

Common Sense and Community in Kant's Theory of Taste

Bart Vandenabeele (Ghent University)

Kant's theory of taste suggests the possibility of community with others who share our sensibilities and capacities to judge the beauty of nature and art. This community is, however, not based on common concepts, arguments, meanings, opinions or convictions, nor on dialogue, contingent social and historical coherence, nor on general moral agreement or rational law. By considering the possibility of an aesthetic common sense (*sensus communis aestheticus*), which is fundamentally enmeshed in human *sensibility* and *affect*, Kant introduces the idea of an affective 'sensus communalis', which not only aims to justify the universal communicability (*Mitteilbarkeit*) of aesthetic judgements, but also ultimately joins together the most personal contingent feelings of pleasure (or displeasure) with a necessary, universal and cosmopolitan idea of humanity, which is based on the shareability of affects.¹ This transcendental idea has to be presupposed, or so Kant argues, in order to legitimate the communicability of aesthetic pleasure and promote human sensibility and affect in communion with others (CJ, 5:297; 5:433; 5:355).

1. Universal Communicability

The problem of founding the aesthetic judgment's universal validity claim can only be tackled by introducing an important term that Kant uses for the first time in the notorious § 9 (on the question whether in a judgment of taste the feeling of pleasure precedes the judging of the object or the judging precedes the pleasure), viz. universal *communicability* (*allgemeine Mitteilbarkeit*). This is what needs to be accounted for if we want to find the justification for the universality claim in the judgment of taste. Unfortunately, Kant has written one of the most confusing passages on this very issue. He states:

If the pleasure in the given object came first, and our judgment of taste were to attribute only the pleasure's universal communicability to the presentation of the object, then this procedure would be self-contradictory. For that kind of pleasure would be none other than mere agreeableness in the sensation, so that by its very nature it could have only private validity, because it would depend directly on the presentation by which the object *is given*. Hence it must be the capacity for being universally communicated of the mental state [*allgemeine Mitteilungsfähigkeit des Gemüthszustandes*], in the given representation, which underlies the judgment of taste as its subjective condition, and the pleasure in the object must be its consequence. (CJ, 5:217)

Kant makes two rather puzzling statements. First, the pleasure is said to be the result of the aesthetic judgment; but how is this possible if the pleasure is also supposed to be the judgment's condition or ground? Secondly, aesthetic pleasure is argued to be the consequence of the universal communicability of the mental state in the judgment. How can the pleasure of taste be the consequence of the universal communicability of the mental state, when the latter is supposed to be pleasurable itself (at least in positive judgments of taste)? This looks really circular.² But, in fact, Kant can be defended by making an essential distinction between the act of judging or contemplating the object (*Beurtheilung des Gegenstandes*) and the judgment of taste (*Geschmacksurtheil*) as such. Judging the object obviously precedes the pleasure, but the latter precedes the actual judgment of taste. It not only precedes it, it also forms the determining ground of the judgment of taste proper. According to Paul Guyer³, § 9 contains

the basic elements for a theory of aesthetic appraisal that consists of two logically – but not necessarily phenomenologically – distinct acts of reflection. First, an act of mere reflection in which pleasure is felt, and secondly, an act of aesthetic judgment proper, in which the pleasure is attributed to the harmonious play of the faculties. On this reading too, however, Kant's apparent implication that the universal communicability of the mental state in judging the object is itself the source of the sensed pleasure is, as Guyer puts it, 'obviously absurd',⁴ since it suggests that universal communicability is constitutive of aesthetic pleasure instead of merely playing a part in evaluating it.⁵

