

---

# ON THE KEY TO KANT'S CRITIQUE OF TASTE

---

BY

HANNAH GINSBORG

---

In §9 of the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant raises a question the solution to which, he says, is the "key to the critique of taste, and hence worthy of all attention." The question is as follows: "whether in the judgment of taste [Geschmacksurteil] the feeling of pleasure precedes the judging [Beurteilung] of the object, or whether the judging precedes the pleasure." Kant's subsequent discussion of the question at §9 is dense and obscure, but it is clear at the very least that he rejects the first alternative and affirms the second. If the pleasure preceded the judging, he argues, the procedure of making judgments of taste would be self-contradictory. Instead, the judging "precedes the pleasure in the object and is the ground of this pleasure" (§9, 218).<sup>1</sup>

This answer is puzzling. Kant appears to be saying that we feel pleasure in a beautiful object on account of our judging the object to be beautiful, rather than the other way around. But this claim seems not only to be counterintuitive in its own right, but also to conflict with repeated indications, in other passages from Kant, that the pleasure in taste precedes the judgment of taste. These indications are of two kinds. First, Kant suggests that the pleasure we feel in a beautiful object is the ground or basis for our judging that it is beautiful; the sensation of pleasure, he says, is the "determining ground" of the judgment (FI VII, 224–225). Second, Kant suggests that a judgment of taste makes reference to a prior feeling of pleasure, in that it claims that one's feeling of pleasure in a given object is one that all other perceivers of the object ought to share. "Through the judgment of taste (on the beautiful) one imputes the delight [Wohlgefallen] in an object to everyone" (§8, 214); "the pleasure . . . is declared through the judgment of taste to be valid for everyone" (§11, 221).

In response to these difficulties, a number of commentators have claimed that §9 cannot be read at face value.<sup>2</sup> When Kant asks whether or not the feeling of pleasure precedes the judging of the object, he

is not, on their view, referring to the act of judging the object to be beautiful. Instead, he is referring to a prior and independent exercise of the cognitive faculties which gives rise, not to the judgment of taste itself, but merely to the feeling of pleasure on which the judgment is based. This approach to §9 has been articulated and defended in detail by Paul Guyer, who argues on more general grounds that Kant holds to a "two-acts" model of aesthetic judgment.<sup>3</sup> Drawing on textual evidence independent of §9, Guyer ascribes to Kant the view that there are two distinct acts of reflective judgment involved in the exercise of taste: an act of judging or "estimating" the object which gives rise to a feeling of pleasure in it; and an act of reflecting on the feeling of pleasure which leads to the judgment that the pleasure is universally valid. According to Guyer, the aim of the "key to the critique of taste" is to reveal just this complex model of aesthetic judgment, by showing that the pleasure which precedes the judgment of taste proper is itself preceded by a prior and independent act of judgment.

However, as Guyer himself points out, the text of §9 itself is resistant to this reading. There is a sentence in §9 which apparently rules out the two-acts interpretation by suggesting that the act of judging which precedes the pleasure is the very same act as that through which the object is judged to be beautiful.<sup>4</sup> Guyer accounts for this recalcitrant sentence by ascribing it to confusion on Kant's part. Kant, he says, was conflating the two acts of judgment that his theory was intended to distinguish; and, as a result, he was unwittingly contradicting the very conclusion that §9 was supposed to establish. Moreover, Guyer suggests, this confusion came about because Kant was influenced by an earlier theory which he himself had held, and mistakenly allowed this theory to intrude into a statement of his mature view. Thus Guyer concludes that Kant's "key to the critique of taste" is "obscured by the intrusion of a theory of pleasure [in the beautiful] distinct from and incompatible with that which it is intended to propose" (PS 53), although he softens this conclusion by suggesting that it is nonetheless valuable in expressing the "ultimate complexity of Kant's theory of taste" (PS 54).

Did Kant really allow such a blatant confusion to infect a passage which he recommends as "worthy of all attention"? I want to argue that he did not, and that the mistake lies, not in §9, but in the reading from which the charge of confusion arises. §9, I shall argue, can be interpreted in a way that is both internally consistent, and consistent with Kant's aesthetic theory as a whole. According to this interpretation, the judging which precedes the pleasure is not distinct from the judging which yields the judgment of taste proper. Rather, as a literal reading of §9 suggests, there is only a single act of judgment required for a judgment of taste: one which is responsible, both for the feeling of pleasure in the object, and for the claim that the feeling of pleasure is universally valid. As we

shall see, this reading of §9 commits us to an unusual and initially counter-intuitive model of what goes on when we judge an object to be beautiful. But it is this model of aesthetic judgment, I shall suggest, that the "key to the critique of taste" is intended to reveal.<sup>5</sup>

### I. *The Two-Acts View*

The reading of §9 which I am challenging relies for much of its plausibility on the range of additional considerations that Guyer adduces in support of the two-acts view. Thus I shall begin in this section by discussing some of these considerations, and by trying to show, on grounds independent of §9, that the two-acts view is unsatisfactory. This will provide a background for assessing the alternative reading of §9 that I shall present in the sections following.

As indicated above, Guyer holds that the judgment of taste involves two conceptually distinct acts of reflective judgment.<sup>6</sup> First, there is a mental activity which Guyer calls "simple reflection" or "estimation," which is prompted by an object without conscious deliberation on the part of the subject. This activity gives rise to the "harmony of the faculties," a mental state in which imagination and understanding engage in a free and harmonious interplay which in turn produces a feeling of pleasure. Second, there is a further act of reflective judgment (which may, unlike the first, be conscious and deliberate) in which the subject reflects on the circumstances and causal antecedents of his or her pleasure. This act gives rise to the judgment that the pleasure is universally valid, and hence that the object is beautiful.

These two acts correspond, according to Guyer, to a distinction between aesthetic response and aesthetic judgment. The "free play" or "harmony"<sup>7</sup> of the faculties produced by the first act of reflection serves to explain only how aesthetic response can arise. It does not answer the further question of how a subject who experiences aesthetic responses to an object can go on to judge that the object is beautiful. Because the harmony of the faculties reflects an underlying similarity among all human beings, the aesthetic response which it causes is, in fact universally valid. But in order for me to judge that an object is beautiful, it is not enough merely for me to experience a feeling of pleasure caused by the harmony of the faculties. For there is nothing in my awareness of the pleasure itself to distinguish it from pleasures arising from other sources which lack universal validity: features of my sensory constitution, for example, or interests and desires specific to my individual situation. In order to rule out any such private origin for my feeling of pleasure, I must engage in a second act of reflection which enables me to recognize my pleasure as one due to the harmony of the faculties. It is this second

act of reflection, also carried out by the faculty of reflective judgment, which allows me to claim that my feeling of pleasure is universally valid, that is, to judge that the object is beautiful.

