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PAUL GUYER

Mary Mothersill's Beauty Restored

HER PUBLISHERS surely would have disliked quotation marks in the title of her wonderful book. Of course it is not beauty itself which Mary Mothersill hopes to restore. Rather, she aims to revive the concept of beauty, and to return it to the center of our attention, whence it had been displaced by the false modesty of the ordinary language philosophers and the incomplete cognitivism of the linguists of art, the fundamental connection between aesthetic merit and pleasure itself. A student of the eighteenth century, when the plain fact of our pleasure in it finally became the basis of a secular justification of our attachment to natural and artistic beauty, cannot but welcome Mothersill's essay. In these remarks I would only like to add that there may be even wider room and deeper need for a theory of beauty than Mothersill allows.¹

On Mothersill's account, aesthetic theory must face the Kantian task of showing how the two truths which she calls the "First Thesis" and the "Second Thesis" can fit together and thereby render the judgment of taste at least logically possible (pp. 86-87). The First Thesis is that there are no noninnocuous *principles* of taste of the form "Whatever has property Φ is *pro tanto* beautiful" where the predicate Φ is not just another name for beauty or some more specific aesthetic merit (p. 164). The Second Thesis is the premise that individual judgments of beauty are "genuine" (pp. 135-44), no mere expressions of inner state but claims about individual objects in the external world. The project of restoring "beauty" is to dispel the apparent antinomy of these two theses by providing an analysis of beauty which

shows how judgments of taste can be genuine without being derivable from noninnocuous generalizations.

Mothersill clears the ground for her proposal with a rejection of the attack on the possibility of aesthetic theory conducted by a number of philosophers of the 1950s and 1960s. This attack depended on a misunderstanding of the First Thesis: the "anti-theorists" objected to mostly unnamed traditional theorists that there were no determinate rules for the creation or judgment of beautiful objects, and concluded from this that there could be no such thing as a theory of beauty; but this conclusion followed only because they confused *principles* of beauty with a *theory* of beauty, and thus denied what more traditional theorists had never maintained—all the while continuing to help themselves to the supposition that there were certain "good-making characteristics." In fact, traditional theory, as in Croce, was more inclined to maintain the uniqueness of beautiful objects or genuine artistic expression and thereby ground rather than deny the First Thesis. Since Kant, if not before, the tradition had sought a theory of beauty which, like the Aristotelian account of the just, would be "both enlightening and just, but . . . not prescribe anything remotely comparable to a litmus-paper test" to determine the beauty of particular objects (see especially pp. 135-44).

Of course, it is unlikely that the anti-theorists just confused principles and theories and so simply failed to notice that there was no substantive disagreement between themselves and more traditional theorists. So what explains their misunderstanding? A prominent part of Mothersill's explanation is that the anti-theorists were moved by the traditional idea of a parallel between aesthetics and ethics; but instead of conceiving of ethics as providing

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ideals of virtue or action which can be applied correctly only by the mature individual of good judgment, they pictured an ethical theory precisely as a definition of the good or right which yields determinate rules for action or reaction in all conceivable circumstances of human practice. With such a conception of ethical theory, they could not but conclude that aesthetics fails to satisfy the only acceptable model for a theory of value in general.

Such a conception of ethical theory, really no more Kantian than Aristotelian but in the British tradition of both utilitarianism and intuitionism, surely played a role in the attack upon aesthetic theory, but cannot be the whole story. Two other prejudices of the period must also have influenced the anti-theorists. First, the verificationist theory of meaning, according to which the meaningfulness of a term is dependent on the existence of rules for its application to objects of experience, must have made them suspicious of such a general conception as that of beauty; for if such a general concept cannot directly yield determinate rules for its own application, then it may begin to look as if there is really no general concept for aesthetics at all. And if even more particular concepts of aesthetic appraisal, such as the dainty and the dumpy, could not be associated with any procedures for the verification of their application, then so much the worse. Second, the positivist equation of scientific *explanation* and *prediction* must have motivated the doubt that even if there was a general *concept* of the beautiful there could be any informative *theory* about it; for clearly no proposed *explanation* of our aesthetic appreciation suffices to yield any particular *predictions* of our aesthetic predilections. In sum, it could hardly have been easy for aestheticians in the hey-day of positivism, whether logical or ordinary and express or tacit, to embrace the First Thesis, the equation of meaning with rules for verification, and the equation of explanation with rules for prediction, and still to suppose that there could be a meaningful and even explanatorily significant concept of beauty. Only once these two dogmas of positivism began to be relaxed might it once again have seemed respectable to offer a general theory of beauty.

I doubt whether Mary Mothersill would disagree with such an extension of her diag-

nosis of anti-theory. But removal of these positivist constraints may leave room for more theory of beauty than Mothersill's analysis of the concept provides. A brief sketch of her account may help us see where it needs amplification.

I.

