The pleasure of judgment: Kant and the possibility of taste

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The main aim of this paper is to outline what I take to be the philosophical essentials of Kant's theory of taste, with particular emphasis on the question of how judgments of taste are possible. In particular, I aim to give an overview of what I take to be the most fundamental points of difficulty regarding Kant's aesthetics, and to sketch my own solution to these difficulties, a solution which I have argued for in detail in previous work. My view of Kant's theory is unorthodox, so l will begin by laying out what I take to be uncontroversial about Kant's view before going on to present my own interpretation against the background of more widely held views. I will confine myself in this discussion to the core of Kant's theory, namely his account of judgments of beauty, and more specifically what he calls "pure judgments of beauty" or "pure judgments of taste." What exactly these are for Kant is a controversial question which I shall come to later, but for now I propose to consider a judgment of beauty, roughly, as whatever content or state of mind we are expressing when we respond to the presence of an object -- whether something natural or a work of art -- by saying, sincerely, "That's beautiful." In the first instance then, judging something to be beautiful is something that we do in, or as an immediate consequence of, perceiving the object which we take to be beautiful. This is not intended to rule out that there can be judgments of beauty that are not directly perceptual. But I am assuming that the primary case of a judgment of beauty is of the kind I have described, and that ascriptions

of beauty that are less immediately related to perception are to be understood in terms of the primary case.[1]

In restricting my account in this way, I will be leaving out a great deal of Kant's aesthetic theory. In particular, I will not consider Kant's views about aesthetic judgments which apparently ascribe evaluative predicates other than beauty, for example those expressed when we say that things are sublime, ugly, charming, graceful or moving. Nor will I consider what Kant sometimes calls impure judgments of beauty, and more specifically judgments of dependent beauty, where it is important to the judgment that the object is recognized as being of a specific kind. And for the purposes of this paper I will not question Kant's assumption that the paradigm aesthetic judgments are evaluative, as opposed to the kinds of nonevaluative judgments which often figure in aesthetic discourse, for example that a piece of music is cheerful or sad, that a musical performance is muscular, that the atmosphere of a poem is dreamy or leaden, that the colours of a painting are vivid or muted. Nor will I question the assumption that judgments of beauty play a central role in what we now call aesthetic judgment more generally. It is true that the word "beautiful" does not figure very often in sophisticated critical writing about the objects of aesthetic discourse, and much important and valuable art is not naturally or plausibly described as beautiful. But we often use the term spontaneously in ordinary life to express a certain pleasurable response to a bouquet of flowers, a sunset, a painting, a decorated interior, a line of poetry, a sequence of chords. It is this kind of response which Kant takes as paradigmatic of aesthetic experience. And although we typically respond to works of art with a range of

[1] This might already be regarded as controversial. Karl Ameriks emphasizes, as part of an argument against my interpretation, the possibility of judgments of beauty which are not directly perceptual (2003, 321) and such judgments also figure in the objection raised in Allison 2003,192-193. However, while we can indeed ascribe beauty to a presently unperceived object, I am inclined to think that this is to make a second-order judgment about the appropriateness of judging it to be beautiful in what I take to be the primary sense. I propose to approach such judgments along lines suggested by Kant's treatment of "logically universal" judgments of beauty as "aesthetically grounded logical judgments" (see my 1998).

reactions which go far beyond, and sometimes exclude, the experience of beauty, it is not implausible to suppose that our capacity to take an interest in these works in some way depends on a more basic propensity to find things beautiful.

I

Kant's theory of taste can be located in the context of a familiar dilemma about the objectivity of aesthetic experience and judgment.[2] When we respond to an object presented to us by saying "That's beautiful," is our utterance to be taken at face value, as the assertion of an objective fact about the thing? Or are we simply expressing our own subjective response to the thing, in particular the fact that we like it? Relatedly, is the experience of finding something beautiful to be understood cognitively, as the recognition of an objective property of the thing, like its colour or shape? Or is it to be understood noncognitively, like the pleasure we feel in a good meal? This dilemma was represented historically for Kant in the conflict between rationalist theories of aesthetics, associated with Baumgarten and Meier, and empiricist views associated with such thinkers as Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and to some extent Hume. For the rationalists, aesthetic experience was the perception of an object's perfection or goodness, understood as an objective property. While this perception was confused it was still cognitive in character: it represented the object as having a certain feature which was intelligible independently of the experience which it aroused. For the empiricists, pleasure in the beautiful could not be analysed in conceptual or representational terms. Objects could indeed be understood as possessing the dispositional property to arouse such pleasure, and this might be

[2] For convenience, I shall restrict my use of the term "aesthetic" so that it pertains only to the beautiful. This differs from Kant's own usage, on which "aesthetic" applies to any judgments made through, or immediately based on, feeling, in particular judgments of the agreeable and of the sublime.

treated as an objective property and even given the name "beauty." But aesthetic experience did not consist in the recognition of objects as having this dispositional property. So while in certain contexts saying that something is beautiful might amount to the ascription of a dispositional property, in the primary context it did not: to express one's response to an immediately presented object by saying "that's beautiful" was not to predicate an objective property of it but to give voice simply to one's own feeling.

As with the conflict between empiricist and rationalist views in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant aims in the *Critique of Judgment* to do justice to the intuitions motivating both sides of the debate. He endorses the empiricist intuition that judgments of beauty make an ineliminable reference to feeling, where feeling is specifically contrasted with cognition (§3, 206). Judgments of beauty in this respect are like what he calls "jugments of the agreeable," which express pleasure in bodily activities like eating and drinking. Like the utterance "that's delicious," the utterance "that's beautiful" conveys, at least in part, that you like or feel pleasure in what it is that you're experiencing. It's a corollary of this essential reference to pleasure that there cannot be general rules or criteria for determining whether or not an object is beautiful. As Kant puts it: "Our judgment on whether a dress, a house or a flower is beautiful is something we do not allow ourselves to be talked out of by any reasons or principles. We insist on subjecting the object to our own eyes, just as if our liking depended on sensation" (§8, 215-16). Nor can we judge an object to be beautiful on the basis of others opinions or responses: "the approval of others does not give a valid proof for judging beauty... what has pleased others cannot serve as the ground of a judgment of beauty" (§33, 284). Kant denies, accordingly, that judgments of beauty are "objective and cognitive judgments" (§18, 237), making clear that they are contrasted

in this respect not only with judgments ascribing primary qualities, but also with secondary-quality judgments and judgments of goodness or perfection.[3]

