

A New Look at Kant's Theory of Pleasure¹

In 1787, Kant announced in a now famous letter that he was embarking on a “critique of taste,” because he “had discovered an a priori principle” for the third and last main faculty of the mind, that of pleasure and displeasure.² Much scholarly ink has been devoted to Kant’s ensuing “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment” (published in 1790 as part of a larger *Critique of Judgment*) and to his central “critical” claim: that we can justifiably require that others agree with our judgments of taste, even though we base those judgments on (or they somehow involve) that most subjective of states, pleasure. In this article, I propose to take a step back from that question to pursue a more basic question: What *is* pleasure for Kant? What is pleasure like, if it “has” an a priori principle, specifically the principle of “purposiveness without a purpose” (as Kant names this principle in the *Critique of Judgment*)? And I shall argue that in the *Critique of Judgment* Kant defines pleasure as intentional (it is a state that is “about” something) and as formal (it is a state that has a complex structure, and institutes relations among its “contents”);³ thus Kant departs from his understanding of pleasure in the *Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals* and *Critique of Practical Reason*, as a sensation, an atomic, brute, “material” element of experience. Moreover, Kant does so on the basis of an investigation of aesthetic pleasure, and I shall argue that aesthetic pleasure is, indeed, the paradigmatic pleasure on this new definition, a purely “purposive” state.

I shall begin by presenting the opposing interpretation of Kant’s theory of pleasure—that pleasures *are* sensations—as articulated by Paul Guyer. I choose Guyer’s account not because it is particularly objectionable, but because it is the most well-defended version of a widely held

view.⁴ I shall then turn to my readings of Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* definition of pleasure, and of his (sole) argument in defense of that definition, before I turn to Kant’s distinction of aesthetic pleasure from other sorts of pleasure.

I. KANT’S DEFINITION OF PLEASURE

Guyer bases his view that pleasures are sensations according to Kant on two grounds.⁵ First, Kant frequently asserts in the *Critique of Judgment* that pleasure is a “feeling” [*Gefühl*], not a sensation [*Empfindung*] (e.g., Introduction VII, pp. 188–190).⁶ Kant appears here to distinguish between pleasure and sensations (as I shall argue that he does), but his glosses on this distinction seem to indicate otherwise: Kant explains that he calls pleasure a “feeling” because it is subjective, i.e., it cannot be interpreted as belonging to an (external) object. Thus Kant seems to believe that pleasures *are* sensations, just especially subjective ones.

Secondly, Guyer points to passages in the *Critique of Practical Reason* where Kant explicitly identifies pleasure as a sensation. Guyer defends his use of these passages from an earlier work by pointing to the similarity between Kant’s definitions of pleasure in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, the *Critique of Judgment*, and the *Anthropology*, a work that succeeds the *Critique of Judgment* and in which, Guyer argues, Kant characterizes pleasure as “agreeable sensation.” (I shall return to these definitions below.) Guyer reasonably argues that if Kant holds the same view of pleasure before, during, and after the *Critique of Judgment*, his statements about pleasure in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (written before the *Critique of Judgment*) surely hold for the *Critique of Judgment* as well.

As noted above, I shall argue, by contrast, that Kant's *Critique of Judgment* theory of pleasure is a formal, intentional view of pleasure, and shall begin with Kant's definition of pleasure in the *Critique of Judgment*. Pleasure, Kant writes, is the "consciousness of a presentation's causality directed at the subject's state so as to *keep* him in that state" (§10, p. 220). As is clear from this definition, Kant does not mean by "feeling" that pleasure is an indefinable, primitive mental state (as, for example, empiricists tend to assume).⁷ Instead, pleasure is apparently a mental state that is "about" another mental state and, specifically, about the continuation in time of that mental state. For example, pleasure in eating chocolate on this account would be the "feeling" or "consciousness" of wanting to continue sensing (tasting) the chocolate (or, more precisely, the feeling that the presentation of chocolate is "causing" one to want to stay in the state of having that presentation).

On Kant's definition, then, pleasure is an intentional mental state, and, further, one whose intentional object is interpreted as subjective, or "referred to" the subject as Kant puts it (e.g., §1, p. 204). That is, we do not take pleasure in the presentation of [the taste of] chocolate *simpliciter*; we take pleasure in—are conscious of wanting to continue—*having* that presentation. Kant reflects *both* the fact that there is an intentional object of pleasure *and* that this object is not an "object" (or does not refer to an object) in the full sense when, in describing pleasure in the agreeable, he writes:

The green color of meadows belongs to *objective* sensation, i.e., to the perception of an object [*Gegenstand*] of sense; but the color's agreeableness belongs to *subjective* sensation, to feeling, through which no object [*Gegenstand*] is presented, but through which the object [*Gegenstand*] is regarded as an object [*Objekt*] of our liking (which is not a cognition of it). (§3, p. 206)

In this passage, Kant distinguishes between *Gegenstand*, a full-blooded object of knowledge, and *Objekt*, a "mere" intentional object of a presentational state.⁸ Our states of pleasure have an *Objekt*, but do not refer to or provide knowledge of a *Gegenstand*. Thus, despite Kant's somewhat inconvenient characterization of pleasure as a "sensation" here (which stems

from the particular nature of pleasures in the agreeable, as I shall discuss below), I would argue that Kant does not believe that pleasure (in general) is a sensation, just a subjective one. Rather, pleasure is *subjective* (because it is an intentional attitude about a subject's mental state *as such*) and *therefore* pleasure is not (simply) a sensation.

Further, Kant defines pleasure in formal terms here. Pleasure can have different contents, and has no content specifically of its own—except that whatever it is we are experiencing, we want that same thing to continue. Moreover, pleasure registers a relational property of whichever first-order state or presentation one is pleased by: between the present occurrence of that state and the future states of the subject. (Or so I read our "consciousness of . . . causality . . . so as to keep us in that state.") Thus, more technically in a Kantian sense, we can say that Kant's definition of pleasure renders it a "formal" state, for it involves a relation in time, the "universal form of intuitions": It is the "consciousness" of a temporal-relational property of the subject's presentation—its tendency to persist (into the future) or its future-directedness.

According to Kant, then, pleasure is distinct in kind from sensations, which are, Kant claims, the "material" or "real" in perceptual experience (§39, p. 291). Unlike sensations, pleasure is a formal state, or (more properly) a consciousness of a formal, temporal relation among other states or presentations. And again unlike sensations, which at best may be referred to objects via empirical judgment, pleasure is an intentional state that has as its complex intentional object the relation between present and future states of the subject.

The formal nature of pleasure on this definition can help us understand why Kant came to believe that pleasure has an a priori principle. For pleasure understood as a temporally-extended and -located sensory state seems to be a paradigmatically empirical phenomenon not amenable to transcendental analysis, subject only to causal, not a priori, conditions. And, indeed, until Kant's "discovery" of an a priori principle for pleasure, he appears to have believed just that. A formal, especially a temporal-formal, state is, however, much more amenable to transcendental, a priori analysis than a particular sort of sensation would be. Moreover, the

specific *kind* of formal structure that Kant attributes to pleasure does seem describable as “purposive without a purpose.” For Kant defines pleasure as future-directed; it is, then, similar to purposes or intentional aims.⁹ Yet, given Kant’s narrow definition of purposes (they are *concepts* that cause actions), pleasure cannot be said to be “purposive with a purpose”—it is a feeling, not a concept or discursive presentation. Pleasure is, Kant suggests, a “feeling of life” (§1, p. 204 and §23, pp. 244–245), is like life, the “purposive” functioning of an organism to maintain the dynamic state that it is in.¹⁰ (Kant makes this analogy—between pleasure and life—more specifically with respect to *aesthetic* pleasure and I shall return to his reasons for doing so below.)