A theory of beauty must work within the boundaries (p. 170) imposed by the First Thesis, that there are no aesthetic principles of the form "Anything which is Φ is beautiful," and the Second Thesis, that individual judgments of the form "This x is beautiful"—where whatever general *term* is used to pick out x will not imply a *principle* entailing the further predication of beauty—are genuine claims to objective validity. The meaning of the First Thesis requires little explanation, and in a way the thesis also requires little argument: no one has ever mounted a plausible argument against it, few have ever tried, and even the anti-theorists themselves have provided suspiciously few examples of the kinds of "theories" that would imply such rules. The Second Thesis requires more explication. Mothersill devotes much of her chapter on the Second Thesis to the *normative* aspect of judgments of taste—the difference between a mere *avowal* of personal pleasure and a *verdict* binding on an audience wider than oneself; and here she quite rightly seeks a middle ground between the proto-emotivism of Santayana, according to which for all its normative sound the judgment of taste is just a misleading expression of personal pleasure, and the excessive moralism of Kant, according to which the judgment of taste actually conceals a *command* for the agreement of others. I will return to this important issue, but now we must consider Mothersill's overall analysis. This seems to be that a genuine judgment of taste is an assertion that an individual object has pleased me and promises to do so again, subject to four conditions. (1) This assertion is an expression of my *conviction* as opposed to mere opinion, which can thus withstand reflection on my qualifications to appreciate the object and the acceptability of the conditions under which I have appreciated it, and can even be connected with procedures by which my conviction can be tested. (2) This assertion can have discernible impact on my overall body of beliefs

and implications for my own behavior, that is it does not simply represent an epiphenomenal episode of pleasure but can affect my plans and action of various cognitive and practical kinds. (3) Moreover, it is intended to express the contingent truth that it is something about the object of my pleasure which pleases me, (4) as well as intended to have some kind of normative implication for others, though surely not a command that others must also like the object or even a claim which is defeated by the evident disagreement of others. Mothersill's argument for this characterization I find somewhat obscure. She does acknowledge that the Second Thesis may seem less secure than the First, but associates insecurity about it primarily with the unclear normative import of judgments of taste. Otherwise, she seems content to rest with the view that this thesis, like the other, is not a self-evident but is an *obvious* truth which is not provable but then again is not intended as an *axiom* of a theory of beauty which it entails; it simply provides a natural boundary on our aesthetic theorizing which could in principle be overturned by a powerful theory—but has hardly been so to date (p. 168).

Mothersill's next step is the identification of a "standing concept" of beauty, a conception of it which is taken for granted in "critical discussion of the arts" as the concepts of knowledge and action are assumed in our first-order scientific and practical discourse, and which, although it is certainly open to philosophical reflection, explanation, and even refinement, is no more open to dissolution through philosophical objection than it is dependent upon philosophical support to begin with. This standing concept of beauty provides a pre-theoretical identification of the *object* of aesthetic judgment complementing the constraints on the *judgments* of taste themselves which are expressed by the First and Second Theses. The three "commonly accepted truths" (p. 275) which constitute the standing concept of beauty are (1) that "Beauty is a kind of good," something which "in contexts of deliberation and choice counts as a plus" (p. 262) though not a plus against which no minuses can be set; (2) that "Items of any sort may be beautiful" (p. 265), by which is meant not that any *particular* can properly be seen as beautiful, but rather that there are no ontological

kinds—such as "images, shadows, reflections, dreams [and] fictions" (p. 265)—but also, presumably, no more natural kinds as well—such as, say, wines, women, and songs—among which beautiful particulars cannot be found; and finally (3) that "Beauty is causally linked to pleasure and inspires love" (p. 271), that both the perception and the production of beauty cause pleasure among a variety of producers and audiences in a variety of ways.

The first of these truths is basically self-evident. The second may be understood as the complement of the First Thesis which holds that no noninnocuous classification is a *sufficient* condition of beauty, while the present claim is that no such classification is a *necessary* condition of beauty. Though the beauties of maidens, pots, and pictures may be interestingly different, no theory of beauty which pretended to prove *a priori* that one of these kinds of things *couldn't* be beautiful would be plausible. It is the third component of the standing concept of beauty, the claim that beauty in an object is the *cause* of a notable pleasure in it, that calls for some of Mothersill's most subtle argumentation and that ultimately points the way to the theory of beauty itself.

Mothersill undermines three philosophical objections to the otherwise natural assumption that beauty is a property in an object which causes feelings of pleasure in those who observe it. First, it has been held that the causal relationship requires an effect which is an event of change from an antecedent state of affairs, but our pleasure in a beautiful object is not any sort of event; pleasure is not an inner episode like pain but some sort of attitude or even a way of conducting an activity. Second, it is held that causality is a contingent connection between two discrete states of affairs, and so requires that the otherwise appropriate characterizations of the cause and the effect reflect their logical independence; yet beauty and pleasure are no more logically independent, than, say, pleasure and fulfillment of desire. If the fulfillment of desire *logically* entails pleasure, it cannot *cause* it, and likewise beauty is actually too closely connected with pleasure to *cause* it. Finally, it is insisted that cause and effect must each be instances of repeatable kinds, states of affairs between which there can be law-like regularities; but then any assumption of a connection between

the beauty of an object and its uniqueness will be precluded.