To maintain the distinction between aesthetic response and aesthetic judgment, Guyer needs to show how aesthetic response can be accounted for without invoking the conditions of aesthetic judgment proper, and hence without appeal to the notion of universal validity. This account is provided by his discussion of what the harmony of the faculties consists in and how it gives rise to pleasure. According to Guyer, the harmony of the faculties is a mental state in which a given manifold of intuition is synthesized by sensibility and imagination, but without the direct involvement of the understanding. In terms of the framework of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, it corresponds to the first two stages of the "threefold synthesis" described in the first edition deduction; that is, it involves the synthesis of apprehension in intuition and the synthesis of reproduction in imagination, but without the synthesis of recognition in a concept. Imagination's activity in unifying the manifold is "free," because it is not guided by concepts and thus does not come under the constraint of understanding; but it "harmonizes" with understanding "in the sense of accomplishing everything requisite for the successful relation of the understanding to a manifold of intuition" (KCT 86).

How does this "harmony" account for aesthetic response? Guyer's explanation takes for its starting point Kant's observation in section VI of the Introduction that "the attainment of every aim [Absicht] is connected with the feeling of pleasure" (187), and the parallel claim, in the first General Remark, that "delight . . . accompanies the accomplishment [Bewirkung] of any aim, even a merely problematical one" (242). The harmony of the faculties, Guyer proposes, gives rise to a feeling of pleasure because it accomplishes an aim, or goal, of cognition. This proposal is elaborated as follows. Cognition can be thought of as having a general goal, namely the "acquisition and possession of knowledge" (KCT 85). But this goal can be characterized from either an objective or a subjective point of view. Characterized objectively, it is the "discovery or acquisition of true beliefs or objectively valid judgments" (*ibid.*); but characterized from a subjective or psychological point of view, it is the synthesis or unification of our manifolds of intuition, which is the psychological prerequisite of objectively valid judgments. Thus the harmony of the faculties, in satisfying this prerequisite, fulfills the goal of cognition as characterized from a subjective point of view. This is why it gives rise to a feeling of pleasure.

But Guyer's account of aesthetic response is subject to a number of difficulties. Most strikingly, his conception of the harmony of the faculties as involving the achievement of a cognitive aim, is at odds with Kant's explicit claims that the harmonious play of the faculties, while

"indeterminately purposive" (first General Remark, 242), has no aim or purpose. Thus at section VII of the Introduction, Kant describes imagination and understanding as "undesignedly" (the German word is *unabsichtlich*, literally "without an aim") set into harmony (191).<sup>8</sup> And in §11 he argues specifically that the judgment of taste rests neither on a subjective, nor on an objective purpose, concluding that:

the delight which we judge, without a concept, to be universally communicable, can be constituted by nothing other than the subjective purposiveness in the representation of an object, without any purpose (neither objective nor subjective). (221)

While Kant does indeed suggest that pleasure may be felt on the achievement of a cognitive goal, he has in mind, not the pleasure of taste, but rather the pleasure that is felt on the achievement of actual cognition: for example, the discovery of a scientific principle (VI, 187) or the solution of a problem in geometry or surveying (first General Remark, 242). And he expressly denies that the pleasure of taste can be assimilated to the pleasure felt on this kind of cognitive achievement. Thus, in one of the passages quoted by Guyer in support of his view, Kant writes:

The regularity which leads to the concept of an object is, indeed, the indispensable condition . . . of grasping the object in a single representation and of determining the manifold in the form of the object. This determination is a purpose [Zweck] in respect of cognition; and in this connection it is also always connected with delight (which accompanies the bringing about of any aim [Absicht], even a merely problematic one). (first General Remark, 242)

But in the immediately following sentence, which Guyer does not quote, Kant goes on to differentiate the pleasure associated with this specifically goal-directed activity, from that connected with the free play of the faculties:

But in that case we have merely the approval of the solution which satisfies a problem, and not a free and indeterminately purposive entertainment of the mental powers with that which we call beautiful.

Guyer defends his view by suggesting that we have no choice but to regard the pleasure in taste as due to the accomplishment of a goal. For the thesis that the attainment of every aim is connected with the feeling of pleasure is, Guyer says, the only general account ever offered by Kant of the conditions under which pleasure arises (KCT 80). But in the first place, as Guyer himself points out (KCT 81), this thesis is not in fact suited to provide a basis for Kant's theory of taste, since it could only be an empirical thesis, and Kant's aim is to provide an *a priori* foundation for taste. And in the second place, it is not true that the thesis provides

Kant's only account of how pleasure can arise. As I shall try to show in section III, Kant has another, much more general, account of pleasure, which allows us to explain the origin of the pleasure in taste without having to invoke the attainment of an aim.

While this is the most prominent difficulty for Guyer's account of aesthetic response, a further objection can be raised to his characterization of the harmony of the faculties in terms of the first two stages of the threefold synthesis.<sup>9</sup> For Kant's description of the threefold synthesis is most plausibly understood, not as laying out three distinct stages in a serial process, but rather as characterizing three inseparable aspects of a single activity. Moreover, even if the syntheses of apprehension in intuition and of reproduction in imagination could occur without the synthesis of recognition in a concept, it is not clear how they would constitute any kind of unification of the manifold. For Kant holds that, without this latter synthesis, there would be no unity in the manifold at all:

all reproduction in the series of representations would be in vain . . . the manifold of the representations would never form a whole, since it would lack that unity which only consciousness can impart to it . . . (A103)

The difficulties that I have raised so far cast doubt only indirectly on the two-acts view. While they suggest inadequacies in Guyer's account of the act of reflection leading to aesthetic response, they do not immediately challenge the view that there are separate acts of reflection corresponding to aesthetic response and aesthetic judgment respectively. However, there are further difficulties which affect the two-acts model more directly. To begin with, despite Guyer's claim to the contrary, there is no textual evidence that Kant himself takes the exercise of taste to involve two separate acts of reflection.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, there is reason to think that the two-acts model conflicts with other aspects of Kant's aesthetic theory. According to the model, the claim that an object is beautiful results from an act of reflection which is intended to determine whether or not a given feeling of pleasure has the kind of causal origin which qualifies it as universally valid. This act of reflection is an exercise in empirical psychology: it involves "hypothesis and conjecture about causal connections in one's mental history" (KCT 205) and it yields the conclusion, either that one's pleasure arises from some antecedent interest, or that it is due to the harmony of the faculties (KCT 166). But an investigation of this kind clearly requires the use of concepts. And this is in conflict with Kant's explicitly stated view that "the judgment of taste is not grounded on concepts at all" (§32, 282), or in other words, that "one who judges with taste may assume his feeling to be universally communicable, and that without any mediation of concepts" (§38, 293).