II. TWO OBJECTIONS

Thus, I argue, Kant’s very definition of pleasure in the *Critique of Judgment* indicates that Kant understands pleasure as a formal-intentional state with its own “principle” (or type of time relation, as Kant technically defines the principles in the *Critique of Pure Reason*), not as a sensation. Yet such a reading faces two objections. First, this interpretation seems threatened by the textual evidence: If Kant defines pleasure similarly in the (earlier) moral philosophy, the *Critique of Judgment*, and the (later) *Anthropology*, and asserts that pleasure is a sensation in the other texts, then Guyer has a strong textual case against my interpretation.

Second, from a commonsensical point of view, Kant’s definition of pleasure is not immediately recognizable as a description of a familiar mental state.¹¹ Pleasure, certainly, seems *itself* to be a state in which we like to remain. Perhaps—in Kant’s defense—this “desire” to remain in our pleasurable state can be characterized as wanting to remain in the [other] state in which we are taking pleasure. And pleasure does appear to be intentional (at least sometimes)—we frequently believe we are taking pleasure *in* something or other, not that we have a separate sensation of pleasure externally caused by some object or other. Yet is not there such a thing as a *sensation* of pleasure? Would not such sensations be the most straightforward cases of pleasure and thus good models for understanding other pleasures?

To answer these objections, I turn to Kant’s

sole argument in the *Critique of Judgment* that [all] pleasures are not sensations, which reads as follows:

If we concede this [that all pleasure is sensation], then sense impressions that determine inclination, or principles of reason that determine the will, or mere forms of intuition that we reflect on [and] that determine the power of judgment, will all be one and the same insofar as their effect on the feeling of pleasure is concerned, since pleasure would be the agreeableness in the sensation of one’s state. And since, after all, everything we do with our powers must in the end aim at the practical and unite in it as its goal, we could not require them to estimate things and their value in any other way than by the gratification [*Vergnügen*] they promise; how they provided it would not matter at all in the end. And since all that could make a difference in that promised gratification would be what means we select, people could no longer blame one another for baseness and malice, but only for foolishness and ignorance, since all of them . . . would be pursuing one and the same goal: gratification. (§3, p. 206)

Here Kant presents roughly the following argument: If pleasures are sensations, then they are all the same; if they are all the same, then morality as distinct from prudence would be impossible (thus we must reject the claim that all pleasures are sensations).

I shall attempt to explain this (somewhat puzzling) argument below, but I shall first suggest that this argument removes most of the textual objections to my interpretation. For Kant presents a very similar argument (though to a different conclusion) in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. That is, after Kant has asserted in the *Critique of Practical Reason* that pleasures are sensations, and are “all the same” or “differ only as to degree” (pp. 23–24), he argues that if one understands the good *not* to be determined by the categorical imperative, then the good must be equivalent to the pleasant, and one must see all actions as mere means to obtaining the sensation of pleasure (pp. 58–59).

One can, then, reconcile these two texts by suggesting that Kant changes his mind about the key premise—that [all] pleasure is sensation. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant adheres to the premise that pleasure is a sensation, and therefore endorses the implications (that all pleasures *are* the same, and that one cannot use

pleasure to distinguish moral from prudential actions). In the *Critique of Judgment*, by contrast, Kant at least appears to believe that one *can* differentiate among pleasures: He distinguishes, after all, among pleasures in the agreeable, good, and beautiful. (And repeats these distinctions in the *Anthropology* and in the *Metaphysics of Morals*.)¹² Correspondingly, Kant denies the premise that [all] pleasure is sensation. Such a change in Kant's position is not implausible since Kant obviously changed his mind between the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the *Critique of Judgment* as to whether pleasure has an a priori principle, and, correspondingly, as to whether a subject's pleasure can be "subjectively universal," rather than merely subjective.¹³

Further, it is much less clear than Guyer lets on that Kant's definitions of pleasure remain the same from the *Critique of Practical Reason* to the *Critique of Judgment* to the *Anthropology*. Kant defines pleasure in the *Critique of Practical Reason* as "the idea of the agreement of an object or an action with the *subjective* conditions of life" (p. 9n). Though Kant probably does intend in the *Critique of Judgment* to connect the "purposiveness" of pleasure and the "purposiveness" of living organisms, this *Critique of Practical Reason* definition does not seem identical to the one in the *Critique of Judgment* (nor is it implausible to believe that Kant has come to a somewhat different understanding of life in the "Critique of Teleological Judgment").

However, Guyer's *Anthropology* passage is more problematic for my view, since the *Anthropology* postdates the *Critique of Judgment* and ought to reflect any changes in Kant's views in the *Critique of Judgment*. This text runs as follows:

Enjoyment [Vergnügen]¹⁴ is pleasure through the senses, and what delights the senses is called *agreeable*. . . . We should not use the terms *what pleases or displeases* to express enjoyment and pain, or the term the *indifferent* for what comes between them: these terms are too *wide*, for they can also refer to intellectual pleasure and displeasure, in which case they would not coincide with enjoyment and pain. We can also describe these feelings in terms of the effect that the sensation of our state produces on our mind. What directly (by the senses) prompts me to *leave* my state

(to go out of it) is disagreeable to me—it pains me. What directly prompts me to *maintain* my state (to remain in it) is agreeable to me—it delights me. (p. 230)

Kant does employ his *Critique of Judgment* definition of pleasure (roughly, the desire to maintain the same state) here, and does connect it to sensuous pleasure.

I suggest, however, that one ought to read this passage quite differently than Guyer does. Kant begins in effect by warning us that we should not take sensory pleasures ("enjoyments") as paradigms of pleasure and then extend this picture of pleasure to cover other cases that are much less amenable to such an analysis—e.g., intellectual pleasures. (And this does seem to be a good "methodological" objection against taking sensory pleasure, unquestioningly, as the model for pleasure.) Thus, it seems highly unlikely that, in introducing pleasure in the agreeable or pleasurable sensation as a particular kind of pleasure as he is doing in the rest of this passage, Kant intends to assimilate all pleasures to pleasurable sensation, as Guyer claims. I propose, instead, that Kant is trying to redescribe pleasurable sensation as a subset of pleasure as he formally defines it. That is, as suggested above, pleasurable sensations seem to be counterexamples to Kant's formal definition of pleasure; here Kant is trying to show that his definition can accommodate sensory pleasures—one can understand even sensory pleasures in formal terms as [sensory] stimuli to maintain oneself in the same state. Similarly, Kant continues in the "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment" to adhere to his view that all pleasurable *sensations* (or pleasures in the agreeable) are "the same" as one another, differentiable only as to their "quantity" or intensity.¹⁵ Kant has, thus, broadened his view of pleasure beyond that in the *Critique of Practical Reason*: The pleasures to which he referred in the earlier work now constitute, according to Kant, only the subclass, pleasurable sensation or pleasure in the agreeable. Thus one can, I believe, reconcile my interpretation of the *Critique of Judgment* theory of pleasure with both Kant's earlier and later texts.