Philosophers as profound as Kant have felt the force of these objections,² and Mothersill's refutation of them is masterly. She rejects the arguments, especially the Rylean arguments, against the supposition that pleasure really is any sort of inner episode at all on a number of grounds: pleasure is in fact sufficiently distinct from the rest of our experience of an object to be abstracted from it and sometimes even to interfere with it; pleasure need not be synchronous with the activity that produces it—it may linger on after our encounter with the object is over, or even come to our notice only then; and our several pleasures are not merely ways of talking or otherwise behaving, but inner states which may at least sometimes be hidden and have to be inferred (pp. 282-83). Second, although the "answer to the question, 'What is the cause of your current pleasure?'" is often obvious and unmistakable" (p. 301), this does not mean that the connection between cause and effect is other than contingent; there is no logical necessity that a beautiful object invariably and obviously please, any more than there is in fact a logical necessity that the fulfillment of desire actually produce the pleasure expected from it. Beauty and the fulfillment of desire almost always please, and it is almost always evident that they are the causes of the pleasures they produce, so the inference from cause to effect is almost always routine. But the exceptional is not the logically impossible, and the connection between beauty and pleasure, like that between fulfillment of desire and pleasure, is in fact a contingent causal connection even if it hardly ever fails or even fails to be obvious.

This brings us to the objection that a beautiful object is too unique to be the proper subject of a causal generalization. Here Mothersill's answer is that the uniquely pleasing character of a beautiful object is not in fact *logically* unique; it is logically possible that an object please in virtue of a property which as a matter of fact it does not share with every or even any other member of its natural kind, but which it could share with objects "indistinguishable" from it "under standard conditions of observation" (p. 343-45). In fact, in cases in which an object which has aesthetically satisfactory

reproductions, or in allographic arts, where the work of art is intended to exist only in a reproducible form, repeated occurrence of the property which pleases is actual and not just logically possible. Rembrandt's etching "View of Amsterdam" certainly differs in a myriad of ways from "The Three Trees," and either may be said to please precisely in virtue of features which render it unique in comparison to the other; but one print of "The Three Trees" may also—*ceteris paribus*—please precisely in virtue of the same property which makes another print of that etching beautiful. A beautiful object pleases in virtue of a property which is aesthetically unique but which satisfies the logical requirement of repeatability derived from the Humean analysis of causation.

Such a property is what Mothersill calls an "aesthetic property" and is the heart of her final analysis of the concept of beauty. She approaches her definition through Aquinas's description of beauty as that, *cujus apprehensio ipsa placet*. From the premise that beauty pleases only through *apprehensio* comes the requirement that pleasure in a beautiful object can only be caused by considerable, even studied acquaintance with the individual object, and neither from any general classification under which the object may fall nor from an indeterminate "context of pleasure," that is, an overall situation instead of an individual—an evening at the opera rather than the opera itself. From the adverb *ipsa*, however, Mothersill derives a further requirement of particularity: what causes the specific pleasure of beauty is not just an individual object in a more complicated context, the opera in the midst of all the distractions attending its performance, but something particular in the object itself, an "aesthetic property." This is the unique constellation of the more ordinary properties of the object—colors and shapes or words and chords—which, although a critic may be capable of referring to it only by general terms for ordinary properties, is actually shared only with the class of possible or actual objects perceptually indistinguishable from the beautiful object at issue. Thus, for instance, *The Burial of the Conde Orgaz* may please because of "the steeply rising and falling curve" traced by the outlines of the figures in its foreground (pp. 336-38), but a geometrical equivalent of

that curve on a blackboard or a page of Hogarth, or maybe even in another painting by El Greco, wouldn't necessarily please equally or at all—it's *that* line outlining *those* figures with *those* colors creating *that* mood that pleases. With this notion of an "aesthetic property," Mothersill then proposes a triad of definitions, required to make epistemological space for the differences between merely taking something to be beautiful, finding it beautiful, and the object's really being so, which culminates in the definition that

Any individual is beautiful if and only if it is such as to be a cause of pleasure in virtue of its aesthetic properties (p. 347).

This appearance of the word "aesthetic" in the *definiens* should raise the hackles of the anti-theorist. But when it is recalled that a definition of the beautiful is to enlighten without providing a litmus-test and when both the extended defense of the causal status of beauty as well as the elaborate characterization of an aesthetic property are kept in mind, it will be seen that this definition does in fact encapsulate a considerable amount of enlightenment.