Yet in the same section Kant explicitly denies that pleasure in the ability to communicate one's mental state could account for the aesthetic pleasure in the beautiful. There is, Kant says, pleasure in the ability to communicate, but one cannot appeal to it to explain the transcendental necessity connected with the pure judgment of taste, since this is merely an empirical or natural propensity (*Hang*) to sociability (CJ, 5:218). To explain Kant's remarkable implication that aesthetic pleasure is grounded in the universal communicability we perhaps ought to qualify the aesthetic judgment in the way Hannah Ginsborg does, viz. as 'a formal and self-referential judgment that claims, not the universal validity of an antecedently given feeling of pleasure, but rather its own universal validity with respect to the object'.⁶ On Ginsborg's account, a judgment of taste is a judgment *about* the normativity of one's own mental state. The demand for assent is merely the demand that others recognise this normativity, i.e., that I judge the object as it ought be judged, namely as beautiful. However, one might wonder how self-referential judgments could avoid making use of concepts, and hence, whether Ginsborg's account does not illegitimately turn aesthetic judgments into intellectual judgments, that is, judgments of cognition requiring concepts to determine the correctness of ascribing one's mental state to others, or – at least – into what Kant calls in his *Logik Dohna-Wundlacken* 'beautiful cognition' (*schöne Erkenntnis*), which is no longer based on the free play of the cognitive faculties, and is, therefore, altogether different from a pure judgment of taste.⁷ Secondly, it is hard to see how Ginsborg's view could allow for negative judgments of taste: if Kant meant the judgment of taste to be self-referential, i.e., *referring to* the normativity or appropriateness of my mental state with regard to the object deemed beautiful, and if the pleasure of taste is really *in* the universal communicability of my pleasure, then there is no room for a universally communicable *displeasure*, since, as Allison rightly notes, 'universal communicability is itself a source of pleasure'.⁸

I do not believe Ginsborg's view is what Kant had in mind. It is hard to see how one can account for the intricacies of Kant's theory of aesthetic response without logically distinguishing between two acts of reflection. On the other hand, it is equally difficult to see how Guyer's logical distinction can be translated into more phenomenological or 'psychological' terms. Phenomenologically speaking, what Kant intimates seems to be the following: judging (*beurtheilen*) the object results in a feeling of pleasure or displeasure in me, and this feeling – which is transcendently grounded in the harmonious play of imagination and understanding – signals the universal communicability of it by means of its affective purity, i.e., its disinterested nature. Although it forms no legitimate basis for the universal validity or communicability of the judgment of taste proper, the disinterestedness is actually the affective 'symptom' of the fact that the pleasure (or displeasure) must be attributed to the reciprocal quickening of the mental faculties that are operative in aesthetic judgments of taste – the 'feeling of life'⁹ of the subject – and not to some idiosyncratic inclination or quirk: displeasure signals the disharmony, whereas pleasure signals the harmony of the two cognitive powers involved in aesthetic judging. It is in this sense that Kant's statement, quoted above, can be readily understood: 'it must be the capacity for being universally communicated of the mental state [*allgemeine Mittheilungsfähigkeit des*

Gemüthszustandes], in the given representation, which underlies the judgment of taste *as its subjective condition*, and the pleasure in the object must be its consequence' (italics added). Instead of qualifying this idea as hopelessly absurd, as Paul Guyer does, or (like Hannah Ginsborg) defining aesthetic judgments as self-referential which deprives them of their disinterested nature – since pleasure *in* the universal communicability of the mental state cannot be disinterested but is (as Kant holds) a natural inclination – or, as Henry Allison¹⁰ does, trying to solve the problems in the quoted passage by changing the words, as if Kant had committed a slip of the pen, one might perhaps interpret Kant's words in § 9 – no matter how clumsy Kant's formulation is – as follows. Phenomenologically speaking, the purity of taste – the disinterestedness of the experienced pleasure – is subjectively determined (*as its subjective condition*, Kant says) by the necessity of being universally communicable or shareable, i.e., by the 'signal' in the mind (*Gemüth*) that the felt pleasure (or displeasure) is universally communicable. Thus, the universal communicability of the mental state is the affective sign of the purity of the felt pleasure or displeasure. This implies that, on the one hand, the disinterestedness of the pleasure is the essential, *a priori* condition for the universal communicability of aesthetic judgments – without disinterestedness aesthetic judgments could not be universally shared. But, on the other hand, the capacity for universal communicability is itself the ideal gauge to estimate whether the experienced pleasure is really disinterested or not. Hence, Kant writes: 'the pleasure in the object must be its consequence', which means that only in and through its possible universal communication can it be estimated whether or not the felt pleasure is actually disinterested or not. So in this sense, and in this sense only, can the pleasure in an object be the consequence of 'the capacity for being universally communicated of the mental state'. Whether or not the pleasure is really pure pleasure, i.e., the disinterested pleasure that grounds a pure judgment of taste, depends on the very universal communicability of the aesthetic judgment, which is the *ratio cognoscendi* of the disinterestedness of the pleasure. That one can actually be fairly certain (though one will never be able to prove it by means of arguments) that the pleasure one experiences here and now is disinterested is grounded in – though not caused by – the universal communicability of the mental state, or more precisely, in the affect that 'signals' whether or not the activity of the mental powers is universally communicable. And this affect, or rather this universally communicable mental state, of course, presupposes 'a capacity for being universally communicated'.