I shall now turn to the substance of Kant's argument in defense of pleasure formally defined (or in criticism of pleasure defined as sensation). As I have suggested, Kant's formal definition of

pleasure might be seen as an attempt to avoid begging the question as to the nature of pleasure, or taking one kind of pleasure as paradigmatic for all. By defining pleasure formally, merely as to its intentionality toward the future, Kant isolates an aspect of pleasure “thin” enough to be shared by all sorts of pleasure, and “thin” enough not to beg the question, or to privilege some instance of pleasure over others. But Kant’s explicit defense of his position is that it can *differentiate* among pleasures. By contrast, he argues, defining pleasure as sensation entails that (i) all pleasures are “the same,” and therefore (ii) it is impossible to distinguish between morality and prudence.

Both of these “threats” are, however, puzzling. First, the consequence that all pleasures are alike would seem to be entailed by any general definition of pleasure: If pleasure is defined as one sort of thing, then “by definition” all pleasures will be alike. Second, though it is certainly important for Kant (and for many moral theorists) that one be able to distinguish between moral and prudential behavior, it is not clear that one must have (or not have) a particular definition of pleasure to do so. Kant himself argues that moral actions are precisely those that are *not* engaged in for the sake of pleasure; they are governed by categorical, not hypothetical, imperatives.¹⁶ Could not one say, then, that moral actions are those engaged in for the sake of something other than pleasure, *whatever* one happens to understand by “pleasure”?

In Kant’s defense, one may remark first that all general theories of pleasure may not be equally incapable of distinguishing among pleasures. For on an intentional view of pleasure, pleasures have “contents” that differentiate pleasures internally; on Kant’s definition, the nature of a pleasure is partly determined (arguably) by *which* [kind of] presentation we want to continue to have. By contrast, pleasures understood as sensations, i.e., as atomic, sensory states, do not lend themselves to such internal differentiation: Each sensation of pleasure is just that, a sensory experience of pleasure.

Nonetheless, it seems that one could differentiate among sensory pleasures in three ways: quantitatively (i.e., as to their degree of intensity), phenomenologically (as to their different qualitative “feels”), and causally (i.e., by identifying their different “causal histories,” the

method of differentiation Guyer attributes to Kant). Kant in fact admits that we can differentiate sensations (even pleasurable sensations) both quantitatively and qualitatively.¹⁷ Yet none of these methods, according to Kant, sufficiently differentiates pleasures from one another, as different in kind.

And indeed quantitative differences among pleasures obviously do not differentiate pleasures according to kinds. Specifically, quantitative differences among pleasures would not distinguish moral from nonmoral pleasures, unless one were able to argue that moral pleasures were always identical as to their degree of intensity, and were consistently either more or less intense than all other pleasures.

As for qualitative differentiations among pleasures, Kant takes these to be the results of empirical, psychological investigation (as, e.g., in Burke’s aesthetics), and are, therefore, not grounds for transcendental distinctions among pleasures.¹⁸ Kant does not explicitly argue for this conclusion, but he might invoke the unreliability of a subject’s self-observation,¹⁹ or argue that such phenomenological differences are differences along a spectrum but would not ground distinctions among *kinds* of pleasures. In any case, phenomenological distinctions among pleasures seem unpromising grounds on which to base a distinction between moral and nonmoral pleasures.²⁰

The method of differentiating pleasures by different causes is the method Kant rejects explicitly in the argument under discussion. Kant clearly believes that the fact that pleasures (understood as sensations) are caused by different activities would not differentiate these pleasures from one another. Instead, he claims, the sameness of the pleasurable sensations would render the activities equivalent to one another from a practical point of view. That is, Kant is arguing that all causes that produce the same effect (here: a pleasurable sensation) are the same—at least for the purposes of practical judgment—not that the (same) effects could be differentiated by pointing to their different causes.²¹

One might argue that Kant rejects this sort of distinction because it too would rely on empirical observation: that some object or action causes (me) pleasure is discoverable only from experience. And Kant suggests as much elsewhere in the *Critique of Judgment* (§12, p. 221

and FI I, p. 199). Yet here Kant rejects causal histories as a means of differentiation entirely—not because they would provide merely a posteriori differentiation. Thus, I suggest, Kant’s worries about distinctions among pleasures based on their causal histories lie deeper, in the nature of causal relations themselves. Kant conceives of causal relations as external relations that connect separately identifiable events or states.²² And the view of pleasure as a sensation would make pleasure particularly amenable to such causal analysis. For pleasures as atomic sensory states would be separately identifiable qualitatively (as distinct from other sensory states such as rough, red, etc.) and by temporal positions in the subject’s series of states. Various causes could then be correlated to the occurrences of this sensation. But such correlations would not differentiate the pleasures from one another; these correlations, Kant writes, are “mere aggregates” (FI III, p. 206). To take another example of a sensation: A sensation of red may be caused by an object that reflects the appropriate range of light waves in white light, by light from a red light bulb reflected by a white object, by an object hitting the retina (to produce a red, retinal afterimage), etc. These different causes do not make the *sensations* of red different from one another; they are just different means of producing a sensation of red. Correlatively, if one is interested in these causal processes only insofar as they produce the sensation of red, they are more or less the same as one another (if they are successful). Since Kant claims that from a practical point of view, we are only interested in actions as pleasing (a claim to which I shall return), actions that cause pleasure could all appear to be the “same” according to the model of causal judgments about sensations.²³

Thus Kant has some grounds for believing that pleasures understood as sensations are difficult to differentiate into kinds. But now we must turn to the question of why Kant believes it is imperative to do so, why (that is) the “sameness” of pleasures would render it impossible to distinguish between moral and prudential behavior. This claim, on the face of it, is shocking coming from Kant. And indeed Kant cannot be taken to be arguing that one must establish the objective moral good by reference to a certain sort of pleasure; such a move would be deeply inconsistent with the whole tenor of Kant’s [crit-

ical] moral philosophy. In the *Critique of Judgment* (and afterward), Kant continues to hold that the moral law is the objective foundation for morality. Kant does, however, change his terminology in the *Critique of Judgment* (and afterward) in another way: He refers to “respect” or moral feeling unproblematically as moral *pleasure*.

I suggest that this terminological change indicates why Kant now suggests that his earlier distinction between moral and nonmoral behavior is insufficient: he is concerned here with the “subjective determining grounds” of moral activity, i.e., with moral motivation. That is, Kant holds two potentially irreconcilable views about the nature of moral motivation. On the one hand, Kant argues that unlike the nonmoral agent, the moral agent is motivated by the idea of the moral law, by “duty alone,” not by anticipation of any pleasure to be gained by the action. On the other hand, Kant believes that ideas or concepts alone do not motivate us; we are not “holy wills,” but need a “subjective incentive” to act.²⁴ So in the *Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals* (pp. 402n and 449–450) and again in the “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment,” Kant asks how the moral law can motivate us, how we can take an “interest” in it, why it is not merely an “idle idea” or “mere cognition” (§12, p. 222). He answers this question by positing a peculiar emotion, “respect,” excited by the moral law.²⁵ Kant’s motivational story then runs as follows: The moral agent feels respect for the moral law, is inspired by this respect to act, and then (one supposes) feels pleasure at having acted morally, thereby earning respect for herself or himself (as an agent of the moral law).