Nevertheless, this definition does not go as far as we can to explain the causal link between beauty and pleasure or as far as we must to justify the normative aspect of judgments of taste.

II.

Mothersill defends the assumption that beauty causes pleasure from the objections to it, but does not try to explain *why* aesthetic properties *should* cause pleasure. Nor does she say why she ventures no such explanation. Clearly she is put off by the spectacular failure of Kant's attempt at a *transcendental deduction* of an *a priori* principle of aesthetic judgment and even a necessarily true version of the First Thesis itself (p. 116), and possibly thinks that any attempt to venture beyond differentia to an actual explanation must come to such a sorry end. I certainly agree with her that Kant falls far short of his goal of showing that the pleasure is just as necessary a consequence of the basic faculties of human cognition as say causal judgment itself and that the communicability of a correct judgment of taste is

just as secure an assumption as that of the objective affinity of nature itself. Nevertheless, certain issues left open by Mothersill's analysis of beauty call for an explanatory theory. Aesthetic properties need not cause pleasure; the ugliness of an object may also lie in a property shared only with others perceptually indistinguishable from it. So why should aesthetic properties ever be a cause of pleasure at all? And what explains the difference between those which are and those which on the contrary cause displeasure, aversion, or even just indifference instead of attachment? Further, what about criteria for the latter discrimination? Of course, Mothersill has disavowed litmus-paper tests for judgments of beauty, but her defense of the Second Thesis certainly implies that my judgment that an object is beautiful may be subjected to reflection which can secure me in the belief that the judgment is genuine, that the object does not just happen to please me right now but promises to please me again and even to please at least some others on some suitable occasions. What form does this reflection take? In isolation, Mothersill's definition would leave room for me to assure myself only that I feel pleasure and that my pleasure has been caused by an aesthetic property. But if aesthetic properties are not necessarily beautiful, how can that be sufficient? On what basis do I judge that an aesthetic property which pleases me today will not seem ugly tomorrow? or that an aesthetic property which pleases me and promises to continue doing so will please you? In other words, why do some aesthetic properties promise pleasure and how does one know when that promise is being made?

Released from its self-imposed burden of providing a transcendental deduction for an *a priori* principle as well as from a later generation's demand that a meaningful explanation of our pleasure in beauty issue in verifiable rules which can actually serve to predict aesthetic preferences, perhaps Kant's explanation of our pleasures in the beautiful and sublime can answer more of these questions than Mothersill allows. Here is Kant's account. Our linguistic intuition tells us that judgments of taste are not intended just to report personal preferences, but are rather meant to express some kind of claim, whether ideal prediction or quasi-command, to the assent of others—Mothersill's

Second Thesis. Yet at the same time it seems an obvious fact of human nature—though not, as Mothersill has persuasively argued, any kind of necessary truth—that pleasure is connected with the fulfillment of some aim or objective. How are these intuitions to be reconciled and transformed into a theory? Leaving aside details, mistakes, and anachronisms, Kant's idea is that an object strikes us as beautiful when, all things considered—that is, either leaving aside or going beyond whatever classifications it may seem natural to impose upon it—it seems to satisfy our underlying desire for cognitive unity in our manifold of representations by effecting a harmony between imagination and understanding, and that an object strikes us as sublime when, under similar conditions, it satisfies our equally basic aim of harmony between imagination and reason even though it must override some of the customary constraints of the understanding. In such a case, there is after all an objective to be satisfied, though not one which the object satisfies automatically in virtue of any classification of it, and thus the occurrence of pleasure is not inexplicable; but at the same time, precisely since the satisfaction of the underlying cognitive objective is not rendered obvious by any conceptualization or classification of the object, it is also explained why this satisfaction does not seem routine, a condition under which, as Kant emphasizes, pleasure, even if theoretically necessary, would hardly be noticeable.³ The occurrence of our pleasure in the beautiful or sublime is thus ascribed to a subjective mechanism, the harmony of imagination and understanding or imagination and reason, which can reasonably be expected to work in others as well as ourselves, and to a relation between an external object and that mechanism which, though it can be made to fit the Humean paradigm of lawlikeness only with the introduction of something like Mothersill's "aesthetic properties," is still clearly causal. It is, after all, the form of the object—not of course in the restricted sense of its shape rather than its color and content, but in the enriched sense of all that and more, anything and everything about it by means of which our representations of it can be "posited and ordered"⁴ as long as that order strikes us as free⁵—which sets our faculties into harmony and causes us pleasure.

If one supposes that there can be truth-conditions for concepts like beauty and sublimity only if there are determinate and precise warrants for the application of "beautiful" and "sublime," this will not seem like much of an analysis of those concepts; and if one insists that an explanation issue in predictions this will not seem like much of an explanation. But if these requirements are relaxed, then this Kantian theory of taste can provide some needed supplementation of Mothersill's analysis of beauty.