2. Aesthetic Common Sense

Since judgments of taste are not cognitive judgments, they cannot be based on a determinate objective principle, and hence they are not unconditionally necessary. On the other hand, if they had no normative force, 'if they had no principle at all [...], then the thought that they have a necessity would not occur to us at all' (CJ, 5:238). This (subjective) principle is called 'common sense' (*Gemeinsinn*) in § 20. Kant stresses that this aesthetic *Gemeinsinn* must be clearly distinguished from the common understanding (*der gemeine Verstand*), for the latter judges according to concepts and not according to feeling. There is a crucial difference between the 'sensus communis logicus' (mentioned in § 40) and the 'sensus communis aestheticus'.¹¹

The aesthetic common sense he is talking about in the context of judgments of taste is first and foremost a *sense*, so a question of sensibility and feeling: 'a sense (or feeling) for what is universally communicable, which can also be assumed to be universally shared. Otherwise expressed, it is a shared capacity to feel what may be universally shareable.'¹² This notion of

common sense, although introduced rather abruptly in § 20, has a long history in Kant's own views on the communal nature of taste, as is clear from the following passage in the *Lectures on Metaphysics*:

But how can a human being pass a judgment according to the universal sense, since he still considers the object according to his private sense? The community among human beings constitutes a communal sense. Out of the intercourse among human beings a communal sense arises which is valid for everyone. Thus whoever does not come into a community has no communal sense. – The beautiful and the ugly can be distinguished by human beings only so far as they are in a community. Thus whomever something pleases according to a communal and universally valid sense, he has *taste*. Taste is therefore a faculty for judging through satisfaction or dissatisfaction, according to the communal and universally valid sense. But taste is still always only a judging through the relation of the senses, and on that account this faculty is a faculty of pleasure and displeasure. Objective satisfaction or dissatisfaction, or judging objects according to universally valid grounds of the power of cognition, is the higher faculty of pleasure and displeasure. This is the faculty for judging of an object whether it pleases or displeases from cognition of the understanding according to universally valid principles. If something is an object of intellectual satisfaction, then it is good; if it is an object of intellectual dissatisfaction, then it is evil. – Good is what must please everyone necessarily. – But the beautiful does not please everyone necessarily, rather the agreement of the judgment is contingent. (LM 28: 249)¹³

This is a very interesting fragment for several reasons. Kant had clearly not developed his complex idea of the 'exemplary necessity' of pure judgments of taste, i.e. the necessary requirement of such judgments' universal assent, which is not based on concepts (CJ, 5:237). But it is equally clear that in his *Lectures on Metaphysics*, as in his *Anthropology*, the idea of the close relationship between the capacity of taste and being-in-community is already overly present, and that Kant had already developed the thought of an affinity between the notions 'sensus communis' and 'sensus communalis' before writing the *Critique of Judgment*. In the *Critique of Judgment*, however, Kant develops the idea of a 'sensus communis' within a transcendental framework, which explains why Kant cannot ground the universal shareability of judgments of taste in the human inclination to sociability (*Geselligkeit*). On the other hand, it also warns against too strict a separation of those approaches: Kant would never have come up with the idea of a *sensus communis*, if he had not been convinced of the anthropological existence and relevance of togetherness and being-in-community: hence he says that 'the beautiful and the ugly can be distinguished by human beings only so far as they are in a community'; an idea that Hannah Arendt¹⁴ will develop in her famous political reading of Kant's third *Critique*. Moreover, Kant was well aware of the pleasure of being with others and of the interest of sociability. The whole idea of universal communicability (*Mitteilbarkeit*) follows from this intuition: the peculiar knowledge that what I feel could be and ought to be shared by other people is itself a source of pleasure.¹⁵ But we are ready now to follow the argument that Kant develops in § 21.

