

Aesthetic Judgement and Pluralism in Kant

-In Connection with Adam Smith's 'Impartial Spectator'-

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I. Kant's Acceptance of Adam Smith

Adam Smith (1723–90) published his first book entitled *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* in 1759, seventeen years before his other major work, *The Wealth of Nations*. It embodied the contents of his earlier lectures on Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow. The book became highly esteemed and influential abroad as well as in Scotland and England. A French translation of the work was published in 1764, and its first German translation (by C. G. Rautenberg) in 1770, the latter being based on the third revised edition.¹ The book would influence many German philosophers, including Lessing and Herder. It seemed that Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) knew and valued this book, judging from a letter dated the ninth July 1771 written to him by Marcus Herz, a former student of Kant and then a medical doctor in Berlin. Herz says in this letter 'About the Englishman Smith, who, Mr. Friedländer tells me, is your favourite [Liebling], I have a few remarks to make'.² Then he goes on to compare the work of Smith with the first part of *Elements of Criticism* by Henry Home, Lord Kames. The passage suggests that Herz was interested in the relevance of Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* to aesthetics.

There is also a passage in Kant's *Reflections on Anthropology* where Kant writes about 'the Impartial Spectator', one of Smith's central terms. It is found in a relatively long fragment concerning taste from 1770 or 1771. Kant begins this fragment with a definition of taste: 'Taste is a social (sensuous) judgement [Der Geschmack ist ein Gesellschaftlich (sinnlich) urtheil *-sic*] about something, that pleases him, not directly through sense nor by general concepts of reason'. He goes on, after a few lines, as follows:

Taste enables enjoyment to be communicated [sich communicirt *-sic*]; it is therefore a means and a result of association between people. It is a kind of accommodation and thoroughly necessary, so a mere single-minded attentiveness of the man who is only interested in the object, is at the same time a rudeness with respect to other people. But the man who goes to the root of things has no perfect pleasure thereon, and he looks at it not just from his own point of view but from that of the community (the Impartial Spectator).³

The final words in brackets, which are his own notes written later in the same year, read 'der Unpartheyische Zuschauer' in the original text and no doubt are quoted from Adam Smith's moral theory.

P. Guyer argued recently that Kant stresses the social function of taste in his earlier stage.⁴ Kant often refers to 'society' as a principal factor in aesthetic judgement in his lectures on logic and *Reflections on Anthropology*, dating from about 1770, as Guyer points out. The issue of universal or social validity of taste there signified for Kant the problem of actual participation in one's society, and society was regarded throughout in a positive light. In a transcription of his lecture known as *Logik Blomberg* dating from about 1771, he states that 'Taste has something sociable or social [etwas geselliges, gesellschaftliches] accompanying it'. He goes on to assert:

Sociability gives life a certain taste, which it otherwise lacks, and this taste itself is social. ...Solitary eccentrics never have taste. There is a certain principle in the human soul, which much deserves to be studied, namely that our disposition is communicable and sympathetic [Communicable und mitleidend -sic], so that man as gladly communicates as he allows himself to be communicated to [der Mensch so wohl gerne mittheilet, als auch sich mittheilen läßt -sic]. Therefore people like to communicate with each other [communiciren sich einander -sic] very much.⁵

It is noteworthy that the concept of 'communication' plays an important role here too, which I have mentioned elsewhere.⁶ And we will find similar ideas on the social implications of taste at Kant's critical stage, namely in his *Critique of Judgement*, though the treatment of society is not so simple as in his earlier thought. In his mature aesthetic theory, the factor of society itself should be eliminated from pure aesthetic judgement, because everyone's innate social inclination can arouse empirical interest in the beautiful thing, e.g., the interest in showing or selling or buying the beautiful thing, instead of the contemplation of it. The conception of sociability would be developed into the ideas of universal communicability and *sensus communis*.

For now I would like to draw attention to the fact that, in his earlier reflections about taste, Kant referred to a key term from Adam Smith's moral theory. Let's return to our first quotation. There Kant considers taste as a means and also an effect of people's association with each other. People not only cultivate their feelings of identification as members of a community through their exercise of taste, but also come to develop a taste as a result of their mutual participation. Taste always makes people aware of their solidarity. So it allows individuals to adapt and adjust to a society. Taste permits a person to cultivate his way of seeing everything 'not just from his own point of view but from that of the community [aus Gemeinschaftlichem Gesichtspunkt -sic]'. Conversely, to have no taste means a 'rudeness' or vulgarity, failing to share in the viewpoint of others. The one who abandons a mere attentiveness of his own interest and tries to acquire thoroughly disinterested eyes, will be called an 'impartial spectator', Kant seems to believe here.

We shall see, first, what the term ‘impartial spectator’ originally means in the context of Adam Smith’s moral theory.

II. ‘Impartial Spectator’ and ‘Sympathy’ in Smith’s Context

Like other empiricist theories of ethics, Adam Smith’s theory of moral judgement is based neither upon the Divine Law nor any rational principle, but upon the natural feelings of human beings. ‘Sympathy’, according to Smith, is the standard of approbation or disapprobation of action.