Once, however, Kant adds respect to his account of moral action, it might be difficult to see the difference, except question-beggingly, between the structures of moral and nonmoral motivation. In both cases, the agent acts according to universal laws (either the moral law or a hypothetical imperative); in each case, the agent is motivated by approval of, or anticipated pleasure in, her or his action, and is pleased as a result of her or his (successful) action. And, given the structure of causal relations on Kant’s view, if one understands pleasures as sensations (and therefore undifferentiable), moral and nonmoral actions could be viewed, equivalently, as causally correlated to the same effect (pleasure).²⁶

Thus, if one is unwilling (as Kant appears to be) to reject Kant's underlying premise here—that ideas or concepts alone do not motivate²⁷—one must show that the pleasures involved in moral versus nonmoral motivation are different from one another, i.e., explain why respect is a particular kind of pleasure. In other words, if one wants (as Kant does) to distinguish between the moral case in which one does something for its own sake and *therefore* is pleased by it, and a nonmoral case in which one does something as means to pleasure, one must develop a theory of pleasure that does not see *all* pleasure as an external product or a (merely) causally correlated effect of action. The view of pleasure as a sensation will not do so, for if pleasure is a sensation, it is *always* an external effect of the action, and would thus always be the ultimate end point (in both senses) of activity. An intentional theory of pleasure, however, can distinguish among pleasures as to their differing contents; thus one could differentiate between pleasures that are “in” or “about” the action itself, and pleasures that are “in” or “about” the products of an action. Likewise, on an intentional view, one can account for a pleasure with the rich intentional content Kant attributes to respect.

III. AESTHETIC PLEASURE AND FUTURE-DIRECTEDNESS

I have argued, so far, that in the *Critique of Judgment* Kant defines pleasure in formal, intentional terms, which, I have suggested, explains why Kant could believe that pleasure “has” an a priori principle. Despite Kant's argument against his earlier view of pleasure on moral grounds, it was a consideration of *aesthetic* pleasure that led Kant to reformulate his views as to the nature of pleasure. Indeed Kant signals the paradigmatic nature of aesthetic pleasure by claiming that the principle of purposiveness without a purpose is “constitutive” of aesthetic pleasure.²⁸ What, we must ask, is peculiar to aesthetic pleasure, according to Kant? Why does a consideration of *aesthetic* pleasure lead him to “discover” the a priori principle of pleasure, purposiveness without a purpose?²⁹

To answer these questions, I shall now turn more explicitly to the purposive nature of pleasure on Kant's new definition—its form of future-directedness. This projective, purposive

structure of pleasure is, I suggest, Kant's attempt to describe the motivational power of pleasure, or (as Kant puts it) pleasure's “inner causality.” As discussed above, pleasure seems to be in itself an end-state, a state in which we want to remain; an end of action. But pleasure is also motivational: If we are pleased by something, that pleasure motivates us to act, to seek out that thing. Kant's definition of pleasure, as consciousness of a present state as causing one to want to maintain that state in the future, captures both of these aspects of pleasure—its intrinsic “value” or “satisfying” character, and its motivating force. And I shall argue that this future-directedness of pleasure, its motivational power, is revealed preeminently, irreducibly, in aesthetic pleasure.

Following Kant, I shall proceed by a negative method, by contrasting aesthetic pleasure with pleasures in the agreeable and in the good. That is, though pleasures in the good and in the agreeable can be understood as purposive, I shall argue that they need not be so understood. The future-directedness of such pleasures may be understood, rather, as captured by conceptualized intentions—by purposes properly speaking—for willed activity. By contrast, the future-directedness of aesthetic pleasure cannot be described as part of “purposive,” willed activity directed by and toward purposes; therefore, it reveals purposiveness without a purpose, or future-directedness, as the a priori principle of pleasure.

Thus I shall now turn to Kant's distinctions among types of pleasures in the *Critique of Judgment*. We may say, first, that Kant's tripartite distinction among pleasures (in the agreeable, good, or beautiful) in the *Critique of Judgment* follows quite easily from his definition of pleasure, for it corresponds to his general, tripartite distinction among kinds of presentations (in which one could take pleasure): sensations, forms, and concepts. That is, pleasure in the agreeable is consciousness of a *sensation's* causality to maintain one in the same state; pleasure in the good, consciousness of a concept's causality to maintain one in the same state,³⁰ and pleasure in the beautiful, consciousness of form's causality (etc.).

Kant's definition of pleasure, then, apparently can distinguish among types of pleasures.³¹ But another of Kant's definitional statements about

pleasure is more helpful in indicating the distinctiveness of aesthetic pleasure, particularly with respect to the future-directed, motivational character of pleasure:

A definition of this feeling in general *without considering the distinction as to whether it accompanies sensation proper, or accompanies reflection, or the determination of the will*, must be transcendental. It may read: *Pleasure* is a mental *state* in which a presentation is in harmony with itself, which is the basis either for merely preserving this state itself . . . or for producing the object of this presentation. On the first alternative, the judgment about the given presentation is an aesthetic judgment of reflection; on the second, a pathological aesthetic judgment or a practical judgment. (FI VIII, pp. 230–232)

Here Kant defines pleasure disjunctively: *Either* pleasure is the “basis for merely preserving the state itself” (aesthetic pleasure) *or* pleasure is the “basis” for producing the “object” of the presentation, whether this object is understood “pathologically” (i.e., as a state of the subject), or “practically” (as an action to be performed).³² We can see here that aesthetic pleasure sounds like the paradigmatic case of pleasure on Kant’s definition, for it is a (purely) self-sustaining mental state. But before turning to that claim, I suggest that Kant’s description here of the other two sorts of pleasures explains how Kant understands those pleasures as motivational or future-directed in a way that need not be described in terms of an a priori principle of purposiveness without a purpose.

Indeed Kant is under considerable theoretical pressure to redescribe the future-directedness of pleasure, for he finds such future-directedness deeply problematic. In the *Anthropology*, immediately after he has presented his definition of pleasure as that which “prompts” one to stay in one’s state, Kant writes:

But we are carried along incessantly in the current of time and in the change of sensations connected with it. Although leaving one point in time and entering another is one and the same act (of change), there is still a temporal sequence in our thought and in the consciousness of this change, in conformity with the relation of cause and effect. So the question arises, whether it is the consciousness of *leaving* our present state or the prospect of *entering* a future state that

awakens in us the sensation of enjoyment? In the first case the enjoyment is simply removal of a pain—something negative; in the second it would be presentiment of something agreeable, and so an increase of the state of pleasure—something positive. But we can already guess beforehand that only the first will happen; for time drags us from the present to the future (not vice versa), and the cause of our agreeable feeling can be only that we are compelled to leave the present, though it is not specified into what other state we shall enter—except that it is another one. (p. 231)³³

So, Kant concludes, “Pain always comes first.”³⁴

Kant’s worries are based on his views about time (and, correlatively, causality). As he indicates in the above passage, Kant understands time to be unidirectional—the past precedes and determines the present.³⁵ Pleasure defined as anticipation of the future violates this Kantian premise, for it would be a state that refers to another moment in time in the “wrong” order. If one understands pleasure purely as a reference to the future, then one must (Kant believes) take pleasure in the present to be determined by the future—not by the past, as it ought to be, according to the nature of time (and causality). But, just like objects or external events, according to Kant, our mental states or the flow of our presentations in “inner sense” ought to be “objectively” describable in terms of a determinate, temporal, causal order. Thus, Kant concludes, sensory pleasure must be understood as “relief from pain,” i.e., as satisfaction with the present by contrast to, and with reference to, the past, rather than with reference to the future.