The argument presented in section 21 can be divided into seven different steps¹⁶:

1. Cognitions and judgments, together with their accompanying convictions [propositional attitudes] must be universally communicable. This is a condition of claiming agreement with an object; consequently, its denial leads to skepticism.
2. This entails that the mental state required for cognition in general, that is, the 'attunement' [*Stimmung*] of the cognitive faculties, which is that 'proportion' [*Proportion*] suitable for turning representations into cognitions, must also be universally communicable. Again, to deny this would be to open the door for skepticism, since this attunement is the subjective cognition of cognition.
3. This attunement actually occurs whenever the perception of a given object puts the imagination into play, which, in turn, sets the understanding into action; but this attunement varies in proportion to differences in the occasioning objects.
4. Nevertheless, there must be one optimal attunement, that is, one in which the inner relation is most conducive to the mutual quickening of the cognitive faculties with a view to cognition in general; and this attunement can be determined (recognised) only by feeling (since the alternative – concepts – is ruled out).
5. Moreover, both this attunement and the feeling of it in connection with a given representation must likewise be universally communicable.
6. But the universal communicability of this feeling presupposes a common sense.
7. Consequently, we do have a basis for assuming a common sense, without relying on psychological observation, as a necessary condition of the universal communicability of our cognition, which must itself be presupposed if skepticism is to be avoided.

A lot could be said (and has been said) about this argument, especially if we read it as an attempt to provide a deduction of common sense as a condition of taste, but I just want to focus on one element that is crucial if we want to develop Kant's idea of a common sense in a more pragmatic (and hence less speculative) way. It is important to note that Kant here claims merely to have shown that there are grounds for assuming a common sense, not that he has proved the *existence* of a common sense. He fully realised that he needed much more argumentation to provide a proper demonstration for that. One problem with his account in § 21 is that it seems to suggest a solution that he wanted to avoid, viz. that the aesthetic common sense must be presupposed as a condition of cognition in general. This Humean solution is surprising, since it is hard to grasp how a common sense that was defined in § 21 as the effect arising from the *free play* of our cognitive capacities, could serve as condition of cognition. This is, as Allison argues, clearly incoherent.¹⁷ There is only one way of avoiding this incoherent reasoning, and that is by assuming that in § 21 Kant uses the term 'common sense' not to refer to the effect of the free play of our cognitive powers, not to taste as such, but rather (as Allison rightly holds) to the capacity 'for immediately seeing (without appeal to rules, and therefore through "feeling") whether, and how fully, a given intuited manifold accords with a particular concept, that is, judgment'.¹⁸ By analogy, it can then be argued that there are *epistemic*, nonpsychological grounds to assume that in taste too there must be a *sensus communis aestheticus*, i.e., one must first assume that there is 'a peculiar talent' to recognize a fit between understanding and imagination in cognition, otherwise the assumption of the capacity to do so when the cognitive powers are in free play (as is the case in taste) is at least highly implausible. Kant clearly hasn't sufficiently demonstrated that we do have a basis for assuming or postulating an aesthetic common sense, but indirectly he has provided arguments for its plausibility, i.e., by showing that 'the attunement itself, and hence also the feeling of it, must be universally communicable' (CJ, 5:239; 88; 158), unless we plainly endorse skepticism which Kant, of course, does not. The question now arises as to whether the link with morality might provide a better ground for the aesthetic judgment's claim to universal assent.