His teacher and predecessor as Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow, Francis Hutcheson, pointed out the role of ‘moral sense’ which is a feeling of approval naturally evoked when we come across the disinterested motive of benevolence in another.⁷ Hutcheson himself took the term from third Earl of Shaftesbury’s moral philosophy. Adam Smith partly agreed with Hutcheson’s claim that moral judgement was to be explained in terms of ‘immediate sense and feeling’ rather than reason. But Smith wasn’t content with the concept of a ‘moral sense’ reserved strictly for ethical judgement. He viewed moral judgement as founded on a more general faculty of the human mind, ‘sympathy’. Smith’s concept is also more dynamic than Hutcheson’s notion, since it develops through actual relationships with other persons.

Smith’s older friend, David Hume, also based morality upon sympathy for others. Hume took sympathy as the ‘psychological machinery of transferring our feelings’, the social principle which takes us out far from ourselves.⁸ The concept of the ‘spectator’ who acquires his disinterested and in a sense universal point of view, is already found in Hume’s explanation of moral approval. Having accepted many of Hume’s ideas, Smith developed them into a more complex and detailed theory. In contrast to Hume’s utilitarian standpoint, Smith’s sympathy is a sharing of feeling not with a person affected by an action, but with an agent’s motivation. Therefore sympathy, for Smith, concerns action itself and, ultimately, how one ought to regulate one’s own conduct.

Smith divides the functions of moral sentiments into three stages.

- 1) Origin and foundation of our judgement concerning the sentiments and conduct of others, in relation to their cause or motive.
- 2) Origin and foundation of our judgement concerning the sentiments and conduct of others, in relation to their end or effect.
- 3) Origin and foundation of our judgement concerning our own sentiments and conduct.⁹

Smith’s starting point is the view that every action of a person comes from his sentiments and passions and our approbation of his action ultimately depends on these sentiments and passions. So the foundation of our judgement, whether we either approve or disapprove of another’s conduct, is whether we can or cannot sympathize

with his sentiments. This means that, when we judge the actions of others, we should make no use of any rule or measure other than sympathy. In this case, sympathy or correspondence of sentiments is not a direct response to an agent's feeling, but it is based on the 'sense of propriety' of an action on the part of the judging subject. In the proportion or disproportion of the agent's affection to the cause or object (motive) which excites it, consists the propriety or impropriety of the consequent action. The spectator should have some objective knowledge of the agent's condition, which stems from the absence of particular personal interest. And from this comes Smith's key term of 'impartial spectator'. 'The spectator must endeavour to put himself in the situation of the other'.¹⁰ Standing at a distance from an agent, the spectator tries to make an imaginary change of situations. As an intellectual feeling, sympathy is founded upon such a remote observation for producing a resonance in the observer's heart.

Now, while the spectator endeavours to enter into the agent's feeling, the person principally concerned (agent) will try to bring down or lower his passion 'to that pitch, in which the spectators are capable of going along with him'. The reaction on the part of the man observed is called the 'reflected passion', which would be somewhat flattened from its original sharpness. And these different efforts of adjustment from both sides may bring such a correspondence between the two sentiments, 'as is sufficient for the harmony of society.'¹¹ What sustains the sympathetic chord as the spectator and agent interact with each other, is the space and distance between them. We can name this process of transforming natural sentiments to modified ones, to coin a term, a 'mechanism of distance'. Adam Smith here distinguishes between the amiable and the respectable virtues, i.e., the virtue of humanity on the one hand and the virtue of self-command on the other. The latter results from an endeavour to control original and selfish feelings. The factor of self-command in this place is, I presume, a kind of preparation for his later argument about the conscience.

Secondly, a sympathy with a person affected by someone's conduct requires a more complicated judgement, whether this conduct can be the proper object of gratitude, and deserve reward. The relevant relationship here is between three persons, 1) an agent as a benefactor, 2) a beneficiary and 3) a spectator. The spectator as an indifferent bystander, who beforehand approves the motives of the person who acts (a direct sympathy), can then sympathize with the gratitude of the person who is acted upon (an indirect sympathy). From here arises the 'sense of merit', that is, a compounded sentiment.¹² The merit or demerit of an action depends upon the beneficial nature of the effects which the affection of an agent aims at.

The third sentiment, which is to form a judgement concerning our own conduct, is the most important point of Smith's Moral Theory. That concerns the problem of the self-command. Based on continual observations of the conduct of others, we come to imagine a position of the spectator of our own conduct and so view ourselves from a certain distance. In this case there is actually nobody other than the agent, but the

‘supposed impartial spectator’ can create that ‘mechanism of distance’.

