritz, es justamente esta independencia radical de la obra con respecto a toda posible utilidad o referencia sensible, la que permite que ella pueda ser contemplada como una presentación de la totalidad perdida del mundo. En tanto organización inmanente, el arte aparece como una imagen sensible “imagen sensible “del gran todo de la naturaleza que nos circunda”; esto es, de aquella instancia que, por “tener en sí mismo su fin final y existir para su propia gloria”, no resulta inmediatamente perceptible para nosotros. Al respecto, afirma Moritz,

considerado de esta forma puede ser verdaderamente útil en la medida en que afina nuestra capacidad de percepción del orden y la armonía y eleva nuestro espíritu por sobre las pequeñeces porque ella nos permite mirar claramente todo en el todo y en relación al todo. (Moritz, 1962:122)

Sin embargo, esta no es la única perspectiva que se vislumbra en la estética de Baumgarten. Como puede apreciarse en su definición de la belleza como perfección del conocimiento sensible, que mencioné más arriba, la *Estética* de Baumgarten también abre el camino a un tipo de reflexión que toma como centro de análisis la experiencia de la recepción y los efectos psicológicos de la obra de arte sobre el ánimo del espectador. Esta línea de pensamiento se manifiesta claramente en la determinación de la bella que propone Friedrich Just Riedel, para quien la belleza remite a aquello que otorga satisfacción a los

hombres, en contraposición a aquello que es designado como tal por las autoridades clásicas de la estética:

A diferencia de la perfección, la belleza no le corresponde de por sí a los objetos contemplados, sin relación a una entidad que los percibe. La belleza es de naturaleza relativa y solo una relación en la cual algo nos gusta. (Riedel, 1769: 116)

Lamentablemente ninguna de estas dos perspectivas sería capaz de superar la crisis de la legitimidad de la dimensión estética. Las estéticas efectuales resultaban problemáticas porque renunciaban a todo posible vinculación de la belleza con la naturaleza y porque hacían peligrar, de este modo, tanto la dignidad como la universalidad de la dimensión estética. Las estéticas objetivistas, en cambio, convertían a la obra de arte en una visión reducida de una naturaleza productiva y resultan incompatibles, por ende, con la concepción mecanicista (y científica) del mundo.

Resulta importante tomar en consideración los problemas que traía aparejados cada una de estas perspectivas, porque ellos definen los frentes en los que se debatirá la estética kantiana. Kant deberá superar, por una parte, las tendencias heterónomas y relativistas que se hallan presentes en las estéticas de corte psicológico-efectual y desactivar, por otra parte, además, aquellos conceptos metafísicos antimecanicistas sobre los cuales descansan las metafísicas de la obra de arte de la época. Lo primero lo obligará a atribuirle un carácter *autónomo* a la dimensión estética, mientras que lo segundo lo impulsará a redefinir en términos subjetivos la *conformidad interna a fin*, esto es, a remitirla al plano de la reflexión acerca de nuestras facultades cognitivas.

Sin embargo, la insistencia de Kant en elementos tales como la *conformidad a fin*, proveniente de las perspectivas metafísicas de la obra de arte, no puede explicarse meramente en función de la necesidad de discutir las visiones efectuales del arte. En este punto la pretensión de superar la crisis de legitimación de la belleza se cruza con la necesidad de resolver las dificultades conceptuales que había traído aparejada la crisis epistémica de mediados del XVIII. De tal manera que la vinculación de la noción de apariencia estética con la idea de *conformidad a fin* cumple en la tercera crítica un doble objetivo. Ella apunta ciertamente a sostener la legitimidad de la belleza pero también resulta idónea para fundamentar, como veremos a continuación, la propia respuesta kantiana a la crisis de la concepción clásica del orden natural. Pues la idea de *conformidad a fin* se presenta como un indicio de la existencia de una subjetividad unificada, a partir de la cual sería posible asegurar la posibilidad tanto de los juicios empíricos de la acción moral en general. Esta referencia a la idea de una subjetividad unificada conecta la *Crítica de la facultad de juzgar* con el idealismo alemán y deja entrever el punto en el cual la concepción kantiana de la apariencia estética tiende a traicionar el imperativo de la autonomía estética. No obstante, el planteo de Kant también pone en evidencia el carácter propiamente moderno de la reflexión estética. Este se encontraría vinculado al hecho de que, en su intento de convertirse en una esfera autónoma, la estética no solo tropieza con las mismas aporías que son inherentes al proyecto moderno, sino que además abre un

espacio para la tematización y problematización de estas últimas. Por este motivo, la estética se ve obligada a debatirse de manera permanente entre la necesidad de garantizar los cimientos de la crítica y de la racionalidad y el peligro de fosilizar un determinado momento del proceso reflexivo, es decir, lo que Friedrich Schlegel, algunos años más tarde y posicionándose en contra la filosofía trascendental, llamaría la tendencia a transformar la “última duda” en “el primer acto de fe.” (Schlegel, 1975: 87)

4. La posición de *La crítica de la facultad de juzgar*

Como lo pone en evidencia Kant en las dos introducciones a *la Crítica de la facultad de Juzgar*, el objetivo de esta obra es establecer un vínculo entre la razón práctica y la razón teórica. Como sabemos, tras la primera crítica de Kant, la filosofía queda dividida en dos partes: la filosofía teórica, por una parte, que investiga las leyes dictadas por el entendimiento puro a la naturaleza, y la filosofía práctica, por el otro, que indaga las leyes que le dicta la razón a la libertad, al hombre en tanto ser moral. Sin embargo, estas dos partes de la filosofía no pueden permanecer disociadas sin generar dificultades tanto de orden cognoscitivo como moral. La mediación entre ellas resulta necesaria, antes que nada, sostiene Kant, para garantizar la posibilidad de la legislación moral. Pues, si bien Kant independiza en la *Crítica de la razón la práctica* la formulación del imperativo categórico de todo posible contenido de carácter empírico, también admite que la libertad está destinada a expresarse en el mundo sensible y que, por ello mismo, el *sollen* debe poder traducirse en un *können*:

Por mucho que se consolide un abismo inabarcable entre el dominio del concepto de la naturaleza, como lo sensible, y el dominio del concepto de la libertad, como lo suprasensible, de modo tal que no sea posible ningún tránsito desde el primero hacia el segundo (o sea, por medio del uso teórico de la razón), igual a como si hubiese sendos mundos diferentes, de los cuales el primero no puede tener influjo alguno sobre el segundo, éste, sin embargo *debe* tener sobre aquél un influjo, a saber, debe el concepto de la libertad hacer efectivo en el mundo de los sentidos el fin encomendado por sus leyes; y, en consecuencia, la naturaleza tiene que poder ser pensada también de tal modo que la conformidad a fin de su forma al menos concuerde con la posibilidad de los fines que en ella han de ser efectuados con arreglo a leyes de la libertad (Kant, AA 05:175-6 EE:86-87).⁵

Pero por medio del enlace entre la razón práctica y la razón teórica no solo debe evitarse la absurda situación de que la libertad ordene aquello que no se puede realizar. También el logro del conocimiento científico exige, según Kant, el establecimiento de “un fundamento de la *unidad* de lo suprasensible que está en la base de la naturaleza con aquél que el concepto de la libertad contiene prácticamente” (Kant, AA 05:176 EE:89). De hecho, como ya se anuncia en la *Crítica de la razón pura*, no es posible garantizar la producción de conceptos empíricos a partir de la mera deducción de las categorías, pues estas “sólo conciernen a la posibilidad de una naturaleza (como objeto de los sentidos) en general” (Kant, AA 05:179 EE:91). Para la conformación de los conceptos empíricos es necesario

⁵ Sigo la traducción de Pablo Oyarzún (Kant, 1992) y consigno, junto a la paginación alemana (AA) las referencias de la traducción al castellano (1992).

presuponer, además, sostiene Kant, la propia unidad de la experiencia sensible. Esto es, es necesario presuponer que la experiencia sensible se adecúa al tipo de articulación de lo múltiple que es propia de nuestra capacidad de juzgar.

Pero si bien Kant percibe la necesidad de vincular la dimensión práctica y la dimensión teórica de la razón, también advierte que este vínculo no puede ser establecido en términos objetivos. Desde su perspectiva, esto supondría traspasar los límites que le habían sido fijados al conocimiento posible en la *Crítica de la razón pura* y retornar a las antiguas concepciones metafísicas. Esto coloca a Kant ante una situación problemática: no puede traspasar los límites del sistema crítico sin poner en cuestión la objetividad del conocimiento científico y la universalidad de la moral, pero tampoco puede permanecer dentro de ellos sin renunciar al ejercicio de aquellas facultades cuya posibilidad había sido determinada en términos apriorísticos. La estrategia de Kant ante la imposibilidad de introducir un principio objetivo de articulación entre la naturaleza y la libertad, consiste en virar hacia el ámbito de las facultades cognoscitivas. De esta manera, Kant postula una nueva facultad de conocimiento, la facultad de juzgar, que se ubica entre el entendimiento y la razón y que debe garantizar por medio de su actividad reflexiva el tránsito de un modo de pensar al otro, es decir, del modo de pensar propio de la razón teórica al de la razón práctica y viceversa.

Según sostienen algunos autores, recién hacia el final del libro y luego de una prolongada argumentación, Kant lograría resolver este problema, volviendo pensable la naturaleza como un sistema teleológico en cuya cima se encontraría el hombre en tanto ser moral (Allison, 2001: 210s.). En este sentido, podríamos decir que deberíamos esperar hasta la *Metodología a la Crítica de la facultad de juzgar teleológica* para ver realizado el cometido del libro. No obstante, creemos que es posible encontrar algunos elementos de esta solución en la propia analítica de lo bello, en la medida en que, por medio de la reinterpretación en términos subjetivos de la noción de *finalidad sin fin*, procedente de las concepciones metafísicas de la obra de arte, Kant logra reconstruir una cierta idea de totalidad en la que la finalidad y la causalidad pueden ser pensadas de una manera congruente.⁶

5. El juicio de Gusto

En función de lo expuesto sería posible decir que la analítica de lo bello no solo se encuentra orientada a superar el relativismo al que habían abierto paso las estéticas psicológico – efectuales. Ciertamente, resulta imposible deslindar las reflexiones kantianas acerca de la autonomía del juicio de gusto y de su universalidad del objetivo de dejar de lado este peligro. No obstante, el concepto de finalidad sin fin del que se sirve Kant para resolver este problema proviene de las concepciones metafísicas del arte y había desempeñado en ellas tanto el rol de legitimar la apariencia estética como de salvar la

⁶ Como veremos, Kant reinterpreta esta noción a partir de la concepción efectual de la experiencia estética como revitalización de las fuerzas del ánimo. Esto le permite remitir la idea de “finalidad sin fin” a la subjetividad y escapar al peligro de una recaída en la metafísica.

referencia a la totalidad. De hecho, es justamente en función de su finalidad interna que la obra de arte puede presentarse, para Moritz, como una imagen sensible del “gran todo de la naturaleza”. Desde el punto de vista kantiano, no obstante, la remisión de la noción de finalidad sin fin a la obra de arte introduce una serie de dificultades conceptuales que hacen peligrar la integridad del pensamiento racional. En primer lugar, la “conformidad a fin” de las formas artísticas solo puede ser explicada si se presupone la existencia de una subjetividad creadora que disponga las partes en función de un fin preconcebido. Pero este supuesto, señala Kant, impediría establecer una distinción entre las obras de arte y los demás productos del arte humano, ya que, en ambos casos, la articulación de las partes se desprendería finalmente de un concepto preexistente. Esto es, si se las considera como productos intencionales, las obras de arte se presentan como el resultado de la sujeción de la materialidad a algún tipo de finalidad externa y deben ser juzgadas, entonces, en función de su posible utilidad o perfección y ya no de sus cualidades estéticas.⁷

También existiría la posibilidad de neutralizar la intencionalidad subjetiva por medio de su subsunción a una fuerza productiva natural. Esto es lo que hace en cierta forma el propio Moritz, por medio de la “teoría del genio”,⁸ y antes que él, el joven Herder y los demás integrantes del *Sturm und Drang*. Sin embargo, esta estrategia no hace más que llevar el problema para atrás, puesto que entonces es necesario dar cuenta del modo en que la propia naturaleza produce “conforme a fin”. Esto lleva a postular la existencia de una fuerza genética originaria, la cual no solo resulta imposible de explicar a partir de los desarrollos científicos de la época sino que además, según lo entiende Kant, pone en cuestión las categorías fundamentales del pensamiento racional.⁹

Pero si las concepciones objetivistas de la teleología privan de fundamento al conocimiento científico, el abandono del concepto de finalidad sin fin, que supondría la mera remisión de la belleza al ámbito de la recepción, también tiene su precio. Uno de los principales rendimientos de la experiencia estética es, para Kant, el hecho de que ella nos permite intuir una conexión entre la razón práctica y la teórica, en la medida en que la conformidad a fin estética parece demostrar la concordancia de nuestras fuerzas cognitivas. ¿O no radica la peculiaridad de lo bello en que, por su propia conformidad a fin interna, nos alienta a confiar en la conformidad a fin de nuestras facultades?¹⁰ ¿No se deriva acaso el placer estético del misterioso acuerdo entre lo particular y lo general que es posible encontrar en aquellas configuraciones artísticas o naturales que denominamos bellas? Y este acuerdo inexplicable, ¿no despierta enormes expectativas con respecto a la posibilidad de una concordancia secreta entre nuestras capacidades cognitivas y la disposición efectiva de las

⁷ Desde este punto de vista, no solo se cerraba la posibilidad de remitir el placer que deparaba el arte al objeto imitado sino también de interpretarlo como el resultado de carácter técnicamente logrado de la imitación (Henrich, 1969:129).

⁸ Moritz postulaba la existencia de una fuerza activa (*tätige Kraft* o *Tatkraft*) que subyace tanto a la imaginación como a la sensibilidad estética (Moritz, 1962: 75-87).

⁹ Esto explica la fuerte crítica que le dirige Kant a Herder en su reseña de *Ideas* (AA 08:62-3; Palti, 2001: 35-69, Zammito, 1997:107-145. Con respecto a la discusión que Kant sostuvo con Herder en torno a la posibilidad de una “historia natural de la humanidad”, se puede consultar Riedel, 1989:148-170.

¹⁰ Un análisis semejante podría realizarse también en lo que respecta a los fines morales. Menke estudia este problema a partir del concepto de lo sublime (Menke, 760s).

formas naturales? Más aun, ¿no indica la bella apariencia, en el caso de la belleza natural, la “disposición a fin” de la naturaleza en su conjunto?

Como es sabido, Kant no se plantea de manera explícita ninguna de estas preguntas ni se expresa a favor de la necesidad de incorporar un suplemento para el correcto funcionamiento del sistema crítico. No obstante, advierte con claridad que el ejercicio efectivo de las facultades humanas, que habían sido descritas en las dos primeras críticas, solo resulta concebible si se demuestra la posibilidad de un acuerdo profundo entre las mismas. En este sentido, sería posible pensar que el abordaje del problema de la belleza, que emprende Kant en el marco de la tercera crítica, encuentra su punto de partida en el reconocimiento implícito tanto de la necesidad de asegurar las condiciones del normal funcionamiento del juicio como de la imposibilidad de hacerlo dentro de los límites del pensamiento crítico (Menke, 760s).¹¹

6. La presencia de la Idea

Tenemos entonces que, para dar cuenta de la posibilidad de una puesta en práctica de nuestras facultades cognoscitivas y morales, Kant necesita asumir la existencia de un principio de carácter teleológico. Como ya vimos, la perspectiva crítica obliga a dejar de lado toda posible interpretación objetiva de este principio y a concebirlo en términos estrictamente subjetivos; esto es, desde el punto de vista de Kant, se trataría de un principio que no haría referencia a una finalidad inmanente de la naturaleza, sino más bien a una regla que se impondría a sí mismo el propio ejercicio de las facultades. Sin embargo, aun en ese caso, es preciso corroborar su validez y, para ello, hay que demostrar, según lo entiende Kant, que dicho principio teleológico se funda en la propia estructura del juicio. Por eso mismo es necesario encontrar al menos un caso en el cual las condiciones subjetivas del juicio se presenten de forma pura, es decir, un tipo de juicio en el cual las facultades subjetivas operen con independencia de todo contenido o condición de carácter objetivo. A partir de aquí probablemente se explique por qué Kant se esfuerza tanto en disociar la cualidad específica del juicio de gusto de todo tipo de interés con respecto a la existencia del objeto. De acuerdo a su interpretación, el juicio de gusto no se halla motivado por un contenido externo ni se orienta a determinar los rasgos definitorios de un

¹¹ Un análisis levemente más radical presenta Szczepanski. Para este autor, el recurso a lo bello sería una muestra del fracaso del proyecto crítico en tanto que la necesidad de lo bello se desprendería de la incapacidad de la razón para fundar algo positivo en su relación crítica consigo misma (Szczepanski, 2007:104). A partir de aquí, la empresa crítica se transformaría en el intento por regular de manera racional el acceso racionalmente necesario a lo suprasensible. En este hecho podría vislumbrarse la posición intermedia que ocupa Kant entre la temprana modernidad y el idealismo, pues el funcionamiento de la razón kantiana resultaría dependiente de un reaseguro externo, como en el caso de los gérmenes preformados. Sin embargo, también Kant procuraría por momentos ir más allá de esta solución de compromiso con el mundo teológico y garantizar, así, la autofundación de la razón. Desde otra perspectiva, también Ginsborg y Zuckert reconocen la función central que desempeña el principio *a priori* del juicio reflexionante en el marco del pensamiento crítico (Ginsborg, 1990, Zuckert, 2007). Béatrice Longuenesse radicaliza esta postura en tanto sostiene que la propia aplicación de las categorías es inseparable de un proceso que tiene un aspecto reflexivo (Longuenesse, 2000, 163s). Una posición contraria con respecto a este tema, puede encontrarse en Guyer. Guyer considera menor la relevancia cognitiva del principio de la conformidad a fin y sostiene que el mismo provee más bien una motivación racional en orden a alcanzar la sistematización de la naturaleza (Guyer, 1979: 57).

objeto. Él es, más bien, un juicio acerca del modo en que el sujeto es afectado por sus propias representaciones; un juicio que, tanto en función de su carácter particular como de su falta de determinación, es denominado “juicio reflexionante”.¹²

Aquí desempeña un papel central la necesidad de superar el relativismo al que abrían paso las estéticas psicológico – efectuales, al equiparar en cierta forma el sentimiento de placer estético con el mero placer del agrado. No obstante, al independizar el juicio del gusto con respecto a todo contenido externo, Kant también busca colocarse en un plano de inmanencia absoluta, en el cual el *modus operandis* del juicio ya no pueda ser entendido sino como la manifestación fenoménica de la estructura profunda –e incognoscible– del mismo. Kant está convencido de que si lograra demostrar que, en ese caso extremo, las facultades operan de una manera armónica, habría logrado dar cuenta de las condiciones subjetivas para una aplicación práctica de las mismas (fuera del ámbito estético). Pues este acuerdo no podría ser interpretado como el resultado contingente del objeto particular que es juzgado y debería ser remitido, entonces, a la disposición a fin de las propias fuerzas subjetivas para un uso cognitivo en general (AA 05:217, 287).

Según Kant, lo que demuestra el placer que se encuentra asociado al juicio de gusto es que efectivamente se establece una relación armónica entre las facultades. El placer estético, aparentemente inmotivado, sería la prueba de que las facultades, dejadas en libertad, funcionan de manera armónica, y esta armonía, a la cual solo tenemos acceso por medio del placer, refractaría la articulación profunda entre facultades que, a primera vista, operan de manera contrapuesta, es decir, entre el entendimiento, que tiende a la unificación, y la sensibilidad que se ocupa de la multiplicidad sensible. El placer propio del juicio de gusto pondría en evidencia, según Kant, la conformidad a fin de nuestras facultades para el uso práctico en general. Pues dicho placer respondería a la constatación de un determinado estado de *conformidad a fin* en nuestras representaciones que, en la medida en que se hace presente en la máxima inmanencia del juicio, no podría ser explicado ni por medio de la referencia a un concepto preexistente, que se impusiese por sobre la multiplicidad sensible, ni en términos fisiológicos, a partir de un objeto que afectara nuestros sentidos.

Este planteo permite evadir las aporías a las que conducían las diferentes perspectivas estéticas de la época. Se supera el peligro del relativismo que se desprende de las interpretaciones psicológico-efectuales del sentimiento de belleza, pero se dejan de lado también los presupuestos metafísicos de la filosofía del arte de Herder o de Moritz. Lo primero, porque el sentimiento de placer es remitido a condiciones subjetivas de carácter universal (AA 05:134); lo segundo, porque la idea de finalidad sin fin es interpretada en un sentido subjetivo. No obstante, esta interpretación del juicio de gusto resulta dependiente

¹² La diferencia entre juicio determinante y reflexionante consiste en que, en el primer caso, la imaginación forma una imagen sensible que unifica las representaciones de los elementos percibidos determinándolas por medio de una regla que corresponde a un concepto determinado. Durante la percepción habitual de objetos, uno se considera determinado por una regla general y esta relación con una regla general basta para explicar el acuerdo entre entendimiento e imaginación. En el caso del juicio estético, no existe ni un concepto ni una regla que guíe la actividad de la imaginación. Sin embargo, se produce el acuerdo de las facultades en la medida en que el objeto –en virtud de su estructura y disposición– no se presenta como un producto de carácter contingente. No es posible determinar un concepto como causa de posibilidad del objeto, pero la apariencia del mismo se presenta no obstante como conforme a fin (Ginsborg, 1990:45-97).

de una premisa tan problemática como central, esto es, de la atribución de un carácter concordante al libre juego de las facultades. En efecto, solo en función de dicha concordancia es posible remitir el principio teleológico a la propia estructura de juicio y recuperar en términos no metafísicos el concepto de “finalidad sin fin”. Sin embargo, no es factible establecer un vínculo necesario entre el carácter libre del juego de las facultades y la “concordancia” del mismo ya que, como lo revela el propio desarrollo de la *Crítica de la facultad de juzgar*, la autonomización de la esfera estética también hace posible la emergencia de experiencias estéticas que presuponen un uso discordante de las facultades.¹³ Por cierto, esto es lo que sucede en el caso del sentimiento de lo sublime, el que, lejos de toda concepción armónica de la belleza, remite a una relación de disconformidad entre las facultades cognoscitivas. Al respecto sostiene Kant en el párrafo 27 de la tercera crítica:

así como la imaginación y el *entendimiento* producen una conformidad a fin subjetiva de las fuerzas del ánimo en el enjuiciamiento de lo bello por su unanimidad, aquí la imaginación y la *razón* la producen por su antagonismo (AA 05:258 EE:192).

Desde mi perspectiva, este desdoblamiento del placer estético no puede ser simplemente pasado por alto. Todo parece indicar que, por medio de la distinción entre el juicio de lo bello y el de lo sublime, Kant no se limita a asumir una tipología estética establecida sino que intenta conjurar el peligro que supone la posibilidad de que las facultades cognoscitivas no tengan un comportamiento concordante. En principio, este hecho no debería resultar demasiado sorprendente ya que Kant ha advertido desde el comienzo que, lejos de toda preocupación genuinamente estética, el objetivo de la *Crítica de la facultad de juzgar* es garantizar la posibilidad del ejercicio normal, esto es, determinante, de nuestras facultades cognoscitivas y morales. No obstante, lo que en la introducción aparece como un objetivo compatible con la fundamentación de la autonomía del juicio estético, aquí tensiona dicha autonomía a partir de presupuestos de carácter extraestéticos. Esto confirmaría la suposición de Christoph Menke de que, en la *Crítica de la Facultad de Juzgar*, la suspensión estética del uso determinante de nuestras facultades se halla externamente motivada, esto es, es ideológica. Todo parecería indicar que lo que lleva a Kant a insistir en el carácter armónico del libre juego del entendimiento y la sensibilidad es la voluntad de ofrecerle al hombre la posibilidad de experimentarse a sí mismo como

¹³ Se podría objetar aquí que Kant no le atribuye un carácter libre al juego de las facultades que tiene lugar en el caso el sentimiento de lo sublime; más aún, se podría decir que Kant no describe en lo absoluto esta relación en términos de un juego. Desde su perspectiva, lo que tendría lugar allí sería más bien la constricción de la imaginación por parte de la razón. No obstante, también sería posible entender la propia caracterización kantiana de lo sublime como una estrategia destinada a evitar los “peligros” que introducía la liberación de la esfera estética con respecto a aquellas instancias que, hasta el momento, habían limitado el uso estético de las facultades; el estado, la religión, la moral, etc. De hecho, la operación de Kant en torno a lo sublime no se limitaba a conjurar el carácter no teleológico del uso estético de las facultades, sino que, además, procuraba ponerlo al servicio de la propia teleología de la razón. De allí el esfuerzo de Kant por desactivar la interpretación de lo sublime que había ofrecido Edmund Burke y por vincular el momento negativo, que presuponia dicho sentimiento, con la afirmación del destino suprasensible de la humanidad.

poseedor de facultades que no solo gozan de legitimidad trascendental sino que, además, son susceptibles de una utilización práctica.¹⁴ En este sentido, la suspensión estética del uso de las facultades no se hallaría orientada en verdad a garantizar la autonomía del juicio de gusto sino más bien a asegurarnos de nuestra propia condición de sujetos. Pero esto supondría que la idea de una finalidad sin fin no solo violenta la autonomía estética sino que transgrede, además, los límites del pensamiento crítico. En palabras de Menke:

En el placer de la vivificación estética de nuestras fuerzas se expresa para Kant el hecho de que nuestras fuerzas verdadera y efectivamente son facultades; es el placer del aseguramiento de sí del sujeto práctico (Menke, 2008: 95, 2010:760s.).

7. Juego y apariencia

En sus lecciones sobre estética de 1958 / 59 Theodor W. Adorno recupera en términos críticos la distinción entre apariencia y juego que establece Walter Benjamin en su ensayo acerca de la obra de arte en la era de la reproductibilidad técnica. Como es sabido, Adorno desconfía de la perspectiva de una posible superación de la apariencia estética, que es defendida por Benjamin en su análisis de las consecuencias artísticas de la crisis contemporánea del aura. No obstante, al igual que este último, Adorno asume el carácter antitético de las nociones de juego y apariencia, y remite la primera de ellas a los aspectos energéticos de la obra de arte, para identificar la apariencia estética con su momento significativo, con

el momento en el que la obra de arte como totalidad... tiene una intención, significa algo, manifiesta algo en ella que es algo más que la mera aparición en sí misma. (Adorno, 2013:149)

La naturalidad con la cual estos dos autores admiten la existencia de una tensión entre el juego y la apariencia resulta llamativa si tenemos en cuenta el modo en que estas nociones son concebidas en la tradición filosófica alemana. En este sentido, adquieren un carácter paradigmático las *Cartas sobre la educación estética de la humanidad*, en la medida en que Schiller establece allí una íntima relación entre la apariencia y el concepto de juego. Desde su perspectiva, la apariencia estética se caracteriza por superar la contraposición

¹⁴ En este punto, mi interpretación se orienta en un sentido similar al análisis que propone Zuckert. En su estudio sobre la tercera crítica kantiana, la autora sostiene que Kant habría introducido allí una nueva concepción de la subjetividad que tensionaba los márgenes del pensamiento crítico. Según Zuckert, este movimiento respondía a la necesidad de explicar “cómo podemos comprender lo dado empíricamente, lo particular, lo contingente en cuanto tal –esto es, precisamente aquello que es marginal o se halla más allá de las formas universales, de los conceptos o de las leyes de las cuales se ocupa la filosofía kantiana (y muchas otras)” (Zuckert, 2007:6). Sin embargo, Zuckert no especifica las condiciones epistémicas que hicieron posible la emergencia del problema de lo particular, es decir, que tornaron insuficientes las respuestas que había formulado la modernidad temprana frente al mismo. Tampoco entra dentro del campo de intereses de la autora el análisis de las consecuencias estéticas que traía aparejada la remisión del placer estético al ideal regulativo de una subjetividad unificada. En este punto, mi lectura se aparta de la interpretación de Kant que, en clara polémica con el idealismo alemán, defienden Nancy y Lacoue-Labarthe en *El absoluto literario* (2012).

entre el principio material y el impulso formal y se halla regida, en tal sentido, por el impulso de juego. En palabras del autor:

En medio del temible reino de las fuerzas y en medio del sagrado reino de las leyes, el impulso estético de formación (*Bildungstrieb*) va construyendo inadvertidamente un tercer reino feliz, el reino del juego y de la apariencia, en el cual este impulso quita al hombre todas las cadenas y le libera de todo lo que significa coacción, tanto en lo físico como en lo moral. (Schiller, 1999:373s)

Sin embargo, una década antes de las famosas cartas de Schiller, la identificación de los dos conceptos se encuentra lejos de presentarse como una obviedad. Tanto es así que uno de los grandes peligros que busca evadir la interpretación kantiana del juicio de gusto es justamente la banalización de la experiencia estética que supone su interpretación psicológico-efectual en términos de una mera vivificación de las fuerzas vitales. Esto último es lo que Kant descubre en la concepción estética de autores como Moses Mendelssohn, que remiten el placer estético a una especial excitación de las fuerzas subjetivas sin dar cuenta de la fuente específica de la misma (Menke, 2008:94s). La *Crítica de la facultad de juzgar* intenta superar este problema por medio de la atribución de una teleología de carácter inmanente al libre juego de las facultades. De esta manera, Kant no hace un uso directo del término “apariencia”¹⁵, pero se distancia de las perspectivas efectuales en la medida en que vincula la noción de juego con la misma dimensión simbólica o significativa a la que posteriormente haría referencia Schiller.

¹⁵ Kant utiliza el término *Schein*, en primer término, a la hora de establecer la especificidad del fenómeno. En este contexto afirma que la “Erscheinung” no es mero “Schein von Gegenständen.” Kant se sirve, en segundo lugar, de la palabra apariencia para referirse a la dialéctica trascendental en el marco de la primera crítica (KrV A 63-B 88). Si bien Kant procura remitir el término a la dialéctica a la antigüedad, su vinculación de la dialéctica con la crítica de la apariencia ilusoria marca un hito en la historia del concepto. Como puede observarse, el término apariencia conserva aquí el sentido negativo que tenía en el primer punto, pues, por medio de él, Kant procura desplazar los problemas tradiciones de la metafísica al presentarlos como el resultado de un avance infundado del entendimiento más allá del terreno de la experiencia. No obstante, se trataría de una ilusión necesaria y natural, que se origina en la misma razón. De esta manera, se preserva el momento negativo del término, ya que la apariencia debe ser sometida a crítica y clarificada en cuanto a su verdadero estatuto a los fines de evitar su influjo negativo. Sin embargo, se abre también un costado positivo de la apariencia, que será explotado en el Apéndice de la dialéctica, en la medida en que se preserva la posibilidad de un uso regulativo de la ideas de la razón. En este punto, la dialéctica se toca con la estética, ya que lo que está en juego en ambos casos es el estatuto de aquellos conceptos que produce la propia dialéctica de la razón, pero que carecen, no obstante, de todo objeto congruente de referencia y de toda posible relación posible, por ende, con la verdad. Kant sostiene que „todo conocimiento de las cosas a partir del mero entendimiento puro o de la pura razón no es más que pura apariencia (*Schein*) y que solo en la experiencia se encuentra la verdad” (Kant, Proleg., Anhang. Akad.-A. 4, 374. Trad. propia). No obstante –y este es el problema que se introduce en el Apéndice de la dialéctica y que reaparece con toda su fuerza en la tercera crítica–, estas ideas –este puro *Schein*–, parecen desempeñar una función esencial en el edificio crítico en la medida en que son necesarias para garantizar la posibilidad de alcanzar la verdad en el ámbito mismo de lo condicionado. Desde mi perspectiva, es Adorno quien mejor ha mostrado en qué sentido la dialéctica de la apariencia y las reflexiones estéticas de Kant se encuentran vinculadas. Al hacerlo, Adorno también ha puesto en evidencia el momento utópico, el contenido de verdad, que se halla contenido en la propia figura de la apariencia: “La verdad es inseparable de la ilusión de que alguna vez entre las figuras de la apariencia surja, inaparente (*scheinlos*), la salvación.” (Adorno, 2001: 121)

Por cierto, el intento de Kant de dotar a la dimensión estética de un momento significativo, y de interpretarla, en tal sentido, bajo la forma de “apariencia”, no es completamente novedoso. Una tendencia similar se halla presente en las estéticas metafísicas de la época. No obstante, en el caso de Herder o de Moritz, la dimensión estética asume un significado de carácter ontológico, ya que la obra de arte es concebida como un microcosmos o como una imagen reducida de la totalidad. Justamente por este motivo, Kant procura apartarse de dichas perspectivas y concentra su atención en el análisis de las condiciones formales del juicio del gusto. Sin embargo, al establecer un nexo entre el libre juego de las facultades y la idea de una finalidad sin fin, da un paso que lo coloca más allá de las estéticas cosmológicas pero también de los límites que él mismo había establecido para la *Crítica de la facultad de Juzgar*.

Dicho de manera sucinta, la tercera *crítica* busca deshacerse de los aspectos problemáticos de las metafísicas de la obra de arte, pero sin renunciar por ello a las potencialidades filosóficas de una concepción organicista de belleza. De hecho, la idea de una belleza de carácter orgánico resulta especialmente productiva a la hora de pensar un enlace entre la naturaleza y la libertad porque insinúa la posibilidad de una articulación entre el mecanicismo, que impera en el ámbito de la naturaleza, y la teleología que rige en el terreno de la libertad (AA, 05:210). No obstante, Kant no puede aceptar las connotaciones vitalistas de este tipo de planteos porque estas suponen una amenaza para aquellas formas de explicación cuya validez había logrado establecer en la primera y en la segunda crítica.¹⁶ Por ello mismo, en la *Crítica de la facultad de Juzgar* procura vincular la idea de finalidad sin fin con el juicio de gusto. De esta forma, se proyecta sobre este último el mismo tipo de relación entre las partes y el todo que, según la perspectiva de Herder o de Moritz, tiene lugar al interior de la obra de arte orgánica. Esto explica el hecho de que el rasgo distintivo del juicio estético sea justamente la acción recíproca entre la facultad de la multiplicidad, la imaginación, y el principio unificador, el entendimiento. Al igual que sucede en la obra de arte de carácter orgánico, también en el caso del juicio de gusto la composición de los elementos no resultaría dependiente de ningún tipo de regulación externa sino que parecería brotar, más bien, de las propias relaciones que se establecen entre ellos.

En este punto se presenta, sin embargo, un hecho verdaderamente paradójico. Pues el juicio de gusto solo puede ser pensado a partir de la figura de una finalidad inmanente, y

¹⁶ Claramente el problema consiste aquí en explicar el origen de la finalidad inmanente que suponen las concepciones organicistas de la belleza. Este problema irrumpe tanto en relación a la belleza natural como a la producción artística propiamente dicha. De hecho, la belleza no resulta concebible a partir de ninguna de las formas causales que se hallan al alcance de nuestra comprensión. Evidentemente su articulación interna no puede ser deducida de causas mecánicas, porque en este caso la organización de la obra (o de la naturaleza) debe ser considerada como un producto de carácter azaroso. No obstante, tampoco se la puede concebir como el resultado de una acción intencional, porque entonces se destruye la relación de acción recíproca entre las partes y el todo que presuponen las concepciones organicistas de la belleza. Vuelvo sobre este punto en el apartado número 5. Para la discusión acerca de la relación entre el juicio de gusto y el juicio teleológico (Beck, 1969:496-498, Guyer, 1979: 213-18). Contra estas posturas, que sostienen la diferencia entre ambos tipos de juicio, se pueden consultar las interpretaciones de Rachel Zuckert y de Hannah Ginsborg (Zuckert, 2007, Ginsborg, 1997:329-360).

concebido, por ende, en términos de autonomía, si se somete el movimiento de las facultades a un principio de carácter heterónimo. Como lo pone de manifiesto la existencia de un sentimiento estético que escapa al ideal organicista –esto es, el sentimiento de lo sublime–, las facultades no se hallan inmanentemente orientadas hacia un estado de equilibrio. Libradas a su propia suerte, ellas pueden dar lugar a un acuerdo entre las partes pero también a estados de tensión. En tal sentido, todo parece indicar que no es el libre juego de las facultades el que torna imaginable la idea de finalidad sin fin, sino más bien esta la que opera de modelo y de límite a la hora de pensar las relaciones entre las diferentes fuerzas subjetivas. Lejos de desenvolverse de una manera libre, estas deben adecuarse al ideal de una articulación inmanente de las partes constitutivas; a un ideal que, en el sistema kantiano, encuentra su punto de referencia en el propio concepto de Idea (Brickmann, 2005, 13-29; Karásek, 2015:1114-1116). De hecho, desde la perspectiva de Kant, las Ideas se presentan como conceptos que, más allá de no remitir a “ningún objeto congruente en los sentidos” (KrV A 327/ B 383), dan cuenta tanto de la organización interna de los objetos sensibles como totalidades como de la articulación del conjunto de ellos bajo la forma de un todo. El concepto de Idea remite, así, al tipo de visualización que hubiera podido realizar un entendimiento que, a diferencia del humano, se hallase en condiciones de superar las dos formas de explicación que conocemos, esto es, la interpretación mecánica, que prescinde de toda referencia a fines, y la explicación teleológica, que subordina las partes a una finalidad de carácter apriorístico. Dicho de otro modo, el contenido de la Idea es justamente la forma, inconceptualizable para el hombre, de una relación de acción recíproca entre las partes y el todo.¹⁷

Esta relación entre el juicio de gusto y el concepto de Idea es algo que Kant acababa reconociendo hacia el final de la primera parte de la *Crítica de la facultad de Juzgar*. En efecto, en la “Dialéctica del juicio de gusto”, Kant asume que el juicio de gusto no excluye la referencia a todo tipo de concepto, sino tan solo a aquellos de carácter determinado. En este contexto, Kant hace alusión al “concepto trascendental de razón de lo suprasensible” y logra explicar, de esta manera, la vivificación de las fuerzas del ánimo que tiene lugar en la experiencia estética. No obstante, la tendencia a interpretar el momento conceptual del juicio estético a partir del concepto de una Idea de razón contrasta fuertemente con la pretensión reconstructiva-trascendental que domina los primeros párrafos de la tercera crítica. Dejando de lado el análisis de las condiciones subjetivas del juicio de gusto, Kant presenta ahora la dimensión estética como manifestación sensible de la idea, esto es, como *Darstellung* de aquella articulación inmanente de las fuerzas subjetivas, que, según los primeros párrafos de la *KU*, recién llegaba a ser vislumbrada y solo de una manera indirecta a partir de la interrupción del uso determinante de las facultades.

De esta manera, se insinúa un enfoque que devendría substancial en el marco de la estética schilleriana y que remite, justamente, a la concepción de la apariencia estética como manifestación sensible de la idea de subjetividad. En este sentido, la estética kantiana no

¹⁷ “La determinación de un todo por medio de un concepto, sostiene Kant en la reflexión número 935, se llama idea.” (AA, 15:415; Cf. Bickmann, 2002: 43–79)

puede ser considerada como una mera continuación de las estéticas efectuales de la ilustración. Pues, lejos de replicar la interpretación energética de estas últimas, Kant se ocupa de dotar a la vivificación de las fuerzas anímicas de un contenido significativo. Pero Kant también se aparta de las metafísicas de la obra de arte de la época. Con su atribución de una teleología inmanente al libre juego de las facultades cognoscitivas, la perspectiva estética de Kant se presenta, podríamos decir, como el eslabón perdido entre la interpretación objetivista de la obra de arte, que habían desarrollado autores como Herder o como Moritz, y la estética de idealista de Schiller. La caracterización kantiana del libre juego de las facultades como una relación de carácter concordante abre paso así a un abordaje de la obra de arte que descubre en ella la manifestación de un principio de orden subjetivo.

En este sentido, la *Crítica de la facultad de juzgar* pondría en evidencia, en primer lugar, hasta qué punto el peligro de una instrumentalización ideológica de la apariencia estética se hallaba presente desde los orígenes de la reflexión estética, esto es, en la medida en que la estética se configura como esfera autónoma a partir del modelo de una subjetividad unificada, el peligro de su instrumentación se vuelve inherente a su propia existencia.¹⁸ No obstante, la tercera crítica también podría de manifiesto la fragilidad constitutiva de la propia subjetividad. De hecho, si su existencia en tanto instancia verdaderamente capaz de disponer de sus facultades cognoscitivas y morales debe asegurarse por medio de la referencia al ámbito de la apariencia estética, es porque ella se encuentra lejos de presentarse como un fundamento certero (Menke, 2008:81).

8. Conclusión

Como vimos, la remisión de la problemática de la belleza al ámbito del juicio estético, que propone Kant en la analítica de lo bello, busca neutralizar las implicancias metafísicas e irracionalistas que, desde su perspectiva, se desprenden de las filosofías del arte de la época. No obstante, llama la atención la insistencia con la cual Kant se aferra a algunas de las categorías centrales de estas perspectivas. Esta tendencia puede explicarse en función de la necesidad de superar el relativismo y la falta de fundamento que eran propios de las estéticas psicológico–efectuales. Sin embargo, al remitir el placer estético al juicio de gusto y al concebir a este último como un acuerdo espontáneo de las facultades del conocimiento, Kant establece un vínculo entre subjetividad y apariencia estética que resultará a lo largo de toda la modernidad estética tan problemático como recurrente.

Como ha puesto en evidencia Menke, el tipo nexos entre apariencia estética y subjetividad que postula Kant en la *Crítica de la facultad de Juzgar* supone una restricción injustificada de las posibilidades de la dimensión estética. En tal sentido, sería posible establecer una línea de continuidad entre el pensamiento de Kant y la expulsión del mal fuera del ámbito estético, que propondría Hegel en sus *Lecciones sobre estética* (Hegel, 1989:160s).¹⁹

¹⁸ Ginsborg hace referencia a una “normatividad primitiva” al analizar la concepción kantiana del juicio de gusto. Sin embargo, lo que está en juego aquí para la autora es más la validez intersubjetiva del conocimiento empírico que la posibilidad de garantizar la unidad del sujeto (Ginsborg, 2006:35,58).

¹⁹ Con respecto al problema de lugar estético del mal en la obra de Hegel puede consultarse Bohrer (2017).

Ciertamente la intromisión de la perspectiva ético-filosófica en la esfera estética resulta más clara en el caso de Hegel. No obstante, la insistencia de Kant en la concordancia del uso libre de las facultades pondría de manifiesto que también él subordina la reflexión estética a la necesidad de garantizar la existencia de un sujeto unitario y soberano; es decir, para Kant, la suspensión estética del uso de las facultades cognoscitivas y morales solo tendría un carácter provisorio y limitado, en la medida en que ella se hallaría orientada, desde el comienzo, a asegurar el funcionamiento habitual (y extra-estético) de las fuerzas subjetivas. En tal sentido, el cercenamiento de la apariencia estética, que tendría lugar en el marco del pensamiento de Kant, iría de la mano del establecimiento de una forma ideológica de reflexión, que aseguraría la continuidad de un uso sesgado y restringido de las facultades, en vez de revelar el carácter espurio de su fundamentación.

Sin embargo, tampoco es posible interpretar en un sentido unívoco el vínculo entre apariencia estética y subjetividad que establece Kant en la *Crítica de la facultad de Juzgar*. De hecho, si la fundación estética de la subjetividad traiciona el espíritu crítico, la mera afirmación de la escisión de las facultades tampoco deja de tener consecuencias negativas para el proyecto filosófico de la modernidad. En este punto, me gustaría seguir el modelo que propone Hans Blumenberg a la hora de explicar los orígenes de la ciencia y del pensamiento moderno, y trazar un paralelo entre el surgimiento de fenómenos tales como la física newtoniana y la noción spinociana de *conatus*, por una parte, y el pensamiento de Kant, por la otra (Blumenberg, 2009:125s). Sin lugar a dudas, el esfuerzo de Kant no se halla orientado a garantizar la permanencia de la creación frente al arbitrio infinito de Dios, como sucede en el caso de las concepciones científicas y filosóficas de la modernidad temprana. No obstante, si admitimos que los problemas epistémicos que Kant enfrenta durante la tercera crítica encuentran su origen en el proceso moderno de temporalización, también resulta posible interpretar su pensamiento como una respuesta a los nuevos poderes inescrutables que amenazan a la razón.

En efecto, el proceso de temporalización atenta directamente contra el presupuesto a partir del cual autores como Newton o como Spinoza habían logrado independizar la explicación científica del mundo de la voluntad desmesurada de dios. Me refiero en este punto al carácter reversible de la temporalidad, en la medida en que este había permitido relegar la acción divina al momento de la creación, sin renunciar, por ello, a la posibilidad de articular la explicación teleológica del mundo con el modelo mecánico-causal. Como ya mencioné, esta articulación encuentra su articulación más clara en las teorías preformistas del siglo XVII, las cuales remitían la disposición a fin de los organismos al comienzo de los tiempos, para concederle a la ciencia la capacidad de dar cuenta en términos mecánico-causales del desenvolvimiento posterior. No obstante, la temporalización de la experiencia desbarata la posibilidad de establecer alguna forma de armonía preestablecida entre los dos órdenes normativos e impone la necesidad de tornar concebible de otro modo la articulación entre teleología y explicación mecánico-causal. De una manera similar a lo que había sucedido a comienzos de la época moderna con el absolutismo teológico, también ahora se trata de asegurar la independencia del hombre, aunque el peligro remita

en esta oportunidad a la acción incontrolada de las fuerzas históricas y naturales. En cualquier caso, la nueva situación obliga tanto a desarrollar una concepción moral que se halle a salvo de las contingencias temporales, como a anclar en la propia estructura de la subjetividad el fundamento de la explicación científica del mundo.

A la luz de este problema, el modo en que Kant piensa la suspensión estética del uso determinante de las fuerzas subjetivas adquiere un significado diferente. Indudablemente, la concepción kantiana no se encuentra exenta de todo contenido de carácter ideológico, ya que el distanciamiento estético se halla orientado a legitimar la idoneidad de las facultades morales y cognoscitivas. En lo que respecta a este punto, Kant traiciona la perspectiva utópica de un juego verdaderamente libre de las facultades, a la que había dado lugar la autonomización moderna de la dimensión estética. No obstante, Kant logra reconocer que la mera insistencia en el carácter insuperable de la escisión de las fuerzas subjetivas tampoco se presenta como una respuesta superadora. De hecho, en la medida en que el ejercicio práctico de la libertad resulta dependiente de la posibilidad de servirse de las propias fuerzas en vista a determinados objetivos, el abandono del problema de la fundamentación acaba conduciendo a una nueva forma de oscurantismo. Esto es justamente lo que ponen en evidencia las críticas de Kant a la idea de una fuerza natural de carácter ilimitado, por medio de la cual autores como Herder procurarían superar los momentos conservadores del pensamiento crítico, esto es, aquellos en los cuales la nueva experiencia de la temporalidad queda desplazada y adquieren primacía, en cambio, los presupuestos preformistas a partir de los cuales la modernidad temprana había buscado reconstruir un orden mundano de carácter secular.

Sobre este trasfondo, la imposibilidad de Kant de hallar una respuesta verdaderamente satisfactoria para el problema de la mediación deja de presentarse como un mero defecto sistémico para asumir un carácter revelador. Desde mi perspectiva, esta dificultad pone en evidencia la aporía sobre la cual se asienta el proyecto moderno y en la cual radica, por otra parte, toda su potencialidad. Se trata de una aporía que intentará ser soslayada desde diferentes perspectivas filosóficas y que, como ya se anuncia en Kant, encontrará un espacio paradigmático de expresión en el ámbito de la reflexión estética. En este sentido, es posible decir que la estética constituye el pensamiento moderno por excelencia, pues en ella se dan cita las dos exigencias de carácter aporético que resultan determinantes del pensamiento moderno en general. En virtud de su propia constitución autónoma, la estética radicaliza el movimiento moderno de la reflexión y socava, de esta manera, todo posible fundamento de carácter trascendente. Y aun así, o precisamente por ello mismo, ella se halla obligada a salvar el hiato entre las facultades y a recrear, de este modo, nuevas formas de andamiajes para el ejercicio de la crítica. Justamente por ello, la utopía de un uso libre de las facultades, que no vaya de la mano de la renuncia a toda forma concreta y posible de libertad, encontrará refugio en el ámbito de la apariencia estética. Sin embargo, la posibilidad de la apariencia estética logre ser fiel a este contenido utópico dependerá de su capacidad para reconocer que, en su intento por brindar expresión a lo que escapa a toda posible apariencia, se encuentra permanente expuesta al peligro de producir lo que contrario de lo que pretende. Este riesgo, que es constitutivo de la apariencia estética,

recién será tematizado de manera explícita por el arte moderno del siglo XX. Kant no pudo advertir la dialéctica de la apariencia que era propia de la dimensión estética y que llevaría al arte, en tanto apariencia, a volverse contra su propia condición de apariencia.²⁰ No obstante, en su intento por garantizar de manera consecuente la autonomía de la dimensión estética logró dejar a la vista su carácter intrínsecamente aporético. Determinar hasta qué punto el resto de la filosofía kantiana está verdaderamente a la altura de este descubrimiento es un asunto que requeriría, sin embargo, una mayor discusión.

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²⁰ En el ámbito teórico fueron probablemente los románticos de Jena los primeros en reaccionar ante esta reticencia de la apariencia estética. En este contexto deben entenderse conceptos tales como el de reflexión o de ironía, que desarrolla Friedrich Schlegel y que luego se encontrará en el centro de la crítica de Hegel. Al respecto.

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**El “concepto hermenéutico”. Una interpretación del juicio
estético puro kantiano desde Heidegger**

*The “hermeneutic concept”. An interpretation of the Kantian pure
aesthetic judgement from Heidegger*

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Abstract

This paper presents a foundation of the intellectual artefact “hermeneutic concept” based on an interpretation of the “Deduction of pure aesthetic judgment” of the third Kantian *Critique*. Since the denomination for this artefact and the first characterization is found in a Heidegger course, I will proceed by offering the context of discussion in which it arises, namely, the Heideggerian interpretation of the Kantian transcendental schematism. Then, I will give the interpretation of the Deduction that allows us the foundation of the “hermeneutic concept” and, once the route of that foundation is completed, two reading hypothesis will be outlined, one for the place of the third Kantian *Critique* in Heidegger’s work and another for the aesthetics in general and the Kantian aesthetic in particular.

Key words

Kant; Heidegger; hermeneutic concept; pure aesthetic judgment.

1. Introducción

El objetivo de este trabajo es fundamentar un artefacto intelectual¹ para el discurso filosófico a partir de una lectura de la “Crítica de la capacidad estética de juzgar” de la *KU*

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y, concretamente, de la “Deducción del juicio estético puro”². El rótulo para este artefacto se encuentra en una expresión del curso de *Lógica* de 1925-26 de Heidegger en una zona donde se está dilucidando la interpretación fenomenológica del esquematismo trascendental kantiano, distinguiendo entre los cuatro tipos de sensorialización que cabe distinguir fenomenológicamente (Heidegger 1976, pp. 357-380) en la esquematización (sensorialización de fenómenos, de conceptos empíricos sensibles, de conceptos empíricos puros y de conceptos puros del entendimiento); el rótulo del artefacto es “concepto hermenéutico”. Dilucidados ya los dos primeros tipos de sensorialización, se lee:

Entre la representación de fenómenos sensibles en el sentido de la pura reproducción y la sensorialización de un concepto empírico hay aún, y esto lo cito sólo al margen, una representación o sensorialización que no es ni un reproducir ni una esquematización en sentido kantiano. Es la representación figurativa en el arte. La fotografía de un perro y la imagen de un perro en un manual de zoología y un cuadro «El perro» representan respectivamente algo distinto de una manera distinta. Los corzos en el bosque que por ejemplo pintó Franz Marc no son estos corzos en este bosque determinado, son «el corzo en el bosque». A tal representación en sentido artístico se le puede llamar también una esquematización, la sensorialización de un concepto, si en ello concepto no se entiende como concepto teórico ni como el concepto zoológico de corzo, sino como el concepto de un ente que aparece conmigo en mi mundo y que, al igual que yo mismo, en el mundo común tiene su medio: el corzo, por así decirlo, como «habitante del bosque», frente al concepto anatómico-zoológico de corzo. Si se atiende a esta diferencia entre los conceptos y si además se atiende a la tendencia al modo de comprensión que corresponde a estos diferentes conceptos, puede decirse efectivamente que en el arte se representa el concepto. Pero con ello queda dicho sólo que esta sensorialización en la representación artística se diferencia esencialmente de un mero pintar copiando, así como de una esquematización teórica, por ejemplo, con fines zoológicos. En la representación artística se representa un concepto, que en este caso representa la comprensión de un ente o, dicho más exactamente, de un ente conmigo en mi medio, la comprensión de un ente y de su ser en el mundo: en concreto está representado el ser-en-el-bosque del corzo y el modo de su ser-en-el-bosque. Este concepto de corzo y este concepto de su ser lo designamos concepto hermenéutico, a diferencia del puro concepto de una cosa. (Heidegger 1976, pp. 363-364).

A pesar de la insinuación, sería impreciso defender que la expresión “concepto hermenéutico” es una interpretación heideggeriana del “juicio de belleza libre”, del “juicio estético puro” o del “juicio puro de gusto” kantiano; por tanto, debe advertirse que es uno y no propiamente Heidegger el que defiende la lectura que se va a presentar, aunque, evidentemente, es en Heidegger y en sus textos en quien uno se apoya para tal defensa que,

¹ Utilizamos la expresión “artefacto intelectual” para indicar que se trata de algo que se construye intelectualmente. La palabra “artefacto” está, por consiguiente, usada (sin pretensiones) en el sentido de la expresión latina a la que recuerda: *arte factum*, “hecho con arte”; se trata de algo hecho con pericia o que ha requerido pericia.

² Se ha consultado la traducción al castellano de Morente (Kant 2013), pero, dada la complejidad de la obra kantiana y el ejercicio interpretativo implícito que supone su traducción, se ofrecerán traducciones de los pasajes citados que no pretenden, en ningún caso, corregir u ofrecer “mejores traducciones”, sino simplemente mostrar la lectura que aquí se defiende.

en definitiva, sí es una interpretación del “juicio estético puro” kantiano desde la filosofía de Heidegger³. Este apoyo necesita, por de pronto, alguna justificación, pues es conocida la “inhibición lectora” de Heidegger de la *KU* (Martínez Marzoa, 2004)⁴; de modo que, en primer lugar (en el apartado 2) me ocuparé de ello para contextualizar la discusión que quisiera presentar en este trabajo.

En segundo lugar (en el apartado 3), se presentará un breve análisis de la “Deducción del juicio estético puro” que nos ofrecerá el fundamento para la construcción del artefacto intelectual y que constituirá la interpretación del “juicio estético puro”. Esta entronca con una interpretación más general acerca de qué lugar ocupa la tercera *Crítica* en el sistema de la filosofía trascendental kantiana (Lebrun 1970; Martínez Marzoa 1987, 1989 y 2018) que, sin embargo, no podrá ser objeto de discusión aquí, pero que estará asumida de fondo. En cualquier caso, mi postura es que, según esa lectura, el tipo de juicio que se averigua en la “Crítica de la capacidad estética de juzgar” de la *KU* ocupa un lugar particular en esa sistemática que, si bien, se averigua a partir de observar qué tipo de juicios emite uno ante “obras de arte” o “eventos sobrecogedores de la naturaleza”, quizá no tenga por qué ser en esos momentos donde este tipo de juicios (el juicio de gusto) genere más rendimientos filosóficos. Esto último no podremos defenderlo hasta sus últimas consecuencias aquí, pero lo menciono ahora porque se observará un desplazamiento de las cuestiones más o menos tradicionales que suelen ocupar a quien trata de interpretar esta zona de la filosofía kantiana; me refiero, en concreto, a que no se estará hablando ni de la estética como disciplina académica, ni de la teoría del arte, y que lo que haya que decir de algo que no

³ Es más, se entiende que esta “interpretación” sigue el espíritu que Heidegger declara de la suya propia: “Con el fin de obtener de lo que las palabras dicen lo que quieren decir, ciertamente, cada interpretación debe necesariamente emplear violencia. Pero tal violencia no puede ser arbitrariedad desatada. La fuerza de una idea precursora debe impulsar y guiar la interpretación. Solo por la fuerza de esta idea puede una interpretación atreverse a lo que siempre será una audacia [*Vermessene*], confiarse a la pasión interior oculta de una obra, para a través de esta colocarse en lo no dicho y forzarlo a ser dicho. Pero este es un camino en el cual la idea rectora viene a la luz en su propia fuerza esclarecedora” (Heidegger 1991, p. 202). Ahora bien, este trabajo no pretende ser, en ningún caso, meramente exegético de Heidegger (y tampoco de Kant, aunque el paso por puntos fundamentales de la *KU* tenga irremediamente ese tono), por ello, aunque se van a citar textos de Heidegger y, en especial, vamos a leer este fragmento, no pretendemos analizar una cuestión de Heidegger por Heidegger mismo, ni tampoco discutir si ese texto habría que leerlo como perteneciente a un “proyecto de lógica”, de “ontología fundamental”, o cualquier otra denominación que Heidegger diera a su trabajo.

⁴ La lectura de Martínez Marzoa de esta “inhibición lectora” quizá pueda llegar a criticarse cuando vea la luz el anunciado segundo volumen del tomo 84 de la *Gesamtausgabe*, donde Günther Neumann nos adelanta en el epílogo que para ese segundo volumen se publicarán los materiales de un seminario de 1936 sobre el texto kantiano (Heidegger, 2013, pp. 864-894). Ahora bien, debe tenerse en cuenta que esa “refutación” a la lectura de Martínez Marzoa estará, de todas formas, por hacer, ya que, por un lado, lo que se prometen son materiales y, salvo quienes tienen acceso a los legajos de Heidegger, no sabemos si estos materiales serán un texto completo de su mano, apuntes o protocolos, todo ello teniendo en cuenta que el título del seminario no es garantía de que en él haya una lectura de ese texto a la altura de la que hay, por ejemplo, de la *Crítica de la razón pura* o de ciertos Himnos de Hölderlin, luego, por otro lado, incluso cuando el volumen esté publicado, la interpretación de Martínez Marzoa estará todavía por refutar. Por otra parte, aquí se va a manejar la hipótesis de lectura de que, incluso aunque no haya y no llegase a haber materiales publicados de una lectura de Heidegger de la *KU* o que los que llegara a haber fueran insuficientes, la *KU* está en el centro de la filosofía de Heidegger.

tendremos más remedio que seguir llamando “obras de arte” no pretenderá ser discurso alguno sobre “las bellas artes” como disciplina⁵.

Lo que se hará es centrar la atención en ese lugar de la filosofía kantiana y en los aspectos puros de ese juicio porque desde ahí trataré de fundamentar el artefacto intelectual “concepto hermenéutico”. Este será el tercer punto (apartado 4) del trabajo, donde se encontrará su fundamentación.

Finalmente, se esbozará una hipótesis de lectura desde este artefacto para la filosofía de Heidegger y su relación implícita con la *KU* como consecuencia de la fundamentación del “concepto hermenéutico”. Asimismo, se esbozará cierta consecuencia para una posible lectura de la “estética kantiana” y la “estética” en general que no pretenderá ser tesis sino hipótesis y que devolverá a su lugar académico tradicional el análisis desplazado que ensayaremos aquí.

2. Contexto de la discusión: la interpretación heideggeriana de Kant

Lo que en la bibliografía sobre Heidegger se conoce como su “interpretación de o confrontación con Kant” suele articularse en función de los distintos desarrollos del proyecto de pensamiento de Heidegger⁶. No es el lugar de pronunciarse en extenso sobre ello, pero sí hay que decir que la postura que se asume es que ese desarrollo comporta cierta continuidad. Por tanto, no hablaré de varias lecturas heideggerianas de Kant, sino de *la* lectura heideggeriana de Kant, y de Heidegger como alguien que se entiende a sí mismo como “continuador” de Kant, en el sentido de que su empeño habría sido continuar donde Kant lo dejara (Jiménez Redondo 1994a, 1994b, 1995, 2003). Esto tiene sus problemas internos según el punto concreto de la interpretación, pero aquí nos interesa sobre todo uno que es ciertamente central en toda esa lectura, a saber, que Heidegger, en ese empeño, pretende “conocer” la raíz común del conocimiento en general (que, hasta 1930, él llama “conocimiento ontológico”) que Kant dejara “desconocida”; y esta pretensión se mantiene en Heidegger, al menos, hasta los años 30. Qué ocurre en el pensamiento de Heidegger y cómo queda esta pretensión no va a formar parte de este trabajo; lo que sí hay que señalar es que esa pretensión condiciona la lectura que se presente tanto en el curso sobre la *KrV* como en el *Kant Buch* (Heidegger 1977 y 1991) y que se desarrolla alrededor del cambio que opera en el esquematismo transcendental y la Deducción Transcendental de la *KrV*

⁵ Hay una intensa discusión a este respecto en la literatura sobre la tercera *Crítica* que demuestra su importancia (Lemos 2017a y 2017b; Allison 2004, Guyer 1997, Kemal 1986). Sin embargo, dado que mi objetivo es la fundamentación del artefacto intelectual mencionado, se dejará al margen sin pretender, en ningún caso, devaluar la importancia de esta cuestión.

⁶ Nos referimos a las cuestiones, en la literatura sobre Heidegger, acerca de *die Kehre* (Rosales 1984 y 2018; Grondin 1987; Vigo 2018a). La bibliografía sobre la confrontación o la interpretación heideggeriana de Kant es muy extensa como para siquiera resumirla aquí (como muestra: Martínez Matías 2018, Vigo 2018b, Gómez del Valle 2017, Courtine 2007, Esposito 2004, Borges Duarte 2002 y 1995, Callejo Hernanz 1998 y 1992).

entre la edición A y B. Heidegger interpreta este cambio como un “retroceder” de Kant que, sin embargo, puede argumentarse, incluso con los textos de Heidegger en la mano (es decir, como lectura de esos textos), que ese “retroceder” pertenece a la constitución misma de lo que significa la *finitud*. Por consiguiente, Heidegger no está imputándole a Kant una falta, sino reconociendo un mérito y colocándose él mismo como alguien que asume el reto que la filosofía de Kant deja sin resolver.

Este “retroceder” implica, por de pronto, dejar “desconocida” la raíz común que Heidegger parece pretender alcanzar con otra estrategia, a saber, con la analítica del *Dasein*. La ordenación del trabajo de Heidegger sería, entonces, que el *Kant Buch* no aparecería como una continuación de *Ser y tiempo*, sino como una preparación para lo que ya se había alcanzado allí. Una vez recorrido el *Kant Buch*, la mirada a la analítica del *Dasein* sería más clara (de hecho, a mi juicio, lo es, ya que se entiende qué camino se pretende continuar, por qué *Ser y tiempo* no debe leerse como una antropología filosófica, por qué sí debe ser *transcendental* el horizonte a toda costa, etc.). Se seguiría cumpliendo, por supuesto, con el plan del tratado (Heidegger 1967, pp. 39-40) y el modo de proceder del mismo, según el cual, nos encontraríamos en un recorrido en espiral que iría profundizando cada vez más en la cuestión (que la comprensión de ser en la que consistimos siempre es *tiempo* o en función de *tiempo*). Implicaría, entonces, que la *Destruktion* alcanzaría una centralidad mayor que la que pudiera aparentar en principio, pues su recorrido daría como resultado una comprensión más plena de lo que se había realizado previamente en las dos secciones de la analítica.

Sin embargo, es cierto que el “retroceder” de Kant parece presentarse en el *Kant Buch* como una pega que Heidegger pone a Kant, pues allí mismo, Heidegger interpreta la imaginación transcendental como la raíz común entre entendimiento y sensibilidad (Heidegger 1991, pp. 138-171), a partir de la independencia y el papel bisagra que Kant le otorga en la edición A de la *KrV*. Cuando este papel es reformulado como dependiente del entendimiento, la imaginación transcendental deja de poder ser interpretada como esa raíz común. Heidegger parece reprocharle esto a Kant, pues esa raíz común sería la que nos permitiría entender y abrir el campo del conocimiento ontológico (investigando la *síntesis pura*) y, por tanto, haber fundamentado la metafísica. Sin embargo, como ya se ha adelantado, la lectura continuada del texto de Heidegger insinúa, sin declararlo expresamente, que esto no ha sido un reproche, sino la demostración de que, con el cambio entre la edición A y B de la *KrV*, lo que Kant ha hecho ha sido ser más consecuente con el problema de la *finitud*.

A mi juicio, en función de esa lectura, incluso frente a ciertas formulaciones de Heidegger (hasta los años 30), cabe interpretar que a este problema de la *finitud* y a ser consecuente con él le es inherente renunciar a *conocer totalmente* la raíz última del conocimiento, renunciar a que la fuente última del conocimiento se revele, a su vez, como un conocimiento posible. Al problema de la *finitud* le sería inherente reconocer que esa raíz

común tiene que permanecer desconocida y que la zona que pueda explorarla no alcanzará el estatuto de *conocimiento* en el pleno sentido que lo alcanza la física moderna.