But, against the empiricists, Kant holds that judgments of beauty have a feature which might naturally be thought to presuppose objectivity and which in some contemporary contemporary contexts might even be identified with it. In Kant's terms they are "universal" and "necessary", where that means, roughly, that they make a normative claim on everyone's agreement.[4] This is a feature which they share with cognitive judgments and which differentiates them sharply from judgments of the agreeable. Someone who judges something to be beautiful "requires the same liking from others; he... judges not just for himself but for everyone" (§7, 212). The point, Kant makes clear, is not that the judgment of beauty involves a prediction that others will respond to the object in the same way, but rather that it involves a claim that they ought to, that such a response is correct or appropriate. "A judgment of taste requires everyone to assent; and whoever declares something to be beautiful holds that everyone ought to give his approval to the object and that he, too should declare it beautiful" (§19, 237). In spite of the emphatic language with which Kant sometimes describes this claim, he makes clear in a number of contexts that the "ought" is not supposed to be different in kind from that implicit in any empirical cognitive judgment. Someone who judges an object to be beautiful, Kant says, lays claim to everyone's assent "in just the same way" as the judgment "made by someone who perceives a movable drop of water in a rock crystal" (VII, 191).[5] The only

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[3] Some commentators, most explicitly Karl Ameriks, have defended a revised Kantian view on which judgments of beauty are objective. I argue against Ameriks's approach in Ginsborg ; Ameriks responds in his 2003.

[4] I here follow many commentators in treating the universality and necessity as amounting to the same , although this has been challenged, in particular by Allison (2001, 80-82), and for different reasons by Richard Moran (ms).

[5] Here I disagree with Moran, who takes the normativity to be different from that implicit in an empirical judgment, reflecting something like a demand for attention on the part of the beautiful object (ms). Along similar lines, Makkai (2009) suggests that the beautiful object lays claim to a kind of recognition or acknowledgment akin to that which might be owed to another subject (21). This is an interesting interpretive approach, but I think that the passage just quoted, and those I go on to cite in this paragraph, tell against it.

difference, he suggests, is that it is a feeling of pleasure rather than the application of a concept which we take to be required of those who perceive the object. "What is strange and different about a judgment of taste is only this: that what is to be connected with the representation of the object is not an empirical concept but a feeling of pleasure (hence no concept at all), though, just as if it were a predicate connected with cognition of the object, this feeling is nevertheless to be required of everyone" (ibid.). Or, as Kant puts it elsewhere, the feeling of pleasure serves "in place of" [statt] a predicate (§36, 288).

In taking judgments of beauty to have these apparently incompatible features -- noncognitive, yet claiming universal validity -- Kant takes himself to be articulating a *prima facie* conflict in our ordinary intuitions about judgments of beauty. He does not think that either of these intuitions, taken separately, stands in need of philosophical defence. The philosophical task he sees, rather, is to show how they can be reconciled, that is to show how judgments of beauty, understood as possessing these features, are possible. The issue is one of legitimacy or entitlement. How can a judgment with "merely subjective validity" still "extend its claim to all subjects, just as if it were an objective judgment that rested on cognitive grounds and to which we could be compelled by proof" (§33, 285)? Kant also puts it in a way designed to recall the problem of synthetic a priori judgments in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. "How is a judgment possible which, merely from the subject's *own* feeling of pleasure in the object, independent of the concept of it, judges this pleasure to attach to the representation of the same object in *every other subject*, and does so a priori, that is without being allowed to await the agreement of others"? (§36, 288).

Kant lays out his answer to this question in a number of different passages, in particular the Deduction of Taste, but also at various points in the Analytic of the Beautiful and in the two

introductions to the *Critique of Judgment*. Taken at the highest level of generality, the answer turns on a connection that Kant sees between judgments of beauty and cognitive judgments: even though judgments of beauty are not themselves cognitive, their possibility is a condition of the possibility of cognitive judgments. Kant characterizes this connection by saying that judgments of beauty are grounded on what he calls the "subjective formal condition of a judgment as such," which he in turn identifies with our capacity to judge, that is the "faculty of judgment" referred to in the title of the *Critique of Judgment* (§35, 287). This faculty or power of judgment is supposed to represent a "subjective" condition of cognition which is independent of, or at least not exhausted by, the objective conditions characterized in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. And the possibility of judgments of beauty, understood as carrying a claim to universal validity, is supposed to rest on the fact that they consist in an exercise of this faculty.

This highly general connection can be described at a somewhat more specific level by drawing on Kant's characterization of the faculty of judgment as the capacity for thinking the particular as contained under the universal, and more specifically for finding the universal for a given particular (KdU IV, 179-180). In the First Introduction he indicates that at least one important cognitive role for this faculty is that of finding empirical concepts for objects that are given to us in experience. Although Kant takes himself to have established in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that anything given to us in experience must be located within a unified spatio-temporal framework of substances standing in reciprocal causal relations, the first Critique does not explain how it is possible for us to represent individual objects as belonging to empirical natural kinds and hence as governed by empirical causal laws. Appeal to a faculty of judgment, distinct from the faculty of understanding, is supposed to fill this gap by showing how we can represent particulars as having general, but still empirical, features: for example, how we can

think of this particular stone not just as a substance, but as a stone, or as a piece of granite. Even though the experience of beauty does not represent the object as having a feature of this kind, so that judging an object to be beautiful does not consist in bringing it under an empirical concept, Kant holds that it manifests the exercise of the general capacity needed to do so. And this accounts, supposedly, for the fact that such judgments, like the more specific empirical claims made possible through the exercise of judgment, can make a claim to universal validity.

Most discussions of Kant's aesthetic theory address his account of how judgments are beauty are possible at a third and still more specific level of generality which appeals to the notion of imagination. The capacity which Kant refers to as the faculty of judgment, and which I described as being responsible for empirical conceptualization, can be thought of, more specifically, as a capacity for the joint exercise of imagination and understanding. In offering this specification of the notion of judgment, Kant draws on the theory of perceptual cognition developed in the Critique of Pure Reason. Very roughly, on this account, we bring the objects we perceive under general concepts in virtue of an exercise of imagination which is governed by rules of the understanding. To perceive an object is to form a visual image of it, and to bring the object under concepts is to become conscious of the rules which govern the process of imaginative synthesis through which that image is produced. In perceiving an object such as a house, for example, I "as it were draw [zeichnen] its shape" (B162): to recognize the object *as* a house is to become aware of the rule with which I have been according in the production of my image. Kant thus identifies concepts with the rules governing imaginative synthesis: "the concept dog signifies a rule in accordance with which my imagination can trace [verzeichnen] the shape of a four-footed animal in a general way" (A141/B180).