What, then, of Kant’s definitional claim that all pleasures *do* have “motivational” power, are (in some sense) future-directed? As I shall now argue, Kant explicates the future-directedness of pleasurable mental states by understanding pleasure as part of “purposive” or “ideal” causality, the causality operated by a concept-having or willing agent.³⁶ Pleasures in the agreeable and in the good, that is, can be understood as “purposive” but “with a purpose” (i.e., as part of willed activity directed and described by concepts), as future-directed in a nonproblematic sense.

I shall begin with pleasures in the good, the pleasures Kant finds least problematic, or most easily comprehensible. As we have seen, on

Kant's account of willed activity, ideas or concepts "cause" action via pleasure, which produces its object as described conceptually by the initial intention. The concept (more properly concepts and judgments) involved in determining the will is complex: It includes the concept of an object, including the objective "marks" or characteristics of that object (which would make it fit to serve the subject's purposes) and the judgment that such an object is not present or existent, and (most important) the concept of that object as possibly existent in the future as caused by the subject's own powers (thereby including causal generalizations or "technical" statements about the effects of human capabilities).³⁷ Thus, willed activity involves conceptual "foresight" of the future effects of one's [causal] powers.

This "foresight" is not, according to Kant, problematic in the way that "presentiment" or *sensing* the future would be (as Kant worries about pleasures in the agreeable, as quoted above). For "we can easily see," Kant writes, "that presentiment is a chimera; for how can we sense what does not yet exist?"³⁸ Conceptual foresight, by contrast, is not only necessary for desire and/or the will—in envisioning that which could be done—but is readily comprehensible, for concepts are universal rules, which in principle apply to any present (or past, or future); in particular, the causal judgments involved in conceptual foresight allow us to *predict*, not sense, the future.³⁹

To turn now explicitly to the place of pleasure in such an account: Kant's purposive-causal account of action domesticates the future-directedness of pleasure by placing the cause and/or intentional object of the pleasure, i.e., the anticipated object, in the past. Pleasure, as motivational, is "in" the concept of the object and the (conceptually anticipated) usefulness or goodness of that object. Thus, pleasure as "practical" (or, as Kant also puts it, as "preceded by" practical judgment) has no "reference" within it to the future but only refers to a state in the present or past (the conceptually articulated intention). (Subsequently, pleasure also registers satisfaction that the idea has been realized; every satisfaction of an aim, Kant claims, is connected with pleasure;⁴⁰ here too we understand the pleasure to be "in" a present object.)

Sensory pleasures, or pleasures in the agree-

able—those that are "in" sensations—are not future-directed in this conceptually described way; hence, indeed, Kant's worries about his definition of pleasure as applied to sensory pleasures and his conclusion that we must (actually) understand sensory pleasure as relief from pain. Pleasures in the agreeable are, that is, to be understood as passively induced "effects" in us, correlated to causes, for they are or are in sensations (which are such passively induced states). But, I suggest, Kant understands such pleasures as "motivational" or "purposive" because they can be incorporated into the model of practical activity just discussed: They are, Kant writes, the "basis" for producing an object, if a "pathological" one.⁴¹ Kant has (I think) the following sort of story in mind: We experience sensory pleasures and formulate empirical causal judgments (pathological judgments) about ourselves, that such and such a sensation (under certain circumstances, given certain antecedent conditions) is pleasing. Then we (can) act upon this judgment, in order to "produce" an "object" (a sensory state in ourselves). Thus, for example, the pleasure I take from a hot bath is to be understood, according to Kant, as a sigh of relief from pain (being cold, tense, etc.); then I find that in general (for me) hot baths are pleasurable when I am tense or cold (etc.); then I can and will act on this judgment, to [re]produce that state in myself. Sensory pleasures are, then, motivational or future-directed because they can figure in conceptually described intentions (as part of causal judgments) for future activity, i.e., to produce another instance of the "same" state.

Thus, in these two cases of pleasure, Kant ultimately understands pleasure as "satisfaction" in the present, in terms of past aims or pain—rather than (as he initially defines it) an intentional directedness toward the future. In both cases, then, we might be able to see pleasures as sensations (i.e., as separable effects of some preceding cause) and we need not characterize them formally, as purposively structured. For, though in some sense we can understand pleasure to have "motivational" power on these accounts, the intentional directedness toward the future of pleasure can be captured by conceptualized intentions for activity. And Kant's distinction among these two types of pleasure may be understood as a distinction—based on his basic distinction between sensations and con-

cepts—as to the characteristic motivational effects of concepts (or judgments) and sensations in action. Concepts (when pleasing) lead us to “produce” their object; sensations (when pleasing) *are* the object we (subsequently) try to reproduce. In any case, as suggested above, such a way of understanding the motivational force of pleasure ought to be appealing to Kant, for in both cases the subject’s pleasure “presupposes something that precedes it” (to paraphrase the Second Analogy), not something that will succeed it.

Now we may turn to Kant’s understanding of aesthetic pleasure in the beautiful, as the paradigmatic type of pleasure, one that is the “basis” for merely preserving the “state itself,” or (as he also puts it) a “mental attunement that sustains itself.”⁴² Aesthetic pleasure is the “consciousness” of a presentation as exciting no other desire than that it itself continue, a “feeling of life.” Why, however, should Kant believe that aesthetic pleasure is such a pleasure, such a state?

Kant’s claims about aesthetic pleasure do seem plausible as descriptions of aesthetic experience: In appreciating a beautiful object, we are pleased, and we “want” to continue appreciating that [very same] object, to remain in the state that we are in. That state, according to Kant, is “reflection” on the object’s “form,” or (seemingly synonymously) the “harmony of the faculties.” Why such “reflection” or “form” should be pleasing, or cause us to remain in that state is a large question into which I shall not enter here. For my purposes, it is necessary only to note, first, that Kant argues (plausibly) that we have no concept of the beautiful, but take aesthetic pleasure in objects as unique or “singular”; and, second, in describing our engagement with the object as “judgment” on the “form” of the object (albeit “reflective” or nonconceptually determined judgment), Kant suggests that we take pleasure in an object as manifold, as comprising “parts” or diverse aspects, not in a simple, atomic sensation/sensory state.⁴³ These two (plausible) claims about aesthetic pleasure are sufficient, I think, to show that that the future-directedness or “purposiveness” of aesthetic pleasure cannot be “domesticated” either as a version of pleasure in the agreeable or in the good. Aesthetic pleasure does not seem to “presuppose something that precedes it,” but to be

“constituted” by “purposiveness without a purpose.”

Kant’s denial that we can formulate a concept of the beautiful object (or what we are pleased by in aesthetic experience) means that there is no concept that determines what we are “looking for” in the beautiful object, or that would be the concept that guides the will to produce that object. Nor can we specify a preexisting pain or need that is satisfied by the (unexpected) encounter with the beautiful object, or describe the object of our pleasure (the indeterminate “form” of a beautiful object) conceptually to formulate empirical causal judgments about such pleasure as correlated to certain kinds of objects/presentations under certain circumstances. The “presentation” that we want to continue “having” is not an atomic, sensory state but rather an indeterminate, conceptually indescribable unity of various sensory aspects of the object. Indeed, aesthetic pleasure is a “consciousness” that whatever it is we are experiencing now, we want it to continue. Thus, instead of being directed toward a conceptually described object (determined by a concept in the past), instead of reflecting a change from a “past” state, aesthetic pleasure “prompts” a lingering in our current state, is the consciousness of ourselves as lingering in the present state, of the present state as a state of pure future-directedness.⁴⁴ It is constituted by “purposiveness without a purpose.”

