

From Beautiful Art to Taste

De la Bella Arte al Gusto

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Abstract

The first part of the following text does make the map of an answer to the question of knowing if and how it is possible to speak of *beautiful art* in the context of Immanuel Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. There is an appeal to the conditions of the freedom of the imagination, to an interpretation of representation as exemplification and to a reference to aesthetic purposes and constraints. This way it will be made evident it is possible to think the judgment by means of which one declares a work of art a beautiful one as a pure judgment of taste and the artistic beauty as free beauty.

Starting from a reflection on what it does mean to speak of aesthetic purposes and constraints, it will be put at stake, in the second part of the text, the univocity of meaning of the notion of *taste* in Kant's third *Critique*. Perhaps in the case of the pure judgment of taste by means of which one declares a work of art a beautiful one it is mandatory to appeal not only to taste as aesthetic power of judgment, but to another taste: a corpus which is narrowly connected with the mechanical, compulsory and academic side of beautiful art.

Keywords

aesthetics; beauty; art; taste; corpus.

Resumen

En la primera parte del siguiente texto se hace el mapa de una respuesta a la cuestión de saber si y como podrá hablarse de *bella arte* en el contexto de la *Crítica de la facultad del juicio*, de Immanuel Kant. Se apela a las condiciones de la libertad de la imaginación, a una interpretación de la representación como ejemplificación y a una referencia a propósitos y restricciones estéticas. De ese modo se evidenciará ser posible pensar el juicio a través del cual se declara bella una obra de

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arte como puro juicio de gusto y la belleza artística como belleza libre. En la segunda parte, a partir de una reflexión acerca de lo que significa hablar de propósitos y restricciones estéticas, se pondrá en cuestión la univocidad de sentido de la noción de *gusto* en la tercera *Crítica* de Kant. Tal vez en el caso del puro juicio de gusto a través de lo cual se declara bella una obra de arte tendrá que apelarse no solo al gusto en cuanto facultad de juicio estética, sino a otro gusto: un corpus estrechamente ligado a la componente mecánica, coercitiva y escolástica de la bella arte.

Palabras clave

estética; belleza; arte; gusto; corpus.

Regardless of the innumerable references, some of them more explicit, some others less, that Kant makes, throughout the *Kritik der Urteilkraft*¹, to an art that is a beautiful one, to a beauty that is an artistic one, the notion of *beautiful art* (*schöne Kunst*), in the Kantian formulation, consists in a contradiction in terms. That contradiction is concretized by setting, side by side, the demands a judgment must satisfy in order that an object be declared beautiful by means of it, i.e. the requirements a judgment must fulfill in order to be a judgment of taste, and the demands a judgment – equally supposed to be a judgment of taste – must satisfy in order that a work of art be declared beautiful by means of it.

If the judgment through which one declares an object a beautiful one is the judgment of taste, if, as it is written in the heading of §15, «[t]he judgment of taste is entirely independent from the concept of perfection ([d]as Geschmacksurteil ist von dem Begriffe der Vollkommenheit gänzlich unabhängig)»² and if, according to §48, «in the judging of the beauty of art the perfection of the thing will also have to be taken into account (wird in der Beurteilung der Kunstschönheit zugleich die Vollkommenheit des Dinges in Anschlag gebracht werden müssen)»³, then the beauty of art cannot be judged by means of a judgment of taste, one cannot judge a work of art through a judgment of taste, one cannot declare a work of art a beautiful one through a judgment of taste, the judgment by means of which one declares a work of art a beautiful one cannot be a judgment of taste, beauty cannot be artistic, an artistic object cannot be beautiful. Briefly: if the judgment by means of which one declares an object a beautiful one is the judgment of taste and if the judgment by means of which one declares a work of art a beautiful one cannot be a judgment of



¹ For the language of this paper is English, the following translation of the *Kritik der Urteilkraft* to English is used: Kant, Immanuel (2008). *Kritik der Urteilkraft* [1793], ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer & Eric Matthews, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. New York, Cambridge University Press.

² Kant, 2008, p. 111 (KU, AA 05: 226).

³ Kant, 2008, p. 190 (KU, AA 05: 311).

taste, then a work of art cannot be beautiful. Therefore, it is not legitimate to speak of *beautiful art*.

In my *Se e como poderá uma obra de arte ser bela*, I asked whether one could speak of *beautiful art* in the context of Kant's third *Critique*.⁴ I was not the only one in identifying this problem. Paul Guyer did so. The mere contraposition of the above-cited passages «would entail», as stated by Guyer, «that only natural and not artistic beauty can be a proper object of taste»⁵. Among other commentators of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* who identified the problem at stake, I also underscore Salim Kemal, according to whom an object cannot be simultaneously declared a beautiful one and an artistic one⁶, and Henry E. Allison, who describes that problem as a «central problem», insofar as «the requirement that the assessment of artistic beauty presuppose a concept of the kind of thing the work is meant to be (...) appears to render all artistic beauty (or at least the judgments thereof) adherent by the criteria of §16»⁷. Lastly, Hans-Georg Gadamer, explicitly says that «the concept of taste loses its significance if the phenomenon of art steps into the foreground»⁸.

There are several ways to ask the question – Is it possible for a work of art to be a beautiful one? Is it possible for beauty to be artistic? Is it possible for the judgment through which one declares a work of art a beautiful one to be a judgment of taste? Is it possible for one to declare an artistic object a beautiful one through a judgment of taste? Is it possible to judge such an object by means of a judgment of taste?