In the *Critique of Judgment* Kant restates this view of perceptual cognition as one in which understanding constrains imagination. Imagination and understanding, he says, are in harmony, but this harmony comes about in virtue of the fact that imagination's activity is governed by determinate rules of understanding. But in aesthetic experience, he says, imagination and understanding harmonize in a way which is free from constraint by concepts, that is, in what he calls a free and harmonious play of the two faculties. This is experienced not as the perceptual awareness of an object as having a certain feature, but rather as a feeling of pleasure. It is this pleasure which, as he puts it, "grounds" the judgment that the thing is beautiful. The notion of the free play of the faculties gives a more determinate specification of the connection between aesthetic and cognitive judgment which is supposed to account for the possibility of judgments of beauty. With the notion of the free play in place, our entitlement to claim the universal validity of our pleasure in a beautiful object can be spelled out as resting on our entitlement to claim universal agreement for our perceptual cognitive judgments. If I am entitled to claim the universal validity of a state in which imagination and understanding are in a harmony determined by rules, I am no less entitled to claim the universal validity of a state in which they harmonize freely, without imagination's being constrained by rules. So, when I experience a pleasure that is based on the free play of the faculties, the argument seems to go, I am entitled to claim that anyone else who perceives the object ought to respond to it with the same feeling of pleasure. And this explains why I can demand that everyone else agree with my judgment.

The argument I have just sketched, however, is subject to notorious and widely recognized difficulties.[6] One set of difficulties arises with the notion of the free play itself. Kant's transcendental psychology of cognition, as presented in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, is

[6] For a fuller acount of the difficulties I go on to describe, see my 1997.

already problematic enough. But the problems are multiplied in Kant's characterizations of the free play, which seem largely metaphorical and of questionable coherence. The general idea that Kant seems to want to convey is that the activity of the free play is one which conduces to cognition in a general or indeterminate way without actually amounting to, or issuing in, any particular cognition. While imagination in the free play does not "exhibit," that is, form an image corresponding to, any particular concept, it still, he says, exhibits a "concept in general." (VIII, 223). But we might wonder, first, how this is compatible with Kant's view in the the *Critique of Pure Reason* that all synthesis of the imagination is subject to specific concepts, namely the categories of the understanding. And we might also wonder whether it so much as makes sense to suppose that imagination can form an image corresponding to a concept in general without exhibiting any concept in particular.

We might try to bypass these difficulties by treating the notion of the free play as an independent attempt on Kant's part to capture something about the phenomenology of aesthetic experience. In looking at an abstract painting, for example, we often consciously engage in an imaginative activity in which we aim at finding coherence in the painting without seeking to apply concepts to what we perceive in it. We look for patterns and symmetries, we focus on a particular patch of colour and attend to its spatial relations to other patches of the same colour, we visualize a certain area of the painting now as background, now as foreground, and so on. Many commentators have assumed, implicitly or explicitly, that we can give adequate content to the notion of the free play simply by identifying it with this familiar exercise. And certainly the metaphor of a free harmonious play seems to fit the phenomenology of at least some experiences we have of art works.

However, it is not obvious that the kind of exercise I have described is either sufficient or necessary for finding something beautiful. We can engage in this kind of exercise even for works of art that give us no pleasure. Conversely, there are experiences of pleasure in the beautiful, in particular the beauty of nature, which do not involve this kind of phenomenology, that is, where there does not seem to be any attempt to bring coherence to what we are seeing, but simply -- as far as the phenomenology is concerned -- the passive enjoyment of it.

Regardless of how we give content to the notion of the free play, there is a further difficulty about Kant's argument which has often been regarded as fatal to it. Suppose we grant that aesthetic experience does involve some kind of nonconceptual and thus noncognitive activity of my cognitive faculties. It is still not clear why any entitlement I have to claim universal agreement for the workings of my cognitive faculties in cases of actual cognition can carry over to their activity in the noncognitive case. Specifically, it can be objected that it is precisely the conceptual character of the activity which entitles us to demand agreement for it in the cognitive cases, so that this entitlement is lacking in the noncognitive case. I am indeed entitled, if my imagination harmonizes with my understanding to form the perceptual image of something as a dog, to take it that anyone else in the same perceptual situation ought to form the same image. But, the objection goes, that entitlement rests on my recognition that the object is in fact a dog. It is only because I both recognize the object to be a dog, and recognize that I am forming an image of it as a dog, that I can take my imagination to be functioning with respect to it in a way which holds good for anyone. In the case of the free play of the faculties I lack that entitlement, precisely because I am not bringing the object under any concept. Now this objection can be avoided if we understand the free play of the faculties not as confined to aesthetic experience, but as something which takes place in all cognitive activity, perhaps as a

precursor to conceptualization. But that way of understanding the free play seems to imply, counterintuitively, that if our faculties are functioning properly then everything should strike us as beautiful. So Kant would seem to face a dilemma. Either everything is, or at least ought to be judged, beautiful; or, as most commentators have concluded, we are not entitled to claim universal agreement for our judgments of beauty.

II

My own view is that Kant does succeed in showing the possibility of taste, and that the difficulties I have sketched arise from a mistaken reading of his line of argument. But to see our way to a better reading of the argument, we need to turn to a more fundamental question: what is a judgment of beauty? I suggested initially that a judgment of beauty for Kant is, in the first instance, whatever content or state of mind we are expressing when we respond to the presence of an object by saying, sincerely, "That's beautiful." It is, so to speak, the mental correlate of a verbal ascription of beauty, when that ascription is made in immediate reaction to, or on the immediate basis of, one's perception of the object. But what state of mind does that verbal ascription of beauty express? Kant holds, as we saw, the words "That's beautiful" convey, at least in part, that the speaker feels pleasure in the object. Saying "That's beautiful," like saying "That's delicious," is a way of expressing one's liking for the thing perceived. This might naturally lead us to think that the relevant state of mind is the subject's feeling of pleasure, and that it is this feeling which -- at least on the initial approach suggested here -- is to be identified with the judgment of beauty. However, we saw also that Kant describes the judgment of beauty as making a claim to the universal validity of the subject's pleasure, that is a claim, about the

pleasure, that any perceiver of the object ought to share it. And this might lead us to think that the relevant state of mind -- the state expressed by the words "That's beautiful" -- is that of taking one's pleasure in the object to be universally valid.