...we either approve or disapprove of our own conduct, according as we feel that, when we place ourselves in the situation of another man, and view it, as it were, with his eyes and from his station, we either can or cannot entirely enter into and sympathize with the sentiments and motives which influenced it. ... We endeavour to examine our own conduct as we imagine any other fair and impartial spectator would examine it.¹³

It doesn't mean that the agent envisions any other particular person, say one of his friends or parents, and then tries to imagine how this specified spectator would assess his conduct. Rather, any unspecified man as an uninvolved spectator is to be imagined and embodied in the agent himself. In the judgement upon the conduct of other people, the uninvolved spectator endeavours to place himself in the situation of the other, that is to cross over the space between both agent and spectator in his imagination. In the judgement upon his own conduct, the agent first removes himself from his own natural station, and then endeavours to view his original sentiments and motives ‘as at a certain distance’. Supposing himself the unspecified spectator of his own behaviour, he again comes across an imaginary space. As D.D.Raphael points out, ‘having this feat of imagination doubling back on its tracks, the agent has to ask himself whether the feelings that he imagines he would then experience do or do not correspond to the feelings that he actually experiences now’.¹⁴

This ‘too complicated’ (Raphael) process presupposes the duplication of oneself, the involved agent and the uninvolved spectator. The agent divides himself into two persons and creates a distance between them. The supposed spectator, as the examiner or judge, reflects society in general, since we have already laid down to ourselves a general rule of conduct through our continual observations of the conduct of others. The ‘regard to those general rules of conduct’ is called the ‘sense of duty’ by Smith. The relevant principle here is that of ‘self-command’, the control of one’s passive feelings upon all occasions, which is necessary in order to obtain self-approbation.¹⁵ The self-approbation or disapprobation is nothing but a ‘judgement of conscience’ made by an agent about his own action. So, according to Smith, conscience is a social product, a ‘mirror’ of social feeling. He also refers to ‘the only looking-glass by which we can, in some measure, with the eyes of other people, scrutinize the propriety of our own conduct’.¹⁶ One can use the word ‘reflection’ as a metaphor here, for the thought process mirrors the judgement of a hypothetical observer.

In Adam Smith’s regarding of self-control or self-command as the greatest virtue, we can see the influence of Stoic philosophy on him, just as in the case of Kantian ethics. Kant and Smith share the Stoic tradition in many respects beside the theory of self-command, e.g., in the doctrine of nature as a cosmic harmony, and the view of world citizenship.¹⁷ Needless to say, there is also a deep difference in their

theoretical positions. Smith's moral theory basically intends to establish a new criterion of morality for developing civil societies. Its principle is a feeling of sympathy, as a principle of social communication with each other, or that of a reciprocal process of approval or disapproval. Even the abstract and ideal spectator as 'the man within the breast' has to be first raised and nurtured by his experiences as a real spectator.¹⁸ What is most important for Kant's ethics, on the other hand, is the priority of moral law, with the independence and autonomy of free will. The rationalistic and formalistic position of critical philosophy in Kant is not at all compatible with the empirical theories of moral sense or sympathy in Scottish philosophy of the Enlightenment. Nevertheless, we can see no small influence of Adam Smith's theory of the 'impartial spectator' on Kant in the fields other than ethics, above all in his aesthetic theory.¹⁹

III. The Problem of the Others in Kant

Along with other English and Scottish empirical theories (for example those of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Edmund Burke and Alexander Gerard), Adam Smith's moral theory had a certain influence upon the foundation of Kant's earlier aesthetic theory. In particular Smith's key terms 'sympathy' and 'impartial spectator' caused Kant to consider an ideal relationship with others in terms of aesthetics rather than ethics. This thought then underwent further transformation and developed in his ideas of *sensus communis* and subjective universality of aesthetic judgement in his mature aesthetic theory. It requires an approach which has hitherto been overlooked, I believe. With respect to the socio-historical background, we naturally cannot disregard the difference between England or Scotland and Prussia in the 18th century, i.e., the actively developing industrial and civil society on the one hand and the country of slow growth on the other. But it is also true that each thought, generated from its native soil, may have an individual life and history of its own.

Although Kant mentioned Smith's terms of 'sympathy' or 'impartial spectator' several times in his works of ethics, yet they are treated only secondarily as occasional applications of the universal principle of morality.²⁰ In the last resort, any kind of sentiment or passion ought to be entirely eliminated, as a mere accidental or subjective factor, from his moral theory, and any empirical dimension of the relationship with others must be abstracted in examining the objectivity and universality of moral law. This fundamental maxim is also kept in his epistemological system. In both cases the ultimate principles, i.e., pure concepts called Categories as well as the forms of intuition of Space and Time in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and moral law called the Categorical Imperative in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, must be valid both objectively and universally. When there occurs any disagreement with other people in these fields, it should be straightaway settled by resorting to those principles *a priori*. It is only in the 'Metaphysical Elements of the Theory of Right',

the first part of *The Metaphysic of Morals*, forming the outer blocks of Kant's moral theory, that he touches on the relationship with the other people. The problem here revolves around the possibility of coexistence of each person's freedom in a community. It is related to the possibility of creating a nation with the cooperation of all the people, and in this socio-political context the universal principle of law is again basic to the process. What 'enables the freedom of each individual's will to co-exist with the freedom of everyone else' in the civil society, vindicating the right of private property of each person, paradoxically cannot be but the obedience to the universal law, to which everyone will consent.²¹ Like the principles of cognition and morality, it has to pass over the actual dimension of agreement or consensus with other people at each scene. The problem of concrete relationships with others was to be treated in another way and under the rubric of aesthetic judgement.