Apparently, the answer to any of those questions is a negative answer. Nevertheless, such an answer, such a conclusion, is problematic. It seems to make one immediately wonder what Kant does mean by *beautiful art* in each of the innumerable references he makes to that notion.⁹ It seems to make one accept that the possibility of speaking of *beautiful art* depends on the identification of that notion with something which

⁴ Lemos, João (2017). *Se e como poderá uma obra de arte ser bela – acerca das condições de possibilidade da noção de bela arte na Crítica da Faculdade do Juízo de Immanuel Kant* [Whether and how a work of art could be beautiful – on the conditions of the possibility of the notion of *beautiful art* in Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*], Madrid, CTK E-Books and Ediciones Alamanda.

⁵ Guyer, Paul (1997). *Kant and the Claims of Taste* [1979]. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 214.

⁶ Cf. Kemal, Salim (1986). *Kant and Fine Art – An Essay on Kant and the Philosophy of Fine Art and Culture*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, p. 36.

⁷ Allison, Henry E. (2001). *Kant's Theory of Taste*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 296.

⁸ Gadamer, Hans-Georg (2006). *Wahrheit und Methode* [1960], trad. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, *Truth and Method*. London, Continuum, p. 49.

⁹ Cf., for instance, §44-§53.

is independent from what beauty or art might be – it seems to entail that, in case that it is possible to speak of artistic beauty, then artistic beauty would be not exactly beautiful or not exactly artistic.

More than asking if or how much such consequences would be contrary to the spirit of Kant's work, I wanted to underline that the assertion of the impossibility of speaking of *beautiful art* can be taken as contrary to the letter of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Moreover, even if one accepts both the distinction between *free beauty* (*freie Schönheit*) and *adherent beauty* (*anhängende Schönheit*) and the distinction between *pure judgment of taste* (*reines Geschmacksurteil*) and *applied judgment of taste* (*angewandtes Geschmacksurteil*), beautiful works of art do not have to be declared beautiful ones by means of applied judgments of taste, they do not have to be conditionally declared beautiful ones. It was in the letter of §16 that I grounded that statement:

designs *à la grecque*, foliage for borders or on wallpaper, etc. (...) are free beauties. One can also count as belonging to the same kind what are called in music fantasias (without a theme), indeed all music without a text (*die Zeichnungen à la grecque, das Laubwerk zu Einfassungen oder auf Papiertapeten usw. (...) sind freie Schönheiten. Man kann auch das, was man in der Musik Phantasieen (ohne Thema) nennt, ja die ganze Musik ohne Text zu derselben Art zählen*)¹⁰.

There are artistic objects which are (freely) declared beautiful ones, there are artistic objects which are declared beautiful ones by means of (pure) judgments of taste – at least designs *à la grecque*, foliage for borders or on wallpaper, what are called in music fantasias (without a theme), indeed all music without a text, are (free) beauties.

Instead of asking whether it would be possible to speak of artistic beauty, it turned out to be necessary to ask how, under which conditions, would be possible, would it be legitimate, to speak of *beautiful art*.

As the ground for the legitimation of the possibility of speaking of an artistic beauty, either as conditionally declared beauty or as freely declared beauty, I put the thesis according to which the exercise of the faculty of imagination of the one who judges is taken by Kant as potentially being a free one even in those cases where the perfection of the object is taken into account. It is true



¹⁰ Kant, 2008, p. 114 (KU, AA 05: 229).

that, throughout his work, Kant never set forth the conditions of the freedom of the faculty of imagination – and, thus, what would be consistent with such a freedom or, on the contrary and more specifically, what would make the exercise of the faculty of imagination an exercise which is not sufficiently free for the one who judges to pass a judgment of taste. Nevertheless, there are several excerpts – particularly throughout §44-§53, while Kant brings his attention towards the production and the judgment of genial artistic objects – which suggest that is his point of view. When it comes to produce or judging genial works of art, the exercise of the faculty of imagination is an exercise which is free enough for one to pass a judgment of taste, regardless of being constrained by the recognition of a given concept, as well as by the recognition of a concept of what the object ought to be and by the observation of the perfection of the work of art according to that concept. The freedom of the faculty of imagination is limited but not exhausted.¹¹ I shall agree with Paul Guyer, according to whom, regardless of imposing «some constraint on the freedom of the imagination» with respect to the appearance of the object, the concept of what the object ought to be «still leaves that faculty such latitude within this constraint that pleasure may yet be produced by its free harmony with the understanding’s demand for unity»¹². Guyer asserts it without avoiding referring as «a fundamental problem» the question concerning «the real conditions of the freedom of the imagination»¹³.

In order to begin the legitimation of the notion of *beautiful art*, besides asserting that the exercise of the faculty of imagination of the one who judges is taken by Kant as potentially being a free one even if the internal objective purposiveness is taken into account in the judgment, there were provided several ways of understanding the word *representation*, giving a special relevance to its exemplative sense, there was identified what in the context of artistic beauty can be the concept of what the object ought to be, i.e., what the work of art ought to represent, the kind of work it ought to exemplify, it was proposed a reason for Kant to refer as *beauty* the adherent beauty and as *judgment of taste*

¹¹ Cf. for instance, §53, where Kant writes that the pictorial arts «set the imagination into a free play that is nevertheless also suitable for the understanding (*die Einbildungskraft in ein freies und doch zugleich dem Verstande angemessenes Spiel versetzen*)» (Kant, 2008, p. 206 (KU, AA 05: 329)). Besides, the simple fact that Kant speaks of an art which is a beautiful one is a hint for the thesis according to which in the judgment by means of which one declares a work of art a beautiful one the faculty of imagination is free. The reason why I cannot use that fact to prove this thesis looks obvious – the very legitimacy of speaking of *beautiful art*, i.e., the possibility of declaring a work of art a beautiful one, the possibility of judging a work of art by means of a judgment of taste, was at stake.

¹² Guyer, 1997, p. 219.