Almost all commentators have assumed that these two characterizations of the relevant state of mind -- that it is the subject's feeling of pleasure in the perception of the object, and that it is the state of taking her feeling of pleasure to be universally valid -- are mutually exclusive. On this assumption there are two distinct candidates for the state of mind expressed by the words "That's beautiful": on the one hand, a feeling of pleasure which is caused or prompted by the perception of the object, and, on the other, a "taking" of a feeling of pleasure to be universally valid with respect to the object. Faced with this choice, commentators have standardly, and understandably, opted to identify the judgment of beauty with the second of these candidates. On the most natural development of this interpretation, the making of a legitimate judgment of beauty comprises two distinct episodes which can be aligned, respectively, with aesthetic response or feeling on the one hand, and aesthetic judgment on the other. The first is the object's prompting the free play of the faculties, which in turn either gives rise to, or is experienced as, a feeling of pleasure. The second element is the subject's taking that response to be one which all perceivers of the object ought to share, and thus making a judgment of beauty. While defenders of this interpretation can and typically do allow that these episodes are fused together in the subject's phenomenology, so that the subject is not aware of them as distinct, the feeling and the judgment are nonetheless, on this interpretation, independent. A subject can in principle feel a pleasure which is due to the free play of the faculties without judging her pleasure to be universally valid and hence without taking the object to be beautiful: in that case she is entitled to make a judgment of beauty but does not in fact do so. Conversely, a subject can mistakenly

judge of a pleasure which is due to some other source that everyone who perceives the object ought to share it. In that case, she still makes a judgment of beauty, but one which is erroneous, in that she lacks the kind of entitlement she would have if the pleasure were caused by the free play.

There is, however, a major textual difficulty for the standard interpretation, at least as I have described it so far. In the title of §9 of the Critique of Judgment, a section which he describes as the "key to the critique of taste, and hence as worthy of all attention," Kant explicitly raises the question of how the feeling of pleasure in a judgment of beauty relates to the judging of the object: "whether in a judgment of taste the feeling of pleasure precedes the judging of the object or the judging precedes the pleasure." His answer to the question is complicated and seemingly indirect, but it concludes with the apparently unambiguous claim that the judging precedes the pleasure: the "merely subjective (aesthetic) judging of the object... precedes the pleasure and is the ground of this pleasure" (§9, 218). This seems to be incompatible with the standard interpretation, on which the pleasure comes about through a process -- the free play of the faculties -- which is independent of, and conceptually prior to, the judgment of beauty. The typical response to this difficulty, some version of which is endorsed by most defenders of the standard interpretation, is to claim that the "judging" which Kant describes as preceding the pleasure is not the act of judging one's pleasure to be universally valid with respect to the object, but rather the free play of the faculties by which the pleasure is produced in the first place. Not only the judgment of beauty, but also the free play of the faculties responsible for the feeling of pleasure, qualifies as an activity or act of judging. So, on the standard interpretation, when Kant

says at §9 that the "judging" precedes the pleasure it is this act of judging, rather than the distinct taking of one's feeling of pleasure to be universally valid, to which he is referring.[7]

But this response to the difficulty, often characterized as the "two-acts" view of aesthetic judgment, is unsatisfying for at least two reasons. One is that it seems to conflict with the claim Kant makes, in the course of answering the title question of §9, that the pleasure is "consequent on the universal communicability of the subject's mental state in the given representation" ("universal communicability" here can be read as equivalent to "universal validity"). This passage suggests that if the pleasure is felt in virtue of an act of judging, the act of judging must be one in which the subject takes her state of mind to be universally communicable or universally valid, and that would require us to identify it with the act of judging the object to be beautiful rather than with any supposedly independent activity of the faculties which takes place prior to that act of judgment.[8] A somewhat broader reason is that Kant offers no indication, in §9 or anywhere else, that the "merely subjective (aesthetic) judging" which he describes in §9 as preceding the pleasure is anything other than the "judging" which he has been describing throughout sections §§1-8. If the two-acts view is correct then we have to understand Kant as tacitly changing the meaning of "judging" in §9 so that it now refers, not to the judging expressed by the verbal ascription of beauty to the object, but to a prior process or activity which might or might not issue in a judgment of beauty proper. But this is an uncharitable hypothesis,

[7] This response is sketched in Crawford 1974 and developed very extensively in Guyer 1979; it is offered independently in Kohler 1980. Most subsequent interpretations endorse some kind of two-acts approach, even where they disagree with other aspects of Guyer's view: some examples include Allison 2001, Longuenesse 2003 and 2006, Vandenabeele 2008 and Sweet 2009. Rachel Zuckert explicitly disclaims a two-acts (or as she puts it two-stage) view, but is still committed to a distinction between the "Beurteilung" of the object, which is responsible for the pleasure, and the "Urteil" (judgment of taste proper) (2007, 321ff).

[8] Allison responds to this by suggesting that we amend the problematic passage so that the pleasure is described as consequent, not on the universal communicability of the mental state, but on a "universally communicable mental state" (Allison 2001); this is endorsed by Longuenesse 2003.

and the only justification for adopting it is that it seems to be required in order to make sense of the claim that the "judging" in a judgment of beauty precedes the pleasure in the beautiful thing.

As I have explained elsewhere, however, I do not think that the two-acts view is necessary in order to make sense of Kant's claim that the judging precedes the pleasure, and, more generally, I think that the standard interpretation is mistaken.[9] This is because I reject the assumption I mentioned earlier as underlying the standard interpretation, namely that the subject's pleasure in a beautiful object has to be understood as distinct from her taking her feeling of pleasure to be universally valid. As I understand Kant's view, the words "That's beautiful" express a state of mind which is both a feeling of pleasure and a taking of one's pleasure to be universally valid. Such a reading is possible if we understand the state of mind as making a claim to *its own* universal validity with respect to the object, that is, if we take the subject to respond to the object with a state of mind in which she takes it that all other perceivers of the object ought to share *this very state of mind*. On the resulting "one-act" view of aesthetic judgment, the object elicits in the subject an imaginative response which essentially involves the immediate and nonconceptual consciousness of that very response as appropriate to the object, and thus as one which all other perceivers of the object should share. It is this imaginative response which the subject expresses with the words "That's beautiful" and which can, thus, be identified with the judgment of beauty. So construed, the judgment of beauty can be characterized in both of the ways which the standard interpretation takes to be mutually exclusive. It can be characterized as a feeling of pleasure because, to quote from Kant's definition of pleasure at EE VIII, it is "a state of mind which harmonizes with itself as a ground... merely for maintaining this state itself" (230-231). A response to an object is a feeling of