Aesthetic pleasure thus reveals that pleasure has a “subjective,” a priori principle (of future-directedness) because its motivational power cannot be “reduced” to its role in causal description of ourselves either as the “causes” of action (as wills guided by concepts) or as “objects” describable by empirical causal laws. Hence, perhaps, Kant’s description of aesthetic pleasure as “free.”⁴⁵

IV. CONCLUSION

In this article, I have tried to articulate what it might mean for Kant to claim that pleasure has an a priori principle of “purposiveness without a purpose,” and that aesthetic pleasure, in particular, is “constituted” by such a principle. On this reading, Kant’s theory of pleasure in the *Critique of Judgment* may not only be a more plausible theory of pleasure than his previous view, but also may have some fruitful implications for

an understanding of the *Critique of Judgment* and its role in Kant's systematic philosophy. First, this understanding of (aesthetic) pleasure allows one to understand Kant's claims that aesthetic experience (involving such pleasure) is "subjective," without understanding such experience (counterintuitively) to be disengaged from the object, only "about" the subject, for such pleasure is "in" the subject's state, indeed, but a state of reflecting on the object's form.⁴⁶ As a result, this view of pleasure might reconfigure readings of Kant's justification of the claims of taste away from seeing such pleasure as causally correlated to some state of judging and toward understanding this deduction as parallel to those in the other two critiques. For on this reading, aesthetic pleasure is understood as "in" an object as "judged" and as internally structured by an a priori principle, in a way similar to the way in which the a priori, categorical principles are internal to judgment, objects, and experience according to Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and as the moral law or pure "lawfulness" of the will is internal to the nature of practical reason as Kant argues in the *Critique of Practical Reason*.⁴⁷

More broadly, on this reading of Kant's account of pleasure, one can begin to see the coherence of the *Critique of Judgment* as a whole, as a sustained discussion of one a priori principle: the principle of purposiveness without a purpose, or teleology. This principle (and Kant's "deduction" of it) cannot, however, be strictly parallel to Kant's other a priori principles. I have suggested that the principle of purposiveness is like the "principles" of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in that it is a structure of temporal relations (and thus could have a priori status), but unlike the principles of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, this principle does not constitute objects or an objective time order. Quite the contrary. Aesthetic pleasure, as "constituted" by this principle, is temporally odd in exactly the way that worried Kant in the *Anthropology*: it is a present state directed toward the future, not caused by the past. It can provide no "cognition" of the subject, Kant writes (§3, p. 206);⁴⁸ it cannot be understood objectively to characterize the subject either as phenomenal "object" subject to empirical, causal laws, or as rational, free agent that acts according to reasons (ourselves as "cause," or as timeless subjects of objective

knowledge). Such a principle could only be a "subjective condition" for the possibility of experience indeed. Thus, I suggest, in investigating aesthetic pleasure, in "discovering" a subjective a priori principle, Kant has (perhaps unwittingly) developed a new conception of the subject *as* subject, irreducible to "objective" description, and describable by its own temporality, purposive without a purpose.⁴⁹

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2. December 28 and 31, 1787, letter to K. L. Reinhold, in Immanuel Kant, *Philosophical Correspondence 1759–1799*, trans. Arnulf Zweig (University of Chicago Press, 1967), pp. 127–128.

3. My use of "formal" and "intentional" overlap in what follows, and certainly intentionality (aboutness) is a type of complex structure of a presentation; however, for Kant, formality and intentionality do not have identical scope, most notably in the case of space and time, which are formal presentations (have a complex structure, whereby they institute relations among material "contents," or sensations) but are not intentional (the contents of [our presentation of] space are not intentional objects of our presentation of space).

4. For example, Kenneth Rogerson, *Kant's Aesthetic: The Role of Form and Expression* (Maryland: University Press of America, 1986); Francis Coleman, *The Harmony of Reason* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1974); Eva Schaper, *Studies in Kant's Aesthetics* (Edinburgh University Press, 1979); Mary McCloskey, *Kant's Aesthetic* (SUNY Press, 1987); Nick Zangwill, "Kant on Pleasure in the Agreeable," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 53 (1995): 167–176; and perhaps Hannah Ginsborg, "The Role of Taste in Kant's Theory of Cognition" (Ph.D. diss. thesis, Harvard University, 1990) are among the few explicit counterexamples to this general trend. McCloskey's view is closest to my own, since she interprets Kant as holding an intentional view of pleasure in general; thus, although I disagree with several elements in her account, I take myself to be providing a defense (as she does not) for this view of Kant's theory of pleasure. Zangwill limits himself (mostly) to considering pleasures in the agreeable, and Ginsborg only suggests that she understands pleasure (according to Kant) to be intentional in claiming that aesthetic pleasure is pleasure "in" its own universal communicability; neither one articulates or defends an account of Kant's doctrine about pleasure in general, nor of purposiveness without a purpose as the "principle" of pleasure.

5. My account of Guyer's view is drawn from *Kant and the Claims of Taste* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 104–105.

6. All page references are to the *Critique of Judgment* (Akademie page numbers, Pluhar translation), unless otherwise noted. A/B page citations are to the *Critique of Pure Reason*; the *Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals*, *Critique of Practical Reason*, *Anthropology*, and *Metaphysics of Morals* citations are to Akademie page references (the translations are Lewis White Beck's of the *Groundwork* and *Critique*, Mary Gregor's of the other two).

7. See, for example, Locke's categorization of pleasure as a "simple idea" (*Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 2.20.2).

8. See, for example, Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* (Yale University Press, 1983) pp. 135–136, on this distinction.

9. Thus, one could say that Kant takes pleasure to be intentional in both of the senses identified by John Searle (*Intentionality* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983] especially p. 3, and chap. 3), who argues that one ought to distinguish this sort of intentionality (as connected to action) from the "Intentionality" or about-ness of mental states or presentation. Here I use "intentionality" to mean about-ness, and use "future-directed" and "purposive" to refer to pleasure's connections to aims, or that sort of intentionality.

10. A full defense of this reading of Kant's "Critique of Teleological Judgment" lies outside the scope of this essay; see, however, §65, p. 372, where Kant describes the purposive causality" of organisms as a "series [that] would carry with it dependence both as it ascends and as it descends," which (given the nature of causality as schematized, i.e., as necessary succession in time), endows organisms (living things) with a structure of future-directedness similar to the futural anticipation in pleasure on Kant's definition.

11. In "Having what We Want," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 91 (1991): 171–186, however, Barrie Falk defends a rather similar view of pleasure: "The rock can please in itself, rather than serving as the focus of pleasures at other things, because it can arouse a desire for its own presence, which cancels other desires; or, putting it another way, because it can arouse a desire which it simultaneously gratifies. I believe we can have no more fundamental understanding than this of what it is for a thing to give pleasure" (p. 182, emphasis added). Apart from Falk's emphasis on the competition among different desires or objects of our attention, his account is quite similar to Kant's. Falk does discuss the *Critique of Judgment*, in fact, but focuses on Kant's description of pleasure in the sublime as a contrast case to the view of pleasure he endorses; here he reflects, I would suggest, Kant's own distinction between pleasure in the beautiful and pleasure in the sublime—that pleasure in the beautiful (which, on both Falk's and Kant's views is the paradigmatic case of pleasure in general) is properly pleasure in the object [as judged or presented], whereas pleasure in the sublime is pleasure that is merely occasioned by the object. Falk is inspired by Ryle's seminal article, "Pleasure," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 28 suppl. (1954): 135–146, upon which I have also drawn in thinking about Kant's theory of pleasure.