In his pre-critical era, as we saw, Kant considered 'taste' as a form of 'social' judgement and its role as cultivating and maintaining people's accommodation to a society through some communication with others. However, taking a broader view of things, one cannot deny that it might be no more than an adaptability to a definite society, but be non-communicating with other societies on the outside. It may also suggest the limitation of Smith's moral theory itself. In earlier stages of Kant's aesthetics, although he had adapted the terms 'impartiality' or 'disinterestedness' in order to overcome one's private sense, he took the universal validity of taste to be almost synonymous with its social validity. Here the actual existence of a society was indispensable to the universal validity of delight, because this universality signified at best the general agreement in this society.

In his mature aesthetic theory, found in the *Critique of Judgement*, Kant abandoned much of his earlier empirical thought. Especially the factor of society was viewed in a negative way as an intermediate element which arouses empirical interest in the object of aesthetic judgement. The idea of society underwent a transformation in his thought. He refined the idea of *sensus communis* as a principle of taste together with that of pluralism, drawing on earlier concepts, and he elaborated his theory of aesthetic judgement as he developed a new terminology of critical philosophy. Different from the first two critiques, the third critique is in a sense a miscellany of his previous thought and later critical philosophy. That makes our understanding of the *Critique of Judgement* quite difficult, but also gives us a fertile ground for interpretation. We no longer find here the concept of 'impartial spectator' itself; instead the device of the imaginary change of situation with others is introduced to carry out a vital role for aesthetic judgement.

While for Smith sympathy takes place as some correspondence of sentiments between spectator and agent, and upon it man approves or disapproves of his own conduct as well as that of the other, in Kant's theory of aesthetic judgement the communication with others is mediated by one's delight in the beautiful in nature or art, so the relationship between people cannot be but an indirect one. In the latter case, the spectator at first directs his attention neither to the sentiments nor conduct

of himself or another man, but to the thing which he finds beautiful. Though Kant drew on Smith's basic ideas, he rejected the need for a direct relationship to others and gave the concepts a new significance beyond Smith's original conception. On the one side, it means that Kant is just inventing a kind of ideal or unrealistic relationship between people, disregarding a living interaction and mutual resonance between them. On the other side, Kant's notion may transcend a particular closed community which any empirical connection should presuppose, and, eliminating the implied exclusionism which is necessarily associated with the set-ideas of 'inside' and 'outside', represent an idea of a liberated open community through each person's aesthetic experience.²²

IV. *Sensus communis* and a 'Liberal Way of Thinking'

In § 40 of the *Critique of Judgement*, entitled 'Taste as a kind of *sensus communis*', Kant deals with the problem of others more explicitly than he does elsewhere in this book. This section includes the argument over *sensus communis* 'aestheticus' and a digression on the maxims of common human understanding; the latter appears to have nothing to do with the theory of aesthetic judgement, but it 'may still serve to elucidate its fundamental propositions'.²³ I would like to suggest that the particular sense (as a mental faculty) called common sense [Gemeinsinn] or *sensus communis* is related to a 'liberal way of thinking [Denkungsart]' through the device of transferring oneself to the standpoint of others.²⁴

An aesthetic judgement as such involves a claim of universal validity. To call something beautiful is to demand the same delight from others. This universal validity is not founded upon any objective concept, because in aesthetic judgement, unlike theoretical judgement, 'we refer the representation to the Subject and its feeling of pleasure or displeasure'.²⁵ Therefore, aesthetic judgement depends on our presupposing the existence of a common sense, which is the necessary condition of the communicability of a feeling. In other words, an idea of common sense assures a subject's conviction that everyone ought to assent to his judgement. This discussion is first presented in the end of the 'Analytic of Aesthetic Judgement'. In § 22, Kant implicitly suggests that common sense doesn't exist as 'a constitutive principle of the possibility of experience', but is formed for us as 'a regulative principle' by a still higher principle of reason, so that an aesthetic judgement is 'but a requirement of reason for generating such a consensus', a unanimity in the 'way of sense [Sinnesart]' (which is distinct from, but linked to a 'way of thinking').²⁶ The theme of a common sense or *sensus communis* is discussed more fully in § 40, as a part of the 'Deduction of Pure Aesthetic Judgement'.