Esto no significa que el trabajo esté terminado y el empeño de Heidegger en la analítica del *Dasein* sería, precisamente, profundizar más en esa comprensión de la *finitud*. Esta estaría ligada al problema de las tres preguntas kantianas y su reunión última en la cuarta que, para Heidegger, ha sido malinterpretada en el orden de la *antropología filosófica*. La cuestión de la cuarta pregunta kantiana no sería tanto el hombre como objeto (en definitiva, científico, de conocimiento, etc.) sino el rasgo *a priori* de ese ser, de un ente que siempre tiene que ser él mismo, que le va su propio ser en ser, y que siempre se encuentra afectivamente templado, comprendiendo tal que puede articular discursivamente esa comprensión y arrojado a un mundo, etc. (Heidegger 1991, pp. 205-242). Ese rasgo *a priori* sería, precisamente, su carácter *transcendental* y, por tanto, la cuarta pregunta sería la pregunta por la *finitud* y no por un ente frente a los otros, homologable mediante el discurso normativo moderno.

Pues bien, en este contexto, en uno de los lugares en los cuales Heidegger trata de mostrar que la imaginación transcendental es la facultad (incluso en la edición B) de la *síntesis pura*, es decir, aquello que muestra en qué consiste la formación de un concepto, ya sea teórico o práctico, es donde se ha encontrado el rótulo del artefacto intelectual que aquí se quiere tratar de construir. La interpretación de Heidegger pretende mostrar que en el seno de la imaginación transcendental se puede distinguir fenomenológicamente la *síntesis pura*, la *síntesis* no de esto o lo otro, sino del que pueda tener lugar esto o lo otro, la *síntesis* que sería de la *apertura* misma de lo ente. Esta no puede ser nunca una *síntesis total*, sino el rasgo *puro* de toda *síntesis*. La tesis que defiende Heidegger es que en la imaginación transcendental encontramos fenomenológicamente el “en qué consiste” que haya “concepto”.

Ahora bien, el lugar que hemos citado, a pesar de encontrarse en la órbita de lo que se acaba de esbozar y de ser en esa órbita donde cobra toda su significación, pretende tener cierto estatuto independiente. Allí mismo, Heidegger advierte que lo que quiere es preguntar por la diferencia entre el par *imagen/reproducción* (*Abbildung*) y *esquema/esquemización* y, entonces, leemos en el curso:

Sobre esta consideración y sobre la anterior hago la advertencia de que no estoy dando una clase sobre Kant, sino sobre la *lógica*, y que, así como en anteriores interpretaciones fenomenológicas de la *síntesis* se hicieron visibles estructuras fundamentales de la posibilidad del juicio, así ahora, en el comentario del esquematismo, se discuten fenomenológicamente las estructuras fundamentales de la posibilidad de conceptos en general. (Heidegger 1976, p. 360).

Esta advertencia la leemos, por un lado, en sentido literal: eso es lo que está haciendo Heidegger; pero, por otro lado, debemos apuntar que, de todas formas, es el texto de Kant el que, por así decir, tiene delante Heidegger en las siguientes páginas y hasta el final del

curso (además del de Aristóteles) y, por tanto, todo el tramo es una interpretación de la Deducción Transcendental de la *KrV* (para la interpretación completa de esta, véase Heidegger 1977, pp. 303-431 y para la interpretación de la “Analítica de los principios”, véase Heidegger 1984, pp. 127-246) y, concretamente el que nos ocupa, del esquematismo transcendental.

Pues bien, en la distinción entre la sensorialización de un fenómeno y de un concepto empírico sensible, hay otra sensorialización que Heidegger dice citar solo al margen y que aquí se pretende mostrar que tiene bastante más recorrido que el que el propio Heidegger parece concederle. Esta es “la representación figurativa en el arte” (Heidegger 1976, p. 363-364). ¿Qué tipo de esquematización es esta representación? Lo que Heidegger nos dice es que se trata de “la sensorialización de un concepto” (Heidegger 1976, p. 364), pero por ello no se está entendiendo un concepto teórico o, más bien, epistemológico, esto es, una regla para la construcción de figura como puede ser, por ejemplo, el concepto de “círculo” o de “célula diploide”, sino de algo que solo huidizamente queda formulado: “el concepto de un ente que aparece conmigo en mi mundo y que, al igual que yo mismo, en el mundo común tiene su medio” (Heidegger 1976, p. 364).

Según Heidegger, si uno es capaz de atender a la distinción entre los conceptos cognoscitivos (y prácticos, habría que añadir) “puede decirse efectivamente que en el arte se representa el concepto” (Heidegger 1976, p. 364), es decir, no uno u otro concepto, sino lo que quiere decir “concepto” en general. En qué sentido esto solo puede ocurrir porque en el juicio de gusto ante el representar artístico siempre hay involucrado un concreto caso de algo que si bien no es un concepto cognoscitivo o práctico, sí es el procedimiento por el cual hay conceptos, es decir, porque siempre está involucrada la imaginación en libre juego con el entendimiento, de modo que siempre estamos ante un juicio particular que, sin embargo, exige universalidad (subjetiva), esto, digo, hay que dilucidarlo atendiendo a la *KU*. Pero lo que ya nos está diciendo Heidegger es que ese concepto representado en el arte es el caso de “una comprensión de un ente o, dicho más exactamente, de un ente conmigo en mi medio, la comprensión de un ente y de su ser en el mundo [...] y este concepto de su ser lo designamos concepto hermenéutico, a diferencia del puro concepto de una cosa” (Heidegger 1976, p. 364).

Antes de entrar a dilucidar lo que se acaba de plantear desde la *KU*, es pertinente dejar apuntado que en la interpretación del *Kant Buch* no se mencionan los párrafos de la “Deducción del juicio estético puro”, sino el párrafo 59 de la Dialéctica. Solo podemos especular sobre qué interpretación explícita sería la de Heidegger de este párrafo, pero una vez hayamos recorrido tanto la dilucidación a partir de la *KU* como la construcción explícita del artefacto, se podría ver en qué sentido ese párrafo está en el fondo de otros trazados interpretativos de Heidegger y cómo en él, lo que vamos a construir, encuentra justificación.

3. Paso por la “Deducción del juicio estético puro”

Recordemos algo ya bastante consolidado que aparece en la Introducción de la *KU* a propósito del juicio. Dado que un juicio, en general, es el procedimiento por el cual una regla de construcción (un concepto) conforma una unidad para una pluralidad de sensaciones dadas a la intuición de un sujeto *finito* (esto es, un ente cuyo conocer está limitado por la sensibilidad, lo empírico o lo contingente), hay siempre en todo juicio (de un ser finito) un aspecto determinante, que se dirige al *objeto*, y un aspecto reflexionante, que se dirige al *sujeto*, esto es, a la propia capacidad de hacer juicios⁷.

Así, un aspecto de ese proceder se puede investigar para *discernir* cómo son los objetos posibles de nuestro conocer y el otro para investigar cómo es el proceder mismo, esto es, en qué consisten no estos o aquellos juicios sino la *capacidad de juzgar o de juicio* (*die Urteilskraft*) en general. El aspecto determinante es el que interesa destacar y analizar cuando nos preguntamos por la posibilidad *a priori* de los juicios sintéticos, ya que, en definitiva, en dicha pregunta lo que se investiga es la validez (*a priori*) de la determinación de esto o lo otro, qué ingredientes tiene la pensabilidad de un algo tal que, ese algo, por ejemplo, este ordenador en el que escribo, quede *enunciado* de modo que sea *cierto* (caracterizado por la *certeza*), es decir, que no haya más duda acerca de eso que enuncio de ese algo concreto, siguiendo el ejemplo, que este ordenador en el que escribo es un portátil⁸.

Por otro lado, a través del aspecto reflexionante del juicio (por ejemplo, del mismo que antes, “este ordenador en el que escribo es un portátil”) se investiga cómo o en qué consiste ese proceder y no, en concreto, este o aquel juicio. Ahora bien, cuando se trata de investigar este aspecto del juicio (cuando Kant se ve en la tesitura de emprender esa investigación por necesidad interna de la construcción de su propio sistema) hay que atender a algún caso de *juicio* que, siéndolo, digamos, sin discusión, deje mudo, vacío o ciego el aspecto determinante, y que lo haga, además siendo *autónomo*, de modo que lo único que lo mantenga como *juicio* sea el aspecto *reflexionante* y, así, pueda investigarse la *reflexión* y, por tanto, la capacidad de hacer juicios en general.

⁷ “Aquella parte sistemática de la obra de Kant cuya expresión es la «Crítica del Juicio» se abre con lo que a primera vista es una distinción entre dos aspectos o dos niveles o dos modos de ejercicio de la «capacidad de (hacer) juicio(s)» (*Urteilskraft*) y, por tanto, una distinción entre dos modos de «juicio» (*Urteil*). De la capacidad «determinante» y el juicio «determinante» (*bestimmende Urteilskraft, bestimmendes Urteil*) distingue Kant la capacidad «reflexionante» y el juicio «reflexionante» (*reflektierende Urteilskraft, reflektierendes Urteil*). La interpretación de la «Crítica del Juicio» tendrá, pues, que empezar por entender que esta contraposición o distinción o división no es lo que en su presentación nominal parece, pues, bajo la apariencia de una división binaria en la que lo «reflexionante» o la «reflexión» serían meramente uno de los términos, lo que en verdad se establece es el concepto de la «reflexión» como el de algo inherente a la capacidad del juicio en cuanto tal y en general; sólo porque hay en general «reflexión», tiene sentido hablar de «juicio» y «capacidad de juicio»” (Martínez Marzoa 1987, p. 15); o sea, que no son *dos tipos* de juicio, sino *dos aspectos de todo juicio*.

⁸ Esto, por cierto, independientemente de que lograrlo no siempre sea factible o que la ausencia última de duda y, por tanto, el conocimiento *absoluto* de algo constituya la *ilusión transcendental* y, por tanto, que solo sea un aspecto tendencial, regulador, del conocer en general.

Dado que, de todas formas, insisto, tiene que tratarse de un *juicio*, parte del negocio de esa investigación tendrá que ser analizar un tipo en concreto que sí sea *tipo*, es decir, que no pueda negarse que es un *juicio*; debe, sin embargo, ser un juicio en el cual ocurra lo que se acaba de formular, que el aspecto determinante quede como suspendido o postergado. Ese *tipo* es el *juicio de gusto* que Kant también llama *juicio estético* y que es un tipo de juicio sobre la *Wohlgefallen* (el agrado, la satisfacción o la complacencia⁹) que la forma de la representación de un objeto genera en el sujeto de dicha representación. Kant nos dice que este es un juicio *sentimental* que no proporciona conocimiento del objeto ni tampoco máxima para mi conducta y, por tanto, podemos decir que se trata de un juicio donde el aspecto determinante queda, por así decir, mudo, vacío o ciego (suspendido o postergado) de modo que en él se resalta el aspecto reflexionante de todo juicio. Lo que debemos notar es que se trata de un juicio “en el margen”, un juicio que siéndolo “de pleno derecho”, no cumple con los criterios formales estrictos de los juicios cognoscitivos, los juicios *sintéticos*, a pesar de que en él se da una *síntesis*.

Hay una razón de fondo (es decir, una coherencia interna en el sistema kantiano) que justifica que *gusto* sea más o menos sinónimo de *estético* y que lo sea sin que esto emborrone o varíe el significado del vocablo “estética” cuando se usa en la expresión *estética transcendental* de la *KrV*. Merece la pena comentar esta coherencia interna brevemente porque, de todas formas, hay que decir que el *juicio estético puro*, por ser *puro*, no puede estar fundamentado en los sentidos, sino solo en la *forma dada a priori*.

Pues bien, el vocablo “estética” tiene que seguir significando en la expresión “juicio estético puro” algo relacionado con el aspecto del conocer en general que llamamos *intuición*, que es *receptivo* o que consiste en la *sensibilidad*, y cuyas *condiciones de la posibilidad* son siempre el *tiempo* y, con ciertas particularidades, el *espacio* y que, como nos dice Heidegger, es el que inscribe indeleblemente en nosotros (en el ente que en cada caso somos nosotros mismos) la *finitud*¹⁰. Ahora bien, cuando al significado de “estética” se le añade en la tercera *Crítica* el aspecto semántico que refiere a algo que también se lo llama *gusto*¹¹, es decir, al aspecto semántico que menciona lo que, según leemos en la *KU*, depende de nuestra “facultad de desear”, esto es, aquella capacidad que nos pertenece en

⁹ Me quedaré con esta última palabra para traducirla sin que ello pretenda ser la mejor traducción. Ciertamente, esta es una elección que si uno tuviera el empeño de traducir todo el texto sería peliaguda de mantener, como ocurriría con las demás. La escojo porque es la que más *me complace*. El vocablo “satisfacción” me resulta insuficiente porque da la idea en castellano de que el placer involucrado ha sido cumplido (hay satisfacción, por ejemplo, después de comer, mientras que de lo que se va a tratar es de nombrar el sentimiento que se daría mientras uno come). El vocablo “agrado” podría ser también una muy buena opción, pero despierta la idea de que es *algo lo que* me agrada, más que ello mismo provenga de la *forma* como me represento ese algo. El vocablo “complacencia” parece posibilitar más que comprendamos la independencia del sentimiento de aquello ante lo cual este se despierta. Pero, insisto, no se pretende defender esta traducción a ultranza.

¹⁰ Para un tratamiento más exhaustivo de esta cuestión, véase el trabajo de O. Meo (Meo 2015).

¹¹ No es este el único sentido de “gusto”; para un trabajo sobre ello, véase el capítulo 6 “La comunidad del gusto como crítica de la sociedad: potencialidad y límites de un paradigma estético y político” de N. Sánchez Madrid (Sánchez Madrid 2018, pp. 179-200; así como, Agamben 2016).

tanto que *finitos* de buscar interesadamente algo (donde el interés suele expresarse en términos de *placer*, de modo que esa facultad es la de distinguir entre *placer* y *displacer*), se añade un aspecto que permite observar un rasgo *a priori* exclusivamente “estético”, a saber, el susceptible *placer* o *displacer* que la *forma* de la representación de un objeto pueda suscitar en nosotros tal que el dictamen acerca de ello sea *autónomo*, es decir, que no dependa de nada *del objeto* y, por tanto, tampoco de nada de los “sentidos”; en otras palabras, que solo sea *placer en la forma de ese objeto* y que, por tanto, sea algo exclusivo del “sentido interno”, esto es, de la *forma a priori del tiempo*, pero sin que esta quede *determinada* en representación alguna (sin que ello sea conocimiento del objeto de esa representación). La “Analítica del juicio de gusto” de la *KU* pone de manifiesto, atendiendo a esos juicios de gusto, que el aspecto determinante del juicio de gusto está, precisamente en virtud de lo que ese juicio es, mudo, vacío o ciego y lo hace atendiendo a las definiciones de lo *bello* y la *belleza* que es el predicado que este juicio emite cuando se expresa por lo que respecta a la *forma* de la representación de un objeto. Antes de ir a ello, hay que insistir algo más en la importancia de que la voz “estética” sea o pueda valer como sinónimo del vocablo “gusto”.

Lo que se juega en esa correspondencia no es un juicio en el cual solo haya *intuición* o *sensibilidad*; la *KrV* ya ha dado suficientes razones de en qué sentido no hay algo así como “conocimiento intuitivo” o “juicios intuitivos” frente a “conocimiento conceptual o del entendimiento” o “juicios conceptuales o del entendimiento”, sino que *conocimiento* o *juicio sintético* es una sola cosa de dos caras, *intuición* y *entendimiento*, para cada una de las cuales hay *condiciones de la posibilidad* y que esto no es algo que demostramos, sino el *factum* mismo ante el cual nos encontramos y que analizamos¹². No es esto, digo, sino un *juicio* que en su enunciar solo pretende quedarse con “lo sensible”, con lo *estético* que, de todas maneras, hay en todo *juicio*. ¿Por qué solo con lo *estético*, con “lo sensible”? Porque –y nótese el inri y la ironía– “las intuiciones sin concepto son ciegas”, es decir, porque allí donde, de alguna manera, la regla para la construcción de figura se suspende o se posterga *ad infinitum*, el aspecto determinante del *juicio* en general (por tanto, del juicio de gusto que, *qua juicio*, tiene que tener también ese aspecto) queda, por así decir, “mudo”, de modo que solo se asiste a la *reflexión*.

Un juicio que intenta ceñirse solamente al *sentimiento* o la *sensación* (*das Gefühl* y *die Empfindung*), lo que siempre cae bajo la condición de la posibilidad del tiempo y, con ciertas salvedades, bajo la del espacio, deja en suspenso el aspecto *determinante*, que es tanto como decir que es un *juicio* en el cual ocurre algo así como el aborto de la formación de la regla para la construcción de figura; de este *juicio* no tengo un *objeto de conocimiento* (o de ámbito práctico), sino solamente un *sentimiento subjetivo* que consiste

¹² Por tanto, es absurdo plantear eso del “conocimiento intuitivo” frente al “conceptual o del entendimiento”, pues si hay conocer hay siempre ambos y, por cierto, queda muy en entredicho (por igualmente absurdo) que pueda plantearse algo así como “conocimiento estético”. Habrá que ver, entonces, qué papel juega todo esto en la sistemática y por qué, de todas formas, nos vamos a dirigir a algo que vamos a tener que seguir llamando “obras de arte”.

en el *libre juego de las facultades del conocer*; si el *libre juego* se da entre la imaginación y la razón, hablamos de *lo sublime* o la *figura de lo sublime*; si es de la imaginación con el entendimiento, hablamos de *lo bello*, la *figura de lo bello* o la *belleza*. En ambos casos la *libertad de juego* consiste en que la imaginación, que es la facultad de los esquemas, no está limitada por la facultad con la cual se relaciona, como ocurre cuando nos ocupamos de los juicios de conocimiento (donde se relaciona con el entendimiento) o de los juicios *puros prácticos* (donde se relaciona con la razón). Aquí solo nos van a interesar los juicios que dan lugar a la *figura de lo bello*.

Si este *sentimiento* se da solamente ante la *forma* de la representación del objeto y no como acompañamiento de esa representación, decimos que la *figura de belleza es libre*, porque es completamente independiente de la representación del objeto. Frente a esta, si el *sentimiento* se da acompañando a la representación del objeto, entonces, digo que esa *figura de belleza es adherida*. En ambos casos el *sentimiento* se da ante la *forma* de la representación del objeto, pero solo en el primer caso este *sentimiento* es independiente de esa representación. Aquí nos interesa solamente la *figura de belleza libre* porque es la que se reconoce en el arte.

A este juicio se le llama indistintamente *estético* o de *gusto* precisamente porque se queda solo con lo que de “estético” tiene todo juicio. Si este juicio, como se estaba diciendo antes, solo refiere al *sentimiento* ante la *forma* de la representación de un objeto, esto es, con independencia de lo empírico, se lo llama *puro*. Es en este juicio en el que, insisto, se puede investigar la *reflexión*, la *capacidad misma de juzgar*, porque se ha aislado precisamente aquello *a priori* en lo que esta consiste. Así, a la *figura de belleza libre* o de *lo bello libre* es a la que le corresponde dar cuenta de en qué consiste la *reflexión* como el aspecto general de la *capacidad de juzgar* en general porque en ella el aspecto determinante está como suspendido o postergado.

El análisis del *juicio de gusto* tiene como objetivo (interno en la sistemática kantiana), por tanto, dar cuenta de esta *figura*, es decir, del “concepto” de lo bello o la *belleza* –el cual no puede ser como tal *concepto*, ya que no refiere a objeto alguno de *conocimiento* o de lo *práctico*–. Los cuatro momentos del análisis de este juicio (en función de las cuatro clases de categorías) dan cuatro formulaciones de la definición de esta *figura* que condensamos del siguiente modo parafraseando lo que aparece en la *KU*: bello es el objeto o la representación de un juicio de gusto de complacencia sin interés alguno (por tanto, lo que place sin interés) que sin concepto place universalmente, cuya *finalidad* es percibida en él *sin (representación de un) fin* y que es “conocido”¹³ como objeto de una *necesaria* satisfacción sin concepto.

¹³ En la definición extraída del cuarto momento de la Analítica, Kant utiliza la voz *erkennen*, pero debemos mantener la distinción que el mismo Kant hace cuando se trata de los *juicios de gusto*, es decir, que no son *juicios de conocimiento*. En esa definición (*KU*, AA 05, p. 240) el que el objeto sin concepto de una necesaria complacencia sea *conocido* como bello no quiere decir que *se conozca* lo bello, sino que aquí “ser

No voy a emprender el comentario detallado de la Analítica, sino que con lo que se ha esbozado vamos a pasar directamente a la Deducción¹⁴, pues es ahí donde vamos a encontrar la base para fundamentar el artefacto intelectual que se ha encontrado en Heidegger denominado como “concepto hermenéutico”. Pero sí hay que decir, al menos, que cada uno de los aspectos de la figura de lo bello vienen, en cierto modo, a hacer viable la observación *a priori* que se alcanza en la Deducción. Estos aspectos, “placer sin interés”, “esquemmatización sin concepto”, “finalidad sin fin”, “necesidad sin concepto (sin objetividad)”, constituyen una serie de “no esto, no esto, etc.”, que van aislando al *juicio de gusto* de los *juicios cognoscitivos* o *prácticos* y, finalmente, en los *juicios de gusto*, a aquellos que pueden llamarse *juicios estéticos puros*.

Ahora bien, al aislar esto último, se aísla una exigencia de universalidad y necesidad que pide ser legitimada. En este caso, la deducción no se enfrenta a la legitimación de un ámbito de la realidad (de un ámbito de objetos, ya sean *cognoscitivos* o *prácticos*), sino a unos juicios que teniendo por su propia estructura pretensión de universalidad y necesidad, son subjetivos. Al juicio de gusto le pertenece tanto la exigencia de que cualquiera apruebe el mismo sentimiento de placer o displeacer en la forma del objeto o de su representación como el enjuiciamiento de que esa complacencia, cuando efectivamente la hay, cuando se la reconoce, sea necesaria; y estos dos rasgos exigen la deducción a pesar de que no vaya a dar como resultado un ámbito de realidad, un ámbito “tercero” de validez.

A pesar de que los juicios son subjetivos, es decir, que su pretensión sea la de una *finalidad* subjetiva –sin que ella misma esté fundada en conceptos del objeto dado, sino solo en la *sensación*, en el *sentimiento de placer o dolor* subjetivo y sin participación de los sentidos y, por tanto, que sea el enjuiciamiento de la forma de la representación de un objeto y no la representación o el objeto mismo– que sin embargo “valga” para todos, el ejercicio crítico está obligado a dar la deducción del principio *a priori* por el cual esos juicios pretenden *necesidad*. Dado que ese principio es deducido críticamente es *transcendental* y dado que no hay en él fundamentación de ámbito de realidad o de validez alguno es estrictamente *subjetivo*. Por consiguiente, cumplida la “Deducción”, se cumple la tarea de dar el carácter *transcendental* de la *capacidad de juzgar*, es decir, se expone en qué consiste la *reflexión* inherente a todo juicio¹⁵.

conocido” (*erkannt werden*) quiere decir algo así como “saber” o “reconocerse”; lo que dice esta definición es que lo bello es eso que “se identifica”, “se sabe”, “se reconoce” como el objeto (como “eso ahí delante”) sin concepto de una necesaria complacencia. Esta expresión, a mi juicio, hay que leerla en el mismo sentido en que uno dice, por ejemplo, que a Joe Louis *se le conoce* como “el bombardero de Detroit”; el predicado “el bombardeo de Detroit” no constituye ningún *conocimiento* sobre (no es ningún juicio que pretenda validez objetiva acerca de) Joe Louis.

¹⁴ Un buen comentario detallado a la Analítica (y a toda la “Crítica de la capacidad de juzgar estética”) puede encontrarse en D. Fan (Fan 2018).

¹⁵ Este es el problema de la Deducción tal como queda expresado en el párrafo 36 que justifica la interpretación general de la tercera *Crítica* que aquí se sigue: “¿Cómo es posible un juicio que meramente por el *propio* sentimiento de placer en un objeto, independientemente del concepto de este, enjuicie ese placer, como la pendiente representación de ese mismo objeto en *cualquier otro sujeto*, *a priori*, esto es, sin que haya que esperar aprobación ajena?” (KU, AA 05, p. 288).

En el juicio de gusto no tenemos ningún conocimiento, ni teórico ni puro práctico, es decir, no tenemos que justificar ni un juicio que represente lo que una cosa es, ni tampoco lo que se me haya dictado en un juicio que debo hacer. Este juicio solo constituye una figura (la de lo bello) fundamentada en una esquematización *sin concepto*. Esto quiere decir que su proceder, su *esquema*, no termina de generar concepto, digamos, no termina de cerrarse nunca la búsqueda de concepto para las intuiciones dadas de la representación del objeto ante cuya *forma* se da el *sentimiento* de placer. Por ello, lo que será expuesto en la deducción tal que lo que termine aclarándose sea la capacidad de hacer juicios en general, será “la mera validez universal de un juicio particular, el cual manifiesta la finalidad subjetiva de la representación empírica de la forma de un objeto” (KU, AA 05, p. 280-281), es decir, se tratará de exponer

cómo es posible que algo pueda placer en el mero enjuiciamiento (sin sensación de los sentidos ni concepto), y que, así como un enjuiciamiento de un objeto para el caso de un conocimiento en general tiene reglas universales, también *la complacencia de cada cual tiene que ser declarada regla para cualquier otro* (KU, AA 05, p. 281).

Precisamente porque el juicio de gusto place *sin interés*, predica algo que siendo *particular* pretende universalidad. Esta universalidad, sin embargo, no es en ningún caso objetiva, sino siempre subjetiva; el juicio de gusto predica el placer o displacer respecto de la forma de la representación de un objeto tal que ese placer o displacer discernido *particularmente* por un sujeto se presupone como el *placer* o *displacer* de cualquier sujeto ante la forma de la representación de ese objeto, pues ese placer es *sin interés* y la *forma* de la representación de ese objeto no es un *concepto* (*cognoscitivo* o *práctico*) del mismo, sino una figura (hay en él una esquematización sin concepto). Esta es la primera característica de los juicios de gusto, que “determina su objeto en consideración de la complacencia (como belleza), con una pretensión de aprobación de cada *cual*, como si fuera objetivo” (KU, AA 05, p. 281). Este “determinar” no es, insisto, objetivo, pues se trata de llamar “bella [a] una cosa sólo conforme aquella índole de acuerdo con la cual es tomada según nuestra manera [de tomar en general]” (KU, AA 05, p. 282) y, sin embargo, ese juicio pretende universalidad, es decir, que cada cual admita llamar *bella* a esa cosa.

Por otra parte, “el juicio de gusto no puede en modo alguno ser determinado a través de fundamentos de demostración o prueba [*Bewiesgründe*], tal y como si fuera meramente *subjetivo*” (KU, AA 05, p. 284), pues, en primer lugar, el juicio que otros puedan emitir sobre esta o aquella cosa no determina el mío, que mantiene intacta la autonomía inherente al juicio de gusto, luego, por tanto, no hay nada *empírico* que demuestre esa complacencia que siento en el caso particular; y, en segundo lugar, tampoco hay regla *a priori* alguna que me dé la base para emitir el juicio antes de sentir el placer o el displacer por mí mismo, es decir, evitándome la particularidad del juicio, pues tiene que ser uno en cada caso el que diga “esto es bello”, sin que haya posibilidad de que se me evite la *ocasión particular*. Sin embargo, se trata de un “como si fuera meramente *subjetivo*” porque esa complacencia la predico como *necesaria*, es decir, la exigencia de que cualquiera dé la aprobación de

“bello” proviene de que la *finalidad subjetiva* de la *forma* del objeto no puede no traer *complacencia* en el enjuiciamiento. Si se da este enjuiciamiento de dicha *forma*, entonces, se da la *complacencia* en ella, esto es, se da la puesta en marcha del libre juego de imaginación y entendimiento.

Esta necesidad de complacencia que en nada es empírica es la segunda característica del juicio de gusto que pide la deducción de su principio. Este principio, por consiguiente, no puede ser objetivo, no puede ser un principio “bajo cuya condición se pudiera subsumir el concepto de un objeto y deducir, mediante una conclusión, que es bello” (KU, AA 05, p. 285), pues para enunciarlo “he [cada cual ha] de sentir el placer inmediatamente en la representación del mismo, y este no puede serme atribuido a través de fundamento de demostración [*Beweisgründe*] alguno” (KU, AA 05, p. 285). Ahora bien, como, de todas formas, ese “sentir” es enunciado bajo la forma de un juicio que exige universalidad y necesidad, de este sí se puede deducir un principio *a priori subjetivo* que, en cuanto tal, da la condición subjetiva de todos los juicios de la capacidad de juzgar misma.

Esta condición exige la concordancia de dos facultades del conocer o de la representación, la imaginación y el entendimiento, es decir, el aspecto del conocer que consiste en dar la sensorialización que permita generar el *esquema* de una intuición dada y el aspecto del conocer que da la regla para la construcción de figura de una intuición dada a partir del *esquema* de la imaginación (el resultado de esa sensorialización), o sea, los principios según los cuales una pluralidad de sensaciones dadas se conforma en una unidad subsumida bajo la regla de su construcción válida para todos los casos de esa pluralidad. En aquellos juicios que son de conocimiento, la concordancia de estas dos facultades se da, se expresa o se encuentra en el concepto mismo, es decir, en la segregación misma de ese concepto y, por tanto, en la validez objetiva que puede alcanzar en cada caso la representación. Como en los juicios estéticos no hay concepto, la concordancia se da entre las facultades mismas, es decir, la imaginación es subsumida “bajo la condición mediante la cual el entendimiento, en general, llega de la intuición a conceptos” (KU, AA 05, p. 287), pero sin que ese concepto llegue, sin que la regla para la construcción de figura quede fijada, de modo que en esa subsunción, la imaginación queda *libre*, no supeditada al concepto, pero solo mientras ella misma siga en búsqueda de tal concepto, o sea, solo mientras la imaginación siga operando.

Nos encontramos frente al cuadro de Franz Marc *Corzos en el bosque* y decimos, “qué bello es; qué bellos son los corzos en el bosque”. Este juicio no da conocimiento alguno sobre el bosque o los corzos, tampoco da conocimiento acerca del cuadro como “objeto de arte”, no da tampoco ninguna máxima para mi conducta (no me dice que es *moral* o *inmoral* dejar a los corzos en el bosque y no cazarlos o cosas por el estilo), solo es un juicio de gusto, particular y subjetivo que pretende, sin embargo, que sea emitido tal cual, autónomamente (esto es, no fundamentado en algo del *objeto* sino en la sensación que la *forma* de su representación genera en mí) por cualquiera, de modo que se imponga como universal y que la complacencia en él expresada sea reconocida como necesaria a pesar de

no tener a su alcance prueba alguna (empírica o *a priori*) para su demostración. En el lenguaje de la facultades que utiliza Kant, decimos que la imaginación ha sido subsumida bajo la condición según la cual el entendimiento llega de la intuición (estos corzos en ese bosque) a conceptos (el concepto de corzo y de bosque), pero no se ha segregado un concepto que tenga validez objetiva (ni el de “corzo”, ni el de “bosque”, ni siquiera el de “cuadro”), pues no se *conoce* aquí corzo alguno, ni bosque, ni cuadro, sino que solamente se ha dado la concordancia de las dos facultades y es eso lo que se ha reconocido, lo que se ha enunciado. Esta concordancia es lo que expresa o lo que significa el juicio de gusto, esto es, lo que condensa la *figura de lo bello*.

Es decir, justamente porque la libertad de la imaginación consiste en que esquematiza sin concepto: el juicio de gusto debe basarse en una mera sensación [*Empfindung*] de la mutuamente animada imaginación en su *libertad*, y del entendimiento con su *legalidad* [*Gesetzmäßigkeit*], por tanto, en un sentimiento que deja enjuiciar el objeto según la finalidad de la representación (mediante la cual se da un objeto) para la promoción [*Beförderung*] de las facultades del conocimiento en su libre juego; y el gusto, como capacidad de juzgar subjetiva, [también precisamente porque la libertad de la imaginación consiste en que esquematiza sin concepto] contiene el principio de la subsunción, pero no de las intuiciones bajo *conceptos*, sino de la *facultad* de las intuiciones o exposiciones (es decir, de la imaginación) bajo la *facultad* de los conceptos (es decir, del entendimiento), en la medida en que lo primero concuerda *en su libertad* con lo segundo *en su legalidad* [*Gesetzmäßigkeit*]. (KU. AA 05, p. 287).

Lo que se afirma propiamente *a priori* en un juicio de gusto es la universalidad de un placer, que este placer (subjetivo y particular) será placer para cualquier sujeto, ante la *forma* de un objeto. Por ello, si se admite que con lo que está vinculada la complacencia en un objeto en un juicio puro de gusto es con el mero enjuiciamiento de la *forma* de un objeto, entonces, lo que se está enunciando es que la finalidad subjetiva del enjuiciamiento de la forma de un objeto, que sentimos vinculada con la representación de un objeto en el ánimo, es el principio *a priori* de la capacidad de juzgar, de que haya este o aquel concepto, pues, en ese juicio puro de gusto, lo que nunca hay, a lo que nunca se llega (mientras sea *juicio puro de gusto*) es a concepto, de modo que, en el siempre estar buscándolo se revela cuál es el principio de tal “búsqueda”: *la finalidad subjetiva del enjuiciamiento de la forma de un objeto*. “Esto es bello” es el juicio *particular* en el cual se revela que esta “finalidad subjetiva”, que no es sino ese *placer sin interés*, a partir de una *esquemización sin concepto, sin fin ni objetividad, aunque necesario*, es el principio mismo de la capacidad de juzgar.

Ahora bien, como la capacidad de juzgar, habida cuenta de las reglas formales del enjuiciamiento, sin toda la materia (ni sensación de los sentidos ni concepto), solo puede dirigirse a las condiciones subjetivas del uso de la capacidad de juzgar en general (que no se ajusta ni a manera particular de sentido, ni a concepto particular del entendimiento) y, por consiguiente, a lo subjetivo que puede presuponerse en todos los hombres (como indispensable para el conocimiento posible en general): así pues, la conformidad de una

representación con estas condiciones de la capacidad de juzgar debe presumirse válida *a priori* para todos. Es decir, el placer, o la finalidad subjetiva de la imaginación para la relación de las facultades del conocimiento en el enjuiciamiento de un objeto sensible en general, podrá ser exigido con razón a cada cual. (KU, AA 05, p. 290).

4. Construcción del “concepto hermenéutico”

En la “Deducción del juicio estético puro” se deduce el principio de la capacidad de juzgar en general. Este principio se deduce del *juicio puro de gusto* y se formula como el *placer* (puro) o la *finalidad subjetiva ante el enjuiciamiento de la forma de un objeto*. Con ello hemos distinguido hasta las últimas consecuencias entre ese principio y los conceptos cognoscitivos o prácticos, es decir, hemos distinguido la *figura de belleza libre* y el *principio* que fundamenta su juicio (y también todo juicio, en tanto que el principio lo es de la capacidad de juzgar en general). Ahora bien, esa *figura*, que solo es tal mientras dura el ejercicio por el cual ella misma se constituye, a saber, el libre juego de la imaginación y el entendimiento, o sea, mientras no hay concepto, pero se lo sigue buscando, no es lo mismo que “la comprensión de un ente conmigo en mi medio” de la que hablaba el fragmento de Heidegger citado.

La *belleza libre* solo nos da el fundamento desde el cual esa comprensión queda justificada, pues para que esta se dé, si bien no nos vale ni un concepto cognoscitivo ni uno práctico, sí necesitamos algo más que el juicio de gusto. Este algo más quizá no sea, estrictamente hablando (o sea, desde Kant), un concepto, una regla para la construcción de figura, pero sí debe ser una *figura* que nos oriente en el mundo y, por tanto, tampoco podremos considerarla meramente como el *juicio puro de gusto*.

Estas “figuras de orientación”, si bien enuncian una comprensión que pretende ser *admitida a priori por cualquiera*, esta, para seguir siendo comprensión y no *conocimiento* o *conducta moral*, tiene que ser en último término subjetiva y no objetiva, es decir, la validez universal, que podemos reconocer que se pretende cuando uno enuncia un juicio acerca de la *comprensión* de algo, no está fundamentada en el concepto del objeto de la representación de esa comprensión, sino en la *finalidad subjetiva ante el enjuiciamiento de la forma de la representación de ese objeto*, es decir, en el *juicio estético particular*. Por consiguiente, en la medida en que estas “figuras de orientación” ni son, ni están fundamentadas en conceptos cognoscitivos o prácticos (esto es, en juicios cognoscitivos o prácticos), decimos que están fundamentadas en el juicio puro de gusto.

Ahora bien, lo que se acaba de decir presupone que estas figuras, de alguna manera, se valen de los conceptos de las representaciones de los objetos ante cuya *forma* en el enjuiciamiento se da la *finalidad subjetiva*; por ejemplo, del concepto de “corzo” para hablar de la *comprensión* del “corzo en su bosque”. El modo como estas figuras se valen de conceptos es vaciándolos de su carácter “constructivo” y quedándose solo con la intuición.

Esto quiere decir que puede parecer que sigue tratándose de “reglas para la construcción de figura” cuando lo único ante lo que se está, y lo único que se está reclamando es, por así decir, la figura, esto es, solo la *intuición*. Los juicios que dan orientación, que dan “comprensión de algo conmigo en mi medio”, no solo no requieren que en ellos haya concepto cognoscitivo o práctico, sino que solo porque en ellos no lo hay dan esa orientación. Esto no quiere decir que los conceptos cognoscitivos o puros prácticos sean contraproducentes para la orientación, sino solamente que estos dan *conocimientos* o *reglas universales para la conducta*, pero no expresamente comprensión; por ejemplo, no dan comprensión de por qué son esos los conocimientos o esas las reglas universales para la conducta. Así, el concepto cognoscitivo de corzo no da el porqué de ese *conocimiento*, como tampoco da la *comprensión* del *corzo en el bosque*. El ámbito que abren los juicios de esas figuras, en la medida en que están fundamentados en el juicio puro de gusto, no constituye *objeto de ciencia*, ni tampoco *conducta moral*, sino solamente “fuente” (si acaso cabe hablar así) para la comprensión de “nuestro medio”, esto es, para lo que Heidegger llama en general *comprensión de ser*.

El calificativo para estos juicios, o estas figuras, es *hermenéutico*, y podemos mantener el rótulo de Heidegger, “concepto hermenéutico” si con ello entendemos que aquí la palabra “concepto” no está pretendiendo ser estrictamente “regla para la construcción de figura”, sino, como cuando hablamos del “concepto de belleza”, *figura* y, como acabamos de esbozar, “figura de orientación”. Así, el concepto de “corzo-en-su-bosque” no es el concepto epistemológico de “corzo”, sino el “concepto hermenéutico” con el que se *piensa* el concepto mismo de “corzo”, esto es, con el cual se expresa la experiencia del esquema o la esquematización que también se ve involucrada cuando hablamos zoológica o biológicamente del corzo. Al hablar del “corzo-en-su-bosque”, reclamo a cada cual que admita *a priori* que esa es la experiencia de “comprender el corzo como habitante del bosque”, experiencia que debe estar a la base del conocimiento del corzo biológica o zoológicamente pero que no constituye, *qua mera experiencia*, conocimiento alguno. Este “comprender el corzo como lo que es en su bosque” no constituye un “desde aquí, hasta allí”, una determinación fiable con la cual puedo contar, por ejemplo, para promulgar una ley que proteja al corzo de su caza descontrolada, sino la *fenomenalidad* de mi andar envuelto en un *mundo* en el cual *hay corzos en su bosque*.

Pues bien, esto mismo es lo que puede decirse que en general uno anda haciendo cuando se vale de “conceptos” (pues se construyen procediendo como al construir el concepto de “célula diploide” o “triángulo equilátero”) que por su propia estructura y uso no se podría pretender que fuesen cognoscitivos, para *dar(nos) sentido* o *mostrar la comprensibilidad* de una situación, cosa o asunto dado “en cuanto tal” (como el *corzo en su bosque*, que no es el “corzo” del manual de zoología pero sí el *corzo en cuanto tal*, la *fenomenalidad del corzo*). Esto que damos o mostramos, esa presencia del corzo-en-su-bosque, no se puede hacer valer normativamente, pero exige la afirmación *subjetiva* de cualquiera como la *fenomenalidad* que sustenta, incluso, el “corzo” del manual de zoología. El corzo-en-su-

bosque no sanciona lo que es *con certeza* el “corzo”, pero sí permite atender a lo siempre ya supuesto cuando decimos *con certeza qué es* el “corzo”.

Ahora bien, se ha venido admitiendo sin discusión que el “concepto hermenéutico” es tanto lo que Heidegger nos dice que representa la figuración artística como el tipo de “concepto” que uno usa en juicios que pretenden orientación, que *nos dan sentido*. Sin embargo, del trabajo de Heidegger, especialmente por lo que aparece en *El origen de la obra de arte*, parece que eso que aquí se ha expuesto como “concepto hermenéutico” es algo *propio* de las “obras de arte” (véase, Moreno Tirado 2020, pp. 385-417). A pesar de que Heidegger menciona más ámbitos que el artístico, cabría una interpretación que dijera que es eminentemente en la “obra de arte”, en su *abrir mundo*, en la medida en que *pone en obra la verdad (de la obra)*, lo que daría *conceptos hermenéuticos*, de modo que nosotros en nuestro encontrarnos en una u otra situación no tendríamos más remedio que recurrir a alguna obra de arte si quisiéramos encontrar ese concepto, es decir, que pertenecería al *arte* exclusivamente esta tarea de *comprensión*. Así, parecería que el corzo-en-su-bosque orienta “verdaderamente” cada vez que me lo trae el cuadro, y “verdaderamente” su orientarme estaría en el “tiempo-espacio” de ese “cada vez” del cuadro de Franz Marc (de mí ante él) y solo en ese instante del “cada vez”, a saber, allí cuando o donde el procedimiento por el cual termina habiendo regla para la construcción de figura para unas intuiciones dadas queda frustrado (no se cumple) y, por ello, tanto tendría que seguir buscándolo como dejar hablar tan solo al cuadro de Franz Marc para mi orientación.

Esta es una de las posibles lecturas, que, sin embargo, conlleva el problema de que vuelve a introducir un criterio normativo: donde “verdaderamente” nos orientamos es en el arte o es a través del arte como “verdaderamente” nos orientamos. Si bien, con Kant, podemos averiguar un criterio de discernimiento para saber cuándo estamos frente a una obra de arte, no está tan claro, a nuestro juicio, que este criterio sea óbice para afirmar que es en el ámbito artístico donde “verdaderamente” (y, por tanto, también “exclusivamente”) nos orientamos. Así, lo que se pretende defender aquí es que, más bien, el “concepto hermenéutico” no es algo que las “obras de arte”, por su *ser-obra*, nos dan, sino aquello que, fundamentado en el mismo sentimiento de placer que se averigua valiéndonos de lo que experimentamos en el ámbito artístico y que el juicio de gusto puro deduce como universalmente exigible a cada cual, uno puede construir para orientarse en esta o aquella situación dada.

Ahora bien, se ha recordado aquí el texto de Heidegger porque nos puede ayudar a terminar de fundamentar el “concepto hermenéutico”. Según lo que hemos ido diciendo, cada “concepto hermenéutico” que uno pudiera construir dependerá de la situación dada¹⁶; lo que nos puede ayudar del texto heideggeriano es que uno lo construirá al modo como

¹⁶ Con “dado” estamos tratando de recuperar el sentido más vasto de la formulación del “Principio de todos los Principios” de Husserl en *Ideas I* y el “Principio de Donación Suficiente” de Marion en *Siendo dado*; a propósito de este “vasto sentido” de la fenomenología, véase, el trabajo de C. Moreno Márquez (Moreno Márquez, 2015 y 2020).

una obra de arte *pone en obra la verdad* (abre mundo). Así, lo que el “concepto hermenéutico” enuncie no estará fundamentado en la normatividad de juicios epistemológicos o prácticos, sino en el juicio de gusto puro, esto es, en el *placer exigible a priori* a cada cual en el *enjuiciamiento ante la forma de la representación de un objeto*.

Dado que se tratará de algo a construir, podremos mantener la noción “concepto” (aunque ya hayamos dicho en qué medida no es estrictamente hablando un concepto), pues sí que el proceso mismo de construcción implicará que, una vez recorrido, lo obtenido podrá subsumir bajo esa construcción el “cada vez” del caso en el cual nos encontremos ante una situación para la cual lo construido en ese “concepto” sea lo requerido para nuestra orientación en ella. Esto no implicará, sin embargo, una normatividad, pues *cada vez* que se presente la situación (que haya su *darse a la intuición*) estaremos involucrados en el recorrido implícito de esa construcción, en la repetición de la construcción que, dado que esta ya habrá sido dada, su recorrido ya habrá sido logrado previamente, de modo que podrá simplemente ser referida. Podrá, no obstante, “sancionarse” si el recorrido (si la *interpretación* de la situación en la cual estaremos involucrados) se ha llevado a cabo hasta las consecuencias que el caso concreto requiere para su comprensión o si simplemente se ha aprovechado el esfuerzo previo de otros, incluso si ni siquiera se ha llegado a comprender ese esfuerzo y, por tanto, la situación (en cuanto al orientarse en ella) está superando a este o aquel. Pero esta sanción no podrá ser nunca simplemente formulable en una regla, sino que tendrá que ser “probada”, como se prueba la sal en la comida, en cada caso.

Por otro lado, no es meramente *placer* lo que uno le pide a cada cual que admita cuando formula un “concepto hermenéutico”, sino la comprensión, la orientación con él construida. Esta construcción, insisto, es la *interpretación* de la situación dada y, como ocurre con la *figura de belleza libre*, solo es tal, solo hay *concepto hermenéutico*, mientras se continúe la interpretación, mientras se está envuelto en ella y mientras la interpretación, el proceso mismo de construcción de ese concepto hermenéutico concreto, esté en marcha (ya sea por primera vez o en su repetición explícita o implícita). Por eso, aunque pueda emplearse la abstracción para llevar un concepto hermenéutico de una situación a otra (a un caso de situación comprendida bajo ese concepto), por la propia estructura del mismo y de lo que consigue, esa “aplicación” no estará exenta de la *repetición* de la construcción del concepto, esto es, de que la *comprensión* haya sido resultado de una efectiva y siempre incompleta, siempre en marcha, interpretación de la situación en la cual se está envuelto.

5. A modo de conclusión

Creemos que con lo que se ha expuesto ha quedado fundamentado el artefacto intelectual, el cual, además, se revela como una interpretación del juicio estético puro kantiano, en la medida en que está fundamentado en él y necesita de esa interpretación para ser puesto pie.

Conseguir esta fundamentación era el objetivo de este trabajo y, por tanto, su “conclusión” (si acaso cabe hablar así) es haberlo logrado. Las consecuencias y el alcance o la extensión que el (o los) concepto(s) hermenéutico(s) pueda tener quedarán para otros trabajos. Así, por ejemplo, poner de manifiesto que si este artefacto intelectual, tal y como se lo ha expuesto aquí, ha estado bien fundamentado, puede decirse que el uso técnico del vocablo “significante” en Lacan, vocablo que Lacan extrae de la lingüística, es un *concepto hermenéutico* (Fasolino 2019) y, entonces, quizá muchos de los conceptos de este y del psicoanálisis, sean *conceptos hermenéuticos* que habrá que reconstruir para que no se reclamen como reglas para la construcción de figura, sino como *juicios de orientación* o de *comprensión* ante situaciones dadas, esto es, *juicios hermenéuticos*.

Queda, ahora, preguntarse, por un lado, si lo que se acaba de fundamentar, el *concepto hermenéutico*, tiene cabida en la filosofía de Heidegger, insistiendo, por tanto, en que la *KU*, está en el centro de su propio trabajo (haya o no lecturas explicitadas de ella); y, por otro lado, si este artefacto repercute o no y, en cuyo caso, de qué manera en la “estética” en general y en la “estética kantiana” en particular. A pesar de que ambas son conclusiones o consecuencias que pueden extraerse de la construcción del artefacto intelectual que nos ha ocupado, quedarán como hipótesis para futuras investigaciones, pues no podremos resolver las cuestiones que de ello se derivan en este espacio.

Respecto a lo primero, el concepto hermenéutico, tal y como lo hemos fundamentado aquí, es, en cierto modo, el antecedente de la *indicación formal* heideggeriana. Esta tiene una restricción que, sin embargo, aquel no sufre, a saber, que la “forma” de la cual da *indicación* es dependiente de la analítica del *Dasein* y del proyecto de la ontología fundamental que se mantiene vivo, al menos, hasta 1930. Después, la *indicación formal* cae en desuso porque el trabajo explícito sobre la analítica del *Dasein*, en la forma como había sido planteada, es abandonado. No obstante, tenemos razones para sospechar que el concepto hermenéutico, que no vuelve a aparecer (que sepamos) con estas palabras, es una constante del trabajo de Heidegger, es decir, los términos que acaban siendo más o menos técnicos en Heidegger son conceptos hermenéuticos (tal y como lo hemos construido aquí) a pesar de que él ya no se pronuncie así sobre ellos. La defensa de esta lectura quedaría por hacer y, por consiguiente, insisto, lo formulado debe tomarse solamente como hipótesis de lectura: ¿podemos leer los términos que Heidegger marca en unos u otros casos como “técnicos” de su filosofía como “conceptos hermenéuticos”? ¿Qué consecuencias tiene leer de este modo los textos de Heidegger? Para responder a estas preguntas habría que analizar el párrafo 59 de la Dialéctica de la “Crítica de la capacidad estética de juzgar” y, por consiguiente, también los párrafos 56 y 57 y las dos Notas siguientes. Todo ello queda para otras ocasiones.

Respecto a la repercusión en la “estética” en general, habría que preguntarse si acaso esta disciplina no debiera restringirse a este tipo de “conceptos” y, en ese sentido, hasta qué punto su surgimiento no se nos presenta como un síntoma de nuestro tiempo. Si, efectivamente, ella misma pone en primer plano un cambio de *sensibilidad* (de cómo se

entiende la *sensibilidad* misma), donde puede apreciarse privilegiadamente que estamos en modernidad y que se ha dejado irremediabilmente atrás toda otra situación histórica, podríamos preguntarnos si no es donde más fácilmente podemos caer en la desorientación para con nuestra propia situación histórica y, al mismo tiempo, la reflexión que más orientación podría ofrecernos¹⁷. La “estética kantiana”, en particular, aparecería, entonces, como un lugar de orientación privilegiado para nuestro tiempo y esta sería la hipótesis de lectura que planteamos a consecuencia de lo expuesto. Con ello no se quisiera decir, en ningún caso, que en la “estética” o en la “estética kantiana” se encontraría la última palabra sobre nuestro tiempo, ni siquiera algo así como la más importante (¿respecto a qué otra sería “más importante”?), sino un lugar que bien puede desorientarnos desmedidamente o darnos la desmedida suficiente para orientarnos. Pero, en cualquier caso, insisto en que ello queda aquí como hipótesis.

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¹⁷ Rubén C. Fasolino ha defendido parte de esta hipótesis de lectura en un artículo que todavía no ha visto la luz: “¿Qué implica la posibilidad de una «estética freudiana»? Aportes para la historia de la filosofía”, pero que se espera que esté disponible en algún momento, a propósito de la llamada “estética freudiana”, el cual podría leerse desde lo que se ha planteado en este texto.

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**La ricezione della *Critica della facoltà di giudizio*
nell'ermeneutica contemporanea (Heidegger, Gadamer, Figal)**

***The Reception of the Critique of the Power of Judgment
in Contemporary Hermeneutics (Heidegger, Gadamer, Figal)***

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Abstract

This article deals with the question of the reception and “history of effects” of Kant’s *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. More precisely, in the present contribution I take into examination some original and influential “appropriations” of Kant’s third *Critique* in the context of 20th-century and contemporary hermeneutics, providing both a reconstruction and a critical interpretation of the readings of Kant’s work provided by Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer and nowadays Günter Figal. In the first section I basically offer an overview of Kant’s conception of the power of judgment as an introduction to the topics investigated into detail in the following sections of this article. Then, I focus on the different interpretations of Kant’s *Critique of the Power of Judgment* offered by the abovementioned hermeneutical philosophers, showing that, in a quite surprising and theoretically stimulating way, in the development of a phenomenological-hermeneutical aesthetics and/or philosophy of art from Heidegger to Gadamer up to Figal, we can observe a progressive shift from a sort of “disinterest” in Kant’s conception of aesthetics in favour of Hegel’s philosophy of art (Heidegger), to an explicit critique of the supposed subjectivization of aesthetics by Kant and

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its problematic consequences (Gadamer), up to a full-blown rehabilitation and retrieval of the significance of Kant's treatment of beauty in the third *Critique* as still essential for any serious philosophical aesthetics (Figal).

Keywords

Immanuel Kant. Critique of the Power of Judgement. Aesthetics. Phenomenology. Hermeneutics.

A Maria Teresa,

che per prima mi ha insegnato ad amare il pensiero di Kant.

1.

Come ha notato uno studioso estremamente attento del pensiero di Kant come Otfried Höffe, «un kantiano ortodosso [è] costretto a leggere la storia dell'influenza kantiana, persino in parti essenziali di essa, come storia di fraintendimenti produttivi» (Höffe 2002, p. 263). Se una tale massima, secondo Höffe, vale per la ricezione del pensiero kantiano in generale, nei più svariati ambiti della filosofia otto- e novecentesca ed a partire da approcci diversi al filosofare, possiamo dire che ciò appare tanto più vero nel caso di un'opera particolare di Kant come la *Critica della facoltà di giudizio*, la quale spicca per la sua complessità e, per così dire, eterogeneità anche all'interno del *corpus* stesso delle opere del filosofo di Königsberg. In linea generale, infatti, se è vero che, quanto più un'opera è articolata e complessa, tanto più è possibile che essa consenta (o addirittura esiga) interpretazioni diverse, allora si può dire che, sotto questo riguardo, il caso della *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* è davvero esemplare.

A tal proposito, basti solo pensare a come, nel Novecento, la *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* sia stata letta in maniere anche molto differenti fra loro da autori importanti come Adorno, Arendt, Bourdieu, Cassirer, Cavell, Cohen, Danto, Derrida, Deleuze, Dewey, Eco, Gadamer, Heidegger, Horkheimer, Lyotard, Marcuse, Plessner, Weil e altri ancora, al punto che – in una maniera forse un po' ambiziosa, ma al contempo veritiera – potremmo spingerci a dire che una ricostruzione della ricezione novecentesca della terza *Critica* si presti bene a fungere da guida per un attraversamento mirato di buona parte della filosofia del secolo scorso (cfr., su ciò, Marino e Terzi 2020). Fra le letture un po' più recenti – senza alcuna pretesa di completezza, ma unicamente a titolo esemplificativo per il presente discorso sulle diverse interpretazioni della *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* – è possibile ricordare come «[l]a sua importanza storica [...] che ha ancora una sua attualità» sia stata individuata da Jean-Marie Schaeffer, per esempio, «in ciò che essa ci può insegnare circa

lo statuto del discorso sull'arte»: più precisamente, nel fatto che «l'analisi della problematica estetica da lui proposta nella *Critica del Giudizio* [fornirebbe] anticipatamente una critica dei fondamenti logici della teoria speculativa dell'Arte» e, così, offrirebbe la possibilità di articolare dei «prolegomeni kantiani ad una estetica analitica» (Schaeffer 1996, pp. 9, 25; cfr. anche *ivi*, pp. 31-108). Laddove altri studiosi – sempre a proposito della ricchezza e pluralità delle interpretazioni recenti di questo testo kantiano – hanno scorto «il significato della svolta estetica di Kant nella terza *Critica* nel suo protendersi verso la categoria del sociale, che mancava nella precedente architettura filosofica di Kant» e che, secondo tale lettura, consentirebbe di collegare la *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* (soprattutto per via del suo ripensamento del modo di concepire la natura rispetto alla *Critica della ragion pura*) a certi sviluppi dell'estetica marxista, interpretando originalmente e anche un po' provocatoriamente alcuni concetti presentati nella terza *Critica* come precursori di tematiche marxiane/marxiste come il feticismo o la reificazione (Wayne 2016, pp. 6, 45; su Marx e l'estetica, cfr. Gandesha e Hartle 2017). Ancora più di recente, alcuni strumenti concettuali offerti dalla riflessione kantiana nella prima parte della *Critica della facoltà di giudizio*, cioè la *Critica della facoltà estetica di giudizio* (Kant 1999, pp. 39-190), sono stati applicati a un tentativo di comprensione dell'affascinante ma sfuggente «logica dell'improvvisazione artistica» (Bertinetto e Marino 2020) oppure a un confronto con una delle più recenti e influenti tendenze del dibattito estetico contemporaneo come la *Everyday Aesthetics* (Leddy 2020). Al contempo, però, bisogna anche dire naturalmente che, se la *Critica della facoltà di giudizio*, «a ripercorrerne mentalmente le tante fortune e sfortune interpretative», può anche apparire un'opera «difficilmente determinabile nel suo disegno complessivo e nei suoi obiettivi salienti, disseminata di ambiguità e di oscurità», ciò d'altra parte *non* deve spingere affatto a trarre la conclusione che essa sia allora «interpretabile a piacere»: infatti, pur trattandosi di «un'opera ricchissima [...] e forse qua e là anche un po' disordinata e non completamente rifinita», la terza *Critica* è al tempo stesso un'opera «tematicamente e teoreticamente compatta» (Garroni 2003, pp. 3-4).

In parte, comunque, la suddetta complessità, articolazione e finanche eterogeneità della terza *Critica* non si deve solo alle sue numerose e variegate interpretazioni successive, ma scaturisce già dall'assetto interno e dai contenuti del testo stesso di Kant. Com'è noto, infatti, il fatto che Kant abbia dedicato solo tardivamente, cioè nel 1790, un'opera alla seconda delle tre facoltà conoscitive superiori (intelletto, facoltà di giudizio, ragione) elencate nella *Critica della ragion pura* e altrove, e cioè appunto alla *Urteilkraft*, non significa che tardiva sia stata la sua scoperta di questa stessa facoltà, per così dire. Dall'epistolario kantiano, infatti, sappiamo che risale soltanto al 1787 la scoperta del fatto che, oltre a quelli già esaminati nelle prime due *Critiche*, vi sia anche «un tipo di principi a priori nuovo rispetto ai precedenti» (lettera di Kant a C.L. Reinhold del 28 dicembre 1787: in Kant 1990, p. 164). Un principio a priori, in questo caso, costituito dalla «finalità» o «conformità a scopi» (a seconda delle traduzioni del termine *Zweckmäßigkeit*) e riconducibile alla facoltà dell'animo del sentimento di piacere e dispiacere, la quale, a sua

volta (facendo adesso riferimento non alla tripartizione delle facoltà dell'animo, bensì a quella delle facoltà conoscitive), appare caratterizzata da un legame intrinseco alla facoltà di giudizio (Kant 1999, § IX, p. 33). Proprio a partire dalla scoperta del principio a priori della conformità a scopi avviene il decisivo ampliamento del progetto iniziale relativo alla terza *Critica*, per diverso tempo concepita dallo stesso Kant come una semplice *Critica del gusto*. Infatti, ancora nelle lettere a C.G. Schütz del 25 giugno 1787, a L.H. Jakob dell'11 settembre 1787 ed a C.L. Reinhold del 28 dicembre 1787, Kant afferma di doversi dedicare «al *Fondamento della critica del gusto*» e alla «elaborazione della *Critica del gusto*», laddove nella lettera a Reinhold del 12 maggio 1789 egli parla ormai definitivamente di una «*Critica del Giudizio* (di cui la *Critica del gusto* costituisce una parte)» (Kant 1990, pp. 154-156, 164, 188). Com'è noto, un tale ampliamento del disegno originario dell'opera avviene solo col maturare in Kant della «convinzione che giudizi estetici e giudizi teleologici siano due diverse applicazioni della stessa facoltà di giudicare, sulla base dell'unico principio a priori della finalità» (Menegoni 2008, p. 18).

D'altra parte, dallo studio delle opere di Kant sappiamo bene che, a prescindere dalla questione più complessa relativa alla presenza o meno di un principio a priori autonomo della facoltà di giudizio, che è al centro della terza *Critica* (Kant 1999, p. 4), la semplice “scoperta” di tale facoltà va fatta risalire perlomeno ai tempi della prima *Critica*. Qui, infatti, la facoltà di giudizio fa la sua comparsa nella sezione intitolata *Analitica dei principi*, definita dallo stesso Kant come «un canone per la facoltà di giudizio» (Kant 2004, A132/B171, p. 295), là dove le funzioni di base di tale facoltà vengono individuate nel sussumere e distinguere (Caygill 1995, pp. 269-270), e là dove per “canone” si intende «l'insieme dei principi a priori dell'uso corretto» (ovvero, dell'applicazione) «di certe facoltà conoscitive in generale» (Kant 2004, A796/B824, p. 1123). Infatti, se l'intelletto, in generale, è definibile kantianamente come «la facoltà delle regole», la facoltà di giudizio è invece «la facoltà di sussumere sotto delle regole, cioè di distinguere se qualcosa stia o non stia sotto una data regola» (Kant 2004, A132/B171, p. 295). Ecco, allora, che l'attenzione di Kant si sposta

dall'intelletto come facoltà delle regole al Giudizio come facoltà di sussumere sotto di esse. [...] Tenuto conto che il problema da affrontare è quello dell'*applicazione* delle categorie ai fenomeni secondo una regola, va ora notato che da ognuno dei titoli (quantità, qualità, relazione e modalità), secondo cui sono raggruppate le categorie, possono essere ottenute regole tali che la *sussunzione* sotto di esse di un oggetto sanziona l'*applicazione* a questo delle relative categorie. Si tratta di regole di connessione necessaria, non fondate esse stesse su conoscenze più alte e generali. Esse sono, cioè, dei principi. Un'*analitica del Giudizio* è dunque, necessariamente, un'*analitica dei principi* (Guerra 2007, p. 67; corsivi miei).

In questo contesto, mi preme sottolineare come emerge qui, quale compito dell'analitica dei principi in quanto «canone per la facoltà di giudizio», quello di insegnare alla facoltà di giudizio «come applicare ai fenomeni i concetti dell'intelletto, i quali contengono le condizioni per delle regole a priori» (Kant 2004, A132/B171, p. 295; sulla valenza applicativa della facoltà di giudizio, cfr. anche Kant 2012, § VI, pp. 69-71). Oltre a ciò, facendo sempre riferimento alla *Critica della ragion pura* e, nella fattispecie, alle indicazioni kantiane sul rapporto tra intelletto e facoltà di giudizio, c'è anche da osservare che, se il primo «è capace di essere istruito e attrezzato mediante delle regole», la seconda è invece per Kant una sorta di «talento particolare, che non può essere insegnato, ma solo esercitato» (Kant 2004, A133/B172, p. 295). Ciò trova conferma anche nell'*Antropologia pragmatica*, dove leggiamo:

il Giudizio (*iudicium*) non può essere istruito, ma soltanto esercitato; quindi il suo sviluppo si chiama maturità, ed è tale che non viene prima del tempo. [...] Se [infatti] ci dovesse essere una istruzione per il Giudizio, allora ci dovrebbero essere delle regole generali, secondo cui si possa distinguere se qualche cosa rientra o no nella regola; il che rimanda la questione all'infinito. Il Giudizio dunque è quella forma di intelletto, di cui si dice che non viene prima del tempo; esso si fonda sopra una lunga esperienza (Kant 2009, § 42, pp. 85-86).

A questo punto, però, la trattazione kantiana della facoltà di giudizio nella prima *Critica* si interrompe improvvisamente, in una maniera che può apparire prematura, soprattutto se si tiene conto dell'importanza apparentemente assegnata a tale facoltà nel disegno complessivo dell'opera. Un'importanza, quest'ultima, che viene ribadita da Kant anche in un altro passaggio, in cui si afferma esplicitamente come l'analitica dei principi vada concepita nella sua interezza come una «dottrina trascendentale della facoltà di giudizio» (Kant 2004, A136/B175, p. 299). Alla luce di ciò, quindi, da un lato, «il concetto di facoltà di giudizio» sembra ricoprire quella che è stata enfaticamente definita «una posizione-chiave nella *Critica della ragion pura*» (Heintel e Macho 1981, p. 164); dall'altro lato, però, la lettura dei rapidi passaggi dedicati da Kant a questo argomento nella prima *Critica* rivela che probabilmente in quest'opera non era ancora possibile fornire un'effettiva fondazione trascendentale per la facoltà di giudizio. Infatti, se ci si pone la domanda su quale sia «la via che il Giudizio deve seguire [...] per produrre contenuti di pensiero a livello di conoscenza e di scienza», si scopre inevitabilmente che, «a questo punto, sul Giudizio visto come facoltà» nella *Critica della ragion pura* «il discorso di Kant tace e non sarà più ripreso nel corso dell'opera» (Marcucci 1999, p. 96). Tenuto conto di tutto ciò, si può essere tentati di applicare anche alla facoltà di giudizio una considerazione di Oscar Meo originariamente sviluppata a proposito della nozione di schema nella prima *Critica* e dire che, «come tutte le strutture che in Kant operano una mediazione, il suo statuto non [è]

chiaramente definibile» e presenta «qualche margine di indeterminatezza teoretica, di fluidità e di vaghezza» (Meo 2004, p. 91).