Guyer might well respond by saying that Kant, despite appearances, is not saying that the judgment of taste is not based on any concepts whatsoever, but only that the judgment of taste is not based on concepts of the object about which it is made.<sup>11</sup> Even if this defense is accepted, however, an additional problem remains. When someone makes a judgment of taste, according to Kant, the pleasure that he or she feels is demanded from everyone else as a matter of necessity. "One who feels pleasure in mere reflection on the form of an object . . . rightly makes claim to everyone's agreement" (VII, 191); the pleasure that we feel in a beautiful object is "demanded [zumuten] by us from everyone else as necessary" (§9, 218). But how can such a demand be licensed, or indeed in any way supported, by reflection on the causal origins of one's pleasure? At most, it would seem, the empirical discovery that one's pleasure has a certain cause might allow one to predict whether or not others *will* share one's pleasure. But empirical considerations could never ground the contrasting claim that the pleasure is one that others *ought* to share.

Now Guyer does not regard this as a difficulty for his account. For on his reading, judgments of taste are in fact predictions, rather than genuine demands. They are not straightforward empirical predictions, but rather "ideal" predictions; predictions that presuppose "ideal knowledge of one's own responses and ideal circumstances of response for others" (KCT 146). As Guyer puts it, "the judgment that a particular object *x* is beautiful amounts to the claim that everyone who perceives *x* should . . . take pleasure in it, or that under ideal conditions . . . everyone who perceives *x* will take pleasure in it" (KCT 146–147). But with this slide from "should" to "will," Guyer is going against the grain of Kant's intentions. For Kant takes pains to emphasize the distinction that Guyer's reading aims to undermine: "the assertion is not that everyone *will* [werden] agree with our judgment, but that everyone *ought* to [sollen] agree with it" (§22, 239). And in accordance with this distinction, Kant denies that empirical considerations have any role to play in justifying the judgment of taste:

If we grant the claim of a . . . judgment [to necessity] it would be preposterous to justify it by explaining psychologically the origin of the judgment. For we would thereby act against our own intention, and if the looked-for explanation were to succeed completely, it would show that the judgment can make absolutely no claim to necessity, precisely because one can prove its empirical origin . . . Now aesthetic judgments of reflection . . . are of this kind. They make claim to necessity and say, not that everyone judges this way—in that case their explanation would be a task for empirical psychology—but that everyone *ought* to judge this way. (FI IX, 238–239)

In spite of these objections, the most powerful argument for the two-

acts reading remains unaddressed. Even without convincing evidence for the two-acts view, and even without an acceptable formulation of it, it may still seem obvious that some kind of two-acts reading is inevitable if we are to make sense of Kant's aesthetic theory. For Kant makes clear, both that the feeling of pleasure in a judgment of taste is based on an act of reflective judgment, and that the judgment of taste itself involves an act of judging that one's feeling of pleasure is universally valid. Thus, whether he recognizes it or not, he would seem to be inescapably committed to two separate acts of judgment: one which gives rise to the feeling of pleasure, and one which subsequently claims that the feeling of pleasure is universally valid. This issue, however, comes into its sharpest focus at §9, where Kant explicitly raises the question of how pleasure and judgment are related to each other in the exercise of taste; and it is to §9 that I turn in the next part of the paper.

## II. The Problem of §9

After raising the question of the relative priority of the feeling of pleasure and the judging of the object, and pointing out that the solution to this question is the "key to the critique of taste," Kant proceeds in the first half of §9 as follows. He argues first of all that the pleasure cannot precede the judging of the object, since there would otherwise be a contradiction in claiming its universal validity or universal communicability.<sup>12</sup> He then draws the initial conclusion that

it is the universal capacity for being communicated [Mittelungsfähigkeit] of the mental state in the given representation which, as subjective condition of the judgment of taste, must serve as its ground [zum Grunde liegen] and must have the pleasure in the object as its consequence [zur Folge]. (217)

This conclusion is apparently intended to rule out the suggestion that the pleasure precedes the judging and to imply the opposite answer to Kant's opening question, namely that the judging precedes the pleasure. Kant now turns to a description of the mental state associated with the judging. After characterizing it initially as

the mental state that is found in the relation of the powers of representation to one another insofar as they refer a given representation to *cognition in general*,

he goes on to describe it in more detail as a "feeling of the free play of the powers of representation in a given representation for a cognition in general." He then specifies further that the powers of representation involved here are the imagination and the understanding. Having thus

introduced the notion of the free play of imagination and understanding, Kant gives an argument to the effect that the free play is universally communicable. He concludes by providing what is apparently a more explicit rearticulation of his implied solution to the original question:

[t]his merely subjective (aesthetic) judging of the object, or of the representation through which it is given, precedes the pleasure in the object, and is the ground of this pleasure in the harmony of the faculties. (218)

According to Guyer, this passage as a whole confirms the two-acts view.<sup>13</sup> For it indicates that the pleasure must be preceded, not by the act of judging the object to be beautiful, but rather by the separate activity of judging or estimation that Kant describes as the free play of the faculties. When Kant argues at the outset that the pleasure cannot precede the judging of the object, because otherwise it would not be universally communicable, he does not mean that it cannot precede the judgment of taste proper. Instead, he means only that, rather than being merely sensory (in which case it would have only "private validity"), it must be preceded by some activity of the higher cognitive powers. But Kant's subsequent discussion makes clear that this activity is the free play of imagination and understanding. It is the free play, rather than the judgment of taste, to which Kant is referring when he concludes that "[t]his merely subjective (aesthetic) judging of the object . . . precedes the pleasure in the object."

However, as Guyer concedes, this reading faces a major textual difficulty. Kant's initial conclusion from the opening argument of the section states that "it is the universal capacity for being communicated of the mental state in the given representation . . . which must have the pleasure in the object as its consequence." In claiming here that the pleasure is consequent on the universal communicability of one's mental state, Kant seems to be suggesting that the judging which precedes the pleasure must be the act of taking one's mental state in the object to be universally communicable. Furthermore, it follows from the last paragraph of §9 that the "mental state in the given representation" is nothing other than the feeling of pleasure itself. Hence the sentence appears to imply that the pleasure is consequent on an act of taking one's feeling of pleasure to be universally communicable; and hence that the pleasure is consequent on the act of judging the object to be beautiful.<sup>14</sup>

Guyer responds to this difficulty by claiming that it is absurd to describe a feeling of pleasure as consequent on its own universal communicability, and thus that the sentence is incoherent and should be disregarded. Kant was led into this absurdity, Guyer suggests, because he was still under the influence of a previously held theory on which the pleasure of taste was due to the universal communicability of the

subject's mental state in the object. This theory was incompatible with Kant's mature view that the pleasure in taste was due to the harmony of the faculties, but it nonetheless continued to hold sway over his thinking. This led him, in the problematic sentence, to conflate the two acts of reflective judgment that his mature theory was supposed to distinguish. Despite the fact that §9 as a whole was intended to show that the feeling of pleasure is consequent on the free play of the faculties, Kant mistakenly described the feeling of pleasure as consequent instead on the second act of judgment, that of taking the feeling of pleasure to be universally communicable.