First, Kant gives the following definition:

By the name *sensus communis* is to be understood the idea of a communal sense [ein gemeinschaftlicher Sinn], i.e., a critical faculty which in its reflective act takes

account (a priori) of the mode of representation of everyone else, in order, as it were, to weigh its judgement with the collective reason of mankind, and thereby avoid the illusion arising from subjective and personal conditions which could readily be taken for objective, an illusion that would exert a prejudicial influence upon its judgement.²⁷

The definition certainly pinpoints the problem, but needs further explanation, which Kant provides:

This is accomplished by weighing the judgement, not so much with actual, as rather with the merely possible, judgements of others, and by putting ourselves in the position of everyone else [sich in die Stelle jedes anderen versetzen], as the result of a mere abstraction from the limitations which contingently affect our own estimate. This, in turn, is effected by so far as possible letting go the element of matter, i.e., sensation, in our general state of representative activity, and confining attention to the formal peculiarities of our representation or general state of representative activity.²⁸

In a previous paper, I divided this 'operation of reflection' of judgement into five processes, reversing the order of Kant's description of it.²⁹

- i) 'To confine attention to the formal peculiarities of our representation'. The formal peculiarities indicate, in the state of representative activity, free activity of imagination which apprehends a form or contours of the object, rather than mere sensuous reception of colour or sound of it. It is also expressed, in other parts of the *Critique of Judgement*, as a 'free play [freies Spiel]' or harmonious interaction between imagination and understanding.³⁰
- ii) 'To let go so far as possible the element of matter'. This apparently negative operation is but the other side of the first positive one. To leave something aside or to abstract from it might seem to have only a negative import. But the ability to abstract [abstrahieren] from a mere accidental empirical element of representation is more generally held by Kant himself, in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, as demonstrating 'a freedom of the power of judgement and the autonomy of the mind, by which the state of its representation is under its control (*animus sui compos*)'.³¹
- iii) 'To abstract from the limitations which contingently affect our own estimate'. The ability to abstract is also of great importance for universal communicability. Each individual unavoidably has all kinds of empirical conditions in his own particular temporal (historical) or social situation. He cannot remove all of these in actuality. But to be able to abstract himself from these factors, at least in his mind, means his emancipation from his personal limitations, and setting himself free at the level of possibility.
- iv) 'To put oneself in the position of everyone else'. This is almost the same expression that Smith applies to the 'impartial spectator', except additional words

‘everyone else’. Here Kant applies it to *sensus communis* as the ground of aesthetic judgement. For Kant, this expression means to ‘weigh one’s judgement not so much with actual, as rather with the merely possible, judgements of others’ In other words, it is for a faculty of judgement itself to ‘take account (a priori) of the mode of representation of everyone else in its reflective act’.

v) ‘To weigh his judgement with the collective reason of mankind’. Here at a stroke Kant reveals his universal perspective. For him ‘everyone’ means humanity as a species, which does not only bear a physiological meaning, but rather suggests the idea of a possible universal community of human beings.

It becomes clear from the above analysis that, through the mediation of stage iii) (abstracting ourselves from our own contingent situations), two dimensions of freedom are linked together, on the one hand a freedom in the relationship to a beautiful thing and on the other a freedom in human relationships. The stage iii) thus serves as a kind of hinge linking stages i) and ii), which deal with our relationship to the object, with stages iv) and v), which deal with our relationships to others. Thus understood, this passage presents a pivotal element of Kantian aesthetic theory. Of these two kinds of freedom, the first one can be considered as a kind of autonomy or a purification of representative activity, and the second one as a liberality (broad-mindedness) in respect of attaining a universal agreement.

Furthermore, these two kinds of freedom seem to correspond to the first two of the three maxims of common human understanding in a digression of § 40. The first maxim is that of ‘unprejudiced thought’ which is to ‘think for oneself [Selbstdenken]’, but not passively, and the second one is of ‘enlarged thought’, which is to ‘think from the position of everyone else [an der Stelle jedes anderen denken]’. The former is the way to ‘enlightenment’ which means emancipation from superstition. The latter can be attained by detaching himself from the private subjective conditions of his judgement and by reflecting upon his own judgement from a ‘universal standpoint’. It also means ‘transferring oneself to the standpoint of others [sich in den Standpunkt anderer versetzen]’, which is similar to the device of aesthetic judgement achieved through *sensus communis* on the stage iv). The third maxim is that of ‘consistent thought’, which is attainable only by the union of unprejudiced and enlarged thought.³² In *Anthropology*, Kant makes the first ‘negative’ maxim equivalent to the principle of ‘freedom from constraint in our way of thinking [die zwangsfreie Denkungsart]’ and the second ‘positive’ one equivalent to that of ‘the liberal way of thinking [die liberale Denkungsart]’.³³ So we may differentiate a negative freedom from a positive freedom in our way of thinking. The latter seems to be more important in Kant’s thought because it relates to *sensus communis* viewed from the angle of the relationship to others. However, in communicating our thoughts to one another, a harmony of two mental powers (imagination and understanding), which is required for connecting intuition with concepts or *vice versa*, must be ‘according to law and under the constraint of definite concepts’. It is only in aesthetic judgement that the interaction between imagination and understanding is put into a ‘free play’

and is communicated as an internal feeling of a purposive state of mind.³⁴ So Kant acknowledges that the word *sensus communis* is related more to taste than to sound understanding and in the former case the word 'sense' can stand for 'an effect that mere reflection has upon the mind', i.e., the feeling of pleasure.³⁵ We can also find a passage in which Kant connects the 'free play' between imagination and understanding in aesthetic judgement with the liberal way of thinking, in 'General Remark on the Exposition of Aesthetic Reflective Judgement':