[9] For maximum detail see the first two chapters of Ginsborg 1990; for a more abbreviated version, and a fuller account of the alternative I go on to sketch here, see Ginsborg 1991. There is some further discussion of §9, and its relation to the preceding sections of the "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment" in Ginsborg 2008.

pleasure, in other words, to the extent that it tends to maintain itself in the subject; and the state of mind I have described has that self-maintaining character in the sense that it involves a consciousness of itself as appropriate to the object.[10] But if it is a feeling of pleasure, then it is also a state in which the subject takes her feeling of pleasure to be universally valid. For, in involving the consciousness of its own appropriateness to the object, and hence universal validity for all who perceive the object, it involves the consciousness of the subject's *feeling of pleasure* as appropriate to the object, and hence as universally valid for all who perceive the object.

We can clarify this interpretation by contrasting the judgment of beauty, as construed here, with a perceptual cognitive judgment, for example the judgment expressed when I say, on perceiving a dog, "That's a dog." Here, as in the case of the judgment of beauty, my state of mind incorporates a claim to its own appropriateness, and hence universal validity, with respect to the object. My saying "That's a dog" expresses a certain way in which I respond imaginatively to the dog in my perception of it: namely in such a way as to form a perceptual image which represents it as a dog. And, as in the case of the judgment of beauty, I take it, in so responding, that everyone else ought to respond as I do. But -- and here is the point of contrast with the judgment of beauty -- my claim to agreement invokes a specific respect in which I take it that everyone ought to respond. I take it, that is, that everyone ought to perceive the object *as a dog*. So my judgment lacks the irreducibly self-referential element of the judgment of beauty, in

[10] Allison objects that the state of recognizing that one has judged appropriately does not involve a tendency to continue in the mental state engendered by perceiving the object, but only to stick to one's subsequent judgment that the object is beautiful, say in the face of conflicting evaluations (2003, 192-193). However, I think this reflects an over-intellectualized view of the consciousness of appropriateness which, on my view, is involved in the subject's imaginative response. As I see it, the appropriateness of one's response is something is *felt*, as a part of that very response: to have such a feeling, I am suggesting, is to feel a "ground" for continuing to have that very response, and this constitutes the response as a feeling of pleasure. It should be noted that I do not think that this in itself explains why someone perceiving a beautiful object might be inclined to continue perceiving it: what one feels is not the appropriateness of continuing to perceive the object, but only the appropriateness of one's state of mind given that one is perceiving the object. This, I am suggesting, is enough to account for the state of mind's being a feeling of pleasure.

which I take my response to the object to be appropriate without being able to offer any specification of the response other than its being *this very* response. I take my response to the dog to be appropriate to it not, so to speak, *simpliciter*, but *qua* perception of the object as a dog, and it is the perception of the object as a dog, not my present perception as such, which I take to be universally valid.

This accounts for the difference in phenomenology between perceptual cognitive judgments and judgments of beauty. In the cognitive case, my consciousness of the appropriateness of my response to the object manifests itself as a consciousness of the object as having determinate features corresponding to the various ways I perceive it. If I perceive the object in ways corresponding to its being brown, furry and a dog, my consciousness of the appropriateness of my perception will take on a determinate form: I will be conscious of the object as making appropriate these determinate ways of perceiving, and that will just be for me to be conscious of it as brown, furry and a dog. The phenomenology of my state will be, so to speak, exhausted in the perception of the object as having these specific features. But in the aesthetic case my consciousness of the appropriateness of my response is not determined in this way. Rather, I am conscious merely of there being a relation of appropriateness between the object and *this very* state of mind. And it is because of this irreducibly self-referential character that my state of mind of mind has the self-harmonizing, self-grounding character which constitutes it as a feeling of pleasure rather than as the perception of the object as having this or that objective feature.

Returning to §9, we can now see how Kant can say that the judging of the object precedes the pleasure even though the judging consists in the subject's taking the pleasure she feels to be universally valid. The pleasure and the judging are indeed one and the same, so there can be no

question of temporal precedence. But, as we have just seen, we can account for the subject's feeling of pleasure in terms of her act of judging: we can explain the fact that she feels pleasure by appealing to her being in a state of mind which incorporates an (irreducibly self-referential) claim to its own universal validity, and hence that she makes a judgment of a certain kind. So there is an explanatory or conceptual priority of the act of judging over the pleasure, which can also be understood as corresponding to a kind of ontological priority. The subject, we might say, feels pleasure *in virtue of* taking her state of mind to be universally valid, so that the pleasure depends on, or is grounded in, the judging.[11] And this accounts for Kant's claim that the judging "precedes" the pleasure, even though, as I have argued, the pleasure and the judging are identical.[12]

How does the free play of the faculties fit into this interpretation? On my view, rather than the free play's being a psychological process which is distinct from, and precedes, the judgment of beauty, the free play of the faculties and the judgment of beauty are one and the same. More precisely, Kant's talk of the free play is just another way of describing what we have already identified as both the feeling of pleasure, and the judgment that the pleasure is universally valid. It is a way of expressing, in the language of transcendental psychology, what that state of mind has in common with and how it differs from states of perceptual cognition.

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[11] Here I want to correct a mistake I made in Ginsborg 2008 ("Interesseloses Wohlgefallen"), p. 74, where I deny that the priority is "ontological"; I intended only to deny that it was temporal. The notion of "grounding" I have in mind is explored in Rosen 2009 ("Metaphysical Dependence"). The non-temporal, non-psychological character of the grounding is emphasized in Palmer 2008 (5, 19), although Palmer's account differs from mine in that she does not identify the free play with the judging of beauty.]

[12] Ameriks 2003 claims that I do not do sufficient justice to the idea that the judging precedes the pleasure (on this, see also Zuckert 2007, 336n26). Ameriks supports his objection by suggesting that the relation between judging and pleasure is to be understood as parallel to the relation between the acknowledgment of the bindingness of the moral law and the feeling of respect (309). On his view, the judgment in the aesthetic case mandates the "universal approval of a beautiful object, but not the feeling as such"; the feeling is, rather, an effect of the judgment (310). But it seems to me that the recognition of "mandated universal approval" in the aesthetic case (in contrast to the moral case, where what is recognized is the universal bindingness of the moral law) just is the recognition that everyone should share one's *feeling* in the object, so that we cannot simply consider the feeling as a causal consequence of the judgment.