¹³ Guyer, 1997, p. 220.

the applied judgment of taste and it was suggested that the distinction between *pure judgments of taste* and *applied judgments of taste* should be taken as a distinction between, respectively, judgments in which no concepts of ends the object ought to exemplify are presupposed and judgments in which such concepts are presupposed. Even though the freedom of the faculty of imagination might be limited by those concepts, in judgments of the second species, it cannot be exhausted in any of them. That is the reason why Kant can refer as *judgment of taste* a judgment of any of the two species; that is the reason why Kant can refer as *beauty* not only free beauty, but also adherent beauty.¹⁴

Adherent beauty was, thus, made legitimate as beauty; applied judgment of taste was, thus, made legitimate as judgment of taste; therefore, artistic beauty was made legitimate as beauty conditionally declared beauty, as beauty declared beauty by means of applied judgments of taste, and, from those legitimations, it was also made legitimate the notion of *beautiful art* – as art conditionally declared beautiful, as art declared beautiful by means of applied judgments of taste. This could not be accepted without a consequence to Kant's text: the heading of §15 («*The judgment of taste is entirely independent from the concept of perfection* (Das Geschmacksurteil ist von dem Begriffe der Vollkommenheit gänzlich unabhängig)»¹⁵) had to be refused. But that turned out to be a perfectly acceptable consequence since there were found some passages which suggest that consideration of perfection does not mean suppression of the freedom of the faculty of imagination and, thus, the impossibility of passing a judgment of taste.

The mission had not been accomplished, though. Having asserted the possibility of speaking of *beautiful art* as art conditionally declared beautiful, as art declared beautiful by means of applied judgments of taste, I had to find out how one could speak of works of art which are declared beautiful by means of pure judgments of taste, how one could speak of freely declared beautiful works of art, how one could speak of artistic beauty as free beauty. In order to fulfill such task,



first I had to subdivide the

¹⁴ It was based upon Guyer's argumentation that Kant's text is not contradictory (cf. Guyer, 1997, pp. 218-220). Guyer goes in the same direction in Guyer, Paul (1996). *Autonomy and the Experience of Freedom* [1993]. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 155-156, where he underscores that Kant «does not deny that dependent beauty is a kind of beauty at all» (Guyer, 1996, p. 155). The same fact is noticed both by Eva Schaper (Schaper, Eva (2003). *Free and Dependent Beauty* [1979]. In P. Guyer (ed.), *Kant's Critique of the Power of Judgment – Critical Essays* (pp. 101-119). Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, p. 104) and John H. Zammito (Zammito, John H. (1992). *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, p. 126). Yet, unlike Guyer, none of these two commentators provides any satisfactory explanation to it.

¹⁵ Kant, 2008, p. 111 (KU, AA 05: 226).

interpretation of the word *representation* (*Vorstellung*) as *exemplification* and underscore the possibility of understanding that word in an exemplative sense linked with taste and, secondly, I had to proceed to a second rereading of Kant's distinction between *free beauty* and *adherent beauty*, or, equivalently, between *pure judgment of taste* and *applied judgment of taste*, understanding it, from there on, as a distinction between, on one hand, beauties or declarations of beauty in which one does not take into account any purposes or constraints or in which one only takes into account purposes and constraints which belong to taste's range and, on the other hand, beauties or declarations of beauty in which one takes into account purposes or constraints which do not belong to that range.

A displacement was done. It was made a translation: the beauty of beautiful arts, or at least of some of beautiful arts, hitherto taken as adherent beauty, could be moved to the range of free beauty, of pure judgments of taste, of judgments of taste in which one does not take into account any purposes or constraints or in which one only takes into account purposes and constraints which belong to taste's range. One could support, thus, the possibility of taking beauty of art as free beauty, the possibility of freely declaring beautiful a work of art, the possibility of declaring beautiful an artistic object by means of a pure judgment of taste – the legitimacy of speaking of *beautiful art* regardless of any distinction between free beauty and adherent beauty or between pure judgment of taste and applied judgment of taste.

The subdivision and the second rereading aforementioned were based on Allison's proposal of distinction between, on one hand, aesthetic purposes and constraints and, on the other, extra-aesthetic purposes and constraints.¹⁶ One should observe, though, that, suggesting that one took the Kantian distinction between free beauty and adherent beauty, or, equivalently, between pure judgment of taste and applied judgment of taste, as a distinction between, on one hand, beauties or declarations of beauty in which one does not take into account any purposes or constraints or in which one only takes into account aesthetic purposes and constraints and, on the other hand, beauties or declarations of beauty in which one takes into account extra-aesthetic purposes or constraints, Allison should have made clear something it seems he did not: what do aesthetic purposes and constraints mean, why are them so, why do such purposes and constraints let the judgment

¹⁶ Allison, Henry E. (2001). *Kant's Theory of Taste*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 296-298.

in which they are taken into account be a pure judgment of taste. A clarification of this matter appears to be indispensable, since, in the context of Allison's thesis, the distinction between aesthetic purposes and constraints, on one hand, and extra-aesthetic purposes and constraints, on the other hand, is the basis for the judgment by means of which one declares a work of art a beautiful one to both take into account a concept of what that work of art is supposed to be, and the perfection of the object, without stop being, so to speak, a pure judgment of taste. One must remind that, in the context of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, the word *aesthetic* (*ästhetisch*) means «whose determining ground *cannot* be other than subjective (*dasjenige, dessen Bestimmungsgrund nicht anders als subjektiv sein kann*)»¹⁷. Therefore, if something is to be called *aesthetic*, it must have, has its determining ground, the feeling of pleasure or displeasure connected with its representation.

According to the Allison, the aesthetic constraints, linked with the kind, genre or form of art, «may be seen as involving the academic norms or standards of correctness for that form»¹⁸. To some extent, this point of view could direct us towards §17, on the ideal of beauty – more specifically, it could direct us towards the aesthetic normal idea, which might be the rule, the form, and the presentation of which is merely academically correct.¹⁹ Yet, Allison does not provide any explicit suggestion that this is the case.