3. Aesthetic and moral normativity

In § 22 Kant argues that aesthetic judgments contain an ‘ought’: using common sense in matters of taste implies not that everybody *will* agree with my judgment but *ought to*; therefore, the demand for agreement in judgments of taste is comparable to similar moral or cognitive claims. Donald Crawford¹⁹, Ray K. Elliott²⁰, and many others have argued that the demand of a judgment of taste for universal agreement is a moral claim, but although Kant clearly argues that there is a moral interest in beauty (and especially in natural beauty), the requirement that judgments of taste be universally shared is not of a moral but an *epistemological* kind. Paul Guyer sums up the considerations that support this interpretation. First, Kant bases the second moment on the first, viz. the qualitative characterization of the judgment as devoid of any interest. It is quite unlikely, however, that a moral demand could be based on a requirement of disinterestedness, which is meant to separate the aesthetic judgment from any connection with an interest to morality. Secondly, in §§ 8-9 Kant is clearly concerned with epistemological grounds for a title to universality, and all moral grounds are excluded. Thirdly, Kant uses cognitive instead of moral terminology to describe the claim to universal shareability: ‘it must be seen as based on what he can *presuppose* in everyone else as well’, and aesthetic judgment is said to be similar to logical judgment ‘inasmuch as we may *presuppose* it to be valid for everyone’ (CJ, § 6, 211; 212; italics added).²¹ The claim to universal validity is not a moral demand but implies that the ground may be presupposed in others as well; aesthetic judgment ‘presupposes’ the feeling of pleasure in others, or attributes it to them.²² This is what Kant’s phrase ‘speaking with a universal voice’ (CJ, 5:216) means: it is ‘imputing feelings of pleasure to others on the basis of one’s own feeling’²³. Kant insists that the crucial difference between aesthetic (reflective) and moral (intellectual) judgments is that the latter entail not merely a claim (*Anspruch*) but also a command (*Gebot*) to universal assent:

The *absolutely good* (the object of moral feeling), as judged subjectively by the feeling it inspires, is the ability of the subject’s powers to be determined by the conception of a law that *obligates absolutely*. It is distinguished above all *by its modality*: a necessity that rests on a priori concepts and contains not just a *claim* but also a *command* that everyone approve. Actually, the absolutely good belongs not to aesthetic but to pure intellectual judgment; by the same token, we attribute it to freedom rather than to nature, and in a determinative rather than in a merely reflective judgment. (CJ, 5:267)

The aesthetic common sense is a mere ideal standard and is, in this respect at least, analogous to the categorical imperative. Contrary to the latter, however, the *sensus communis* does not provide determinate criteria: ‘there is no universalizability test, or analogue thereof, for taste’.²⁴ Why is the *sensus communis* now called an ideal standard or norm (*bloss idealische Norm*), instead of, as was previously the case, a sense or feeling? The reason is simply because it underwrites the claim to speak with a universal voice (as Kant stated in § 9). As Allison argues, ‘it is only because the idea of a common sense serves as an ideal norm that the demand for universal agreement associated with the aesthetic discrimination of taste is even conceivable’.²⁵ However, after repeating that our presumption in making judgments of taste proves that ‘we do actually presuppose this indeterminate standard of a common sense’, quite suddenly and surprisingly in light of the preceding paragraphs, Kant asks:

But is there in fact such a common sense, as a constitutive principle of the possibility of experience, or is there a still higher principle of reason that makes it only a regulative principle for us, [in order] to bring forth in us, for higher purposes, a common sense in the first place? In other words, is taste an original and natural ability, or is taste only the idea of an ability yet to be acquired and [therefore] artificial, so that judgment of taste with its requirement for universal assent [*mit seiner Zumutung einer allgemeinen Beistimmung*] is in fact only a demand of reason to produce such agreement in the way we sense [*eine solche Einhelligkeit der Sinnesart*]? In the latter case the *ought*, i.e., the objective necessity that everyone's feeling flow along with the particular feeling of each person, would signify only that there is a possibility of reaching such agreement; and the judgment of taste would only offer an example of the application of this principle. These questions we neither wish to nor can investigate at this point. For the present our task is only to analyze the power of taste into its elements, and to unite these ultimately in the idea of a common sense. (CJ, 5:240)