But this response is unsatisfactory. For it is hard to believe, either that Kant could have allowed an earlier, rejected theory to intrude so incongruously into the canonical statement of his mature view, or that he could have let stand a patent absurdity in a passage which he emphasizes as "worthy of all attention." I suggest, then, that we try to take the problematic sentence seriously, and to read it in a way that avoids the charge of incoherence. To begin with, let us suppose that it is possible for me to perform the following self-referential act of judgment: I take my mental state in perceiving an object to be universally communicable, where my mental state is nothing other than the mental state of performing that very act of judgment, that is, of taking my mental state in the object to be universally communicable. And in addition, let us suppose that, in performing this act of judgment, I am not explicitly aware of its self-referential structure, but that my act of judgment is instead manifest to consciousness through a certain experience of pleasure. In other words, the act of self-referentially taking my mental state to be universally communicable with respect to a given object consists, phenomenologically, in a feeling of pleasure in that object.

Given these suppositions, we can see how it is possible for a feeling of pleasure to be consequent on its own universal communicability. For if I judge self-referentially that my mental state is universally communicable with respect to a given object, then the universal communicability of my mental state with respect to that object can be thought of as the justifying ground of my judgment; equivalently, my judgment can be thought of as consequent on the universal communicability of my mental state. And if my judgment consists phenomenologically in a feeling of pleasure, then we can say too that my feeling of pleasure is consequent on the universal communicability of my mental state. But by the same token, my mental state in making the judgment is that same feeling of pleasure; so that my feeling of pleasure is consequent on its own universal communicability.

By adopting these suppositions, then, we can make sense of the problematic sentence. I want to suggest now that we take this as a clue to understanding §9 more generally. In particular, I suggest that we interpret §9 along the following lines. There is a single act of judgment involved in

the exercise of taste: namely, the act of self-referentially judging that one's mental state in that very act of judging is universally communicable or universally valid with respect to an object. This act of judgment is manifest to consciousness as a feeling of pleasure. It precedes the pleasure, not in a temporal sense, but in the sense that the pleasure is felt in virtue of the act of judgment. But it is at the same time an act of judging one's feeling of pleasure to be universally valid. This means that it is also the act of judging the object to be beautiful, that is, the judgment of taste proper. Moreover, I suggest, this self-referential act of judging is the same activity which Kant describes as the free and harmonious play of imagination and understanding. Thus §9 does not present elements of two incompatible theories of the pleasure in taste. Rather, Kant's claim that the pleasure is consequent on the universal validity of one's state of mind, and his claim that it is due to the free play of the faculties, are equivalent. Nor does §9 require us to distinguish between two acts of judging, one which precedes the pleasure and one which is subsequent to it. Instead, it commits us to a single act of judgment, whose self-referential structure allows us to regard it, not only as preceding the pleasure, but also as making the claim that this same feeling of pleasure is universally valid.

This line of interpretation has its peculiarities, not least the idea of a judgment which, in effect, claims nothing but its own universal validity. And it may well strike the reader as a contrived way of dealing with an isolated textual difficulty. But I shall go on to show that it is consistent, not just with the literal text of §9, but with central features of Kant's theory of taste. I shall begin in the next section by arguing that the pleasure of taste is, on Kant's own assumptions, best accounted for by appealing to a self-referential act of judgment of the kind that I have described. In section IV I shall go on to argue that this self-referential act of judgment can in turn be understood as a free play of imagination and understanding. Thus I shall try to show that, despite its apparent lack of intrinsic plausibility, this interpretation captures the model of aesthetic reflection underlying Kant's own theory of taste. More specifically, I shall argue, it does better justice to Kant than its initially more intuitive competitor.

### III. *Pleasure*

Why should the self-referential act of judgment described above be manifest to consciousness in a feeling of pleasure? The answer emerges from a series of passages in which Kant attempts to explain what pleasure in general consists in. The first of these is at FI III, where Kant is elaborating on the claim that there are three fundamental faculties of the mind,

namely the faculty of cognition, the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, and the faculty of desire. The feeling of pleasure and displeasure, he says, is distinct from the other two faculties in that it does not involve a representation's being referred to an object. In cognition, representations are referred to an object in virtue of belonging to the unity of apperception; and in desire, representations are also referred to the object in that they are "regarded as the cause of the actuality of [the] object" (206). But when representations are regarded "in relation to the feeling of pleasure," they are referred "merely to the subject, in that they serve as their own grounds for maintaining their own existence in the subject" (*ibid.*).

Kant expands on this description in two further characterizations of the feeling of pleasure in general. At the remark to FI VIII, he defines pleasure as a "state of mind in which a representation harmonizes with itself as a ground, either merely for maintaining this state itself . . . or to produce its object" (230–231). And at §10 of the *Critique of Judgment* he defines pleasure as

the consciousness of the causality of a representation in respect of the state of the subject, to maintain it in the same state . . . whereas displeasure is that representation which contains the ground of determining the state of representations to its own opposite (of hindering or removing them). (220)

Kant also provides specific characterizations of pleasure in the agreeable and of pleasure in the beautiful which conform to his descriptions of the feeling of pleasure in general. In the *Anthropology* he writes that

what immediately (through the senses) drives me to *leave* my state (to go out of it) is *unpleasant* to me—it pains me; what similarly drives me to *maintain* my state (to remain in it) is *agreeable* to me, it satisfies me. (§60, 7:231)

At §12 of the *Critique of Judgment*, along apparently parallel lines, he describes the pleasure in taste as having "an inner causality" or "causality in itself, namely to *maintain* the state of the representation itself and the business of the cognitive faculties without further aim" (222).

These passages suggest that pleasure is a mental state which maintains itself or tends towards its own preservation in the subject's mind. It is tempting to think of its self-maintaining structure in terms of a desire or inclination to remain in one's present mental state. Pleasure, on this way of thinking, is a state which tends towards its own preservation through its effect on the faculty of desire. For me to feel pleasure in an object is for me to feel inclined to act so as to continue in my present state (for example, by keeping the object in existence or producing additional objects of the same kind). It is in this way that my representation of the object manifests an "inner causality" to "maintain the state of the

representation itself." However, while this model may work for pleasure in the agreeable or the good, it does not accord with Kant's view of pleasure in the beautiful. According to Kant, pleasure in the beautiful is "independent of determination by the faculty of desire" (FI III, 207), a point which he argues for in detail in his analysis of it as devoid of any interest (§§2-5, 204-211). But this means that it cannot consist in my being inclined to continue in my present state, for if it did, then it would involve both an interest in the continuation of my state, and a corresponding interest in the object that was responsible for this state.