I cannot understand Kant's theory of the harmony of the faculties except as a venture into psychology—arm-chair psychology, if one insists, or concert-hall or gallery psychology. Nor can I reconcile the freedom of the imagination postulated by this theory with the rule-governed character of self-consciousness required by the *Critique of Pure Reason's* theory of transcendental apperception except by interpreting the theory of taste as precisely the kind of psychological theory which the theory of apperception *cannot* be. The premises that humans find pleasure in the satisfaction of their aims, but only if the latter seems somehow contingent and unexpected, and the postulation that beautiful objects produce a mental state which unexpectedly strikes us as satisfying a cognitive objective and thus please us, seem matters of psychological fact rather than transcendental epistemology. Thus there is no prospect for Kant's truly *a priori* principle of taste or for his "modal versions" of the First and Second Theses (pp. 86-87, 116-17). But it is still a virtue of Kant's theory that it attempts to provide some theoretical support for the pre-theoretical insights from which it starts. On Mothersill's account, the assumptions that judgments of beauty are genuine claims with objective import but independent of any determinate classifications of objects or principles of taste can be defended from theoretical objections but cannot themselves be given any theoretical defense. Indeed, the crucial concept of the final analysis of beauty, that of aesthetic property itself, is given logical expression but no theoretical derivation, for its discussion too really comprises a defense from theoretical objections to its use in a causal context but no deduction of any sort. In Kant, the relations between intuition and theory are more complex. On the one hand, to be sure, Kant poses

the problem of taste with an appeal to our pre-theoretical intuitions about private preferences and public tastes, and likewise writes as if the disinterestedness of taste were common knowledge which self-evidently entails the freedom of beauty from a concept of the object, and his venture into speculative psychology surely derives some support from these facts which we all take ourselves to know just by knowing what we mean when we're talking about taste. Yet at the same time Kant clearly believes that these pre-theoretical intuitions just pose the problem of taste, and that they are by no means immune from skeptical objections until they are themselves deduced from a theory of aesthetic response and judgment. That judgments of taste cannot be grounded on concepts and must instead be occasioned by as many features of the objects as freely and therefore apparently uniquely dispose our cognitive faculties to their enjoyable harmony or free play—in a word, by aesthetic properties of individual objects—may be something which has to be defended from theoretical objections, but it is also a theoretical consequence of Kant's theory of the subjective conditions of human cognition. Pre-theoretical insights may provide boundaries for our aesthetic analysis, but a theory of taste in turn provides a deduction, even if not a transcendental one, of our title to the land within these boundaries.

Kant's theory also explains why some but only some aesthetic properties will please us and thus lead to a judgment of beauty. On the one hand, the property of an object which gives us aesthetic pleasure must be an aesthetic property, logically shared with the class of indistinguishable counterparts but not captured by any ordinary general term, precisely because our pleasure in the satisfaction of our underlying goal of cognition is noticeable only if that satisfaction is not predictable by any classification of an object which entails that it must satisfy any more determinate purpose, practical or cognitive. So beauty must at least be an aesthetic property. But on the other hand, this is only a necessary but not a sufficient condition. Only aesthetic properties can render our sense of cognition of them radically contingent, but certainly not every aesthetic property will give us any sense of cognitive accomplishment at all. It's hard to quantify over aesthetic

properties (p. 353) but presumably the vast majority of them will either escape our notice altogether or else strike us as cognitively dissonant rather than harmonious. Kant's theory imposes a dual condition on beautiful objects—they must please us through an apparently contingent satisfaction of our cognitive objectives. This condition can be satisfied only by aesthetic properties, but it is not necessarily satisfied by all aesthetic properties. Thus there is some explanatory connection between aesthetic properties and aesthetic pleasure but not one which explains too much.

This alleged explanation of our pleasure in beauty might seem open to a ready objection. Kant's theory of the harmony of the faculties, after all, is nothing but a translation of the older image of unity amidst variety as the object of taste into the language of the subjective faculties of imagination and understanding, coupled with an overreaching attempt to make the uniformity of human thought a necessary truth rather than happy accident. Yet it is obvious that for any object, no matter how formless or misshapen it may seem, there is at least one description under which it will satisfy the requirement of unity amidst variety, or, in Kantian terms, at least one empirical concept adequate to unify the manifold which the object presents. Doesn't this render the Kantian theory explanatorily, let alone criterially, hollow? Won't every object, not just some objects of any natural kind but every last object, have to come out beautiful on this account?

As long as it is kept in mind that we are not dealing with *a priori* principles but with human psychology, and as long as the possibility of meaningful explanation is separated from that of determinately applicable rules for prediction, this objection can be set aside. If we were looking for rules which could be applied by a machine, surely the condition of unity amidst variety could be satisfied by some easy description of any particular object; and if we were looking at the world from some god's eye point of view, perhaps every object would strike us as self-evidently unified. But on the Kantian account of aesthetic response, we are certainly not looking at the world from such a point of view, and the description of the object of taste as a unity amidst variety is not meant to furnish a decision-procedure for judgments of taste.