Like perceptual cognition, it involves an immediate imaginative response to an object which carries with it consciousness of its own appropriateness with respect to the object, and this is what Kant captures by saying that it consists in a harmony of imagination and understanding. But unlike perceptual cognition it does not involve a grasp of any specific respect in which it is appropriate, and this is why Kant describes the imagination as conforming to the understanding in a way which is indeterminate, or not constrained by concepts.

This interpretation of the free play, like other aspects of the account presented here, represents a thoroughgoing rejection of the distinction -- taken for granted by the standard interpretation -- between aesthetic response or feeling on the one hand, and aesthetic judgment on the other. I want to insist on the idea that one and the same mental state, process or activity can be both a response to an object, something which is, so to speak, prompted as a matter of natural fact, and with respect to which the subject is in a sense passive; and, at the same time, a judgment about the object, something which incorporates a normative claim on the agreement of others, and with respect to which the subject is, in a sense, active. If, as on the standard interpretation, feeling and judgment are assumed to be mutually exclusive, then the identification of the free play with the judgment of beauty will seem to amount either to an implausible over-intellectualization of the free play, or to the downgrading of the judgment of beauty to a mere psychological response productive of pleasure. But I understand the idea of the free play as intended to accommodate both the immediacy of the experience of beauty, and the character of that experience as incorporating a claim to universal validity and thus as amounting to a judgment. We can, if we like, think of the "free play" as belonging to aesthetic response and the judgment of beauty proper as belonging to aesthetic judgment, but this is not to distinguish two

separate acts, processes, or activities, but rather to recognize two different aspects of the experience of the beautiful.

My view has been criticized for the apparent emptiness which it ascribes to aesthetic judging. How can the judgment that something is beautiful consist in nothing more than a state of mind in which one takes that very state of mind to be universally valid with respect to an object? The notion of such a state might seem to be, if not outright incoherent, at least too thin and schematic to account for the richness of aesthetic experience and the apparent contentfulness of our claims that an object is beautiful.[13] Here I would like to offer some clarification. To say that we find something beautiful in virtue of being in a state of mind which self-referentially claims its own universal validity is not to say that we find something beautiful in virtue of having the thought "I am in a mental state which is universally valid" or, relatedly, "I am in a mental state which is appropriate to the object." Rather, to the extent that there is something in our state of mind which qualifies as a thought at all, it is the thought "*This* state of mind is universally valid," where the demonstrated state of mind has a phenomenological specificity which is not exhausted by its incorporating a claim to its own universal validity. Our aesthetic experience of any given object has its own distinctive phenemology, reflecting an imaginative response which is peculiar to that object, even though all aesthetic experiences are alike in involving the immediate and nonconceptual claim to their own appropriateness which constitutes them as feelings of pleasure.[14] So when we claim that all others should agree with us in our judging of the object, we are in the first instance claiming not merely that all perceivers of the object should

[13] For variations on this criticism, see for example Kulenkampff 1994, 180-181; Pippin 1996, 561n25, Wenzel 2000,.65; Allison 2003, 192-192; Zuckert 2007, 189n14; Palmer 2008, 31. Vandenabeele relatedly objects that my account "illegitimately turn[s] aesthetic judgments into intellectual judgments" (2008, 422).

[14] Note that, on this view, there can be many phenomenologically different feelings corresponding to what Kant calls "pleasure in the beautiful." Experiencing the beauty of a sunset as opposed to that of the Chopin *Barcarolle*, or for that matter the beauty of the *Barcarolle* as opposed to the *Berceuse*, is not a matter of having a different perceptual experience accompanied by a qualitatively identical feeling of pleasure, but rather of feeling a phenomenologically different kind of pleasure.

feel pleasure in it or judge it to be beautiful, but, more specifically, that they should share the very experience we are having. This claim to the universal validity of our experience does indeed imply that everyone should feel pleasure in the object, that everyone should judge the object to be beautiful, and that everyone's faculties should be in free play, but it also implies something more specific, albeit something which cannot be conceptually articulated: that everyone should feel *this* pleasure, that everyone should experience *this* beauty, and that everyone's faculties should be freely harmonizing in *this* way.

This view differs from the standard interpretation in denying that the notion of the "free play" picks out anything characteristic about the activity of faculties in responding to a beautiful object, over and above its being the case that their activity (whatever it may be) incorporates a self-referential claim to its own appropriateness with respect to the object. Versions of the standard interpretation typically identify the free play with some specific kind of psychological process attributable to the faculties -- for example the recognizing of patterns and similarities in a complex manifold, or the finding of order and unity in diversity -- which might be supposed to give rise to pleasure. This offers a substantive explanation of aesthetic experience, of a kind which seems to be lacking on my account, but at the cost of restricting the scope of experiences which qualify, on the standard interpretation, as genuine experiences of beauty. Where there is no conscious attempt to make sense of the object, to find patterns or interrelations -- where one is simply struck by the subtle vibraphone entry, or the shininess of the silk dress in the Ter Borch painting, or the view of the garden, or the soprano's pianissimo high C, or the curve of the dancer's arm -- an explanation of this kind seems inapplicable, or at least strained. On the interpretation I am proposing, by contrast, there is no constraint on how we respond imaginatively to the object beyond the requirement that our response involve a self-referential

feeling of its own appropriateness to the object. To put the account I am suggesting in a way which brings it closer to the actual phenomenology of aesthetic experience: the experience of the beautiful consists in our responding imaginatively to the object in some phenomenologically specific way which we cannot adequately put into words, which can be conveyed to another person only by getting him or her to perceive that very object (or one qualitatively indistinguishable from it), but which we experience -- in a way integral to that very response -- as something which is called for by, or which fits, the object. The precise imaginative response I have to the point at the seventh bar of Beethoven's Eroica Symphony, where the cello melody moves to an unexpected C# in the seventh bar, is something which cannot be described or conveyed except in the most general terms. While I might speak, or think of it, as a feeling of instability, of the uncanny, of a darkening of mood, I cannot convey its character to another person adequately except by getting her to hear the passage herself. But it is part of the phenomenology of that response that I experience the response itself as, not as idiosyncratic or accidental, but as appropriate to, or called for, by the music. The suggestion, then, is that we feel pleasure in the music, or judge it to be beautiful, not in virtue of anything specific about our response (for example, the features of it we might try to capture with terms like "unstable," "darkening," "uncanny") but rather in virtue of the normative fit we experience -- in that very response, and without the mediation of concepts -- between the response and the object.[15]