¹⁷ Kant, 2008, p. 89 (KU, AA 05: 203).

¹⁸ Allison, 2001, p. 296.

¹⁹ According to the section at stake, the aesthetic normal idea is «an individual intuition (of the imagination) that represents the standard for judging it as a thing belonging to a particular species of animal (*eine einzelne Aufschauung (der Einbildungskraft), die das Richtmaß seiner Beurteilung, als eines zu einer besonderen Tierspezies gehörigen Dinges*)» (Kant, 2008, p. 118 (KU, AA 05: 233)). Still according to §17, it is «the rule [*die Regel*]», it is «only the form that constitutes the indispensable condition of all beauty, and so merely the *correctness* in the presentation of the species (*nur die Form, welche die unnachlässliche Bedingung aller Schönheit ausmacht, mithin bloß die Richtigkeit in Darstellung der Gattung*)» (Kant, 2008, p. 119 (KU, AA 05: 235)). As such, the aesthetic normal idea «cannot contain anything specifically characteristic, for then it would not be the *normal idea* for the species (*kann nichts Spezifisch-Charakteristisches enthalten; denn sonst wäre sie nicht Normalidee für die Gattung*)» (Kant, 2008, p. 119 (KU, AA 05: 235)). Thus, as Kant does admit, «[i]ts presentation also does not please [i]tself as beauty, but merely because it does not contradict any condition under which alone a thing of this kind can be beautiful (*[i]hre Darstellung gefällt auch nicht durch Schönheit, sondern bloß weil sie keine Bedingung enthält, unter welcher allein ein Ding dieser Gattung schön sein kann, widerspricht*)» (Kant, 2008, p. 119 (KU, AA 05: 235)). In the case of the aesthetic normal idea, «[t]he presentation is merely academically correct (*[d]ie Darstellung ist bloß schulgerecht*)» (Kant, 2008, p. 119 (KU, AA 05: 235)). In contrast to the idea of reason, it might be asserted, therefore, that the aesthetic normal idea allows only a merely negative pleasure in an academically correct presentation (cf. Kant, 2008, p. 120 (cf. KU, AA 05: 235)). §17 might be, by the way, as surprising as useful to the comprehension of the third *Critique* as a whole. According to António Marques, that section «shows how a good interpretation of teleology in Kant shall not, in any way, be confined to the second part of that work» (Marques, António (1987). *Organismo e Sistema em Kant*. Lisboa, Editorial Presença, p. 366 – the translation is mine).

What does seem apparent is that the aesthetic purposes and constraints mentioned by the commentator are purposes and constraints linked with taste. That taste might not be the taste Kant writes about throughout the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, though. Perhaps it is a taste which is connected with the artistic side of beautiful art, i.e., with the mechanical, compulsory and academic side of artistic beauty. Kant makes some references to that taste in §43, §45, §47 and §49. Its constraints change according to the kind, genre or form of art the particular work of art is supposed to belong to, as one may check in some examples provided by §43, §53 and §54. It might be, therefore, a taste that Kant connects with determinate rules, with understanding, with science. What taste is that one? The notion of *taste* (*Geschmack*) is now at stake.

In order to find an answer to the question, I may start quoting some of the references Kant makes to the mechanical, compulsory and academic side of artistic beauty. In §43, while disapproving those «modern teachers (*neuere Erzieher*)» who «believe that they can best promote a liberal art if they remove all compulsion from it and transform it from labor into mere play (*eine freie Kunst am besten zu befördern glauben, wenn sie allen Zwang von ihr wegnehmen und sie aus Arbeit in bloßes Spiel verwandeln*)»²⁰, Kant reminds us that

in all liberal arts there is nevertheless required something compulsory, or, as it is called, a *mechanism*, without which the *spirit*, which must be *free* in the art and which alone animates the work, would have no body at all and would entirely evaporate (*in allen freien Künsten dennoch etwas Zwangmäßiges, oder, wie man es nennt, ein Mechanismus erforderlich sei, ohne welchen der Geist, der in der Kunst frei sein muss und allein das Werk belebt, gar keinen Körper haben und gänzlich verdunsten würde*)²¹.

In §45, he mentions «the academic form (*die Schulform*)» which cannot show through a beautiful work of art²². In §47, he emphasizes

there is no beautiful art in which something mechanical, which can be grasped and followed according to rules, and thus something *academically correct*, does not constitute

²⁰ Kant, 2008, p. 183 (KU, AA 05: 304).

²¹ Kant, 2008, p. 183 (KU, AA 05: 304).

²² Kant, 2008, p. 186 (KU, AA 05: 307).

the essential condition of the art (*gibt es keine schöne Kunst, in welcher nicht etwas Mechanisches, welches nach Regeln gefaßt und befolgt werden kann, und also etwas Schulgerechtes die wesentliche Bedingung der Kunst ausmacht*)²³

and takes the occasion to censure those «superficial minds (*seichte Köpfe*)» who «believe that they cannot show that they are blossoming geniuses any better than by pronouncing themselves free of the academic constraint of all rules, and they believe that one parades around better on a horse with the staggers than one that is properly trained (*glauben, dass sie nicht besser zeigen können, sie wären aufblühende Genies, als wenn sie sich vom Schulzwange aller Regeln losfagen, und glauben, man paradiere besser auf einem kollerichten Pferde, als auf einem Schulpferde*)»²⁴. Lastly, in §49, Kant notes there is something ascribable «to possible learning or schooling (*der möglichen Erlernung oder der Schule*)» in the product of a genius²⁵.