Though it is logically and metaphysically possible to describe every object as presenting some unity amidst its variety, it is equally a fact of human psychology that not every object *strikes* us as unified apart from any concept we are immediately inclined to apply to it. And the causal explanation of our pleasure in beauty says that an object will please us if it unexpectedly *strikes* us as unified, or if it *feels* like it is satisfying our cognitive objective, not just if there is some logically or metaphysically possible point of view from which it *could* be seen as unified.

The Kantian theory of aesthetic response also offers some model for the kind of aesthetic reflection which might produce or confirm our confidence in a genuine judgment of beauty. On Mothersill's account, it seemed as if one could only assure oneself that one felt pleasure in an aesthetic property, and this didn't seem adequate to ground any kind of promise of pleasure if there was no evident reason why the same aesthetic property one is inclined to associate with one's pleasure on one occasion should please others or even oneself on another occasion. On Kant's account, there is room for an additional consideration—if reflection suggests that an object is causing pleasure because its aesthetic property is subjectively satisfying the general aim of cognition, then one has some reason to believe that one is not taking pleasure in an aesthetic property which might strike one as ugly another time or displease someone else; one will see some reason why this aesthetic property but not others should please.

To be sure, Kant's initial presentation of his theory does not suggest that the phenomenon of unexpected cognitive accomplishment can have criterial as well as explanatory significance. Rather, Kant actually provides a theoretical argument for the intuitive view that judgments of taste can be justified only by the *via negativa*, by the exclusion of idiosyncrasies as well as both private and public interests. This is because he argues, on the one hand, that pleasure and pain are the only necessarily noncognitive forms of consciousness, and therefore that the existence of the not strictly cognitive harmony of the faculties can be manifest to consciousness only in the occurrence of the feeling of pleasure, but that, on the other hand, there is no qualitative difference among differ-

ent feelings of pleasure, thus no self-evident distinction between feelings of pleasure produced by sensory gratification, the satisfaction of practical reason, or the harmony of the faculties. Therefore the occurrence of the harmony of faculties, the proper cause of pleasure in the case of a correct judgment of beauty, is not manifest to consciousness, and can only be inferred from the absence of alternative causes of pleasure. When he gets beyond the simple cases of natural beauty or decorative art that provide his paradigms in the "Analytic of the Beautiful," however, and presents his more complicated theory of our pleasure in the fine arts, Kant seems to depart from this *a priori* phenomenology and assume that we can actually have a direct sense of free and therefore merely subjective cognitive satisfaction. Perhaps in the pleasant contemplation of a rose or an arabesque we can imagine that the harmony of the faculties is itself in some sense sub- or pre-conscious, and that all that we are actually conscious of is the object on the one hand and our feeling of pleasure on the other. But, for example, when an artwork expresses an aesthetic idea, it is hard to believe that "the flight" of the imagination "over a whole host of kindred representations that provoke more thought than admits of expression in a concept determined by words"⁶ is not meant to be a unique kind of manifestly cognitive but not rule-governed experience, a quasi-cognitive quality of experience that is to some degree phenomenologically distinct from the pleurability of the experience and which can thus be recognized and not just inferred to be the cause of one's pleasure. So extended, the theory of the harmony of the faculties as the cause of pleasure in aesthetic properties might not merely add some explanatory content to Mothersill's analysis of the concept of beauty, but also provide some criteria—though no decision-procedure—for the reflection which she associates with the genuineness of judgments of beauty.

III.

I now suggest that there is need as well as room for a theory and not just an analysis of the beautiful. This is because justice cannot be done to the normative component of a judgment of taste without appeal, at least in a significant range of cases, to a theory of the beautiful

which can sustain a burden of responsibility in making a claim upon the aesthetic attention of others.

Mothersill recognizes that there is a difference between even a sincere *avowal* of pleasure in an object and a *verdict* that it is beautiful (pp. 91-94), and does suggest that the normative implication of a verdict of taste requires some form of justification. Yet she forcibly argues that Kant has gone too far in construing the normative aspect of the judgment of taste as any sort of *command* that others find beautiful what I find such, creating some kind of *obligation* to be pleased by beauty in them. But her own characterization of the norm appropriately connoted by a judgment of taste is vague. Surely I am not to command that others enjoy the beauties that I do, let alone sit in judgment upon the tastes of others like some pope or Pope (p. 216). But neither am I just to sincerely avow my own pleasures to others; I have more than a general burden of sincerity in critical communication, and it seems to me that Mothersill gives short shrift to a perfectly serious dimension of responsibility in issuing judgments of taste.