Both Crawford and Guyer see this as raising a serious difficulty for Kant's view that the pleasure of taste is disinterested. If, as they take Kant to hold, all pleasure involves a desire for its own continuation, then there can be no such thing as a fully disinterested pleasure.<sup>15</sup> But the difficulty can be avoided if we appeal to the self-referential act of judgment introduced in the previous section. For this allows us to explain the self-maintaining character of the pleasure in taste without making reference to any desire or interest. In engaging in this self-referential act of judgment, as we saw, I am in effect demanding that all perceivers of the object in question should judge it as I do, and thus that they all ought to share the mental state that corresponds to my act of judging. But this demand, being universal, applies just as much to myself as to any other perceiver of the object. Thus in judging, I take it that I myself, like any other perceiver of the object, ought to be in the mental state corresponding to my present act of judging. My mental state thus consists in the consciousness that I ought to be in the very same mental state as that in which I presently find myself.

Now this mental state, I suggest, qualifies as a feeling of disinterested pleasure. For although it involves no interest or desire, the consciousness that I ought to be in my present state of mind supports or maintains itself by serving as a ground or justification for my being in that very state of mind. To quote Kant's initial characterization of pleasure at FI III, my representation "serve[s] as [its] own ground for maintaining [its] own existence in the subject." My mental state in having this representation, we might say, "approves of itself"<sup>16</sup> in that it consists in the consciousness of its own appropriateness with respect to the object. Or in the words of Kant's definition of pleasure at FI VIII, my representation "harmonizes with itself," not "as a ground for producing its object" (which would mean that it involved a desire for its own continuation) but merely "as a ground for maintaining this state [of having the representation] itself." Admittedly, my mental state does not literally bring it about that I continue in that same mental state. But it can nonetheless be thought of as having a tendency to perpetuate itself, insofar as it grounds or justifies itself in the way suggested by the characterizations of pleasure just quoted. This explains Kant's subsequent reference to the pleasure in

taste as having a "causality . . . to maintain the state of the representation itself" (§12, 220). The "causality" here does not consist in my being impelled, through desire, to continue in my present state. Rather, it consists simply in my being aware, by virtue of my being in this very state, that this is the state I ought to be in.

This account of disinterested pleasure suggests a model of aesthetic judging that is very different from Guyer's. On Guyer's account, as we saw, the pleasure of taste is to be accounted for in a way that makes no reference to the notion of universal validity. The act of reflective judgment which gives rise to the pleasure is distinct from the further act of reflective judgment through which that pleasure is taken to be universally valid. But on the account that I am presenting, no such distinction can be made. Since my pleasure consists in the consciousness of its own universal validity, it consists also in the consciousness that my pleasure is universally valid.<sup>17</sup> The act of reflection which is responsible for the pleasure—an act which is literally reflective in that it claims *its own* universal validity—is at the same time the act which claims the universal validity of the pleasure.<sup>18</sup>

As I argued in section II, this model is required in order to resolve the textual difficulty raised by the "key to the critique of taste." But the account that I have presented in this section confirms the model in two ways. First, it shows how the self-referential act of reflective judgment invoked by the model can be understood as giving rise to a feeling of pleasure. Second, and more strongly, it suggests that an act of judgment of this kind may offer the only way of explaining, given Kant's views about pleasure in general, how the disinterested pleasure characteristic of taste is possible.

#### IV. *The Free Play of the Faculties*

How is this account to be reconciled with Kant's own explanation of the pleasure in taste as due to the free play of imagination and understanding? As a first step in answering this question, let us return to Kant's introduction of the notion of the free play at §9. As we saw in section II, Kant introduces this notion in the course of characterizing the mental state associated with judging an object to be beautiful. He begins by describing this state as

the mental state that is found in the relation of the powers of representation to one another insofar as they refer a given representation to *cognition in general*.

He then goes on to provide a more detailed characterization in terms of the free play:

the powers of cognition brought into play by this representation are here in a free play, since no determinate concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition. Thus the mental state in this representation must be one of a feeling of the free play of the powers of representation in a given representation for a cognition in general.

What are we to understand by Kant's references to "cognition in general"? Further passages indicate that the free play of the faculties manifests an activity which is required for all cognition, but that it does so in an indeterminate or general way, and thus without yielding any particular cognition. For example, later in §9, Kant refers to the free play as a "harmonious activity, namely that which belongs to cognition in general" (219), and he describes it as involving "the proportionate accord [of the cognitive faculties] which we require for all cognition." But this relation of faculties "does not rest on any concept," and the corresponding activity, while harmonious, is "indeterminate." Thus the relation of faculties is accessible to consciousness, not through a cognition, but through a non-cognitive state of sensation or feeling: "the subjective unity of the relation [of faculties] makes itself known only through sensation." This sensation, of course, is the feeling of pleasure in taste.

It is tempting to try to interpret this "harmonious yet indeterminate activity" in terms of the specific faculties of imagination and understanding. The free play, we might think, can be explained as follows: imagination synthesizes the manifold of representations just as it does in ordinary cognition, except that it does so without being guided or constrained by specific concepts of the understanding. It is this kind of approach that Guyer adopts in identifying the free play of the faculties with the first two stages of the threefold synthesis invoked in the first Critique's Transcendental Deduction. But we saw in section I that Guyer's account is subject to a number of difficulties. And, more generally, the appeal to a synthesis without concepts is no more explanatory than Kant's original metaphor of free and harmonious play. For it remains extremely difficult to understand how the imagination can synthesize in a way that is non-conceptual, yet accords with the general requirements on cognition laid down by the understanding.

A better approach, I suggest, is to appeal to the self-referential act of judgment discussed in the preceding sections. For as I shall now try to show, the act of self-referentially taking one's mental state in an object to be universally valid with respect to that object, answers in several important respects to Kant's account of the free play of the faculties. It manifests an activity which is required for all cognition. It does so in a general and indeterminate way which does not yield any cognition. And, as we have already seen, it is responsible for a feeling of disinterested pleasure. Thus despite the fact that it does not appear to involve the characteristic activity, either of imagination or of understanding, it none-

theless corresponds to Kant's initial description of the free play in terms of "cognition in general."

To see why this is, let us consider how the reflective judging characteristic of taste compares, on Kant's view, with the judging involved in ordinary empirical cognition. There is one feature of empirical cognition which is relevant to this comparison, but which is easily overlooked because it is not emphasized in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.<sup>19</sup> This is that any empirical cognition makes a claim to universal agreement. Kant makes this point in a general form at §21:

Cognitions and judgments must . . . allow of being universally communicated, for otherwise they could not be ascribed any agreement [Übereinstimmung] with the object; they would be altogether a merely subjective play of the powers of representation, exactly as scepticism demands. (238)

He also gives a specific example at VII of the published Introduction:

A judgment of experience from someone who perceives a movable drop of water in a rock-crystal rightly demands that everyone else should find the facts to be the same [es ebenso finden müsse]. (191)

Now in this respect, judgments of taste and empirical cognitive judgments are alike. "The judgment of taste . . . makes claim, like every other empirical judgment, to be valid for everyone" (VII, 191); "the judgment of taste determines its object in respect of delight with a claim to *everyone's* agreement, just as if it were objective" (§32, 281). The difference is that a judgment of taste, unlike a cognitive judgment, does not subsume the object under any concept.