[15] For discussion of the ideas in this paragraph and the preceding, I am indebted to Barry Stroud, Eugene Chislenko and Janum Sethi. These ideas go beyond the account I have offered in earlier work (in particular Ginsborg 1990 and 1991), but I think they are compatible with it. I hope here also to have responded indirectly to the worry that my view does not assign a sufficient role to the object of aesthetic experience (e.g. Zuckert 2007, 189n13; Hughes 2009, 455-456; Sweet 2009, 69). Now, in making clear the phenomenological specificity of the response which we take the object to make appropriate, I might seem to invite the converse worry, that my view collapses into objectivism (for versions of this worry, see Ameriks 2003 and Makkai 2009). Against this, I want to emphasize the importance of our inability to characterize adequately any specific respect in which the response is appropriate to the object and, accordingly, any general feature of the object in virtue of which the response is appropriate to it. What we take the object to call for is not a response of this or that kind, but rather, irreducibly, just *this* response, and this is what secures the subjectivity of the judgment of beauty.

III

If the interpretation I have suggested is correct, the question of how taste is possible can be reformulated as a question about the possibility of the kind of imaginative response I have been describing. Specifically, it can be understood as a question about the subject's entitlement to the claim implicit in that response. How can my response to an object legitimately claim the appropriateness to the object of that very response, if not in virtue of my recognizing some feature of the object which I take myself to be apprehending correctly? To answer this question I want to leave Kant aside for a moment and turn instead to Wittgenstein. One of Wittgenstein's concerns in the *Philosophical Investigations* is to show how the meaningful use of language depends on a certain commonality, at a prelinguistic level, in our responses to the world. In Crispin Wright's terms, we all share "basic reactive propensities" and more specifically "primitive classificatory dispositions" without which "language would fail."[16] The fact that we can acquire specific linguistic dispositions, for example with respect to the use of expressions like 'plus' or 'green' depends on our having more basic propensities to add numbers rather than quadd them, or to respond to objects in a way which is sensitive to their being green rather than grue.[17] These propensities or dispositions are illustrated by Wittgenstein's example at *Investigations* §185 of the pupil to whom it comes naturally to continue the series of even numbers up to 1000 by writing '1004' rather than '1002.' The example draws attention to the

[16] Wright 1986, 289
[17] Following Quine (1974, 16-18), we can think of these as second-order dispositions: in particular as dispositions to acquire specific linguistic dispositions.

contingency of our agreement in these primitive reactive dispositions, and hence of our possession of a common language. Wittgenstein compares the case of the pupil with an even more basic case: someone who naturally responds to a pointing gesture by looking in the direction of fingertip to wrist. Our usual methods of teaching people words for the objects around them would be useless in the case of such a person. Not only that, her reactions to the world would most likely be so pervasively different from ours that we would be unable to find any way of bringing her to acquire our language or to share our concepts.

I think that Wittgenstein is right to emphasize the role of these shared reactive propensities in making it possible for us to speak a common language and grasp a common set of concepts. But I think his examples leave out, or at least fail to highlight, a feature of these propensities which I take to be important. This is that, when we respond as we do to the number series or to the pointing hand, not only do we say '1002' or look in the direction from wrist to fingertip, but our response also involves a consciousness of ourselves as responding appropriately, in a way which fits the preceding number series or the shape of the hand. We do not respond with the sense of succumbing to a blind and inexplicable impulse: we respond with a sense that what we are doing is normatively called for by the thing to which we are responding.[18] We can see this by considering what it would be for the person in Wittgenstein's example to "react naturally" to the pointing gesture by looking in the direction from fingertip to wrist. Presumably what we should imagine here is not just someone whose nature is such that they just feel impelled to look in that direction, but someone who, as we might put it, *finds* that reaction natural, where this in turn is a matter of finding it appropriate or fitting. What is odd about this person, and what seems to rule out the possibility of his ever coming to share our language, is not

[18] Note that, in the case of the pointing gesture, we typically also take the person pointing to be "calling for" us to look in a certain direction. But I would like to abstract from this feature of the example, and consider the response as being to the shape of the hand in isolation (consider a pointing hand symbol, or even just an arrow shape).

just that he happens always to look in what we think of the wrong direction when he sees a pointing hand, but that his response to the hand involves his taking it that that is the direction he *should* look in, that this is what the hand *calls for*. And, relatedly, our situation with respect to this person is not just one in which we manifest differing responses but one which might be called disagreement in judgments. If I am reacting to the pointing gesture in the usual way, and this person is reacting in his unusual way, each of us implicitly takes our own reaction to be the appropriate one, and rejects the implicit claim made by the other.

Now it might seem that what I have identified here is not a feature of the basic propensities that underlie grasp of language or concepts, but rather something which is a consequence of our grasp of language or concepts. If we do take '1002' to be appropriate, it might be thought, this can only be because we have grasped the meaning of the expression 'add two' or because we otherwise succeed in understanding ourselves to have been adding two. Similarly, it might seem, if we respond to the pointing gesture with a sense that our response fits the gesture, this can only be because we already understand that gesture as endowed with a certain meaning or content in virtue of which it can tell us to respond by looking in one direction rather than another. But I think that this gets things the wrong way round. The normative attitude I have described as implicit in these responses is, as I see it, a part of the prior conditions for language use and concept-possession, and not something which we are able to adopt only in virtue of being language-users and concept-possessors. In drawing attention to this normative attitude, I intend to be highlighting an overlooked element of the shared prelinguistic propensities which Wittgenstein and other philosophers regard as essential to grasp of meaning. What is required if we are to be able to grasp the meaning of the expression 'add two' and thus to conceive of ourselves as adding two is not the mere fact of our being disposed to continue the

series with '1002' as opposed to '1004' but rather the fact of our being able to do this with the awareness of '1002' as the appropriate continuation. Someone who was inclined to continue the series with '1002' but who never did so except with a feeling of blind compulsion, would be in no better a position to grasp the meaning of the expression 'add two' than the pupil in Wittgenstein's example. She would be unlike that pupil in producing responses to the 'add two' command which we would classify as correct, but she would still be unable to understand the expression or to form a conception of what it is to add two.