I certainly agree that Kant fails to defend his suggestion that "the judgment of taste [can] be exacted from everyone as a sort of duty."⁷ Indeed Kant cannot very well argue that pleasure can be commanded when he insists that even love cannot be; and his suggestion that the cultivation of taste *may* assist in the development of a moral disposition hardly seems strong enough to justify such a command—nothing less than an argument that taste is a unique and indispensable aid to morality would really seem to justify an exaction of agreement in taste. However, as Mothersill herself suggests, there is a more modest conception of the judgment of taste: while I may not reasonably *command* that you like an object, I can certainly *commend* it to you (p. 217). To commend something is to perform a speech-act, thus in the realm of practice, and at least in principle subject to the constraints of morality. But more specifically, to commend is not just to risk influencing your beliefs in ways that may have unforeseen consequences for your actions, which is true in the case of any indicative speech-act, but is to offer you fairly clear motivations for action, and thus certainly subject you to standards of

responsibility. In commending a show or performance to you, I may well be fairly explicitly recommending that you spend some of your finite time, energy, or money in one way rather than another; and you will have good ground to resent it if I have no good ground for doing so, and even do so without a thought of such grounds. Though Mothersill mentions the responsibility involved in commending objects to others in passing (pp. 31, 79, 224), she does not say enough about it.

To be sure, the standard of responsibility for critical utterances cannot reasonably be set as high as standards of responsibility are elsewhere. In Western democracies, at least, the consequences of ill-advised aesthetic choices are not likely to be incarceration or incapacitation, and neither a professional critic nor each of us in our aesthetic recommendations should be held to the same standard of considered judgment required in matters of life and death. Nevertheless, the costs of a night at the opera, a journey to a distant cathedral, or even a weekend afternoon spent at the museum without a child who has been in day-care all week are not negligible, and one would like to think that those who recommended such costs to us will not do so irrationally or even just thoughtlessly. To put this point in professional terms, what was always so offensive about the image of self-appointed members of the art-world baptizing objects as candidates for appreciation without any particular theory of aesthetic appreciation was not the metaphysical or conceptual problem of speech-acts performed without any qualifications or constraints for their performance, but rather the moral problem of claims upon our thought and action being made without any consideration for our own interests and pleasures. But to satisfy these moral claims, a theory of beauty may often be required.

I do not mean to suggest that a critic can issue responsible recommendations only if possessed of a unique and correct theory of beauty; even in moral judgment, after all, we require only that the conscientious agent have what he takes on due reflection to be a good reason for his action, not that he be right in so taking it. Nor is it even obvious that for every responsible recommendation *some* theory of pleasure is required. There are clearly a variety of ways in which we might reasonably commend objects

of taste to each other. Nevertheless, appeal to a theory of taste may be required to justify many of our aesthetic recommendations.

Though Addison and Hume saw the need to commend the "pleasures of imagination" themselves, let us leave that aside and consider authorial and critical recommendations of particular objects. What form do such commendations take, and how can a theory of beauty help sustain them?

A) Sometimes an individual object will be offered by its producer or commended by a critic, paid or volunteer, to a general public; here a reason to expect good value will surely be wanted, and both artist and art-critic may reasonably be required to have a good reason to promise pleasure to others. Even if the critic's product is not itself a work of art, that the artist also bears the critic's burden of having some reason to impose his work upon our attention is clear. In the case of the philosophical artist, perhaps even more than in the case of the critic, a theory of beauty itself may provide that reason; particularly the inventor of a new genre or the pioneer of a new medium can be expected to have some kind of theory as to why his product should please us like other more traditional works have. And while the model of conscience suggests that such a theory cannot reasonably be required to be unimpeachable, the same model also suggests that we can require it to be considered; not every artistic manifesto will discharge the responsibility incumbent upon such demands on our attention, but only such as have either some self-evident plausibility or some serious reflection behind them.

B) More often, however, an artist or critic will not recommend a work to our attention by directly subsuming it under an explicit theory of beauty. Rather, the object is likely to be associated with an artistic or cultural tradition the value of which may be presumed, and recommended to us as sharing in that value. Even here, however, a theory explaining the value of the artistic tradition may well be needed to sustain the claim that the object is connected to what is really valuable in its predecessors. A critic who associates an abstract presentation of the picture plane with the great representational painting of the past may not make much of a case for his abstractions unless

he can explain the centrality of the picture plane in our appreciation of those older paintings. Of course, there are an infinite number of relations which it is logically possible to construct between one stretched and colored canvas and another; relevant connection with a tradition of beauty may require a theory of that beauty and not just some accidental resemblance. Connection with an accepted artistic tradition will probably almost always be required to supplement a theory of beauty, given the indeterminateness of the latter, but cannot simply substitute for it.