The judgment of taste is differentiated from the logical [i.e. cognitive] judgment, in that the latter subsumes a representation under a concept of the object, whereas the former does not subsume under a concept at all. (§35, 286)

The only thing which is strange and different about the judgment of taste is that it is not an empirical concept but rather a feeling of pleasure (hence no concept at all) which is to be required of everyone and connected with the representation of the object . . . (VII, 191)

On my interpretation of the judgment of taste, this contrast is to be understood as follows. Both the empirical cognitive judgment and the judgment of taste make a claim to universal agreement. That is, in making both kinds of judgment I take my judgment to be universally valid, and thus demand that everyone else judge the object as I do. But the demand in each case has a different character. In a cognitive judgment, my demand is that everyone should judge the object in this or that specific way. I claim, for example, that everyone should judge this



rock-crystal to contain a drop of water. My demand thus has a determinate content, which is reflected in the concept under which the object is subsumed. But in the case of a judgment of taste, as we have seen, there is no antecedently specifiable content to the demand. Instead, it is purely self-referential. I claim that everyone else ought to judge the object just as I do, without any specification of how the object is to be judged beyond its being the way that I am judging it in making this very claim.

This understanding of the contrast is borne out by a passage at §18 where Kant describes the judgment of taste as possessing what he calls "exemplary necessity," namely

a necessity of everyone's agreement to a judgment which is seen as an example of a universal rule which cannot be stated [angeben]. (237)

In making a judgment of taste, I take it that there is something that all other perceivers of the object ought to do, that is, that they should judge the object as I do. Thus I think of my judgment as laying down a "universal rule" which everybody ought to follow. But the "rule" cannot be specified without reference to my own judgment. In contrast to the case of cognitive judgment, in which I have in mind some determinate way in which the object ought to be judged (e.g. as containing a movable drop of water), my claim to universal agreement does not specify a concept. Instead, I judge that all others should judge the object as I do, where the only way of pointing to how the object is to be judged (and thus to the "universal rule" implicit in my judgment) is through the example of my judgment itself.<sup>20</sup>

We have seen, then, that for Kant a judgment of taste and an empirical cognitive judgment are alike in that they both make claim to universal agreement. And I have suggested in addition that a judgment of taste differs from an empirical cognitive judgment only in that its claim to universal agreement does not invoke a specific concept but is, instead, purely self-referential. If this is correct, then we can think of the self-referential act of judgment involved in taste as manifesting a necessary feature of all empirical cognition, but as doing so in a completely indeterminate way. Accordingly, we can see how it answers to Kant's initial characterization of the free play of the faculties in terms of "cognition in general." In engaging in this act of judgment, I do something which is required for all cognitive judgment: that is, I claim that everyone should judge the object in question as I do. But instead of performing this act in a way which yields a particular cognition, I carry it out in a way which is indeterminate or general. I can thus be thought of as engaging in "an activity . . . that belongs to cognition in general" (§9, 219), or one which "refers a given representation to cognition in general" (§9, 217).

Moreover, because the indeterminate character of my activity consists in its not being constrained by specific concepts, it can be described as a "free play" of my cognitive powers.

But why should Kant go on to describe this self-referential act of judging as a free play of imagination and understanding? The answer, I think, is that it is the natural way to describe it in the context of his transcendental-psychological account of cognition. According to this account, imagination and understanding are the faculties at work in all cognition. Thus, given that the self-referential act of judging is a performance of the same activity that is required for cognitive judging, it makes sense for him to describe it as using the same faculties also. Yet at the same time, given that it is a non-conceptual and indeterminate performance of this activity, it makes sense for him to regard these faculties as related in a correspondingly indeterminate way. Kant makes clear at §9 that cognition is not possible except through the combined workings of imagination and understanding:

If a representation through which an object is given is to become cognition at all, it requires *imagination* for the combination of the manifold and *understanding* for the unity of the concept which unifies the representations. (217)

Moreover, he suggests at §40 that a relation between imagination and understanding is required specifically as a condition of our being able to claim universal communicability for our cognitive states:

The aptitude of human beings to communicate their thoughts requires . . . a relation between imagination and understanding, in order to put intuitions together with concepts and concepts again together with intuitions, which both unite together in a cognition. (§40, 295)

It is natural, then, that he should also invoke the idea of a relation between imagination and understanding in characterizing the act of claiming universal communicability that is performed in the judgment of taste. But while he goes on at §40 to describe the "agreement of both powers of the mind" as being, in the case of cognition, "*lawlike*, under the constraint of determinate concepts" (*ibid.*), it is clear that he has to describe their relation in taste as being of a somewhat different character. Imagination and understanding must harmonize, as they do in cognition: but they must harmonize in a free and unconstrained way.

## V. Concluding Remarks

While the interpretation of §9 which I have presented in this paper is by

no means fully defended, I hope to have said enough about it to show some of its advantages over the two-acts reading. To begin with, it is preferable on purely textual grounds. In saying that there is only a single act of judgment required for the exercise of taste, it accords better with Kant's own terminological practice, which does not register any distinction between the two acts of judging proposed by Guyer. And in ascribing to this act of judgment a self-referential structure, it allows us to make sense of §9 without convicting Kant of extreme confusion in a section on which he lays special emphasis.

Moreover, the model of aesthetic judging offered by this interpretation provides a more satisfactory account of the pleasure in taste. It shows how the pleasure in taste can be explained without having to claim that aesthetic judging involves the fulfillment of an aim, and without having to rely on the empirical thesis that the fulfillment of an aim is pleasurable. It also shows how we can reconcile Kant's view that the pleasure in taste is disinterested with his theory that all pleasure involves a tendency towards its own continuation.

Yet there are still a number of reasons why this interpretation might strike the reader as implausible. One of them has to do with the free play of the faculties. It is natural to think of Kant's talk of the free play of imagination and understanding as an attempt to capture something about the phenomenology of aesthetic experience, particularly the experience of works of art.<sup>21</sup> In contemplating works of art, our imagination may often seem to be occupied in trying out different ways of relating the elements of the work in order to bring them into some kind of unity; yet while the imagination in this activity is concerned with order and unity, it may also seem to be "free" given that there is, in fact, no one correct way of relating the elements of the work to one another. But while Guyer's account of the free play as a procedure of synthesis without concepts makes room for this aspect of the phenomenology of aesthetic experience, my account does not. On my account, the free play of the faculties bears no essential relation to the activities of ordering and unifying whereby we make sense of an object of aesthetic experience. If it captures anything about the phenomenology of aesthetic experience, it is only this: the experience of an object as beautiful carries with it the sense of its own universal validity and hence of its "rightness" or "appropriateness" with respect to the object perceived.