Ad ogni modo, ai fini del discorso che sto cercando di sviluppare in questo paragrafo introduttivo, ciò che conta maggiormente è che solo nella terza *Critica*, con la distinzione fra due modi di procedere della medesima facoltà di giudizio (cioè, determinante e riflettente), quest'ultima si spinge finalmente oltre lo statuto meramente applicativo fin qui delineato e acquista invece una funzione propria, spontanea, specifica e autenticamente "inventiva". Soltanto adesso, cioè, il discorso sulla facoltà di giudizio sembra giungere a uno sviluppo pieno e completo nel pensiero di Kant (nonostante sia stato notato con accuratezza filologica che, a rigore, «sebbene la *reflektierende Urteilskraft* faccia la sua comparsa "ufficiale" molto tardi, soltanto nell'ultimissima fase di elaborazione dell'"estetica critica", a stesura di *KU* già avviata, del suo affacciarsi all'orizzonte del pensiero di Kant si trova testimonianza o traccia [già] nei *Kollegentwürfe*, e non solo in quelli degli anni '80, ma anche in quelli degli anni '70»: Meo 2013, p. 12). Ad ogni modo, è bene specificare che, ammesso che si possa parlare qui di "compimento", in questo caso tale termine non è affatto da intendere come sinonimo di "arresto" o "conclusione" nell'elaborazione concettuale, giacché nel caso della nozione di facoltà di giudizio mi sembra quanto mai pertinente ciò che ha scritto Hilary Putnam in altro contesto (cioè, a proposito della concezione kantiana dell'esperienza in generale): «Kant estende e approfondisce in continuazione la presentazione della sua concezione, e forse anche la concezione stessa» (Putnam 2013, p. 257). Oppure, addirittura, a questo riguardo si potrebbe essere tentati di applicare al caso specifico della facoltà di giudizio ciò che affermò Ernst Cassirer riguardo al particolare tipo di esperienza di lettura che si ha in generale con gli scritti di Kant, ovvero che

[s]i incontrano dovunque nuovi dubbi e questioni [...]. Così i concetti divengono via via altri (da quello che parevano essere), a seconda del luogo in cui compaiono nella progressiva costruzione sistematica dell'insieme. Essi non sussistono fin dall'inizio come un sostrato immobile, quiescente, del movimento del pensiero, ma si sviluppano e si fissano solo in questo stesso movimento. Chi non tiene conto di questo tratto caratteristico, chi crede che il significato di un determinato concetto portante sia esaurito nella sua prima definizione e in tal senso cerca di tenerlo fermo e intatto lungo il procedere del pensiero come un termine immutabile – è già per forza di cose sulla strada di un'interpretazione errata (Cassirer 1997, pp. 170-171).

A tutto ciò che, fin qui, è stato detto a titolo meramente introduttivo a proposito della nozione di facoltà di giudizio che è al centro della terza *Critica*, bisogna poi ovviamente aggiungere, al fine di formarsi una prima idea della succitata articolazione e varietà interna dell'opera, il ben noto fatto che quest'ultima, una volta operato il passaggio dal progetto di una *Critica del gusto* a quello di una *Critica della facoltà di giudizio*, si viene a strutturare

in due parti distinte, entrambe di notevole ampiezza e complessità. Due parti, com'è noto, rispettivamente dedicate alla facoltà estetica di giudizio e alla facoltà teleologica di giudizio come articolazioni particolari della facoltà riflettente di giudizio, la quale a sua volta, come si diceva poc'anzi, insieme alla facoltà determinante di giudizio costituisce una delle due modalità in cui si esplica l'operatività di questa facoltà conoscitiva. A ciò, però, bisogna poi aggiungere ovviamente che le stesse due parti della *Critica della facoltà di giudizio*, per parte loro, non appaiono affatto focalizzate semplicemente e univocamente su un'unica tematica ma, al contrario, comprendono al loro interno una pluralità straordinaria e, per così dire, irriducibile di temi e problemi, soprattutto nel caso della prima parte dell'opera, la *Critica della facoltà estetica di giudizio*. Una parte dell'opera, quest'ultima, alla quale ci si riferisce abitualmente con l'espressione "estetica kantiana" (sebbene, a voler essere rigorosi, la "vera" estetica di Kant rimanga l'*Estetica trascendentale* della prima *Critica*, laddove quella della terza *Critica* è appunto un'analisi critica della facoltà estetica di giudizio¹) e la quale, com'è noto, include poi al suo interno riflessioni di enorme importanza su una varietà di questioni comprendenti l'analitica del bello e il giudizio di gusto nei suoi quattro momenti secondo la qualità, quantità, relazione e modalità (Kant 1999, §§ 1-22, pp. 39-76), l'analitica del sublime nelle sue due forme del sublime matematico e del sublime dinamico (Kant 1999, §§ 23-29, pp. 80-102), la natura comunicativa del gusto e il rapporto tra facoltà di giudizio e *sensus communis* (Kant 1999, §§ 39-41, pp. 128-134), il rapporto tra l'arte in generale, le belle arti e il genio (Kant 1999, §§ 43-53, pp. 139-166), la dialettica della facoltà estetica di giudizio e l'antinomia del gusto (Kant 1999, §§ 55-57, pp. 172-176), la relazione fra bellezza e moralità alla luce della distinzione essenziale fra schemi e simboli come «intuizioni, che vengono fornite a concetti a priori» (cioè, alla luce dell'idea secondo cui il «modo rappresentativo intuitivo [...] può essere diviso in modo rappresentativo schematico e simbolico» e secondo cui solo quest'ultimo si applica in modo rigoroso al rapporto fra il bello e il bene: Kant 1999, § 59, p. 186), e molto altro ancora.

¹ Una delle *Riflessioni sull'antropologia* di Kant risalente al 1769 stabilisce già: «Ogni conoscenza di un prodotto è o critica (giudizio [*Beurteilung*]) o disciplina {dottrina} (insegnamento) o scienza. [...] Se i rapporti che costituiscono il fondamento della bellezza sono qualitativi, e di conseguenza oggetto della filosofia (per es., identità e differenza, contrasto, vivacità, ecc.), non è possibile alcuna disciplina, e ancor meno una scienza, ma solo una critica. [...] Perciò si deve evitare la denominazione scolastica di "estetica"» in questo campo (Kant 2013, pp. 31-32). Com'è noto, poi, nella *Critica della ragion pura* Kant chiarirà: «Chiamo estetica trascendentale una scienza di tutti i principi a priori della sensibilità» e aggiungerà in nota: «I tedeschi sono gli unici, oggi, a servirsi del termine *estetica* per designare con esso ciò che altri chiamano critica del gusto. Alla base di questo sta la vana speranza, nutrita da quell'eccellente filosofo analitico che è stato Baumgarten, di ricondurre la valutazione critica del bello sotto dei principi razionali, e di innalzare le sue regole a scienza» (Kant 2004, A21/B35, p. 115).

2.

Una volta esaurite queste premesse meramente introduttive sulla terza *Critica*, volte a chiarire molto rapidamente le affermazioni iniziali sulla complessità, articolazione e finanche eterogeneità di quest'opera di Kant, ritorniamo alla questione da cui avevamo preso le mosse: la questione, cioè, della ricezione novecentesca della *Critica della facoltà di giudizio*. Come evidenzia già il titolo di questo articolo, infatti, lo scopo limitato del presente contributo è quello di offrire una ricostruzione e un'interpretazione di un piccolo segmento della vicenda relativa alle avventure (e, qualche volta, disavventure) delle diverse letture della terza *Critica* che sono state offerte nella contemporaneità. Il piccolo e particolare segmento di questa vicenda, per così dire, che prenderò qui in esame è rappresentato dall'ermeneutica filosofica e, specificamente, da una delle varie linee interne a questa importante tradizione contemporanea di pensiero, a sua volta caratterizzata da una notevole complessità, eterogeneità e non di rado persino conflittualità (su ciò, cfr. ad esempio Bleicher 1986; Ferraris 1988; Bianco 1992 e 1998; Jung 2002). Mi riferisco, nel dire ciò, alla linea interna all'ermeneutica tedesca che, ancorando quest'ultima alla fenomenologia husserliana come perdurante fonte di ispirazione e come modello sul piano del metodo e dell'atteggiamento filosofico generale, a partire dalla riflessione di Martin Heidegger conduce al pensiero di Hans-Georg Gadamer e, al giorno d'oggi, alla proposta filosofica di Günter Figal². Una linea interna all'ermeneutica contemporanea, quest'ultima, che appare anche singolarmente caratterizzata da una sequenza di rapporti diretti di discepolato, essendo Heidegger un allievo diretto di Husserl, Gadamer un allievo diretto di Heidegger e Figal un allievo diretto di Gadamer, e che, come vedremo, ha molto da offrire non soltanto sul piano del pensiero filosofico in generale, ma anche sul piano più particolare e specifico dell'interpretazione della terza *Critica* di Kant.

² Naturalmente, il fatto di applicare in modo così diretto e immediato il termine "ermeneutica" alla filosofia di Heidegger potrebbe suscitare qualche obiezione e resistenza. Com'è noto, infatti, dopo avere inizialmente definito il proprio pensiero «ermeneutica fenomenologica della effettività» (Heidegger 2005, p. 32), «ermeneutica come autointerpretazione della effettività» (Heidegger 1992, pp. 23-28) o «fenomenologia dell'Esserci» come «ermeneutica nel significato originario della parola» e come «elaborazione delle condizioni di possibilità di qualsiasi ricerca ontologica» (Heidegger 2008, p. 53), nella fase del suo pensiero successiva alla *Kehre* Heidegger «non [fa] più uso dei termini "ermeneutica" ed "ermeneutico"», abbandonando la posizione iniziale «non per sostituirla con altra, ma perché anche quella era solo stazione di un cammino» (Heidegger 1984, p. 91). In questo senso, rimane in un certo senso emblematico e vincolante il celebre passaggio della lettera di Heidegger a Otto Pöggeler del 5 gennaio 1973, in cui si legge: «La "filosofia ermeneutica" è cosa di Gadamer» (Pöggeler 1983, p. 395). Tuttavia, alla luce dell'indiscutibile influenza della riflessione heideggeriana per tutti gli sviluppi successivi del pensiero ermeneutico (Gadamer, Pareyson, Ricoeur, Vattimo, Rorty, ecc.), e alla luce della possibilità di servirsi della nozione di "ermeneutica" anche in un senso più generale che rende possibile includere al suo interno forme e declinazioni di tale pensiero anche molto diverse fra loro, non ritengo illegittimo inserire Heidegger all'interno di uno studio sulla ricezione della terza *Critica* di Kant nell'ermeneutica contemporanea.

Prendendo le mosse da Heidegger e focalizzando la nostra attenzione, all'interno del suo pensiero e del *corpus* delle sue opere quanto mai vasto e labirintico (se si pensa al semplice fatto che il piano della sua *Gesamtausgabe* prevede ben 102 volumi), esclusivamente sui suoi principali scritti di filosofia dell'arte, è interessante notare come il primissimo paragrafo delle sue annotazioni del 1934 intitolate *Per l'oltrepassamento dell'estetica. Note per "L'origine dell'opera d'arte"* contenga un breve ma significativo riferimento a Kant. Scrive infatti Heidegger: «Il fatto storico che ogni estetica fondata in modo pensante (cfr. Kant) fa esplodere se stessa indica in modo infallibile che da una parte questo modo di interrogare l'arte non è casuale, ma che esso, d'altra parte, non è neppure essenziale» (Heidegger 2010, p. 37). È senz'altro utile fornire qui qualche rapido cenno e riferimento alle caratteristiche di questo testo, *Per l'oltrepassamento dell'estetica. Note per "L'origine dell'opera d'arte"*. Infatti, come spiega il curatore del testo, Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, le annotazioni pubblicate con questo titolo

sono tratte da una cartella a cui Heidegger ha dato il titolo complessivo *Zur Überwindung der Aesthetik. Zu "Ursprung des Kunstwerks" 1934 ss.* Questa datazione mostra che i lavori preparatori a *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerks* risalgono a prima del 1935, anno che nelle *Nachweisen a Holzwege* (GA 5) Heidegger ha indicato come quello della conferenza dal titolo *Vom Ursprung des Kunstwerks*, tenuta il 13 novembre 1935 presso la Kunstwissenschaftliche Gesellschaft di Friburgo in Brisgovia. Nel vol. 5 (1989) degli "Heidegger Studies" è stata pubblicata la prima elaborazione di *Vom Ursprung des Kunstwerks* degli anni 1931 e 1932, che precede la conferenza di Friburgo, definita da Heidegger seconda elaborazione. Le tre conferenze tenute nel Freies Deutsches Hochstift di Francoforte sul Meno il 17, il 24 novembre e il 4 dicembre 1936, apparse in *Holzwege* con il titolo *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerks*, costituiscono, a detta dello stesso Heidegger, la terza elaborazione (Heidegger 2010, p. 37n).

Si tratta di considerazioni di rigorosa filologia heideggeriana, per così dire, che però risultano interessanti anche per gli scopi specifici del presente contributo. Infatti, come emerge chiaramente dal succitato riferimento a Kant nel passo sul carattere intrinsecamente problematico di «ogni estetica fondata in modo pensante (*jede Aesthetik, die denkerisch gegründet ist*)», nel momento stesso in cui Heidegger intraprende i primi passi nell'elaborazione della propria filosofia dell'arte in chiave "anti-estetica" o "oltre-estetica" – cioè, fondata sull'idea di un necessario "oltrepassamento (*Überwindung*)" o "superamento (*Verwindung*)" dell'estetica, in quanto parte anch'essa di quella tradizione metafisica che Heidegger mira appunto a "oltrepassare" o "superare" (cfr. Gentili 2003; Sallis 2005; Marafioti 2008, pp. 51-68, e 2010) –, egli si premura per prima cosa di prendere le distanze dall'estetica kantiana, seppure solo in forma di cenno rapido e, per la verità, anche un po' criptico. Naturalmente, va notato che a una tale presa di posizione critica di Heidegger nei confronti di Kant e del suo «modo di interrogare l'arte (*Fragen nach der Kunst*)» si potrebbe facilmente obiettare che la terza *Critica* non è in prima

istanza e a livello fondamentale una filosofia dell'arte, dato che, come abbiamo già visto, temi come quelli dell'arte e del genio fanno certamente parte della prima parte dell'opera (*Critica della facoltà estetica di giudizio*) ma senza svolgervi il ruolo principale e, anzi, risultando in parte marginali, o comunque meno essenziali, rispetto ai temi del bello (che per Kant include anche, se non soprattutto, il bello naturale accanto al bello artistico), del sublime, del gusto e del libero gioco tra facoltà conoscitive che si instaura nel concepimento e proferimento di un giudizio estetico, con tutto ciò che questo comporta anche al livello di un ripensamento generale della concezione della conoscenza.

Ad ogni modo, come risulta chiaramente dalle succitate considerazioni di filologia heideggeriana riguardo alle annotazioni del 1934 intitolate *Per l'oltrepassamento dell'estetica. Note per "L'origine dell'opera d'arte"*, già nel 1931 Heidegger intraprende la stesura di una primissima versione del testo che, con ampliamenti, approfondimenti e modifiche, nel giro di alcuni anni porterà gradualmente all'elaborazione di uno dei saggi più noti e influenti di tutta l'estetica novecentesca, cioè il testo *L'origine dell'opera d'arte* pubblicato poi nel 1950 come saggio d'apertura nel volume *Sentieri interrotti*. È bene tenere presente che solo due anni prima rispetto a quel 1931 Heidegger aveva dato alle stampe la sua celebre e controversa interpretazione della *Critica della ragion pura* nel libro *Kant e il problema della metafisica*, il che sta chiaramente a indicare che, soprattutto nel periodo immediatamente successivo a *Essere e tempo*, il confronto critico con la filosofia di Kant rappresentava per Heidegger una necessità imprescindibile al fine dello sviluppo del proprio stesso pensiero (sul confronto complessivo di Heidegger con Kant lungo tutto il suo *Denkweg*, cfr. lo studio oltremodo sistematico e completo di Marafioti 2011).

Alla luce di tutto ciò, da un lato, non stupisce il fatto che, nel 1934, il primo riferimento (seppur critico e criptico) di Heidegger alla tradizione estetica occidentale – che, non sapendo pensare l'arte e la bellezza in modo "originario" (nell'accezione heideggeriana del termine), farebbe «esplosione se stessa (*sich selbst sprengt*)» – sia proprio un riferimento a Kant. Sempre alla luce di tutto ciò, però, dall'altro lato, appare sorprendente che la lettura della versione definitiva di *L'origine dell'opera d'arte* evidenzi una sorta di "sparizione" del confronto critico di Heidegger con l'estetica di Kant. Nel saggio pubblicato in *Sentieri interrotti*, infatti, non sembra esserci alcuna traccia esplicita di un confronto approfondito di questo tipo con la terza *Critica*. Semmai, a emergere nel saggio *L'origine dell'opera d'arte* – che, com'è noto, si articola e si sviluppa principalmente intorno alla questione del rapporto fra arte e verità – è un riferimento importante all'*Estetica* di Hegel e alla sua celebre e variamente interpretata tesi della "fine dell'arte" o "morte dell'arte", più che un riferimento alla *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* di Kant. Nel dire ciò, mi riferisco chiaramente alla tesi hegeliana del "carattere di passato (*Vergangenheitscharakter*) dell'arte", con la quale il filosofo di Stoccarda intende fondamentalmente che, «[p]er noi, l'arte non è più il grado più alto per l'espressione dell'idea» (Hegel 2017, p. 4). Secondo Hegel, infatti, l'«arte non vale più per noi come il modo più alto in cui la verità si dà esistenza», giacché «[n]el progredire dello sviluppo culturale di ogni popolo giunge in generale l'epoca in cui l'arte rimanda oltre se stessa» e l'età contemporanea, a suo

giudizio, corrisponde precisamente a una tale fase: «Si può, sì, sperare che l'arte s'innalzi e si perfezioni sempre di più, ma la sua forma ha cessato di essere il bisogno supremo dello spirito» (Hegel 1997, p. 120). Scrive Hegel:

lo spirito del nostro mondo odierno [...] appare come al di sopra della fase in cui l'arte costituisce il modo supremo di esser coscienti dell'assoluto. Il genere peculiare della produzione artistica e delle sue opere non soddisfa più il nostro bisogno più alto; noi siamo ben oltre il poter onorare in maniera divina e venerare le opere d'arte; l'impressione che esse fanno è di natura più ponderata, e quel che da esse è suscitato in noi richiede una pietra di paragone più alta e una conferma diversa. Il pensiero e la riflessione hanno sopravanzato la bella arte. [...] Qualunque atteggiamento si voglia assumere di fronte a ciò, è certo che ora l'arte non arreca più quel soddisfacimento dei bisogni spirituali, che in essa hanno cercato e solo in essa trovato epoche e popoli precedenti. [...] Perciò il nostro tempo, per la sua situazione generale non è favorevole all'arte. [...] Per tutti questi riguardi l'arte, dal lato della sua suprema destinazione, è e rimane per noi un passato. Con ciò essa ha perduto pure per noi ogni genuina verità e vitalità (Hegel 1997, pp. 14-16; su ciò, cfr. ad esempio Gethmann-Siefert 1993; Geulen 2002; Ophälders 2014; Vieweg, Iannelli e Vercellone 2015; Romagnoli 2016; Siani 2017³).

A tal riguardo, alla fine del saggio *L'origine dell'opera d'arte* Heidegger si richiama esplicitamente a quella che chiama la «meditazione più vasta – perché pensata in base alla metafisica – che l'Occidente possiede intorno all'essenza dell'arte, [le] *Lezioni di estetica* di Hegel», e si domanda appunto se l'arte sia «ancor oggi una maniera essenziale e necessaria in cui si storicizza la verità decisiva per il nostro Esserci storico» oppure no, concludendo che l'«ultima parola intorno a questa affermazione di Hegel [*scil.* quella del “carattere di passato dell'arte”] non è ancora stata detta» (Heidegger 1997, p. 63). Parecchi anni dopo, nella lettera a Rudolf Krämer-Badoni del 25 aprile 1960, Heidegger comunque specificherà:

nella postfazione al mio saggio [*Holzwege*, pp. 66-67] cito Hegel, concordando con la tesi secondo cui “quanto alla sua suprema destinazione, l'arte è per noi qualcosa che appartiene al passato”, [ma] ciò non vuol dire né aderire alla concezione hegeliana dell'arte né affermare che l'arte sia alla fine. Desidero piuttosto dire che l'essenza dell'arte è per noi degna di essere interrogata. Io *non* “posso fermarmi a Hegel” perché non sono mai stato con lui, lo impedisce l'abissale differenza nella determinazione dell'essenza della “verità” (Heidegger 2010, pp. 89-91).

³ Per questi riferimenti bibliografici e alcuni spunti di revisione per migliorare la qualità del mio testo sono debitore nei confronti di uno dei tre *reviewer* anonimi che hanno valutato positivamente il mio saggio in occasione della *submission* a “Con-textos Kantianos” e che vorrei dunque ringraziare.

Secondo Heidegger, com'è noto, l'«opera d'arte apre, a suo modo, l'essere dell'ente. Nell'opera ha luogo questa apertura, cioè lo svelamento, cioè la verità dell'ente. Nell'opera d'arte è posta in opera la verità dell'ente. L'arte è il porsi in opera della verità (*das Sich-ins-Werk-Setzen der Wahrheit*)» (Heidegger 1997, p. 25). Al fine di articolare concettualmente e chiarire il rapporto tra opera d'arte e verità (intesa da Heidegger come *Unverborgenheit*, in quanto “traduzione” del greco *aletheia*), nelle prime parti del saggio *L'origine dell'opera d'arte* ci si serve soprattutto degli esempi della pittura di van Gogh e del tempio greco e si introduce una celebre coppia di concetti, quelli di “Mondo (*Welt*)” e “Terra (*Erde*)”, in riferimento ai quali Heidegger enuncia i «due tratti essenziali dell'esser opera dell'opera»: rispettivamente, l'«esporre un Mondo (*Aufstellen einer Welt*)» e il «porre-qui la Terra (*Herstellen der Erde*)». Di questi due “tratti costitutivi (*Wesenszüge*)” dell'opera d'arte, però, Heidegger non si limita a fornire delle descrizioni isolate ma ne ricerca piuttosto l'intima unità, la quale è rinvenibile proprio nella loro “lotta (*Streit*)”. Heidegger, infatti, afferma che «[i]l Mondo si fonda sulla Terra e la Terra sorge attraverso il Mondo», e che ciascuno dei due tratti, nella misura in cui mira a imporsi sull'altro, mostra al tempo stesso di averne essenzialmente bisogno, cosicché «[i]l contrapporsi di Mondo e Terra è una lotta (*das Gegeneinander von Welt und Erde ist ein Streit*)» nella quale «ha luogo l'unità dell'opera» (Heidegger 1997, pp. 33-35). Sulla base della centralità assunta dalla questione relativa alla verità dell'opera d'arte e, come ho detto poc'anzi, sulla base della rielaborazione anche da parte di Heidegger della celebre questione relativa alla “fine” o “morte” dell'arte (così come da parte di Adorno, Gadamer, Gehlen, Danto e molti altri autori importanti del Novecento: su ciò, cfr. Valagussa 2013, Vercellone 2013), alla fine del saggio *L'origine dell'opera d'arte* emerge in modo esplicito il succitato rilievo conferito da Heidegger al confronto critico con la riflessione di Hegel su questi temi, laddove un confronto di pari livello e importanza con il pensiero estetico di Kant sembra essere assente in questo contesto⁴. Riferendosi proprio alla sorprendente e, a seconda dei punti di vista, forse anche problematica assenza di un confronto approfondito con la *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* nel saggio sull'origine dell'opera d'arte, in un suo contributo recente Günter Figal ha parlato esplicitamente di uno “spazio vuoto (*blank space*)” che non manca di suscitare interrogativi a chi voglia occuparsi del rapporto tra la filosofia dell'arte di Heidegger e l'estetica di Kant. Scrive infatti Figal:

⁴ A scanso di equivoci, ciò non significa che nei suoi corsi universitari o nei suoi scritti Heidegger tralasci del tutto di confrontarsi con la terza *Critica* di Kant, giacché ovviamente non è così e, infatti, è possibile trovare nei suoi testi diversi riferimenti di questo tipo. Si vedano, ad esempio, i riferimenti alla *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* nel volume 84/1 della *Gesamtausgabe*, comprendente i suoi seminari su Kant, Leibniz e Schiller, o nel volume volume 84/2 della *Gesamtausgabe*, comprendente anche un seminario del 1936 su *Kant. Kritik der (ästhetischen) Urteilskraft (Die Frage nach der 'Kunst')*, al momento non ancora pubblicato ma comunque già annunciato nel *Nachwort des Herausgebers* nel succitato volume 84/1 della *Gesamtausgabe*. Per questi riferimenti bibliografici molto dettagliati sono debitore a Rosa Maria Marafioti, grande esperta del pensiero di Heidegger, che dunque ringrazio.

Heidegger presents the philosophical project of aesthetics without mentioning the book that in general is most closely associated with it: Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. In Heidegger's considerations on aesthetics and art Kant's groundbreaking examination of aesthetic experience is just a blank space. [...] As it seems Heidegger did not feel challenged by Kant's third *Critique*; the book did not speak to him. [...] Since Heidegger hardly could underestimate Kant's contribution to modern philosophy of art, his understanding of aesthetics must be of such a kind that he saw no need to take Kant's contribution into account or, even more likely, that he wished to avoid it. Since Heidegger could not seriously regard Kant's contribution to aesthetics as marginal, he maybe skipped it because it might have been a serious challenge of Heidegger's view on aesthetics and thus also of his own thinking on art (Figal 2020, pp. 61-62).

A tal proposito, tenuto conto anche della significativa contemporaneità fra la versione definitiva di *L'origine dell'opera d'arte* (1935-36) e il corso universitario *La volontà di potenza come arte* (1936-37) svolto da Heidegger presso l'Università di Friburgo, è importante non trascurare la sezione di quest'ultimo intitolata *Sei fatti fondamentali ricavati dalla storia dell'estetica*. Qui, infatti, muovendo dalla premessa secondo cui «la riflessione nietzscheana sull'arte si muove in linea con la tradizione [...] determinata nel suo carattere peculiare dal nome "estetica"» e secondo cui, pertanto, per poter comprendere fino in fondo «l'interpretazione nietzscheana dell'essenza dell'arte», è necessario prima «connotare l'essenza dell'estetica, il suo ruolo entro il pensiero metafisico e il suo riferimento alla storia dell'arte europea» (Heidegger 1994, pp. 86, 88), Heidegger offre una serie di osservazioni che, nonostante la loro brevità, si rivelano molto importanti e dense di contenuti. In estrema sintesi, i «fatti fondamentali» della storia dell'estetica elencati ed esaminati da Heidegger sono: (1) la mancanza di una «riflessione speculativo-concettuale» sull'arte nell'età della «grande arte greca», dovuta al fatto che una tale cultura possedeva «un sapere talmente originario e lucido, e una tale passione per il sapere, da non avere bisogno, in tale lucidità del sapere, di una "estetica"» (Heidegger 1994, pp. 88-89), cioè di una sorta di spiegazione o giustificazione concettuale «a posteriori» dell'arte; (2) la nascita della filosofia dell'arte greca «all'epoca di Platone e di Aristotele» – ovvero, dal punto di vista critico di Heidegger, «nel momento in cui la grande arte, ma anche la grande filosofia che le è parallela, si approssimano alla fine» – e la coniazione, in quel contesto, di una serie di «concetti fondamentali che da allora definiscono l'orizzonte di ogni posizione della questione dell'arte» (Heidegger 1994, p. 89); (3) l'imporsi, in età moderna, della soggettività come istanza filosofica fondamentale e la conseguente relegazione dell'arte «allo stato sentimentale dell'uomo, alla *aisthesis*»: il che, secondo Heidegger, segna per l'arte la perdita della «sua essenza, [del] riferimento diretto al suo compito fondamentale di rappresentare l'assoluto» (Heidegger 1994, p. 92); (4) la piena comprensione, nel diciannovesimo secolo, della «fine della grande arte», cioè del fatto che, «[n]el momento storico in cui l'estetica raggiunge la sua massima altezza, vastità e rigore di sviluppo possibili, la grande arte è alla fine», e la grande concettualizzazione di tale fenomeno fornita da Hegel in quella che Heidegger, come abbiamo visto, reputa l'«estetica ultima e

massima dell'Occidente» (Heidegger 1994, p. 93); (5) il tentativo, nel corso di quello stesso secolo, di riesumare il fantasma di un'«opera d'arte totale» che riesca nuovamente a elevare l'arte al livello di «un bisogno assoluto» – laddove però bisogna constatare che per l'umanità dell'Ottocento «l'assoluto viene ormai esperito soltanto come il puro indeterminato, come la completa dissoluzione nel sentimento puro» (e qui Heidegger fa riferimento alla concezione wagneriana del *Gesamtkunstwerk*) – e, inoltre, a partire dal fallimento di una tale metafisica artistica, il progressivo sviluppo di un «sapere dell'arte» ormai inteso come mero «esperire e indagare i puri fatti della storia dell'arte», come «vera e propria indagine scientifica della storia dell'arte» (Heidegger 1994, pp. 96, 98); (6) infine, la trasformazione dell'estetica, operata proprio da Nietzsche, in «fisiologia dell'arte» e, con ciò, il definitivo compimento della «posizione estetica della questione dell'arte», la quale con il filosofo di *Così parlò Zarathustra* viene ormai «pensata fino in fondo nelle sue ultime conseguenze»: «l'estetica come fisiologia applicata» (Heidegger 1994, pp. 99-100).

Riassumendo, si può dire che lo schema heideggeriano relativo ai suddetti “fatti fondamentali” della storia dell'estetica sia quello di una progressiva decadenza riguardante l'arte e, soprattutto, la riflessione filosofica sull'arte, cioè appunto l'estetica, la quale, proprio in base al suo impianto generale, secondo Heidegger «assume l'opera d'arte come un oggetto, e precisamente come l'oggetto della *aisthesis*, della apprensione sensibile» che al giorno d'oggi «prende il nome di esperienza vissuta (*Erlebnis*)» (Heidegger 1997, p. 62). Con una frase indubbiamente molto forte e significativa che, volendo, è anche collegabile a certi sviluppi recenti del dibattito sulla cosiddetta estetizzazione del mondo e la parallela vaporizzazione dell'arte (cfr. Michaud 2019), Heidegger constata infatti: «l'“esperienza vissuta” in quanto tale diventa decisiva. L'opera è ormai soltanto un attivatore di esperienza vissuta» (Heidegger 1994, p. 95). Non è certo un caso, sotto questo punto di vista, che nel famoso saggio *L'epoca dell'immagine del mondo* Heidegger citi criticamente, fra le manifestazioni essenziali dell'età moderna, anche il «processo in virtù del quale l'arte è ricondotta nell'orizzonte dell'estetica [e] l'opera d'arte si trasforma in oggetto dell'esperienza vissuta» (Heidegger 1997, p. 72): un processo, quest'ultimo, la cui radice è individuata da Heidegger proprio nel costituirsi dell'uomo a “soggetto” nella modernità. Così come non deve affatto stupire, alla luce di quanto è stato detto fin qui, l'avvertenza di Heidegger al lettore, posta in apertura alla raccolta di saggi *La poesia di Hölderlin*, secondo cui le sue «*Delucidazioni* non pretendono di essere contributi alla ricerca storiografica sulla letteratura o all'estetica», giacché esse non sono l'esito di una mera indagine estetica (in base al punto di vista critico di Heidegger sull'estetica, chiaramente) ma, in maniera molto più enfatica e ambiziosa, «scaturiscono da una necessità del pensiero» (Heidegger 2001, p. 3). Forse persino più esplicita, per certi versi, è la presa di posizione critica di Heidegger in un altro corso universitario friburghese pressoché coevo agli scritti sull'arte e l'estetica precedentemente citati, cioè *Introduzione alla metafisica* del 1935, dove si legge che, mentre gli antichi Greci «intendono per “bellezza” il domare (*Bändigung*)», il «confluire insieme dei più cospicui sforzi

antagonistici», per gli uomini moderni e contemporanei «il bello è invece ciò che rilassa, che riposa, e risulta per questo fatto per il godimento»: il che, secondo Heidegger, implica che l'«estetica intende tutto ciò», cioè l'arte e la bellezza, «in modo diverso» rispetto a come esse erano intese originariamente e ancora oggi andrebbero intese correttamente:

L'arte è per essa [*scil.* l'estetica] rappresentazione del bello nel senso di ciò che piace, del gradevole. Invece l'arte è il manifestarsi dell'essere dell'essente. Bisogna dare alla parola “arte” e a ciò che essa vuole significare, un nuovo contenuto, riguadagnando una posizione originaria di base per ciò che concerne l'essere (Heidegger 1990, p. 140).

Ora, tutto ciò è non soltanto interessante in sé, cioè in relazione allo studio e all'approfondimento della filosofia dell'arte di Heidegger in quanto tale, ma è anche significativo e ricco di implicazioni ai fini del nostro discorso sulla particolare (e spesso nient'affatto aporetica) ricezione della *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* nell'ermeneutica contemporanea. Infatti, la dura e serrata critica di Heidegger all'impostazione fondamentalmente soggettivistica di tutto il pensiero moderno, compresa dunque l'estetica filosofica, va a ripercuotersi quanto meno implicitamente, e talvolta anche esplicitamente, pure sull'impostazione di fondo della terza *Critica* e, quindi, sul ruolo decisivo di Kant all'interno della nascita e dello sviluppo dell'estetica degli ultimi secoli. A tal proposito, è importante notare come nel succitato corso *La volontà di potenza come arte*, subito dopo la summenzionata sezione *Sei fatti fondamentali ricavati dalla storia dell'estetica*, Heidegger inserisca una sezione specificamente dedicata al tema *La dottrina kantiana del bello. Il suo fraintendimento a opera di Schopenhauer e di Nietzsche*. Qui Heidegger, pur soffermandosi principalmente su Nietzsche (dato che il contesto generale è appunto quello di una serie di lezioni universitarie sul filosofo di *Così parlò Zarathustra*), dedica comunque alcune riflessioni al modo in cui Kant avrebbe affrontato il tema della bellezza e al modo in cui, a suo avviso, andrebbe interpretata in particolare la dottrina kantiana del compiacimento estetico “disinteressato” al fine di mettere al riparo tale dottrina da facili ma altresì fatali fraintendimenti. Per prima cosa, Heidegger definisce molto nettamente la *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* di Kant come l'«opera nella quale è esposta l'estetica» (Heidegger 1994, p. 114), ovvero l'opera in cui sarebbe esposta, come abbiamo già visto, una concezione essenzialmente “errata” di determinate tematiche perché “viziata” da determinati pregiudizi che affondano le loro radici nella tradizione metafisica nel suo insieme, secondo il punto di vista critico di Heidegger sulla storia della metafisica come storia dell'“oblio dell'essere (*Seinsvergessenheit*)”. A ciò il filosofo di *Essere e tempo* fa seguire alcuni rapidi riferimenti ai §§ 2-5, 57 e 59 della terza *Critica* (Kant 1999, pp. 40-46, 173-176, 185-189), sempre al fine di mostrare come Schopenhauer e poi, sulla sua scia, anche Nietzsche avrebbero frainteso e distorto il significato autentico dei «concetti fondamentali kantiani di “piacere” e di “riflessione”», «come [già] per il concetto

di “interesse”» (Heidegger 1994, p. 119). Neanche qui, dunque, si può dire che si giunga a un confronto approfondito da parte di Heidegger con la *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* nella sua interezza e complessità, o anche solo con la prima parte dell'opera nel suo insieme (cioè, quella sulla facoltà estetica di giudizio), a conferma della succitata diagnosi di *blank space* recentemente offerta da Figal. Ciononostante, rimane sicuramente degno di nota quello che Heidegger afferma a proposito di un momento specifico dell'analisi kantiana del bello in questa stessa sezione del corso *La volontà di potenza come arte*, là dove egli scrive:

per trovare bello qualcosa, [per Kant] dobbiamo lasciare che sia ciò in cui ci imbattiamo a venirci dinanzi puramente come tale, nel suo proprio rango e nella sua dignità. [...] Il comportamento nei confronti del bello in quanto tale, dice Kant, è il *libero favore* (*freie Kunst*); dobbiamo lasciare libero in quello che è, come tale, ciò in cui ci imbattiamo. [...] Ma questo libero favorire – domandiamo ora –, questo lasciare che il bello sia quello che è, è una sospensione della volontà, è indifferenza? O questo libero favore non è piuttosto lo sforzo sommo del nostro essere, la liberazione di noi stessi per lasciare libero ciò che ha in sé un propria dignità, affinché l'abbia soltanto in modo puro? [...] [C]oncedendo l'essenza dell'interesse in maniera più netta, ed escludendo quindi l'interesse dal comportamento estetico, Kant non fa di quest'ultimo qualcosa di indifferente, ma crea la possibilità che questo comportamento in rapporto all'oggetto bello sia ancora più puro e più intimo. L'interpretazione kantiana del comportamento estetico come “piacere della riflessione” penetra in uno stato fondamentale dell'essere uomo, nel quale soltanto l'uomo perviene alla pienezza fondata della sua essenza (Heidegger 1994, pp. 116, 119).

Seppure sullo sfondo di un mancato confronto esplicito e approfondito con l'estetica kantiana da parte di Heidegger nei suoi testi principali (primo fra tutti, il succitato saggio *L'origine dell'opera d'arte*), e seppure sullo sfondo di una concezione fondamentalmente e finanche radicalmente negativa dell'estetica nel suo insieme per le succitate ragioni (in gran parte riconducibili all'idea heideggeriana della storia della metafisica come storia dell'“oblio dell'essere”), cionondimeno queste ultime osservazioni sul tema della *freie Kunst* sembrano dischiudere uno spazio parzialmente diverso. Ovvero, lo spazio per un confronto più proficuo fra l'atteggiamento disinteressato (e dunque libero) verso gli oggetti nel discorso di Kant sul bello, da un lato, e l'atteggiamento di libera apertura del *Dasein* all'accadere dell'essere nel pensiero di Heidegger, dall'altro, con conseguenze notevoli anche a proposito del ripensamento del concetto stesso di libertà (su ciò, cfr. La Bella 2017).

3.

Com'è noto, uno dei lasciti fondamentali di Heidegger alla filosofia contemporanea, oltre che nelle sue opere ovviamente, risiede anche nel suo magistero e nella sua influenza (soprattutto per via di alcuni suoi "legendari" corsi universitari a Friburgo e Marburgo) su un ampio numero di studiosi di filosofia allora molto giovani e promettenti che, nei decenni successivi, avrebbero offerto contributi autonomi di notevole rilievo sul piano del pensiero. Fra questi allievi, perlomeno due si sono distinti anche per la loro importanza sul piano della ricezione novecentesca della *Critica della facoltà di giudizio*, dischiudendo linee interpretative originali rispetto al testo kantiano che, a loro volta, non hanno mancato di generare delle vere e proprie "storie degli effetti". Nel dire ciò, mi riferisco a Hannah Arendt, con la sua ormai famosa interpretazione in chiave politica della nozione di facoltà estetica di giudizio nella terza *Critica* di Kant (cfr. Arendt 1990), e a Hans-Georg Gadamer, con la sua non meno influente lettura della *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* alla luce del perdurante significato della "tradizione umanistica" nella nostra epoca tecnoscientifica e delle sue implicazioni ermeneutiche (su ciò, cfr. Marino 2011).

Tralasciando di soffermarci qui sull'interpretazione arendtiana e addentrandoci invece nella lettura gadameriana della terza *Critica* (anche per via di alcune sue convergenze con le succitate prospettive della filosofia dell'arte di Heidegger), possiamo dire per prima cosa che uno dei punti centrali della cosiddetta "estetica ermeneutica" di Gadamer è rappresentato dall'idea di una perdita, che si sarebbe venuta a determinare negli ultimi secoli, del profondo significato dell'esperienza estetica, con il suo decadimento a «una specie di accessorio (*Ergänzung*), una molteplice modalità di sgravio (*eine vielfache Art der Entlastung*) dalla tensione provocata dall'esistenza» (Gadamer 1973, p. 25). Secondo Gadamer, l'origine di tale fenomeno andrebbe colta nel graduale imporsi, nell'Ottocento e nel Novecento, di un'inarrestabile tendenza a «slegare l'opera d'arte dall'unità del suo mondo» ed a prescindere «da tutto ciò in cui un'opera si radica come nel suo originario contesto vitale (*ursprünglicher Lebenszusammenhang*)», al fine di rendere «l'opera [...] visibile come "pura opera d'arte"», «nel suo puro essere estetico» (Gadamer 2000, pp. 193-195). Tale operazione, significativamente denominata da Gadamer "differenziazione estetica (*ästhetische Unterscheidung*)", si fonderebbe sul preliminarizzare affermarsi, nel pensiero moderno soggettivisticamente e coscienzialisticamente impostato (secondo la visione critica della modernità offerta da Heidegger, che Gadamer almeno in parte riprende), dell'idea di "coscienza estetica (*ästhetisches Bewußtsein*)", la quale secondo Gadamer costituirebbe appunto una tendenza ampiamente diffusa nel mondo moderno, la cui effettiva influenza sul rapporto che ciascuno di noi stabilisce con l'arte deriverebbe proprio dal fatto che una tale coscienza estetica «si crea anche una concreta esistenza esterna» e «manifesta la sua produttività approntando delle [appropriate] sedi» (Gadamer

2000, p. 197). Fra queste sedi e istituzioni, ad esempio, spicca soprattutto il museo, inteso da Gadamer come un vero e proprio correlativo sociale della differenziazione estetica.

Com'è noto, il capolavoro filosofico di Gadamer, *Verità e metodo*, si apre con una prima parte dedicata al recupero dei concetti-guida umanistici, al trascendimento della soggettivizzazione dell'estetica inaugurata secondo Gadamer proprio da Kant, al recupero del problema della verità dell'arte e all'esplicazione di un'ontologia dell'opera d'arte (Gadamer 2000, pp. 31-361). «L'estetica deve risolversi nell'ermeneutica (*Die Ästhetik muß in der Hermeneutik aufgehen*)» (Gadamer 2000, p. 353) è la frase-chiave posta a sigillo di questa prima parte del libro. Quindi, *Verità e metodo* prosegue con una seconda parte dedicata a un'analisi critica dell'ermeneutica romantica e dello storicismo ottocentesco, alla trasformazione novecentesca dell'ermeneutica da metodica delle “scienze dello spirito (*Geisteswissenschaften*)” a dottrina filosofica universale e, infine, all'elaborazione di una teoria dell'esperienza ermeneutica incentrata sul recupero di alcune nozioni fondamentali (pregiudizio, autorità, classicità, distanza temporale, applicazione) che si connettono poi fra loro nella nozione più ampia e comprensiva di “coscienza della determinazione storica (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*)” (Gadamer 2000, pp. 365-779). Dopo la seconda parte, sfociante nell'elaborazione del suddetto concetto di coscienza della determinazione storica, *Verità e metodo* si chiude quindi con una terza parte dedicata a un'analisi critica della filosofia del linguaggio occidentale e all'individuazione del possibile orizzonte di un'ontologia ermeneutica nella “linguisticità (*Sprachlichkeit*)” dell'uomo (Gadamer 2000, pp. 783-997). «La linguisticità del comprendere è *il concretarsi della coscienza della determinazione storica*» e «*l'essere che può venir compreso è linguaggio (Sein, das verstanden werden kann, ist Sprache)*» sono la frasi-chiave poste a sigillo della terza e ultima parte del libro (Gadamer 2000, pp. 795, 965).

Come dicevamo poc'anzi, in *Verità e metodo* Gadamer prende posizione in maniera decisamente critica contro la cultura moderna, sia a un livello generale, per via della sua eccessiva tendenza a conferire un primato unilaterale al sapere tecnico-scientifico, e sia a un livello particolare, nel caso delle questioni estetiche che qui ci interessano, per via dell'inarrestabile tendenza moderna all'impoverimento dell'esperienza con l'arte, esemplificato da ciò che abbiamo precedentemente chiamato la “musealizzazione” di quest'ultima. In una tale tendenza moderna, infatti, Gadamer sembra scorgere una segreta volontà di neutralizzare il potenziale insito nelle creazioni artistiche e di confinare l'esperienza estetica entro le mura di un luogo “sicuro” e separato dal resto del mondo. Sia in *Verità e metodo*, sia in diversi contributi successivi, Gadamer sottolinea inoltre come l'artista stesso, nel corso dell'epoca moderna, sia andato progressivamente smarrendo il proprio posto nella società e, con ciò, il senso della propria attività. A prima vista, infatti, la cultura moderna sembrerebbe garantire unicamente maggiore libertà e indipendenza creativa e persino un innalzamento del ruolo sociale dell'artista, ma in realtà, dietro tutto ciò, per Gadamer è possibile scorgere la relegazione di quest'ultimo in uno spazio ristretto ed esclusivo dal quale non è più possibile esercitare una concreta influenza sul resto della società. Come si legge nel saggio *L'attualità del bello*, ad esempio, l'artista moderno

non vive più in una comunità, ma si crea egli stesso una comunità (*er schafft sich eine Gemeinde*), con tutto il pluralismo che consegue da questa situazione e con tutte le accresciute aspettative che vi sono necessariamente connesse [...]. Questa è in realtà la coscienza messianica dell'artista [...] che col suo appello rivolto agli uomini si sente quasi una specie di “nuovo redentore” (*wie eine Art “neuer Heiland”*): egli porta un nuovo messaggio di riconciliazione, e paga questa pretesa restando un estraneo nella società, in quanto con la sua artisticità egli è ormai soltanto un artista per l'arte (Gadamer 1986, p. 7).

Per queste e ancora altre ragioni, Gadamer ritiene in generale che, nell'«età industriale in cui viviamo», si vada diffondendo «una cultura estetica morente (*eine absterbende ästhetische Kultur*)» che «possiede più il carattere di una riserva ben protetta che non quello di appartenere al nostro mondo» (Gadamer 2002a, p. 174). In particolare, nel nostro mondo che «diventa sempre più uniforme in ogni sua parte» e che opera «un livellamento di tutte le forme vitali (*Nivellierung aller Lebensformen*)», si assisterebbe secondo Gadamer alla trasformazione dell'esperienza estetica in «semplice e casuale riempimento di spazi del tempo libero» (Gadamer 1996, p. 129). Ciò, ai suoi occhi, rappresenterebbe «inequivocabilmente un sintomo del venire meno dell'autentico significato dell'opera d'arte» e, addirittura, «una specie di sottosviluppo [della] nostra cultura» (Gadamer 2002b, p. 170). E ciò, ricollegandoci adesso al discorso svolto nei primi due paragrafi del presente contributo, spinge Gadamer a intraprendere un'operazione critica o persino “distruttiva” nei confronti di quella che gli sembra essere l'impostazione di fondo dell'estetica moderna, al punto che, a tal riguardo, alcuni interpreti hanno esplicitamente parlato di una «distruzione dell'estetica (*Destruktion der Ästhetik*) in nome dell'arte» compiuta nella prima parte di *Verità e metodo* (Grondin 2001, pp. 112-113)⁵.

È proprio in questo contesto che il ruolo fondamentale svolto dalla *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* si appalesa anche agli occhi di Gadamer, il quale però, a differenza di Heidegger, non si sottrae a un esplicito confronto critico col testo kantiano e, anzi, si sofferma con attenzione e precisione (sebbene anche con una certa parzialità esegetica, perlomeno in alcune occasioni) sulla terza *Critica*. In estrema sintesi, il cuore dell'argomentazione di Gadamer risiede nella messa in luce di come il pensiero moderno, screditando progressivamente ogni forma di sapere differente da quello delle scienze naturali, sia pervenuto anche a una fatale svalutazione della nostra esperienza con l'arte. Secondo Gadamer, un ruolo-chiave in questa vicenda sarebbe stato svolto da quell'«avvenimento

⁵ La medesima espressione, cioè “distruzione dell'estetica”, è stata impiegata anche da altri interpreti (cfr. Liessmann 2003), laddove altri studiosi hanno preferito parlare di un “oltrepassamento dell'estetica (*Überwindung der Ästhetik*)” messo in atto da Gadamer (Fehér 2003, p. 26), facendo così riferimento alla categoria che, per certi versi, prende il posto della *Destruktion* nel pensiero di Heidegger successivo a *Essere e tempo*.

epocale (*Epochenereignis*)» rappresentato dal pensiero di Kant, che egli non esita a definire una vera e propria «rivoluzione nel modo di pensare», un'autentica «cesura a partire dal quale si calcola il prima e il dopo» (GW 4, p. 336). Se ciò, in generale, si applica a tutte le questioni filosofiche prese in esame da Kant, nel caso specifico delle questioni estetiche il riferimento è ovviamente alla *Critica della facoltà di giudizio*, in quanto opera fondamentale per la nascita e lo sviluppo dell'estetica moderna.

Bisogna dire che il confronto di Gadamer con la terza *Critica* è di lunga data – come testimoniato già dal saggio *Zu Kants Begründung der Ästhetik und dem Sinn der Kunst* (Gadamer 1939) – e, soprattutto, è molto ampio e complesso, nella misura in cui egli, soprattutto nella prima parte di *Verità e metodo*, prende in esame le dottrine dei rapporti tra gusto e genio, tra bellezza libera e bellezza aderente, tra bello di natura e bello artistico, e ancora altri aspetti del pensiero estetico kantiano (Gadamer 2000, pp. 109-135). Per gli scopi limitati del presente contributo, mi limiterò a dire che il punto fondamentale è probabilmente rappresentato dal fatto che Kant, secondo Gadamer, avrebbe sì legittimato l'autonomia della dimensione estetica, ma al prezzo di una significativa riduzione della sua rilevanza. Ciò, nel senso che kantianamente «il giudizio estetico non dà assolutamente alcuna conoscenza, nemmeno confusa, del suo oggetto», giacché l'autore della *Critica della ragion pura* avrebbe «considerato razionale solo il metodo delle scienze naturali e l'imperativo categorico morale, relegando nell'ambito della soggettività e del sentire, del genio e della coscienza estetica, l'esperienza dell'arte e l'esercizio del gusto critico» (Perniola 1997, pp. 83, 94). Il che, sulla base di quanto è stato detto poc'anzi, risulta problematico e persino gravido di conseguenze negative per un filosofo come Gadamer, il cui pensiero ermeneutico appare complessivamente orientato proprio dall'esigenza di riscattare e, anzi, valorizzare la verità extrametodica di ambiti quali la storia, le scienze dello spirito, il linguaggio e, appunto, l'arte: una verità, quest'ultima, non dimostrabile scientificamente né sfruttabile tecnologicamente, ma cionondimeno di vitale importanza per l'esistenza umana. Come è stato notato,

secondo Gadamer, Kant [...] avrebbe favorito la diffusione dell'idea che l'arte e l'esperienza estetica costituiscano [solo] il “dominio della bella apparenza”, isolato da contesto storico e sociale dei suoi concreti rapporti con il mondo. [...] Storicamente questo processo si affermerebbe con il sorgere delle moderne istituzioni artistiche (il museo e l'accademia, il teatro e la sala da concerto) con il loro atteggiamento distaccato nei confronti delle opere d'arte, e, sul piano teorico, soprattutto con la teoria kantiana del Giudizio estetico (Modica 1997, p. 78).

Oltre a ciò, un aspetto fondamentale dell'interpretazione gadameriana della terza *Critica* consiste nell'enfatica sottolineatura del fatto che Kant avrebbe sì recepito nella sua concezione del bello, dell'arte, del gusto e del genio la profonda e duratura eredità sedimentatasi nei cosiddetti “concetti-guida umanistici” (*Bildung, sensus communis, gusto,*

facoltà di giudizio), ma – secondo Gadamer – avrebbe al contempo operato una radicale decontestualizzazione e finanche depoliticizzazione di tali concetti. Questi ultimi, infatti, un tempo densamente intessuti di aspetti non soltanto estetici ma anche etici, culturali e politici (tutti proficuamente intrecciati fra loro), con Kant e soprattutto dopo Kant sarebbero stati invece radicalmente soggettivizzati ed estetizzati, cioè ricondotti unilateralmente nell’ambito di un’esteticità problematicamente isolata da ogni contesto vitale al fine di coglierla in modo presuntivamente “puro”, in ultima analisi, nella presenzialità immediata e irrelata dell’*Erlebnis* (cfr. Gadamer 2000, pp. 85-145). Scrive Gadamer: «[l]a giustificazione trascendentale del Giudizio estetico fondò l’autonomia della coscienza estetica [...]. La radicale soggettivizzazione che era implicita nella nuova fondazione dell’estetica operata da Kant ha fatto veramente epoca» (Gadamer 2000, p. 107).

Naturalmente, una tale lettura della terza *Critica*, oltre a risultare singolarmente diversa, se non proprio opposta, rispetto a quella di Arendt, incentrata viceversa sulla tesi di un’inedita politicizzazione del giudizio di gusto in Kant (su ciò, cfr. Marino 2012), non ha mancato di suscitare in generale dubbi e resistenze da parte di alcuni interpreti. A tal proposito, bisogna dire che lo stesso Gadamer in seguito ha parzialmente ritrattato la lettura della terza *Critica* offerta in *Verità e metodo*, ammettendo di aver interpretato in quel libro «la *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* [solo] sul suo significato per la filosofia dell’arte» e di averla quindi sottoposta a «un’interrogazione parziale» (Gadamer 2002a, p. 35), tenuto conto della varietà, complessità e finanche eterogeneità di quest’opera su cui abbiamo sinteticamente richiamato l’attenzione nel primo paragrafo del presente contributo. Estremamente interessante ed esemplificativo, in tal senso, può risultare il confronto fra un saggio di poco precedente rispetto a *Verità e metodo*, come *La problematicità della coscienza estetica* del 1958 (Gadamer 1986, pp. 61-70), che essenzialmente presenta in forma più sintetica alcune delle tesi-chiave esposte appunto nella prima parte di *Verità e metodo*, e un saggio molto più tardo come *Intuizione e perspicuità* del 1980 (Gadamer 2002a, pp. 23-40), nel quale si offre una prospettiva più ampia e si ammette che «la tradizionale collocazione della *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* nell’estetica e nella filosofia dell’arte resta parziale e problematica. La terza *Critica* di Kant non intendeva dare un nuovo fondamento all’estetica. Il suo oggetto aveva un significato di principio molto diverso» (Gadamer 2002a, p. 35).

Ad ogni modo, tenendo fermo qui all’interpretazione critica dell’estetica kantiana e postkantiana offerta da Gadamer in *Verità e metodo* (cioè nel libro che, a prescindere da parziali revisioni o ritrattazioni successive, rimane in ogni caso il contributo filosofico più importante fornito da questo pensatore), possiamo dire che, secondo la lettura offerta da Gadamer, «la fondazione dell’estetica nella soggettività delle energie dell’animo», elaborata nel modo più compiuto e sofisticato proprio da Kant, avrebbe dato il via a «una pericolosa soggettivizzazione» facilmente collegabile anche alla «teoria della sregolatezza del genio» (Gadamer 1987, pp. 88-89). Una soggettivizzazione, quest’ultima, destinata

peraltro ad accentuarsi ulteriormente nel corso dell'Ottocento, sino a sfociare secondo Gadamer nella netta contrapposizione tra l'oggettività delle scienze e la (presunta) mera soggettività dell'arte, con la conseguente relegazione dell'esperienza estetica in un ambito di irrealtà ed extrarazionalità interpretabili, a seconda dei punti di vista, come detentrici di una superiore spiritualità e verità o, viceversa, di mera gratuità, irrilevanza e superfluità. Il punto, però, è che per Gadamer nessuna di queste due false alternative è in grado di rendere giustizia all'esperienza conoscitiva insita nell'arte. A suo giudizio, infatti, ciò che è necessario a tal fine è proprio spezzare il predominio di un'impostazione subordinata al "fatto delle scienze", basata sulla dicotomia soggetto/oggetto e incapace di pensare in maniera alternativa rispetto a tali schemi. Sotto questo punto di vista, alcuni interpreti hanno affermato che «l'aspetto principale della discussione sull'arte svolta in *Verità e metodo*» consisterebbe in un vero e proprio «rifiuto dell'estetica, perché essa», considerata nel suo complesso, non avrebbe mai smesso di «orientarsi sulla base dei concetti di oggetto e di verità desunti dall'ambito delle scienze naturali» (Hammermeister 1999, p. 78). Secondo tali letture, anche Gadamer, al pari di Heidegger, riterrebbe che «la teoria estetica in generale [sia] un tentativo filosofico relativamente recente, reso possibile dal rivolgimento cartesiano verso il soggetto e sospinto da problematiche e preoccupazioni di tipo epistemologico», il quale riduce la complessità dell'esperienza estetica «al modo in cui l'opera d'arte appare al soggetto» (Hance 1997, p. 134). Sulla base di tutto ciò, ecco allora che, in *Verità e metodo*, alla "distruzione" della "coscienza estetica (*ästhetisches Bewußtsein*)" e della nozione di "differenziazione estetica (*ästhetische Unterscheidung*)" a essa correlata Gadamer fa seguire un'analisi fenomenologica dell'esperienza con l'arte che, infine, mette capo alla nozione di "non-differenziazione estetica (*ästhetische Nichtunterscheidung*)". Una nozione, quest'ultima, che mira proprio a segnalare come, di fronte a «tutto quel che ha la stabilità di un'opera d'arte», si realizzi una «solidarietà nella ricezione», una «condivisione di ciò che è comune (*Teilhabe an dem Gemeinsamen*)», una «enunciazione (*Aussage*) nel segno di una comunanza e di una verità che unisce tutti» e che, pur non essendo metodicamente verificabile, è cionondimeno vincolante ed esistenzialmente rilevante: nell'esperienza estetica, dunque, si realizza qualcosa di simile a «un autentico dialogo, dove il colloquio procede in una direzione che non può essere preventivata» (Gadamer 2002a, pp. 46-50).

4.

Dopo avere sinteticamente esaminato, nel contesto del presente contributo sulla ricezione dell'estetica kantiana nel contesto dell'ermeneutica contemporanea, l'interpretazione critica della *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* offerta da Gadamer e il confronto con la terza *Critica* solamente accennato da Heidegger (perlomeno in termini espliciti, giacché non è naturalmente da escludere un'implicita eredità kantiana in diversi concetti heideggeriani),

in quest'ultimo paragrafo intendo soffermarmi sul confronto esplicito (e, a differenza che nei primi due casi, positivo e costruttivo) con la *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* da parte di un filosofo contemporaneo attivo nell'ambito del pensiero ermeneutico attuale: Günter Figal. Studioso importante di Heidegger e autore di contributi significativi sul pensiero dell'autore di *Essere e tempo* (Figal 2006a, 2006b), nonché allievo diretto di Gadamer e prosecutore del discorso filosofico dell'ermeneutica (Figal 2007), negli ultimi anni Figal ha lavorato molto intensamente alla delineazione di un proprio percorso autonomo di pensiero all'interno della cornice di una fenomenologia ermeneuticamente orientata (o, se si preferisce, di un'ermeneutica fenomenologicamente orientata). Una siffatta esigenza di autonomia filosofica lo ha portato anche a prendere le distanze da diversi aspetti delle filosofie dei suoi autori di riferimento, cioè appunto Heidegger e Gadamer, e ciò, come vedremo, non manca di offrire spunti e rilievi interessanti ai fini di un confronto con la *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* in chiave fenomenologico-ermeneutica.

Su un piano filosofico generale, la succitata esigenza di autonomia filosofica ha trovato espressione soprattutto nell'ampio trattato sistematico *Oggettualità. Esperienza ermeneutica e filosofia* (Figal 2012), su cui mi soffermerò nella prima parte del presente paragrafo, laddove su un piano più specificamente estetico Figal ha poi sviluppato il proprio discorso nel libro *Il manifestarsi dell'arte. Estetica come fenomenologia* (Figal 2015), su cui mi soffermerò invece nel secondo sottoparagrafo. Proprio nella prima parte di *Il manifestarsi dell'arte*, come vedremo, trova posto anche un'approfondita disamina dell'estetica kantiana e, soprattutto, della concezione kantiana della bellezza, che Figal non esita a riprendere e rivalutare anche in funzione critica nei confronti delle filosofie dell'arte "anti-estetiche" (nell'accezione precedentemente chiarita) di Heidegger e Gadamer. Tuttavia, poiché *Il manifestarsi dell'arte* costituisce in un certo senso uno sviluppo in ambito specificamente estetico della concezione filosofica presentata in *Oggettualità*, prima di arrivare all'estetica e alla filosofia dell'arte di Figal (e, in particolare, alla sua interpretazione della *Critica della facoltà di giudizio*) sarà opportuno fornire alcuni cenni generali alla fenomenologia ermeneutica esposta per l'appunto in *Oggettualità*.

4.1.

Oggettualità presenta un quadro organico, completo e "totalizzante" (nell'accezione migliore del termine, da un punto di vista filosofico) del pensiero di Figal, nella forma classica del trattato filosofico e del discorso sistematico che, dopo aver chiarito nei primi capitoli in cosa consista l'annunciata transizione dall'ermeneutica filosofica alla filosofia ermeneutica e come vada inteso il fenomeno ermeneutico fondamentale (cioè l'interpretare, nella sua strettissima relazione con l'oggettualità), prende in considerazione, nell'ordine, i temi del mondo come spazio ermeneutico, della libertà, del linguaggio, del

tempo e, infine, della vita. In *Oggettualità* Figal definisce esplicitamente il proprio pensiero come “filosofia ermeneutica”. Ora, a prima vista la dizione “filosofia ermeneutica” potrebbe anche non destare particolare attenzione, vista la frequente abitudine a usare in maniera piuttosto indifferente, e persino a scambiare tra loro, le nozioni di “ermeneutica filosofica” e “filosofia ermeneutica”. Per Figal, però, un siffatto uso dei termini nasconde sottili insidie ed è foriero di equivoci e incomprensioni su ciò che è realmente in gioco in queste due differenti possibilità del pensiero ermeneutico. Al chiarimento di questa complessa trama di relazioni, prospettive e sviluppi è interamente dedicato il primo e fondamentale capitolo del libro, intitolato proprio *Dall'ermeneutica filosofica alla filosofia ermeneutica* e volto a delineare una sorta di itinerario che, muovendo dall'imprescindibile confronto con le principali tappe dell'ermeneutica filosofica otto- e novecentesca (l'ermeneutica delle scienze dello spirito di Dilthey e, in parte, ancora di Gadamer; l'ermeneutica della fatticità di Heidegger, ripresa ma anche trasformata in profondità da Gadamer, «senza che ciò [però] possa essere notato a prima vista» [Figal 2012, p. 31]; infine, l'ermeneutica come filosofia pratica, ancora una volta impostata dal giovane Heidegger negli anni Venti ma compiutamente ed esplicitamente dispiegata solo da Gadamer negli anni Sessanta-Settanta), approda infine a un'idea matura e compiuta di filosofia ermeneutica. Una filosofia ermeneutica che ha appunto nel problema dell'oggettuale il proprio cuore teorico e principale centro d'interesse, intorno al quale si irradia una molteplicità di temi coerentemente connessi fra loro. Secondo Figal,

nell'esperienza ermeneutica abbiamo a che fare con qualcosa di diverso da noi, con qualcosa che ci si oppone e che così facendo ci lancia una sfida. L'esperienza ermeneutica è esperienza dell'oggettuale – di ciò che è qui e ora, affinché corrispondiamo a esso, e che tuttavia non viene assorbito in nessun tentativo di corrispondere. Per questo, nella misura in cui costituisce il tema ermeneutico, l'oggettuale deve collocarsi al centro del pensiero ermeneutico. L'oggettualità è il tema capitale della filosofia impostata in termini ermeneutici. [...] Come si mostrerà, l'interpretazione è l'esplorazione dell'oggettuale. Essa esplora l'oggettuale rappresentandolo (Figal 2012, pp. 9-11).