C) In many cases, an object will not actually be recommended to a general public, but to a more specific one. When Hume says that "At twenty, Ovid may be the favorite author, Horace at forty, and perhaps Tacitus at fifty,"⁸ he should not be thought to surrender his defense of standards of taste—by which he of course means paradigms, or paragons, not principles. For such a comparison is not like an assertion of equality between Ogilby and Milton; it does not reduce taste to idiosyncratic preference, but only suggests that some beauties may be apparent, or at least most salient, to persons in a certain restricted but certainly shareable position—at a certain stage of life, in a certain kind of relationship, and so on. But there will still be a genuine reason why anyone in such a position should take pleasure, and the kind of pleasure associated with other beautiful objects, in such a case; and it will be incumbent upon the critic to have such a reason available. That is, it is not just that Ovid appeals to a common interest of twenty-year olds and Tacitus to one of fifty-year olds; Ovid and Tacitus both have genuine aesthetic merits, but their beauties are most salient to persons in the different positions described. Of course, in this case a critic may also have the additional responsibility of making the intended audience of his recommendation plain: if there are differences in their best audiences, then Tacitus and Ovid should not be equally recommended to all, or Tacitus, say, recommended in the same way to the twenty-year old as to the fifty-year old.

D) Finally, one other kind of case. Hume often emphasizes that the appropriate aesthetic response to an object may require some form of connection to a particular community of taste. When he explicates the requirement that

a qualified critic "must preserve his mind free from all *prejudice*," it turns out that he does not mean that the critic must free himself from all presuppositions whatever and approach the objects mindlessly (to borrow an image from Mothersill); it means he must approach a work from the *right* point of view, free from *alternative* preconceptions that would indeed be prejudicial for his perceiving the merits that the object really has to offer. Thus, "a critic of [a work from] a different age or nation . . . must have all these circumstances in his eye, and must place himself in the same situation as the audience, in order to form a true judgment."⁹ This actually suggests two different situations. In some cases, a work created from one point of view is commended to an audience with another; art from a religious age is still commended in secular times, an artist's expression of his own personality is offered to others of quite different frames of mind, yet some claim is made that it is worth the effort of assimilating the alien point of view. In other cases, a work is recommended within a certain community, though not necessarily to those who stand beyond its membership. In these cases, it might seem, no general theory of beauty could possibly have a place, for it is precisely in virtue of its particularity that an object is commended—the particular insight it offers into another mind or culture, the particular shared taste that differentiates one community from another rather than assimilating it to the other.

But even in these kinds of cases responsible commendations may have to be grounded in a serious theory of beauty. If the recommendation to enter into another point of view is not that there is insight into archaeology, sociology, or psychopathology to be so derived, but an *aesthetic pleasure*, a perception of *beauty*, then there must be some reason to suppose that this alien expression is in fact beautiful though this may be obscured if the object is approached with inappropriate preconceptions about culture, religion, or personality. Indeed, the more alien the viewpoint of the object being commended is to that of the audience to whom it is commended, the more obvious it is that the commender should have an *aesthetic* reason for his recommendation; and the more alien is the *tradition* of beauty to which the commended object belongs, the more obvious will it be that

the recommendation must be grounded in some more general *theory* of beauty.

Consider now the second kind of case, where shared pleasure in an object is commendable precisely because of the additional bonds of sociability it creates within a particular community. Here one might think of the model of "in" jokes, which create a sense of community precisely because they are *not* universally shared. Many eighteenth century theorists were impressed by this value especially in art. But the social explanation of our pleasure in a beautiful object is circular, and its recommendation even within a particular community will be hollow, unless the object can please *as beautiful*—it is the perception of its beauty, after all, which it is so pleasant to share. In the other case, the joke had better be *funny* if it is to become "in." Here again, the purely extensional approach cannot stand alone. An object cannot be commended *simply* as standing in a certain tradition, or as part of a certain individual or communal point of view, but the tradition or point of view itself must be commended as of genuine aesthetic merit. Backing up such a commendation may well push the critic towards the expression of a serious theory of beauty.

I hope that my profound sympathy with Mary Mothersill's restoration of beauty has remained apparent throughout. I have only wanted to suggest that a recognition of the genuine even if hardly capital burden of responsibility we undertake in offering critical commendations may often be satisfied only by some theory of beauty, and that by looking further into the causal connection between aesthetic properties and the pleasure they surely do cause we may discern something more of the shape of such a theory.

¹ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, trans. J.C. Meredith (Oxford Univ. Press, 1952): Preface, 5: 170 (pagination as in the *Akademie* edition).

² *Ibid.*, §2.

³ *Ibid.*, V, 5: 187-88.

⁴ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, Second ed. (London, 1933): A 20/B 35.

⁵ Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, §22 GR, 5: 240-41.

⁶ *Ibid.*, §49, 5: 315.

⁷ *Ibid.*, §40, 5: 296.

⁸ David Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," in *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1903): 250.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 244-45.