12. Pages 230 and 211–213, respectively. Strikingly, Kant does distinguish (with varying degrees of terminological precision) among the three sorts of pleasure he identifies in the *Critique of Judgment* in his Anthropology lectures before, during, and after the publication of the *Groundwork for*

a Metaphysics of Morals and the *Critique of Practical Reason* (see, e.g., *Menschenkunde* [1781–1782], pp. 1095–1096; *Mrongovius* [1784–1785], pp. 1315–1316; *Busolt* [1788–1789], p. 1508). Tracking the variations in Kant's treatment of pleasure in the Anthropology lectures is a complex project, and lies outside the scope of this essay; I will suggest, however, that we can explain Kant's distinction among these pleasures in the lectures, and his assertion that all pleasures are the "same" in the moral works by noting that his "discovery" of the a priori principle of pleasure enables him to take these distinctions as transcendental, rather than empirical, distinctions, and (as I shall discuss below) that his investigation of aesthetic pleasure leads him to see that pleasure can have varying roles as part of the structure of practical activity.

13. See, for example, *Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 413, where Kant asserts that every pleasure is subjective, and "holds for the senses" only of the particular person feeling pleasure, not for anyone else.

14. Kant distinguishes verb forms of "to enjoy" or "to be pleased" to correspond to his distinctions among the pleasures in the agreeable, good, and beautiful: "We call agreeable [*angenehm*] what gratifies us [*vergnügen*], beautiful [*schön*] what we just like [*gefallen*], good what we esteem [*schätzen*] or endorse [*billigen*], i.e., that to which we attribute an objective value" (*Critique of Judgment*, §5, p. 210).

15. See §29, p. 266: "The agreeable, as an incentive for desires, is always of the same kind, wherever it may come from and however different in kind may be the presentation (of sense, and of sense regarded objectively). That is why what matters in judging its influence on the mind is only the number of stimuli (simultaneous and successive), and, as it were, only the mass of agreeable sensation, so that this sensation can be made intelligible only through its quantity" (cf. pp. 277–278).

16. *Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 413–415.

17. *Critique of Judgment*, §29, pp. 266 and 267.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 277; cf. pp. FI X, 238, and §29, 266.

19. As Kant (perhaps) suggests later in the *Metaphysics of Morals*: "Pleasure . . . expresses nothing at all in the object but simply a relation to the subject. For this very reason pleasure and displeasure cannot be explained more clearly in themselves; instead, one can only specify what results they have in certain circumstances, so as to make them recognizable in practice" (p. 212). Kant suggests here that pleasures may be distinguished from one another causally—but not as to their causal *histories*, but instead by their causal *influences* or results (cf. *Critique of Judgment*, FI IX, p. 232); I shall return to this differentiation by "results" (or motivational structure) below.

20. This sort of objection is a standard criticism of Mills's attempt to distinguish between "higher" and "lower" pleasures in order to show that one ought rather to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied.

21. Thus, I would argue that Guyer misrepresents Kant's understanding and evaluation of the alternative theoretical options as to distinctions among pleasures. Guyer suggests that there are only two such options—that pleasures are qualitatively (i.e., phenomenologically) to be differentiated, or by their causal histories—and that Kant rejects the former in favor of the latter (*Kant and the Claims of Taste*, pp. 104–105). Kant, I suggest, does not reject the former outright at

all; he merely judges that it is an empirical project. As I discuss here, Kant does, however, explicitly reject differentiating pleasures via their causal histories. Further, Kant endorses a third theoretical option: that pleasures can be differentiated intentionally; unlike Guyer's causal option, this third option has the advantage that it could be an a priori distinction—whereas causal histories will always be discoverable only a posteriori.

22. A full defense of this claim obviously lies outside the scope of this essay. I will suggest, however, that Kant's definition of causality in the Second Analogy (as a rule of necessary succession or objective time order), and the close compatibility between the Second Analogy and the mechanical causal laws Kant presents in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* are strong suggestions that Kant agrees with Hume that causal connections are external relations between separately identifiable events. (See, e.g., *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, p. 544; cf. A215/B267, B234.)

23. Here my account is in great sympathy with Richard Aquila's views on aesthetic pleasure and his criticism of causal accounts thereof in "A New Look at Kant's Aesthetic Judgments," in *Essays in Kant's Aesthetics*, ed. Ted Cohen and Paul Guyer (University of Chicago Press, 1982), especially pp. 94–95. My account differs from Aquila's in that I take Kant to be arguing on a broader scale (i.e., not merely as to aesthetic pleasure) that causal "historical" differentiations among pleasures do not appropriately distinguish any kinds of pleasure from one another.

24. See *Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 399: "Every determination of choice [*Willkur*] proceeds from the representation of a possible action to the deed through the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, taking an interest in the action or its effect."

25. *Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 401n; *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 162.

26. On the grounds of a somewhat unsympathetic account of Kant's moral theory, one could perhaps argue that moral actions are to be differentiated from nonmoral actions by the fact that they always involve pain, whereas, presumably, nonmoral actions are engaged in for the sake of pleasure, as Kant does suggest in the *Critique of Judgment* (p. 271). (This view is something of a straw man in Kant interpretation, though Schiller does articulate such a criticism of Kantian morality, as does Hegel in his so-called "rigorism" objections against Kantian morality (see, e.g., *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, paragraph 628). Barbara Herman, *The Practice of Moral Judgment* (Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 176, also suggests that contemporary objections to Kantian morality as a morality of obligation appear to hold such a view of Kant, though such critics tend to qualify their "rigoristic" characterizations of Kantian morality (e.g., Lawrence Blum, *Friendship, Altruism, and Morality* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980], p. 102.) In any case, this distinction (even were it based on a plausible reading of Kant's moral theory) seems inadequate. Many merely prudential actions may also involve some "pain" or at least self-control (e.g., eating healthily might require abstaining from the pleasures in chocolate or succeeding at one's job abstaining from pleasures of leisure activity), as Kant himself discusses in the *Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 399. This, after all, marks a difference between prudent and imprudent action.

27. See L. W. Beck, *Commentary on the Critique of Practical Reason* (University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 213–215, for a discussion of the historical continuity and development in Kant's thought on this issue.

28. For example, *Critique of Judgment*, Introduction VI, pp. 187, 197, and FI VIII, p. 230. Kant also indicates, perhaps, that aesthetic pleasure is the "purest" case of pleasure in his terminological distinctions among types of pleasures: Unlike the pleasures in the agreeable or the good, aesthetic pleasure is called (simply) "*Lust*," and to please aesthetically, "*gefallen*," the noun and verb forms of pleasure most generally (see, for example, §5, p. 210).

29. One might answer this question, in some sense quite rightly, by noting that (according to Kant) in aesthetic judgment, we make normative claims on others' agreement on the basis of, and with respect to, aesthetic pleasure, but without basing such a claim on concepts or laws. Such universality and necessity claims are, for Kant, the mark of the a priori, and (as Kant is at pains, repeatedly, to argue) distinguish aesthetic pleasure from sensory pleasures that are taken to be purely private, empirical facts about the subject, and are likewise distinct from the claims we normally make on others' agreement. But, although such universality and necessity might hint at the presence of an a priori principle, these claims are not *justified* unless one can make a case that there is in fact an a priori principle upon which they are based. Here one might again contrast Kant's views in the *Critique of Judgment* to those he held prior to the *Critique of Judgment*: Aesthetic pleasure, he had thought [as attested by his Anthropology lectures as early as 1781], are pleasures shared or shareable with others; before his "discovery" of the a priori principle of purposiveness, however, Kant denied that they justifiably laid claim to any universal normativity or necessity.