Still concerning the mechanical, compulsory and academic side of beautiful art, they are also worth a mention the examples Kant gives of the mechanical, compulsory and academic constraints that come with the different kinds, genres or forms of art one wants a particular work of art to belong to. In the case of poetry, for instance, Kant cites, in §43, «correctness and richness of diction as well as prosody and meter (*die Sprachrichtigkeit und der Sprachreichtum, imgleichen die Prosodie und das Silbenmaß*)»²⁶; regarding «eloquence (*Wohlredenheit*)» and «the art of tone (*Tonkunst*)», he mentions, in §53, respectively, «the rules of euphony in speech or of propriety in expression, for ideas of reason (*Regeln des Wohllauts der Sprache, oder der Wohlanständigkeit des Ausdrucks für*

²³ Kant, 2008, p. 188 (KU, AA 05: 310).

²⁴ Kant, 2008, p. 189 (KU, AA 05: 310). In the same context, Kant does add that the one who «speaks and decides like a genius even in matters of the most careful rational inquiry, then it is completely ridiculous (*sogar in Sachen der sorgfältigsten Vernunftuntersuchung wie ein Genie spricht und entscheidet, so ist es vollends lächerlich*)» (Kant, 2008, p. 189 (KU, AA 05: 310)). When it is the case «one does not rightly know whether one should laugh more at the charlatan who speaks about himself such a mist that one cannot judge clearly but can indulge in imagination all the more in the face of the public, which trustingly imagines that its incapacity to recognize clearly and grasp the matter at hand and insight comes from the fact that whole masses of new truths are being thrown at it, in contrast to the detail (achieved by careful explanations and the academically correct examination of fundamentals) which seems to be merely the work of amateurs (*man weiß nicht recht, ob man mehr über den Gaukler, der sich so viel Dunst verbreitet, wobei man nichts deutlich beurteilen, aber desto mehr sich einbilden kann, oder mehr über das Publicum lachen soll, welches sich treuherzig einbildet, dass sein Unvermögen, das Meisterstück der Einsicht deutlich erkennen und fassen zu können, daher komme, weil ihm neue Wahrheiten in ganzen Massen zugeworfen werden, wogegen ihm das Detail (durch abgemessene Erklärungen und schulgerechte Prüfung der Grundsätze) nur Stümperwerk zu sein scheint*)» (Kant, 2008, p. 189 (KU, AA 05: 310)).

²⁵ Kant, 2008, p. 195 (KU, AA 05: 318).

²⁶ Kant, 2008, p. 183 (KU, AA 05: 304).

Ideen der Vernunft)»²⁷ and the «harmony (*Harmonie*)», the «melody (*Melodie*)» and the «mathematical form (*mathematischen Form*)» which is combined with them²⁸; lastly, in §54, Kant asserts that the object of beautiful art – regardless of which kind, genre or form it is – «requires a certain earnestness in the presentation (*ein gewissen Ernst in der Darstellung erfordert*)»²⁹.

What's more, though, is the link Kant does make between the aforementioned constraints – and, so, the mechanical, compulsory and academic side of beautiful art – and taste. The criteria stated at the beginning of §49 – namely, the prettiness and the elegance of a poem, the accurateness and the organization of a story, the thoroughness and the floweriness of a solemn oration, the capacity a conversation has to entertain and the prettiness, the talkativeness and the charm of a woman – concern taste. Regarding the products which fulfill those criteria, Kant asserts that «one finds nothing in them to criticize as far as taste is concerned (*man an ihnen, was den Geschmack betrifft, nicht zu tadeln findet*)»³⁰. Thus, if, in the production of a work of art, only the constraints abovementioned are fulfilled, that work, though it might be «a product belonging to a useful and mechanical art or even to science, conforming to determinate rules which can be learned and which must be precisely followed (*ein zur nützlichen und mechanischen Kunst, oder gar zur Wissenschaft gehöriges Produkt nach bestimmten Regeln sein, die gelernt werden können und genau befolgt werden müssen*)», as it is assured by Kant, at the end of §48, «it is for that very reason not a work of beautiful art (*ist darum eben nicht ein Werk der schönen Kunst*)»³¹.

The ground for the link mentioned above lies in a thesis which arises in §47 and materializes in §48. In §47, Kant writes:

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 (*[d]as Genie kann nur reichen Stoff zu Produkten der schönen Kunst hergeben; die Verarbeitung desselben und die Form erfordert ein durch die Schule*

²⁷ Kant, 2008, pp. 204-205 (KU, AA 05: 327-328).

²⁸ Kant, 2008, p. 206 (KU, AA 05: 329).

²⁹ Kant, 2008, p. 212 (KU, AA 05: 335).

³⁰ Kant, 2008, p. 191 (KU, AA 05: 313).

³¹ Kant, 2008, p. 191 (KU, AA 05: 313).

gebildetes Talent, um einen Gebrauch davon zu machen, der vor der Urteilskraft bestehen kann)³².

That talent is taste. The next section does confirm the assertion. There, after making a distinction between the beauty of nature and the beauty of art, calling the beauty of art «a beautiful representation of a thing (*eine schöne Vorstellung von einem Dinge*)»³³, Kant asserts that the «beautiful representation of an object (*schönen Vorstellung eines Gegenstandes*)» is only «the form of the presentation of a concept by means of which the latter is universally communicated (*die Form der Darstellung eines Begriffs, durch welche dieser allgemein mitgeteilt wird*)» and adds that «[t]o give this form to the product of beautiful art, however, requires merely taste (*[d]iese Form dem Produkte der schönen Kunst zu geben, dazu wird bloß Geschmack erfordert*)»³⁴. Meanwhile, still in §48, Kant notes that the mentioned form

is only the vehicle of communication and a manner, as it were, of presentation, in regard to which one still remains to a certain extent free, even if one is otherwise bound to a determinate end (*ist nur das Vehikel der Mitteilung und eine Manier gleichsam des Vortrages, in Ansehung dessen man noch in gewissen Maße frei bleibt, wenn er doch übrigens an einen bestimmten Zweck gebunden ist*)³⁵.