I am suggesting, then, that the kinds of responses Wittgenstein describes involve a consciousness of normativity which is primitive in the sense that it does not rest on the subject's recognition of meaning or grasp of a rule or concept. It follows that, when we take our response to be appropriate in this primitive way, we must do so without justification. We cannot justify our primitive claim to the appropriateness of '1002' by appealing to the fact that we were following the add-two rule, because we cannot grasp that fact except in virtue of being able to take that response, or others like it, to be appropriate. So what sort of entitlement do we have for these primitive claims to appropriateness? As I see it, what entitlement we have derives simply from the fact that we must be able to make such claims if we are to be capable of language and concepts. The primitive character of these claims, and hence the impossibility of justifying them in terms of concepts, cannot be a ground for denying our entitlement to them, because if they were ruled out as illegitimate, then there could be no conceptual justification to begin with. So there has to be a general presumption of entitlement for these primitive claims if we are to be entitled to make any claims at all. Now in saying that this is merely a presumption of entitlement I mean to allow that, in any particular case, it is open to challenge. The pupil in Wittgenstein's example has the same general presumption of entitlement for his claim for the

appropriateness of '1004' as we do for that of '1002', and it cannot be that both claims are legitimate. In such a case we have to allow that the presumption of entitlement fails for one of the parties to the disagreement. And because of the primitive character of the claims there is no neutral way of adjudicating the disagreement: we will of course claim that the presumption of entitlement fails for the pupil, but the pupil is no less entitled to make the same claim with respect to us. But the possibility of irresolvable disagreement does not undermine the claim that we are entitled, so to speak by default, to our primitive claims to the appropriateness of our responses, since the ground of this default entitlement does not lie in anything about these responses in particular, but rather in the conditions for language-use and concepts in general.

While I think that the line of thought I have just described is plausible in its own right, my primary aim here is to propose it as an interpretation of Kant's argument for our entitlement to judgments of beauty. Very roughly, I take Kant to be arguing that we are entitled to judgments of beauty simply in virtue of our default entitlement to take our responses to objects -- more specifically those responses which Kant would identify as due to the imagination rather than to the senses -- to be appropriate to those objects and, therefore, universally valid. I claimed just above that, in order for language and concepts to be possible, we must not only agree in our primitive reactive dispositions to the world, we must also, in our actualizing of those dispositions, take our reactions to be appropriate to the circumstances which occasion them. But this is, I want to suggest, just the point that Kant is making when he invokes the faculty of judgment as the subjective condition of cognition, and more specifically, of empirical conceptualization. What it is for us to possess a faculty of judgment, I want to suggest, just is for our imaginative responses to the world to involve a presumptively legitimate claim to their own appropriateness with respect to whatever elicits them. So if we are capable of judging at all, then

whenever we are in a state of mind in which we take that very state of mind to be appropriate to the object to which we are reacting, we are entitled by default to the claim implicit in our state of mind, and hence to the claim that anyone perceiving the object should share it.

If my interpretation of Kant's conception of aesthetic judgment in section II is correct, then judgments of beauty have the same presumption of legitimacy which characterizes the claims implicit in the primitive reactions underlying our cognitive judgments. Because pleasure in an object's beauty is the consciousness of the appropriateness of our imaginative response to the object, we have the same default entitlement to claim that others ought to respond to the object in the same way that we do in the case of our response to the pointing hand and the number series. And this is what I take to be the force of Kant's argument for the possibility of taste. To say that judgments of beauty are exercises of the faculty of judgment, or that they consist in a harmony between imagination and understanding, is simply to say that they are responses to an object which involve a primitive claim to their own appropriateness. And because such claims do not depend for their legitimacy on our having applied a concept to the object, they have no less of a presumption to legitimacy than those implicit in the kind of proto-cognitive reactions which figure in Wittgenstein's examples.

Now judgments of beauty do indeed differ from the imaginative responses characteristic of cognition because, as we saw in section II, they do not involve a consciousness of one's response to the object as appropriate to the object in any specific respect. They are not, so to speak, classificatory responses: they cannot be characterized in terms of our inclination to sort the thing in one set of ways rather than another. This difference corresponds to Kant's claim that the activity of imagination in aesthetic response is free rather than being constrained by concepts. And it has typically been thought to undermine our entitlement to claim universal validity for a

judgment of beauty. If it is assumed that any claim to universal validity for an imaginative response must rest on the recognition that the object has some specific feature in virtue of which one's response is appropriate, then it is difficult to see how a subject could be entitled to claim the same universal validity for the free harmony of her faculties as she can for a state in which imagination and understanding harmonize in the application of a concept to the object. But if we accept that the possibility of concepts itself depends on our imaginative responses' involving what I have called a primitive claim to their own universal validity, then the difficulty disappears. In the language of Kant's transcendental psychology, the free play of the faculties is no less universally valid than a harmony of the faculties under the constraint of determinate concepts. For the claim to universal validity implicit in the harmony of the faculties does not derive from the applicability of the concepts that "constrain" the harmony, but rather accounts for the harmony's conceptual character.

The reading I have offered of Kant's account of the possibility of taste turns on two distinct points of interpretation. The first, which I outlined in section II, is that the judgment of beauty does not claim the universal validity of a preceding feeling of pleasure, but rather its own universal validity, and that it is identical with the feeling of pleasure in the object which is, through that very pleasure, judged to be beautiful. The second, which I outlined in section III, is that all our imaginative responses to the world, whether aesthetic or cognitive, incorporate a presumptively legitimate claim to their own universal validity, and that this is a condition of the possibility of conceptual judgment. If these two points are granted, then we can see that there is nothing problematic about judgments of beauty. In fact, as Kant himself puts it, their deduction, that is the argument to their universal validity, is "easy" (§38, 290). Judgments of beauty remain, however, a special case: not because they present a special philosophical problem, but rather

because they offer a special philosophical opportunity. Speaking of the subjective universality of judgments of beauty, Kant says that it is a "remarkable feature, not indeed for the logician, but certainly for the transcendental philosopher: it requires a major effort on his part if he is to discover its origin, but it compensates him for this by revealing to him a property of our cognitive powers which would [otherwise] have remained unknown" (§8, 213). What the universality of the judgment of beauty reveals, as I interpret Kant's view, is the primitive claim to appropriateness which is implicit in all our cognitive responses to the world, but which is -- except in the case of aesthetic judgment -- obscured by the very onceptual determination which it makes possible. So if this view is correct, then Kant's argument shows not only the possibility of taste, but also its crucial importance for the philosophical understanding of cognition.

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