30. One might add here a further distinction between pleasures in concepts and pleasures in (moral) ideas, in order to distinguish between pleasures in the instrumentally good, and pleasure in the morally good. Kant suggests such a distinction, for example, on §29, p. 265 of the *Critique of Judgment*, where he describes respect as a "feeling for (practical) ideas."

31. Moreover, these distinctions are a priori distinctions, if one is willing to allow Kant his claim that the (prior) distinctions among types of presentations in general is an a priori one.

32. Readers will note that this disjunctive characterization of pleasure correlates to Kant's claim that aesthetic pleasure is disinterested, whereas the other two sorts of pleasure are "interested." I have avoided the vocabulary of "disinterestedness" here because Kant's discussion of it has sparked immense scholarly debate, responses to which would occupy too much space here. I will suggest, however, that my account of the "purposiveness without a purpose" of aesthetic pleasure—that it can neither be "in" conceptual judgments that could guide purposive (willed) activity, nor constitute part of such a conceptually described purpose (or "interest") for action, could provide a less problematic account of aesthetic disinterestedness. But the defense of such claims will have to be postponed for another time.

33. This passage follows the passages quoted above from Kant's *Anthropology* opening discussion of pleasures in the agreeable. One might, therefore, raise the same objection against my reading that I raised against Guyer: that I use this

passage, which treats the agreeable, as if it applies to all pleasures. In response, however, I note that the future-directedness with which Kant is concerned in this passage is the characteristic by which Kant defines pleasure in general. Thus, I take my use of these passages to be different from that of Guyer who, as argued above, uses Kant's discussion of the agreeable to attribute characteristics that belong (according to Kant) not to pleasure in general, but only to the agreeable, i.e., sensation-like-ness, to pleasure in general.

34. *Anthropology*, p. 231.

35. Kant's claims about the unidirectionality of time are intimately connected to commonsensical views about existence (such as, something can only exist in the present and can only be caused to exist by something that itself exists—i.e., is present or was present), as he articulates here: "The power of deliberately bringing the past to mind is memory, and the power of representing something as taking place in the future is *foresight*. To the extent that they belong to sensibility, both of them are based on our *associating* ideas of our past and future states with our present state; and while their ideas are not perceptions, they serve to connect our perceptions *in time*—to connect, in a coherent experience, *what no longer exists* with *what does not yet exist* through *what is present*. They are called the powers of *memory* and *divination*, of the retrospective and the prospective (if we may use these terms), since we are conscious of these ideas as ideas we would encounter in our past or future state" (*Anthropology*, p. 182).

36. Notably, Kant's general definition of pleasure in the *Critique of Judgment* occurs in the context of a discussion of "purposive" causality, i.e., the causality exerted by an agent with a will, who acts according to concepts (which serve as the "purposes" of her activity). And, although I cannot argue for this claim here, I suggest that Kant concludes that teleological judgments about organisms are "merely subjective" or merely reflective judgments for quite similar reasons. That is, Kant claims that the organization and seemingly future-caused functioning of organisms could only be "determinative" explained if it were to be understood as caused by God's ideas (e.g., FI IX, p. 236); and he does so, I suggest, because such explanation would render such causality consistent with the objective temporal, causal order (the cause would reside in the past). Of course we cannot, according to Kant, make determinative judgments invoking God's ideas either; thus, teleological judgment must remain a merely reflective judgment.

37. Cf. *Anthropology*, p. 251: "Appetite . . . is the self-determination of a subject's power through the idea of some future thing as an effect of this power."

38. *Anthropology*, p. 187.

39. *Ibid.*

40. *Critique of Judgment*, Introduction VI, p. 87.

41. *Ibid.*, FI VIII, p. 232. Pleasures in the agreeable are, Kant writes, "purposive" only after they are pleasing; the purpose or judgment does not "precede" pleasure, but is "based on" the feeling of pleasure (§12, p. 223). (Similarly, Kant argues that such pleasures are "interested" insofar as they give rise to an interest [§3, p. 207].)

42. *Ibid.*, §16, pp. 230–231; cf. FI III, pp. 206, 242, 270, and §54, 331.

43. Like Samuel Fleischacker in *A Third Concept of Liberty: Judgment and Freedom in Kant and Adam Smith* (Princeton University Press, 1999), chap. 2, I take Kant's "harmony [or play] of the faculties" to describe our appreciation of an order and richness in an object's sensory manifold that cannot be described by one, overarching concept (though it is "judgmental" in that it is an appreciation of an order or unity of a manifold, the parts of which may be conceptually described).

44. See Ermanno Bencivenga, "Economy of Expression and Aesthetic Pleasure," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 47 (1987): 615–630, for an interesting phenomenological exploration of aesthetic pleasure in incomplete or unfinished art objects as futurally projective (rather than as a release from tension, as in Kant's account of pleasures in the agreeable, or in the Freudian model to which Bencivenga opposes his own account).

45. For example, see *Critique of Judgment*, §5, p. 210.

46. Ginsborg's account of Kant's view of aesthetic pleasure is perhaps the clearest case of the opposing, unsatisfying sort of reading, since (according to Ginsborg) for Kant aesthetic pleasure is pleasure "in" its own universal communicability. Guyer's account, however, in which aesthetic pleasure is merely a sensory state caused by (correlated to) the harmony of the faculties also disengages aesthetic pleasure from the object. Guyer is motivated, in part, from difficulties he finds in Kant's articulation of what the "form" of an object might be, and why or how we take pleasure in it (see, e.g., "Formalism and the Theory of Expression in Kant's Aesthetics," [Kantstudien 68 (1977): 46–70]). Such questions about beautiful or purposive "form" lie outside the scope of this essay, but I wish to point out here that Kant's understanding of pleasure does allow us to understand Kant's claims that aesthetic pleasure is "in" the object's form, yet is merely subjective.

47. This move, of course, cannot fully explain Kant's deduction in the *Critique of Judgment*, for one would also have to articulate what it means to judge according to the a priori principle of purposiveness, why such judging is pleasurable, and why such judging is a "subjective condition" for the possibility of experience. But this strategy for reading Kant's deduction of the claims of taste seems more promising than Guyer's causal account, or than Ginsborg's claim that aesthetic pleasure is self-verifyingly universally communicable.

48. On the connection between time determination and proper cognition of the subject, see B277: "To be sure, the presentation *I am*, which expresses the consciousness that can accompany all thinking, is what directly includes the existence of a subject; but it is not yet a *cognition* of that subject, and hence is also no empirical cognition—i.e., experience—of it. For such experience involves, besides the thought of something existent, also intuition, and here specifically inner intuition, in regard to which—viz., time—the subject must be determined." (Pluhar translation [Hackett]).

49. I am indebted to Philip Alperson, John Brown, Anne Eaton, Michael Forster, Paul Guyer, Les Harris, Robert Pippin, Gaby Sakamoto, Catherine Zuckert, and anonymous readers for the JAAC for comments on earlier versions of this essay; all mistakes are, of course, mine.