A giudizio di Figal, però, se ci si continua a muovere esclusivamente all'interno di un quadro di pensiero heideggeriano-gadameriano non risulta possibile rendere adeguatamente giustizia al tema-chiave dell'oggettualità. Innanzitutto, infatti, nonostante l'ermeneutica venga abitualmente identificata con una filosofia incentrata sul concetto di interpretazione, né Heidegger né tantomeno Gadamer, a suo giudizio, avrebbero adeguatamente tematizzato e valorizzato tale concetto. Addirittura, secondo Figal, «l'interpretazione non svolge alcun ruolo in *Verità e metodo*» (Figal 2012, p. 1267), il che, per certi versi, sembra trovare conferma anche nei rilievi critici di un'altra eminente esponente del pensiero ermeneutico contemporaneo, Donatella Di Cesare, secondo la quale l'ermeneutica di Gadamer «non è una filosofia dell'interpretazione. Non si è mai intesa in

tal modo» (Di Cesare 2007, p. 282). Riguardo, poi, al tema specifico dell'oggettualità, come si legge nel § 13 di *Oggettualità*, «la filosofia moderna ha avuto difficoltà con l'oggettuale. [...] Non appena nella filosofia moderna viene scoperta l'oggettualità, si pone subito il problema di come superarla» (Figal 2012, p. 367). Ciò contraddistinguerebbe, fra le altre, anche le filosofie di Husserl e Heidegger: in particolare, secondo Figal, le obiezioni rivolte da Husserl alla fondamentale tendenza matematizzante-oggettivante della scienza sarebbero state estese da Heidegger anche alla filosofia che, «con il suo atteggiamento teoretico nei confronti del mondo», avrebbe sviluppato «il modello per la scienza. In quanto “obiettivazione” l'atteggiamento teoretico in rapporto alla vita umana» equivarrebbe allora, per l'autore di *Essere e tempo*, «a una “devitalizzazione” che occulta l'esperienza vitale originaria» (Figal 2012, p. 377). Secondo Figal, Husserl e Heidegger riuscirebbero dunque a «distanziarsi dalle determinazioni dogmatiche della scienza» e a risalire «all'attuazione non obiettiva della vita o dell'esserci, per mettere in luce una connessione di senso in base a cui si può dischiudere il senso di ciò che si presume sia l'obiettivo», ma al tempo stesso lascerebbero senza risposta «il problema relativo alla possibilità della stessa obiettivazione. Non vi è nessuna via che conduca fuori dall'immanenza [...] della vita o dell'esserci», anche se «d'altro canto non si può contestare che qualcosa sia “fuori”» (Figal 2012, p. 379).

Se, dunque, caratteristici del pensiero moderno sono quelli che Figal non esita a chiamare dei veri e propri «tentativi di de-oggettivazione» – fondamentalmente dovuti alla «preoccupazione che, nel rivolgerci verso l'elemento esteriore, ci consegniamo ad esso e possiamo perderci in esso» (Figal 2012, pp. 379, 387), ossia al timore che l'oggettivazione debba necessariamente sfociare nell'alienazione e nella reificazione –, allora ecco che la sua filosofia ermeneutica si ripropone, in un certo senso, un'autentica riabilitazione della centralità della nostra relazione agli oggetti. Ne scaturisce dunque una centralità dell'oggettuale, inteso come ciò che «si presenta di fronte [...] e allora, almeno per un momento, *si oppone*»; una centralità, per la nostra esperienza del mondo in generale, «dell'esteriorità *delle cose*» e finanche del fatto «che noi stessi siamo anche una cosa fra cose» (Figal 2012, pp. 387, 391, 397). Per poter sviluppare appieno questa tematica e, in particolare, per poter afferrare in maniera adeguata la connessione ermeneutica fondamentale di «interpretazione, comprendere e oggettualità [che] si coappartengono» (Figal 2012, p. 411), secondo Figal è però indispensabile riabilitare anche un particolare tipo di impostazione filosofica, per così dire. Si tratta della «impostazione della contemplazione», di una contemplazione intesa come «delucidazione concettuale dell'ermeneutico in base alla sua possibilità nel mondo» e che è essenzialmente fenomenologica, nel senso che «in essa è in gioco una fenomenologia dello spazio ermeneutico inteso come mondo» (Figal 2012, p. 409).

Tutto ciò è intimamente connesso a un altro aspetto fondamentale della filosofia di Figal, emerso già nelle parti di *Oggettualità* in cui il filosofo tedesco si confronta criticamente con la succitata tendenza – propria sia di Heidegger, sia di Gadamer – a concepire

l'ermeneutica filosofica «come una variante del sapere pratico», ossia in base al modello dell'etica aristotelica «come “filosofia pratica”» (Figal 2012, p. 83). In questo modo, secondo Figal, Heidegger e Gadamer manifesterebbero però implicitamente un pregiudizio antiteoretico – riconducibile alla loro (erronea) identificazione della teoria, in generale, con i metodi oggettivanti e con il «sapere meramente constativo, separato dal proprio essere», della «teoria *scientifica*» – e, soprattutto, cadrebbero nella difficoltà di non saper rispondere alla domanda su «come deve essere possibile una filosofia pratica senza il suo riferimento, per Aristotele essenziale, alla filosofia teoretica» (Figal 2012, p. 83). Figal, invece, parla senza mezzi termini di una «inaggirabilità dell'elemento teoretico» e di un'alternativa possibile «fra il sapere-per-sé» valorizzato dall'ermeneutica come filosofia pratica, da un lato, e «il freddo, disinteressato constatare» della scienza moderna, dall'altro (Figal 2012, pp. 85, 87). Si tratta, in sintesi, di quell'ideale di contemplazione di cui abbiamo parlato poc'anzi, che corrisponde «esattamente [a] quello che Husserl aveva definito come essenza dell'*epoché*» e che sfocia nell'idea di «un comprendere pensato in base alla fenomenologia e nel quale è già operante ciò che si può manifestare come atteggiamento specificamente fenomenologico. Con esso», continua Figal, si apre «la possibilità di un'ermeneutica come fenomenologia. Per questo essa dovrebbe, anche in base all'impostazione fenomenologica, potersi sviluppare come filosofia ermeneutica, invece di essere ermeneutica filosofica» (Figal 2012, p. 87). In altre parole, per Figal, l'interpretare va concepito

come un atteggiamento teoretico nel senso della *theoria* o *contemplatio*; è un conoscere libero da ogni volontà di modificare le cose e da ogni orientamento verso una meta. Interpretare qualcosa significa sempre: interrompere la comprensione immediata, rivolta all'applicazione e alla realizzazione, chiedendosi cosa è in verità ciò con cui abbiamo a che fare, quale significato e quale senso ha (Figal 2012, p. 1267).

Fondamentale, all'interno della filosofia dell'oggettualità di Figal, è in particolare la questione del rapporto fra le nozioni di mondo e vita, o più precisamente la questione della *Lebenswelt*. A tal proposito, Figal afferma chiaramente che il «problema conclusivo» del libro concerne «il concetto guida per la descrizione dell'“essere” nel mondo, che non è essere», come forse verrebbe spontaneo pensare seguendo Heidegger, «ma vita» (Figal 2012, p. 13). Non a caso, il settimo capitolo del libro, intitolato proprio *Vita* e ricco di riferimenti ad autori come Merleau-Ponty e Plessner, contiene alcune delle analisi più preganti e significative dell'intero libro, per esempio là dove Figal si spinge fino a definire l'uomo come «un essere vivente ermeneutico» per il fatto che «l'aspetto peculiare della vita umana risiede nel rappresentare (*Darstellen*)», nel «non poter fare a meno del rappresentare e di rappresentazioni» (Figal 2012, p. 1023); oppure, là dove egli prende in esame la differenza, centrale per l'intera tradizione della fenomenologia ma anche per l'antropologia filosofica novecentesca, tra la dimensione della corporeità racchiudibile nel

concetto di corpo (*Körper*) e quella definibile col concetto di soma (*Leib*), ovvero corpo organico, corpo vivo, corpo vivente (cfr. Figal 2012, pp. 1107-1125). Da ultimo, nelle pagine conclusive del libro riemerge con forza il tema centrale di tutta l'opera, là dove si legge che «ogni ricognizione conduce là dove già sempre siamo prima di ogni relazionarsi a sé; conduce fuori, nel mondo delle cose»: gli oggetti «sono eminentemente i correlati della rappresentazione, vale a dire dell'interpretazione e quindi anche del comprendere. Nel loro opporsi ricordano l'originarietà della vita [...]. La misura di tutte le cose non è l'uomo. Proprio nel momento in cui gli stessi oggetti rifiutano ogni risposta e tanto più un'ultima risposta, danno una misura, in base a cui l'uomo può rendersi conto della sua esteriorità»; in ultima analisi, allora, sono proprio gli oggetti che «ci fanno essere aperti al mondo e ci fanno continuamente scoprire quel senso del contemplare e rappresentare che entra in gioco in ogni vita umana» (Figal 2012, p. 1175).

4.2.

Fra i numerosi sviluppi che un pensiero filosofico come quello esposto in *Oggettualità* consente di intraprendere, spicca in particolare, come ho già detto, la prosecuzione di tale discorso nel campo dell'estetica, sulla base dell'idea secondo cui «le opere d'arte non sono solo oggettuali. Sono gli oggetti e così i correlati ermeneutici *par excellence*», ovvero sono «oggetti in senso eminente»: «le opere d'arte sono essenzialmente manifestazioni; la loro essenza è la fenomenicità» (Figal 2012, pp. 1269-1270). È un campo, quello dell'estetica filosofica, al quale Figal ha apportato un contributo significativo con il succitato libro *Il manifestarsi dell'arte*. Il punto di partenza dell'indagine di Figal in quest'ultimo libro è rappresentato proprio da un'iniziale ricostruzione storico-interpretativa di alcuni sviluppi novecenteschi dei rapporti tra filosofia e arte, e, di qui, a un chiarimento dei rapporti tra filosofia dell'arte ed estetica (Figal 2015, pp. 48-67), da concepire sicuramente come vicine e affini, eppure *non* come immediatamente coincidenti. Come spiega Figal fin dall'Introduzione a *Il manifestarsi dell'arte*, l'intento della sua ricerca è quello di

connettere fra loro i punti di forza della filosofia dell'arte e dell'estetica filosofica, evitando i loro punti deboli. Si tratta di descrivere, nel modo più preciso possibile, la costituzione essenziale delle opere d'arte, tenendo presente un punto: le opere d'arte sono identificabili come tali, perché richiedono da sé un atteggiamento specifico, vale a dire l'atteggiamento estetico (Figal 2015, p. 17).

Già una tale intenzione di *non* abbandonare *sic et simpliciter* il percorso dell'estetica filosofica, di *non* dichiararlo *tout court* “viziato” da certi pregiudizi del pensiero moderno e

dunque incapace di insegnarci a concepire in maniera adeguata l'esperienza con l'arte, segna un'evidente presa di distanza, da parte di Figal, dalle filosofie dell'arte a carattere marcatamente "anti-estetico" di Heidegger e Gadamer, con tutte le implicazioni che ciò comporta anche per la ricezione della *Critica della facoltà di giudizio*. Il cuore profondo o, se si vuole, il centro teoretico dell'estetica di Figal può essere individuato nella nozione di "manifestazione" o, se si vuole, di "fenomeno", cioè di *Erscheinung*, che è assolutamente centrale per Figal, come suggerito dal radicamento fenomenologico della sua indagine nonché dal titolo stesso del libro (*Il manifestarsi dell'arte*, nella felice scelta del traduttore italiano, laddove si deve tenere presente però che l'originale tedesco è *Erscheinungsdinge*, cioè "cose manifestative"). Figal definisce la manifestazione come «uno stato di cose complesso» in cui «una presenza [viene] tratta in risalto», in cui «qualcosa che si manifesta [è] presente *per qualcuno*»; la definisce come «il terzo elemento che abbraccia ambedue» questi elementi, «connettendoli fra loro», ovvero la definisce husserlianamente come «una correlazione» (Figal 2015, pp. 93, 95-96, 103 ss.). In tale quadro generale, il bello viene definito quindi come «manifestazione con massima intensità», come «un manifestarsi, che non è altro se non il manifestarsi stesso», e, a partire da qui, le opere d'arte appaiono dunque come «manifestazioni in sé», «pure manifestazioni» o anche «fenomeni *par excellence*», trattandosi degli «unici fenomeni che l'osservatore fenomenologico reperisce in un modo tale che, per riconoscerli come fenomeni, può far leva sulla "percezione originariamente offerente"» (Figal 2015, pp. 97-98, 110).

Alla luce dell'idea delle opere d'arte come «compagini manifestative» (Figal 2015, p. 113) si può dunque comprendere anche l'ambizioso sottotitolo del libro: *Estetica come fenomenologia*. Per Figal, infatti, non soltanto l'estetica deve avere un carattere e un approccio fenomenologico (senza che ciò si traduca peraltro nell'assunzione di un atteggiamento dogmatico che esclude a priori la proficuità di altre correnti di pensiero), ma «con il riferimento all'apparenza estetica e all'arte» si trasforma «la stessa fenomenologia» (Figal 2015, p. 101). Ciò è dovuto al fatto che gli oggetti propri dell'estetica, vale a dire le succitate "cose manifestative", si rivelano essere determinanti e, dunque, imprescindibili per la fenomenologia in quanto tale, cioè per una migliore comprensione delle sue possibilità essenziali. A tutto questo segue, nell'elaborazione dell'estetica di Figal, un esame della fenomenicità dell'arte, sulla base dei concetti di "mostrare" e "mostrarsi", che mette capo all'idea di un «mostrare auto-ostensivo delle opere d'arte», di un loro «mostrarsi che mostra»: in quanto «cose manifestative [esse] sono pure manifestazioni», «sono completamente ostensive», «mostrano *qualcosa* senza riserve» e senza alcun «rimando a qualcosa che si trova al di fuori di esse, bensì a guisa di un presentare» (Figal 2015, pp. 128, 139). Ne deriva il compito di «chiarire lo specifico carattere ostensivo» delle singole «*forme fondamentali* dell'arte» (Figal 2015, p. 139): un compito, quest'ultimo, che Figal affronta specificamente attraverso i concetti di "determinazioni essenziali" e "mescolanze" che gli consentono di distillare, per così dire, i caratteri o principi fondamentali del figurale, del musicale e del poetico, e di avviare quindi

un'esplorazione del molteplice configurarsi di tali "forme manifestative" nel concreto realizzarsi dei prodotti artistici. L'ambiziosa tesi di Figal, allora, è quella secondo cui

tutte le opere d'arte deriv[a]no da una mescolanza delle tre forme illustrate. [...] Un'opera d'arte si rivela allora determinata da più forme artistiche; è una mescolanza di queste forme. [...] Quindi un'opera è bella, e con ciò una vera opera d'arte, solo nella mescolanza delle forme artistiche; questa stessa mescolanza è un ordine decentrato realizzato ogni volta in maniera individuale. Da un punto di vista formale, un'opera d'arte è tanto bella quanto più intimo è il nesso delle forme artistiche in essa (Figal 2015, pp. 184, 191, 194).

Da ultimo, in *Il manifestarsi dell'arte* Figal prende in esame la questione della «peculiare spazialità dell'opera d'arte» e, di qui, della stessa esperienza estetica, il cui chiarimento serve anche a rendere definitivamente comprensibile e coglibile «in modo adeguato alla cosa stessa» quello che l'autore chiama il «carattere manifestativo e oggettuale» dell'arte (Figal 2015, p. 252). L'idea di Figal, sintetizzando molto, è che le opere d'arte rendano possibile compiere «l'esperienza della spazialità [...] in modo eminente», in maniera «particolarmente pronunciata», di modo che «la spazialità delle opere d'arte» (a cui Figal, sulla base di un concetto particolarmente ampio di *spazio*, sembra decisamente accordare una preminenza rispetto all'aspetto della temporalità, anche nel caso di arti come la poesia e la musica) diviene «la chiave per comprendere la spazialità» in generale, cioè il nostro stesso senso dello spazio (Figal 2015, p. 255). In altre parole, ogni opera d'arte per Figal «ha una propria spazialità fenomenica»: essa «non solo [accorda] uno spazio, ma [è] anche in sé spaziale», e «la spazialità appartiene all'essenza delle opere d'arte» (Figal 2015, pp. 268, 273-274). «Lo spazio dell'opera d'arte», spiega ancora Figal, «è determinato in quanto tale unicamente dal mostrarsi. È spazio *deittico* o *fenomenico*», e, a sua volta, affinché sia possibile il manifestarsi delle opere, è necessario che queste ultime abbiano un *luogo* adeguato per mostrarsi e che l'esperienza con esse – che per Figal, come abbiamo detto, è di tipo eminentemente contemplativo – sia compiuta a un'adeguata *distanza* (Figal 2015, pp. 265, 273). L'ultimo nesso concettuale che scaturisce a partire da qui è quello che conduce in modo molto suggestivo, e non senza riferimenti anche a forme di esperienza estetica proprie delle culture orientali, a prendere in esame il “vuoto” e il “qui”, ovvero l'assoluta presenzialità e dunque anche autonomia dell'opera d'arte. Per “vuoto”, spiega Figal, s'intende qui «ciò per cui qualcosa può essere ciò che è. Cosa è dobbiamo perciò pensarlo in base al vuoto. L'arte mostra come ciò sia possibile»: «il manifestarsi delle opere d'arte è [...] un gioco di *mostrarsi*, *mostrare* e *vuoto*», di riempimenti e svuotamenti alternati, per così dire. Il vuoto non è quindi «un fondo oscuro o abissale», bensì

ciò che è semplicemente senza fondo, infondato, né fondante né fondabile. Lascia essere, nient'altro. [...] Il libero manifestarsi, vale a dire la bellezza, viene dal vuoto. [...] Nella bellezza, senza fondamento, senza scopo, come è, siamo massimamente vicini al vuoto. È così, perché l'esperienza del bello è una esperienza del lontano (Figal 2015, pp. 283, 288-289).

4.3.

Le lunghe digressioni a carattere ricostruttivo-interpretativo su *Oggettualità e Il manifestarsi dell'arte* a cui sono stati dedicati i precedenti sottoparagrafi erano necessarie al fine di preparare adeguatamente il terreno per un'esposizione, in quest'ultimo sottoparagrafo, dell'originale interpretazione della prima parte della *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* offerta da Figal nel contesto della sua serrata analisi del concetto di bellezza (Figal 2015, pp. 69-93). Il peculiare rapporto di affinità – attraverso l'indubbia eredità metodologica e continuità tematica – ma, al contempo, di divergenza – attraverso il ripensamento critico di vari contenuti e la conseguente presa di distanza – che lega la filosofia di Figal a quelle di Heidegger e Gadamer è già emerso a proposito della transizione dallo stadio dell'ermeneutica filosofica a quello della filosofia ermeneutica, e poi anche a proposito del differente modo di rapportarsi all'estetica e ai suoi temi e concetti fondamentali. Ciò, come si è detto, non manca di avere un riflesso anche sul piano del confronto con la terza *Critica* di Kant, che in questo contesto viene anzi a configurarsi come una sorta di cartina di tornasole per cogliere le ambizioni filosofiche e gli intenti originali del discorso fenomenologico-ermeneutico ed estetico-filosofico di Figal. In questo modo, uno sguardo alle diverse modalità di ricezione della *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* in una fra le principali vie dell'ermeneutica contemporanea si rivela essere proficuo sia per arricchire la propria conoscenza della *Wirkungsgeschichte* dell'estetica kantiana, sia per cogliere con maggior precisione determinati rapporti interni all'ermeneutica filosofica tedesca di matrice o ispirazione fenomenologica.

Come emerge chiaramente soprattutto nella prima parte di *Il manifestarsi dell'arte*, l'analisi del bello è centrale per l'estetica di Figal, in quanto il bello rappresenta per il filosofo tedesco «[il] *come* di un'opera d'arte», ciò in base a cui «si possono rivelare come specificamente estetici caratteri quali l'autonomia, l'inizialità, l'originarietà e la sensibilità» (Figal 2015, pp. 65-66). Le opere d'arte, scrive Figal, sono «*essenzialmente belle*» (là dove questo richiamo alla “essenzialità” va certamente enfatizzato, tenuto conto della centralità di questo motivo in tutto il pensiero fenomenologico e, nella fattispecie, del fatto che la questione dell'essenza dell'arte è *la* questione al centro di *Il manifestarsi dell'arte*): «il bello è presente nell'arte senza condizioni e senza riserve», sebbene esso *non* sia presente «solo nell'arte» bensì anche, seppure in diverso modo, «nelle cose d'uso e [nella] natura» (Figal 2015, p. 66). In questo senso, «l'esperienza estetica dell'arte è l'esperienza della sua bellezza» (Figal 2015, p. 67) e ciò, secondo Figal, vale anche nell'età

che è stata definita da altri teorici come l'epoca delle "arti non più belle" (Jauss) o l'epoca dell'"abuso della bellezza" (Danto), nella misura in cui anche l'arte che si ripropone esplicitamente e intenzionalmente di contravvenire ai principi e ai canoni del bello – per apparire, ad esempio, disarmonica, dissonante, disorientante, disturbante o, in sintesi, "non-bella" – non può fare a meno di rinviare almeno implicitamente proprio al termine al quale intende opporsi, cioè appunto il bello, per non parlare del fatto che, a distanza di decenni, non è affatto infrequente che anche l'arte d'avanguardia che al suo primo apparire era apparsa scioccante o persino "brutta" venga gradualmente riassorbita nel campo di ciò che risulta accettabile e fruibile come "bello". A sua volta, come essenza della bellezza – intesa come una sorta di «coerenza [...] priva di regolamentazione» – viene individuato il carattere «eccedente, periferico», non esauribile, dell'ordine di cui consiste il bello: un ordine «irregolare in senso stretto», cioè nel senso che «a suo fondamento non c'è alcuna regola», che Figal definisce in modo pregnante come «ordine decentrato» (Figal 2015, pp. 87-89). Un tale ordine, per Figal, «è manifestazione» (nel senso che «un ordine decentrato sussiste manifestandosi») ed è quel tipo di ordine che non si riesce a «riconoscere direttamente, per così dire al primo sguardo. Cogliamo ordini decentrati solo entrando in relazione con essi e, assolutamente concentrati e non senza rigore, esperendoli nella coerente molteplicità delle loro relazioni» (Figal 2015, pp. 89, 93).

Ora, assolutamente centrale per la concezione di Figal del bello è proprio l'insegnamento kantiano contenuto nella prima parte della terza *Critica*. Come si legge in *Il manifestarsi dell'arte*, infatti, «la *Critica del giudizio* di Kant [è] il libro fondamentale dell'estetica filosofica»:

L'impostazione estetica ha fondato l'analisi filosofica moderna dell'arte. Tuttavia, in questo quadro è stata *decisiva* non tanto l'*Aesthetica* di Baumgarten, quanto la *Critica del giudizio* di Kant. Per quanto Kant eviti il concetto di estetica nel suo lavoro, con lui *inizia* l'estetica filosofica. Baumgarten è preistoria, mero oggetto di indagine storiografica. Kant, invece, con un decisivo lavoro di integrazione, ha recepito, raccogliendole in un progetto sistematico, le precedenti analisi del bello e della sua esperienza. Ma non si è limitato a questo. Egli ha inoltre conferito all'estetica filosofica un significato che concerne la stessa filosofia; occorre infatti sottolineare con forza un punto: con la *Critica del giudizio* Kant non fonda alcuna disciplina filosofica, bensì colloca la problematica estetica *al centro* di un'autochiarificazione della filosofia. [...] Chi vuole descrivere e comprendere concettualmente l'esperienza estetica, *deve* cominciare con Kant [che] ha definito l'esperienza estetica in una maniera che *continua ad essere determinante* [...]. Kant *delimita in modo accurato* l'esperienza del bello mettendola in luce nella sua *unicità*, rispetto a tutte le altre possibilità di riferimento affettivo, di percezione e di pensiero (Figal 2015, pp. 17, 49-50, 69; corsivi miei).

In primo luogo, dunque, ciò che emerge da questi passi è l'idea che, a differenza dell'estetica di Baumgarten o anche di altri autori, l'estetica di Kant (intendendo qui con questa espressione, come abbiamo visto, non tanto l'estetica trascendentale esposta nella prima parte della *Critica della ragion pura* quanto la critica della facoltà estetica di giudizio esposta nella prima parte della *Critica della facoltà di giudizio*) non sia oggetto di interesse solo da un punto di vista storico-filosofico ma anche da un punto di vista squisitamente teoretico, ovvero continui a rivelarsi ancora oggi un'inesauribile fonte di ispirazione e stimolo per il pensiero. Oltre a ciò, per Figal appare decisivo notare come l'estetica di Kant, pur avendo di fatto dato avvio all'estetica filosofica in senso forte, rigoroso e vincolante (cosa su cui anche Heidegger e Gadamer sarebbero certamente d'accordo), non soltanto *non* abbia per questo motivo gettato le basi per una comprensione "errata" o "viziata" dei fenomeni estetici e soprattutto artistici (come sembrano indicare concordemente le letture critiche di Heidegger e Gadamer, al netto delle varie differenze esistenti anche fra le loro rispettive concezioni), ma anzi abbia introdotto alcune nozioni preziose, se non proprio assolutamente fondamentali, per penetrare concettualmente l'essenza dell'estetico e dell'artistico. Particolarmente rilevanti, in tal senso, appaiono a Figal le analisi kantiane di aspetti quali il carattere disinteressato del giudizio estetico, la validità universale dell'esperienza del bello, il rapporto tra percezione e riflessione nel caso dell'esperienza estetica, la proficua paradossalità del carattere di "finalità senza scopo" che è proprio della bellezza, la relazione fra arte e natura e, soprattutto, il libero gioco che, per Kant, si viene a instaurare fra le nostre diverse facoltà conoscitive nell'esperienza del bello e anche del sublime (inteso però da Figal come una forma di compiacimento estetico che, in realtà, «non designa alcuna alternativa rispetto al bello, bensì solo una modificazione»: Figal 2015, p. 64).

A proposito di quest'ultimo tema, cioè quello del "libero gioco", Figal sottolinea che ancora oggi, a dispetto di ogni possibile tentazione di screditare un pensiero risalente alla fine del Settecento come fatalmente "invecchiato", bisogna invece «prendere sul serio la definizione kantiana della riflessione estetica come libero gioco delle facoltà conoscitive» e dimostrarsi all'altezza del tentativo kantiano di «rendere giustizia [alla] essenza assolutamente incomparabile del bello»:

concependo la bellezza come una qualità, come qualcosa nelle cose, Kant *coglie un punto decisivo*; l'esperienza estetica si riferisce a qualcosa che non si esaurisce nella normale determinatezza cosale e per questo solo in maniera approssimativa può essere caratterizzato come una "qualità" delle cose. [...] Ciò che dice Kant sulla libera formazione e sulle idee estetiche *rimane direttivo e indicativo*. [...] Kant *ha colto l'essenza del bello* in quanto ordine decentrato *con eccezionale intuizione*, cercando di definirla, per quanto glielo consentisse il linguaggio filosofico a sua disposizione. [...] Kant ha mostrato che il bello non si può proprio fissare alle cose, nella misura in cui esse sono cose identificabili. Appartiene piuttosto alla loro periferia o ai loro spazi intermedi; si lega non a *che cosa* sono le cose, vale a dire alla loro determinatezza fissa, da cogliere concettualmente, bensì si trova nella superficie non dominata dal loro centro identico. [...] Non da

ultimo nei suoi esempi *Kant fa una scoperta*: il mondo non si esaurisce in ciò che, in esso, è determinabile, realizzabile rispetto a fini e disponibile. [...] [N]onostante tutta la ritrosia speculativa, [quella di Kant] è la soluzione più radicale rispetto all'idealismo tedesco, quella che va più in profondità (Figal 2015, pp. 77, 79, 85, 88-89; corsivi miei).

Al pari che nella precedente lunga citazione su Kant tratta da *Il manifestarsi dell'arte*, anche nel caso di quest'ultima lunga citazione dal libro di Figal emergono chiaramente diversi aspetti di notevole interesse ai fini di una ricognizione sulla ricezione della *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* nel contesto del pensiero ermeneutico-filosofico contemporaneo. Come si può facilmente vedere, infatti, non soltanto – a differenza di quanto stabilito da Heidegger e Gadamer – per Figal non è necessario “distruggere” o “oltrepassare” l'impostazione di fondo dell'estetica moderna o prendere criticamente le distanze da essa, ma anzi (anche qui in disaccordo con i due grandi autori, rispettivamente, di *Essere e tempo* e *Verità e metodo*), al fine di descrivere e comprendere adeguatamente l'arte e l'estetico, appare indispensabile riallacciarsi proprio al testo fondamentale della tradizione estetica moderna, cioè appunto la terza *Critica* di Kant. Emerge quindi anche da qui, cioè dalle diverse forme che può assumere un libero confronto esegetico con un'opera come la *Critica della facoltà di giudizio*, il particolare rapporto di affinità e al contempo di divergenza che sembra caratterizzare il dispiegarsi e lo svilupparsi, nel corso dei decenni, di questa tradizione particolarmente significativa e autorevole del pensiero ermeneutico contemporaneo.

Quanto detto fin qui non esclude, naturalmente, che anche per Figal il testo di Kant presenti a volte dei lati oscuri e degli «aspetti problematici» (Figal 2015, p. 69) che ne rendono necessario un ripensamento critico e un superamento, ma sempre mantenendo un dialogo aperto e costante con tale testo, nella consapevolezza della sua perdurante attualità e imprescindibilità. Ad esempio, secondo Figal, «Kant intende l'esperienza estetica essenzialmente come un processo interno alla coscienza» e ciò può apparire problematico nel quadro di una filosofia come quella di Figal che, come abbiamo visto, risulta orientata a livello generale verso l'oggettuale, sebbene si debba anche aggiungere che, per Figal, il «presunto internalismo kantiano dell'estetico» di per sé «non esclude il riferimento oggettuale nel contesto dell'estetico» (Figal 2015, p. 69; cfr. anche *ivi*, p. 77). Ciò significa che, anche in questo caso, in ambito estetico per Figal non sembra possibile filosofare senza un saldo riferimento al pensiero di Kant ma, al contempo, bisogna essere capaci di spingere quest'ultimo oltre i suoi limiti o, per così dire, fargli compiere un passo avanti in direzione della fondamentale oggettualità dell'estetico. In maniera analoga, per Figal non si può non notare che «Kant non approfondisce il carattere cognitivo dell'esperienza indicato con la formula del libero gioco delle facoltà conoscitive» e, soprattutto, «non ha alcun concetto per [l']autonomia» dell'opera d'arte come «ordine decentrato autonomo» (Figal 2015, pp. 75, 93), pur riuscendo ad avvicinarsi notevolmente a questa idea e quasi a sfiorarla attraverso la riflessione sul carattere di “finalità senza scopo” del bello.

Alla luce di ciò e anche di molti altri aspetti su cui non è possibile soffermarsi qui, se ne deduce che, per un filosofo come Figal, il tentativo di sviluppare oggi un'analisi del bello nel contesto di un'estetica fenomenologicamente-ermeneuticamente ispirata «conduce oltre Kant», ma – in una maniera senz'altro significativa ai fini di una ricognizione critica sulla “storia degli effetti” della *Critica della facoltà di giudizio* come quella tentata nel presente contributo – non al fine di abbandonare i risultati conseguiti dall'estetica kantiana, bensì «per sviluppare ulteriormente la definizione del bello ottenuta con Kant» (Figal 2015, p. 93; corsivi miei). Dal punto di vista di Figal – che, su un piano filosofico generale, eredita le grandi conquiste delle dottrine ermeneutico-filosofiche di Heidegger e Gadamer, e cerca di stabilire con esse un rapporto di aperta continuità su alcuni aspetti ma, al contempo, di altrettanto aperta discontinuità su altri aspetti – solo filosofando “con Kant” e insieme “oltre Kant” in campo estetico risulta possibile sviluppare una prospettiva adeguata sull'arte e sul bello, in grado di cogliere la reale essenza di tali fenomeni e non solamente le loro manifestazioni superficiali.

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La estética kantiana como paradigma de la fenomenología de la donación de Jean-Luc Marion

Kant's aesthetic as the paradigm for the Jean-Luc Marion's phenomenology of givenness

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Resumen

La fenomenología de la donación de Jean-Luc Marion presenta, en tanto que fenomenología, raíces husserlianas y heideggerianas incontestables. No obstante, es de recordar que los dos conceptos fundamentales de esta fenomenología -el don y la saturación de los fenómenos- provienen de Kant, y más precisamente de su estética. Mediante un análisis de la estética kantiana, el autor muestra el legado kantiano de la fenomenología de la donación estableciendo un vínculo entre el fenómeno de revelación -o saturación de la saturación- y lo sublime en Kant. Así, Marion encuentra en la estética kantiana la posibilidad de presentar negatividades de manera positiva y por lo tanto la evidencia de su donación.

Palabras claves: estética; fenómeno saturado; Jean-Luc Marion; revelación; sublime

Abstract

Jean-Luc Marion's phenomenology of givenness has, as a phenomenology, strong and unquestionable Husserlian and Heideggerian roots. Nonetheless, it is to remember that its two main concepts -givenness and saturated phenomena- come directly from Kant, and more precisely from

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his aesthetics. Through an analysis of Kantian aesthetics, the author argues in favour of a Kantian legacy of the phenomenology of givenness, establishing a link between the phenomenon of revelation -saturation of saturation- and the sublime in Kant. Thus, Marion finds in Kantian aesthetics the possibility to positively present negativities, and therefore, a way to let them phenomenalyze the givenness they are inhabited of.

KEY WORDS: aesthetics; Jean-Luc Marion; revelation; saturated phenomenon; sublime

“El camino que debemos seguir se abre ahora más claramente. Tenemos que desarrollar tan lejos como nos sea posible la hipótesis poco común entrevista por Kant mismo -y contra él.” (Marion, 2008a, 327)

Introducción

La fenomenología de la donación de Jean-Luc Marion ocupa hoy en día un papel central dentro del campo de la fenomenología francesa y, de manera más general, en el campo de la fenomenología contemporánea. En tanto que fenomenología, muchos autores resaltaron sus raíces husserlianas, heideggerianas y levinasianas (Mackinlay, 2010), lo que es innegable y evidente no sólo por los estudios críticos que el mismo Marion dedicó a estos pensadores (Marion, 2011), sino además por la reivindicación explícita de esta filiación en su obra (Marion, 2001, 131-159). No obstante, si la fenomenología de la donación está en diálogo constante con la fenomenología alemana de comienzos del siglo XX y se presenta en tanto que su relevo (Vinolo, 2019), sus dos conceptos fundamentales: la donación y la saturación, provienen más bien de la obra de Kant. Por un lado, es en la *Crítica de la razón pura*, y más precisamente en el juego de la intuición, que Marion encuentra el concepto de donación que pone al centro de toda fenomenicidad: “Kant, en el momento mismo en el que atribuye el privilegio que caracteriza propiamente sólo a la intuición, debe empero añadir -arruinando así su propia tesis- que “[...] esta intuición sólo tiene lugar en la medida en que el objeto nos es dado” (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, I, A19/B33.” (Marion, 2008a, 107, n.1). Por otro lado, Marion reconoce que no inventa el concepto central de su fenomenología -el fenómeno saturado- sino que proviene de la estética kantiana y que no hace más que extenderlo a la totalidad de la fenomenicidad cuando Kant lo había limitado a la manifestación de ciertos fenómenos específicos marginales: “[...] corresponde a Kant -pensador de la penuria de la intuición y del fenómeno común- el haber presentado lo que nosotros nombramos fenómeno saturado.” (Marion, 2008a, 325). Efectivamente, cuando Kant hace del fenómeno estético un fenómeno marginal, una excepción a las leyes comunes de la fenomenicidad tal como las estableció en la *Crítica de la razón pura*, la

fenomenología de la donación, por su lado, se puede leer como una estética kantiana extendida a la totalidad de la fenomenicidad. Lo que era para Kant una excepción se convierte en Marion en la ley común de la fenomenicidad. De ahí que Emmanuel Falque haya podido hablar, acerca de la fenomenología de la donación, de una “Crítica de la razón pura invertida”¹. Se podría entonces leer la obra de Marion como una deconstrucción de la estética kantiana ya que lejos de crear algo radicalmente nuevo anula la jerarquía que se había establecido históricamente y clásicamente entre la fenomenicidad objetual, común y normal, y, la fenomenicidad saturada, marginal y excepcional, lo que es propiamente un gesto de deconstrucción que pone el margen al centro o que afirma una marginalización generalizada (Ramond, 2018).

No obstante, para invertir la fenomenicidad kantiana tal como se constituye en la primera *Crítica*, Marion no recurre a autores exteriores al kantismo. Al contrario, es desde el mismo Kant que pretende superar las condiciones de posibilidad de los fenómenos, y, más precisamente, desde la estética kantiana. Tal como existe, en historia de la filosofía, un debate acerca del orden según el cual se deben leer las *Investigaciones lógicas* de Husserl², también se puede preguntar si el texto kantiano en el cual más aparecen las reglas de la fenomenicidad es la *Crítica de la razón pura* o la *Crítica del juicio*, lo que fundamentaría dos direcciones de lectura diferentes de la obra de Kant. Es posible preguntar entonces si la fenomenicidad se debe distribuir en fenomenicidad común y fenomenicidad estética, o si la fenomenicidad estética es la regla general de la cual los fenómenos comunes descritos en la *Crítica de la razón pura* no son sino una excepción o un caso particular. La propuesta de Marion consiste en leer a Kant desde la tercera *Crítica* ya que, para su fenomenología, la fenomenicidad estética no es una fenomenicidad marginal sino su figura paradigmática. Más aún, la misma tipología marioniana de la fenomenicidad se fundamenta en las rúbricas de cantidad, de cualidad, de relación y de modalidad, establecidas por Kant, y es a partir de éstas que se establecen las cinco modalidades (Vinolo, 2020a) de los fenómenos saturados. Tanto para pensar lo que se debe superar como para pensar la manera según la cual es necesario superarlo, la fenomenología de la donación es entonces tributaria de la obra de Kant, y de manera más precisa, tal como vamos a mostrarlo, de su estética.

1. Después de la finitud

Con el fin de entender el papel de la estética kantiana en la obra de Marion, es necesario comenzar por establecer lo que la fenomenología de la donación pretende superar. Dentro de la filosofía moderna, Kant es, para el fenomenólogo francés, quién determinó de manera más precisa las condiciones de la fenomenicidad, y estas se reflejan ante todo en su

¹ « D’aucuns reprocheront cependant à l’auteur [Marion] de construire une nouvelle architectonique, à la manière d’un Kant par exemple – sentiment que le lecteur n’aura de cesse de partager en comparant ce livre [Étant donné] sinon à une nouvelle *Critique de la raison pure*, au moins à une « Critique de la raison pure inversée », nous y reviendront. » (Falque, 2003, 52)

² Esta pregunta dio lugar a un debate entre Derrida y Marion para saber si el texto de Husserl se debe leer a partir de la primera o de la sexta de las investigaciones. Cf. (Vinolo, 2019, 108-116)

definición de la “posibilidad”. Kant estableció que es fenomenalizable lo que es posible, evidenciando un vínculo fundamental entre la posibilidad y la fenomenicidad (Marion, 2005, 36): “Lo que concuerda con las condiciones formales de la experiencia (desde el punto de vista de la intuición y de los conceptos) es *posible*.” (*KrV* A218/B265). Se podría pensar entonces, explica Marion, que la fenomenicidad marca los límites de lo posible y que el fenómeno impone su propia posibilidad, que la efectividad de un fenómeno manifiesta de manera retroactiva su posibilidad. No obstante, Kant no instauró un vínculo entre fenomenicidad y posibilidad sino más bien entre la posibilidad y las condiciones formales de la experiencia. Lo posible, lejos de surgir de lo que se da en la fenomenicidad, de la efectividad del fenómeno, es impuesto desde el sujeto transcendental a partir de una exigencia formal que enmarca la posibilidad de los fenómenos: “El postulado de la posibilidad de las cosas exige, pues, que el concepto de éstas concuerde con las condiciones formales de una experiencia en general.” (*KrV* A220/B267). El fenómeno, para poder aparecer debe someterse a las leyes de la posibilidad que no surgen de él sino de las condiciones formales que le impone el sujeto.

Pero ¿cuál es la modalidad de las condiciones formales de la experiencia? Kant lo dice explícitamente, es la modalidad del conocimiento: “Lo peculiar de las categorías de la modalidad consiste en que, en cuanto determinaciones del objeto, no amplían en lo más mínimo el concepto al que sirven de predicado, sino que expresan simplemente la relación de tal concepto con la facultad cognoscitiva.” (*KrV* A219/B266). Es a raíz de las condiciones de posibilidad del conocimiento que se deben pensar las condiciones de posibilidad de la fenomenicidad. El vínculo entre la fenomenicidad y las facultades cognoscitivas operado mediante el concepto de posibilidad justifica entonces que para pensar la modalidad según la cual los fenómenos se dan, Marion se oriente en un primer momento hacia la *Crítica de la razón pura*, leyéndola en línea directa con las tesis del Descartes de las *Reglas para la dirección del espíritu* (Marion, 2008b). Ciertamente es que nadie mejor que Marion sabe que Kant no conocía este texto no publicado de Descartes (Fichant & Marion, 2006); sin embargo, establece un vínculo directo entre las condiciones de la construcción de la objetividad en Descartes³ y aquellas de la constitución de los fenómenos en Kant mediante la relación que establecen ambos autores entre lo fenoménico y lo cognitivo⁴. Así, para Marion, Descartes y Kant comparten la destitución de cierta ontología a favor de factores epistemológicos.

Los primeros pasos de Marion en la *Crítica de la razón pura* reflejan a la vez un elogio de Kant como la necesidad de superar este primer momento dentro de la estética kantiana. Uno conoce las dos fuentes del conocimiento en este texto: “[...] existen dos troncos del

³ Recordemos que las condiciones de la objetividad en Descartes son ante todo el orden <ordo> y la medida <mensura>. Pero dado la inversión cartesiana entre el *ordo cognoscendi* y el *ordo essendi* (inversión de la protología), siempre se trata, en Descartes, de un orden y de una medida impuestos a los objetos por el proceso cognitivo del sujeto. Así, el objeto es fruto de una verdadera construcción y responde a condiciones epistemológicas más que ontológicas (Marion, 2008b, 91-116).

⁴ « [...] le criticisme kantien ne fut possible que parce que le rationalisme s’instaure comme un criticisme dès sa figure initiale, à savoir, Descartes. » (Marion, 1996, 286). <El criticismo kantiano fue posible únicamente porque el racionalismo se instauró, desde su figura primera, desde Descartes, en tanto que criticismo>.

conocimiento humano, los cuales proceden acaso de una raíz común pero desconocida para nosotros: la *sensibilidad* y el *entendimiento*. A través de la primera se nos *dan* los objetos. A través de la segunda los *pensamos*.” (*KrV* A15/B29). Nos permitimos citar este texto muy conocido de Kant con el fin de señalar que, para Marion, su punto crucial yace en el hecho que, mediante la intuición, los objetos se *dan*, lo que fundamenta la fenomenología de la donación. Puesto que Kant asume la donación de los objetos, se debe encontrar en su obra toda una teoría de la donación que no podía sino interesar a Marion.

No obstante, esta apertura hacia el don es también una de las debilidades del kantismo ya que la teoría de la donación tal como aparece en la *Crítica de la razón pura* evidencia dificultades en cuanto al mismo concepto de don puesto que evidencia un don condicionado. Por un lado, dado que la intuición es en Kant, a diferencia de lo que era en Descartes, una intuición sensible, la donación debe someterse a la condición de la sensibilidad. Para poder ser una donación, ésta debe ser sensible: “Nuestra naturaleza conlleva el que la *intuición* sólo pueda ser *sensible*.” (*KrV* A51/B75). Así, el carácter estrictamente sensible de la facultad de donación limita la recepción a lo que el marco es capaz de recibir, y éste preestablece la finitud de lo que se da ya que no puede sino darse dentro de límites temporales y espaciales. Por un lado, la intuición sensible (sea interna o externa) necesita la temporalización de los fenómenos. Se habla aquí de temporalización porque el tiempo no es algo que el sujeto recibe sino una de las condiciones *a priori* de la experiencia: “El tiempo no es algo que exista por sí mismo o que inhiera en las cosas como determinación objetiva, es decir, algo que subsista una vez hecha abstracción de todas las condiciones subjetivas de su intuición.” (*KrV* A32/B49). He aquí una primera restricción o una primera condicionalidad de la donación ya que no se puede recibir ningún tipo de don cuyo fenómeno no se pueda inscribir en el tiempo. Al reducir lo que se da a lo que se da dentro del marco de la sensibilidad, Kant encierra entonces la donación dentro de los límites de la temporalidad que se da como una de sus condiciones⁵. Se podría aquí pensar en el fenómeno de Dios que no se somete al tiempo, o a aquel del amor que solo puede existir dentro de un infinito actual (Badiou, 2002). Lo mismo sucede para el espacio que limita lo que se puede dar a la posibilidad de espacializarlo en lo que se refiere a la sensibilidad externa. Existe una ruptura importante entre la condicionalidad de la donación por el tiempo y aquella que existe mediante el espacio ya que el tiempo es condición de toda fenomenicidad cuando el espacio limita su condicionalidad a la sensibilidad externa: “El tiempo es la condición formal *a priori* de todos los fenómenos. El espacio, en cuanto forma pura de toda intuición externa, se refiere sólo, como condición *a priori*, a los fenómenos externos.” (*KrV* A34/B50). No obstante, aunque la condición de espacialidad se limite a los fenómenos externos, no deja de ser un marco que condiciona la

⁵ “[...] el tiempo no es más que una condición subjetiva de nuestra (humana) intuición (que es siempre sensible, es decir, en la medida en que somos afectados por objetos) y en sí mismo, fuera del sujeto, no es nada.” (*KrV* A35/B51)

fenomenicidad⁶, y es posible preguntar con Marion ¿en qué espacio se fenomenaliza el fenómeno del Yo o del otro? Por todos lados, el don está condicionado puesto que uno sólo recibe lo que puede y siempre son las capacidades de recepción del sujeto que marcan lo que se puede recibir del don. Así, la intuición, en Kant, abre y cierra a la vez la problemática de la donación. Por un lado, Marion reconoce que la *Crítica de la razón pura* abre la idea según la cual los fenómenos se dan; sin embargo, esta donación se ve inmediatamente parasitada y anulada por ser condicionada por las posibilidades de recepción del sujeto⁷.

Más allá de la sensibilidad, existe una segunda condicionalidad del don del fenómeno ya que la donación no aparece en la intuición de por sí mismo, sino siempre mediante un proceso que abre el camino de lo dado hacia la fenomenalización: “[...] la misma experiencia constituye un tipo de conocimiento que requiere entendimiento y éste posee unas reglas que yo debo suponer en mí ya antes de que los objetos me sean dados, es decir, reglas *a priori*.” (*KrV* BXVII). Para que lo dado pueda pasar de la donación a la fenomenalización debe, además, someterse a reglas *a priori* que rigen el campo del conocimiento tanto como el de la fenomenicidad: “[...] las condiciones de *posibilidad de la experiencia* en general constituyen, a la vez, las condiciones de *posibilidad de los objetos de la experiencia* [...]” (*KrV* A158/B297). Además de la condicionalidad de la donación en la intuición sensible, su fenomenalización requiere entonces la intervención activa de las categorías del entendimiento según las cuatro rúbricas de la cantidad, la cualidad, la relación y la modalidad, cuyas superaciones fundamentan los cuatro fenómenos saturados que son el acontecimiento, el ídolo, la carne y el ídolo (Marion, 2001). Sin embargo, a pesar de esta doble condicionalidad del don (por su carácter sensible y por la mediación de las categorías) existe una donación absoluta en Kant que yace, no en los fenómenos, sino en la misma donación de las condiciones de posibilidad de la fenomenicidad que son simplemente expuestas y nunca demostradas ni deducidas. Paradójicamente, si el don se ve condicionado por ciertas condiciones de posibilidad, éstas son simplemente dadas y no se deducen de ningún argumento anterior: “[...] el espacio y el tiempo constituyen el objeto de una “exposición”, no de una deducción; [...]” (Deleuze, 1997, 36). Existe así un don absoluto en Kant, no en la donación de los fenómenos sino en la donación de las condiciones de posibilidad de la donación.

Un último punto establecido en la *Crítica de la razón pura* deberá ser superado por la estética kantiana con el fin de poder establecer una fenomenología de la donación. De manera clásica, en la *Crítica de la razón pura*, Kant sigue definiendo a la verdad en tanto que *adaequatio*: “Se concede y se presupone la definición nominal de verdad, a saber, la

⁶ “El espacio no representa ninguna propiedad de las cosas, ni en sí mismas ni en sus relaciones mutuas [...]. El espacio no es más que la forma de todos los fenómenos de los sentidos externos, es decir, la condición subjetiva de la sensibilidad. Sólo bajo esta condición nos es posible la intuición externa.” (*KrV* A26/B42)

⁷ “Así, al apartar de la representación de un cuerpo lo que el entendimiento piensa de él - sustancia, fuerza, divisibilidad, etc.- y al apartar igualmente lo que en dicha representación pertenece a la sensación - impenetrabilidad, dureza, color, etc.-, me queda todavía algo de esa intuición empírica, a saber, la extensión y la figura. Ambas pertenecen a la intuición pura y tienen lugar en el psiquismo como mera forma de la sensibilidad, incluso prescindiendo del objeto real de los sentidos o de la sensación.” (*KrV* A20-21/B35)

conformidad del conocimiento con su objeto.” (*KrV* A58/B82). Esta definición de la verdad fundamenta el papel igualitario de la intuición y de las categorías en la fenomenicidad o en la producción de los objetos. En la colaboración entre intuición y conceptos, no sólo es necesario pensar la relación en tanto que síntesis sino además en tanto que equilibrio. En el caso ideal de la fenomenicidad, lo dado en la intuición está totalmente enmarcado por las fronteras del concepto⁸. No obstante, en este caso ideal en el cual la materia rellena totalmente la forma, Marion nota un desequilibrio entre ambas facultades ya que incluso en su ceguera, la intuición seguiría dando algo, cuando el concepto sin intuición no es capaz de dar a ver absolutamente nada. Una vez más en el campo de la fenomenicidad, la donación es primordial y primera⁹.

La regla de la escasez de los datos intuitivos en la fenomenicidad se manifiesta¹⁰ en la misma definición de la nada que nos provee Kant. Encontramos en la *Crítica de la razón pura*, cuatro definiciones de la nada, o cuatro modalidades de ésta, y es esencialmente en relación con la intuición, y más precisamente con la escasez de lo que se da en la intuición que se determinan sus cuatro modalidades. Esto se evidencia primero en la nada en tanto que *ens rationis* puesto que: “[...] el objeto de un concepto al que no corresponde ninguna intuición precisable es igual a nada.” (*KrV* A290/B347). Aquí, se produce la nada mediante la incapacidad de la intuición de proveer la materia necesaria, es decir adecuada, al concepto. Lo mismo sucede para la nada en tanto que *nihil privatum* que se define como: “[...] el concepto de la falta de objeto, como la sombra, el frío.” (*KrV* A291/B347). En este caso se desdobra la escasez de intuición. Por un lado, la nada se define en tanto que concepto, es decir, mediante algo que, en sí mismo, falta de intuición, pero además se define en tanto que concepto de esta misma falta de intuición. Así, el “concepto de la falta” está habitado doblemente por la falta de intuición, no solo en tanto que concepto, sino además en tanto que concepto de esta misma falta. Tercero, la nada en su modalidad de *nihil imaginativum* presenta la misma lógica. La nada aparece como la no-objetualidad de las formas de la intuición sensible: “La mera forma de la intuición, sin sustancia, no es en

⁸ “Ninguna de estas propiedades es preferible a la otra: sin sensibilidad ningún objeto nos sería dado y, sin entendimiento, ninguno sería pensado. Los pensamientos sin contenido son vacíos; las intuiciones sin conceptos son ciegas. Por ello es tan necesario hacer sensibles los conceptos (es decir, añadirles el objeto en la intuición) como hacer inteligibles las intuiciones (es decir, someterlas a conceptos). Las dos facultades o capacidades no pueden intercambiar sus funciones. Ni el entendimiento puede intuir nada, ni los sentidos pueden pensar nada.” (*KrV* A51/B76)

⁹ « Le phénomène se pense par concept ; mais pour se penser, il doit d’abord être donné ; et il ne se donne que par intuition. La mise en scène intuitive conditionne l’objectivation conceptuelle. En tant que seule et antérieurement donatrice, l’intuition rompt à son profit son parallélisme avec le concept. Désormais, l’étendue de l’intuition fixe celle de la donation phénoménale. La phénoménalité s’indexe sur l’intuition. » (Marion, 2005, 50). <El fenómeno se piensa con un concepto, pero para pensarse debe primero darse, y no se da sino mediante una intuición. La manifestación intuitiva condiciona la objetivación conceptual. En tanto que única donante, la intuición rompe a su propio beneficio el paralelismo con su concepto. Desde ahora en adelante, la extensión de la intuición determina aquella de la donación fenoménica. El fenómeno está indexado sobre la intuición.>

¹⁰ « La nomenclature des quatre acceptions du néant revient en effet à passer en revue quatre modes de la défaillance de l’intuition. » (Marion, 2005, 52). <La nomenclatura de las cuatro acepciones de la nada consiste en recorrer cuatro modalidades de la falencia de la intuición>

sí misma un objeto, sino la mera condición formal de éste (en cuanto fenómeno). Tal como ocurre con el espacio y el tiempo puros (*ens imaginarium*), que, si bien constituyen algo en cuanto formas de intuición, no son en sí mismos objetos intuidos.” (*KrV* A291/B347). Esta concepción de la nada presenta una paradoja ya que la nada imaginada debería presentar cierto tipo de intuición por el simple hecho de ser imaginada. Sin embargo, se reduce a una intuición vacía, sin siquiera valorarla en tanto que intuición ciega por lo que el vacío de la intuición se asemeja al vacío del concepto. Finalmente, la nada en tanto que *nihil negativum* también refleja la debilidad de la intuición: “El objeto de un concepto que se contradice a sí mismo es nada, ya que el concepto es nada, lo imposible, como, por ejemplo, la figura rectilínea de dos lados (*nihil negativum*).” (*KrV* A291/B348). En este caso uno podría imaginar que un objeto vacío sin concepto marcara una falencia del mismo concepto ya que es el concepto que se contradice a él mismo. No obstante, Kant presenta el ejemplo de una figura geométrica que, por lo tanto, se presenta, por definición, en el espacio y por consiguiente en la intuición. De hecho, tal como lo precisó Kant en otra ocasión: “[...] el concepto de una figura encerrada entre dos rectas no implica contradicción alguna, ya que los conceptos de dos rectas y su cruce no implican la negación de ninguna figura. La imposibilidad no descansa en el concepto como tal, sino en la construcción de tal figura en el espacio, es decir, en las condiciones del espacio y de la determinación de éste.” (*KrV* A220-221/B268). Es entonces la construcción espacial (intuitiva) de una figura geométrica que puede evidenciar su contradicción y no su concepto. De esta manera, las cuatro determinaciones de la nada (*ens rationis*, *nihil privativum*, *nihil imaginativum*, *nihil negativum*) se definen en relación con alguna de las modalidades de la escasez de la intuición.

Se entiende entonces los puntos que Marion establece con Kant con el fin de superarlos para pensar su fenomenología de la donación. Primero, es necesario mantener el carácter central de la donación en la fenomenicidad, pero repensando lo que significa “dar” para romper las condiciones que lo anulan en tanto que don. El limitar el don a la donación sensible evidencia la falta de don ya que condicionar el don es perderlo como don (Vinolo, 2012, 47-60). Segundo, para liberar el fenómeno de la condicionalidad del don y acceder a lo dado, es menester liberarlo de todos los marcos que lo encierran y por lo tanto analizar, no la posibilidad sino la efectividad de un exceso de intuición en cuanto al concepto, es decir, la modalidad fenoménica en la cual la intuición satura el concepto desbordándolo. Finalmente, sobre el camino del exceso de intuición y en contra de la adecuación o de la escasez de intuición, se deben analizar los diferentes fenómenos que surgen a raíz de la saturación de la rúbrica de la cantidad, de la cualidad, de la relación y de la modalidad, y, en última instancia, de las cuatro rúbricas a la vez (el fenómeno de revelación), para pensar fenómenos cuya efectividad precede su posibilidad.

2. Excesos kantianos

Con el fin de pensar el exceso de lo dado en Kant, Marion recurre a su concepción de la Idea. Efectivamente, Kant evoca como mínimo en una oportunidad la posibilidad de una

inversión de la escasez de la intuición: en la Idea estética. Cuando señala los límites del conocimiento, evoca dos tipos de Ideas que no pueden entrar dentro del marco ni de los límites del conocimiento por dos razones opuestas¹¹. Por un lado, las Ideas de la razón no pueden entrar dentro de los límites del conocimiento porque no pueden encajar dentro de los marcos que fijan las condiciones de posibilidad de la experiencia. Las Ideas de la razón se ven excluidas del conocimiento por falta de intuición: “Una *idea de razón* no puede llegar a ser conocimiento, porque contiene un *concepto* (de lo suprasensible), para el cual nunca puede darse una intuición apropiada.” (KU, §57). Por otro lado, las Ideas estéticas tampoco pueden dar lugar a conocimiento por una razón exactamente contraria, porque no se puede encontrar un concepto que abarque la totalidad de lo que se da en su intuición: “Una *idea estética* no puede llegar a ser un conocimiento, porque es una *intuición* (de la imaginación) para la que jamás puede encontrarse un concepto adecuado.” (KU, §57). Encontramos entonces en Kant dos casos límites de la ley común de la fenomenicidad; la primera, por defecto; la segunda, por exceso.

Así, la donación se puede entender en Kant según tres modalidades. Primero, en el caso de las Ideas de la razón, según lo mínimo. En este caso, lo que se da es mínimo en relación con el concepto. Segundo, en el caso de los fenómenos objetuales, la donación es adecuada, es decir, suficiente para llenar el concepto. Finalmente, Kant también evoca la posibilidad de un exceso de intuición en el caso de la Idea estética: “Es importante insistir en este punto: esta deficiencia para producir el objeto no resulta de una penuria de donación (como para las ideas de la razón), sino de un exceso de intuición, de un exceso pues de donación [...]” (Marion, 2008a, 326). No obstante, tanto las Ideas de la razón como las Ideas estéticas constituyen casos marginales y extremos de la fenomenicidad ya que la norma sigue siendo el equilibrio y la adecuación.

Ahora bien, estas tres modalidades de la articulación del don en cuanto a la fenomenicidad (de lo dado en la intuición) reflejan los tres tipos de fenómenos que Marion desarrolla en su fenomenología. Por un lado, se habla de fenómenos pobres en intuición para los fenómenos como los objetos lógicos y matemáticos ya que, en éstos, no es posible distinguir el objeto de su concepto: “[...] estos no reclaman más que una intuición formal en matemáticas o una intuición categorial en lógica, o dicho de otra manera, una “visión de esencias” y de idealidades. En esta configuración, casi basta a lo que se muestra en y a partir de sí con su mero concepto o, al menos, con su sola inteligibilidad (la demostración misma) para darse.” (Marion, 2008a, 362). El círculo no es nada más que el concepto de círculo y el cuadrado no da nada más a ver que el concepto de cuadrado. Por este motivo los fenómenos pobres en intuición fueron los objetos paradigmáticos de la metafísica ya que, al no estar parasitados por ningún tipo de materia alcanzan el grado más alto de la verdad: la certeza¹². Por otro lado, Marion piensa los fenómenos comunes (u objetos¹³) que se caracterizan por la adecuación o el equilibrio de lo que se da en la intuición con el concepto. Estos fenómenos abarcan la totalidad de la fenomenicidad común que se puede asemejar a los objetos técnicos, ya que estos fenómenos son construidos o constituidos por un sujeto y que, por lo tanto, se dan a su medida: “La objetivación misma del fenómeno

¹¹ “Las ideas, en la acepción más general, son representaciones referidas a un objeto según un cierto principio (subjetivo u objetivo), pero en cuanto jamás podrán llegar a ser un conocimiento de ése.” (KU, §57).

¹² “Este privilegio epistémico, empero, se invierte también en un déficit fenomenológico radical -aquí la manifestación no [se] da (o poco), puesto que no libera ni intuición real, ni individuo, ni temporalización de acontecimiento, es decir, ningún fenómeno consumado.” (Marion, 2008a, 363)

¹³ En *Certitudes négatives*, publicado en 2010, Marion abandona la tripartición de la fenomenicidad para reducirla a la oposición binaria entre objetos y acontecimientos. Cf. (Marion, 2010)

requiere que se restrinja lo dado intuitivamente a lo que confirma (o, más bien, lo que no invalida) el concepto. La intención conserva así el dominio de la manifestación y la donación se restringe a la plantilla de la objetivación.” (Marion, 2008a, 364). Finalmente, para aquellos fenómenos en los cuales la donación intuitiva supera los marcos del concepto, Marion habla de fenómenos saturados: “La intuición no llega después del concepto, siguiendo el hilo de la intención (mención, previsión, repetición), sino que subvierte y precede toda intención, desbordándola y descentrándola [...]” (Marion, 2008a, 366). Se evidencia entonces claramente que la estética kantiana, al abrir la efectividad de una superación de la donación intuitiva por encima del concepto fundamenta la tripartición de la fenomenicidad en Marion ya que la relación cuantitativa entre intuición y concepto, proveniente de Kant, le sirve de patrón¹⁴.

No solo entonces la tripartición de la fenomenicidad se fundamenta sobre un patrón kantiano sino además la posibilidad de los fenómenos saturados surge de una reflexión sobre la estética kantiana. A la hora de presentar la Idea estética, Kant la explica mediante un concepto complejo: “[...] a la idea estética podría llamársela una representación *inexponible* de la imaginación, y a la idea de razón, en cambio, un concepto *indemostrable* de la razón.” (KU, §57). El carácter indemostrable del concepto en el caso de la idea de la razón no presenta mayor dificultad; en cambio, lo inexponible de la Idea estética merece más explicaciones, aún más cuando se explica mediante el juego de la intuición y por lo tanto de la donación. Por un lado, la Idea estética presenta cierta representación (es una “representación” inexponible) y, en este sentido, da a ver. No obstante, a diferencia de las representaciones objetuales, su representación es inexponible. Para entender lo “inexponible” es necesario hacerlo en relieve, en oposición a lo que significa, en Kant, exponer. En el párrafo 57 de la *Crítica de la facultad de juzgar*, Kant precisa que exponer es enmarcar dentro de condiciones y de reglas *a priori* de la representación, es literalmente subsumir mediante conceptos: “[...] traer una representación de la imaginación a conceptos equivale a decir: exponerla [...]” (KU, §57). Más aún, no solo el exponer equivale a encerrar sino además a encarcelar. Se puede hablar de encarcelamiento porque Kant hace de la imposibilidad de contener lo que da la intuición un verdadero proceso de liberación. Cuando la intuición desborda el concepto, recupera cierta libertad que el concepto le había, por lo tanto, robado:

Tal como en una idea de razón no alcanza la *imaginación*, con sus intuiciones, el concepto dado, así tampoco el *entendimiento*, a través de sus conceptos, alcanza jamás, en una idea estética, toda la intuición interna de la imaginación que ella enlaza con una representación dada. Y como traer una representación de la imaginación a conceptos equivale a decir: exponerla, la idea estética puede ser llamada una representación *inexponible* de aquella (en su libre juego). (KU, §57)

Lo inexponible se refiere entonces a una donación liberada de los marcos conceptuales dentro de los cuales la objetualidad le impone aparecer y, por lo tanto, a una donación incondicional. La Idea estética presenta así el paradigma de la saturación fenoménica y determina todo el proyecto de la fenomenología de la donación de Marion: “La dificultad consiste solamente en intentar comprender (y no repetir) qué posibilidad fenomenológica

¹⁴ “En lo sucesivo, la relación entre la manifestación y la donación se invierte: para los fenómenos a) pobres y b) de derecho común, la intención y el concepto prevén la intuición, palian su penuria y delimitan la donación; en cambio, para c) los fenómenos saturados o paradojas, la intuición sobrepasa la intención, se despliega sin concepto y deja que la donación prevenga toda limitación y todo horizonte.” (Marion, 2008a, 367)

se instaure cuando la demasia de la intuición donadora empieza así a jugar libremente.” (Marion, 2008a, 327).

Pero dentro de esta modalidad kantiana de la fenomenicidad, su modalidad saturada, es también el kantismo que permite segmentar los fenómenos saturados o las diferentes modalidades de la saturación: “Esbozaremos la descripción del fenómeno saturado siguiendo el hilo conductor de las categorías del entendimiento definidas por Kant.” (Marion, 2008a, 330). Puesto que el fenómeno saturado evidencia una intuición que sobrepasa el concepto, es posible imaginar, explica Marion, cuatro modalidades de la saturación según la rúbrica kantiana que se vea saturada: “El fenómeno saturado se describirá así como no-mentable según la cantidad, insoportable según la cualidad, absoluto según la relación, inmirable según la modalidad.” (Marion, 2008a, 330). No sólo la saturación es kantiana sino además sus modalidades se determinan dentro de un marco kantiano.