But the temptation to understand Kant's talk of the free play as attempting to capture the rich and complex mental activities that go into the interpretation and appreciation of a work of art is, I think, mistaken. While the free play of the faculties is supposed to take place in all experience of the beautiful, in particular the experience of natural beauty, it is not at all clear that all experience of the beautiful involves the ordering and unifying of disparate elements. On the other hand, it is clear, at least

on Kant's view, that all experience of beauty involves the awareness that one's experience is universally valid. Thus if my account of the free play seems disappointingly thin and abstract, it has the advantage over a richer interpretation of being plausible in a wider range of cases.

In addition, this account of the free play evades two specific problems which face Guyer's reading. In the first place, it saves us from having to explain how, contrary to Kant's account of synthesis in the first Critique, it is possible for imagination to unify a manifold of intuition without being governed by concepts. In the second place, it is able, unlike Guyer's account, to do justice to Kant's view that the judgment of taste demands universal agreement. As we saw at the end of section I, Guyer understands the free play of the faculties as an empirical psychological process which is causally responsible for one's feeling of pleasure in the object. Because of this, as we saw, he cannot explain why my own experience of the free play should give rise to a claim that all others *ought* to feel pleasure in the object, as opposed to a mere prediction that they *will* feel pleasure in it. But on my account of the free play, there is no difficulty in seeing why the experience of the free play should give rise to a demand for agreement. For to experience the free play of the faculties is just to take it that all other perceivers of the object ought to share one's mental state, which is to say that they all ought to experience the free play of the faculties too. Thus the claim to agreement is not based on an inference from one's own experience of the free play to the fact that the free play should or will occur in others similarly situated, but is, rather, part and parcel of the free play itself.

Another reason why my interpretation might seem implausible stems from its account of the judgment of taste as essentially devoid of content. If all I do in judging an object to be beautiful is to judge that all others should judge it as I do, without specifying in what respect they should judge it, then it seems as though I cannot be making any claim about the object at all. Accordingly, it seems as though the object is irrelevant to the act of judging: any object is equally suitable as a candidate for such a judgment, since the judgment does not say anything about the object which might turn out to be false. What, then, is to prevent me from engaging in this empty act of judgment with respect to every object, and hence judging that every object is beautiful?

While this might be the basis of a legitimate complaint against Kant's aesthetic theory, it is not an objection to my interpretation of that theory. For Kant himself makes explicit that the judgment of taste is without content. The judgment of taste, he says, is a "formal judgment of reflection" (§36, 288); it rests only on "formal rules of judging, without any matter (whether sensation or concept)" (§38, 290); and "it brings to our notice no quality of the object, but only the purposive form in the determination of the cognitive faculties which are engaged with it" (§15, 228).

Moreover, judgments of taste, because they possess merely subjective universality, "have no bearing at all on the object [gar nicht auf das Objekt gelten]" (§8, 215). It follows, then, that from an objective standpoint, there is indeed nothing to prevent me from judging each and every object to be beautiful. If judgments of taste are not based on objective grounds, then there can be no fact about any object which rules it out as a candidate for being regarded as beautiful. It is only from the subjective standpoint of each individual that certain objects qualify as beautiful while others do not.<sup>22</sup>

Why, then, do we not as a matter of actual circumstance judge every object to be beautiful? Kant is debarred by his commitment to the subjectivity of taste from answering this question. To do so would be to explain why some objects are judged to be beautiful while others are not, and this would in turn be to provide at least the beginnings of an objective criterion of beauty. But if this represents a difficulty for Kant, it is not one which arises exclusively on my interpretation. We can equally well ask, within the context of the two-acts reading, why every object does not occasion the free play of the faculties. And Kant is no better placed to provide an answer. It has to remain an inexplicable fact that some objects give rise to the free play of the faculties and others do not; and this holds true whether we understand the free play as a psychological process of synthesis without concepts or whether we understand it as the formal and self-referential act of judging one's mental state to be universally valid.

Even if these worries are resolved, there remains a third difficulty for my interpretation which is of a rather different kind. If Kant indeed holds that a judgment of taste is a self-referential judgment which claims its own universal validity, why does he not say so directly? In describing the judgment of taste, Kant consistently characterizes it as claiming, not its own universal validity, but the universal validity of a feeling of pleasure or delight. And even though he sometimes seems to hint that the judgment of taste has a self-referential structure (for instance, when he describes it as a formal judgment of reflection or ascribes to it exemplary necessity) these suggestions are too oblique to convey the point effectively. Moreover, his alternative descriptions of aesthetic judging in transcendental-psychological terms are equally unhelpful in laying bare the structure of the judgment of taste. If my interpretation is correct, it seems as though we have to read Kant as almost perversely misleading his readers as to the true underpinnings of his theory of taste.

While it is puzzling that Kant does not make the structure of the judgment of taste more explicit, his failure to do so may be due, at least in part, to the differences between eighteenth-century and twentieth-century modes of philosophical expression. For Kant may well have thought that his descriptions of aesthetic judging in terms of the free play

of imagination and understanding provided the most perspicuous means of conveying its self-referential character. To a twentieth-century audience, there is an irremediable obscurity in Kant's talk of an activity of "mere reflection," in which the employment of the faculties is "subjectively purposive" (§39, 292), and which possesses an "inner causality" through which the activity "strengthens and reproduces itself" (§12, 222). But to Kant, such apparently metaphorical expressions may have seemed more natural, and carried a clearer meaning, than a bald characterization of the judgment of taste as claiming its own universal validity.

Whether or not this explanation is satisfactory, however, Kant cannot be viewed as denying his readers all access to the underlying character of the judgment of taste. For despite his failure to state the point explicitly, he leaves us with no choice but to conclude that the judgment of taste has a self-referential structure. In posing the question, at §9, of whether the pleasure in the judgment of taste precedes or is consequent on the act of judging, Kant requires us to reconcile his descriptions of the judgment of taste as claiming the universal validity of the pleasure, with his assertion that the judging precedes the pleasure. And to reconcile these satisfactorily, we are compelled to conclude, both that the pleasure and the judging are one and the same, and that the judging self-referentially claims its own universal validity. It is for this reason, I believe, that Kant describes the solution to this question as "the key to the critique of taste."<sup>23</sup>

University of California, Berkeley  
Berkeley, California

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> All references to the *Critique of Judgment* (CJ) will be located by indicating both the section number (arabic numerals preceded by "§") will refer to sections in the main text and (roman numerals will refer to sections in the Introduction) and the page number according to the pagination of volume 5 of the *Akademie* edition of Kant's collected writings (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1902-). References to the First Introduction to the *Critique of Judgment* will be abbreviated "FI" and will include the section number and the page number according to the pagination of volume 20 of the *Akademie* edition. References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* will cite the usual A and B pagination. References to other works by Kant will cite volume and page number of the *Akademie* edition. All translations are my own.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to Paul Guyer, whose work I shall be discussing in detail, see Donald Crawford, *Kant's Aesthetic Theory* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), 69-74 and Georg Kohler, *Geschmacksurteil und aesthetische Erfahrung* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), 170-174 and 273-277.