Whereas Kant seemed convinced that the *sensus communis* was a constitutive principle, here he seems to change his mind, or at least hesitate, since he considers the possibility of the *sensus communis* as a merely *regulative* principle and taste a not-yet-acquired capacity, which is surprising if we consider the previous paragraphs as attempts to *deduce* judgments of taste. These questions are perhaps less puzzling when considered as ultimately referring to the relationship between taste and morality. In Kant's view there is a clear connection between taste and morality. There are even several commentators, e.g. Anthony Savile²⁶, that argue that the demand of judgments of taste to be universally shared is in one way or another grounded in the 'ought' of morality – which is what Kant seems to suggest in the previously quoted passage. Nevertheless, we must distinguish two different 'oughts' in taste: first, the demand for universal assent. As Allison says, 'it is this ought that presupposes common sense, and it is quite independent of morality.'²⁷ The second ought is the demand to acquire and develop the capacity of taste itself, and this demand or requirement *is* connected with morality. But, *pace* Savile, it does not follow that the first 'ought' is based on the second. Naturally, it would be absurd to demand universal assent to a judgment of taste, unless I presupposed that there are others with a similar ability to discriminate between beauty and mere charm or agreeableness. But from this it does not follow that the requirement to develop and refine these discriminatory abilities grounds the aesthetic 'ought', i.e., the demand for universal shareability of judgments of taste. On the contrary, and here I am again in agreement with Allison, the moral demand to develop the capacity of taste *presupposes* the universalisability claim of the pure judgment of taste: it is only because there is an inherent normative claim in judgments of taste that it could be morally interesting to develop the capacity to make such judgments.²⁸

This *caveat* is important, especially because Kant has made many commentators believe that the transition (*Übergang*) from beauty to morality is equivalent to saying that taste is inherently moral or that the capacity of taste is a necessary condition to a good will. Nothing of this is actually faithful to Kant's enterprise, though. On the contrary, he clearly insists on the universalisability of taste, and even claims – against any humanistic interpretation of the *sensus communis* – that taste is more entitled to being called 'common sense' than is the 'common human understanding', which reduces the idea of communality to vulgarity, the possession of which involves no merit whatsoever (CJ, 5:294). Instead, Kant makes clear that he is talking of common sense to refer to 'the idea of a public sense [*gemeinschaftlichen Sinnes*]', i.e., 'a power to judge that in reflecting takes into account (a priori) [...] everyone else's way of presenting [something], in order as it were to compare our own judgment [...]

not so much with the actual as rather with the merely possible judgments of others, and [thus] put ourselves in the position of everyone else, merely by abstracting from the limitations that may happen to attach our own judging' (CJ, 5:293-294).

Although there are clear analogies here with moral reflection, Kant does not claim that abstracting from the limitations of our aesthetic judging, i.e., by paying attention solely to the formal features of our representation or our representational state' is a necessary or sufficient condition for morality. The latter would lead to aestheticism, which is obviously not what Kant wants to defend here. On the contrary, taste and morality are both autonomous, and it is only because taste lays claim to universal assent that it may symbolize morality. The adoption of a *general perspective* – a perspective in which other people's judgments are democratically taken into account – is crucial in this sense: in virtue of this capacity to adopt a broadened point of view, as it were, aesthetic reflection, which brings along 'a certain ennoblement', may serve as a symbol for morality. As Henry Allison writes, 'just as the beautiful does not effect a transition from the sensible to the supersensible because it symbolizes morality, but rather symbolizes morality because it effects such a transition, so, too, the pure judgment of taste does not make a valid demand on others because it symbolizes morality, but rather it is because of the "purity" underlying the validity of its demand that it symbolises morality.'²⁹

4. Conclusion

In aesthetic judging we not only experience ourselves as free from the push and pull of our drives, needs and desires but also experience the 'liberality' of our active engagement with an object and an enlivenment and expansion of our cognitive capacities (CJ, 5:268). This experience of 'aesthetic freedom' – which is grounded in the freedom of the imagination in aesthetic judging – is no merely private or personal matter. It is, Kant rightly holds, inextricably connected with the feeling of being-together with others, with whom we share similar capacities to judge the beauties of nature and art. In this sense, beauty presupposes not only a shared aesthetic sensibility but also a subject that is not primarily concerned with its own personal and private sensations but is always – at least in principle – aware of the shareability of its aesthetic affects and the communality of its aesthetic appraisal. In aesthetic judging, we do not merely feel our 'elevation' above mere sense pleasure but also experience, as it were, a common affective bond with a cosmopolitan community in which all human beings participate and through which they 'esteem the value of others' (5:353). Aesthetic judging is, therefore, not of signal importance because it would make a transition from the sensible to the supersensible, but because it offers a way of rethinking subjectivity and intersubjectivity as manifest within felt, particularised pleasures that are universally shareable – not despite but *due to* their affective nature (CJ, 5:353; 355).³⁰