Comencemos por la saturación de la rúbrica de la cantidad. El primer axioma de la intuición estipula que: “[...] *todas las intuiciones son magnitudes extensivas*” (*KrV* A162/B202) por lo que padecen de cierto límite cuantitativo. En el campo de lo extensivo, la totalidad del fenómeno se construye como la suma de sus partes. De ahí que la magnitud extensiva conlleve una tesis epistemológica sobre la fenomenicidad según la cual las partes preceden a la totalidad, y la totalidad no es más que la suma de sus partes. Por este motivo, existe una síntesis activa pensada en términos de unidad sintética del fenómeno: “[...] sólo podemos percibir un objeto como fenómeno gracias a esa misma unidad que sintetiza la diversidad de la intuición sensible dada y mediante la cual pensamos en el concepto de una *magnitud* la unidad de la composición de la diversidad homogénea.” (*KrV* A162/B203). La magnitud extensiva impone cierta finitud ya que ninguna suma pueda dar el infinito. El fenómeno saturado según la cantidad debe entonces hacer excepción a la regla de la unidad sintética, lo que no significa que no presente cierta unidad ya que se da como “un” fenómeno, pero su unidad debe ser primera, sin que surja de ninguna unificación subjetiva. El fenómeno saturado según la cantidad es el que Marion llama el acontecimiento, cuyos paradigmas son el encuentro amoroso y el nacimiento (Marion, 2001, 37-66).

La segunda modalidad de la saturación también se piensa en relación con Kant ya que se trata del caso en el cual la intuición desborda la rúbrica de la cualidad. Todo fenómeno aparece según grados que se reparten desde la negación hasta la realidad: “[...] toda realidad en la esfera del fenómeno, por pequeña que sea -tiene un grado, es decir, una magnitud intensiva capaz de ser reducida. Entre realidad y negación hay una cadena continua de realidades y de posibles percepciones más pequeñas.” (*KrV* A169/B211). Cada fenómeno supone así un grado de intuición que debe ser anticipado para que éste pueda aparecer. No obstante, ¿qué pasaría si este grado fuese llevado más allá de lo que el sujeto puede soportar, es decir, si se tratase de una verdadera donación? Si la intensidad de lo visible admite un mínimo, también debe conocer un máximo. Tal como aparece en la caverna de Platón, la visibilidad es un espacio que existe entre dos cegueras. Por un lado, la ceguera por escasez de visibilidad: “[...] ¿crees que han *visto* de sí mismos [los prisioneros], o unos de los otros, otra cosa que las sombras proyectadas por el fuego en la parte de la caverna que tienen frente a sí?” (Platón, 1986, VII, 515a, 338-339); por otro lado, la ceguera por exceso de visibilidad: “Y si se le forzara a *mirar* hacia la luz misma, ¿no le dolerían los ojos y trataría de eludirla, volviéndose hacia aquellas cosas que podía percibir, por considerar que éstas son realmente más claras que las que se le muestran?” (Platón, 1986, VII, 515e, 340). Se puede entonces pensar un fenómeno que sea invisible por resplandor y no por falta de intuición. Este es el caso del fenómeno saturado según la

cualidad que Marion llama “ídolo” cuyo paradigma es el efecto estético que impone su fenomenicidad a quien es capaz de someterse a su propia regla mediante un proceso de anamorfosis (Vinolo, 2017). En este caso, el sujeto, lejos de constituir el fenómeno se abandona a su manifestación.

La saturación según la relación es la tercera modalidad de los fenómenos saturados y nace a raíz que, en Kant: “[...] *la experiencia sólo es posible mediante la representación de una necesaria conexión de las percepciones.*” (*KrV* A176/B218). Todo fenómeno debe inscribirse dentro de una red de relaciones que le provee su sitio. Por ejemplo, todo fenómeno se da en tanto que causa o efecto de otro fenómeno. No obstante, lo que Marion llama la Carne (Henry, 2001) violenta la relacionalidad externa de todo fenómeno ya que, en tanto que Carne, nuestro cuerpo se auto-afecta y está en relación consigo mismo en cada momento en el cual se relaciona con otros cuerpos, tal como se puede experimentar en la paradoja siguiente: uno puede ver sin ser visto, escuchar sin ser escuchado; sin embargo, no es posible tocar sin ser tocado (Derrida, 2011) por lo que existe una auto-referencialidad originaria de la Carne que hace de ésta un fenómeno específico en cuanto a su capacidad de entrar en relación, y satura toda relación en una doble relación que es, a la vez, causa y efecto.

Finalmente, la cuarta modalidad de la saturación se refiere, en Marion, a la superación de la rúbrica de la modalidad que encontramos en el fenómeno saturado del ícono. Las categorías kantianas de la modalidad se distinguen de las otras en tanto que remiten al pensamiento y no a los objetos ni a sus relaciones. Para que los objetos sean cognoscibles es necesario, primero, que sean posibles, es decir, que se puedan acordar con condiciones de posibilidad que remiten en última instancia al sujeto: “El postulado de la posibilidad de las cosas exige, pues, que el concepto de éstas concuerde con las condiciones formales de una experiencia en general.” (*KrV* A220/B267). La efectividad del fenómeno debe ser precedida por su posibilidad y, por lo tanto, por su pre-visión subjetiva, lo que reduce toda fenomenicidad a su modalidad objetual. Ahora bien, es posible, para Marion, que ciertos fenómenos saturen esta posibilidad y que su efectividad se dé previamente a su posibilidad. Esto implicaría una contra-experiencia en la cual no es el sujeto que somete el fenómeno a sus propias condiciones de posibilidad sino la efectividad del fenómeno que impone, por su simple efectividad, su posibilidad *a posteriori*. Es el caso del rostro que impone el desplazamiento o el descentramiento del sujeto que de constituyente del fenómeno pasa a ser simple testigo de su surgimiento: “Lejos de poder constituir ese fenómeno, el *Yo* se experimenta como constituido por él. Al sujeto constituyente le sucede pues el testigo -el testigo constituido.” (Marion, 2008a, 353).

Encontramos entonces una doble fuente kantiana en la fenomenología de la donación. No sólo la saturación proviene de la articulación kantiana de la intuición con el concepto, y más precisamente de su articulación tal como aparece en la Idea estética, sino además incluso dentro del campo de los fenómenos saturados, la partición de éstos en cuatro modalidades (acontecimiento, ídolo, Carne e ícono) surge a raíz de las rúbricas kantianas.

3. Lo sublime de la saturación

Es en la estética kantiana donde más se evidencia la efectividad del fenómeno saturado, y más precisamente en lo sublime: “Kant ofrece un ejemplo de fenómenos saturados tanto más significativo porque no se vincula, como en el caso de Descartes, a la teología racional, sino al ejercicio finito de las facultades: se trata en efecto de lo sublime.”

(Marion, 2008a, 357). El problema de lo sublime surge en Kant con el objetivo de contestar a una objeción en contra de su teoría estética tal como aparece en la *Análitica de lo bello*. Efectivamente, lo bello corresponde a la percepción de cierta forma en tanto que remite a una finalidad. Ciertamente es que esta finalidad es una finalidad sin fin y que la forma es subjetiva; sin embargo, el juicio estético en lo que se refiere a lo bello sigue siendo un juicio formal. Ahora bien, gracias a la lectura del texto de Edmund Burke sobre lo sublime (Burke, 2014), en 1773, en la traducción de Christian Garve (Gramont, 1996), Kant debe responder a la posibilidad de una estética de lo informe: a la belleza de la forma debe añadirse el análisis de una estética de lo informe. Burke había distinguido el placer simple <pleasure> (de lo bello) de la delicia <delight> ya que el primero es un sentimiento positivo cuando el segundo es un placer negativo que nace cuando cesa un gran dolor. De ahí que vincule lo sublime con las pasiones de la compasión y del miedo, paradigmáticas de la tragedia. Pero el punto central de lo sublime en Burke es que está vinculado con la imaginación y el infinito. A diferencia del tratado *De lo sublime* (Aristotle, 1995) de Pseudo-Longino que hacía de lo sublime lo que supera la razón, es decir, lo que es infinito en sí, Burke vincula lo sublime con el infinito de la imaginación, es decir, con un infinito subjetivo¹⁵. Así, Burke permite llevar lo sublime del lado del infinito subjetivo e inmanente. Ahora bien, puesto que Kant en su teoría de lo bello estableció la forma en tanto que límite¹⁶, debe necesariamente responder a la posibilidad de lo ilimitado y de lo infinito en estética. De esta manera (Séguy-Duclot, 2018, 241) no es necesario pensar, a diferencia de lo que hace Lyotard (1991), que lo sublime en Kant opera una ruptura o una brecha teórica en su filosofía, sino más bien se inscribe dentro de la continuidad de la exposición de una tesis filosófica y de la respuesta a objeciones. Pero también se entiende en qué medida lo sublime en Kant puede interesar a Marion y a su fenomenología de la donación ya que, mediante este infinito subjetivo e inmanente es posible pensar un fenómeno que se da, que se sigue dando tal como lo hace todo fenómeno, pero que goza de la especificidad de darse por encima de la capacidad de recepción de esta donación por el sujeto.

La definición general de lo sublime establece una relación entre tres términos: “Se puede describir así lo sublime: es un objeto (de la naturaleza) *cuya representación determina al ánimo para pensar la insuficiencia de la naturaleza como presentación de ideas*.” (KU, Comentario general). Lo sublime pone así en relación un objeto de la naturaleza, el ánimo (o espíritu, y más precisamente la imaginación), y las Ideas de la razón. Al ver por ejemplo un océano, la imaginación tiende a presentarlo dentro de la intuición de una totalidad, en lo que fracasa. Pero, precisa Kant, en este fracaso yace el secreto de lo sublime. El fracaso se da en tanto que presentación negativa de una Idea que es por definición impresentable, o no presentable de manera adecuada. De ahí la manifestación inmediata, en el texto de Kant, de la desvinculación de lo sublime con las

¹⁵ Por este motivo, Nicolas Boileau que tradujo el texto de Pseudo-Longino en 1674 pudo reducir lo sublime a Dios y a sus obras.

¹⁶ “Lo bello de la naturaleza atañe a la forma del objeto, que consiste en la limitación [...]” (KU, §23)

formas de la sensibilidad, desvinculación presentada en términos de desbordamiento: “[...] lo auténticamente sublime no puede estar contenido en ninguna forma sensible, sino que sólo atañe a ideas de la razón [...]” (KU, §23). Así, es en términos de incapacidad de contener un dato sensible que se piensa lo sublime por lo que desborda los márgenes de la intuición sensible. Lo sublime no es entonces ni el objeto (un objeto no puede ser sublime ya que el objeto es lo que entra dentro del marco de las condiciones de posibilidad del conocimiento), ni las Ideas de la razón, pero el simple movimiento de fracaso de la imaginación para presentar algo irrepresentable¹⁷.

Pero ¿de dónde proviene el fracaso de la imaginación, y por qué no le es posible presentar la Idea dentro de una totalidad? Para entender este punto es necesario regresar a la misma definición de lo sublime: “Llamamos *sublime* a lo que es *absolutamente grande*.” (KU, §25). El simple hecho de hablar de grandeza en términos absolutos ya evidencia la dificultad puesto que lo grande, tal como lo pequeño, deberían evaluarse siempre en relación, en comparación con otro objeto. Pero lo absolutamente grande es lo “[...] (*non comparative magnum*) [...] aquello que es grande por sobre toda comparación” (KU, §25). Lo absolutamente grande no se puede comparar porque no está localizado en el espacio ni en el tiempo, no es extensivo ni intensivo. Así, las formas *a priori* de la sensibilidad, y por lo tanto lo dado, marcan los límites detrás de los cuales yace lo sublime ya que toda comparación debería darse dentro de un tiempo y, a veces, de un espacio.

Lo sublime se vincula entonces con el fenómeno saturado ya que es el fenómeno del desacuerdo de las facultades, del conflicto de las facultades y del fracaso del equilibrio. Por este motivo, lo sublime se piensa en superación de las cuatro rúbricas establecidas en la *Crítica de la razón pura*. En lo que se refiere a la cantidad, lo sublime se distingue por su grandeza; no por el hecho de ser grande, pero por el hecho de ser absolutamente grande que se distingue como: “[...] *aquello en comparación con lo cual todo lo demás es pequeño*.” (KU, §26). Se evidencia aquí la saturación de la cantidad ya que, según las matemáticas, la grandeza no conoce ningún tipo de máximo. Tal como se evidencia en el caso del infinito potencial, uno siempre puede añadir una unidad a un número de manera ilimitada sin que nunca se llegue a un número que sea absolutamente grande. De ahí que, para Marion, lo sublime sature la fenomenicidad común ya que: “[...] según la cantidad, lo sublime no tiene ni forma ni orden, puesto que es grande “[...] sin comparación”, absolutamente y no comparativamente [*absolute, schlechthin, bloss*].” (Marion, 2008a, 357). Lo sublime debe pensarse, entonces, según la regla del infinito actual, de la presentación inmediata de una totalidad que no puede ser presentada según el patrón de ninguna unidad, lo que se evidencia en la diferencia entre lo monstruoso (que manifiesta la

¹⁷ “Nada, pues, que pueda ser objeto de los sentidos, ha de ser llamado sublime, considerado en este plano. Pero precisamente porque en nuestra imaginación reside una tendencia a la progresión hacia lo infinito, y en nuestra razón, una pretensión de absoluta totalidad como idea real, esa misma inadecuación de nuestra facultad de estimación de magnitudes de las cosas del mundo sensorial para esta idea es lo que despierta el sentimiento de una facultad suprasensible en nosotros; [...]” (KU, §25)

grandeza dentro de un sistema de medición) y lo colosal (que marca una grandeza que violenta la misma posibilidad de medir)¹⁸.

En el caso de la cualidad, lo sublime se piensa en referencia a una evaluación cualitativa que se asemeja con aquella que implica, en el campo práctico, el respeto: “*Respeto* es el sentimiento de la inadecuación de nuestra facultad para alcanzar una idea *que es para nosotros ley*.” (KU, §27). No se debe minimizar la diferencia entre lo sublime y el respeto ya que el respeto es respeto frente a una ley cuando lo sublime es sublime frente a un objeto de la naturaleza, razón por la cual Kant propone el concepto de subrepción¹⁹ que permite denunciar la extensión del respeto por una ley dentro de nosotros al respeto hacia objetos que nos son externos. Aquí, el objeto de la naturaleza es el beneficiario ilegítimo de un proceso semejable al respeto. Efectivamente, el respeto implica un doble movimiento. Primero, el sujeto se ve negado en su sensibilidad por lo que la evaluación de sí corresponde a un momento de humillación. Por otro lado, esta humillación revela la razón pura práctica del sujeto con lo que la evaluación se hace positiva. Sin minimizar la subrepción que yace entre ambos, lo sublime implica este doble movimiento que genera primero la tristeza de la inadecuación de la imaginación con la grandeza absoluta, y, segundo, la felicidad de la adecuación de la imaginación con las Ideas de la razón. Así, lo sublime satura la cualidad ya que: “[...] contradice el gusto en tanto que “placer negativo” y provoca un “sentimiento de desmesura”, de “monstruosidad”.” (Marion, 2008a, 357).

En lo que se refiere a la relación, lo sublime está vinculado con el sentimiento de temor²⁰ que se establece en las relaciones de causalidad en la existencia. El temor está vinculado con la relación de violencia que se establece a través de una comparación de las potencias entre la potencia que amenaza y la potencia que, más débil, se siente amenazada. No obstante, lo sublime no es la visión de una potencia que nos amenaza realmente sino más bien de una potencia que podría amenazarnos. La visión de una tormenta en el océano es sublime cuando uno está a salvo en la orilla²¹, por lo que lo sublime no yace en la

¹⁸ “Pues en esta especie de representación no encierra la naturaleza nada que fuera portentoso (ni algo espléndido u horrendo); la magnitud que es aprehendida puede haber recrecido cuanto se quiera, siempre que pueda ser comprendida en un todo por la imaginación. *Monstruoso* es un objeto cuando por su tamaño aniquila el fin que constituye a su concepto. En cambio, se denomina *colosal* a la mera presentación de un concepto, que es casi demasiado grande para cualquier representación (que linda con lo relativamente portentoso); es que el fin de la presentación de un concepto es dificultado por el hecho de ser la intuición del objeto casi demasiado grande para nuestra facultad de aprehensión. - Pero un juicio puro sobre lo sublime no debe tener fin alguno del objeto por fundamento de determinación si ha de ser estético y no estar mezclado con algún juicio del entendimiento o de la razón.” (KU, §25)

¹⁹ “El sentimiento de lo sublime en la naturaleza es, pues, respeto hacia nuestra propia destinación, el cual mostramos a un objeto de la naturaleza a través de una cierta subrepción (sustitución de un respeto por el objeto en lugar del respeto hacia la idea de la humanidad en nuestro sujeto), lo que nos hace, por así decir, intuíble la superioridad de la destinación racional de nuestras facultades de conocimiento por sobre la más grande potencia de la sensibilidad.” (KU, §27)

²⁰ “Cuando la naturaleza ha de ser juzgada por nosotros como sublime [en sentido] dinámico, tiene que ser representada como inspiradora de temor [...]” (KU, §28)

²¹ “Rocas que penden atrevidas y como amenazantes; tempestuosas nubes que se acumulan en el cielo y se aproximan con rayos y estruendo; los volcanes con toda su violencia devastadora; los huracanes con la desolación que dejan tras de sí; el océano sin límites, enfurecido; la alta catarata de un río poderoso y otras cosas parecidas, hacen de nuestra potencia para resistirlos, comparada con su poderío, una pequeñez

contemplación de una potencia que nos amenaza y nos violenta sino en una que podría hacerlo: “La naturaleza considerada en el juicio estético como poderío que no tiene prepotencia sobre nosotros, es *sublime dinámicamente*.” (KU, §28). Si bien entonces, lo sublime se manifiesta en una comparación de la potencia de la naturaleza con la potencia del ser humano, esta diferencia de potencia, o la ruptura de la resistencia de la potencia humana frente a la potencia de la naturaleza, no debe ser efectiva: “[...] en el enjuiciamiento estético (sin concepto), la superioridad sobre los obstáculos sólo puede ser juzgada según la magnitud de la resistencia. Ahora bien, lo que nos esforzamos por resistir es un mal, y cuando no encontramos nuestra potencia a la altura de éste, un objeto del temor.” (KU, §28). Así, en lo sublime, uno no tiene efectivamente miedo, pero juzga el objeto como capaz de generarle algún tipo de temor. Pero con el fin de temer una fuerza más grande que la nuestra, es necesario algún patrón para poder compararlas ya que una fuerza que uno podría medir no generaría el sentimiento estético de lo sublime ya que se podría someter al cálculo y a la medida del entendimiento; pero, por otro lado, una fuerza total que nos amenazaría directamente sería objeto de terror, pero no de un sentimiento estético. Lo sublime debe provocar cierto temor, pero un temor que se pueda sobrepasar. Ahora bien, puesto que no estamos en situación de superarlo técnicamente (ya que no podemos dominarlo mediante las categorías del entendimiento), sólo podemos tener la sensación de vencerlo moralmente. De ahí la importancia de sentirse seguro para poder gozar de la violencia de lo sublime ya que es la fuerza del alma que se opone a la potencia de la naturaleza y no la fuerza del cuerpo. Por este motivo, lo sublime satura las categorías de la relación ya que, por un lado, implica necesariamente la relación entre dos potencias, y no obstante la violenta ya que siempre surge al establecer relaciones entre dos potencias inconmensurables, que son cualitativamente diferentes ya que juegan sobre dos campos distintos: aquel de lo físico y de lo moral, de la naturaleza y de la libertad. Por este motivo, lo sublime excluye todo tipo de analogía: “Según la relación, lo sublime escapa muy claramente a toda analogía y a todo horizonte [...]” (Marion, 2008a, 357).

Finalmente, lo sublime satura también las categorías de la modalidad. El problema yace aquí sobre todo en la categoría de la necesidad. La teoría estética de Kant estableció que lo bello es inmediatamente objeto de comunicación ya que uno espera que lo que percibe como bello pueda ser compartido por los otros seres humanos. Este no es el caso para lo sublime²² por lo que podría aparecer en tanto que contingente más que como necesario. Lo contingente es singular cuando lo necesario debería ser universal. En un primer momento, se podría pensar que el sentimiento de lo sublime es contingente ya que requiere de cierta predisposición del espíritu: “El temple de ánimo para el sentimiento de lo sublime demanda una receptividad del ánimo a las ideas [...]” (KU, §29), predisposición que se

insignificante. Mas su vista se hace tanto más atrayente cuanto más temible es, con tal que nos hallemos seguros [...]” (KU, §28)

²² “[...] no podemos tan fácilmente prometernos acceso a otros con nuestro juicio sobre lo sublime en la naturaleza. Pues parece requerirse una cultura lejanamente mayor, no sólo de la mera facultad de juzgar sino también de las facultades de conocimiento que están en su fundamento para poder emitir un juicio sobre esta excelencia de los objetos naturales.” (KU, §29)

construye mediante la cultura²³. De ahí el ejemplo del campesino saboyano, incapaz de entender la voluntad del alpinista de escalar los montes con el fin de acceder a paisajes sublimes y de volver a bajar. Sin embargo, aunque el acceso a lo sublime sea más fácil para quien goza de cierta cultura, no significa que éste sea cultural o convencional ya que yace en última instancia: “[...] en la disposición para el sentimiento relativo a las ideas (prácticas), es decir, para el sentimiento moral.” (KU, §29). Por un lado, entonces, hay algo contingente en lo sublime ya que se ve reforzado por la cultura; por otro lado, hay algo potencialmente necesario ya que todos disponen de las facultades necesarias para acceder a él. De ahí que la capacidad de percibir lo bello se exija de toda persona cuando la capacidad de percepción de lo sublime la: “[...] exigimos sólo bajo una suposición subjetiva [...]” (KU, §29).

Lo sublime violenta entonces cada una de las categorías que fundamentan la fenomenicidad común, enmarcándola dentro de los límites de las capacidades receptoras del sujeto y permite explicar el fracaso de la imaginación. Pero, sobre todo, explica que a pesar de este fracaso no se entre en un régimen de no-fenomenicidad sino que sea posible que por encima de las condiciones de la donación, se siga dando algún tipo de fenomenicidad.

Conclusión: la revelación de lo sublime

Lo sublime kantiano fundamenta entonces la fenomenología de la donación de Jean-Luc Marion en lo que mediante su fenomenalización más allá de las condiciones de posibilidad que le impone el sujeto, evidencia el carácter dado del fenómeno, así como el carácter necesariamente absoluto y excesivo del don. Pero más aún, lo sublime debe cumplir con cuatro referencias a las categorías del entendimiento ya que su sensación: “[...] tiene que ser, según la *cantidad*, universalmente válida, según la *cualidad*, sin interés, y según la *relación*, hacer representable una conformidad a fin subjetiva, y a ésta, según la *modalidad*, como necesaria.” (KU, §24). Ciertamente es que la referencia a las cuatro categorías es una referencia negativa puesto que lo sublime las violenta. No obstante, esta cuádruple referencia se asimila al movimiento de saturación de la saturación, o de saturación al cuadrado que evidencia la quinta modalidad de la saturación que Marion llama revelación y de la cual la Revelación cristiana no es más que uno de los posibles: “El fenómeno de revelación se define pues como un fenómeno que concentra en sí mismo las cuatro acepciones del fenómeno saturado [...]” (Marion, 2008a, 380). En tanto que fenomenólogo, Marion nunca confunde la revelación que es un tipo, una “[...] saturación de quinto tipo” (Marion, 2008a, 379), y la Revelación tal como aparece en teología. Por esta razón, la revelación describe una posibilidad fenoménica sin que se tenga que tomar

²³ “De hecho, sin desarrollo de ideas éticas, al hombre rústico le aparecerá como meramente aterrador aquello que, preparados por la cultura, llamamos sublime. En las pruebas de la violencia de la naturaleza en su destrucción y en la gran medida de su poderío, ante el cual se desvanece el suyo hasta la nada, verá pura penuria, peligro y menesterosidad que circundarían al hombre que estuviera sujeto a él.” (KU, §29)

posición sobre la efectividad de la Revelación cristiana²⁴. Como saturación de la saturación, es decir, en tanto que saturación de las cuatro rúbricas kantianas, se presenta como la paradoja de paradojas, *paradoxotaton*: “La manifestación de Cristo es válida pues como paradigma del fenómeno de revelación según los cuatro modos de saturación de la paradoja.” (Marion, 2008a, 381).

Por un lado, encontramos en el surgimiento de Cristo un carácter acontecimiential (que satura la cantidad) ya que aparece según la modalidad de un rayo: “Porque como el relámpago sale por oriente y brilla hasta occidente, así será la venida del Hijo del hombre.” (Mateo 24, 27). Pero el relámpago no es algo exterior a Cristo ya que su advenimiento lo califica en tanto que Cristo: “El que viene detrás de mí se ha puesto delante de mí, porque existía antes que yo.” (Juan 1, 15). Nada mejor evidencia el carácter acontecimiential del arribo de Cristo que su ignorancia en cuanto a su regreso: “Estad atentos y vigilad, porque ignoráis cuando será el momento.” (Marcos 13, 33). Pero Cristo también satura la cualidad según el ídolo ya que su visibilidad satura el grado máximo de visibilidad de los fenómenos tal como aparece, por ejemplo, en Marcos: “Y se transfiguró delante de ellos, y sus vestidos se volvieron resplandecientes, muy blancos, tanto que ningún batanero en la tierra sería capaz de blanquearlos de ese modo.” (9, 2-3). Pero también se evidencia en Juan: “Mucho tengo todavía que deciros, pero ahora no podéis con ello.” (16, 12). Por este motivo, el aparecer de Cristo violenta la visibilidad: “Cuando les dijo: “Yo soy”, retrocedieron y cayeron en tierra.” (Juan 18, 6) e incluso aterró: “Ellas salieron huyendo del sepulcro, pues un gran temblor y espanto se había apoderado de ellas, y no dijeron nada a nadie porque tenían miedo...” (Marcos 16, 8). Lo mismo sucede en cuanto a la relación y su saturación por la Carne. El fenómeno de Cristo se da en una desvinculación radical con los otros fenómenos ya que Cristo no es de este mundo, no aparece en el mundo sino en tanto que mundo puesto que resignifica todas las relaciones de significaciones que suelen tejer un mundo: “[...]: pero mi Reino no es de aquí.” (Juan 18, 36). Finalmente, Cristo también se da según la iconicidad que satura la modalidad ya que su aparecer se da en tanto que contra-experiencia que invierte la primacía del sujeto en la constitución de los fenómenos. Frente a Cristo, de constituyente, el sujeto pasa a ser simple testigo de un fenómeno que se da, a tal punto que él mismo constituye sus discípulos invirtiendo el sentido de la mirada constituyente: “Jesús, fijando su mirada en él, le dijo: «Tú eres Simón, el hijo de Juan; tú te llamarás Cefas» -que quiere decir, «Piedra».” (Juan 1, 42).

Se entiende así en última instancia por qué razón lo sublime en Kant es el centro de la fenomenicidad saturada tal como aparece en Marion ya que a diferencia de los cuatro otros fenómenos saturados (acontecimiento, ídolo, Carne e ícono) que saturan, cada uno, una de las rúbricas de la cantidad, la cualidad, la relación o la modalidad, lo sublime presenta la efectividad de una cuádruple saturación, lo que hace de éste una saturación de la

²⁴ “Así pues, si privilegiamos como ejemplo preciso de un fenómeno de revelación la manifestación de Jesucristo, descrita en el Nuevo Testamento (y conforme a los paradigmas de las teofanías del Antiguo), no estamos procediendo en menor medida como fenomenólogo -describir una posibilidad fenomenológica dada-, ni como filósofo -confrontar el Cristo visible con su rol conceptual posible (tal y como lo hicieron Spinoza, Kant, Hegel o Schelling) para erigirlo eventualmente en paradigma.” (Marion, 2008a, 381)

saturación, es decir, literalmente, tal como la entiende fenomenológicamente Marion, una revelación. El carácter revelador de lo sublime permite entonces presentar un fenómeno de manera negativa, en contradicción con las leyes comunes de la fenomenicidad, y manifestar así la efectividad de un fenómeno que se da en violación de éstas. Por esta razón, ningún fenómeno mejor que la revelación o que lo sublime evidencian, en fenomenología, el carácter incondicional, es decir, dado, de los fenómenos.

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Una teoría crítica de la propiedad.

Sobre el diálogo entre María Julia Bertomeu y Nuria Sánchez

Madrid

A Critical Theory of Property.

On the Dialogue between María Julia Bertomeu and Nuria

Sánchez Madrid

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Resumen

En este trabajo intento hacer algunos aportes al diálogo entre María Julia Bertomeu y Nuria Sánchez Madrid publicado en *Con-Textos Kantianos* en 2019. Me interesa establecer que la teoría kantiana de la propiedad es una teoría crítica que no justifica los derechos de propiedad privada y las relaciones de propiedad existentes sino que sirve para señalar el carácter no absoluto de los derechos de propiedad privada y la necesidad normativa de modificar las relaciones de propiedad existentes.

Palabras clave

propiedad, posesión, pobreza, teoría crítica, Kant

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Abstract

In this paper I wish to contribute to the dialogue María Julia Bertomeu and Nuria Sánchez Madrid have made public in *Con-Textos Kantianos* in 2019. I propose that Kant's theory of property is a critical theory that does not justify actual property rights and relations. On the contrary, it helps explaining the non-absolute character of private property and the need to transform existing social-property relations.

Key words

Property, possession, poverty, critical theory, Kant

Esa capacidad para hacer beneficencia que depende de las riquezas materiales es, en su mayor parte, resultado de que ciertas personas son favorecidas por la injusticia del gobierno, injusticia que introduce una desigualdad de riquezas que hace que las personas necesiten de la beneficencia ajena. Bajo estas circunstancias, la ayuda que el rico pueda prestar a las personas necesitadas, de la que tanto se vanagloria como si fuera algo meritorio, ¿puede ser realmente llamada beneficencia?

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I.

Las discusiones políticas sobre la propiedad en Kant se suelen dar, en general, en el marco temático de los derechos de bienestar y del rol del Estado en la redistribución de la riqueza con el fin de proteger a las personas más vulnerables. Lo más usual es la literatura especializada es analizar el famoso pasaje al respecto en *Doctrina del derecho* (Observación general C, MS 325-326), en el que Kant sostiene que el Estado asume el deber del pueblo de mantener a las personas pobres y que tiene, por lo tanto, el derecho de gravar a las personas más ricas para redistribuir la riqueza con ese fin. Algunos de los trabajos clásicos son los de Kaufmann, 1999, LeBar, 1999, Weinrib, 2003, Holtmann, 2004, Varden, 2006, Weinrib, 2008 y Ripstein, 2009 (capítulo 9). En los últimos años, Baiasu, 2014, Sánchez Madrid, 2014 y Davies, 2020 presentaron buenos análisis críticos de esta literatura y propusieron lecturas propias sobre cómo encauzar el debate, con visiones divergentes acerca de la capacidad e incapacidad de la teoría kantiana para justificar derechos de bienestar. Creo que todos estos debates son importantes pero que

tienden a pasar por alto los fundamentos filosóficos más básicos de la cuestión, que son metafísica y normativamente anteriores al diseño institucional del Estado de bienestar o de su contrario y a la especificación de quién tiene qué deber respecto de los derechos sociales.

En nuestro ámbito lingüístico, María Julia Bertomeu y Nuria Sánchez Madrid han discutido la propiedad en Kant en una serie de rigurosos trabajos¹ y recientemente han hecho público en esta revista un interesante debate en el que se ponen en juego las categorías eminentemente políticas de republicanismo y liberalismo y su contraste ideológico respecto de la pobreza y su relación con la sociedad política.² En estas páginas intento hacer algunos aportes al debate entre Bertomeu y Sánchez Madrid, con el fin de proponer algunos lineamientos centrales de mi propia lectura del tratamiento kantiano de la propiedad como una teoría crítica de los derechos positivos de propiedad y las relaciones de propiedad existentes.

Pienso que la discusión central al respecto de la propiedad, la pobreza y los derechos sociales en Kant no tiene que empezar en los derechos de bienestar, sino que debe intentar señalar ante todo el carácter no absoluto de los derechos de propiedad privada (especialmente cuando se trata de la propiedad de los medios de la producción) y la necesidad normativa de modificar las relaciones de propiedad existentes.

Un análisis en este sentido permite, entre otros objetivos deseables, descartar la idea falsa de que la redistribución de la riqueza y los impuestos a las personas pudientes socavan de alguna manera su libertad, idea de inspiración lockeana devenida sentido común que no aparece justificada en la teoría de Kant, pero que vemos aparecer una y otra vez en los artículos sobre derechos sociales en Kant (y en el tratamiento académico y público de la redistribución de la riqueza en general). La lectura cuyos puntos principales presento aquí permite también desarrollar alternativas a la postura liberal dominante en los debates porque enfatiza que la redistribución de la riqueza tiene que abordar el problema básico, i. e., la inequidad en las relaciones de propiedad y la promoción estatal de la desigualdad económica, si de lo que se trata es de transformar las estructuras que generan desposesión.

¹ Cito algunos: Bertomeu, 2005, 2005, 2017. Sánchez Madrid, 2013, 2014, 2018, 2019a.

² Bertomeu, 2019 se concentra en el trabajo de Sánchez Madrid con Pinzani de 2016. Sánchez Madrid, 2019b, responde a las objeciones de Bertomeu.

En la sección II recojo algunas características centrales de la teoría kantiana de la posesión y de la propiedad, en su marcada diferencia con las teorías de cuño grociano-lockeano. En la sección III me involucro en los debates de Bertomeu y Sánchez Madrid. Tengo puntos de acuerdo y de disenso con ambas. Pienso que sus debates han enriquecido las investigaciones kantianas y la filosofía política en lengua castellana y con este trabajo quiero homenajearlas, aunque mis intenciones son siempre más altas que mis logros.

II.

Una de las diferencias radicales entre los tratamientos de la propiedad de Kant, por un lado, y de Grocio (y Locke), por el otro, radica en el modo en que opera la posesión común originaria en sus teorías respectivas.³ En Grocio y en Locke, esta noción es una premisa que describe un estado de cosas histórico y se introduce para explicar cómo se originaron históricamente las relaciones de propiedad y los derechos positivos de propiedad existentes, con el fin de conferirles una fundamentación normativa. La posesión en común grociana y lockeana es, así, parte de la normativización de una distribución de la propiedad dada históricamente, parte de un marco conceptual dentro del cual el estado presente de las relaciones de propiedad es considerado necesario y moralmente justificado por la triple vía del curso de la historia humana, el derecho natural y el consentimiento humano. En estas teorías, el Estado es la garantía positiva de esas relaciones apoyada por el monopolio de la violencia legítima.

En directa oposición a este esquema, en Kant la idea de la posesión común originaria tiene el estatuto de un principio crítico que forma parte de un conjunto de criterios cuya función es evaluar la legitimidad de esas relaciones de propiedad existentes. Si los derechos de propiedad no son compatibles con una comunidad política de reciprocidad en la interacción, en la que todas las personas obligadas a respetar derechos de propiedad participan en la creación omnilateral del corpus legal y las instituciones por las cuales la propiedad privada se convierte en un derecho *stricto sensu*, y si no son compatibles con la posibilidad de que todas las personas tengan propiedad *personal* que garantice su derecho a existir ahí donde están, entonces no son derechos legítimos a los que correspondan deberes y una coacción legítimos, es decir que son una mera imposición. De hecho, esto es precisamente lo que implica la formulación del postulado jurídico de la

³ Véanse los trabajos comparativos de Grocio y Kant de Bertomeu, 2004, Huber, 2016 y Loriaux, 2017. Trabajé esta comparación en Marey, 2019.

razón práctica acerca de la posesión en el § 6: “es deber jurídico actuar respecto de las otras personas de modo tal que lo externo usable pueda convertirse también en lo suyo de cualquiera” (MS, 252).

En contraste con el carácter histórico de la noción grociana y lockeana de una posesión en común inicial de los recursos naturales, entonces, en la sección “El derecho privado” de *Doctrina del derecho*, Kant sostiene que la posesión en común originaria e innata de la tierra es un principio crítico que jamás puede ser definido como *communio primaeva*: “esta comunidad originaria de la tierra y de las cosas sobre ella (*communio fundi originaria*) es una idea que tiene realidad objetiva práctico-jurídica y es absoluta y completamente diferente de la *comunidad primitiva (communio primaeva)*, que es una ficción” (MS, 251). La posesión común kantiana no es una premisa que describa un estado de cosas histórico desde el que se habrían desarrollado legítimamente los derechos de propiedad porque, entre otras razones, es el fundamento de la posibilidad *conceptual* de la noción de una posesión inteligible o jurídica (legítima) de un objeto del arbitrio.

La proposición sobre la posibilidad de una “*possessio noumenon*” establece que el concepto de una posesión sin tenencia física constante y sin ocupación es “necesaria para el concepto de algo externo que es mío o tuyo” (MS, 250). Al ser esta una proposición sintética a priori que va más allá de la analiticidad del concepto de una “posesión empírica” en el sentido kantiano (i. e., más allá de la tenencia física efectiva del objeto en el momento presente), la razón tiene que probar su posibilidad. La justificación normativa de la posibilidad de una posesión puramente jurídica descansa sobre tres principios: el postulado de la razón práctica (MS, 252), la idea de una “posesión innata en común de la superficie de la Tierra” y la idea de una voluntad general que corresponde a priori a esta posesión originaria (MS, 250). En efecto, la posesión en común innata de la tierra, sostiene Kant, “contiene a priori el fundamento de la posibilidad de una posesión [i. e., no propiedad] privada” (MS, 251), *si y solamente si* funciona como criterio de legitimidad junto con la idea de una voluntad general unida a priori (MS, 267).

Además, que la posesión en común kantiana tenga el rol de ser parte de la respuesta de cómo es posible una *posesión* legítima para el uso de objetos externos sin tenencia física constante no indica nada todavía sobre la extensión de esa posesión. Más bien al contrario, la circunscribe a la posesión personal de objetos de uso. El verdadero punto del concepto de una posesión inteligible no es fundar derechos de propiedad sobre grandes extensiones

de tierra sino colocar la pregunta acerca de la posesión (y, consecuentemente, acerca de la propiedad) en el ámbito de la correlación entre derechos y deberes.

Como sabemos, una proposición sobre la violación a la “posesión empírica” (en el sentido estrictamente kantiano del concepto) es analítica porque tal violación es un ejercicio de violencia sobre el cuerpo, que es constitutivo de la persona, de su libertad innata, y no una propiedad privada alienable. Pero cuando se trata de la posesión de objetos sin la tenencia física constante, pasamos a preguntarnos cómo se puede adquirir algo externo como suyo de alguien de manera no arbitraria, de modo de poder generar para otras personas un deber jurídico de abstenerse a usar lo suyo sin su permiso. Para poder conectar la posesión inteligible con un entramado legítimo de derechos y deberes, tenemos que poder conectar la adquisición del objeto con la idea de una voluntad omnilateral. Esta idea nos obliga, a su vez, a aceptar la reciprocidad de la obligación correspondiente a los derechos (*claim-rights* en sentido hohfeldiano) de posesión de las demás personas. Pero esto no quiere decir que cualquier arreglo de derechos existentes de propiedad quede sin más legitimado por la emergencia de una autoridad política que dicte un derecho positivo. La función de la autoridad política en Kant no es la de funcionar como una escribanía, como un notariado que meramente suscriba un *corpus iuris* natural prepolítico, pues para Kant no existe tal *corpus*. Tal como la legislación de la voluntad general rousseauiana no es la mera rúbrica que la autoridad política le preste al mercado, tampoco lo es la voluntad omnilateral kantiana.

Respecto de la posibilidad de articular en el estado de naturaleza un discurso de derechos de propiedad privada más allá de la posesión de los objetos de uso necesarios para sostener una vida vivible Kant es hobbesiano: no se puede hacer tal cosa, no hay derechos naturales de propiedad privada correspondientes a la idea de posesión inteligible. Esto nos da una pista para pensar que la provisionalidad de los derechos de posesión en el estado de naturaleza no quiere decir en lo absoluto que cualquier esquema positivo concreto de propiedad privada sea legítimamente vinculante tal cual existe, que los “derechos de propiedad” sean reclamos que solamente esperan su turno para ser positivizados por cualquier autoridad política, sin sufrir modificaciones en el paso del estado natural al Estado regido por una voluntad omnilateral y recíproca concreta. En su versión positivizada, las ideas críticas kantianas de “posesión empírica” y “posesión inteligible”, centrales en la sección “El derecho privado” de *Doctrina del derecho*, no

remiten entonces a las relaciones de propiedad existentes en cualquier Estado, sino que tejen el entramado normativo para reclamar acceso a derechos de posesión de objetos de uso, entre los que podemos contar, por caso, el acceso a la salud y a una vivienda digna.

En resumen, la idea de la posesión en común *y también* las ideas una “posesión inteligible” o “puramente jurídica” y de una “posesión empírica” son para Kant ideas metafísicas críticas en el sentido de que no describen ni racionalizan estados de cosas respecto de la propiedad privada. Por el contrario, su “realidad objetiva práctica” implica que son criterios normativos que se deben aplicar críticamente a “objetos de la experiencia” (MS, 252-253). Mientras que la historicidad de la posesión en común en Grocio y en Locke nunca pierde su carácter racionalizador, de manera análoga en Kant nunca pierde su carácter crítico: nunca justifica los derechos de propiedad existentes; sirve, por el contrario, para evaluar su legitimidad. El rol crítico que tiene el sistema metafísico jurídico-político kantiano frente a los contextos prácticos concretos no consiste en contraponer una teoría ideal a una realidad todavía imperfecta con la intención de racionalizarla y perfeccionarla. *Una teoría crítica no es una teoría ideal*. Por el contrario, intenta ofrecernos una serie de razones que explican por qué no se da el caso de que los derechos actuales de propiedad excesiva y de los medios de la producción sean legítimos tan sólo por estar legalizados por un derecho positivo.

Mi tesis sobre el rol político crítico de la teoría kantiana de la propiedad permite explicar un punto que en los últimos años se ha convertido en centro de debates entre especialistas de *Doctrina del derecho*: la provisionalidad de los “derechos de propiedad” en el estado de naturaleza.⁴ La provisionalidad de los derechos de propiedad permanece constante incluso en un Estado legal no solamente porque mientras no esté garantizada la vigencia de todas las condiciones de derecho público (estatales, internacional y cosmopolita) no podemos hablar de derechos completamente perentorios, sino también en el sentido de que los derechos positivos existentes de propiedad no son absolutos ni incondicionales. Esto no quiere decir que las personas deban ver, según Kant, sus derechos sociales legítimamente superados por alguna razón de Estado o por supuestas necesidades del mercado. Lo que sí significa es que, en virtud de las ideas críticas de posesión empírica, posesión inteligible y posesión en común innata y originaria de la tierra, puede trazarse, por ejemplo, una distinción normativa entre propiedad de los objetos de uso

⁴ Algunos de los trabajos más rigurosos son: Ypi, 2012, Stilz, 2014b, Hasan, 2018, Messina, 2019.

personal (que debe ser garantizada), por un lado, y la propiedad desmedida y la propiedad privada de los medios de la producción (que no deben ser consideradas objetos de derechos absolutos), por el otro.

Otro rasgo del tratamiento kantiano de la propiedad es que está diseñado para bloquear cualquier intento de justificación iusnatural de la conquista colonialista e imperialista, sea según la teoría lockeana o de algún otro tipo. En este marco normativo político, el derecho kantiano a existir, a “estar ahí” donde la naturaleza nos puso (MS, 262), es un derecho subjetivo (un *claim-right* en el sentido hohfeldiano) suprajurídico, parte del derecho innato, que protege eminentemente a las personas desposeídas. Otra característica notable de la teoría kantiana de la propiedad que la opone radicalmente al esquema lockeano es que Kant no solamente no justifica la preferibilidad moral de un tipo de producción por sobre otros sino que además explícitamente admite en su sistema la propiedad comunitaria del suelo y las formas económicas de pueblos no sedentarios:

¿Se puede tener algo como lo suyo sobre un suelo del que ninguna parte pertenece a alguien? Sí, como en Mongolia, donde todo el suelo le corresponde al pueblo pero su uso a cada individuo, por lo que cualquiera puede dejar su equipaje, lo que tiene, o recuperar el caballo que se le escapó. [...] – / 266 / ¿Pueden dos pueblos (o familias) vecinos oponerse mutuamente a la adopción de un modo determinado de uso de un suelo, por ejemplo un pueblo cazador a un pueblo pastor o agrícola, o estos a unos pueblos colonos, etc.?⁵ Por supuesto que no, porque mientras se mantengan en sus territorios, el modo en el que quieran *residir* en ellos es discrecional (MS, 265-266).

Hay una diferencia ulterior entre las interpretaciones tradicionales y la de Kant, respectivamente, de la idea de la posesión en común. En Grocio, Pufendorf y Locke, podemos tomar cosas del acervo común y convertirlas en objetos de nuestra propiedad privada bajo la condición de que lo hagamos para satisfacer el fin natural de preservarnos. El fundamento filosófico de la posesión en común es, en estas teorías, teleológico y teológico: los recursos naturales nos fueron donados en común *exclusivamente* a la especie humana por la divinidad y *exclusivamente con el objetivo* de preservarnos pacíficamente, que es a su vez un objetivo también dado por la divinidad. Este fin natural es universal y

⁵ Kant se refiere aquí a los pueblos que migran colectivamente (por ejemplo, porque deben huir de sus países de origen, no se refiere al colonialismo de colonos) y se establecen pacíficamente, sin dominar ni subyugar a otros pueblos sino conviviendo con ellos, quienes por lo demás los reciben hospitalariamente.

absoluto y por lo tanto su consecución triunfa por sobre cualquier otra consideración, como por ejemplo el daño que causa la extracción intensiva de recursos naturales al ambiente, a los territorios, a las formas de vida que no se adecuan a ciertos modos de producción y a la vida de los animales no humanos. En estos esquemas, la Tierra es *solamente para los seres humanos*, que se relacionan a su vez con ella sólo como apropiadores privados. En fuerte contraposición con esto, la filosofía práctica de Kant cancela toda justificación y todo modo de argumentación teológico-teológicos. En efecto, su concepción de una posesión en común originaria no está asociada a un fin natural que la divinidad nos haya impuesto, sino a la interacción práctica, a la influencia recíproca de nuestras acciones en las libertades, las condiciones materiales y las vidas de las otras personas.

En Kant, la antigua idea iusnatural de la posesión en común originaria de la tierra se desplazó, entonces, desde una premisa teológica y teleológica destinada a fundamentar el carácter absoluto de los derechos de propiedad y la superioridad iusnatural del modo de producción capitalista hacia una concepción *de la interacción práctica de las personas y de las consecuencias normativas de esta interacción*. Uno de los usos principales que da Kant a la idea de posesión en común es que cuando pretendemos afirmar derechos de propiedad no estamos sacando cosas de un acervo común, como si el planeta fuera una gran despensa a nuestra disposición, ni que damos un mejor cumplimiento a los fines del *corpus* legal natural cuanto más riqueza produzcamos de la extracción y explotación de los recursos naturales. El punto de Kant es que al tomar objetos para nuestro uso estamos pretendiendo generar deberes para con las demás personas y, en consecuencia, necesariamente necesitamos un entramado normativo jurídico establecido de manera omnilateral para regular esos derechos y deberes de manera recíproca. El sentido básico de la idea de que la tierra, los recursos naturales y la Tierra son en común es, en Kant, que compartimos nuestro lugar de residencia, que lo habitamos de modo tal que nuestras acciones tienen influencia recíproca en la vida de las demás personas y que tenemos que convertir esa interdependencia en interacciones justas.

El carácter crítico de la lectura que planteo nos recuerda que Kant no eligió el camino que desemboca en el liberalismo económico, sino que instado por Rousseau tomó la vía alternativa que conduce a la teoría crítica, aunque esto ponga en cuestión algunas de sus propias posturas, como por ejemplo sus afirmaciones acerca del acceso al voto exclusivo para propietarios. Si bien existe una lectura progresiva republicana como la que

hace Bertomeu (que yo sigo en muchos aspectos), la propuesta del voto propietario y el sexismo político de Kant no son consistentes ni coherentes con su sistema político. Personalmente creo que se trata de dos áreas sobre las que Kant, quien paradójicamente tuvo un origen proletario muy pobre y fue incluso él mismo dependiente (tutor en la casa de una familia adinerada) antes de ser docente universitario (es decir funcionario del Estado), tenía una profunda ignorancia voluntaria que era inexcusable en el siglo XVIII, en el que había movimientos propiamente modernos por los derechos de las mujeres y de las personas no propietarias.

Que Kant no haya previsto las consecuencias radicales igualitarias que se siguen de su tratamiento de la propiedad se deba quizás a que estaba mucho más concentrado en desmontar unas metodologías determinadas en filosofía política, especialmente la derivación absolutista de la autoridad política desde la ética y la teología y el individualismo subjetivista de las teorías del contrato social, principalmente. Muchos autores y autoras elaboran marcos teóricos mucho más progresivos, radicales y revolucionarios que sus propias posturas políticas en sus contextos prácticos inmediatos y esto sucedía en el siglo XVIII tanto como hoy mismo. La inversa también ocurre: muchas personas con posturas progresivas sostienen marcos teóricos regresivos, conservadores y excluyentes que no se condicen con sus maneras de posicionarse en sus comunidades políticas concretas. En resumen, las afirmaciones de Kant sobre el voto de mujeres y personas desposeídas no son límites intrínsecos de su sistema sino anomalías dentro de él que dependen completamente de su ignorancia voluntaria al respecto.⁶ Sobre este punto vuelvo en la sección que sigue.

III.

En un trabajo reciente, Alice Pinheiro Walla desarrolló una teoría de los derechos de bienestar fundamentada en el tratamiento kantiano del derecho de equidad. Este derecho comparte con el derecho de necesidad la categoría de derecho equívoco: se trata de derechos en sentido amplio (*ius latum*) (MS, 233-234) cuya amplitud reside en que no se puede determinar la coacción correspondiente (i. e., el deber) por medio de una ley positiva. Ahora bien, mientras que el derecho de necesidad es un derecho meramente supuesto porque no genera deberes, el derecho de equidad es un derecho “verdadero”. En

⁶ Autoras feministas como Helga Varden y Jean Hampton desarrollaron planteos feministas desde la filosofía kantiana que permiten trazar cartografías antisexistas del pensamiento de Kant.

el caso del derecho de equidad, que no exista un juez competente que pueda definir completamente los efectos jurídicos determinados de los reclamos asociados a la equidad se debe al hecho de que ella es, precisamente, el criterio al que apelamos cuando la ley positiva genera injusticia o es incapaz de subsanarla. La equidad kantiana es un tipo de derecho amplio cuyos reclamos se suscitan y justifican dentro de un marco jurídico positivo que no alcanza por sí mismo a resolver la cuestión problemática de la que se trata.

A partir de estas consideraciones, Pinheiro Walla sostiene que “los derechos basados en la equidad pueden ser usados para crear programas oficiales de bienestar” porque los juicios basados en ella son “juicios extra-positivos sobre los derechos” que “nos pueden ayudar a entender los defectos y limitaciones de los sistemas legales formales existentes que no podríamos identificar desde su interior” (p. 12):

Los derechos de equidad nos ayudan a identificar una clase distintiva de violaciones de derechos, aquellas que son *extrínsecas* a los sistemas formales legales. Además, lo que les debemos realmente a quienes tienen un derecho de equidad es una compensación proporcional a su pérdida específica. Pero como es casi siempre imposible determinar la extensión de las lesiones sufridas como resultado de la desventaja sistemática y cuantificar lo que se debe a cada individuo como compensación, la provisión universal de beneficios sociales puede funcionar de manera sustituta para compensar violaciones de derechos (Pinheiro Walla, 2019, p. 12).

La propuesta de Pinheiro Walla es importante porque ofrece un aporte kantiano a los derechos de bienestar que los concibe como derechos subjetivos (*claim-rights* en sentido hohfeldiano) que pueden fundamentar sólidamente reclamos políticos orientados a conseguir leyes y políticas claras y serias respecto de la garantía estatal del acceso a la seguridad social y las condiciones materiales de una vida digna. La equidad funciona, en esta lúcida lectura, como criterio normativo para la generación de legislación y como criterio evaluativo para la explicación del carácter estructural de las desigualdades y de las injusticias legales:

Al conectar el tratamiento kantiano de los derechos de equidad con lo que Kant llama ‘injusticia general’, sostengo que la provisión de derechos de bienestar puede funcionar como sustitución para la compensación de violaciones de derechos que resultan de la

discriminación jurídica pasada y de la injusticia sistémica permanente. Si bien esta no es la única manera posible de justificar derechos de bienestar, puede explicar la idea *prima facie* de que existe un derecho estricto (*claim-right*) al bienestar. Concluyo que los derechos de bienestar basados en la equidad requerirían proveer una cantidad suficiente de recursos para asegurar una libertad económica significativa. Esto incluye no sólo asegurar la subsistencia básica y acceso a la educación, sino también políticas públicas que aseguren una igualdad de oportunidades eficaz, movilidad social y de ingresos y no-discriminación por género y raza (Pinheiro Walla, 2019, p. 2).

La lectura de Pinheiro Walla no es simplemente una interpretación de Kant, es una teoría fructífera por derecho propio y tiene un gran potencial igualitario para guiar la praxis política y legislativa en el marco de las democracias existentes. Es, además, una lectura rigurosa y original de Kant a la que me adhiero. Mi propia lectura funciona como complemento a esta teoría y la intención es insistir en que el discurso hegemónico vigente de los derechos de bienestar tiene unas limitaciones que son intrínsecas a todo esquema redistributivo que no ponga en cuestión el discurso del carácter absoluto de los derechos de propiedad y que tome la propiedad privada de los medios de la producción como *prima facie* justificada normativamente. La provisión de los derechos de bienestar es reparativa de injusticias económicas que son generadas y promovidas institucional y legalmente. El carácter crítico de la teoría kantiana de la propiedad en mi lectura implica la puesta en cuestión de la legitimidad de las relaciones de propiedad que suscitan esas injusticias.

María Julia Bertomeu ha resaltado la importancia de la reflexión kantiana sobre las relaciones de propiedad. Ella y Nuria Sánchez Madrid han discutido largamente sobre el significado político de la independencia económica en Kant y su rol en la distinción entre ciudadanos activos y pasivos. En esta discusión, Sánchez Madrid presenta una visión global de la filosofía política kantiana que toma como punto de partida algunas conocidas afirmaciones de *Teoría y práctica* (TP, 292ss) sobre la desigualdad económica y su permisibilidad, mientras no choque con la oportunidad de acceso a la independencia económica. En los pasajes de *Teoría y práctica*, esta desigualdad es tolerada, de hecho, cuando no implica la negación del acceso al estatuto de *sui iuris*, por lo tanto, cuando están abolidos todos los privilegios jurídicos hereditarios y las grandes propiedades eclesiásticas y de corporaciones de nobleza, y debemos agregar también cuando es acompañada por la asistencia estatal a la pobreza. Aunque difícilmente esta caracterización pueda ser leída

como neoliberal sin más, aisladas del sistema político de Kant, sus afirmaciones sobre la independencia económica sí parecen apuntar en una dirección liberal e individualista que es ajena al pensamiento kantiano. En varios trabajos, María Julia Bertomeu repuso el contexto no sólo sistemático del análisis kantiano de la independencia económica y el derecho al voto sino sobre todo su ubicación en la tradición republicana de izquierdas.

A mi modo de ver Kant —como el grueso del republicanismo clásico— tiene una visión institucional e histórica —y también metafísica, por supuesto— de la justicia y, en general, de la vida político-social. De ahí que su descripción de los ciudadanos activos y pasivos —acaso sorprendente para un ciudadano del siglo XXI—, no es más que un retrato histórico sobre la división del trabajo en su Prusia natal; que sólo se comprende en correspondencia con la institución social de la propiedad de la tierra, entendida como el más importante medio de producción de la época. Pensemos, por ejemplo, en el herrero de la India que va de casa en casa con su martillo, yunque y fuelle para trabajar el hierro de otros, y el carpintero europeo o el herrero capaces de poner a la venta los productos de su trabajo en el mercado público. ¿En qué funda Kant la diferencia entre estos dos grupos de ciudadanos?, ¿cuál es la causa de que el primero sea un ciudadano pasivo y los otros activos? Sin duda alguna, el herrero de la India carece de uno de los atributos jurídicos de los que deben gozar los miembros de una sociedad civil (Estado); tres atributos inseparables de la ‘esencia’ republicana de la ciudadanía. No es libre porque depende de otro para subsistir, tiene que ser mandado o protegido por otros y, por eso mismo, no posee independencia civil (MS, 314-315). Sin embargo, y a diferencia de una concepción liberal de la ciudadanía, el planteo kantiano no tiene una perspectiva meramente individual, sino también —y preferentemente—institucional, anclada en la institución social de la propiedad adquirida. El herrero de la India no es propietario del hierro para fabricar opus —dice Kant haciendo uso de la axiología jurídica romana republicana— por eso no tiene más remedio que ceder a otros el uso de sus fuerzas (*operam*) (TP, 295). Para Kant no es políticamente irrelevante que una gran mayoría de personas están obligadas a ponerse al servicio de otros para subsistir, entre otras cosas porque el concepto de ciudadanía pasiva está en contradicción con los atributos jurídicos propios de la definición de ciudadanía, y muy especialmente con el atributo de la independencia civil (política) (Bertomeu, 2019, p. 175).

El trabajo de Bertomeu muestra acabadamente que el punto principal del tratamiento kantiano de la independencia económica es que Kant reconoce el hecho de que los sistemas políticos, sociales y económicos producen desigualdades económicas que impactan a su vez políticamente y que *no defiende* que lo hagan. La filosofía política kantiana no asume el punto de partida liberal en el individuo soberano que responde solamente al tribunal de la conciencia iusnatural y que no tiene responsabilidad social o política por las desigualdades que producen las relaciones de propiedad, y esto no puede ser dejado de lado en ningún análisis. Kant creía que la pobreza y la dependencia económica son producto de los sistemas políticos y económicos y que estos sistemas son injustos cuando generan desigualdades. Bertomeu destaca acertadamente que Kant piensa la pobreza como efecto de las relaciones de propiedad:

La pobreza no es para Kant un tema de mera justicia distributiva (en el sentido actual y no kantiano del término), ni tampoco asunto de un equívoco derecho de necesidad, sino [objeto de] un derecho estricto del gobernante por delegación, de modo que un estado jurídico que no se ocupe activamente de erradicar la pobreza carece de legitimidad (republicana), al permitir formas de adquisición de la propiedad externa incompatibles con la reciprocidad en la libertad de todos. [...] La pobreza es, para Kant, la contracara de una distribución social de la propiedad adquirida incompatible con la igual libertad de todos según leyes universales (Bertomeu, 2017, pp. 478-479).

Siguiendo estas reflexiones de Bertomeu, el punto que quiero resaltar por mi parte es que estos sistemas generan desigualdades *también porque tienen deficiencias políticas* en un sentido específico: no satisfacen los requisitos de reciprocidad y omnilateralidad. El pensamiento jurídico y político de Kant se construye desde la conciencia de que es necesario cambiar estos sistemas porque no cumplen con estos requisitos básicos que son precondition de toda justicia, aunque no garantía inexpugnable de ella, como bien nos enseña la obra de Sánchez Madrid. El error de Kant es no haber comprendido, en el momento de sacar las conclusiones del diseño institucional de los derechos políticos, que la relación entre dependencia económica y dependencia política es una vía de dos sentidos. Como sugerí más arriba, creo que estamos aquí ante un claro caso de ignorancia voluntaria, no ante un problema del sistema filosófico político de Kant.

Bertomeu sostiene que en la tradición republicana “la independencia que confiere la propiedad no es un asunto de mero interés propio privado, sino de la mayor importancia política, tanto para el ejercicio de la libertad como para la realización del autogobierno republicano. Pues tener una base material asegurada es indispensable para la propia independencia y competencia políticas” (Bertomeu, 2019, p. 497). Sin embargo, la relación entre la independencia material y la calidad de los juicios políticos propios puede interpretarse en el sentido contrario: ¿no ameritaría invertir la definición de ciudadanía activa y pasiva, de modo que la ciudadanía activa fuera ejercida por las personas que corren el riesgo constante de perder sus medios de subsistencia porque estos no les pertenecen? Los privilegios de clase generan sesgos de clase antes que puntos de vista epistémicamente más cualificados. Por otro lado, que las políticas públicas para con las personas pobres sean diseñadas sin la participación de esas personas genera más injusticia social porque implica una negación de la agencia de esas personas que hace que las políticas y leyes resultantes se asemejen más a la caridad privada ejercida por celebridades multimillonarias que sufren del llamado “complejo del salvador” que a acciones políticas progresivas con verdadero potencial de transformación social.

La pregunta política que debemos plantear a la distinción entre ciudadanía activa y pasiva es acerca de si las personas con independencia económica tienen mayor competencia política. Creo que no y creo que Kant tampoco podría haberlo afirmado sin una pérdida considerable de consistencia y coherencia en su sistema. En mi trabajo sobre *Aufklärung* (Marey, 2017 b) sostuve que en Kant la ilustración sólo puede ser una tarea del pueblo, dado que no podemos confiar en la autonomía de una clase intelectual al servicio del poder despótico. Asociada con esta pregunta está la cuestión de cuántas son las personas que realmente tienen su independencia económica a salvo de las injusticias y arbitrariedades del capitalismo.

En una de las últimas notas al pie de *Religión dentro de los límites de la mera razón*, Kant mismo denuncia el sentido despótico de la negación de la libertad civil y política a personas que supuestamente no están “maduras” todavía para ella:

Confieso que no me es cómoda la expresión de la que se sirven incluso hombres inteligentes: “un pueblo determinado (que se encuentra en plena elaboración de una libertad legal) no está maduro para la libertad”, “los siervos de un terrateniente no están

maduros todavía para la libertad”, y también “la gente en general no está madura todavía para la libertad de creencia”. Pero según este presupuesto la libertad nunca llegará, pues según él no estaríamos maduros para ella si no estamos ya en ella (se debe ser libre para poder usar las fuerzas propias orientadas a la libertad). Los primeros intentos serán crudos, ligados comúnmente a una condición más dura y peligrosa que cuando se estaba bajo las órdenes pero también el cuidado de otros. Pero no maduramos para la razón más que por los intentos propios, y tenemos que ser libres para poder hacerlos. No tengo nada en contra de que quienes tienen el poder en las manos, constreñidos por las circunstancias temporales, retrasen mucho la liberación de esas cadenas. Pero convertir en principio que quienes les están sometidos no son aptos para la libertad y que se está justificado a alejarlos de ella es una usurpación de las prerrogativas de la divinidad misma, que creó a los seres humanos libres. Para dominar en el Estado, la casa y la iglesia es más cómodo imponer tal principio. ¿Pero es también más justo? (RGV, 188)

Creo que el verdadero problema con el modo en que Kant lee la distinción entre ciudadanía activa y pasiva es el que describió Rousseau con el concepto de pacto inicuo, que es un pacto de clase. Nada están ganando del pacto político estos ciudadanos pasivos si no tienen garantizada su independencia económica y si su dependencia económica⁷ determina que sean heterónomos políticamente. El error antikantiano de Kant es no haber sacado la conclusión normativa de que la distinción entre ciudadanía activa y pasiva trazada en términos de independencia económica, entendida a su vez de manera descriptiva, no soluciona el problema que pretende denunciar. Kant quería denunciar la dependencia económica, no quería simplemente asumirla en su sistema *à la* Hegel, como un dato de la realidad racional justificado por el universal estatal, de ahí que la distinción sea tan llamativa en el interior de un sistema que tiende a expulsarla.

Creo que es claro para toda la literatura rigurosa de la obra kantiana que Kant piensa en un Estado más o menos “grande”, que hoy llamaríamos un Estado de derecho y de bienestar. La obra de Sánchez Madrid nos alerta sobre los sesgos y prejuicios kantianos en torno a la relación entre agencia política eficaz y pobreza, sesgos estos que están tan extendidos en nuestras culturas que se han vuelto un sentido común regresivo que dificulta y moldea la participación política en las instituciones democráticas, expulsa el disenso y obstruye el cambio social.

⁷ Que incluso podemos cuestionar en términos de plusvalía para invertir la relación: ¿de quién depende la riqueza de las personas ricas, cómo se ha generado esta riqueza?