Though ... the immediate pleasure in the beautiful in nature presupposes and cultivates a certain *liberality* of way of thinking [eine gewisse *Liberalität* der Denkungsart], i.e., makes our delight independent of any mere sensory enjoyment, still it represents freedom rather as in *play* than as exercising a law-ordained *task*, which is the genuine characteristic of human morality, where reason has to impose its dominion upon sensibility.³⁶

V. Contention about Taste and Pluralism

On the basis of *sensus communis*, aesthetic judgement, together with conviction of its persuasiveness, must admit of being universally communicated; each person who describes something as beautiful holds that everyone ought to agree with his judgement. However, its conviction cannot be an objective certainty because it is not determined on the basis of proof. In this regard aesthetic judgement 'has to face unavoidable difficulties which do not affect logical judgement'.³⁷ The former is not grounded on logical concepts as is the latter, but on a mere sensible relation between imagination and understanding in the represented form of the object. In such a case subsuming the object under the principle of *sensus communis* 'may easily prove fallacious'.³⁸ So it seems inevitable that a disparity among people's judgements will occur. Nevertheless, the lack of consensus 'does not detract from the legitimacy of the claim of the judgement to count on universal agreement'.³⁹ The difficulty and uncertainty concerns the correctness of the subsumption of the object under the principle. Or rather, the principle within each individual is not fixed and immutable as an objective law, but is a kind of working principle that is open to elaboration in the exercise of aesthetic judgement. Conflicting evaluations could make a judging subject question his own judgement or his degree of detachment from personal conditions and thus provide an opportunity to sharpen his faculty of judgement. In other words, in the conflict and comparison with actual judgements different from one's own, there is a possibility for cultivating and refining one's taste.

In the 'Dialectic of Aesthetic Judgement' Kant refers, in preparing for his presentation of the antinomy of taste (§ 56), to the two famous commonplaces about taste. 1) *everyone has his own taste*; this means that aesthetic judgement 'has no right to the necessary agreement of others'. 2) *there is no disputing about taste*; this

means that taste is not based on definite concepts and 'no decision can be reached by proofs'. Then Kant interjects between these two commonplaces an intermediate proposition which is central to his discussion: 3) *there may be contention about taste* (although not a dispute). People may rightly contend this matter. Both disputing [disputieren] and contending [streiten] 'aim at bringing judgements into accordance by means of their mutual opposition'.⁴⁰ But while the former may attain agreement by objective concepts as bases of proof, the latter may not reach universal accordance because of its lack of a definite basis of proof. And yet contention is to be allowed, Kant believes, since there is some 'hope' of arriving at universal agreement.⁴¹ If the ground of judgement were merely a subjective and personal one, even contention would be unnecessary. There must be some ground of judgement which is neither objective nor merely subjective and which also works as a basis or prerequisite of the contention itself. Such is a 'regulative' principle of aesthetic judgement. Kant characterises aesthetic judgement founded upon this particular principle as being not 'egoistic' but necessarily 'pluralistic' by its inner nature, before the 'Deduction of Pure Aesthetic Judgement'.⁴²

Hence if the import of the judgement of taste; ... cannot be egoistic, but must necessarily, from its inner nature, be allowed a pluralistic validity, i.e., on account of what taste itself is, and not on account of the examples which others give of their taste, then it must be founded upon some *a priori* principle.

The 'pluralism' applies to the 'liberal' way of thought too. According to Kant in *Anthropology*, 'pluralism' is 'the attitude of not being occupied with oneself as the whole world, but regarding and conducting oneself as a citizen of the world [ein bloßer Weltbürger]'.⁴³ 'Being a citizen of the world' suggests forming a universal community with everyone else, that is a community open diachronically as well as synchronically without end. But it does not mean to disregard differences between people or societies nor to pass over a communication with others. Rather, basing one's thinking on such a principle should imply comparison with the actual judgements of others and even the possibility of modifying a phase of the principle itself. In other words, if one should think for oneself and at the same time from a universal standpoint, one must be able to admit distinction between oneself and others in reality and to withstand the existence of countless contradictory viewpoints. That is also to be liberated from the totalitarianism that everyone should conform to definite thoughts in actuality, and yet not to abandon a hope of attaining universal harmony in possibility. The attempt to adjust and reconcile the differences in thinking will not end but will continue infinitely. The dynamic nature of this process is characteristic of the liberal way of thought. To have a broadened mind or to think from the standpoint of everyone else means to envision an idea of unanimity of every human being, imagining a possibility of a universal community. The universal community ideally comprehends an infinite number of possible viewpoints; it is open both diachronically and

synchronically without end. This infinity is not an extensive one that will only expand indefinitely, but an intensive one that is to extend inside and to be embraced within the idea of the universal community. It must not be a homogeneous universe indicating a uniformity of thinking, but a heterogeneous one indicating a coexistence of manifold viewpoints and a dynamic process of integrating these modes of thought.