This is why the form that the artist finds is made «adequate to the thought and yet not detrimental to the freedom in the play of the mental powers (*dem Gedanken angemessen und doch der Freiheit im Spiele derselben nicht nachteilig werden zu lassen*)»³⁶. Thus, from a distinction between *genius* and *taste*, which arises in §47 and materializes in §48, «in one would-be work of beautiful art, one can often perceive genius without taste, while in another, taste without genius (*kann man an einem seinsollenden Werke der schönen Kunst oftmals Genie ohne Geschmack ohne Genie wahrnehmen*)»³⁷. Besides, the mentioned distinction is corroborated



³² Kant, 2008, p. 189 (KU, AA 05: 310).

³³ Kant, 2008, p. 189 (KU, AA 05: 311).

³⁴ Kant, 2008, p. 191 (KU, AA 05: 312).

³⁵ Kant, 2008, p. 191 (KU, AA 05: 313).

³⁶ Kant, 2008, p. 191 (KU, AA 05: 313).

³⁷ Kant, 2008, p. 191 (KU, AA 05: 313).

inspiration as freedom of the imagination to produce nonsense by providing original aesthetic ideas, Kant connects taste with the power of judgment as the faculty for bringing imagination's freedom, richness and originality in line with the lawfulness of the understanding.³⁸

To connect the mechanical, compulsory and academic side of beautiful art with taste is, necessarily, to connect the former with beauty. Still in §50, Kant writes both that it is «only in regard to [taste] that [an art] deserves to be called a *beautiful art* (*eine Kunst in Ansehung des zweiten allein eine schöne Kunst genannt zu werden verdient*)» and that taste, «at least as an indispensable condition (*conditio sine qua non*), is thus the primary thing to which one must look in the judging of art as beautiful art (*ist wenigstens als unumgängliche Bedingung (conditio sine qua non) das Vornehmste, worauf man in Beurteilung der Kunst als schöne Kunst zu sehen hat*)»³⁹. This is strengthened in §53. In the context of his remarks about music, Kant suggests that the mathematical form is the element on which «depends the satisfaction that the mere reflection on such a multitude of sensations accompanying or following one another connects with this play of them as a condition of its beauty (*hängt das Wohlgefallen, welches die bloße Reflexion über eine solche Menge einander begleitender oder folgender Empfindungen mit diesem Spiele derselben als Bedingung seiner Schönheit verknüpft*)».⁴⁰ Meanwhile, in the last section of the “Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment” (§60) Kant underlines that «the scientific element in any art (...) which concerns *truth* in the presentation of its object, this is to be sure the indispensable condition (*conditio sine qua non*) of beautiful art (*was das Wissenschaftliche in jeder Kunst anlangt, welches auf Wahrheit in der Darstellung ihres Objekts geht, so ist dieses zwar die unumgängliche Bedingung (conditio sine qua non) der schönen Kunst*)»⁴¹. All these excerpts express a connection of the mechanical, compulsory and academic side of beautiful art with beauty. Besides, they are in agreement with the designation Kant gives, in §48, of *the form of the presentation of a concept by means of which the latter is universally communicated* (*Form der Darstellung eines Begriffs, durch*

³⁸ Cf. Kant, 2008, pp. 196-197 (KU, AA 05: 319).

³⁹ Kant, 2008, p. 197 (KU, AA 05: 319).

⁴⁰ Kant, 2008, p. 206 (KU, AA 05: 329). Mathematics might be, in this context, the indispensable condition of beauty.

⁴¹ Kant, 2008, p. 228 (KU, AA 05: 355).

welche dieser allgemein mitgeteilt wird), a form that – we already said so – requires only taste. In the words of Kant, it is the «form of beautiful art (*Form der schönen Kunst*)»⁴².

Considering that the faculty by means of which one judges beauty is taste and that judgments of taste are aesthetic judgments, I might assert, now, that, insofar as it is connected with taste and beauty, the mechanical, compulsory and academic side of beautiful art generates constraints which are merely aesthetic. Insofar as they concern taste, insofar as they concern beauty, the constraints that come with the kind, genre or form of work of art a particular work of art is supposed to be might be called *aesthetic* constraints. Such an assertion is plausible. Nevertheless, one must be careful about it.

Before connecting the mechanical, compulsory and academic side of beautiful art with taste and with beauty – something Kant does from §48 on – he connects that side of beautiful art with the artistic side of beautiful art. In §43, Kant reminds us that in all liberal arts – and, so, in beautiful art – there is *nevertheless* (*dennoch*) required a compulsory, mechanical component.⁴³ According to §47, that mechanical, academic component, is not an essential condition of the beautiful side of the beauty of art, not an essential condition of the beauty of beautiful art, but an essential condition of its artistic side, an essential condition of its *art* (*Kunst*).⁴⁴ It is in order to be called *artistic* (*künstlich*), according to §46 words, and not to be called beautiful, that an object does presuppose rules.⁴⁵ Therefore, the question one must ask is the one of knowing what taste and what beauty are those Kant connects with the artistic side of beautiful art, what taste and what beauty are those Kant presents as determining a whole mechanical, compulsory and academic side, what taste and what beauty are those, which are connected with determinate rules, understanding and science.⁴⁶

⁴² Kant, 2008, p. 191 (KU, AA 05: 313).

⁴³ Cf. Kant, 2008, p. 183 (KU, AA 05: 304).

⁴⁴ Cf. Kant, 2008, p. 188 (KU, AA 05: 310).

⁴⁵ Cf. Kant, 2008, p. 186 (KU, AA 05: 307).