No es posible interpretar a Kant como un liberal individualista. Pero el riesgo del republicanismo kantiano es, nos vuelve a alertar la obra de Sánchez Madrid, que su republicanismo mismo lo haya conducido a supeditar los derechos económicos y sociales a los derechos políticos y civiles plenos, cuando en rigor su propio criticismo debería haberlo acercado a la conclusión a la que la dialéctica entre sociedad y política nos lleva: que no puede haber una garantía para el acceso concreto a una vida digna si no hay un acceso concreto a la participación política eficaz. Justificar los derechos económicos con base en cuáles son las condiciones materiales para el ejercicio adecuado de los derechos políticos y la participación republicana es poner el carro delante del caballo. Tanto la obsolescencia de la distinción kantiana entre ciudadanía activa y pasiva como su inadecuación en el sistema kantiano me conducen a pensar que ella se debe en gran medida a la persistencia de elementos de su teoría que están marcadamente datados y que provienen de sesgos del autor, aunque la tradición en la que se inscribe Kant sí ofrezca un modo políticamente progresivo de leer las visiones de Kant sobre la independencia económica.

No obstante esto, estoy absolutamente de acuerdo con el núcleo interpretativo de la lectura de María Julia Bertomeu:

Si un acto de adquisición externa es incompatible con la igual libertad de todos (contrario al derecho), instituir obstáculos que pongan trabas a esa “libertad” concuerda con el derecho y con la libertad según leyes universales. Impedir ese tipo de adquisiciones o apropiaciones privadas confiscatorias, por tanto, es una tarea de los gobernantes en un estado jurídico cuyas instituciones sean legítimas (Bertomeu, 2017, p. 498).

Un argumento central de la lectura de Sánchez Madrid (que también usan Pinzani, 2011 y otras publicaciones y Brandt, 1982) consiste en considerar que la posesión intelectual es la mera declaración pública y subsecuente legalización sin modificaciones por parte del Estado de cualquier posesión empírica, donde por “posesión empírica” entienden las propiedades privadas existentes *tout court*, cualquiera sea su origen, y no la noción estrictamente kantiana de “posesión empírica”. Pero toda esta línea argumental descansa sobre varios errores de interpretación. “Posesión empírica” es para Kant el concepto de una posesión como tenencia efectiva de objetos de uso, no es la propiedad privada lockeana a la que se llega al final del capítulo 5 del *Segundo tratado*, en el que la

distribución inequitativa de la tierra y su apropiación excesiva quedan justificadas por el derecho natural y la moralización de la laboriosidad individual.

La posesión empírica kantiana remite a aquella posesión de objetos cuyo uso por otra persona sin mi consentimiento me daña porque implica ejercer violencia sobre mi cuerpo (i. e., sobre mi libertad innata). Se refiere, así, a la manzana en mi mano o al suelo sobre el que tengo derecho a existir, no a grandes extensiones de propiedad privada de la tierra. La posesión inteligible, por su parte, es el mero concepto de la posibilidad de tener cosas sin estar teniéndolas en las manos u ocupándolas físicamente todo el tiempo. Tiene más que ver con la casa que habita una conjunto de personas que con la propiedad de plantaciones en ultramar. Por el otro, los *derechos positivos de propiedad privada* no son ideas metafísicas con realidad objetiva práctica (como sí lo son las posesiones empírica, inteligible y en común), sino aquello que los conceptos de posesión en común innata y originaria de la tierra, posesión empírica y posesión inteligible nos permiten criticar para evaluar su legitimidad, cualquiera sea su origen. Por esto resulta que no es factible interpretar que el paso del estado de naturaleza al Estado sea la consagración jurídica de las relaciones de propiedad existentes.

Los Estados existentes legislan acerca de la propiedad privada y la teoría kantiana tiene la intención de funcionar de manera crítica para conseguir la transformación progresiva de las relaciones existentes de propiedad en relaciones justas, equitativas y recíprocas. En esto consiste el carácter crítico que le atribuyo a la teoría kantiana de la propiedad y del Estado. Creo, sin embargo, que Kant nos quedó debiendo la teoría práctica acerca de cómo hacer esa transformación.

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“Ein weites Feld”. Revisitando el Kant político y republicano

“Ein weites Feld”. Revisiting the Political and Republican Kant¹

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Resumen

El escrito continúa una discusión mantenida por Macarena Marey, María Julia Bertomeu y Nuria Sánchez Madrid en torno a la capacidad de los principios del republicanismo kantiano para transformar el espacio social en un ámbito en el que la autosuficiencia material constituya una de las condiciones fundamentales para que la igualdad formal ante la ley y la libertad política puedan actualizarse. En estas coordenadas se manifiestan también algunas discrepancias en lo concerniente a la percepción kantiana de las injusticias sociales y políticas propias de su tiempo, si bien se alcanza el acuerdo de que el diseño institucional del republicanismo kantiano constituye un dispositivo conceptual suficiente para eliminar la desigualdad económica que comporta pasividad civil y política.

Palabras clave

Kant; republicanismo; propiedad; voluntad omnilateral; autosuficiencia

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Abstract

This paper engages in a discussion held by Macarena Marey, María Julia Bertomeu and Nuria Sánchez Madrid on the capacity of Kant’s republicanism to transform the social realm in a space where material self-sufficiency acts as a key condition to embody formal equality towards the law and political freedom. In this discussion the authors also show some disagreements concerning Kant’s perception of social and political injustice of his time, although they agree in the thesis that the institutional agenda contained in Kantian republicanism means a sound conceptual framework for removing the economic inequality that leads to civil and political passivity.

Key words

Kant; republicanism; property; omnilateral will; self-sufficiency

El artículo de Macarena Marey –a quien considero discípula además de colega- es excelente. Es el texto de quien conjuga un conocimiento muy preciso de la doctrina jurídica y política de Kant con algunos temas de la filosofía política clásica, y proyecta las ideas del Kant republicano a temas de estricta actualidad político-jurídica, y muy especialmente al de la propiedad y la soberanía. En este artículo, además, Marey retoma y propone mediar en la interesante discusión que hemos tenido recientemente con Nuria Sánchez Madrid, originada en un comentario mío al texto publicado por Alejandro Pinzani y Nuria Sánchez Madrid en el 2016, al que luego gentilmente respondió Nuria. (Bertomeu, 2019; Pinzani, Sanchez Madrid, 2016; Sánchez Madrid, 2019).

Hay varios puntos en común entre nosotras, y sobre algunos de los puntos en común —y sus matices— centraré mi comentario.

En primer lugar: las tres aceptamos que Kant no fue un liberal en el sentido europeo del término, pero tampoco lo fue en un sentido anglosajón, metodológicamente centrado en problemas de justicia distributiva *ex post*. Entonces, no fue metodológicamente un liberal anglosajón, porque la justicia distributiva era para Kant la conclusión de un silogismo práctico en el que una corte de justicia –en caso de litigio- debía expedirse sobre si un caso particular era subsumible en la premisa mayor, esto es en la ley (*iusti*) que, entre otras cosas, aporta el criterio *ex ante* para juzgar la legitimidad de las apropiaciones adquiridas. Y esas apropiaciones adquiridas estaban reguladas por la voluntad general –el legislativo- en función del derecho natural de todos a estar ahí “donde la naturaleza y el azar los haya colocado”, esto es, reguladas en función de garantizar universalmente el derecho a existir sin pedir permiso a otros. No se trataba, entonces, de redistribuir el excedente.

Pero tampoco fue un liberal a la europea por varias razones la primera de las cuales es histórica, pero además porque su concepto de libertad externa -política y jurídicamente relevante- no es liberal. La libertad externa sobre la que pivota el entero sistema jurídico-político kantiano tiene como principal atributo el de la *independencia*, pues sólo es externamente libre quien no depende del arbitrio constrictivo de otro cualquiera. Esa

libertad no es absoluta, está recíprocamente embridada por una ley universal *a priori*, cuyo criterio de legitimidad es que el goce de esa independencia sea compatible con el ejercicio de la independencia de todo otro y de manera universal. La idea de libertad externa nos dice Kant, supone reciprocidad y universalidad frente a todo tipo de constricciones externas ilegítimas –del *imperium* y del *dominium*, esto es, constricciones provenientes de un poder arbitrario, público o privado-. Y en función de esta idea, Kant diseñó *a priori* un sistema jurídico-político en su totalidad, desde el derecho privado y el público político, hasta el cosmopolita.

Ahora bien, de esta definición de libertad externa se sigue -para Kant, y para la tradición republicana en general-, que la libertad y la igualdad no son valores en competencia, porque la igualdad es “la reciprocidad en la libertad”. (MS AA 06: 230, 237). Sobre este último punto, sobre los alcances y las limitaciones del principio *a priori* de igualdad de Kant, retomo los valiosos comentarios de Nuria Sánchez Madrid y de Macarena Marey, que me permitirán hacer algunas aclaraciones adicionales sobre nuestras diferencias. Me atrevo a decir que nuestros matices giran en torno a la siguiente pregunta: ¿cuál fue la posición de Kant ante la desigualdad económica que también produce desigualdad política?

En su respuesta a mi comentario, Sánchez Madrid insiste en una dualidad que encuentra en el Kant de la *Doctrina del Derecho*, entre “la protección jurídica que el Estado debe ofrecer a los ciudadanos en su totalidad, y la dualidad que abre sobre problemas de enorme incidencia social y política, como lo son la pobreza y, en general, la desigualdad económica extrema” (Sánchez Madrid, 2019: 180). La autora aclara que *no afirma* que Kant no preste suficiente atención a la capacidad de los sujetos para abrirse paso en el proceso de intercambio de bienes y mostración de talentos, pero que *sí afirma* que el argumento de Kant “adolece de una atención institucional hacia aquellos individuos que son lanzados a los márgenes de la actividad profesional y productiva” (Sánchez Madrid, 2019: 183). Y sobre este último punto, vuelve a expresar su inquietud por el texto kantiano de 1793: “a cada miembro del ser común le debería ser posible alcanzar, dentro del mismo, el nivel en cualquier rango (que le corresponda a un súbdito) al que puedan llevarlo su talento, su diligencia y su suerte”, texto que Kant introdujo en su explicación del principio *a priori* de la “igualdad formal de cada miembro de la sociedad en cuanto súbdito” (TP, AA 08: 292).

El argumento de Sánchez Madrid en este punto –que es más extenso y reconoce que abreva en la crítica de Marx al sistema capitalista, aunque sin confundir a Kant con Marx, por supuesto- es que Kant no prestó suficiente atención a las consecuencias de esa “lógica de la libre competencia” que ensalza en el texto, y cuyo resultado podría ser que la vida de un número creciente de sujetos sea un verdadero infierno ante el cual las instituciones jurídicas no sean capaces de interpretar como injusta a la pobreza, la precariedad y la exclusión (Sánchez Madrid, 2019: 184).

Ahora bien, si la tesis de Sánchez Madrid es que bajo un sistema capitalista avanzado el principio formal de igualdad ante la ley —interpretado como un principio de oportunidades abiertas para todos los merecedores, por lo general tocados por la buena suerte—, se ha usado como baluarte para la defensa de la propiedad privada exclusiva, excluyente y expropiadora, estoy totalmente de acuerdo con su interpretación. Pero creo necesario realizar algunos comentarios de cara al contexto en el que Kant lo introdujo.

En primer lugar, el principio de igualdad formal ante la ley tuvo, tiene y tendrá diferentes consecuencias, según el papel que se le otorgue en su interpretación a los distintos poderes de un estado, esto es, al legislativo, ejecutivo y judicial, y según sea la lectura y la primacía de las funciones de cada uno de ellos. Volveré muy brevemente sobre este punto al final. Bajo la monarquía prusiana absoluta el principio tenía un significado muy preciso y Kant no deja de decirlo en el texto, a saber, garantizar la igualdad formal (y no material) ante la ley, de los individuos súbditos de la corona frente a los atropellos de la administración gubernamental monarco-despótica, por ejemplo, frente a los famosos funcionarios prusianos que debían obedecer, sin razonar. Y el principio también garantizaba una defensa jurídica para los derechos de los súbditos no privilegiados frente a los derechos especiales de los privilegiados. De ahí que Kant agregue de inmediato -luego de hablar de mérito y suerte- que *no es lícito* que existan co-súbditos capaces de cerrar el paso a los demás mediante prerrogativas hereditarias; ni tampoco lo es que quienes heredan grandes fortunas las transmitan a su descendencia, impidiendo que los demás —si su talento, diligencia y suerte lo hacen posible—, estén facultados para elevarse a iguales posiciones, pues de otra manera a algunos les sería lícito coaccionar, sin ser coaccionados. (TP, AA 08: 292-293). No olvidemos, tampoco, que si bien se trata de una igualdad formal y no material, la eliminación de privilegios hereditarios también significaba, en ese momento, la supresión de los clásicos fideicomisos de bienes que no se podían enajenar y estaban creados, como bien de la familia, para sustento de la nobleza. En todo caso, esa lógica de la libre competencia de los meritorios estaba acompañada de fuertes vallas que cerraran el camino a los acumuladores de tierra, que para Kant era la “sustancia” que hacía posible toda apropiación originaria. En este punto, a mi modo de ver, Kant estableció una relación causal clara entre la acumulación de tierras, y el infierno que tan bien describe Nuria Sánchez Madrid.

Es posible que mi interpretación “caritativa” del texto de *Teoría y Praxis*, derive de una antigua costumbre de hurgar siempre en el contexto de los textos kantianos, y muy especialmente en las interpretaciones de sus críticos, conservadores o revolucionarios, y en este caso conservadores. Para decirlo muy brevemente, imaginemos el impacto que pudo tener -en la Prusia dieciochesca y en pleno periodo revolucionario francés en 1793-, la consigna de “igualdad de todos los seres humanos”, entendida como principio *a priori* regulativo de una verdadera constitución jurídica republicana. Para el contra-revolucionario discípulo de Kant, Friedrich Gentz -el traductor de Burke al alemán-, por ejemplo, “las prerrogativas hereditarias no siempre lesionan el derecho a la igualdad de los co-súbditos”, porque “la igualdad jurídica nada tiene que ver con los privilegios

hereditarios, que no le competen al derecho político y deberían juzgarse con criterios de utilidad, pues de otro modo, ese “foro incompetente” (el derecho político) podría atribuirse el conocimiento de otras desigualdades, por ejemplo de patrimonio, como han hecho los audaces, ofuscados y desleales defensores de los derechos humanos” (Bertomeu, 2010, 71). Y Kant se atrevió a concederle al derecho público esa competencia tan temida por su antiguo discípulo: regular los derechos adquiridos.

El artículo de Marey tercia y aporta conceptos que enriquecen la discusión sobre éste y otros puntos en los que las tres kantianas tenemos algunas diferencias. La hipótesis de Marey es que si bien en los pasajes de *Teoría y práctica* la desigualdad de recursos materiales resulta tolerada cuando no implica la negación del acceso al estatuto de *sui iuris*, estos pasajes no deberían ser leídos aislados del sistema kantiano.

Es indudable que las tres convenimos en que Kant fue un pensador sistemático y debe ser leído como tal, y también en que no debe dejarse de lado su interpretación metafísica –racional y *a priori*- de los principios fundamentales del derecho y de la política, que Kant define como la doctrina ejecutiva del derecho. Coincidimos también, para decirlo con Marey, en el carácter crítico de la teoría kantiana de la propiedad adquirida, fundada en la propiedad común original de la tierra, que implica la puesta en cuestión de las relaciones de propiedad que suscitan injusticias. Y, por último, coincidimos con Marey y Sánchez Madrid, en que Kant reconoce que los sistemas políticos, sociales y económicos producen desigualdades que impactan a su vez políticamente.

Nuestras diferencias -de matices- giran en torno a identificar lo que Marey denomina el “error” y Sanchez Madrid la “falta de atención institucional” de Kant, en punto a la desigualdad económica y sus consecuencias. Según Sanchez Madrid, en la *Doctrina del Derecho* de Kant no parece haber nadie en concreto que sea culpable de la desposesión, en parte porque Kant no advierte los peligros de la mera competencia entre agentes sociales, y también porque el control político-civil de la propiedad por parte del legislativo no es suficiente para lograr que todos los individuos gocen de la independencia material propia de una ciudadanía activa republicana (Sánchez Madrid, 2019: 184).

Para Marey, en cambio, en el momento de sacar las conclusiones del diseño institucional de los derechos políticos, Kant no comprendió que la relación entre dependencia económica y dependencia política es una vía de dos sentidos”, y en este punto Marey reconoce lo que enseña la obra de Sánchez Madrid. Según Marey, las afirmaciones de Kant sobre el (no) voto de mujeres y personas desposeídas no son límites intrínsecos de su sistema, sino anomalías dentro de él que dependen completamente de su ignorancia voluntaria al respecto, que era inexcusable en el siglo XVIII, en el que había movimientos propiamente modernos por los derechos de las mujeres y de las personas no propietarias. (Marey, 2020: 13, 9). Para concluir haré algunos comentarios en torno a los comentarios de Marey y Sánchez Madrid.

El sistema jurídico-político kantiano opera con conceptos racionales y *a priori* que, sin embargo, tienen realidad práctica y deben ser aplicables a objetos de experiencia. Eso no implica, como bien señala Marey, que la teoría jurídico-político kantiana sea una teoría

ideal, aunque obviamente está fundada en ideas de la razón y muy especialmente en la idea de libertad. Kant se propuso construir una teoría para la práctica -y no una teoría desde la práctica-, y también mostrar que los conceptos jurídicos *a priori* son aplicables a la experiencia. La teoría jurídico-política acabada de Kant de 1797, es un sistema racional *a priori* que propone un diseño institucional republicano en torno al único derecho innato y originario a la libertad, entendido como “la independencia del arbitrio constrictivo de otro, en la medida en que pueda coexistir con la libertad de cualquier otro según una ley universal”. (MS, AA 06: 238). Y de esta libertad pensada como independencia se derivan otras facultades que no se distinguen de este único derecho innato, entre ellas la igualdad innata o la coacción recíproca universal, y la capacidad de todo hombre de ser su propio señor (*sui iuris*), concepto que Kant toma del derecho romano y que significa tener la capacidad de hacer valer los derechos sin depender de otro. Kant construyó todo su sistema jurídico en torno al concepto del derecho innato a la libertad en el derecho privado, y en el derecho público político, de gentes y cosmopolita-, porque “la naturaleza nos ha encerrado a todos juntos entre unos límites determinados, (gracias a la superficie esférica del *globus terraqueus*)” (MS AA 06: 352).

De la cita anterior se infiere que Kant –el gran constructor de un sistema racional y *a priori*- también tuvo en cuenta algunos datos empíricos con los que la teoría se encontraría en la práctica, entre ellos, que la superficie de la tierra es esférica y limitada; que la experiencia no muestra la máxima de la violencia y la maldad humanas de hacerse mutuamente la guerra; que hay anomalías que se introdujeron en la maquinaria de los gobiernos en épocas pasadas (en el sistema feudal apoyado casi totalmente por la guerra) gracias a las cuales hay súbditos que quieren ser más que co-súbditos; o que hay señores que están legitimados para utilizar las fuerzas del súbdito a su antojo, como es el caso de los negros en las islas del azúcar, y explotarlos hasta la muerte. (MS AA 06: 329-330) Y una de las condiciones empíricas que Kant tuvo en cuenta al elaborar la distinción entre ciudadanos activos y pasivos, fue comprobar que en su Prusia natal –y no sólo en Prusia- había trabajos -como el del desposeído herrero de la India, que iba de casa en casa con su martillo, yunque y fuelle, para trabajar el *hierro de otros*-, que no eran libres porque el trabajador dependía de otros –del hierro de otros en este caso- para subsistir.

El diseño institucional de la república ideal kantiana impide que los poderes públicos y privados tengan la suficiente capacidad como para condenar a la gran mayoría de personas a realizar trabajos indignos para poder vivir y que, por tanto, no sean libres en el sentido de ser económicamente independientes y políticamente activos. Este diseño institucional se corresponde con el que en ese mismo momento proponían varios de los revolucionarios franceses puestos a redactar constituciones republicanas, entre ellos el difamado Robespierre. Por ejemplo, en la primacía del poder legislativo que reside en la voluntad popular y que es el poder que, entre otras cosas, regula la propiedad adquirida; y también en la necesidad de un control fiduciario del poder ejecutivo, que administra el mercado público y el comercio.

Como buen republicano, Kant no ignoraba que los ricos y poderosos con frecuencia convierten en poder político los recursos y privilegios que adquieren en la esfera privada, y

que ese poder que ejercen en la esfera pública compromete la libertad y la igualdad de participación política de una gran mayoría. Y Kant también sabía, y lo escribió, que en la esfera privada del trabajo, el pobre se ve forzado a entrar en relaciones de dependencia que minan su autonomía personal y política. Ahora bien, en el debate del XVIII entre republicanos demócratas y antidemócratas, la cuestión de la propiedad era de suma importancia. Los demócratas contrarestaban la falta de independencia de quienes no tenían propiedad remunerando a los ciudadanos activos pobres (como la república francesa luego de 1793) y propusieron reformas sociales estructurales para emancipar a los *alieni iuris*. Kant fue propietario, porque era republicano, pero no fue demócrata en el sentido antiguo de la palabra democracia, que era el gobierno de los pobres libres. La solución liberal del siglo XIX consistió primero en desleír el concepto de libertad y luego universalizar el voto masculino, y de esta forma se canceló la posibilidad de juzgar como contrario a la libertad un orden social con relaciones de dependencia y alienación. Kant no fue un liberal, pero tampoco un demócrata, y por eso no propuso —cuando se trataba de una república imperfecta— incluir a los pobres en el ejercicio de la ciudadanía activa, y creyó necesario, aunque no justamente óptimo porque era contradictorio con el concepto mismo de ciudadanía, excluir a todos aquellos pobres que podían ser interferidos arbitrariamente por los poderosos. (Bertomeu, 2005: 136, ss)

En sus textos de los 90 y muy especialmente en la *Doctrina del Derecho*, Kant diseñó una república —verdadera, ideal o perfecta— capaz de incluir a todos en la ciudadanía activa por la vía de otorgar una garantía universal al derecho a una existencia digna de todos, y esa fue su respuesta, diseñar una teoría para la práctica, aunque nunca desde la práctica.

Pocos ámbitos del pensamiento de Kant me parecen más atractivos que el que conforman sus escritos tardíos de filosofía jurídica, en los que considero que el pensamiento contemporáneo encuentra una fuente fructífera para abordar las dificultades que nos alejan de los objetivos propios de las sociedades democráticas. Kant no fue desde luego un pensador de la democracia. El atractivo aumenta si esa exploración se realiza en compañía de dos de las hermeneutas actuales del Kant republicano que considero más autorizadas, como es el caso de Macarena Marey y de María Julia Bertomeu. La fuerte posición epistocrática de Kant, tan contraria a caracteres filosóficos como el de Jacques Rancière, no es armonizable con una forma de vida política en que todas las voces tienen el mismo valor, con independencia de la proximidad que mantengan con contenidos identificados con la tríada clásica la verdad, el bien y la belleza. Pero es manifiesto que el republicanismo kantiano busca hacer de la Tierra un espacio conforme a derecho —en la línea de la interpretación defendida por Arthur Ripstein en *Force and Freedom* (Harvard University Press, 2009)—, donde la condición de la “libertad innata” conceda a este una infraestructura necesaria de reciprocidad civil, cuyo principio universal establece la coacción recíproca entre seres humanos iguales como *nomos* de la Tierra. Por supuesto, esta condición jurídica pretendida por el republicanismo kantiano tiene consecuencias

importantes con respecto al alcance con que las relaciones de propiedad puedan contar en el espacio social.

Como tuve ocasión de señalar en el *Book Symposium* en que participé a comienzos de octubre de 2020 vía Zoom sobre el manuscrito de la primera, titulado *Voluntad omnilateral y finitud de la Tierra. Una lectura de la filosofía política de Kant*, de próxima publicación en *La cebra*, estoy en deuda con este escrito en el sentido de haberme hecho ver con claridad la distinción de dos planos clave para proceder a una lectura cabal de la obra jurídico-política de Kant. Me refiero al hecho de que este pensador configura —especialmente en la obra publicada en 1797, la *Metafísica de las costumbres*— un “diseño institucional” —como gusta de señalar con acierto María Julia Bertomeu— de consecuencias radicales con respecto al control del abuso que unos seres humanos puedan realizar en una comunidad civil al subalternizar a otros. La dura crítica de Kant a la transmisión de herencias propia de la clase aristocrática es un botón de muestra relevante acerca de la condena decidida que este autor dirige a un modelo de sociedad estamental, en el que protecciones civiles a los poderosos impiden que “todos” puedan mostrar aquello de que son capaces en el plano de un *mercado*, cuyo “modelo de veridicción” —por decirlo con la expresión de Michel Foucault en *El nacimiento de la biopolítica*— resulta más transparente a ojos de Kant que el orden de fuerzas trucado por el privilegio del universo aristocrático. Pero ello no es óbice para que Kant muestre una cierta “ignorancia voluntaria” —utilizando la expresión empleada por Macarena Marey— ante la secuencia de dinámicas sociales que le obligan a distinguir entre ciudadanos pasivos y activos con el fin de salvaguardar la condición de la *autosuficiencia* [*Selbstständigkeit*] que junto a la igualdad y la libertad conforma la tríada fundadora de su posición republicana. En efecto, el punto principal de mi inquietud aquí estriba en el hecho de que, en virtud de las consecuencias perniciosas que Kant asocia con el privilegio aristocrático, parece pasarle desapercibido la responsabilidad que el mercado proto-liberal, al que los sujetos acuden a competir por sus facultades y talentos —el “talento, [...] aplicación y suerte” mencionados en *Teoría y práctica* (TP, AA 08: 290)—, posee en la precariedad de medios a la que determinados sujetos se enfrentan en su día a día, debiendo renunciar a actualizar una condición civil propiamente dicha. ¿No fue Kant víctima de una distorsión epistémica generada por su excesiva atención a una de las principales causas de la desigualdad económica injusta en el siglo XVIII, en la medida en que pronto el mercado liberal representaría una máquina de generación de desigualdad aún más temeraria que la del decadente mundo aristócrata, encubierta ahora bajo la aparente libertad de la competencia entre iguales?

Naturalmente que el aparato conceptual proporcionaba a Kant medios para interpretar correctamente lo que ocurre cuando un sujeto se ve reducido a ofrecer únicamente sus fuerzas [*operam*], en lugar de un producto fabricado por sus manos [*opus*] a las demandas del mercado (TP, AA 08: 295, n.). Es más, Kant es bien explícito al señalar que “[a]unque aquel a quien encargo mi leña y el sastre al que doy mi paño para que me haga un traje parecen encontrarse en relaciones del todo semejantes con respecto a mí, aquel se diferencia de este como el peluquero del fabricante de pelucas (a quien también

puedo haber dado el cabello para que me haga una)” (*ibíd.*). Esta distinción proto-marxista está imponiendo claramente un límite que el mercado liberal no respetará desde su aparición histórica. En efecto, desde su mismo origen el mercado liberal consiste en ocultar bajo la especie de la igualdad de talentos, energías y facultades —una igualdad en el deseo de los sujetos— una desigualdad *de facto* entre diferentes situaciones de entrada en el mercado de la oferta y la demanda. Kant sospecha —y no le falla el olfato— que el mercado burgués que advendrá cuando la acumulación de privilegios aristocrática entre en declive tenderá a mostrar comportamientos extractivistas con los sujetos, solicitando de ellos la compraventa de las propias fuerzas ante la ausencia de una “sustancia” —la propiedad o el producto— que pueda suponer un apoyo mínimo que permita a quien la posee declinar ofertas de trabajo que le parezcan indignas. La garantía del estado en que el sujeto se muestra como *sui juris* aparece así como condición de intervención en el mercado laboral en condiciones jurídicamente aceptables. De acuerdo con ello, el célebre ejemplo del herrero de la India o cualquier caso de trabajador doméstico ejercen *de facto* actividades económicas que, sin embargo, se encuentran divorciadas de las condiciones de reciprocidad que la libertad innata y el principio universal del derecho comportan. Ahora bien, ¿ese afuera del orden legal republicano no corre el peligro de fagocitar al menos parte de la capacidad transformadora de las relaciones sociales a la que aspira la tríada de principios republicanos? Mejor dicho, ¿supondrá la remoción de los privilegios de los nobles la aparición de un espacio social en que cada sujeto encuentre la manera de ejercer su derecho a vivir como alguien *sui iuris*? El siguiente pasaje de *Teoría y práctica* muestra una cierta esperanza excesiva en este decurso de los acontecimientos:

[C]omo el nacimiento no es una *acción* por parte del que nace, y consiguientemente no puede acarrear a este ninguna desigualdad del estado jurídico ni sometimiento alguno a leyes coactivas (salvo el mero sometimiento que, en cuanto súbdito del único poder legislativo supremo, tiene en común con todos los demás), resulta que no puede haber ningún privilegio innato de un miembro de la comunidad —en cuanto cosúbdito— sobre otros; y nadie puede legar a sus descendientes el privilegio de la *posición* que tiene dentro de la comunidad; por tanto, tampoco puede impedir coactivamente —como si el nacimiento le cualificara para detentar el rango de señor— que los otros alcancen por sus propios méritos los niveles superiores de la jerarquía [...]. Puede transmitir por herencia todo lo demás que es cosa (lo que no concierne a la personalidad), lo que como propiedad puede él adquirir y enajenar, produciendo así en la serie de descendientes una considerable desigualdad de situación económica entre los miembros de la comunidad [...]; pero no puede impedir que estos, si su talento, su aplicación y su suerte lo hacen posible, estén facultados para elevarse hasta iguales posiciones (TP, AA 08: 293).

El texto condena inequívocamente la lógica de la herencia aristocrática, que instituye una diferencia de rango entre personas solo por el nacimiento, contraviniendo la comunidad originaria en que todos los cuerpos se encuentran en relación con su existencia sobre la Tierra. Incluso podría decirse —y no creo que se trate de un gesto excesivamente caritativo por mi parte— que Kant aborrece la desigualdad de propiedades que el privilegio acumulado durante siglos ha generado. En relación con ello todas las condenas de la

desigualdad económica que da paso a la cómoda disposición a la beneficencia rastreables en las Lecciones de Filosofía moral y en la *Doctrina de la virtud* podrán estar dirigidas como dardos a un comportamiento estamental definido. Me atrevo a sostener que cuando Kant afea la presunta superioridad del bienhechor tiene delante la imagen del noble, pero no creo que tenga tan presente al burgués. Sin embargo, este último ya invita a reclamar, incluso con más urgencia que la casta noble, una intervención radical del jefe supremo del Estado para evitar que haya en este “ningún hombre que carezca de toda dignidad, ya que al menos tiene la de ciudadano” (RL, AA 06: 329-330). El firme compromiso de Kant a introducir la vigilancia jurídica del Estado en la *locatio conductio* que conduce a un sujeto a alquilar sus servicios a otro pone sus miras claramente en la lucha del republicanism contra la naturalización de la esclavitud. Pero con ello no termina de entenderse por qué la *ciudadanía pasiva* se puede cohonstar con la personalidad jurídica, a la que también agrade, por cuanto esa condición mantiene al sujeto —entendiendo como tal, naturalmente, un público de varones— que la padece en un umbral de minoría de edad permanente con respecto a la posición en la que el individuo se entiende como colegislador. Siempre podríamos decir que Kant encuentra en tales situaciones una rémora de modelos jurídico-políticos propios del pasado. Pero, en ese caso, ¿por qué no eliminarla del todo con las útiles herramientas que proporciona un Estado que vuelve eje de la autoridad política no la voluntad de un soberano despótico, sino la coacción recíproca que deben mantener entre sí todos los miembros de una unión civil? ¿Y, si eso ocurre en el seno de la teoría kantiana del derecho político, por qué resulta tan poco visible esa evidencia en sus consideraciones sobre las prácticas de su propio tiempo, donde todo parecen concesiones *malgré* las propias expectativas de Kant?

Las aportaciones y discusiones como Marey a lo largo de estos años me han permitido advertir la importancia —como señalaba— de esta dualidad de planos discursivos en los escritos de Kant, lo que no deja de arrojar efectos —junto al siempre productivo intercambio de pareceres con Bertomeu— con respecto a la interpretación que he venido dedicando a su tratamiento de la propiedad, de la pobreza y de las condiciones materiales y formales de la ciudadanía. Ateniéndome al escrito de Marey, comparto enteramente su ilustrativa exposición del hecho de que la posesión común de la Tierra y reivindicación de la validez práctica a priori de la voluntad omnilateral ejerce la función de un principio crítico que permite evaluar la legitimidad de todo pretendido título de propiedad. Toda apropiación de la fundamentación kantiana de la propiedad en clave liberal en sentido clásico cae por su propio peso cuando se advierte que para este pensador la autoridad política no se reduce a actuar como una suerte de filtro institucional encargado de legitimar títulos de propiedad ya existentes. Este planteamiento ilumina asimismo la distancia entre la teoría de la propiedad de Kant y la de Locke, especialmente si contemplamos a la última desde la perspectiva del «individualismo posesivo» acuñado por C.B. Macpherson.² En efecto, para Kant la primera relación del arbitrio humano con cualquier territorio la determina el derecho, no la potencia al alcance de ese arbitrio (RL §

² Dejo al margen de esta discusión la lectura en clave fiduciaria de la autoridad política en Locke, como la desarrollada por Jordi Mundó en la Universitat de Barcelona.

15), lo que aleja cualquier visión extractivista, explotadora de la Tierra. Una distancia semejante me parece la que Marey delimita de manera ejemplar —en una línea en que se vuelve interlocutora de Alice Pinheiro Walla y de Jakob Huber— entre la noción de comunidad originaria establecida por Hugo Grocio y por Kant. Como señala Marey, la *primaeva communio* aparece en Grocio más como un instrumento de *la raison d'état* del monarca que como un principio dotado de “realidad política práctico-jurídica”, de suerte que esa presunta comunidad de origen a la que apela el soberano para ejercer su derecho de gracia sobre determinados sujetos subalternos no responde a un derecho universal, sino que más bien expone el poder detentado por el gobernante.

Más problemas hermenéuticos sigue generando a mi entender el tratamiento kantiano de la pobreza, que este pensador identifica con un asunto de salud pública que justifica la intervención directa del poder ejecutivo como sujeto fiduciario del legislativo con el fin de garantizar la *salus publica* e impedir así la merma de una parte de la población cuya desaparición vulneraría la integridad del *demos* (RL § 46, AA 06:). Esta perspectiva no coloca en el centro la vulnerabilidad jurídica del pobre, sino más bien la del Estado, toda vez que en Kant la prelación conceptual de los principios a priori sobrepuja con mucho las demandas de los individuos, que en sí mismas carecerían de visibilidad categorial inmediata.³ Como he señalado en varias ocasiones (Sánchez Madrid 2021a y 2021b), partiendo de una pauta interpretativa ofrecida por Pinheiro Walla (2019), resulta asimismo llamativo que Kant se lamenta y denuncie lo que califica como «la injusticia del gobierno» (TL AA 06: 454) para exigir acto seguido a los individuos —y no a los Estados— una reacción consecuente con la percepción de esa injusticia. La misma lógica sigue la condena kantiana de la beneficencia como una falsa virtud, que proyecta un velo de ignorancia jesuítico sobre las auténticas causas de la indigencia (TL, §§, AA 06: 453). Como he defendido en esos textos, ¿es sostenible, más allá de las coordenadas de la razón práctica kantiana, esta interpelación a la intervención directa de los sujetos con el fin de modificar injusticias estructurales que afectan a la agenda de los gobiernos? No puedo dejar de manifestar un prudente escepticismo en relación con esa exigencia. A mi entender, teniendo en cuenta el ambicioso alcance del diseño institucional kantiano para transformar las injusticias producidas por las relaciones de propiedad en el ámbito social, considero que Kant nos debe una exposición detallada que indique cómo transformar relaciones de propiedad existentes en un mercado liberal en la práctica en relaciones justas, en la medida en que se ajusten al principio universal del derecho, que dicta que las máximas adoptadas permitan “a la libertad del arbitrio de cada uno coexistir con la libertad de todos según una ley universal” (RL, AA 06: 230).

³ Ciertamente, la “voluntad omnilateral” asume como principio el compromiso de no dejar a nadie atrás en el espacio social, pero al mismo tiempo silencia el punto de vista de los individuos, cuyo testimonio no es central ni determinante a la hora de calibrar lo que es o no injusticia en el planteamiento de Kant.

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On Allen W. Wood's *Kant and Religion*

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Allen W. Wood's new book on Kant and religion offers considerable insight into this rich and contested area of inquiry (Wood, 2020; cited in the text by page number). Wood, a leading scholar who has made noteworthy contributions to many topics within Kantian and post-Kantian studies, is well-positioned to engage the subject. His encyclopedic mastery of the material is evident throughout this new book. In the following, I will explicate some of Wood's main arguments, highlighting the relation between rational faith and historical religious forms as a focal concern. Here, the key question concerns the points of compatibility and incompatibility between practical reason and historical religions.

Religion as a theme traversing Kant's critical writings

Inquiries into religious and theological concepts appear throughout Kant's writings, even if we bracket Kant's pre-critical writings. The first *Critique* refutes theoretical proofs for the existence of a divine being; the critical epistemology underpins his negative assessment of the ontological argument and other traditional arguments (A592/B620ff. and cf. KpV 5:138, KU 5:463, 5:466, and 5:473). As Kant summarizes: "The concept of a highest being is a very useful idea in many respects; but just because it is merely an idea, it

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is incapable all by itself of extending our cognition in regard to what exists” (A601-02/B629-30). At the same time, the first *Critique* develops constructive regulative and practical approaches to the concept of God (A619/B647; A796/B824; A814/B842). The methodology of later writings, including the *Religion*, is continuous with these critical innovations: excluding knowledge of the supersensible while focusing on practical reason. The second *Critique*, in describing the moral law, emphasizes its unconditioned nature (KpV 5:31-32) and refers to “the majesty of this holy law [*das heilige Gesetz*]” (KpV 5:77-78; and cf. 5:123). More directly, Kant formulates the practical postulates of God and an immortal soul (KpV 5:125-26). He consistently argues that the practical idea of God generates “attributes” that “can never be used for a theory of supersensible beings, so that ... they are quite unable to ground a speculative cognition and their use is, instead, limited solely to the practice of the moral law” (KpV 5:137, 5:138). The third *Critique* interweaves a regulative approach to teleological thinking with an explication of moral theology. Kant refers to the “purely moral need for the existence of such a being, by means of which our morality acquires either more strength or (at least as we represent it) more scope” (KU 5:446). In this way, the “concept of the supreme cause as author of the world in accordance with moral laws” leads “to religion, i.e., the recognition of our duties as divine commands” (KU 5:481). Additionally, Kant devotes several shorter pieces to religious themes, and references to the concept of God appear in his legal and political philosophy as well. These points are well-known, but it is important to emphasize two issues. First, as he does with metaphysics generally, Kant reorients religious concepts so that they are grounded in practical reason. In this way, Kant makes a distinct and invaluable contribution to the Enlightenment tradition of linking universal laws of reason with divine law.¹ Secondly, “religion” is not a separate, compartmentalized topic for Kant; it constitutes a domain of inquiry that intersects with virtually every facet of his mature work, especially his practical philosophy.

There is no textual evidence that the *Religion* departs in any respect from the principles elaborated in Kant's mature critical philosophy, i.e., interpreting religion and

¹ For example, Spinoza (2007/1670), “the divine law which makes men truly happy and teaches the true life, is universal to all men... [that law] must itself be deemed innate to the human mind and, so to speak, inscribed upon it” 68; and cf. 8, 13, 49, 59-62. In a very different context, Mary Wollstonecraft (2014/1790) argues for the equality of women and men: “the nature of reason must be the same in all, if it be an emanation of divinity...” (p.80).

theology through practical reason. However, one major way in which the *Religion* (along with its sequel, *Conflict of the Faculties*) are unique is in analyzing doctrines of historical faith or revelation. While other critical writings mostly address concepts of rational theology as a subset of metaphysics, the *Religion* also examines scriptural sources and ecclesiastical history. These historical and cultural elements make the *Religion* an important resource for understanding how Kant connects religion with questions of social, political, and ethical advancement. Wood, accordingly, underscores the practical and social contributions of the *Religion*. He does not attempt a comprehensive discussion of the text, but he emphasizes core themes in Kant's ethical interpretation of theological concepts, while drawing upon a wide range of writings.² In so doing, he further demonstrates the continuity in Kant's mature thinking about religion in the three *Critiques*, the *Religion*, and later works; in every case practical reason remains the criterion.

Symbolism, Religion, Enlightenment

Wood focuses on *symbolism* as an individual and collective resource for disseminating ethical ideas and furthering the self-reflection essential to ethical development. He rejects the opinion that Kant "reduces" religion to morality (3), a view that assumes a supernatural standard and downplays how the moral law (as universal and unconditional) cannot meaningfully be understood as a reduction of something greater. To be sure, elements of historical faith, i.e., those that counteract the moral law, are excluded from rational religion. While insisting that practical reason is the interpreter of religion, Wood argues that "religion goes beyond morality, adding something to it that enriches the moral life" (3). That extra "something" turns out to be collective systems of representation, transmitted through scriptures and other means. Chapter 1.2, "Religion as essentially Symbolic," offers an account of the role of religious symbolism in facilitating access to ideas of reason (pp. 4-5ff.). As Wood stresses, "For Kant it is only through symbolism that the pure concept of God can be presented in a way that is meaningful to human beings and therefore truly religious" (7). Symbolism, in other words, offers linguistic and representational resources for expanding our access to concepts that do not merely

² For example, when Wood engages the concept of a "propensity to evil" he adroitly draws upon the *Groundwork*, the second *Critique*, *Anthropology*, "Idea for a Universal History," and other sources to supplement his analyses (70ff).

designate empirical objects, or designate conceivable supersensible objects modelled after empirical ones. For Kant, valid symbolic interpretation of religious concepts is guided by practical reason (13-19). The moral interpretation of historical religions facilitates the gradual realization of moral religion, also called rational faith and true religion. This interactive relation between ethical ideas and existing institutions across an indefinite temporal frame is a topic Wood explores with considerable insight later in the book, and I will return to it.

The theme of symbols is also given concentrated attention in Chapter 5.2 and 5.3 on symbolism and analogy, and on symbolism and religion respectively. As he does throughout the book, Wood draws on a variety of Kant's writings, showing the consistent approach to symbolism in the three *Critiques*, the *Religion*, and elsewhere. Wood demonstrates how specific areas of inquiry related to the theme of religion develop over numerous works, thereby enriching our understanding of key concepts. Hence in discussing symbolism, Wood cites the *Anthropology*: "it is enlightenment to distinguish the symbolic from the intellectual..., the temporarily useful and necessary shell from the thing itself" (Anth 7:192; Wood, 121). Wood emphasizes how Kant's approach to religion, symbolism, and practical reason is representative of his focus on Enlightenment (210). Enlightenment requires a process of approximating rational morality by combining inner reflection with rational modification of cultural resources. Kant succinctly makes this point when he writes, "Should one now ask, Which period of the entire church history in our ken up to now is the best? I reply without hesitation, *The present*. I say this because one need only allow the seed of the true religious faith now being sown in Christianity—by only a few, to be sure, yet in the open—to grow unhindered, to expect from it a continuous approximation to that church, ever uniting all human beings, which constitutes the visible representation (the schema) of an invisible Kingdom of God on earth." (R 6:131-32, Wood, 214).³ The "true seed" emerges and grows through an understanding of Christianity predicated on rational ethical principles and disseminated by the freedom to exercise reason publicly. Kant clarifies how Enlightenment and practical reason are conjoined in describing "a true enlightenment (an order of law originating in moral freedom)" (R

³ The fact that Kant, author of "What is Enlightenment?," is advocating in 1793 an enlightened, ethically-oriented approach to religion *should* be self-evident, although there are contrary views in the literature.

6:123n). These comments encapsulate Kant’s progressive model of a collective movement toward autonomy, driven by rational and ethical interpretation of existing forms. Building on the pivotal role of symbolism in expressing non-empirical concepts, a central contribution of Wood’s book is to distinguish the valid interpretations of religious concepts from invalid ones. Wood highlights literalism, superstition, and anthropomorphism as antitheses of an enlightened approach to religion (5-7, 14, 120-21, 177). However, as I will discuss below, Wood does not equate this enlightened, symbolic understanding of religion with “secularism.”

Faith or Belief

In Chapter 2, Wood links moral faith with the pursuit of the highest good in the world and explicates the “moral arguments” in the three *Critiques*. This analysis demonstrates that moral faith is associated with the pursuit of an ethical life by finite, imperfect rational beings. As Wood explains, practical assent and practical faith do not abrogate the standards of rational judgment to which Kant subscribes; they are in fact a resource for practical purposes. Summarizing arguments in the second *Critique*, Wood notes that Kant “denies that either belief or assent can be commanded, but he does describe the result of the moral arguments as ‘maxim of assent for moral purposes’ and a ‘voluntary (*freiwillig*) determination of our judgment’ (KpV 5:144-146)” (58). The stress on faith as non-coercible, and as a feature of human agency in pursuit of long-term ideal ends is essential.

Wood frames his inquiry into practical faith by drawing on Josiah Royce’s idea of a “lost cause,” defined as “any cause that cannot be fulfilled within the lifetime of the loyal community or any of its members” (36). This unlikely reference clarifies how moral faith emerges directly from Kant’s practical philosophy as positing ends that can only be approached asymptotically. Wood argues that “the highest good in Kant’s conception of it—as an end that is a duty for each of us, and a shared end for the ethical or religious community as Kant conceives of it—can be seen as a ‘lost cause’ precisely in Royce’s sense” (36, citing R 6:97). Faith in this sense is operative in all human efforts at individual and collective ethical advancement. Wood eloquently offers a personal reference to pursuing the “lost cause of advancing the work of science and scholarship” (36). Clearly,

these noble pursuits are not *hopeless*, but they are uncertain and imperfect in their outcomes, and subject to contingencies beyond one's control. One needs to be sustained by a faith and devotion to invest in moral effort while acknowledging that complete realization will never occur. All practical endeavor by fallible human beings is of this kind: even if guided by rational principles, it remains open-ended and future-directed, subject to the day-to-day contingencies of individual and historical life. It is because of the antagonisms endemic to phenomenal and social life that Kant introduces the concept of *moral courage* as a capacity for fidelity in the face of opposition. Moral courage is a concept that also links the *Religion* with Kant's rallying call to Enlightenment (R 6:57, 6:68, 6:183-84, E 8:35).

Less helpful, in my judgment, is Wood's recourse to Andrew Chignell's "Belief" (51ff.), differentiated by capitalization from the standard use of belief to designate accepting low evidence doctrinal claims. The capitalized term is used to render rational faith (*Vernunftglaube* KpV 5:126), practical faith (*praktischen Glauben*, R 6:62) or moral faith (*moralischen Glauben*, R 6:110). However, Wood must continually alert readers to the significance of the capitalized usage by stating, for example, that "Kant argues that there are rational grounds, based on practical rather than theoretical reason, for a morally committed person to have faith (or Belief) in God or representing your duties as divine commands" (139). Similarly, he later reminds us how "Belief (rational assent on practical grounds), [is] distinct from belief in the ordinary sense, habitual unconditional assent according to theoretical evidence," while noting that the former is compatible with "evidentialism" and the latter is not (202). Repeated clarifications of an artificial terminology are necessary because the English 'belief'—whether capitalized or not—is associated with commitment to dogmatic propositions and to the authority of inherited traditions however incompatible with reason and evidence. This latter form of belief is entirely different from "moral faith" as active ethical striving based on rational principles.

Because practical faith guides action by human agents, it is in this sense "subjective." That is, faith concerns the encompassing orientation or attitude governing the course of our lives as we seek to advance ethically under experiential conditions (54). Throughout the book, Wood contrasts one mode of religiosity with another. He observes that "Kant's moral arguments ...simply cannot deliver the comforting confidence of

unquestioned certainty, if that's what people want religious consolation to be. Religion should be more honest than that" (55). The book is filled with insights along these lines, distinguishing rational faith from what Kant often refers to as mere wishing (see R 6:51 on cult-like practices and "mere wishing," R 6:184-85 on servile submission and wishing, and R 6:201 on "deedless wishes").

Wood establishes differentiations internal to the concept of religion that eschew simplistic dichotomization of religious and secular in favor of a more nuanced, ethically oriented approach. On this point, Wood repeatedly uses Kant's "as if" formulations—specifically, that of understanding one's ethical duties (following the Moral Law) as divine commands (KU 5:481-82, R 6:99, 6:153-54, SF 7:36, OP 22:127-128). The "as if" or regulative approach to concepts, which permeates the *Religion* and the third *Critique* in particular, is essential to Kant's unremitting focus on human agency guided by rational representations. However, as noted, Wood does not want to call this approach "secular." He argues that "there is no ground for Reath's distinction between a merely 'secular' conception of the highest good, for which merely human effort might suffice, and the larger ('religious') conception, for which we cannot reasonably suppose it does" (48, citing Reath 1988). In his concluding remarks, Wood likewise insists that "Kant most certainly did not intend to embrace 'secularism' as opposed to religion" (210). In a certain way, this is correct; as noted, religious and theological concepts infuse Kant's work and are deeply connected to ideas of reason irreducible to phenomenal experience. If secularism means abandoning rational ideals and principles irreducible to cultural contingency, then Kant is not secular in that sense. However, if religion signifies literalist conceptions of higher supernatural powers, based on uncritical internalization of official doctrines, and secularism means grounding our judgments and practices on the autonomous exercise of practical reason, then Reath's differentiation between "human effort" and divine intervention is significant. Kant does not invoke the sacred/secular distinction, but he repeatedly stresses "natural" over "supernatural" interpretations. For example, in concluding the *Religion* he clearly emphasizes that "specially favored" individuals who feel "the special effects of grace" within them can "hardly withstand comparison" with "naturally honest human beings" (R 6:201-202; translation modified).⁴ Unfortunately,

⁴ *Gnadenwirkungen* is mistranslated as "effects of faith" in the CUP edition.

Wood does not address this distinction, and never explains what he means by secularism. Combined with his otherwise consistent emphasis on the symbolic and morally-focussed interpretation of religious concepts, this generates a degree of confusion.

Evidentialism

Wood's overall position is, in the overview, consistent in upholding Kant's focus on practical reason, despite occasional passages that call for further clarification. A crucial feature of Wood's approach, already noted in formulating the distinction between rational faith and dogmatic belief, is the emphasis on *evidence-based criteria* for judgment. Wood introduces "evidentialism" in the Preface, citing W. K. Clifford that "it is wrong, always and everywhere and for anyone to believe anything upon insufficient evidence" (xx). Here, after noting Hume's doctrine of "proportionality" between beliefs and the evidence on which these are based, and "Kant's 'deduction' of freedom and the moral law," Wood observes: "I do not regard assent based on such philosophical arguments as violating the evidentialist principle" (xx). In other words, Wood is concerned not merely with empirical evidence for assent, but also with rational evidence, including that of practical reason. Subsequently, Wood reiterates that "moral Belief [i.e., practical faith] does not violate Clifford's evidentialist principle" (57). Wood consistently adheres to this principle, although on occasion, when working with symbolic representations deriving from religious sources, he may appear to depart from it when he writes from the standpoint of Christian symbols (e.g. 17, 49, 121, 127, 137, 152, 155). Most importantly, Wood argues that evidentialism is not merely about testing facts but has moral consequences as well: "Violations of Clifford's principle [of evidentialism] are among the most insidious, as well as the most common, form of evil" (58, cf. 177). To this I would only add: given the claims, unsupported by textual evidence, made over the years about Kant's *Religion*, evidentialism could be extended to include scrupulous, properly documented use of sources.⁵

Rational and Historical Religions

The Preface to the first edition of the *Religion* contains an "experiment" summarized by Wood as "considering [biblical theology and pure rational religion] as a

⁵ See Wood, p.14n, 116n, 135n, 156-57n for some examples.

unity” (Wood 11, citing R 6:10). This is slightly misleading, as Wood disregards Kant’s statement that “the sciences [of biblical theology and philosophy] profit simply from being set apart, insofar as each science first constitutes a whole by itself; only after that shall the experiment be made of considering them in association [or, as a unity]” (R 6:10). Clearly, Kant is stressing that philosophy, especially practical philosophy formulating the moral law as foundational for rational faith, must establish clear principles based on reason alone (mere reason) before being mixed up with biblical theology and historical faith. In the second edition Preface, Kant briefly considers another experiment using the analogy of two concentric circles (R 6:12-13). Wood analyzes the *Religion* as interpreting various elements of the “outer circle,” i.e., historical religions, as symbolic representations of the moral principles constituting rational faith, the inner circle (11ff.). Theological concepts that represent ideas of practical reason can thereby be taken into the inner circle constitutive of moral faith.

Wood takes the outer circle of historical faith as synonymous with Christianity, although he makes brief references to Judaism and Islam late in the book. He states, “Kant’s *Religion* considers ‘fragments’ of an alleged revelation—namely, the Christian. Specifically, it takes up these: Original Sin, the Son of God as savior, divine grace, and the church” (Wood, 19). Indeed, it might be expected that Kant, writing in 1793 for an audience Wood describes as “orthodox Lutheran Christians” (140), would focus exclusively on Christianity. Yet, the rubric of historical faiths is inclusive in principle. Apart from repeated references to classical sources, especially Stoicism, Kant references Indian (Vedic) traditions at R 6:19, 6:73 note, Tibetan and Mongolian religions (R 6:108 note), some Indigenous traditions at R 6:176, and trinitarian formulations in “the religion of Zoroaster... Hindu religion...the religion of Egypt” (R 6:140 note).

I am not claiming that Kant’s passing comments reveal serious familiarity with religions other than Christianity. However, these wider references take on greater significance in relation to the underlying principle governing his approach to historical religions. This is stated forcefully: “There is only one (true) religion; but there can be several kinds of faith.—We can say, further, that in the various churches divided from one another because of their kinds of faith, one and the same true religion can nevertheless be met with” (R 6:107-8). Kant then enumerates “(Jewish, Mohammedan [Muslim], Christian,

Catholic, Lutheran) faith” (R 6:108). The “true religion” inherent in every faith is the moral law. In an important passage explaining a core objective of the *Religion*, Kant discusses how universality (the moral law) needs to be accompanied by “something that the senses can hold onto”; therefore, “some historical ecclesiastical faith or other, usually already at hand, must be used” (R 6:109). Although Kant is inconsistent in using the terms “religion” and “faith,” he understands the historical domain as having a global, inclusive scope. Kant stresses the need for a moral “interpretation of the revelation we happen to have” even if “this interpretation may often appear to us as forced, in view of the text (of the revelation), and be often forced in fact” (R 6:110, and Wood, 14). In making this point, Kant reiterates “all types of faith,” and by way of illustration writes: “the moral philosophers among the Greeks and, later, the Romans did exactly the same thing with their legends concerning the gods... Late Judaism, and Christianity too, consists of such in part highly forced interpretations ... the Mohammedans [Muslims] know very well ... how to inject a spiritual meaning in the description of their paradise... and the Indians do the same with the interpretation of their Vedas” (R 6:111). Therefore, with regard to the multitude of historical faiths, “they all deserve equal respect, so far as their forms are attempts by poor mortals to give sensible representation to the Kingdom of God on earth, but equal blame as well, when (in a visible church) they mistake the form of representation of this idea for the thing itself” (R 6:175n, and see the comparative examples at R 6:176). The “kingdom of God on earth” is a biblical concept and would not likely be accepted by different religions as the way to define their goals. Yet, insofar as “the Kingdom” designates a moral order, the realm of ends, Kant is arguing that all cultural systems can and should be directed toward that end, even if their modes of expression are radically different.⁶ Moreover, ethical interpretations that have arisen within various traditions, even if only by a small minority, are indicative of this potential for harmonization with rational moral principles, and this is especially important in his cosmopolitan vision of the ethical community. These points are consistent with Wood’s focus on traditional religions as offering symbols for ethical practice. Embracing rational religion means drawing upon the resources of traditions to cultivate ethical awareness embracing all of humanity, rather than

⁶ As Kant states in the second *Critique*: “the doctrine of Christianity even if it is not regarded as a religious doctrine, gives on this point a concept of the highest good (of the kingdom of God [*des Reichs Gottes*]) which alone satisfies the strictest demands of practical reason” (KpV 5:127).

fixating on culture-specific dogmatic details. Clearly, in today's globalized world this inclusive emphasis is more important than ever.

Autonomy versus heteronomy

Although Wood stresses the primacy of practical faith, he is concerned to show that practical reason is compatible with traditional religiosity: "rational religion does not deny those doctrines of revealed religion that it does not include" (13). This is correct, if "deny" means theoretically disprove. On the other hand, Wood is clear that "both rational and revealed religion must reject certain doctrines, or the apparent teachings of certain scriptures, when these are given certain (anthropomorphic or merely literal) interpretations" (14). This is consistent with Kant's emphasis on ethically focussed interpretations (15). The frequently reiterated critique of superstition, anthropomorphism, and literalism in Wood's book crystallizes in this ethical focus: there is something about these popular modalities of belief that caters to heteronomy and obstructs a focus on rational principles.

Wood opposes the view that there is "a 'disparagement' of Christianity" in the *Religion*. He argues that rather than denying "important Christian truths" and using "agreement with the religion of reason [as] a standard that any purported revelation must meet," and rather than imposing his views on theologians, Kant instead "is merely offering his own interpretation of these doctrines: an interpretation that enables them to be reconciled with a religion of reason" (Wood, 24-25). I am not sure where Wood finds the word "disparage"; certainly, Kant is doing nothing of the sort. However, he *is* engaging in a serious critical endeavor in which the stakes are high: the furthering or the obstructing of rational ethical principles among global communities. The tremendous influence of religions in Kant's time is attested to by his concern with "dominion over minds" (R 6:79, cf. SF 7:21-22, 36), which is explicitly attributed to "priestcraft" (R 6:200, and cf. SF 7:60).⁷ Whether Kant perfectly grasps and conveys the principles of the moral law, he is certainly attempting to be a spokesperson, as it were, for rational principles. To say that "he is offering his own interpretation" is to dampen rational ethical inquiry, leading us to a

⁷ In his Preface, Wood gives an example from the contemporary U.S. of dogmatic fundamentalist religion running contrary to principles of autonomy, noting that "a more exquisitely depraved combination of callousness, cruelty, and hypocrisy would even be hard to imagine" (xvii).

mere difference of opinions. Kant's statements, like all others, must be evaluated with reference to rational principles such as universalizability, consistency, inclusivity, equality, and justice; the standard remains practical reason itself. By contrast, heteronomous forms of religion, just as with heteronomous political systems, dismiss or override such rational principles and suppress the free exchange of ideas, in favor of dogmatic systems of authority, usually founded on unfalsifiable supernatural claims.

Attempts to heal rifts with more traditionally oriented thinkers appear in Wood's discussions of grace, where he stresses that a symbolic reading does not conflict with Christian doctrine (e.g., 133-38, 180-81). In discussing the question of "God's causality," Wood refutes scholars who try to attribute a doctrinal position on theological questions to Kant, stressing "Kant's total agnosticism about the metaphysical relation of freedom to either natural or divine causality" (156-57n). Because of the critical limits on supersensible knowledge, Kant cannot make, and does not make, any theoretical or dogmatic assertions whatsoever about divine activity. This also means, as Wood shows, that Kant does not criticize theological doctrines from a theoretical standpoint (154-156). Rather, for Kant, "the problem is moral self-knowledge, not metaphysical knowledge" (153, citing SF 7:54). This does not mean that Kant takes an uncritical stance concerning these doctrines: they are engaged in terms of their compatibility with the moral law. Discussing views on grace, Wood states, "Kant holds that unaided reason can neither affirm nor deny any of these doctrines... Any of them might be welcome if it serves the ends of religion by symbolizing parts of our moral and religious life in a way that furthers our moral improvement" (161). In other words, practical criteria remain primary for Kant.

The underlying issue concerns competing sources of normativity, especially principles of autonomy versus heteronomy (G 4:432-33, 4:440-43). Autonomy means freely limiting oneself in relation to the freedom of others; it is quite distinct from the lawless freedom unregulated by concern for others (G 4:446). In addressing human responsibility for evil maxims and actions, Wood offers a helpful discussion of "practical freedom" (63-66). In an earlier work, Wood summarizes Kant's argument that: "the principle of autonomy is the only possible solution to the riddle of obligation, and that all other principles of obligation must fail to solve it because they must be grounded on heteronomy of the will" (Wood, 1999, 159). This distinction is central to understanding the

differences between Kant and Wood on the one side, and more traditional approaches to divine action and grace on the other. Despite Kant's agnosticism, there are serious moral concerns about placing agency in a higher power, inscrutable to reason and therefore open to the manipulations of priestcraft, or investing unquestionable authority in literally read scripture, or in institutions stemming from antiquity. These are not necessarily dispensable, but in a Kantian framework they remain subject to the same rational principles as other products of human history. For this reason, Kant steadfastly counteracts passive reliance on "foreign influences" (R 6:117-18, 6:191, SF 7:42-43; Wood 157, 160). Wood notes, citing Kant, that revelation is synonymous with "a historical system," which means that revelations contain a wide range of non-rational and culturally contingent features.⁸ When Kant proposes examining fragments of a revelation in relation "to moral concepts" he is not assuming that all such fragments will lead back "to the same rational system of religion" (Wood, 17, citing R 6:12). He is only proposing to test them to see if they harmonize with a religion of reason; some will not. Wood obviously knows this. He is clear that the moral standard, and hence the standard of autonomy, is fundamental: "we can reasonably judge that something claimed to be divinely revealed is *not* genuine, if what is supposedly revealed is *contrary* to reason or the moral law" (18, citing SF 7:63, R 6:87).

To establish clear criteria differentiating autonomy from heteronomy, both in terms of ways of thinking and public institutions, Kant employs several "principles of distinction" in the *Religion*. These principles do not necessarily correspond to the "concentric circles" motif, and are drawn from practical, rather than theoretical reason as the touchstone for assessing historical forms of faith. A crucial instance appears in the following: "All religions, however, can be divided into the *currying of favor* (of mere cult) [*der Gunstbewerbung (des bloßen Cultus)*] and the *moral* [*die moralische*], i.e. the religion of *good life conduct*" (R 6:51, translation modified).⁹ Kant's analysis of Christianity as a "Natural Religion" (R 6:157ff), and as a "Learned Religion" (R 6:163ff.) applies this moral versus favor-seeking paradigm. While the former concerns moral teachings that are

⁸ This is a major theme of J. G. Fichte (2010/1792).

⁹ George di Giovanni's translation of *Gunstbewerbung* as "rogation" obscures the role of the concept of favor in the *Religion*. A better rendering of the same term as "courting of favor" appears at R 6:185n. (See DiCenso 2015 for further discussion).

universalizable, especially the Sermon on the Mount, the latter concerns historically formed teachings and practices that are not. The *parerga* discussed in “Remarks” added to each Part of the *Religion* also distinguish religious ideas outside the boundaries of mere reason; “it [reason] just cannot incorporate them into its maxims of thought and action” (R 6:52). The theoretically *and* practically inadmissible concepts explored in each section are: Effects of Grace; Miracles; Mysteries; and Means of Grace (R 6:52). In the concluding passages to the *Religion*, Kant analyzes “Priestcraft [*Pfaffenthum*]” as “the dominion which the clergy has usurped over minds by pretending to have exclusive possession of the means of grace” (R, 6:200). The ethical significance of these distinctions is clear.

The Holy One of the Gospels as *Urbild*

Chapter 5 discusses the status of “the Holy One of the Gospels” in the *Religion*. Wood explores how doctrinal theology concerning “hope for redemption through the saving work of Jesus Christ” as “the outer circle of revealed faith... leads back to the inner circle of revealed religion” (115). However, Wood emphasizes that this is a philosophical, not a theological inquiry, and that “it is therefore worse than gratuitous to speak, as many writers do, of Kant’s ‘Christology’” (116). He explores various attributes of Jesus presented in Scripture: the “ideal of humanity well-pleasing to God” (R 6:61), the “personified idea of the good principle” (R 6:60), and “humanity in its full moral perfection” (R 6:60) (116). Crucially, Kant argues that “it is our duty to *elevate ourselves* to this ideal of moral perfection, i.e. to the prototype [*dem Urbilde*] of moral disposition in its entire purity, and for this the very idea, which is *presented to us by reason* for emulation, can give us force” (R, 6:61). As always with Kant, the emphasis is on human agency and activity, guided by practical reason and by religious representations that express practical principles.

Unfortunately, the status of the Holy One as representing an ideal of reason is obscured by the rendering of the term *Urbild* as “prototype” in the di Giovanni translation, and Wood passes this along without comment. (This poor translation, like many others, is *not* corrected in the “revised” 2018 edition.) The technical status of the term *Urbild* is further obscured by inconsistency of translation. For example, the “*church invisible*” is defined by Kant as “the mere idea of the union of all upright human beings under direct yet moral divine world-governance, as serving for the archetype [*zum Urbilde dient*] of any

such governance to be founded by human beings” (RGV, 6:101). Kant also discusses “complete religion,” cognized through reason, as “a prototype [*Urbild*] for us to follow” (R 6:162). The variations in translation within the same text obscure how Kant is employing the same concept, *Urbild*, as a fundamental image that is historically informed, yet also representing ideas of reason.