¹ Though I cannot argue here for this claim, I would suggest that the view put forth by Rachel Zuckert that the conception of non-conceptually governed community is 'a sphere of shared *meaning* – i.e. culture (in the non-Kantian meaning of the word)' is based on a misunderstanding of Kant's considered view concerning the social nature of taste. See R. Zuckert, *Kant on Beauty and Biology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 382 (italics added).

² See also D. Crawford, *Kant's Aesthetic Theory*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1974, p. 70, and H.E. Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 111 ff., on which the following is partly based.

³ See P. Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 8, 51-2, 97-102, 140-2, 147, 228.

⁴ P. Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, p. 137.

⁵ As Guyer contends, this would imply that in a solipsistic situation no one could take pleasure in a beautiful object. Only if there were the possibility of communication, would aesthetic pleasure be possible. This was actually Kant's anthropological view before he wrote the *Critique of Judgment*. See *Logik Blomberg*, 24:45-46: 'taste can therefore impossibly be separately solitary [*abgesondert eigenthümlich*]'; *Logik Philippi*, 24:353-5; *Anthropologie Collins*, 15:179-80. This also occurs, however, in texts written after the *Critique of Judgment*, as in, for instance, his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, 7:244 and the *Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:212. See also *Metaphysik L₁* 28:249-51, where he argues that the universal sense (*allgemeiner Sinn*) underlying judgments of taste has to be identified with a communal sense (*gemeinschaftlicher Sinn*), and also emphasises that 'whoever does not come into a community has no communal sense' (28:249).

⁶ H. Ginsborg, 'Reflective Judgement and Taste', *Noûs*, 24 (1990), p. 72. See also *idem*, 'On the Key to Kant's Critique of Taste', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 72 (1991), p. 290-313., and *idem*, Kant on the Subjectivity of Taste', in Herman Parret (ed.), *Kant's Aesthetics / Kants Ästhetik / L'esthétique de Kant*, Berlin, W. de Gruyter, p. 448-465.

⁷ See *Logik Dohna-Wundlacken*, 24:710: 'Wenn Anschauung und Begriff zusammenstimmen zur Belebung der Erkenntnis selbst, so machen sie in uns ein Wohlgefallen und dann nennt man es schöne Erkenntnis. Man muss sich bemühen, dass Verstand und Einbildungskraft zu einem Geschäft zusammenstimmen. *Dies ist aber nicht mehr Spiel.*' (emphasis added)

⁸ H.E. Allison, *o.c.*, p. 115.

⁹ For an interesting treatment of the parallels and differences between beauty's 'feeling of life' (*Lebensgefühl*) and morality's 'feeling of spirit' (*Geistesgefühl*), which is not a feeling of sense – although it is in some way palpable, see: John H. Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1992, p. 292-305. Interestingly, Kant also uses the term *Geistesgefühl* and not *Lebensgefühl* in connection with the feeling of the sublime.

¹⁰ H.E. Allison, *o.c.*, p. 115: 'In reality, however, all that is required to rectify matters is to substitute "a universally communicable mental state" for "the universal communicability of the mental state." In addition to removing much of the air of paradox around the text, this would allow room for the possibility of negative judgments of taste; for there is nothing inherently problematic in a universally communicable mental state of displeasure (as opposed to a displeasure in its very communicability).'