⁴⁶ John H. Zammito is aware of the difficulty. In a footnote, he notes that «[s]pirit and life, in the normal Kantian order of things, should belong with form, mechanism and “body” should, in the normal Kantian order of things, belong with “matter”. But mechanism has been associated with taste, and taste with “form”, while genius has been associated with “matter”. Yet “spirit” and “life” clearly fall to the side of genius» (Zammito, 1992, pp. 144-145). Then, he asserts that «taking taste in isolation, it can only produce a “mechanical”, academically correct but “lifeless” product» (Zammito, 1992, p. 145). Meanwhile, in a footnote, Zammito adds that «that which has only taste, but no spark of genius, is, to be sure, in the measure that it conforms to the rules, “correct” and, Kant even seems to suggest, beautiful» (Zammito, 1992, p. 381). Zammito’s conclusions are, indeed, what a significant part of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* leads one to conclude. Unfortunately, he does not present any consequence of the connection of beauty to the



It cannot be that taste I write mostly of throughout my *Se e como poderá uma obra de arte ser bela*, that taste Kant writes mostly about throughout his third *Critique*. Thus, it cannot be the faculty of taste as the aesthetic power of judgment – the taste the third *Critique* critiques and which can be improved and confirmed by critique.⁴⁷ Insofar as it is susceptible of improvement and confirmation, maybe already improved and confirmed by the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, it is only a power of judgment, an aesthetic one – its judgment is not based on determinate rules; it is based on a feeling of pleasure in the mutual and both free and harmonic movement of the faculties of cognition of the one who judges, by the occasion of the representation he makes of an object, insofar as that movement is formally purposive. It also cannot be the taste of each individual as his aesthetic power of judgment, i.e., as instance, in an individual, of the power of judgment which is subjected to critique throughout Kant's text. It cannot be that taste, for, when the power of judgment of an individual is aesthetically exercised, its determining ground is the determining ground of the aesthetic power of judgment, and not, therefore, a determinate rule.

The taste I refer to when I speak of purposes and constraints which belong to taste's range is the taste that Kant does mention at the end of the Vorrede to the first edition of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. There, Kant asserts:

the investigation of the faculty of taste, as the aesthetic power of judgment, is here undertaken not for the formation and culture of taste (for this will go its way in the future, as in the past, even without any such researches), but only from a transcendental point of view (*die Untersuchung des Geschmacksvermögens, als ästhetischer Urteilskraft, hier nicht zur Bildung und Kultur des Geschmacks (denn diese wird auch ohne alle solche Nachforschungen, wie bisher, so hernerhin, ihren Gang nehmen), sondern bloß in transzendentaler Absicht angestellt wird*)⁴⁸.

mechanical, compulsory and academic side of art – perhaps it happens because his main concern is the consistency of Kant's description of genius and taste.

⁴⁷ In the Erste Einleitung to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, right before mentioning the «striking (*auffallende*)» and «very promising prospect for a complete system of all the powers of the mind (*viel verheißende Aussicht in ein vollständiges System aller Gemütskräfte*)» that such a critique «discloses (...) by the way in which it fills in a gap in the system of our cognitive faculties (*eröffnet, dadurch, dass sie eine Lücke im System unserer Erkenntnisvermögen ausfüllt*)», Kant does mention it as «used (...) for the improvement or confirmation of taste itself (*zur Verbesserung oder Befestigung des Geschmacks selbst gebraucht wird*)» (Kant, 2008, p. 44 (EEKU, AA 20: 244)).

⁴⁸ Kant, 2008, pp. 57-58 (KU, AA 05: 170).

It is a taste the formation and culture of which is independent from a critique of taste as critique of the aesthetic power of judgment, it is a taste the formation and culture of which is, therefore, independent from what Kant does in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*.

The abovementioned formation and culture goes its own way because, regardless of the legitimation of an aesthetic power of judgment, it has been establishing and been established as a corpus. Artistic objects which fulfill the constraints originated by the mechanical, compulsory and academic side of beautiful art, i.e., objects that follow rules that are determined by the form of art that they represent themselves, are the content of such a corpus.⁴⁹ Those artistic objects are quoted in those historical sciences confusedly but customarily called *beautiful sciences* (*schöne Wissenschaften*). It is based on the explanation that Kant gives about that designation, in §44, that one supposes so:

What has given rise to the customary expression *beautiful sciences* is without doubt nothing but the fact that it has been quite rightly noticed that for 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., and for that reason these historical sciences, because they constitute the necessary preparation and foundation for beautiful art, and also in part because acquaintance with the products of beautiful art (rhetoric and poetry) is even included within them, have because of a verbal confusion themselves been called beautiful sciences (*Was den gewöhnlichen Ausdruck schöne Wissenschaften veranlaßt hat, ist ohne Zweifel nichts anders, als dass man ganz richtig bemerkt hat, es werde zur schönen Kunst in ihrer ganzen Vollkommenheit viel Wissenschaft, als z. B. Kenntnis alter Sprachen, Belesenheit der Autoren, die für Klassiker gelten, Geschichte, Kenntnis der Alertümer usw., erfordert, und deshalb diese historischen Wissenschaften, weil sie zur schönen Kunst die notwendige Vorbereitung und Grundlage ausmachen, zum Teil auch weil darunter selbst die Kenntnis der Produkte der schönen Kunst (Beredsamkeit und Dichtkunst) begriffen worden, durch eine Wortverwechslung selbst schöne Wissenschaften genannt hat*)⁵⁰.



⁴⁹ We have already made reference to some of the rules at stake: «e.g., in the art of poetry, correctness and richness of diction as well as prosody and meter» (Kant, 2008, p. 183 (KU, AA 05: 304)).

⁵⁰ Kant, 2008, p. 184 (KU, AA 05: 305).