Indicative of the potential confusion here is the case of Firestone and Jacobs who, seemingly based on mistranslation alone, weave a neo-Platonic vision of the “prototype” (2008, 156ff). They engage in anthropomorphization and shift moral agency away from humans in referring to “gracious condescension on the prototype’s part” (2008, 164). Wood correctly remarks that this Platonic rendering “plays a role in medieval (especially Scotistic) and early modern Christology. These speculations have textual support only if we suppose Kant has these historical allusions in mind, which seems to me highly doubtful because it would involve transcendent metaphysical commitments inconsistent with the critical philosophy” (116n).

Yet, Wood, one of the most important translators of Kant’s work in the past 30 years, does not clarify how Kant uses a specific term, *Urbild*, to refer to a wide range of representational ideals throughout the critical philosophy, which would help place Kant’s understanding of the “Son of God” in its proper conceptual context.¹⁰ It is a symbol expressing rational moral principles actualized by rational agents. Wood is aware of this, and discusses religious symbols as representing various aspects of morality and the moral path, again utilizing a variety of Kant’s writings (117-126). This culminates in section 5.4, “The Son of God as a Symbol.” Wood summarizes how “the moral striving for which we hope is represented symbolically as our striving to become well-pleasing to God,” how “the Son of God is a religious symbol for the change of heart or, more specifically, for the good disposition resulting from it,” and finally how “the end of this striving is represented symbolically in religious terms as God’s acceptance of us” (125). These points illuminate how Kant draws upon this scriptural narrative to exemplify the moral path.

¹⁰ Many instances of *Urbilder* or archetypes appear in Kant’s work. For example: Ideas for Plato are “archetypes of things themselves” (A313/B370); the idea of humanity (A318/B374); the Sage of the Stoics (A569/B597); the system of all philosophical cognition (A838/B866); the ideal of the philosopher (A839/B867); holiness of the will (KpV, 5:43); moral ideas, as archetypes of practical perfection (KpV, 5:127n); the ideal of holiness (KpV, 5:128-29); the archetype of beauty (KU, 5:235); the aesthetic idea (KU, 5:322) (See DiCenso 2013 for further discussion).

However, Wood runs into difficulties here that go beyond inattention to Kant's terminology. He notes that "the ideal is thought as a human individual," and "that it serves as a standard for our moral striving" (117). The question is, how feasible is it to interpret the Son of God, presented as a supernatural or divine as well as a human being, as a model for human ethical striving? Wood concludes that "the ideal cannot be thought by us as 'an example to be emulated'" (117, citing R 6:64). A few pages later Wood cites the same passage and reiterates, "we cannot think of ourselves as emulating the ideal because its purity of will is achieved innately and without effort" (126). However, while Kant argues that we need not "absolutely deny that he might indeed also be a supernaturally begotten human being," he insists that "from a practical point of view any such presupposition is of no benefit to us, since the prototype [*das Urbild*] which we see embedded in this apparition must be sought in us as well (though natural human beings), and its presence in the human soul is itself incomprehensible enough" (R 6:63-64). In other words, while Kant maintains an agnostic stance concerning doctrinal claims, he argues that as a symbol for the actualization of the moral law in human life, the *Urbild* should *not* be considered supernatural. In this vein, Kant states: "the elevation of such a Holy One above every frailty of human nature [i.e., making of him a supernatural being] would rather, from all that we can see, stand in the way of the practical adoption of the idea of such a being for our imitation [*unsere Nachfolge*]" (R 6:64). The *Urbild* can have this representational efficacy because it is an ideal of reason to which we, as rational beings, can have access. In the technical meaning of *Urbilder* as representing ideas of reason, and hence as potentially accessible to and actualisable by human beings, the Son of God is indeed an "example to be emulated."

Instead, rather than understanding the Son of God as a human being courageously striving to remain true to the moral law in the face of persecution, Wood argues that "The Son of God can, however, serve as a symbol for the purity of disposition to which a human being aspires and even hopes to attain by undergoing a moral revolution or change of heart" (126). This is not incorrect, but it restricts the symbolic reference to the ideal or holy disposition and dissociates this from the travails of human life. By contrast, it is especially important that Kant presents the narrative of Jesus's life as personifying "rational beings in the world [*des vernünftigen Wesens in der Welt*]" (R 6:60; 6:61). Kant refers to the "sufferings, up to the most ignominious death" that the ideal human endures, and observes:

“human beings cannot form for themselves any concept of the degree of strength of a force like that of a moral disposition except by representing it surrounded by obstacles and yet—in the midst of the greatest possible temptations—victorious” (R 6:61).¹¹ The moral challenges represented in accounts of his life also concern *our* ethical endeavors in the world, and here Kant uses a term explicated in the third *Critique*, *Nachfolge*, to describe the ethical emulation we undertake voluntarily (KU 5:283, R 6:62, 6:64). Kant explicates the narrative framework of Jesus’s life as a rational model, an archetype or *Urbild*, for human ethical striving in the face of uncertainty and adversity. It is only if the Son of God is “taken as” divine that this representational force for practical purposes falters. Once again, the central interpretive issue for Kant concerns how religious symbols, without violating autonomy, help us become oriented to and motivated by the moral law.

Autonomy and Grace

As noted, Wood argues that Kantian autonomy is not incompatible with traditional religious ideas, including that of grace (Wood 151, 158, 180-81). However, grace must be understood as a supplement to, rather than a substitute for, our autonomous practical endeavors; in Kant’s words, “the human being must make himself into whatever he is or should become in a moral sense, good or evil.” In an oft-cited passage, Kant continues: “Supposing [*Gesetzt*] that some supernatural cooperation is also needed to his becoming good or better, whether this cooperation only consist in the diminution of obstacles or be also a positive assistance, the human being must make himself antecedently worthy of receiving it” (R 6:44, translation modified). Although it has contributed to misreadings of Kant as explicitly invoking divine assistance, Wood downplays the significance of *Gesetzt* being translated as “granted” by di Giovanni, rather than the more appropriate “suppose” or “supposing” (as it is at e.g. A551/B579, G 4:398, and KU 5:451). He states, “the meaning of what Kant has said is quite clear, however it might be translated. In the German, and in both translations, the import of the antecedent clause is simply conditional” (158n). That is, even if we assume divine assistance, our autonomous efforts remain primary and indispensable. Kant argues that the idea of grace can support ethical practice in the face of the inevitable hindrances that finite rational beings encounter.

¹¹ Kant reiterates this crucial point: “The teacher of the gospel, through his teaching, suffering, and “meritorious death,” gave to us “an example conforming to the prototype [*dem Urbilde*] of a humanity well-pleasing to God” (R, 6:128-9).

However, one “must incorporate this positive increase of force into his maxim: in this way alone is it possible that the good be imputed to him, and that he be acknowledged a good human being” (R 6:44). Kant is concerned with the attitude and freely chosen maxims of moral agents; this is crucial to the doctrine of moral evil, predicated as it is on reason, choice, and responsibility (Wood, 66). Once again, one “must be able to hope that, by the exertion of *his own* power, he will attain to the road that leads in that direction [i.e., to a “new heart”], as indicated to him by a fundamentally improved disposition” (6:51; italics original).

In trying to reconcile Kant with more traditional thinking, Wood also cites R 6:88: “A human being’s moral improvement is likewise an affair incumbent upon him, and heavenly influences may indeed always co-operate in this improvement, or be deemed necessary to explain its possibility” (Wood, 151n). Wood comments: “Kant here allows that God’s unilateral action might be necessary even for the change of heart. He regards it as unknowable whether this divine action is needed or actually occurs. But he holds we must strive to make ourselves worthy of it antecedent to depending on it” (ibid). Although “unilateral action” by God is never mentioned by Kant, Wood correctly emphasizes Kant’s focus on human effort. However, it should be observed that the cited passage appears in “General Remark” to Part II, on the topic of miracles (one of the *parerga* excluded from rational religion). Kant’s agnosticism is not as nonjudgmental as Wood portrays. The passage continues: “Yet he [the person seeking moral improvement] has no understanding of himself in the matter: neither how to distinguish with certainty such influences from natural ones, nor how to bring them and so, as it were, heaven itself down to himself. And, since he knows not what to do with them, in no case does he *sanction* miracles but rather, should he pay heed to the precept of reason, he conducts himself as if every change of heart and all improvement depended solely on the application of his own workmanship” (R 6:88). The stronger point is that much confusion can arise from passively awaiting supernatural signs and interventions; one must follow what is clear and known to us, the precept of reason (the moral law). Therefore, miracles, mysteries, effects of grace and means of grace, are classified as *parerga*.

Finally, whether Kant’s practical inquiry into the significance of the concept of grace is more like Augustinianism or Pelagianism is irrelevant, precisely because Kant’s

focus is practical, not metaphysical. As Wood stresses, “Kant holds that unaided reason can neither affirm nor deny any of these doctrines” (161).

The Ethical Community

A crucial issue emerging from Kant’s analysis of radical evil in Part I concerns the need to address evil on a societal level without abrogating individual freedom and responsibility. Wood cites the *Religion* concerning how our sense of self-worth is gauged in relation to others, how the individual, for example, “is anxious that other human beings will consider him poor and will despise him for it.” Kant stresses the mutual corruption arising from this *amour propre*, to use Rousseau’s term, or unsociable sociability, to draw from “Idea for a Universal History,” in which the mere presence of others fuels a relentless comparative and competitive dynamic. As Kant concludes, “they will mutually corrupt one another’s moral predisposition [*Anlage*] and make one another evil” (Wood 78-79, citing R 6:93-94, translation modified). The predisposition to the good, as Kant details in his discussions of the predispositions to animality and humanity, must be developed through interpersonal relations. Hence it can be corrupted by various forms of self-love, including the “striving for ascendancy” from which arise “jealousy and rivalry” and “the greatest vices of secret or open hostility to all whom we consider alien to us” (R 6:27). As Wood summarizes: “to say that for Kant the radical human propensity to evil has a social and historical origin is only to report what Kant explicitly says” (78).

In chapter 7, turning to Part Three of the *Religion* where the ethical community is introduced, Wood summarizes Parts One and Two of Kant’s project as concerning the internal change of heart in relation to Christian concepts such as grace and the Son of God. He states, “the *Religion* has still not asked how the struggle against evil could be carried on effectively. What can we do now to effect a change of heart in ourselves or in others?” (164). This last concern, he argues, is taken up only in Part Three, and he returns to the issues of mutual corruption and unsociable sociability. However, the social element is not suddenly introduced in Part Three of the *Religion*; it is there from the start. As noted, Wood places great stress on symbolic interpretations of inherited religious traditions. These traditions are not individually created—they are culturally and historically formed and transmitted. The same applies more generally to scriptures and sacred texts in all

traditions, as well as to doctrines, codes of conduct, and other practices. These are collective and social, and yet have a tremendous impact on the psychological and ethical formation of individuals. Kant is concerned throughout the *Religion* to reinterpret Christian faith (and by extension other historical faiths, Wood 188) to render them more suitable as vehicles for the moral law. Wood sees this connection, and inserts a section, 7.6, on “The Interpretation of Scripture” into his discussion of the ethical community (174ff.). Kant makes rational interventions into shared cultural and religious institutions, thereby actively contributing to the conditions supporting a change of heart, and a change of *Denkungsart*.

Wood explains that, “the ethical community is in its concept universal, encompassing all humanity,” and is distinguished from any political community by that universality as well as its non-coercive focus on inner states (165-66). It is vital that moral religion and ethical community concern all of humankind—they are not culture or tradition specific. Wood explicates how the ethical community, as rational and universal, is “an ideal in the sense that no existing community ever fully lives up to it” (167). The ideal ethical community is also called the church invisible, because it concerns internal ethical matters, but it does not correspond to existing, visible churches. As noted, Kant describes the “ethical community” as “the church invisible (the mere idea of the union of all upright human beings under direct yet moral divine world-governance, as serves for the archetype [*zum Urbilde*] of any such governance to be founded by human beings” (R 6:101). Wood notes that the four features of the church invisible are given under “the four headings of the table of categories” (168, citing R 6:101-102). It could also be noted that *the moral law* grounds the four basic characteristics of the church invisible: *universality*, *purity*, *freedom*, and “the *unchangeableness* of its *constitution*” following “secure principles *a priori*.” The moral law is defined as *universal* at G 4:402, 4:421, 4:431, 4:436, as *pure*, i.e., strictly *a priori*, at G, 4:405, 4:410, 4:411, 4:426; as establishing human relations under the principle of *freedom* at 4:433ff., 4:438; its *unchanging nature*, i.e., resistance to exceptions and historical contingencies, is stated at 4:424.¹²

One of Wood's strongest contributions is explicating the active interface of the ideal with existing communities: “In order effectively to combat evil, the ethical community must exist here on earth, as a human institution” (168). Because of the need to

¹² See DiCenso (2019) for further discussion.

work with existing historical structures, “Kant cannot be understood as rejecting revealed (Christian) religion ... as the outer circle of religion” (170). At the same time, this does not mean Kant accepts revealed traditions on heteronomous terms. Moral religion “consists solely in the performance of our ethical duties, symbolically presented in religious terms” (170). Because of this tension between existing churches and the moral ideal, Wood argues, “religion must be subjected to a historical dynamic, through which the two contrasting thoughts can be brought together” (171). Noting the patterns of priestcraft and domination in historical traditions, including Christianity, Wood observes how human institutions can be “far removed from, even in certain ways directly opposed to, the rational aims that human beings must realize through them” (171). At the same time, Wood emphasizes “that an ethical community is possible only through the historical progress of existing churches” (172). While this is true, the question remains: what *drives* this progress toward universal moral principles, which does not occur without the intervention of rational agents? We are returned to the need for an enlightened, ethical interpretation of existing institutions, accompanied by freedom of speech in the public sphere, so that the heteronomous and contra-rational elements of religions are reformed into vehicles of moral autonomy. Wood also makes this point, noting the problems of idolatry and literalism; avoiding these involves “accepting the responsibility to interpret religious symbols” (173n, R 6:199).

Wood notes significant parallels in Kant’s approaches to religious and political transformation: “politics should begin with an imperfect or even despotic state and seek to bring it closer to a true condition of right” (182). One might exchange “should” for “must,” since all existing states are imperfect. Nevertheless, the point is important; Kant is not a naïve utopian who thinks we can disregard existing political or ecclesiastical institutions and replace them with purely rational ones. This is a recipe for chaos or, as Kant puts it, “anarchy” (TP 8:302 including Kant’s footnote). Kant prioritizes an “evolutionary” over a “revolutionary” model of progress (SF 7:87-88). Concerning religious reform, Kant likewise emphasizes how “equality springs from true freedom, yet without anarchy, for each indeed obeys the law (not the statutory one),” and how “the basis for the transition to a new order of things must lie in the principle of the pure religion of reason... inasmuch as it is to be a human work, through gradual reform” (Wood 182-83, citing R 6:121-22). The

use of the term “statutory” to describe both political and religious codes indicates that, in each case, historically formed institutions are gauged in relation to ideas of reason. However, since ideal models cannot be imposed on reality, there must occur a gradual interaction between ideal and real, to which each contributes. In the final chapter, Wood reiterates that “Kant’s project must be to advocate gradual reform of these [religious] practices from within” (187). As he further explains, “If pure rational religion is simply the telos of a process of religious reform that Kant hopes will take place in ecclesiastical faiths, then we cannot know what pure rational religion truly is until that process of reform has taken place” (187). This is a crucial point, i.e., that any ideal must be applied through the judgment and action of rational beings living under existing societal and political conditions; depending on the particulars of those conditions, the outcomes will vary. This is also why Kant emphasises approximation to the ideal rather than completion, and why, as Wood also notes, the application of the ideal to ecclesiastical faiths includes all historical religions (188)—hence there will be different versions of the “rational religion” should it ever come into being.

However, Wood ends chapter 7 on a melancholy note, lamenting that Kant’s “hopes for religion have not been borne out.” More pointedly: “Ecclesiastical religion fails in its religious vocation when it becomes an enemy of enlightenment, when it defends traditional, backward ways of thinking rather than leading the way to enlightened social reform” (184). Likewise, in his conclusion, Wood observes: “If Kant errs at this point, it is in his overestimation of the capacity of religious thought and institutions to develop and reform” (211). In fact, because of its heteronomous systems of thinking and authority, statutory faith can become a “fetter” blocking progress in autonomy and enlightenment (Wood 214, citing R 6:121). The question of over-riding criteria is essential: for ethical reform to occur, the principles governing moral religion, the moral law and its correlate autonomy, must have primacy over heteronomous mores. This is where Kant poses a challenge to traditional patterns of religious thinking and is one reason why Kant’s hope for an enlightening of ecclesiastical institutions has gone largely unfulfilled. Wood advances the process of religious enlightenment in several respects with his clear treatments of symbolic interpretation in the service of practical reason. However, his position sometimes becomes weakened or muddled in his efforts to emphasize the

harmony of rational faith and historical, especially Christian institutions, thereby downplaying Kant's cosmopolitan project grounded in practical reason.

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Husserl y Kant: debates en torno a la filosofía trascendental y la revolución copernicana

Husserl and Kant: debates on Transcendental Philosophy and Copernican Revolution

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El volumen editado por Iulian Apostolescu y Claudia Serban reúne una serie de artículos de reconocidos investigadores en el ámbito de la fenomenología. Como el título indica, los trabajos que componen este libro analizan críticamente las distintas dimensiones y aristas de la relación entre las ideas de Kant y Husserl, tomando el concepto de lo trascendental como eje organizador. Esta relación se vuelve tanto más interesante y compleja, en la medida en que el punto de vista de Husserl respecto de Kant y del enfoque trascendental no ha sido homogéneo ni ha estado exento de tensiones. El volumen configura un apasionante debate sobre la filosofía trascendental en general y sobre la fenomenología en particular, al mismo tiempo que profundiza en distintos temas centrales de la obra de los mencionados autores: la naturaleza de la lógica, la crítica del psicologismo y el antropologismo, las concepciones de la ciencia, la ética y la metafísica.

Los editores han distribuido los artículos en las siguientes secciones temáticas: 1) Lo trascendental y lo a priori; 2) El ego y la esfera de la otredad; 3) Estética, lógica, ciencia, ética; 4) La filosofía trascendental en debate. En la presentación de las distintas contribuciones, he respetado el orden de dichas secciones, aclarando en cada caso el título

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correspondiente. Hacia el interior de cada sección, en cambio, preferí no atenerme siempre al orden de aparición de los artículos, priorizando el señalamiento de ciertas discusiones y vínculos conceptuales.

De cualquier modo, es posible advertir que hay temáticas y debates que atraviesan las distintas secciones, como es el caso de la reformulación husserliana del concepto de *a priori*, la discusión sobre la antropologización de lo trascendental, el problema de la justificación, el problema de la normatividad y el eventual carácter anti-copernicano de la fenomenología. Considero que la persistencia de estas temáticas y debates es lo que da consistencia y profundidad al volumen, de modo tal que mi recorrido por los artículos pondrá especial atención en ellas.

Sección I: Lo trascendental y lo a priori

El artículo de Veronica Cibotaru señala que Kant introduce el concepto de lo trascendental en el contexto de la discusión sobre la posibilidad de la metafísica, mientras que Husserl lo hace motivado por la búsqueda de una mejor comprensión de la relación entre el sujeto y el mundo. Sin embargo, ambos filósofos comparten para la autora dos puntos fundamentales. Por un lado, sus concepciones de lo trascendental no implican en ningún caso un encierro en el sujeto. Por otro lado, caracterizan la tarea de la razón como una tarea infinita. En el caso de Kant, esto se explicaría porque su giro hacia el sujeto no es un giro reflexivo hacia la interioridad, sino más bien un giro hacia las condiciones de posibilidad de los conceptos de la razón pura. En el caso de Husserl, porque mediante la reducción trascendental nos volvemos plenamente conscientes del mundo como horizonte infinito, en contraposición con nuestro cotidiano encierro en la finitud, propio de la actitud natural.

Susi Ferrarello analiza el concepto de lo trascendental en su relevancia a la hora de salvar el abismo entre el ser y el sentido. Desde este enfoque, la actividad dadora de sentido se convierte en el tema fundamental de la indagación filosófica. La autora señala y explicita una interesante implicancia ética de dicha actividad, en la medida en que en ella se refuerza la interpretación del ser como compuesto de unidades de sentido y esto motiva la interpretación atomística que los seres humanos tenemos de nosotros mismos. Así pues, la epojé husserliana, en tanto redescubrimiento de las interconexiones de sentido, no sólo resulta fundamental en el plano teórico, sino también en el plano ético.

Los restantes artículos de la primera sección plantean el tema de la filosofía trascendental en tanto crítica del naturalismo psicologista y antropologista. John Rogove reconstruye los puntos fundamentales en que Husserl se diferencia de cierta impronta antropologista kantiana, criticando así las lecturas de la fenomenología husserliana como una filosofía del sujeto o un idealismo. Mientras que Kant quedaría atrapado en un relativismo del esquema conceptual y por consiguiente en una separación irreconciliable entre lógica y ontología, Husserl critica la distinción entre la representación y la cosa en sí, dando lugar a una nueva concepción de lo *a priori*. Elena Partene, en cambio, propone una respuesta posible a la acusación de antropologismo dirigida por Husserl a Kant. Dicha

respuesta se estructura en base a una doble distinción: por un lado, entre el concepto kantiano de *a priori* y el concepto de lo innato, por el otro, entre el concepto antropológico de finitud (*finiteness*) y el concepto metafísico (*finitude*).

Claudia Serban, por su parte, cuestiona la inevitabilidad de la “prohibición antropológica” como rasgo esencial de la filosofía trascendental. De hecho, es posible encontrar en Kant y Husserl elementos que sugieren y alientan la búsqueda de una mejor psicología y de una mejor antropología a partir de la orientación superadora del enfoque trascendental, sin caer en la reducción de lo racional a lo humano. Según la autora, en Kant encontramos cierta dominancia antropológica como consecuencia del rechazo de la primacía de la experiencia interna, mientras que en Husserl habría una dominancia psicológica como consecuencia de que lo *a priori* es considerado válido para toda subjetividad y no sólo para el ser humano. Sin embargo, a partir de la década del 30, Husserl emprendería un intento de trascendentalizar la antropología, tomando como base incuestionable los logros de la reducción fenomenológica y la consiguiente superación de la actitud natural.

Sección II: El Ego y la esfera de la Otredad

Inga Römer se ocupa de la interpretación y apropiación husserliana de la apercepción trascendental kantiana, poniendo especial atención en la relevancia de la constitución del tiempo. En un primer momento, la apercepción trascendental es considerada por Husserl como un planteo metafísico, pero luego recupera esta noción y la incorpora en su abordaje fenomenológico. El elemento fundamental de esta revisión es el intento de superar el formalismo (tanto el de Kant como el propio) en el estudio de la correlación entre la unidad del objeto y la unidad del Yo. El trabajo de Corijn van Mazijk analiza el otro aspecto central de la cuestión, relativo a la caracterización de la esfera no subjetiva. En su opinión, las filosofías de Husserl y Kant pueden leerse como intentos de incorporar la dosis justa y necesaria de realismo en un marco idealista. El único modo de lograr esto sería la combinación kantiana de realismo empírico con idealismo trascendental, puesto que todo intento de plantear un realismo trascendental conduce irremediablemente al idealismo escéptico. Para no malinterpretar este enfoque, es importante comprender adecuadamente dos puntos centrales, desarrollados por el autor en el trabajo: 1) el carácter no ontológico del concepto kantiano de *noumenon*; 2) la tesis husserliana de la posibilidad lógica y contrasentido material de una realidad por fuera de la experiencia.

El aporte de Antoine Grandjean se dirige al esclarecimiento de la noción husserliana de Yo puro, así como de las garantías que fundamentan el carácter auténticamente fenomenológico de dicho concepto. El autor parte del reconocimiento de la continuidad egoica entre la actitud natural y la esfera fenomenológica trascendental, tanto en el aspecto formal como en la dimensión temática. En la medida en que el camino hacia el Yo es un camino de la reflexión, depende en última instancia de la garantía de la retención, la cual no es considerada suficiente por Grandjean. Por otro lado, Irene Breuer analiza la

evolución del abordaje husserliano sobre el Yo, partiendo de su necesidad meramente metodológica en la eidética trascendental de *Ideas I* y terminando en el planteo de una necesidad ontológica del Yo en los escritos tardíos. Este cambio implicaría una inversión de la prioridad de las posibilidades sobre las realidades que caracterizaba al primer pensamiento de Husserl, dando lugar a la necesidad de una metafísica de los hechos primarios (no de las causas primeras).

Raymond Kassis argumenta que la fenomenología husserliana no implica un posicionamiento solipsista en relación con la intersubjetividad, al mismo tiempo que rechaza las interpretaciones tradicionales sobre la experiencia de los otros, basadas en las nociones de analogía, compasión, identificación o imitación. Para Husserl, el abordaje eidético nos muestra que el Yo individual es una entre las infinitas posibilidades del Yo universal, esto es, lo individual sólo es individual en tanto variación de lo universal. Vincent Gérard, por su parte, se ocupa del abordaje husserliano del nacimiento, el sueño y la muerte como casos límite que implican un descentramiento del Yo y plantean problemas de relevancia ética y metafísica. En estos abordajes, se observa la influencia de la antropología kantiana, aunque reformulada en términos no antropológicos y trascendentales.

Sección III: Estética, lógica, ciencia, ética

Julien Farges analiza la revisión husserliana de la estética trascendental, desarrollando cuatro puntos fundamentales: 1) la desobjetivación de la estética; 2) la incorporación de la causalidad al espacio estético; 3) la idea de que la síntesis ya opera en la estética y es coextensiva con la vida intencional; 4) la incorporación de la estética a la lógica. En algunos de estos puntos, el autor advierte la influencia de Arthur Schopenhauer. Daniele De Santis, por su parte, se ocupa del rol que Husserl atribuye a Kant en la historia de la filosofía, a partir de la importancia que la concepción trascendental de la síntesis tuvo en el abordaje del problema de la determinación de la identidad del ser. Kant realiza este aporte en oposición al escepticismo humeano, pero Husserl advierte en ello una suerte de primer descubrimiento de la intencionalidad. Dale Allen Hobbs Jr. compara las concepciones de la ciencia de Kant y Husserl, prestando especial atención al vínculo entre las ciencias naturales y la filosofía trascendental. El autor se propone mostrar que la concepción husserliana, además de ser más amplia y elaborada, permite una mejor determinación y explicitación del rol que debe cumplir la indagación científica en nuestra vida cotidiana y en la comprensión del mundo de la vida.

Bernardo Ainsbinder argumenta que, si bien el desarrollo de la fenomenología genética parece dejar atrás la distinción tajante entre las cuestiones de génesis y las cuestiones de validez, no abandona la preocupación trascendental por la justificación, sino que más bien la completa. Husserl no renuncia al trascendentalismo para caer en una especie de psicologismo humeano, sino que advierte la necesidad de criticar la noción de psicología de Kant (tomada de Hume), puesto que impide ver la conexión entre las cuestiones de génesis y las cuestiones de validez. El autor discute la lectura planteada por Steven

Crowell en *Phenomenology and the First-Person Character of the Philosophical Knowledge* (Modern Schoolman, 2007), según la cual la incorporación de mecanismos impersonales significaría un abandono del enfoque epistemológico. Así pues, sostiene que debe explicitarse cómo la justificación emerge a partir de tales mecanismos, al ser asumidos por un carácter teleológico-normativo.

El trabajo de Dominique Pradelle analiza la crítica husserliana a la ética de Kant. Husserl y Kant compartirían el rechazo del escepticismo (ya sea de tipo histórico, cosmológico o humeano) y la afirmación de que las cuestiones éticas no son cuestiones de hecho. Sin embargo, el autor señala que en Husserl es posible advertir una crítica del giro copernicano de Kant, bajo la sospecha de que conduce a un irremediable antropologismo. Esto se manifiesta especialmente en la reformulación husserliana del concepto de *a priori*, admitiendo la posibilidad del *a priori* material. Por otro lado, Husserl también invertiría la supremacía de la razón práctica planteada por Kant y propondría un concepto de razón basado en la dinámica teleológica de intención y cumplimiento. Estas revisiones fenomenológicas del trascendentalismo kantiano tienen consecuencias en la ética y en el concepto de libertad, en la medida en que no hacen énfasis únicamente en la razón, sino también en la experiencia, los sentimientos y los deseos.

Sección IV: La filosofía trascendental en debate

Alexander Schnell continúa la discusión sobre el carácter anti-copernicano de la fenomenología husserliana, argumentando que esto no implica un retroceso al “realismo tolemaico”. La filosofía de Husserl abre una dimensión de análisis previa o “por debajo” de la dicotomía entre realismo e idealismo. El punto de partida es un doble distanciamiento respecto del trascendentalismo kantiano: por un lado, el sujeto trascendental no es un mero aparato epistemológico, sino que tiene un estatuto ontológico. La fenomenología, entonces, abre una nueva región del ser. Por otro lado, cada categoría de objeto prescribe la legalidad de sus modos de aparecer. Se advierte en ello una desobjetivación del *a priori*. Para el autor, la característica fundamental de la fenomenología es el planteo de una circularidad constructiva entre constitución trascendental y fundación ontológica.

El trabajo de Steven Crowell se orienta a la confrontación con el nihilismo, tomando como punto de partida el libro *Wahrheit: Die Architektur der Welt* (Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2012) de Karsten Harries. Crowell rechaza la lectura que Harries realiza de la fenomenología y afirma que es posible plantear una concepción de la razón humana que resulte superadora del nihilismo, a partir del pensamiento de Husserl y Heidegger. La filosofía trascendental de Husserl está basada en la relación entre la experiencia y el sentido, al mismo tiempo que implica un esfuerzo por volver temático este último. Esto permite el desarrollo de un concepto de razón que evite caer en el factualismo nihilista. En el caso de Heidegger, Harries asimila el planteo de la diferencia ontológica al trascendentalismo kantiano, ignorando la influencia de Husserl, con la consecuente antropologización de la filosofía heideggeriana. Sobre la base de esta lectura de la

fenomenología, Crowell propone un concepto de la razón humana como dadora de razones, el cual no se reduce a la idea del espacio lógico ni de la legislación práctica, no se deja asimilar en el cientificismo ni en el tradicionalismo.

Natalie Depraz presenta a la microfenomenología como una disciplina posicionada en un gesto trascendental inaugurado por Husserl, el cual se caracteriza por el intento de revertir el olvido del enigma de la subjetividad y la naturalización de la conciencia. Esto implica poner el foco en el sujeto dador de sentido, a partir de un método de naturaleza reflexiva. La autora analiza las similitudes y diferencias entre la fenomenología husserliana y la microfenomenología, así como las relaciones de esta última con los enfoques neurocientíficos, cognitivos y psicológicos.

El aporte de Garrett Zantow Bredeson consiste en la presentación y análisis de la interpretación de la fenomenología husserliana realizada por Paul Natorp. A diferencia de muchos discípulos de Husserl, Natorp dio la bienvenida al giro trascendental de la fenomenología. Sin embargo, mantuvo siempre las dudas respecto de la auténtica inspiración kantiana del trascendentalismo de Husserl, sospechando una cierta influencia de Fichte. Por último, Ovidiu Stanciu y Yusuke Ikeda se ocupan del pensamiento de Eugen Fink, poniendo de relieve la influencia de Kant, específicamente de la dialéctica trascendental. Según Stanciu, Fink toma de la filosofía kantiana el rechazo de las concepciones acumulativa y teológica del mundo. Por su parte, Ikeda discute las lecturas que definen a Fink como un hegeliano especulativo, destacando la influencia que tuvieron en su pensamiento la antinomia cosmológica kantiana y el abordaje husserliano del mundo.

En pocas palabras, se trata de un libro valioso y de gran utilidad, compuesto por artículos de notable claridad y excelencia académica. Lamentablemente, no todas las contribuciones mantienen continuidades y debates directos con los restantes aportes que conforman el volumen. La impronta general de la obra, como se expresa en el propio título, resulta más bien fenomenológica que kantiana. La interpretación de Kant que se desprende de la mayoría de los artículos está mediada por la lectura de Husserl, lo cual se advierte por ejemplo en las discusiones sobre el antropologismo.

Los trabajos no sólo ofrecen lecturas e interpretaciones de fuentes husserlianas poco estudiadas y de aparición reciente, sino también discusiones originales y enfoques novedosos sobre los temas clásicos de la tradición fenomenológica. En mi opinión, los vínculos temáticos más significativos vienen dados por los tópicos que mencioné al comienzo de esta reseña, con independencia de la distribución de los artículos en las diferentes secciones. La posibilidad de internarse y profundizar en dichos debates, de la mano de investigadores de primer nivel, constituye el aspecto más apasionante y enriquecedor de esta obra.



Kant on the Necessity of the Empirical Laws of Nature

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Immanuel Kant’s philosophy continuously provides us with schemes for later philosophical reflections. Nowadays, confrontation with Kant is unescapable in any field of knowledge. Epistemology is with no doubt one of the fields where the bounds with the transcendental thought are stronger; especially so, given the great interest towards epistemology in the contemporary philosophy. Even though, on the one hand, this attention by contemporary thinkers promotes the study of the epistemological questions arisen by Kant’s thought, on the other hand, there are many works reading Kant’s texts under the light of prejudicial theoretical structures. With these reasons in mind, and with the explicit goal to understand and reconstruct “welche Position Kant tatsächlich vertreten hat” (p. 17), Ansgar Seide focuses on the *status* of the empirical laws of nature. In particular, one contemplated question is the predication of necessity to some laws that, by definition, cannot be inferred a priori. The works selected by the author are to be found in the period between the publication of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790), because it is in this phase that Kant’s position on the empirical laws proves to stay consistent. Nonetheless, the choice to exclude the so-called pre-critical period and the *Opus Postumum* from this analysis is bound to generate some degree of perplexity. The *Opus Postumum* deals with a new range of problems, namely the theory of those a priori knowledge that are not pure, under the management of

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the faculty of judgement rather than of the understanding. The author chose to exclude the *Opus Postumum* precisely because, in spite of this, its fragmented nature presents several interpretative problems, deserving a separate specific analysis (p. 18).

In this effort to reconstruct the status of the empirical laws, Seide is in contrast with other interpreters, e.g. Kitcher (1994: p. 270): “[I offer] a reading of Kant that links him far more closely with contemporary naturalism and rejects the aprioristic concern [...]. The advantage of my interpretation is that it produces a Kant who can speak directly to twentieth century epistemological problems. Its disadvantage is that it may seem to many not to produce *Kant* at all. I shall leave it to devotees of the a priori to find ways of connecting the themes I slight with those I make prominent”. Kitcher had to exclude the *Metaphysical Foundations* – in which the systematicity of experience is not enough to establish the necessity of the empirical laws, which is guaranteed by the principles of the understanding instead – because of the clash that would arise with the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, the second *Introduction* grounds the necessity of the empirical laws on the systematizing function of the faculty of judgement. On the other hand, Seide pursues a reading of Kant’s doctrine as organic as possible, trying to keep together the contents of the *Metaphysical Foundations* and the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant famously claims that the understanding prescribes the laws to nature. This thesis is reinforced in the *Prolegomena*, further investigating the distinction between “pure or universal laws” and empirical laws, which “always presuppose particular perceptions” (*Prol*, AA 4: 320). The understanding, while prescribing the transcendental laws to nature, cannot though complete the process of determination of the empirical laws, which do require the content of perceptions. Nevertheless, the empirical laws of nature “carry with them an expression of necessity” (*KrV*, A 159 / B 198; see also *KU*, *Einleitung*, § IV).

Seide underlines precisely and clearly how, at first sight, it might seem that the epistemological account of the first *Critique* denies any attribution of necessity to the empirical laws of nature. A proposition is universally valid only if it is valid a priori; though, the validity of the empirical laws of nature is not verifiable a priori: hence, these propositions appear to be unsuitable to be formulated as laws and to be declared universal and necessary. In spite of this, Kant clearly seeks to avoid such skeptical conclusions. One first insight of this complex effort can be found in the first *Critique*, where Kant seems to allow for deriving the empirical laws on the transcendental laws: «Particular laws, because they concern empirically determined appearances, cannot be completely derived from the categories, although they all stand under them» (*KrV*, B 165).

The relevant literature appears to be deeply undecided about the interpretation of Kant’s solution to this problem. On the one hand, Michael Friedman, starting right from the abovementioned passage of the *B-Deduction* and from a close analysis of the *Metaphysical Foundations*, claimed that not only the necessity of categories but also the necessity of the

empirical laws is secured by the understanding. On the other hand, scholars such as Gerd Buchdahl, Philip Kitcher, Henry Allison, and Paul Guyer, mostly relying on the Introductions of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, claimed that the necessity of the empirical laws does not depend on their relation with the transcendental laws of the understanding, but rather on their reciprocal correlation in the context of the system of knowledge that is ruled by the faculty of judgement and its principle of finality. Moving from this state of the art, Seide tries to walk on a middle road, showing how “die Rollen des Verstandes auf der einen und der Vernunft beziehungsweise der Urteilskraft auf der anderen Seite in einer sehr komplexen Weise miteinander verwoben sind” (p. 5).

Since the conception of the empirical laws is strongly linked to the problem of causality, the first part of this work (pp. 21-104) explores the relationship between Kant and Hume. Seide hereby contrasts Gary Hatfield, who denies the key importance of the confrontation with Hume for the development of the critical philosophy. On the contrary, according to Seide, Kant views the Scottish philosopher as an ally at war with the dogmatic metaphysics, despite the skeptical consequences of his positions.

The analysis of Kant’s texts about the empirical laws takes place in the second part of this work. The third chapter (pp. 107-187) deals with the Second Analogy of Experience in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. On the one hand, many interpreters, and first of all them Gerd Buchdahl, claimed how Kant, in the Second Analogy, does not aim to prove the necessary character of the empirical laws, as, for this purpose, one must take into account also a finalistic and systematic conception of nature. On the other hand, Friedman saw the Second Analogy as evidence for the existence of necessary empirical laws. Seide, while he leaves some space to Friedman’s reading and partly agrees with it, holds that Kant does not wish to prove the necessity of empirical laws, but rather aims at explaining how the laws of nature are necessarily valid and how we can know them, in the context of his overall doctrine. Moreover, “selbst wenn Kant in der Lage sein sollte, den Nachweis zu erbringen, dass notwendige empirische Naturgesetze *existieren*, bleibt in der zweiten Analogie der Erfahrung jedoch offen, wie wir diese erkennen können” (p. 109). So, in the Second Analogy Kant would have merely claimed that, in order for us to report our perception of objects, and hence to impose an objective temporal structure to our experience, it is necessary to analyze and to organize the hypothetical formulations of the empirical laws. The deduction of the particular empirical laws in the *Analytic of Principles* would take second place, as this passage solely deals with the necessity that some empirical laws be given.

The *Metaphysical Foundations* is analyzed in the fourth chapter (pp. 188-291). This work indeed represents a fundamental frame of reference to understand how Kant grounds the necessity of physical laws: his goal is precisely to seek an a priori foundation for physics as an empirical science, in order to secure the necessity of the physical laws. This is possible only thanks to the creation of a link between the realm of the pure understanding and that

of physics: this link is constituted by the metaphysical foundations of the natural sciences, which are in their turns the result of the application of the transcendental laws of the understanding to the empirical concept of matter.

In the fifth chapter (pp. 292-325), Seide briefly goes back to the *Critique of Pure Reason* and in particular to the *Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic*, because it is in these pages that Kant anticipates some key themes of the Introductions of the *Critique of Power of Judgment* and tackles the problem of the necessity of the empirical laws of nature. The task to systematize our empirical knowledge is attributed to the faculty of reason. Kant finds himself nevertheless to face the problem of the justification of this attribution, whose question remains open in the first *Critique*. This is because, while on the one hand the systemic organization of the empirical knowledge is fundamental for the knowing subject, on the other hand this organization looks indeed very problematic unless it directly derives by the empirical world. The presupposition that the laws of nature are formed in a finalistic form requires some justification. Seide though highlights how this justification is missing from the first *Critique*, and, moreover, it is impossible within the conceptual frame of the work. How Chignell found as well, the question on the objective reality of a concept is strictly linked with the question on the real possibility of that concept's object: so, "legt Kant sich zumindest indirekt darauf fest, dass das Objekt der Idee der Systematizität real unmöglich ist" (p. 314). Kant in fact observes how "In fact it cannot even be seen how there could be a logical principle of rational unity among rules unless a transcendental principle is presupposed, through which such a systematic unity, as pertaining to the object itself, is assumed a priori as necessary" (*KrV*, A 650-651/B 678-679). Though, like Kant himself admits right away, the object of this idea is impossible, and for this reason the idea of the systematicity of nature must be intended as a *maximum* (cfr. *KrV*, A 665/B 693). Then, the regulative principle of the systematic unity of knowledge, as a logical principle, presupposes a transcendental principle, according to which the systematicity pertains to the object itself; this being said, the idea of systematicity is a maximum and its object is actually impossible.

The last chapter of this work (pp. 326-401) deals with the Introductions of the *Critique of Power of Judgment*, where Kant dismisses reason as the agent of the systematization of knowledge, as suggested in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, attributing this task on the reflective faculty of judgement. According to Seide, the transcendental deduction of the principle of the systematic constitution of nature can be realized thanks to the new context of the third *Critique*. In the *Critique of Power of Judgment*, the principle of systematicity is supported also by the symbolic relation with the experience of natural beauty. "The self-sufficient beauty of nature reveals to us a technique of nature, which makes it possible to represent it as a system" (*KU*, AA 5: 246). The topic of natural beauty and of the conformity to one's goals is an evergreen subject of enquiry in numerous studies; Seide (who limits itself to mentioning Rueger-Evren and Chignell) highlights the connection between the deduction of the principle of finality and beauty. The foundation of the principle of finality, in the third *Critique*, is epistemologically weaker, as opposed to that

of the pure concepts of the understanding in the first *Critique*. In spite of this, Kant considers this explanation correct. With regard to the attribution of the systematicity of knowledge from the understanding to the faculty of judgment, Seide substantially accepts Friedman's proposal, though the author underlines with more force the importance of the power of judgment, as implied also in the foundation of physics (pp. 367-396). "The *Metaphysical Foundations* provides an a priori foundation for the most general empirical concept (the empirical concept of matter) and the most general empirical law (the law of universal gravitation), which characterize and govern all matter as such – regardless of the specific differences of various distinct types of matter. Reflective judgment, by contrast, proceeds from the most specific empirical concepts and law, and attempts always to unify and consolidate these under more and more general empirical concepts and laws" (Friedman, 1992: pp. 255-256).

To conclude, I judge positively Seide's work. In a simple and original way, he reconstructs with precision one of Kant's most important theoretical routes, enjoying a living and growing attention in the contemporary scenario. Thanks to the exploration of several texts in which this path takes place, and to the constant relationship with the secondary literature, Seide indeed puts forth a work of strong interest and relevance.

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A Rescued Legacy and a Jazz Model: Mapping Kant's "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment"'s Twentieth- Century Reception

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“Nun war vor Törleß der Name Kant nie anders als gelegentlich und mit einer Miene ausgesprochen worden, wie der eines unheimlichen Heiligen. Und Törleß konnte gar nichts anders denken, als daß von Kant die Probleme der Philosophie endgültig gelöst seien, und diese seither eine zwecklose Beschäftigung bleibe”. This passage from Musil is well known: after a conversation with his mathematics teacher, Törleß has just taken into his hands a book by Kant, which had been lying open on a table, like a Bible. And although Musil does not write it explicitly, that book has been universally recognized as *The Critique of Pure Reason*. In the following pages, Musil shows us Törleß, struggling to read the first pages of the Kant. At the end of the day he is exhausted, he does not want to read a single page more, and he asks himself whether the reason for that feeling is sickness or just fear. But the most meaningful passage comes right after, when Törleß falls asleep and dreams of Kant, walking with a heavy book in his arms. And that book is so heavy that Kant has to stop every three steps to rest. The result of Törleß/Musil's encounter with Kant was the strong belief that Kant had surely found the conceptual order for the understanding of the rational world, but refused to investigate the dimension of irrationality and the imaginary. It was probably the first Viennese step towards Canetti's novel *Die Blendung*,

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which was originally to be entitled *Kant fängt Feuer*. But what if Törleß had read – for example – the *Analytic of the Sublime*?

Kant's "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment" in the 20th Century, edited by Stefano Marino and Pietro Terzi, could help us to rethink Törleß's dream, drawing a map of the influence of "another" Kant, which burst into flames not because – as Canetti would have wanted – his philosophy was unfit to address the new challenges posed by the twentieth-century, such as irrationality or blind spots of rationality, but rather because his philosophy had to become a torch to illuminate new paths through the unexplored land disclosed after the turn of the century. Let us now imagine Törleß stands symbolically for the twentieth century, and from his unconscious emerges Immanuel Kant, with his eighteenth-century ponytail, as Musil ironically writes, but this time something is different: in his arms he is carrying another book, "a complex, multi-layered, heterogeneous, discontinuous and, so to speak, 'patchy' work" (p.4), the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Out of metaphor, it is well known that the third *Critique* has deeply influenced the twentieth-century history of philosophy, nourishing debates in many philosophical disciplines. However, the volume's editors are right when they argue that, "while the importance of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* for the birth of nineteenth-century romanticism and transcendental idealism was widely acknowledged and documented early on, scholars have sometimes overlooked its far-reaching influence on twentieth-century thought" (p.4). Marino and Terzi's editorial project takes the first important step towards the comprehension of *Critique of Power of Judgment's* widespread importance in contemporary philosophy. This collective volume does not only make a first mapping – both properly geographical and chronological and conceptual – but also provides a methodological toolbox to follow the track taken. Indeed, the second paragraph of the introduction is a fresco of the history and geography of the reception, which constitutes the background on which the contributions can be organically placed. The editors follow the *Wirkungsgeschichte* vertically, crossing two centuries, and horizontally, looking at different cultural contexts. In this way, tracing the reception paths in Germany, France, Italy, the United Kingdom and America, within a range of two centuries, a three-dimensional web emerges. Precisely this figure allows the editors to organize the material of the contributions, and also provides the reader with orientation within such a complex phenomenon.

In the third paragraph the editors accurately describe the state-of-the-art of the research on the reception and the interpretations of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* by referring to the last three decades of conferences and publications on the topic. This thorough overview of the *status quaestionis* is not a mere formality, but allows the editors to show the originality of *Kant's "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment in the 20th Century* in the light of current scholarly debate, and also to declare the general ambition of the book. Indeed, Marino and Terzi clarify that they aimed to produce "the first comprehensive study on this missing piece in the history of contemporary philosophy, capable of cutting in a unique way across different traditions, movements, and geographical areas" (p.30). The last part of the introduction makes explicit the methodological framework used for the

coordination of the seventeen contributions that compose the collective work. First, each chapter – for both methodological and historical-philosophical reasons – investigates the contemporary reception of the *Critique of the Aesthetic Power*, leaving out the contemporary debate on the *Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment*. This focus allows the work to concentrate specifically on aesthetics as a field of philosophy, and its implications. Secondly, the general method of choice and organization proves to be, paradoxically, a successful non-method, since the editors explicitly declare that they restrained themselves from dictating an overreaching methodological model to the authors, with the aim of showing, practically, the complexity and variety of the phenomenon of reception of one of the most crucial texts in the history of philosophy. Indeed, the *Critique of Power of Judgment* is not only the fulfilment of the system of transcendental philosophy, it could be considered the core of the system, the work in which the elements that make a critique of the whole reason possible truly appear. The unedited use of the reflective judgment, the role of imagination in its free play, and the power of teleological judgment are the conceptual devices that opened new paths of thought in the history of philosophy, from Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* to Deleuze's *Transcendental Empiricism*. This collection, as was anticipated, is about sketching a cartography of this web of paths, a map of a territory that has remained historically uncharted, and it is also a tool to shed light on Törleß's multi-layered dream, in the way we have reformulated it.

The first part of the volume collects contributions regarding German philosophers. The opening one, by Arno Schubbach, discusses the interpretation of the third *Critique* by the most prominent representatives of the Marburg school, Hermann Cohen and Ernst Cassirer. In the first paragraph, Schubbach introduces Cohen's "violent" reading of this Kant text as an aesthetic in the narrow sense of philosophy of art. Then, the author proceeds, showing how Cohen's pivotal twist was to interpret Kant's universal communicability of the pleasure of beauty as the horizon in which humanity is aesthetically revealed as a cultural community. From this point of view, Cohen could reinterpret aesthetic as the keystone of the whole Kantian system of critical philosophy, contributing, as a specific part of the system, to the plurality of cultural fields and, as the systematic pin, to the integrity of philosophy and the unity of its object, which is culture. The second paragraph is dedicated to Cassirer's interpretation, which takes a position against the common view of the *Critique of Power of Judgment* as a filler of an architectonical missing piece. According to Cassirer, it is an immanent progress of the critique of reason that led to the third part of the system, since empirical knowledge could not be gained by applying general concepts, but only through a system of particular laws, which would have necessarily led to a keener and deeper formulation of apriority itself. This reading leads Cassirer to the formulation of his Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, based on the concept of symbol as the vanishing point of philosophical reflection based on empirical findings. To sum up, in contrast to Cohen, Cassirer reads the examination of empirical knowledge and the reflective power of judgment not as mere elements of a philosophy of art, completing the system, but rather as fundamental devices to transform and improve critical philosophy as such.

Leaving Marburg, Günter Figal discusses Kant's aesthetics from Heidegger's (non)-reception to Gadamer's interpretation and his landing to phenomenological aesthetics until today. The contribution opens with a conjecture about why Heidegger never referred explicitly to the third *Critique*: "since Heidegger could not seriously regard Kant's contribution to aesthetics as marginal, he maybe skipped it because it might have been a serious challenge of Heidegger's view on aesthetics, and thus also of his own thinking of art" (p.62). Developing this hypothesis, the author sketches Heidegger's portrait of aesthetics, consisting in a contrast between his evocation of "true art" and a self-centred reduction of art to a stimulus of subject's emotional states. According to Figal, this simplified picture helped Heidegger to avoid the challenge posed by Kantian aesthetics, which was, instead, accepted by Gadamer in *Truth and Method*. Indeed, while claiming, in the wake of Heidegger, that the only alternative to aesthetics is the truth-character of art, Gadamer develops his critical argument against Kant extensively. Finally, opposing the Heidegger-Gadamer critical arguments, Figal argues that Kantian aesthetic framework actually resists those critiques. Aesthetic experience clearly has a subjective aspect, but the pleasure gained from the contemplation of an artwork, the free views and possibilities that it opens, are by no means self-centred. Aesthetic experiences have their roots in the concrete artwork, which make them possible precisely because it is an aesthetic object.

Dennis J. Schmidt' chapter is linked to the previous one. In fact, if Figal focused on Gadamer's criticisms to Kantian aesthetics, on the *pars destruens* of its interpretation, Schmidt highlights the *pars costruens* by claiming that Gadamer's originality starts exactly with his reappropriation of Kant's effort to clarify the bond between aesthetic experience and truth. In this sense, although Gadamer was not an orthodox Kantian, Kant's third *Critique* has been for him an inspiration to be pressed forward on and radicalized. In order to find his hermeneutic upon a humanistic sense of truth, Gadamer isolated four concepts – *Blidung*, *sensus communis*, *Urteilskraft* and *Geschmack* –, which are precisely Kant's third *Critique*'s conceptual pillars. From these premises, the author shows how the analysis of Kant was the bridge that connected Gadamer's hermeneutics with humanism. Gadamer himself acknowledged that he found his way to hermeneutics discussing the narrowness of the concept of knowledge that limited Kant's position on aesthetics. Developing this argument, the author ends meaningfully the contribution claiming that "Gadamer radicalizes the phenomena and experience that Kant first exposes in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*" and "can be read as one of Kant's most loyal successors in the twentieth century" (p.90).

Haans-Peter Krüger's original chapter is about Helmuth Plessner's usage of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. The first part is dedicated to Plessner's functionalization of reflective judgment for modern research procedures. Plessner was convinced that it could be possible to conceive of a new idea of philosophy in a systematic form by inverting the relation between determining and reflective judgment in Kant into a future orientation for modern research. Since, moreover, research involved not just working through known laws but, rather, revolves around the discovery and invention of

the new, it was a matter of functionalizing Kant's reflective judgment for modern research into a procedure. The reflective judgment was, indeed, able to deal with contingency, and invent new methods of representation of science, and provide new operative hypotheses. This new procedure, according to Plessner, could be applied not only to the natural sciences, but also in the field of the humanities. Following these premises, the last part of the contribution deals with Plessner's late formulation of the ideal of dignity in the conflict among research procedures. If reflective judgment works as a device of historicization of the universal, then it could be seen as a principle of democratization as long as it is fixed on the heuristic ideal of man's dignity.

Moving now towards Frankfurt, Tom Huhn's essay retraces Adorno's attempt to overcome Kantian aesthetics. First, Adorno argues that objectivity has to resist subjectivity by installing itself between the pores of subjectivity. This is why he could not accept Kant's aesthetic model, which precludes the possibility of beauty ever attaining the status of something in itself. According to Adorno, aesthetic pleasure is a historically determined feature of aesthetic experience: "Kant's having yoked pleasure to the aesthetic as an unavoidable element of this experience snatched [...] what was a historical component of aesthetic experience and attempted to make it ahistorical and absolute" (p.118). Adorno claims that beauty cannot be a mere formal or subjective thing, but has rather to be something in the matter itself, the reason for his return to Hegel, who first set the problem of the resistance of the aesthetic matter itself to consciousness. In this sense, the success of an artwork cannot be determined by taste, which is merely subjective, but rather by the aliveness of the object itself. Resuming Adorno's own terms, Huhn efficiently explains that the artwork is a *constellation* or a force-field, which means that the artwork is a living, dynamic phenomenon, while taste is a permanent capacity that would want to correspond to unchangeable features.

Staying within the Frankfurt School, Nicola Emery's contribution focuses on Horkheimer's original interpretation of Kantian aesthetic judgment in *Art and Mass Culture*. According to Horkheimer, the question of aesthetic judgment is immediately a question about the *possible community*. From this point of view, in the judgment of taste, egoism is overcome, and a social space is opened. Theoretically, "by arousing this enlarged communitarian dynamic [...], the *reflecting judgment* draws the open space in which the *subject's movement develops* and fights its historical affliction, combats the expropriation of its *cum* and its *dynamis*" (p. 139), but, in historical reality, "capitalistically, increasingly burdened by a *mortgage* [...] the incomplete *reflecting-judging life, with its secret communitarian sense, is entirely foreclosed*" (p.140). To sum up, Emery argues that Kant's aesthetic-political community was the constant term of orientation in Horkheimer's research. In fact, if in a capitalistic society the subject, isolated and separated, is deprived of the possibility of opening communitarian worlds, the aesthetic experience, with its anti-dogmatic feature, assumes an emancipatory office of resistance against capital's burdens, and a driving function towards a communitarian future, the ideal of the aesthetic-moral community. In this sense, art effectively becomes the possible opening of forms of critical life.

The following chapter, by Serena Feloj, investigates Hannah Arendt's interpretation, focusing on those elements that define the very nature of judgment. In line with Horkheimer's interpretation, according to Arendt, *judging* is the most political of men's mental abilities and, for this reason, the third *Critique* has to be considered Kant's most political work. Moreover, its core concept lies in the need for a social life and for the comparison with other human beings. Feloj effectively presents Arendt's conception of the linguistic nature of language and her notion of *Weltbetrachter*, but she also sharply detects Arendt's forcing and weakening of Kantian thought. It has to be acknowledged that, embracing a realistic perspective, Arendt misses the transcendental feature of Kantian judgment, implementing a detranscendentalization of Kant's aesthetics. However, considering these problematic differences, Feloj insists on the importance of Arendt's interpretation, recognizing its historical and theoretical value in having re-elaborated and politically actualized Kant's concepts, and in having produced an intense debate, which led to a renaissance of the studies on the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*.

Patrice Canivez's contribution, presenting the interpretation of Eric Weil – German, naturalized French – is the juncture between Germany and France. Weil's interpretation revolves around the Kantian gap between nature and liberty, which the philosopher rethinks in terms of facts and meanings. According to Weil, the major discovery of the third *Critique* is the existence of facts that are meaningful in themselves, the discovery of the reality of meanings. Weil's *Logique de la philosophie* starts, indeed, "with a pure attitude that is a way of experiencing the real as a meaningful whole" (p.189), but in order to maintain this idea, the word "meaning" has to be understood in the enlarged sense of an overall signification that does not have to be necessarily linked to the pursuit of an end. However, in the last part of his *Logique*, Weil retrieves the notion of finality and the Kantian notion of a moral end to human action. In this sense, crossing the connected categories of *meaning* and *action*, Canivez concludes his contribution showing that, according to Weil's definitive reading of the third *Critique*, the world exists only for human beings, and reality without humans is an abstraction that would reveal itself to be incomprehensible as soon as it would be taken seriously.

Opening a proper French section, Anne Sauvagnargues focuses on Deleuze's interpretation of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* as a general doctrine of the faculties, which would be the kernel of the transcendental method. In this perspective, Deleuze could arrange the three *Critiques* as different sides of a three-faceted system of the regulation of faculties, even though, soon after, he re-evaluated the status of the third *critique*, putting it clearly in a prominent role because of the turning point of the *Analytic of the Sublime*. That section marks the passage from a harmonic synthesis of faculties to a dissonant one, an unstable equilibrium of the faculties. This disequilibrium, after a Proust crossing, allows Deleuze to turn the involuntary into the highest mode of exercise of a faculty, which has to encounter the contingency to be forced to create and release the conditions of creativity of thought. The Deleuzian discovery of the potential of Kant's Sublime brought him to the formulation of the main features of his transcendental

empiricism and – combining the power of judgment to Bergson’s *Matter and memory* – to most of the categories he used to develop his philosophy of cinema. In this sense, Sauvagnargues sums up, writing that “the sublime does not simply define the relationship between thought and sensibility, philosophy and art, [but] also ensures the conversion of the well-known, of the sensorimotor clichés and the doxic behaviors, into a discovery of the new, in this irruptive and violent mode that Deleuze attributes to creation” (p.205).

In his chapter, Pietro Terzi follows Derrida’s reading of the third *Critique*, suggesting that his interest in it was not related to art or aesthetics per se, since they were mere pretexts to deal with questions intimately concerning his own “encyclopedic” concern. In this sense, according to Terzi, what Derrida found in Kant’s work was a “chance of questioning a founding text where the conditions of a *philosophical discourse on art* are fully and paradigmatically deployed” (p.210). After all, the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* was the implementation of the legislative function of philosophy, the actualization of the question *quid juris*, the founding gesture of a system of transcendental philosophy. And if the “era of deconstruction” had announced itself as a challenge to the subordination of all the fields of questioning to the onto-encyclopedic instance, then the third *Critique* was, according to Derrida, the paradigmatic example of philosophy on which deconstruction had to work. After have faced the main conceptual hearts of Derrida’s encounter with Kant, Terzi exhaustively concludes by arguing that, also thanks to Kant, “Derrida was able [...] to deploy a more general account of how deconstruction works and which stance it adopts towards the philosophical tradition: in principle, in fact, deconstruction is a questioning of the frames, a supplement of reflexivity that obliges philosophy to unveil and “denaturalize” its own conceptual frameworks and their inner economy” (p.227).

Completing this French section, Dario Cecchi proposes an analysis of Lyotard’s reading of the Kantian Sublime. *Enthusiasm* is the text in which Lyotard deals systematically with an aspect of Kantian philosophy, wondering whether the third *Critique* provides a fitter framework for Kant’s political philosophy than his works properly dedicated to the philosophy of rights. Specifically, the sublime is what, according to Lyotard, unveils the paradox of reflective judgments as “dispute,” which might produce enthusiasm. This concept of “dispute” is the condition of possibility of the evaluation of the disproportion between general political ideas and their realization, which prompts the question of the legitimacy of revolutions. In this sense, “enthusiasm is an ambivalent feeling: it incites to action as much as it invites the critical discrimination of events” (p.243). Referring to enthusiasm and melancholy, Cecchi interestingly shows how Lyotard’s attempt is to establish a transcendental transition by which ideas – such as justice, freedom, moral law – could be embodied through the exposition of the fact of absence. Applying this concept to cinema and painting, it is clear that Lyotard’s philosophy of art is not based on Kant’s theory of genius, but rather develops a new theory of sublime art. In this sense, every artistic element, insofar as it is sublime, symbolically refers to the presence of a transcending thing, by exhibiting absence.

In his contribution, Claudio Paolucci deals with Umberto Eco's interpretation of the third *Critique*, providing the opportunity for a short Italian stopover. The starting point of *Kant and the Platypus* is Eco's conviction that there is a connection between Kant's reflective judgment and Pierce's idea of *abduction*. According to Eco, once the reflective judgment comes to be introduced in the system, it overturns the whole structure of Kantian critical philosophy. As a consequence of these assumptions, abduction should result in having a primacy for cognition and knowledge. In this sense, empirical knowledge is only possible thanks to a predictive process, implemented by the reflective judgment/abduction, which works by hypothesis and confirmations. That is where the Kantian *als ob* enters the stage: according to Eco, it is necessary to interpret the world *as if* it is coherent or *as if* our hypothesis can guess its real structure. In a suggestive passage of the essay, Paolucci shows how this "as if" principle actually founds the conception of the world as a story or a text. And even if the predictive hypothesis can always be susceptible to error, even if there is nothing in the structure of the world that guarantees the success of our abductive techniques grounded on reflective judgment, without this regulative method we wouldn't be able to gain experience.

Moving to America, Scott R. Stroud presents John Dewey's challenge to Kantian aesthetics, arguing that Dewey's account of aesthetics can be seen as an explicit rejection of Kant's perspective. According to the American philosopher, the main problem of Kant's aesthetics is the alleged contemplative character of the reflective judgment. In other words, Kant errs in the extreme separation of desire and emotion from the experience of art. In fact, in total opposition, Dewey's naturalist perspective does not separate emotional dimension from the rational thought. The aesthetic has to be considered as an immediate "consummatory experience," which involves the whole human life and its relationship with his environment, synthetizing all the previous parts of experience, and also the anticipated future part of it. For Kant, aesthetic experience – in its disinterestedness – is generally separated from practical activity, from actual liveliness, being generated by a contemplative approach to the artwork. In reverse, Dewey believes that the aesthetic experience is a total absorption, which involves the human being in its entirety. However, at the end of his contribution, Stroud makes also clear the area in which Kant and Dewey seem to overlap. For both authors, indeed, the experience of aesthetic phenomena invigorates and encourages humans, disclosing their moral dimension or making them feel wholly united with their environment, and therefore fully alive.

Diarmuid Costello's essay focuses on the relation between Kant's aesthetic and art theory from Greenberg to Danto and de Duve. First, the author shows how Greenberg distorted Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment, overlapping Kant's criterion of "disinterest" with his own, psychologist conception of "aesthetic distance." Then, Costello presents de Duve's "Kant after Duchamp" approach. According to his view, De Duve believes that making Kant's aesthetic "actual," "up to date," involves "substituting the judgment 'this is art' for the judgment 'this is beautiful,'" thereby capturing the transformation in the nature of art embodied by Duchamp's Readymades" (p.288). In direct contrast to de Duve,

instead, Danto rejects entirely what he calls the two “Kantian tenets,” grounding Greenberg and de Duve’s writings: “genius must be unconstrained by rules” and “the critic’s practised eye is at home everywhere.” In fact, starting from the criticism against these alleged “tenets,” Danto argues that Kant conflates natural and artistic beauty, considering this overlapping as the demonstration of the inadequacy of Kant’s aesthetics as a basis of a theory of art. Finally, in the last part of his contribution, Costello tries to amend some of these misunderstandings, pointing out some resources in Kant’s theory of art, which according to him, has remained neglected in art theory.

The last American contribution, by Thomas Teufel, gives an overview of Stanley Cavell’s constant confrontation with Kant. Cavell focuses on Kant’s idea that in the absence of empirical verification, the judge of taste speaks with a “universal voice,” which solves the problem of the lack of empirical grounding by revealing transcendental warrant for her judgment. Cavell is convinced that something similar to this universal voice can be found in ordinary language philosophy’s meta-linguistic pronouncements, especially in the similarities between self-reporting and the reflective nature of judgment. There would be, then, a strict connection between Cavell’s conception of the meta-linguistic claims of ordinary language philosophy and Kant’s idea of judgment in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. This is why Cavell relies on “Kant’s view that the source and legitimacy of that voice traces to the heautonomy of the principle of nature’s purposiveness present in reflecting aesthetic judgments” (p. 312). Teufel, then, concludes his contribution by discussing the problem of authority in Cavell’s thought. Since there is no empirical evidence on which language could be grounded, the ordinary language philosopher is claiming something as true in itself, as an *authority*. After all, only the Kantian principle of heautonomy could yield the authority to build a “thin net over the abyss,” and show meta-linguistics the way to ground the language.