In the egoistic attitude, on the contrary, to be 'occupied with oneself as the whole world' may mean paradoxically to immerse oneself in the other, which is in a sense the same thing as being occupied with others as the whole world. That is to say that here one cannot meet with any 'other' person as such. The same could be said of the case of actual 'sympathy'. A limitation of sympathy is that it may form a particularly closed society. Inside such a community people experience feelings uniformly and relate to no people other than themselves. To sympathize with others may lead one to assimilate oneself with others. If, on the basis of sympathy, one identifies his viewpoint with that of others immediately, his judgement might become heteronomous. Therefore Kant warned, in his short essay of 1796, of the danger of 'philosophy drawn from feelings' for freedom of thinking.⁴⁴

However, Kant finds in aesthetic judgement a certain 'way of sense' that could overcome the drawbacks of natural and immediate feeling. Based on the idea of *sensus communis*, this way of feeling is free and liberal, i.e., pluralistic 'by its inner nature'. It is, so to speak, a truly 'imaginary' sympathy that can sustain 'universal communicability' of aesthetic judgement. The universal community it presupposes is the whole that could embrace infinite plural viewpoints and it will be accomplished neither by any actual relationships to others nor in any society at present, but the accomplishment of it will be always postponed. The form of the whole itself will be continuously renewed. I might add that the dynamic process of this intensive infinity could also be seen in a 'free play' between imagination and understanding in the consciousness of the judging subject, where reason doesn't 'impose its dominion upon sensibility'.⁴⁵ But this theme requires elaboration elsewhere. It is enough here to see how Kant elucidates the claim of universal validity of aesthetic judgement in his philosophical maturity. On the one hand, taking the device of 'putting oneself in the situation of other' from Smith's theory of the 'impartial spectator' and adding to it the words 'everyone else', Kant proposes the idea of *sensus communis* as the principle of aesthetic judgement and in a sense idealises the relationship with others as a possible communal relationship. On the other hand, as a requisite for attaining universal community to the greatest extent possible, he acknowledges that one should admit the actual disparity and conflict of different judgements and through this diversity there is a possibility of cultivating one's own taste. The crucial point is that Kant finds a parallel between a certain 'way of sense' and a 'way of thinking' and therefore he sees a deep connection between taste and freedom of thinking.

The *Critique of Judgement* was published in 1790, that is, the year after the French Revolution. But the Revolution had almost no influence upon the book. In his last published work, *The Conflict of the Faculties* of 1798, Kant mentions the Revolution and there again draws upon the terms of 'sympathy' and 'impartial spectator'. The whole work deals with the conflict between the three 'higher' faculties of theology, law and medicine on the one hand, and the 'lower' or philosophical faculty on the other. According to him, the teachings of the 'higher' faculties interest the government and submit themselves to its sanction because their work has an influence on the public, while only the faculty of philosophy is independent of the government's command and free to make impartial remarks on everything, even on the work of the other faculties. In § 6 of Part II of this book, Kant argues about 'an event of our time' which means the French Revolution, as follows: even though it may be 'filled with misery and atrocities' and should not be repeated, 'this revolution nonetheless finds in the hearts of all spectators (who are not engaged in it themselves) a sympathy that borders closely on enthusiasm'.⁴⁶ The existence of 'the mode of thinking of the spectators [die Denkungsart der Zuschauer]' which reveals itself publicly even at the risk of a great disadvantage for themselves, proves a form of progress of human race. Their sympathy is universal and disinterested owing to the attitude of the uninvolved public of onlookers. Still this sympathy is also the passionate participation in the exaltation of the revolutionaries, since a 'genuine enthusiasm always moves only towards the ideal, ... and it cannot be grafted onto self-interest'.⁴⁷ Here is the final stage of Kant's acceptance of Adam Smith's theory of the 'impartial spectator'.

Notes

1. *Theorie der moralischen Empfindungen*, translated from the third edition by Christian Günther Rautenberg (Braunschweig, 1770). In Germany the second translation was published in 1791 by Ludwig Theobul Kosegarten of editions 4 & 5 of the original book and supplemented in 1795 with the additions to edition 6. Cf. Adam Smith, *Theorie der Ethische Gefühle*, übersetzt von W. Eckstein (F. Meiner Verlag, 1928/1977), Vorbemerkung des Herausgebers, S.XXXIIff.
2. Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Briefwechsel*, Auswahl und Anmerkungen von O. Schondörffer (F. Meiner Verlag, 1924/1972), Nr.41. (from Marcus Herz. Berlin, dated 9. July 1771), S.98. A previous letter, from Kant to M. Herz dated 7. June 1771, also reminds us of Smith's concept of the 'impartial spectator': 'I always hope to acquire the third judgement which may be better than my previous one, through looking it impartially from the position of others'. Ibid., Nr.40, S.94.
3. Kant, *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie [=RA]*, Akademische Ausgabe [=AA] XV-1, Nr.767, S.334.
4. Cf. P. Guyer, Pleasure and Society in Kant's Theory of Taste, in *Essays in Kant's Aesthetics*, ed. by T. Cohen & P. Guyer (The University of Chicago Press, 1982).