<sup>3</sup> See *Kant and the Claims of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), henceforth referred to as KCT, and "Pleasure and Society in Kant's Theory of

Taste," in *Essays in Kant's Aesthetics*, edited by Ted Cohen and Paul Guyer (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983), henceforth referred to as PS.

<sup>4</sup> See KCT 151–160, and PS 33–48. Guyer in fact discusses two sentences that apparently conflict with the two-acts interpretation, but I shall be taking only one of them into consideration in what follows.

<sup>5</sup> I shall be concerned in this paper only with those judgments of taste that can properly be designated as "pure," although I shall follow Kant's customary usage in referring to them simply as "judgments of taste" or "judgments of beauty." I shall use the term "aesthetic" in its modern usage, that is, as indicating a reference to taste rather than to feeling or sensation in general.

<sup>6</sup> See for example KCT 110–116 and PS 23–28.

<sup>7</sup> The terms "free play" and "harmony" are not, strictly speaking, interchangeable. Since imagination and understanding harmonize in cognition as well as in aesthetic experience, it is possible for the faculties to be in harmony without being in free play. However, Guyer, like several other commentators, uses the expression "harmony of the faculties" to cover only those cases where the faculties are in free play, and in discussing his account I shall follow his usage.

<sup>8</sup> For this reason, Guyer proposes translating "unabsichtlich" as "unintentional" (KCT 80, 105).

<sup>9</sup> Guyer argues for his characterization on the basis of Kant's description of the harmony of the faculties as the "subjective and merely sensible" condition of cognition (KCT 85–86). The expression "merely sensible" indicates, according to Guyer, that the harmony of the faculties corresponds to that part of the conditions of knowledge having to do with sensibility rather than understanding. But "sensible" here translates "*empfindbar*" rather than "*sinnlich*." It seems more plausible to read Kant as referring to the fact that we are only aware of the harmony of the faculties through feeling or sensation [*Empfindung*], than as indicating a special connection with sensibility [*Sinnlichkeit*].

<sup>10</sup> While Guyer notes that Kant's terminology does not consistently distinguish two acts of reflective judging, he cites several passages as evidence that Kant was nonetheless committed to the distinction (KCT 110–115, PS 24–26). But three of these passages (from VII, 191, from FI VIII, 224 and from FI VIII, 229) are compatible, not only with the two-acts view, but also with the alternative reading that I shall go on to present. The other two are mistranslated. In the first of them, from CJ VII, the German reads: "Wessen Gegenstandes Form . . . in der bloßen Reflexion über dieselbe (ohne Absicht auf einen von ihm zu erwerbenden Begriff) als der Grund einer Lust an der Vorstellung eines solchen Objekts beurteilt wird: mit dessen Vorstellung wird diese Lust auch als notwendig verbunden geurteilt . . ." (190). From this, Guyer concludes that the judgment of taste results from judging or estimating that the pleasure has resulted from "simple reflection," that is, the free play of the faculties. But "in der bloßen Reflexion" modifies the verb "beurteilt wird" rather than the expression "Wessen Gegenstandes Form." The situation Kant describes in the antecedent clause is not one in which reflection on the form of the object is judged to be the ground of the pleasure; rather, it is one in which the form of the object is judged, through reflection, to be the ground of the pleasure. The second, from FI VIII, reads as follows: "Dieweil aber eine bloß subjective Bedingung eines Urteils keinen bestimmten Begriff von dem Bestimmungsgrund desselben gestattet, so kann dieser nur im Gefühle der Lust gegeben werden, so doch, daß das ästhetische Urteil immer ein Reflexionsurteil ist" (225, my emphasis). Guyer, following James Haden's translation (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965) takes "so doch, daß" to mean "so that" and "immer" to mean "always." From this he draws the conclusion that all judgments based on a feeling of pleasure, including judgments on the agreeable, require an act of reflection: an act which, in the case of the judgment of taste, is supplementary to the act of reflection giving rise to the feeling in the first place. But "so doch, daß . . ." here means "yet in such a way that . . ." Kant's

point, in other words, is that although a judgment of taste, like a judgment on the agreeable, is based on pleasure, it is, unlike a judgment on the agreeable, based on pleasure in such a way that it is still [immer] an aesthetic judgment of reflection.

<sup>11</sup> A response of this kind is suggested at KCT 150.

<sup>12</sup> I follow Guyer in taking the expressions "universally valid" and "universally communicable" to be, at least in this context, synonymous; see KCT 415.

<sup>13</sup> See KCT 151–154 and PS 33–34.

<sup>14</sup> Guyer goes on to discuss a further sentence of §9 which raises a related difficulty for his view. However, because the difficulty in this second case is less straightforward, I shall leave it out of consideration.

<sup>15</sup> See Crawford, op. cit., 48–49, and KCT, 182 and 189.

<sup>16</sup> I owe this formulation to David Hills.

<sup>17</sup> I am in agreement here with Richard Aquila ("A New Look at Kant's Aesthetic Judgments," in Cohen and Guyer, op. cit.), who argues, although on different grounds, that "an aesthetic pleasure involves a supposition of its own universal validity" (90).

<sup>18</sup> It has been objected to me that this model does not work for the judgment that an object is ugly, since it cannot explain how we can claim universal validity for a feeling of displeasure as opposed to pleasure. But the reason, I think, is that for Kant pure judgments of taste do not have any analogue in respect of the ugly. The examples that Kant gives of ugliness (the Furies, diseases and devastations of war) all appear to involve a displeasure that is interested rather than disinterested, a point which he underscores by referring to them as "harmfulnesses" [Schädlichkeiten] (§48, 312). It seems plausible that Kant would have ruled out the possibility of disinterested displeasure (except, perhaps, the displeasure that is involved in the experience of the sublime), and, with it, that of pure judgments of ugliness.

<sup>19</sup> But see A820–821/B848–849 and §§18–19 of the *Prolegomena* (3: 297–299).

<sup>20</sup> This may seem to conflict with the passage quoted above from CJ VII, in which Kant claims that in the judgment of taste a feeling of pleasure "is required of everyone . . . just as if it were a predicate connected with the cognition." For this suggests that the judgment of taste does lay down a specifiable rule, namely that everyone should feel pleasure in the object. But on the account given in section III of this paper, the conflict is illusory. My judgment of taste claims that all others should feel pleasure in the object because it claims that all others should judge the object as I do, where my own judging of the object is manifest to consciousness as a feeling of pleasure. But my own judging of the object is manifest to consciousness as a feeling of pleasure only because of its character of pure self-referentiality, or as Kant puts it, exemplary necessity.

<sup>21</sup> See for example David Bell, "The Art of Judgment," *Mind*, 1987.

<sup>22</sup> For an opposing view, see Karl Ameriks, "Kant and the Objectivity of Taste," *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 23 (1983).

<sup>23</sup> I am grateful to Janet Broughton and to Gary Hatfield for their comments on an earlier version of this paper.