Opening the last section, dedicated to some examples of contemporary debates, Alessandro Bertinetto and Stefano Marino discuss the possible relations between Kant’s concept of power of judgment and the logic of artistic improvisation. The contribution aims to show that the reflective judgment could shed light on some of the creative processes operating in improvisation and, on the other side, that improvisation could be read as a paradigm of the artistic creativity. The principle of heautonomy, the capacity of the power of reflective judgment to legislate over itself, might be considered the grounding principle of improvisation as such. According to the authors, this self-regulatory and recursive structure represents the clear link between improvisational practices and the notions of reflective judgment and genius. But this link is so strict that if the aesthetic judgment permits improvisation, it is because the reflective judgment itself works in an improvisatory way, inventing *abductively* the norms valid for the single empirical cases. Furthermore, the improvisatory structure of the reflective judgment grounds the possibility of communities, which are produced by the inventive and intersubjective development of a common normativity in the practice. And, finally, improvisation seems to be the very nature of genius, since it creates without knowing the rule, with heautonomy its only rule. Thanks to this grounding (on itself) principle, which does not follow any pre-established

plan and does not have a prefixed goal, “artworks are, in a way, the concretizations of the ‘free play’ of imagination and understanding that describe the proper dimension of the aesthetic experience, according to Kant” (p.335).

Concluding this long summary of the volume’s content, the last essay, by Thomas W. Leddy, deals with the importance of Kant in everyday aesthetics. In this recent field of philosophical aesthetics, the most common point of debate over Kant concerns the notion of “disinterestedness,” which could allow for anything to be considered beautiful. But starting from this point, Leddy’s contribution crosses everyday aesthetics’ internal debate, reaching some interesting conclusions. Kant could have a multifarious usage in everyday aesthetics, that is the reason why the best application of Kant’s concepts for everyday aesthetics “would move beyond a narrow focus on one of these ways to recognize a complex layering of ways based on [...] various dimensions” (p. 357): the agreeable, the pure beauty, the dependent beauty, the ideal beauty, the intellectual interest in beauty, and the aesthetics idea based on nature and everyday life.

With this detailed review of each contribution we hope to have given a general overview of the volume’s content, in the attempt of replicating on a reduced scale the panoramic view that characterizes *Kant’s “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment” in the 20th Century*. The map of the uncharted land of the third *Critique*’s reception in the twentieth century is drawn by authors with different research interests, ages and backgrounds, but the result is solid and harmonious. In this sense, the objective of providing a descriptive and interpretative mapping seems to have been successfully achieved. Avoiding the risk of a mere classification, the editors manage to orchestrate the numerous and heterogeneous material, keeping and communicating the idea of the dynamism and plurality of the different interpretations. Indeed, the result of this very refined work is not a picture gallery, on whose walls are hanging figures locked in their frames, but a living web of connections, in which the elements illuminate each other. Therefore, if it is certainly true that this kind of ambitious collective work might easily run into many problems, appearing, for instance, disjointed and approximate, *Kant’s “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment” in the 20th Century* succeeds in supplying a selective and synoptic view, which stands out for its consistency and its deepening in each of its components. Furthermore, all the theoretical problems listed in the very last part of the introduction do not seem to destabilize the work’s inner logic, but become the opportunity to test a research method. It is true that it might be difficult, if not impossible, for a thorough selection to distinguish between major and minor authors or to decide which interpretation has to be considered more influential than others. And it could also be quite difficult to evaluate the impact of a philosophical object, avoiding the risk of slipping into naïve teleologies, or pre-fixed schemes, which would probably weaken this kind of work. But one of *Kant’s “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment” in the 20th Century*’s strengths is to have addressed and resolved these critical problems of method, offering a practical clear example of a sophisticated methodological approach to the history of philosophy. The result aimed at by the editors was meant to be the picture of “a constellation of major points that may serve as a scheme to be fitted with further, larger

and more in-depth analyses” (p. 32), a “first step towards the comprehension of the historical and conceptual elements that have made the third *Critique* such an interesting text for its readers over two centuries in various geographical and cultural milieus” (p. 33). But far from being an *excusatio non petita* to prevent eventual criticism of partiality or approximation, the renunciation to provide a complete account makes this work avant-garde and a headlamp for the research. It is an open mapping, that has to be completed. Incorporating reflective judgment’s operativeness, this important book provides an open structure, able to adapt to the individual case. As a jazz model, *Kant’s “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment” in the 20th Century* offers a method and a first in-depth example of its use, opening up multiple possible research paths and directions. This volume not simply rescues the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*’s twentieth-century legacy and helps us to reinvent Törleß’ Kantian dream, but also makes itself an open scheme on which other scholars are invited to “improvise” in order to map the rest of this uncharted land.





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Revisiting Kant's Legacy in Continental Philosophy

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Review of: Sorin Baiasu and Alberto Vanzo (eds.), *Kant and the Continental Tradition: Sensibility, Nature and Religion*. Milton, Routledge, 2020, 255 pp. 978-1138503748.

It is well known that Kant had an immense influence on the history and development of continental philosophy. At the same time, there is a curious lack of work today putting Kant in dialogue with the continentals. This is precisely the task of *Kant and the Continental Tradition*, where Kantian themes in the continental tradition, including their continuities, tensions, transformations, and ruptures, are addressed by eleven authors. This exciting collection is important for a variety of reasons. Perhaps most significantly, its focus is not just on how continental philosophers such as Heidegger, Derrida, Irigaray, and Arendt saw Kant. That would be too easy. The true value of this work lies with its ability to show us what those interpretations can still teach us today about Kant's legacy.

Besides filling out literature gaps, *Kant and the Continental Tradition* offers a variety of perspectives, avoiding the usual tunnel vision of specialist debates.¹ In this sense, this work—with its polished writing, rigorous analysis, and historical contextualization—is

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¹ We might place this collection alongside Cutrofello (1994) and Hengehold (2007), though these works focus more on Foucauldian, post-structuralist connections than the wider scope of the present volume. It may be more appropriately placed alongside, as Sorin and Vanzo note (2020, p. 20), volume 1 of *The History of Continental Philosophy*, edited by Schrift (2010).

unique. It touches on contentious topics relevant to Kant scholars, but will also interest scholars and critics of continental philosophy. It may even interest students of both. *Kant and the Continental Tradition* is geared to continentals and literary critics through its comparative engagement with the continental appropriation of Kant. We receive a clue, for instance, why Heidegger favored the A-Deduction and Schematism in the *Critique*, or how Lyotard, like Hegel, saw its key value in the Antinomies. This work will, of course, be a welcome addition for Kant scholars; in addition to its consideration of contemporary debates in Kant scholarship, such as the unity of Kant's critical philosophy, this collection touches on, in one way or another, nearly all flavors of Kant's works. This includes elements from the three *Critiques*, the political works, the pre-critical works, and even a lesser known work on religion.

Kant and the Continental Tradition is comprised of eight original essays, plus an introduction and postscript that function as conceptual bookends. The collection is unified thematically around three familiar Kantian themes: sensibility, nature, and religion, with their corresponding obverses of reason, freedom, and philosophy. Some essays highlight interpretative issues in Kant relevant to the continentals, while others put post-Kantian ideas in dialogue with the critical philosophy, viewed through a self-reflective, contextual lens. Regardless of approach, all essays in this collection are oriented with an eye to the legacy of Kant and the philosophical appropriation of his philosophy. A main lesson this collection succeeds in teaching, we should note, is the import of this Kantian legacy. Indeed, Kant's legacy informed (and continues to inform)—whether reactively or creatively, dismissively or critically—the bulk of the continental philosophical trajectory, from Nietzsche to Deleuze.

Structurally, the collection is interesting in that each essay sets the stage for the next. For instance, Dermot Moran's essay tracing Kantian intuition from Leibniz and Kant to Eberhard and Husserl clears ground for Roxana Baiasu's essay on Heidegger's schematism (Baiasu and Vanzo 2020, p. 5). We not only have a collection of distinct essays on Kant and the continentals, but one that is thematically and structurally unified despite its diversity of content. In short, each essay flows to the next in a way that makes sense. This is not typical for a multi-authored collection covering figures as dissimilar as Kant, Hegel,

Heidegger, Derrida, Lyotard, and Irigaray. Finally, each essay critically engages with the work of pioneer Gary Banham, for whom the volume is dedicated.

The following paragraphs outline *Kant and the Continental Tradition*'s essays to highlight this structural coherence. The reader should by no means infer that less words on an essay mean less content: quite the contrary. Space is limited and so is time—especially in a review. Heidegger would agree. Highlighting essay themes can at the very least showcase this collection's variety of content and coherence.

To begin, Moran disentangles the various meanings of intuition for Kant, and to do so traces early modern views at the basis of his historical achievement. What we get here, then, is a careful overview of Kantian intuition, meant to re-orient our reading of Kant in contemporary debates. Moran's analysis reveals the "complexities, ambiguities and fissures" in Kant's account of intuition (Moran 2020, p. 24), and this estrangement from the rationalist tradition allow us to prefigure how continental philosophers—from the phenomenologists to the post-structuralists—have interpreted him in their philosophies of difference. Moran's critical discussion of the many, seemingly incompatible roles intuition takes for Kant—conceptual, psychological, intentional—anticipate the subsequent essay on Heidegger, especially with its passing remarks about Husserl's provocation. This essay also provides excellent material for students of Kant who wish to appreciate the complexity of his epistemological starting-point, and how it could have tempted the early phenomenologists in their later investigations.

Roxana Baiasu's continues this intuitive thread by considering Heidegger's reading of Kantian schematism. She views Heidegger's admittedly "violent" interpretation of this obscure part of the *Critique* as "the climax of a turning point in the history of philosophy," and indeed as one that conditions Heidegger's own phenomenological development (Baiasu 2020, p. 61). Though often unappreciated outside Heidegger circles, Heidegger lectured extensively on Kant during the year of *Being and Time*'s publication, and his own mentor Rickert was a prominent neo-Kantian. In many ways, Heidegger appropriated several Kantian insights for his fundamental ontology, all the while remaining critical of Kant's emphasis on time as the form of inner sense, and its superficiality with regard to lived human experience (Baiasu 2020, p. 71). This essay is a welcome and succinct

contribution for hearing what is unspoken in Kant, and it will help us connect the dots with the broader continental tradition following in Heidegger's footsteps.

In the collection's final essay on sensibility, Andrea Rehberg analyzes the third *Critique's sensus communis*. Surprising to those who view Kant as the arch-rationalist *par excellence*, Rehberg argues that if we view the *sensus communis* as a key pivot point of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment, we find in Kant an important precursor to the well-known continental emphasis on affectivity and lived experience. Accordingly, this essay can be useful for tracing the anti-Platonic movement from Nietzsche to Heidegger, Arendt, and Lyotard.

Just as Moran's reading on Kantian intuition prefigures the essays on sensibility, Christian Onof's essay provides one interpretative framework for two essays on the (dis)unity of nature in post-Kantian continental philosophy. On its own, this nuanced look into constitutive and regulative principles will likely not be of interest to continental scholars and students. Yet in the broader context of this collection, Onof's essay marks an important conceptual bridge between essays and is therefore quite helpful.

Keith Crome's comparative essay on Kant and Lyotard is another valuable addition. It stresses the latter's entanglement with the first *Critique*, rather than the typical attention to sublimity received in the literature. Here, Lyotard's work *The Differend* is appreciated alongside Kant's "critical enterprise—as a tribunal in which philosophical reason calls itself to count. It is, in this sense, a repetition of the Kantian project" (Crome 2020, p. 132). Crome showcases Lyotard's rejection of the Kantian view vis-à-vis the concept of nature and his break with the canonical tradition despite maintaining Kant's "combative, critical spirit" from the antinomies (Crome 2020, p. 134). This essay is valuable because it shows how new insights can be sourced from the wellspring of Kant's thought. Such a wellspring can even shed light on our understanding of Kant today, and so has a pedagogical value.

Rachel Jones's essay is exceptional in that it not only integrates a discussion of Kant with Hegel, but does so through the lens of continental philosopher Luce Irigaray. The result is another "violent" yet productive interpretation, this time on Hegel's attempt to mediate teleology with mechanism (Jones 2020 p. 166). This bold essay covers a lot of ground. It explores the gendered dualisms that Hegel inherits from Kant; the former cannot accommodate a certain feminine remainder, and Jones suggests that Irigaray is better poised

to help us here. This refreshing addition moves beyond the phenomenological and postmodern continental approaches of prior essays to more linguistic, feminist, and psychoanalytic ones, with the famous student of Lacan, Irigaray.

Nicola J. Grayson builds the last exegetical bridge-essay in *Kant and the Continental Tradition* using the blueprint of hypotyposis in Kant; this bridge leads us to our collection's final terrain: Kantian influences on continental takes on religion. Here, we understand the *Religion's* "schematism of analogy" with the figure of Christ as that elusive practical link between humanity and divinity. This essay on Kant leads naturally to Dennis Schulting's penultimate essay on religious tropes in Kant and Derrida, though it might as easily take us back to Plato, showing us how the essays in this collection have a bidirectional historical worth.

Schulting addresses the deadlocks of religion and philosophy, faith and reason. Surprisingly, he teases out these tensions not by looking into Kant's *Religion*, but through consideration of a separate and oft neglected Kantian work: *Of a Recently Adopted Exalted Tone in Philosophy* (1796). Derrida himself offered a commentary on this work in 1983, and Schulting puts them in dialogue. By analyzing and criticizing Derrida's "hyper-Kantian" critique of Kant as "fanatical" yet self-consistent, Schulting presents a masterful essay fitting for this collection (Schulting 2020, pp. 209-10). And, in making oblique connections to other philosophers in *Kant and the Continental Tradition*, including Heidegger and Hegel, Schulting's essay will surely be of interest to both Kant scholars and continental thinkers, Derridean or not.

Our final essay is actually a postscript, and it functions as a coda for harmonizing the preceding. In each essay, our authors engage with the late Gary Banham. Joanna Hodge concludes with reflections on several continental themes—genealogy of the Nietzschean strain, critique that follows Kant through Husserl, Heidegger, Marx, and Derrida, and more—set in the context of Banham's work. As a tribute, *Kant and the Continental Tradition's* coda sounds a nostalgic tone, one that represents nicely the tonal trajectory from Kant to continental philosophy; many of these reflections are as it were detuned and transformed, as in Derrida, and yet others echo the boundaries of new worlds, as in Heidegger. We would do well to listen.

Before concluding, it is worth mentioning potential concerns for the present collection. Editors Sorin Baiasu and Alberto Vanzo spend much space in the introduction defending the structural and thematic unity of these essays. This may present to some an initial suspicion about the unity of the book, and for the merits of a return to Kant vis-à-vis the continental tradition. If the essays are unified, why should we need an elaborate explanation of this? Why not let the essays speak for themselves? Luckily, the essays and their interconnections indeed *do* speak well by themselves and so justify their inclusion, rendering this concern a superficial one. More importantly, our editors illuminate the philosophical convergence between Kant and continental philosophy; many canonical continental philosophers in this volume try to distance themselves from Kant by emphasizing becoming over substance, lived experience over abstraction, and so on. Yet, all the while, as our editors show us and as the essays speak, they cannot escape the orbit of Kant's immense philosophical legacy.

Though space does not permit critical engagement with each essay, there are at least two elements of the volume that invite criticism since these also reflect the motivations of the text as a whole. These include a certain boldness of scope in some essays—unsurprising given the continental spirit—and a possible lack of balance between the essays themselves. For the former, we might point to Jones's essay on Kant, Hegel, and Irigaray as one instance. For many casual readers, Jones's essay may seem unsuccessful given that the scope of its aim is too large. Adequate treatment of these topics and philosophers would require, it seems, something on the order of a monograph. At the same time, we receive a philosophically exciting paper that brings something refreshing to the collection as a whole. In an odd way, the boldness of some of the essays in this collection reflects the spirit of the continental reaction to Kant's legacy.

The last concern of this volume is a potential lack of balance. We all know that an unbalanced blade cannot fulfil its purpose properly. Accordingly, we may worry that the present volume weighs, at times, too heavily on Kant. Indeed, a handful of essays concern conceptual problems in Kant scholarship, such as the status of intuition or regulative judgment. Though no problem for those of the Kantian inclination, this choice may turn off continental readers who would otherwise find an enticing collection of essays on one of their key philosophical forefathers. This questionable footing can, at times, undermine our

expectations for a genuine dialogue (or dance, if we wish to put on our theatrical Nietzschean hats) between Kant and the continentals advertised by the book's title.

This proportional imbalance is nonetheless counterbalanced through the collection's narrative. The Kantian choreography, as mentioned, sets the stage for later, more elaborate continental dances. For instance, Moran alludes to Husserl, reluctant to draw deeper connections, yet these allusions nicely foreshadow Baiasu on Heidegger. Still, the collection could have benefited from additional discussions on Arendt and Kantian aesthetics vis-à-vis politics, or on Husserl and Kantian anticipations of phenomenology. Just as Rehberg begins an exciting critical reading of Arendt's lectures on Kant (the only Arendt in the collection), it is cut short. Despite this, the structural balance of the collection offsets the bulk of this proportionality concern.

One final limitation of this collection, following this remark, is a curious absence of other prominent figures in the continental tradition. These include Gadamer (whose doctoral adviser Natorp was also a neo-Kantian), Deleuze (who wrote his own creative commentary on the unity of Kant's philosophy), or even Badiou (who fuses continental and analytic approaches, not unlike Kant's prefiguration of both schools). Surprisingly, Nietzsche is only considered in the postscript of the book. These omissions are understandable, however, since critical engagement with them would require space exceeding the limits of any reasonable volume. We should find little reason to complain, since we instead get illuminating studies on less appreciated figures such as Luce Irigaray.

At the end of the day, *Kant and the Continental Tradition* will be a welcome addition for any scholar or student of Kant, continental philosophy, or even the history of philosophy. It not only adds to the rather slim collection of comparative works of this sort, especially with its focus on the topics sensibility, nature, and religion. No, even more than that, it interacts with multiple schools of thought in a careful and thoughtful way. The holistic, untamed topical excesses unique to continental philosophy are masterfully tempered by the analytical methods we come to expect of Kant scholarship. This makes for a work on continental philosophy accessible for Kant scholars (and even those more analytically-oriented), yet broad enough to appeal to postmodern thinkers, cultural critics, and continental commentators. And, by returning to perennial topics of philosophy, such as the

unity of nature or the coherency of religion, *Kant and the Continental Tradition* shows us how a canonical thinker of the past—like Kant—can still have something to teach us today. In this way, the collection succeeds. It therefore merits our attention.

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Kant hoy

Kant Today

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Reseña de: Marques, António, Lemos, João y Cadilha, Susana (comp.), *Kant: atitudes, experiências, valores*, Lisboa, IFILNOVA, 2020, 167 pp. ISBN: 978-989-97073-5-1.

Este libro reúne las conferencias discutidas en un coloquio que se realizó en noviembre de 2019, en el marco de las actividades del IFILNOVA (Instituto de Filosofia da Universidade Nova, en Lisboa). En su estudio introductorio, los compiladores destacan el carácter heterogéneo del libro, que en sus ocho capítulos remite a tradiciones y a líneas de debate diversas (p. 6).

El primer capítulo está escrito por Nuria Sánchez Madrid. Se titula “A comunidade estética como comunidade vulnerável (morte, exclusão, compaixão): pôr Kant em diálogo com Blanchot e Rancière”. En este texto, la autora desarrolla una problematización de un concepto de comunidad estética que infiere de cierta interpretación de la filosofía kantiana, a la luz de un conjunto de consideraciones que se desarrollan desde un punto de partida y con objetivos diferentes; a saber, las posiciones de Blanchot y de Rancière. La autora parece identificar una limitación de la noción de comunidad estética desarrollada en el planteo kantiano, en el que no habría espacio para la heterogeneidad irreductible que constituye la figura del otro. La comunidad kantiana es una comunidad armónica, que no deja margen para el conflicto. Sánchez Madrid parte de la premisa de que “la materia no funciona en Kant como motor de claridad conceptual”, el “cuerpo, si quiere ser legible, sólo puede aceptar de

antemano en Kant las condiciones de su subordinación en los términos de un contrato con la forma” y “el cuerpo parece no ser oído por el entendimiento en Kant” (p. 11). En este sentido, parece que la interpretación de Sánchez Madrid pone el foco en lo que queda justo fuera de la investigación crítica, que es una investigación de nuestras facultades en su uso puro. De hecho, su investigación recorre no sólo los argumentos de la *Crítica de la facultad de juzgar*, sino que también recurre a otros textos, tales como *Ideas para una historia universal en clave cosmopolita*, *Antropología en sentido pragmático* y la *Metafísica de las costumbres*.

El segundo capítulo se titula “La actualidad pedagógica de la pragmática del gusto en la Antropología”. En su introducción, Mònica Carbó explica el origen de la *Antropología en sentido pragmático*, texto elaborado por el propio filósofo, y las dificultades que involucra el estudio de otra clase de fuentes: las anotaciones de los estudiantes en las clases de Kant y las anotaciones personales de este filósofo. Curiosamente, a pesar de esta diversa condición, y sin justificar las razones (asumimos que pueden ser temáticas o cronológicas), la autora advierte que emplea este último tipo de fuentes en su investigación. En el cuerpo del trabajo, empero, el suelo para la argumentación parecen ser las tesis de Manuel Sánchez Rodríguez y Marco Sgarbi. La autora contrapone ambas tesis, y sostiene que la primera coloca a Kant cerca del proyecto ilustrado, en tanto que la tesis de Sgarbi lo mantiene en el ámbito de la emergencia de la estética romántica. Luego de recorrer estas líneas de lectura, Carbó establece un lazo entre la primera interpretación de la estética de Kant, que pone el eje en el componente social y moral que ella contiene, y la doctrina didáctico-política de Martha Nussbaum. En segundo término, vincula la interpretación romanticista del proyecto estético de Kant, el cual se centra en la disposición y el peculiar vínculo de nuestras facultades que trae a la luz la experiencia estética, con un elemento pedagógico de la hermenéutica.

El capítulo de António Marques se titula “Uma Crítica Wittgensteiniana à Dedução Transcendental de Kant”. El punto de partida de este capítulo es un artículo escrito por Peter Hacker acerca de la crítica wittgensteiniana de la deducción trascendental. El hilo conductor de este trabajo es la pregunta kantiana por las condiciones de posibilidad de la unidad de la experiencia y el aspecto trascendental de la filosofía. De acuerdo con Marques, la revisión crítica de ese aspecto por parte de Wittgenstein en sus *Investigaciones filosóficas* contiene no sólo una objeción contra el sistema filosófico kantiano, sino también, incluso, contra las tesis que el mismo Wittgenstein sostiene en su *Tractatus*. La crítica del austríaco involucra una sustitución de la solución lógico-transcendental (la solución kantiana) por una respuesta que pone el eje en el plano lingüístico. Con esto, el *yo pienso* se torna superfluo, en la medida en que la estructura de la experiencia está dada por reglas gramaticales. El problema filosófico se desplaza, así, hacia la investigación de las condiciones y la naturaleza de tales reglas. Este camino, empero, no se encuentra libre de dificultades. Luego de explicar la lectura de las tensiones entre ambos filósofos por parte de Hacker, Marques señala en la sección final de su trabajo algunas inquietudes que permanecen irresueltas.

Sofía Miguens es la autora del capítulo siguiente, que tiene por título: “Kant et la philosophie analytique de la perception”. Este capítulo es una traducción al francés de un artículo publicado en inglés en la revista *Con-Textos Kantianos*. En él, Miguens examina, primero, un debate en torno a la naturaleza de los juicios de percepción. En ese debate, las tesis de

John McDowell, inspiradas en cierta interpretación del kantismo, se oponen a las de Charles Travis, que adopta una posición fregeana. Antes de explicar las diferencias entre ambos, la autora analiza sus puntos comunes, el principal de los cuales parece ser una visión compartida de la tarea que tiene la filosofía. Ninguno de ellos confunde esa tarea con la investigación de las ciencias cognitivas. Por otro lado, ambos examinan la cuestión de la percepción desde el punto de vista de las facultades del agente. Luego de desarrollar estas indicaciones, Miguens describe los elementos kantianos que encuentra en McDowell y los elementos fregeanos que encuentra en Travis. Por último, contrapone ambas posiciones, en relación con lo que cada uno de ellos entiende por el contenido de nuestras representaciones, y en particular sus visiones de la percepción y de lo fenoménico.

A continuación encontramos el texto “Kant segundo Dieter Henrich: um estudo em torno do conceito de liberdade”, de Sílvia Bento. Como el título lo indica, en este capítulo se traza un recorrido por los textos de Dieter Henrich acerca de la filosofía de Kant, tomando como un hilo conductor la noción de libertad. Luego de trazar una reseña biográfica de la producción de Henrich, Bento examina su recepción de Heidegger y la incidencia de la crítica de ella en una lectura de Kant que pone el foco en el carácter sistemático de su obra. En segundo término, Bento identifica un elemento común entre Henrich y Heidegger, que consiste en la consideración de la filosofía práctica como el fundamento mismo del sistema kantiano. Henrich examina este aspecto en relación con la influencia de Rousseau y las doctrinas del *moral sense*. A continuación, Bento se demora en la originalidad del planteo de Henrich, al contraponerse con otras recepciones de Kant en Alemania que ponen el foco en la epistemología o la estética. Un aspecto adicional considerado en este capítulo es el uso kantiano de las metáforas y la interpretación por parte de Henrich de este recurso. Por último, y como consecuencia de la relevancia que le concede al concepto de libertad en la estructuración del sistema kantiano, Henrich tiene una lectura que no interpreta a Kant como un mero idealista, sino como un defensor de la posibilidad de algún tipo de metafísica. El recorrido cronológico por el *corpus* kantiano permite ver, sin embargo, que esta piedra de toque, el concepto de libertad, no es un presupuesto ni un punto de partida, sino un resultado de la investigación.

“Hannah Ginsborg on Kant and perceptual normativity” es el título de la contribución de Manuela Teles. En este capítulo, como en el anterior, se describe una interpretación de la filosofía kantiana. En este caso, en particular, se trata de la interpretación de Hannah Ginsborg, orientada en torno a un presunto potencial regreso infinito en la consideración del origen de los conceptos empíricos. Teles examina cómo se formula este problema y cómo pretende resolverlo la interpretación de la adquisición de los conceptos empíricos por parte de Ginsborg. En la introducción, la autora examina la emergencia de la filosofía de la percepción a fines del siglo XX. Este tema también ha recibido atención en la investigación sobre McDowell y Travis desarrollada por Miguens en este mismo volumen. Pero si Miguens lo ha abordado desde una perspectiva estrictamente epistémica, la recepción de Ginsborg por parte de Teles incluye también un elemento estético en la resolución del problema. Se ha mencionado que este problema consiste en la consideración de la

experiencia perceptual como fundamento para la adquisición de conceptos empíricos. Para Ginsborg, el problema se soluciona por medio de la noción de la reflexión y sus pretensiones de validez universal subjetiva. A partir de una interpretación peculiar de la filosofía de Kant, que incluye tesis tales como la consideración de los esquemas trascendentales como conceptos, Ginsborg concluye que no es la doctrina lógica de la Primera Crítica, sino en la doctrina estética de la Tercera que debe buscarse la clave para comprender las condiciones de la producción de los conceptos empíricos. La respuesta de Ginsborg se resume en su noción de una normatividad perceptual en la base de la formación de tales conceptos. Tras explicar esta noción y el modo en el que Ginsborg enfrenta el problema, Teles revisa su posición a la luz de posteriores desenlaces en el debate del conceptualismo y el no-conceptualismo.

El siguiente capítulo pertenece a Inês Salgueiro y se titula “A eco-estética contemporânea como acordo entre ética e estética numa perspectiva kantiana”. En primer lugar, Salgueiro presenta una extensa enumeración de trabajos que se inscriben en el marco de la constitución de lo que denomina el movimiento filosófico de la “eco-estética” (132). Su propuesta consiste en pensar el vínculo entre ética y estética ambiental a partir del aparato conceptual kantiano. El primer punto que examina es la noción kantiana de una estética desinteresada, así como las objeciones que esta noción ha recibido por parte, principalmente, de Berleant, a la luz de las consideraciones acerca de nuestro compromiso con cierto concepto del ambiente. A continuación, Salgueiro examina la defensa de la posición kantiana por parte de Cheng. Esta defensa se funda en la consideración de la estética de Kant en clave antropológica. Se trata de una estética formal que habilita una noción de comunidad- como se ha señalado, el carácter formal de la comunidad estética y sus limitaciones constituyen el tema del primer capítulo de este libro, escrito por Sánchez Madrid. El segundo eje con el que Salgueiro propone dar respuesta a las objeciones contemporáneas está dado por la noción de una conformidad a fin sin fin. El carácter final de los juicios de gusto pone en evidencia que el examen del texto se dirige al estudio de la racionalidad y las facultades del hombre. Luego, la autora se demora en las principales nociones de la ética de Kant y alcanza la pregunta por el vínculo entre la noción de respeto y la admiración. Por medio del examen de este vínculo, que puede hallarse tanto en la *Crítica de la razón práctica* como en la *Crítica de la facultad de juzgar*, la autora alcanza un punto de continuidad con una línea de la tradición de la ética ecológica, a saber: la tradición de Aldo Leopold. Ese punto de continuidad consiste, precisamente, en indicar una estrecha relación entre la ética y la estética.

El último capítulo de este libro está a cargo de João Lemos y se titula “Um gosto de considerações morais – acerca do juízo de gosto aplicado”. En este capítulo, Lemos desarrolla una lectura original de la “Crítica de la facultad de juzgar estética”. La mentada originalidad está dada por el hecho de que el autor no concentra su atención, como es usual en las lecturas del texto, en el concepto del juicio puro de gusto, sino en lo que él denomina el “juicio de gusto aplicado”, que se corresponde con la noción kantiana de la belleza adherente. La lectura propuesta, arguye Lemos, abre la posibilidad de fundar estéticas contemporáneas, que valorizan el aspecto político o moral de las obras, sobre un suelo

conceptual kantiano. En primer lugar, Lemos examina de manera precisa la definición de la belleza adherente y se detiene en los ejemplos proporcionados por el filósofo de Königsberg. El examen de los ejemplos es, una vez más, minucioso y permite rescatar cuestiones de actualidad filosófica, tales como los elementos morales de la arquitectura y el trato de los animales. El último ejemplo en el que Lemos se demora es el de la belleza adherente de los seres humanos. La conclusión a la que llega este autor es la siguiente: los juicios de belleza adherente pueden involucrar y en algunos casos involucran necesariamente la consideración de propósitos morales. En la segunda sección del capítulo, Lemos se detiene en la cuestión de la legitimidad de los juicios sobre belleza adherente. En pocas palabras, su argumentación apunta a mostrar que estos juicios reposan en el mismo fundamento de determinación que los juicios puros de gusto. Esta lectura permite reconstruir una estética kantiana que no se restringe a las condiciones del purismo estético y que, en cambio, puede contemplar obras del arte comprometido.

En síntesis, este libro, resultado de un diálogo internacional y variado, escrito en diversas lenguas y desde lineamientos teóricos diferentes, puede ser de interés para los estudiosos de los debates contemporáneos que de una u otra manera remiten al aparato conceptual kantiano.



Del deber moral a la acción humanizadora: Kant y Levinas

From Moral Duty to Humanizing Action: Kant and Levinas

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Reseña de: Tenreiro Rodríguez, Victoria, *Creer en el Otro: La motivación moral a partir de Kant y Levinas*, Valencia, Ápeiron Ediciones, 2017, 437 pp. ISBN: 978-84-17182-51-9.

Entre saber qué debo hacer y llevarlo a cabo en la acción media la motivación; y en la motivación juegan un papel importante las creencias: si creo que algo es bueno no sólo sé lo que hay que hacer, sino que estoy también convencido de que hay que hacerlo. Este libro versa sobre el proceso que media entre la moralidad y la culminación de esta en la acción. Estudia, en esta perspectiva, el proceso de la motivación moral y el papel que juegan las creencias en ese proceso. La tesis que recorre el libro es que para la culminación de la moralidad en acción no es suficiente hablar de razones, sino que es preciso creer en ellas.

El libro se centra en Kant y en Levinas. Su autora cree que es posible articular a Kant y a Levinas en el campo de la ética. En su filosofía práctica Kant articula dos dimensiones: fundamentación y realización. Esta distinción es crucial para no dejar fuera ciertos elementos que, si bien no intervienen en la fundamentación del valor moral de nuestras acciones, sí forman parte de la moralidad en el plano de su realización en el mundo y, por tanto, tienen su papel en la culminación de la moralidad en la acción. De

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manera que, en principio, el intento de la autora de encontrar ciertos puntos en común entre Kant y Levinas es pertinente.

Pero, además, la acción de la que trata este libro es la acción humanizadora. Esta perspectiva es directamente perceptible en Levinas; pues, como precisa Tenreiro, para Levinas, el punto de referencia no es la moral, sino la humanización; esta no tiene su fundamento en el interior de la razón, sino en la responsabilidad con el otro (eticidad). “Es esa relación con el otro el fundamento del tipo de acción específicamente humana” (p. 195). Sin embargo, también el otro (“la persona de cualquier otro”) tiene su lugar en la ética kantiana, incluso en el plano de la fundamentación, como lo prueba la formulación del imperativo categórico según el principio de los fines o de la humanidad (GMS, AA 04: 429).

De Kant estudiará sus aportaciones a la motivación moral y su relación con el tema de las creencias. En lo que respecta a Levinas, investigará el papel del Otro-Infinito; concretamente, si se puede entender al Otro-Infinito como creencia capaz de conducir a la culminación de la moralidad en acción.

Por otro lado, la autora pone en relación a Levinas con una razón cordial, la cual hace del vínculo humano fuente de obligación moral. En esta razón cordial, por su carácter de razón íntegra, encuentra también Tenreiro otro apoyo para relacionar las creencias con la motivación moral, pues “conocemos la verdad y la justicia no solo por la argumentación, sino también por el corazón” (Cortina 2007, p. 191).

A la Introducción y a la primera parte del libro, dedicada a preliminares, siguen otras dos partes: la segunda de ellas desarrolla el contenido central de la obra y la tercera recoge los resultados de la investigación. A lo largo de ella la autora se esfuerza por identificar aspectos comunes entre Kant y Levinas.

En el tratamiento de la ética kantiana (cap. 2), se pone de relieve que en Kant la producción de una acción moral incluye más factores que la sola ley moral; el valor moral de las acciones tiene como fundamento la ley moral; pero en la producción de la acción hay más factores. En realidad, incluso en la caracterización de una acción como moral, tal como anticipábamos más arriba, entran otros factores además de la sujeción a la ley. En este sentido, la autora, apelando a la presencia del otro en la segunda fórmula del imperativo categórico (GMS, AA 04: 429), interpreta la ética kantiana en la perspectiva de un humanismo, “entendido como la prioridad de la condición humana sobre la ley moral” (p. 56). En Kant, la acción moral termina siendo acción humanizadora: “el otro es el único fin moral en sí, no como fin a producir, sino como aquel fin que debe hacerse razón de ser para mí mismo” (p. 53). “El otro y la *humanidad* -reino de los fines- que formo con él, ponen de manifiesto parte importante de presupuestos básicos del imperativo moral” (p. 53). A mi modo de ver, podría añadirse que el otro está ya presente en la primera formulación del imperativo categórico, en el principio de la universalización.

Pero, sobre todo, donde se pone de manifiesto la presencia de otros factores es en la determinación a la acción. Es aquí donde sitúa la autora el tema de la motivación moral y las creencias en la ética kantiana. En el plano de la motivación moral, destacan el papel que juegan el interés moral y los sentimientos morales, como disposiciones a acciones humanizadoras. En este aspecto, esto es, en cuanto a disposiciones previas a la moralidad, la autora detecta “un punto de coincidencia breve pero significativo” (p. 68) con el papel que juega en Levinas el “sentimiento de vulnerabilidad ante el Otro-Infinito (p. 67).

La tesis de Tenreiro es que las creencias juegan un papel relevante en la motivación moral y en el paso del deber a la acción. Las creencias o “asentimiento subjetivo ante principios indemostrables” (p. 79) juegan un rol fundamental en la búsqueda de sentido y hacen posible la determinación a la acción. La creencia es una categoría que conduce al sentido. Menciona en esa línea los supuestos de Dios y un mundo futuro, así como el papel de la religión. Otro campo privilegiado para las creencias y su papel en la motivación moral es el juicio estético, especialmente el de lo sublime.

En este punto de la experiencia de lo sublime ve también la autora una cierta relación entre Kant y Levinas, en lo que se refiere a “la relevancia de la *experiencia* preoriginaria de una cierta relación asimétrica con el Otro, como aquel que, antes de reconocerlo desde un cierto y determinado concepto, se impone en su infinitud y grandeza” (102). Pero también habría un punto de conexión en lo que concierne al juicio de lo bello: en ambos se toma en consideración un tipo de juicio que no descansa directamente en el objeto sino en el modo como soy afectado. Dice la autora: “Cuando dos siglos después de Kant, Levinas pone el acento en el modo como el otro me concierne, no en cuanto objeto, sino en cuanto otro que me afecta sin más, es como si estuviera, no distanciándose y mucho menos anulando el planteamiento kantiano, sino reubicando o revalorizando algo que Kant ya sostuvo: que el hombre siente y entiende” (111). La diferencia es que Kant acaba poniendo el acento en la relación objetiva, mientras que Levinas lo pone en cómo soy afectado.

En todo caso, en la ética de Kant también tienen cabida factores sensibles y afectivos, como lo prueba el hecho de que admita un tipo de satisfacción, el sentimiento de lo bello, que, lejos de ser antitético de la moralidad, es favorable a ella y “símbolo” de la misma (KU, AA 05: 353). El mismo respeto a la ley, que en Kant constituye el fundamento subjetivo del deber, se sitúa en el plano de la sensibilidad, del sentimiento. La realización de la moralidad requiere de elementos disposicionales, como se pone de relieve en la “Metodología de la razón pura práctica” (KpV, AA 05: 151-16).

En el marco de una acción humanizadora hay que introducir la idea de infinitud o infinito. Para Kant, la infinitud es el mundo de la libertad; esta es el fundamento de la idea de infinito. En cambio, para Levinas, el fundamento de la idea de infinito es el Otro; “(siempre abierto, siempre inacabado, no reducido a una substancia) y que, justo por ello, es infinito” (119). Así, “el infinito tiene el rostro humano” (p. 119).

En su tratamiento de la filosofía de Levinas (cap. 3) y de acuerdo con su objetivo de propiciar el diálogo entre los dos filósofos, la autora quiere poner de relieve que la primera hace posible una crítica constructiva y una interpretación de la ética kantiana, que pone el acento en el ser humano o la humanidad como su fin (p. 131), una interpretación muy relevante para los planteamientos de la ética contemporánea, entre ellos, los relativos al problema de la motivación moral (p. 131).

Después de un amplio desarrollo sobre el Otro levinasiano y su valor motivacional para la acción humanizadora, Tenreiro vuelve sobre la comparación entre ambos filósofos. El hilo conductor es la idea de la recuperación de la humanidad como fin.

La autora cree que, aunque desde puntos de partida diferentes, Kant y Levinas responden a “preocupaciones similares” (p. 186). Para Kant, la libertad es la base de la moralidad y, en la medida en que entiende la libertad en el sentido de un sujeto autónomo capaz de elegir los fines a realizar, es también la base de la humanización. Levinas, en cambio, pone directamente el foco en las acciones de los seres humanos entre sí, pero no en cuanto acciones morales, sino en un nivel previo, que la autora identifica como “acciones humanizadoras” (p. 187). Partiendo de Levinas, cuestiona si es suficiente con radicar los procesos de humanización en la libertad y el sujeto autónomo o no será preciso abrir espacios para otros aspectos en los que el otro me concierne (por ejemplo, la vulnerabilidad), como fuentes de la humanización, y que serían previos al uso moral de la razón. En efecto, según Levinas: “En el recibimiento del rostro la voluntad se abre a la razón” (Levinas 1977, p. 232). Es decir, en Levinas la moral aparece como nivel ulterior de un proceso orientado en su origen “hacia la humanización” (p. 189). Sin embargo, ambos, Kant y Levinas, desde puntos de partida diferentes, ponen al “Otro como fin” (189-190).

Igualmente, Tenreiro ve una analogía entre el sentimiento de lo sublime en Kant y la relación con el Otro como Infinito en Levinas; se trata de sentimientos de “asimetría” (198), que en un caso deviene en responsabilidad y en el otro, en respeto. Por otro lado, respecto a las creencias y su papel en la motivación moral, Tenreiro insinúa un cierto paralelismo entre el Otro-Infinito de Levinas y el bien supremo de Kant, en lo que se refiere al impulso a la acción y a una acción humanizadora (p. 195-196). A mi modo de ver, siendo aceptable tal comparación en algunos aspectos, este punto del bien supremo en Kant necesitaría de una mayor precisión ya que se trata de un concepto que admite varios sentidos en la obra kantiana. En algún momento, parece entenderlo directamente en el sentido de un reino de los fines (416), que sería lo coherente. En todo caso, refiriéndose a lo descubierto en el capítulo tercero, la autora declara que las condiciones en las que Levinas presenta su explicación del Otro-Infinito “en cierto modo se ajustan a las creencias en la motivación moral desde la perspectiva kantiana” (p. 16).

En un paso ulterior (cap. 4) se trata de indagar si el Otro-Infinito de Levinas podría interpretarse como una creencia, en cuanto que, en el marco de una concepción ampliada de la razón o razón cordial, las creencias constituyen una fuente de motivación moral. Para

ello lleva a cabo una revisión histórica del concepto de creencia (Hume, Kant, el pragmatismo de Peirce y W. James, Ortega y Gasset y la filosofía de la mente). En lo que a Kant se refiere, comparto con la autora la indicación sobre el carácter credencial del “como si” (*als ob*) kantiano, que, de acuerdo con Jesús Conill, constituye una instancia de sentido para la acción humana (Conill 1991, 81); el hombre mismo es una “idea regulativa” (302), en el sentido de “un *ideal* que posee fuerza práctica para dirigir la acción porque nos permite orientarla y valorarla” (Conill, 1991, 204).

Finalmente, la tercera parte del libro (cap. 5) recoge los resultados de la investigación. La autora cree haber llevado a cabo una interpretación positiva del papel de las creencias en Kant, presentándolas como un tipo de “saber” que hace posible la práctica (p. 358); en esta perspectiva, las creencias son, ante todo, instancias de sentido; y la razón kantiana no puede dejar de verse más que en el marco de un “*sistema completo de la razón*” (359). Como decíamos al principio, la tesis que ha pretendido defender es que para actuar no basta con hablar de razones, sino que es necesario creer en ellas; y, por tanto, para la culminación de la moralidad en acciones, hay que tomar en consideración las creencias. En esta perspectiva, otro de los resultados de la investigación es que la tendencia preoriginaria hacia el Otro en Levinas es interpretable como una creencia, más que como “deseo del Otro” (p. 423), pues en Levinas la proximidad con el Otro “otorga direccionalidad y sentido humanizador a la relación interhumana” (397), que son rasgos propios de las creencias. Desde ese carácter credencial cabe promover un reconocimiento cordial entendido como vínculo en el que el hombre queda ligado y, por tanto, *obligado* al Otro (405; Cortina 2007, p. 51).

Las creencias son ante todo instancias de sentido y perspectivas de futuro, y cumplen un rol fundamental como “asentimiento ante las razones” (402). Pero además, ese asentimiento no se produce solo ante razones, sino que puede producirse directamente hacia el otro; por tanto la creencia en el otro es un medio y un modo de producir una acción humanizadora; es decir, “una acción que pone al Otro como *fin*” (p. 403). Otro de los rasgos que la autora destaca de las creencias es su comunicabilidad, un aspecto de gran interés y que habría que explicar más.

En síntesis, este libro muestra que la motivación moral ocupa un lugar importante en la ética kantiana; y que, lejos de ser una ética descarnada, incluye elementos sensibles y afectivos que hacen de la razón kantiana una razón abierta, íntegra y cordial, que también se alimenta de elementos como las creencias, “como recurso de alto valor motivacional” (p. 207). Todo ello es verdad, a mi juicio, siempre que en la ética kantiana no dejen de distinguirse los dos planos, el de la fundamentación y el de la realización, de los que el presente libro es plenamente consciente. La pregunta de la autora al final de la obra (pp. 425-426), a saber, si es posible conciliar una ética deontológica con una ética pragmática como la que ella perfila, esto es, que atienda a la realización de la moralidad en la acción, a sus efectos en el mundo o a su eficacia para la vida, podría responderse tomando en consideración ese doble plano de la ética kantiana.

Hay que valorar muy positivamente el esfuerzo de la autora por no obviar, sino tomarse en serio, ciertas dimensiones de la ética kantiana que hacen justicia a una razón ampliada, integral, y a una acción humanizadora, hasta el punto de pasar felizmente la prueba de su comparación con Levinas, a pesar de las indudables diferencias entre ambos, aspecto que hace de este libro un documento de gran interés en los estudios kantianos actuales. Así, una de las posiciones que formula esta obra es que “el Otro como creencia basal o estructural abre camino a la disposición hacia las ideas morales que son base del respeto a la ley moral, en sentido kantiano. La creencia -añade- posibilita un puente desde la eticidad levinasiana, hacia la moral en sentido kantiano” (p. 408).

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Conciencia, ética y derecho

Conscience, Ethics and Right

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Jens Timmermann me preguntó una vez si, al no saber castellano, uno se pierde cosas relevantes en la literatura secundaria kantiana. El presente trabajo de Alejandro Vigo, profesor de la Universidad de Navarra, proporciona, a mi juicio, una respuesta clara a su pregunta: más allá del alemán e inglés, también en castellano se publican textos sobre Kant que claramente vale la pena leer. Compuesto por 10 capítulos o estudios, como los llama el propio Vigo, el volumen reúne los artículos sobre la filosofía práctica de Kant (y de Fichte y Hegel, en el caso de los tres últimos estudios) en los que Vigo estaba trabajando desde el año 2006. En lo que sigue, presentaré brevemente cada uno de ellos. Por el enfoque de la presente revista, dedicaré más espacio a los estudios dedicados a Kant; en particular, me detendré más en el primer estudio y eso por la razón de que es, con gran diferencia, el más extenso de todos (pp. 15-145) y además el único que, en su versión final, todavía no había sido publicado ni pronunciado en forma de conferencia.

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Pues bien, el primer estudio es un comentario de los tres textos principales donde Kant trata la conciencia moral: la lección universitaria sobre filosofía moral del semestre 1774-75, el escrito de la *Religión* y la *Metafísica de las costumbres*. Hay que notar que cuando el título dice que se trata de un comentario “introdutorio”, desde luego no es introductorio en el sentido de “básico”, ya que difícilmente podríamos encontrar estudios que profundicen más en el tema de la conciencia moral; más bien podemos entender eso en el sentido de que Vigo no presupone que el lector esté ya familiarizado con el tema, sino que va explicando todas las premisas e implicaciones del fenómeno de la conciencia moral, tocando así también los fundamentos de la filosofía práctica de Kant (en parte por eso se trata del estudio más largo del volumen). Por esto último, el estudio puede recomendarse no solamente a los interesados en la doctrina de la conciencia moral, sino también a lectores que simplemente quieran profundizar en el conocimiento de la filosofía moral del pensador prusiano. Como es lógico, Vigo empieza por la lección del 74-75, la cual no presenta grandes problemas interpretativos, pero es importante para la correcta comprensión del fenómeno de la conciencia moral. El pasaje que ya supone más dificultades es el de la *Religión*: la tesis fundamental de Vigo aquí (en contra de lo que sostiene por ejemplo Esser 2013) es que Kant, a partir de este texto, considera la conciencia moral como una forma específica de la facultad del juicio. Pasando a la *Metafísica de las costumbres*, más concretamente, a la *Doctrina de la Virtud*, desde el punto de vista del debate actual en la literatura secundaria es muy interesante la explicación de la famosa imposibilidad de la conciencia moral errónea. Aunque en los últimos años ha habido intentos de rechazar la tesis de Kant de que “una conciencia moral errónea es un absurdo” (MS 6:401) (cfr. por ejemplo Sticker 2020; 2017), Vigo explica que tal tesis es perfectamente plausible, ya que en nada afecta a la posibilidad del error y autoengaño por parte del propio agente. Pero lo que quizás más aporta al debate actual es el llamado “excurso” al sentimiento moral y el respeto (pp. 85-105). Como se sabe, Kant en el apartado de las prenaciones estéticas de la *Doctrina de la virtud* trata junto con la conciencia moral también el sentimiento moral, el respeto (autoestima) y el amor. Ahora bien, aunque tanto la conciencia moral como el amor han recibido últimamente bastante atención en la literatura secundaria, el sentimiento moral y el respeto como prenaciones estéticas no han encontrado mucho eco en la investigación kantiana. Ambas prenaciones se mencionan de vez en cuando al tratar el sentimiento del respeto [*Achtung*] de la KpV y así, implícitamente, se identifican con él, pero muy pocas veces se ha intentado una interpretación centrada en las prenaciones por sí solas. Uno de los pocos intérpretes que sí llevó esta tarea a cabo, aunque dejó varias cuestiones sin responder, fue P. Guyer en su contribución al volumen sobre la *Metafísica de las costumbres* de la serie *Cambridge Critical Guide*, cfr. Guyer 2010. La interpretación de Alejandro Vigo está precisamente en oposición explícita a la suya. Vigo, muy acertadamente, a mi modo de ver, no limita la prenación del respeto al respeto *hacia sí mismo*, de modo que se convirtiese en un sentimiento exclusivamente autorreferencial; el respeto como prenación, según Vigo, más bien coincide con la explicación del respeto en la KpV y la *Fundamentación*. En cambio,

la otra prenoción, el sentimiento moral, es un sentimiento especial, según Vigo “indisolublemente vinculado [...] a la operación de la ‘conciencia moral’” (p. 93), y no se puede identificar con el respeto de la KpV. Esto último ya me parece más opinable, ya que podemos encontrar pasajes que parecen indicar lo contrario, pero la interpretación de Vigo es desde luego plausible y tiene la gran ventaja de explicar de modo convincente por qué Kant incluyó en su lista de las prenocios tanto el sentimiento moral como el respeto. Como es lógico, Vigo se detiene también en la descripción kantiana de la conciencia moral en términos del “tribunal interior”, perteneciente al apartado de la MS dedicado a los deberes que uno tiene para consigo mismo, como “juez nativo de sí mismo” (*Doctrina de la virtud* § 13). Aquí el lector puede apreciar, bajo la guía de Vigo, cómo la teoría de Kant acerca de las facultades humanas elaborada en su filosofía crítica le permite desarrollar mejor los elementos presentes ya en concepciones precedentes (la misma imagen del “tribunal interior” la utilizó Kant también en sus lecciones universitarias): como dice Vigo luego en las conclusiones, “la elaboración de una concepción de conjunto relativa al papel que desempeña la función reflexiva de la facultad del juicio, esbozada ya de modo disperso desde KrV y desarrollada sistemáticamente en KU, provee aquí toda una gama de nuevas posibilidades, a la hora de hacer justicia, también en sede específicamente moral, al papel decisivo de la reflexión y su vinculación con el ámbito del sentimiento” (p. 144). Finalmente, después de ocuparse también del deber de autoconocimiento como una prolongación natural del tratamiento de la conciencia moral (*Doctrina de la virtud* §§ 14-15), Vigo añade también otro “excursus” titulado “Autoconocimiento y crítica de la razón”, en el cual presenta el programa crítico de Kant como una especie de autoexamen de carácter socrático.

El segundo estudio se titula “Inteligencia práctica y facultad del juicio según Kant” y se trata de una versión revisada de la ponencia de Vigo en el congreso “Filosofía de la inteligencia”, organizado en la Universidad San Pablo – CEU en Madrid en el 2011 (esta versión revisada fue posteriormente recogida también en los acta del congreso, cfr. Oriol Salgado 2012). Vigo aquí presenta lo que Kant entiende bajo la noción de inteligencia (cuando se refiere al genuino “yo” interior, a otros seres racionales de carácter espiritual y también a Dios) y luego explica la “peculiar función de determinación causal que Kant asigna a lo que denomina inteligencia, en conexión con la idea de una causa libre” (p. 159), ya que “pensarse como una inteligencia le abre al sujeto un punto de vista radicalmente nuevo, esto es, el punto de vista propiamente práctico-moral, el cual da cuenta de la posibilidad de la determinación de la voluntad por la razón (pura) práctica” (p. 168). Se pone especial énfasis en que hay que evitar la tentación de entender ésta última “en términos de lo que sería un modelo de conexión eficiente” (p. 163); según Vigo, el modelo kantiano “se aproxima más a lo que tradicionalmente sería un modelo de causalidad formal”, ya que consiste en el hecho de que “la voluntad adquiere una cierta *forma* o, si se quiere, una cierta *orientación*” (p. 166). Así, Vigo resume lo esencial que Kant dice al respecto en la *Fundamentación* y profundiza desde la KpV, llegando a las llamadas “categorías de la libertad” y “Típica de la facultad del juicio pura práctica” y explicando el

peculiar rol que en la determinación apriorística de la voluntad por la razón tiene la facultad del juicio.

El tercer estudio trata la distinción y la relación entre ética y derecho. Titulado “Ética y derecho según Kant”, fue publicado en 2011 en el número especial de la revista *Tópicos* (n. 41) dedicado a la filosofía práctica de Kant (una versión abreviada está publicada también en de Garay and Araos 2016). La presente versión mejora, según mi análisis, ligeramente el contenido, en cuanto cambia la traducción de ciertos términos, añade algunas referencias bibliográficas y amplía una nota a pie de página basándose en los logros del primer estudio acerca de la conciencia moral. No puedo entrar aquí en detalles, por lo cual me limitaré tan solo a resumir el núcleo del estudio. Vigo propone aquí un modelo de distinción entre ética y derecho que llama “motivacional”. El modelo apunta al hecho de que, para Kant, la legislación ética se refiere a la libertad interior, pero la legislación jurídica considera meramente la libertad exterior (o, mejor dicho, la “libertad en su uso exterior” (MS 6:214)); de allí que, mientras el derecho solo puede estar basado en la coacción exterior, la ética se funda en la coacción interior o “autocoacción”. Según explica Vigo, la verdadera complejidad de este modelo explicativo se advierte cuando se tiene en cuenta que combina inseparablemente dos tesis complementarias: la del primado de la libertad interior (en el sentido de que la libertad exterior presupone la interior) y la tesis según la cual la autocoacción excluye necesariamente la coacción exterior pero no viceversa. En virtud de la primera tesis, el derecho queda incluido en el ámbito más amplio de la moralidad, en virtud de la segunda “se da cuenta de la irrestricta compatibilidad que la obligatoriedad jurídica presenta respecto aquella otra que se conecta con la motivación propiamente moral de las acciones, pero también de su esencial independencia respecto de ella” (p. 218). Así, la distinción y la relación entre ética y derecho no se pueden aclarar atendiendo a las diferencias de contenido de las obligaciones, sino que responden a dos diferentes fuentes de motivación.

El cuarto estudio, “La concepción kantiana del derecho natural”, fue publicado anteriormente en Granja Castro y Santiago 2011 (una versión anterior en inglés, más breve, se encuentra, también en A. M. González 2008 que recoge la ponencias de las XLIV Reuniones Filosóficas sobre “La ley natural” del 2006). Como es lógico, en la filosofía práctica de Kant el concepto de la ley natural o derecho natural en el sentido tradicional no puede jugar ningún papel clave. Ahora bien, como en su caso ocurre con muchos otros elementos de la tradición filosófica, Kant sí recibe el motivo del derecho natural, pero lo reinterpreta a su manera. Así, en el cuarto estudio, Alejandro Vigo explica de qué modo es posible hablar del derecho natural también en Kant, basándose en el análisis pormenorizado de la *Doctrina del derecho*. Expone la fundamentación kantiana del derecho (se repiten pasajes de los dos estudios anteriores) y el modo en que Kant inserta allí la noción del derecho natural (y, en su sentido práctico-moral, de la ley natural).

El quinto estudio, titulado “Acción como estructura causal y como estructura de sentido. Reflexiones programáticas a partir de Kant”, lo pudo conocer el lector en Alarcón et al. 2018. Partiendo del hecho de que las acciones (acciones genuinas, voluntarias) se pueden considerar desde el punto de vista exterior, meramente causal, o con vistas a su estructura intencional (o, como la llama Vigo, “estructura de sentido”), Vigo aquí rechaza la tesis de que Kant defiende una concepción de la acción de orientación básicamente causal. Según Vigo, “Kant elabora una concepción de conjunto que no sólo considera debidamente ambos aspectos constitutivos de la acción, como conexión causal y conexión de sentido, sino que, además, está en condiciones de hacer justicia, tanto en el plano temático como en el metódico, al primado que corresponde al aspecto de la conexión de sentido, como momento constitutivo de la acción” (p. 261). Vigo básicamente describe dos niveles de constitución de sentido en la concepción kantiana: el “nivel empírico de constitución” que parte de la descripción de la acción bajo una máxima, y un segundo nivel, que se aplica al anterior, “nivel apriorístico de constitución” que da cuenta de las condiciones formales que debe cumplir una acción para poder ser calificada como moralmente correcta (en este último nivel se repiten reflexiones acerca del modelo de causalidad formal del segundo estudio – al final, ya que el presente estudio se remonta a una conferencia dictada en el 2011, ambos estudios se originaron al mismo tiempo).

El siguiente estudio es el que quizás más expectativas produce en el lector, también porque —aunque pronunciado ya varias veces en forma de conferencia— todavía no había sido publicado. Se trata de una comparación del querer moralmente bueno en Kant y en Aristóteles (el título reza “Aristóteles y Kant, en torno al origen de la cualidad moral de la acción”) y difícilmente podríamos encontrar a una persona más apropiada para llevar al cabo esa comparación: como es sabido, Alejandro Vigo, aparte de ser un gran experto en Kant, conoce también perfectamente el pensamiento de Aristóteles. El artículo queda enmarcado por el debate —ejemplificado por la famosa crítica de las éticas modernas por parte de G. E. M. Anscombe en su “Modern Moral Philosophy” (1958)— acerca de la commensurabilidad entre la ética antigua y la ética moderna en general (y entre las concepciones de Aristóteles y de Kant en particular). ¿Hay una afinidad entre ambos sistemas o más bien están separados por una especie de cesura y, dicho con Quine, hay un “cambio de tema”? Vigo deja claro desde el comienzo que él mismo se posiciona junto a autoras como J. Annas o Ch. Korsgaard que promueven una lectura más bien compatibilista de ambas concepciones. Resume brevemente tanto el planteamiento de Annas como el de Korsgaard y luego desarrolla su propia propuesta de aproximación. Presenta lo que llama el “modelo hilemórfico” del querer moralmente bueno (basado en la “distinción funcional entre lo que [...] puede llamarse el ‘objeto’ o la ‘materia’ del querer, por un lado, y la ‘modalidad’ o la ‘forma’ del querer, por el otro, es decir: *lo que* en cada caso se quiere (hacer, llevar a cabo, realizar, obtener), por un lado, y *cómo* (de qué modo, en calidad de qué, en qué respecto, bajo qué perspectiva) se lo quiere, por el otro” (p. 284)) y luego, en un análisis pormenorizado de cada uno de los autores, señala cómo dicho modelo puede aplicarse tanto a Aristóteles como a Kant (si el lector ha leído también los

estudios anteriores, reconocerá una gran parte del apartado dedicado a Kant). La lectura es muy instructiva y el resultado desde luego muy convincente: Vigo demuestra que ambos autores dan importancia tanto al *qué* como al *cómo* del querer. Ahora bien, la cuestión es si eso basta para mostrar que la tesis sobre la inconmensurabilidad de ambas concepciones es realmente incorrecta y si no es, quizás, por las otras diferencias entre ambos pensadores, que Vigo también por supuesto menciona brevemente al final del estudio (como por ejemplo la diferencia entre el razonamiento moral y el técnico y el papel de la felicidad), que esa brecha, en alguna medida, efectivamente tiene lugar.

El siguiente, interesantísimo estudio “Kant y la fundamentación estoica de la moralidad” (anteriormente fue publicado en la revista chilena *Methodus* (n. 8) en 2016) describe el modo en que Kant, a lo largo de su vida, trata e incorpora en su pensamiento los elementos de la concepción estoica de la moralidad. Y ya que, como es sabido, Kant a lo largo de su vida cambia algunos rasgos de su ética, también va cambiando su postura respecto de la doctrina estoica. Como resume Vigo, “la actitud de Kant frente a la concepción estoica combina [...] aspectos tanto de identificación como de distanciamiento, los cuales, por otra parte, no siempre permanecen invariables, a través de las diferentes fases del desarrollo de su propia posición” (p. 358). Por ello, Vigo básicamente divide su estudio en dos partes: una que traza la postura de Kant en la época pre-crítica, llegando hasta el *Canon* de la *KrV*, donde Kant todavía considera a Dios y al otro mundo [*andere Welt*] como motores [*Triebfedern*] de la moralidad, y luego otra que analiza su postura final en la *Fundamentación* y la segunda *Crítica* (con un breve excursus a las prenociones estéticas de la *Doctrina de la Virtud*). En esta segunda parte, en apartados separados, Vigo analiza los siguientes aspectos de la concepción kantiana de la ética respecto a la estoica: el bien supremo (la problemática de la identificación estoica de la virtud y la felicidad), la propia fundamentación de la moral (con referencia a la doctrina estoica de la *oikeiosis* y, derivadamente, la perfección como el posible fundamento de determinación de la voluntad) y, finalmente, la relación del bien con la virtud, la motivación moral y el fin natural del hombre.

Hasta aquí los estudios dedicados a Kant: los dos siguientes se centran en Fichte (por lo menos en gran parte) y el último en Hegel. El octavo (“Conciencia moral y destinación del ser humano. La radicalización de un motivo kantiano en Fichte”, publicado anteriormente en González y Zorroza 2011) y el décimo (“Conciencia moral como figura del Espíritu. Una aproximación al análisis hegeliano de la conciencia moral”, publicado en Herrero et al. 2014) se pueden considerar como un complemento al primer estudio sobre la concepción kantiana de la conciencia moral; el noveno estudio (“Identidad práctica y reconocimiento. El debate contemporáneo y el modelo fichteano”, publicado en *Metafísica y Persona* (n. 15) en 2016) se sale un poco del marco del volumen, ya que parte de la discusión actual acerca de la noción de identidad práctica (debida, sobre todo, a Ch. Korsgaard) y Fichte aparece en la medida en que, según Vigo, su noción de

reconocimiento [*Anerkennung*] debería estar presente: la segunda parte del artículo es, por tanto, un análisis detallado de dicha noción.

A mi juicio se trata de un libro sin duda excepcional dentro de la investigación kantiana, cuyos límites vienen marcados por su propia concepción: por ser una colección de artículos de diferentes años con un tema más o menos parecido, a lo largo del libro se repiten varios pasajes y a veces uno también desearía que el autor conectara la materia con lo dicho en los demás estudios. Ahora bien, considerados los artículos por sí solos, independientemente, pertenecen a lo mejor que uno puede leer sobre la filosofía práctica de Kant (aunque, eso sí, el lenguaje de Vigo no es precisamente fácil de leer), y desde luego se agradece que estén todos reunidos en un único volumen. Cada uno de ellos están perfectamente fundamentados en los textos, con muchísimos enlaces a la literatura secundaria relevante (ya solo por eso vale la pena entrar en el libro, aunque también hay que tener en cuenta el año del origen del estudio en concreto: así, por ejemplo, en el primer estudio Vigo refiere a la literatura secundaria más reciente, del año 2020, en los estudios escritos anteriormente lógicamente no encontramos referencias tan nuevas); la única pega que les encuentro es quizás un trabajo de edición final algo apresurado: aparte de las inevitables erratas, en varios sitios se remite por ejemplo a otros trabajos del autor (a veces citados también en la bibliografía, a veces no), siendo en realidad el caso que esos trabajos se encuentran en el propio libro. Pero, como se sobreentiende, eso es un pero que en nada afecta los méritos del libro.

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Parra París, L. (1987), “Naturaleza e imperativo categórico en Kant”, *Ideas y valores*, no. 74-75, pp. 35-60.

Capítulo en una obra colectiva:

Gómez Caffarena, J. (1994), “Kant y la filosofía de la religión”, en D. M. Granja Castro (coord.), *Kant, de la "Crítica" a la filosofía de la religión: en el bicentenario de "La religión en los límites de la mera razón*, Anthropos, España, pp. 185-212.

Trabajos disponibles en la web:

Waldron, J. “The Principle of Proximity”, *New York University Public Law and Legal Theory Working Papers* 255 (2011), p. 19
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Examples:

Book:

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