¹¹ There is a striking parallel between the way Kant introduces the problem of the *sensus communis* and the central argument on the conditions of mathematical knowledge in his *Prolegomena*. (See H.E. Allison, *o.c.*, p. 148-149.) There Kant is concerned with how mathematical knowledge can be both synthetic and *a priori*, and he will show that this is only possible under the assumption that an underlying pure or *a priori* intuition is possible. Kant is well aware of the paradoxicality of such a notion. He writes: 'There is therefore only one way possible for my intuition to precede the actuality of the object and occur as an *a priori* cognition, namely if it contains nothing else except the form of sensibility, which in me as subject precedes all actual impressions through which I am affected by objects. For I can know *a priori* that the objects of the senses can be intuited only in accordance with this form of sensibility.' (*Prolegomena*, 4:282) In the *Analytic of the Beautiful*, the problem of the universal shareability of taste is no less paradoxical: how can something intrinsically private as a *feeling* really claim universal validity? As Henry Allison rightly contends, 'the idea of a common sense, as the only condition under which such a claim regarding a mere feeling is possible, plays precisely the same role in the case of taste as that of pure intuition does in the case of mathematics' (Allison, *o.c.*, p. 149). This is as far as the analogy goes, however, since, as is well known, Kant did not invent the term *sensus communis*, whereas he did introduce the technical term 'pure intuition'. Yet, *sensus communis* was used before Kant in a totally different way: in (especially) Scottish philosophy, common sense referred to common understanding, whereas Kant is here concerned with a *sensus communis aestheticus*, and he will not claim that taste can be based on a logic common sense, the *gemeiner Menschenverstand*. This is not surprising, since in the *Prolegomena*, he utterly disparages any appeal to this notion to solve the Humean problem of causality.

¹² Allison, *o.c.*, p. 149.

¹³ I. Kant, *Lectures on Metaphysics*, translated and edited by Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 65.

¹⁴ H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1982.

¹⁵ It goes without saying that, as Béatrice Longuenesse argues, the fact 'that this pleasure serves the empirical interest in sociability is a derived fact that no more diminishes the disinterested character of the pleasure, than does the fact that aesthetic pleasure generates an empirical interest in surrounding ourselves with beautiful objects.' See Longuenesse, 'Kant's Theory of Judgment, and Judgments of Taste: On Henry Allison's *Kant's Theory of Taste*', *Inquiry* 46 (2003), p. 155.

¹⁶ I take these different steps literally from Allison, *o.c.*, p. 150-151. See also Lyotard, *Leçons sur l'Analytique du sublime*, Paris, Galilée, 1991, p. 242-244 for a similar analysis.

¹⁷ See Allison, *o.c.*, p. 153.

¹⁸ Allison, *o.c.*, p. 154-155.

¹⁹ Donald Crawford, *o.c.*, p. 143; 145, and *passim*.

²⁰ Ray K. Elliott, 'The Unity of Kant's "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment",' *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 8 (1968), p. 244-259.

²¹ Compare also with the following note (1788-89) from Kant's *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie* (15:437, R 993): 'A judgment of taste has in this respect something logical, in that it demands universal assent, and is so far as this distinguished from another sort of aesthetic judgment, namely that of the feeling, which only holds for each individual.' Kant continues: 'In this it still distinguishes itself from a logical judgment, in that this universal validity does not ground itself on the agreement of the mode of presentation with the object, but rather with the relation of the faculty of presentation (which belongs to cognition) in the subject, and indeed in each subject.' (my translation)

²² P. Guyer, *o.c.*, p. 125.

²³ P. Guyer, *o.c.*, p. 127.

²⁴ Allison, *o.c.*, p. 156.

²⁵ Allison, *o.c.*, p. 157.

²⁶ See A. Savile, *Aesthetic Reconstructions: The Seminal Writings of Lessing, Kant and Schiller*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1987.

²⁷ Allison, *o.c.*, p. 159.

²⁸ See Allison, *o.c.*, p. 159.

²⁹ Allison, *o.c.*, p. 267. Here I am in agreement not just with Allison, but also with Salim Kemal, 'Aesthetic Necessity', *Kant-Studien*, 74 (1983), p. 184 and A.C. Genova, 'Aesthetic Justification and Systematic Unity in Kant's *Third Critique*', in G. Funke & T.M. Seeböhm, eds., *Proceedings of the Sixth International Kant Congress*, Washington, D.C.: Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology & University Press of America, 1989, vol. 2, pt. 2, p. 293-309. This reading goes against Donald Crawford, *Kant's Aesthetic Theory*, Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1974.

³⁰ I wish to thank Stijn Van Impe for this invaluable comments.