5. Kant, *Logik Blomberg*, AA XXIV–1, § 18–19, S.45. Cf. *RA*, AA XV–1, Nr.648, 686, 710, 743, 880, etc. *Logik Philippi*, AA XXIV–1, S.354.
6. Cf. J. Nagano, Aesthetic Judgement and the Idea of Human Community, Problem of Universal Communicability in Kant's Aesthetics, in *Journal of the Faculty of Letters, Aesthetics*, Vol.11, (The University of Tokyo, 1986).
7. Cf. Francis Hutcheson, *Illustrations upon the Moral Sense* (1728), *A System of Moral Philosophy* (1755).
8. Cf. David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* (1740), II, III, *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751).
9. Cf. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* [=TMS], ed. by A .L. Macfie and D. D. Raphael (Liberty Classics, 1974), II.i.intro.1, p.67, III.1.1, p.109.
10. TMS, I.i.4.6, p.21.
11. TMS, I.i.4.7, p.22.
12. Cf. TMS, II, pp.67–108.
13. TMS, III.1.2, p.109.
14. D. D. Raphael, The Impartial Spectator, in *Essays on Adam Smith*, ed. by A. S. Skinner & T. Wilson (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1975), P.99.
15. Cf. TMS, II.3.21–45, pp.145–156.
16. TMS, III.1.5, p.112.
17. Cf. TMS, III.3.11, p.140, III.3.14, p.143, III.3.27, p.147, III.3.30, p.149, III.3.44, p.156, etc.
18. Cf. TMS, III.2.32, p.130, III.3.38, p.153.
19. In respect of the general objects of taste, Smith considers that, because beautiful things have no peculiar relation to the judging subject and his companion, both persons look at the objects from the same point of view, in which case sympathy does not take place for producing the agreement of sentiments. For Smith, it is more important that the man of taste, with his acuteness and delicacy, plays a role of leader, directing or conducting our own sentiments. Cf. TMS, I.i.4.2.
20. Cf. Kant, *Reflexionen zur Moralphilosophie*, AA XIX, Nr.6628, S.117, *Grundlegung für Metaphysik der Sitten* (1788), AA IV, S.393. In addition, Kant was certainly familiar with another book by Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*. Cf. Kant, *Metaphysik der Sitten* [=MS](1797), I. Anfangsgründe der Rechtslehre, AA VI, S.289, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* [*Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*] [=APPV] (1798), AA VII, § 48, S.209. It is well-known that Kant's idea of 'unsocial sociability', which promotes development in every human culture in spite of social conflicts, corresponds to 'an invisible hand' in Smith's theory of economics. Kant develops the theme in one of his articles on historical philosophy. Cf. Kant, *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürger Absicht*, AA VIII, S.20.
21. Cf. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781/1787) B373, MS, § C, AA VI, S.231.
22. The concept of 'impartiality' can be related to that of 'disinterestedness' which is the first critical moment in Kant's analysis of aesthetic judgement. The latter would be developed into Romantic and Idealist conception of the 'autonomy' of beauty or

art. But here I am putting stress on the another aspect of the ‘impartiality’, i.e., the possible communication with everyone else through liberation from self-interest, which indicates the universal communicability of aesthetic judgement.

23. Kant, *Critique of Judgement* [*Kritik der Urteilskraft*] [=CJ], § 40, AA V, S.158.

I owed my quotations from this book to the J. C. Meredith translation (1952), with necessary alterations, but used Akademische Ausgabe V pagination, for example, ‘V, 158’.

24. Ibid. Hannah Arendt, referring particularly to § 40 of this book, reads Kant’s third critique as a theory of political judgement. I presume that, while she rightly insists the ‘basic other-directedness’ or ‘public relevance’ of aesthetic judgement, she tends to disregard the individual relationship between a subject and a beautiful thing as the first moment of aesthetic judgement. Cf. H.Arendt, *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy*, edited and with an Interpretive Essay by R.Beiner (The University of Chicago Press, 1982).

25. Ibid., § 1, V, 3–4.

26. Ibid., § 22, V, 68.

27. Ibid., § 40, V, 157.

28. Ibid.

29. Cf. J. Nagano, Das Ästhetische Urteil und die Freiheit bei Kant, die Tragweite des *sensus communis*, in *Aesthetics*, No.5 (The Japanese Society for Aesthetics, March 1992).

30. CJ, § 9, V, 28.

31. APPV, § 3, AA VII, S.131.

32. CJ, § 40, V, 158–9.

33. APPV, § 59, AA VII, S.228.

34. CJ, § 40, V, 161.

35. Ibid., § 40, V, 160.

36. Ibid., General Remark, V, 116.

37. Ibid., § 38, Remark, V, 152.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., § 56, V, 233.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid., General Remark, V, 130.

43. APPV, § 2, AA VII, S.130

44. Cf. Kant, *On a Newly Arisen Superior Tone in Philosophy* [*Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie*] (1796), AA VIII, S.395.

45. CJ, General Remark, V, 116.

46. Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties* [*Der Streit der Fakultäten*] (1798), AA VII, S.85.

47. Ibid., S.86.