Regardless of the absurd (*Unding*) that such a designation entails, the so-called beautiful sciences contain references to products of beautiful art, i.e., to works of art that fulfill rules which are connected with the mechanical, compulsory and academic side of beautiful art.⁵¹ It is within those historical sciences that the «models of beautiful art (*Muster der schönen Kunst*)» are mentioned⁵². In a footnote to an excerpt of §17, Kant calls them «[m]odels of taste (*Muster des Geschmacks*)»⁵³. The confusedly but customarily called beautiful sciences represent the corpus taste has been establishing and been established as regardless of the legitimation of an aesthetic power of judgment.

Thus, although the constraints originated by the mechanical, compulsory and academic side of beautiful art are constraints which might be called *aesthetic* ones, precisely because they are connected with taste, that designation is based on an indistinct use of the notion of *taste* in more than one sense. In order to be freely declared beautiful, i.e., in order to be declared beautiful by means of a pure judgment of taste, a work of art must fulfill constraints that are connected to taste.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the taste such constraints are connected to does not coincide with taste as aesthetic power of judgment – it is a taste that, in spite of the terminological coincidence, does not match with taste as aesthetic power of judgment.

Notwithstanding, it shall be observed that it is Kant, himself, who indistinctly uses the word *taste* (*Geschmack*). This fact, per se, allows one to call it free beauty, i.e., to declare it by means of pure judgments of taste, the beauty of some art. Perhaps that is the reason why Kant never asks – at least in an explicit way – the question of knowing whether it is legitimate to speak of *beautiful art* as art which is freely declared beautiful, i.e., as art which is declared beautiful by means of pure judgments of taste.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, it is important to remark that to accept it means to solve through a merely terminological coincidence a question the difficulty of which lies in the claims of taste as aesthetic power of judgment.

⁵¹ It is also as so that those sciences are as important to beautiful art as, in the quoted excerpt, Kant suggests they are.

⁵² Kant, 2008, p. 188 (KU, AA 05: 309).

⁵³ Kant, 2008, p. 116 (KU, AA 05: 232).

⁵⁴ Although not a sufficient condition for such, this condition is a necessary one.

⁵⁵ In an explicit way, Kant does not even ask the question of knowing whether it is legitimate to speak of *beautiful art* as art conditionally declared beautiful, i. e., as art declared beautiful by means of applied judgments of taste.

It seems that the most demanding requirement §16 claims (the possibility of freely declaring an artistic object a beautiful one) can be satisfied only if one accepts the plurivocity of meaning of the notion of *taste* in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. One could say, thus, that the legitimacy of speaking of *beautiful art* regardless of any distinction between free beauty and adherent beauty or between pure judgment of taste and applied judgment of taste depends, in the final analysis, on the acceptance that the quoted notion is used by Kant in several senses throughout his third *Critique*. It seems that the question raised in my *Se e como poderá uma obra de arte ser bela*, the difficulty of which lies in the claims of taste as aesthetic power of judgment, can be solved only through a merely terminological coincidence.

Now, some questions arise: Is the above-cited coincidence merely a terminological coincidence? Is the taste which is mentioned at the end of the Preface to the first edition of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* one the formation and culture of which is effectively independent from a critique of taste as critique of the aesthetic power of judgment? Does it not have anything to do with that power? Is there not any connection between them? What is/are taste(s) in the third *Critique* like? How many tastes are in that work?

There must be some answers to these questions – perhaps I can give my own contribution in another occasion. For the present, I would only add that in case that there are two tastes, there should be at least a mutual influence between taste as aesthetic power of judgment and the corpus taste has been establishing and been established as. The first should influence the second insofar as each of the objects that already or potentially belong to the latter should be judged by the former. Depending on the judgment, the object at stake might become a constituent of the corpus or be removed from the contents of it. That does hint a continual volatility of taste as a corpus. On the other hand, the corpus should have an influence on the power of judgment insofar as, in passing a judgment on the beauty of an artistic object, one has to take into account the perfection of that object, i.e., the fulfillment of the purposes the artistic object, as a work of art of some kind, must fulfill. Now, within the corpus, composed by the contents cited in the historical sciences mentioned by Kant in §44, which are confusedly but customarily called *beautiful sciences*, there are examples of works of art that fulfill their respective purposes. By the occasion of the exercise of the aesthetic power



of judgment concerning a work of art, i.e., in passing a judgment of taste regarding an artistic object, one has to take into account taste as corpus, for within it lie examples of works of art that satisfy the purposes that themselves, as works of art of some kind, must satisfy. In case that there are two tastes, then, their influence should be not only mutual, but a virtually infinite one. One should observe that taste as corpus adds to the increase of the acuteness of the power of judgment – and, therefore, to the cultivation, practice and correction of the aesthetic power of judgment – insofar as the fact that the objects mentioned therein have been taken as examples of beauty might work as an invitation for the one who judges to be as correct as possible in terms of the way he judges, i.e., as an incentive for him to seek out more easily the principles of the aesthetic power of judgment, which would be harder if he judged from a raw, barbarian and crude nature; on the other hand, when the acuteness of the power of judgment of the one who judges is increased, he might be able to proceed to a critique of the aesthetic power of judgment not as a science anymore, for, as so, the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* already criticizes that power, and thus improves and confirms it, but as an art.

Meanwhile, giving attention to another aspect of the issue, perhaps it should be also kept in mind that, through genial artistic objects, art acquires a new rule. Is that rule a new set of constraints concerning a kind of work of art? Is it a new rule for the aesthetic power of judgment? Is it a combination of both, i.e., a new rule for the aesthetic power of judgment precisely since it is a new set of constraints concerning a kind of work of art? These questions, seemingly side ones, might also help one in answering the questions raised about the notion of *taste* in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*.

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