

PHENOMENOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF FEELING OF PLEASURE AND DISPLEASURE

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My lecture today is partly based on my PhD project Kant's Theory of Feeling that I defended last year. The main aim is to outline my understanding of feeling in Kant, and how it could be distinguished from a causal model, defended in particular by Paul Gayer among others, and what I call the HOC (Higher-order-consciousness) model (most precisely explained by Rachel Zuckert).¹ Actually, I share with R. Zuckert the main interest in understanding feeling as a complex phenomenological and intentional state. However, my point of view stems from new phenomenological approaches in the philosophy of emotions, to understand feelings as *sui generis* states and as a specific manner of how we become conscious, like those of Peter Goldie, Jan Slaby, Bennet Helm etc. From this perspective it is important not to confuse feeling with second-order representing, because it allows us to reveal how specific 'feeling-awareness' is. And I think we are committed to it in Kant, due to Kant's relatively strict division of the faculties.

Three basic faculties of the soul

First, just some brief historical remarks. It is well-known that Kant thought that there are three basic (irreducible) faculties of the soul: faculty of cognition, faculty of desire and feeling of pleasure and displeasure. The thesis is directed against that of Christian Wolff namely, that the soul has only one basic force, to represent the world (*vis representativa universi*), and that all other powers of the soul are derived from it (*vis derivativa*). Kant denied Wolff's metaphysical conclusions even in his earlier work with a different understanding of substance and force.² In the *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, Kant attempted to ground the basic faculties in the principles of higher faculties of cognition (understanding, power of judgement

¹ The more common distinction is between the causal model and intentionalist's interpretation. Many authors who advocate intentionality are explicitly or implicitly committed to the HOC model (next to Zuckert, e.g. McCloskey and Alisson). While some authors might not be, such as Aquila and Ginsborg. However, it would be difficult to claim that they explained something like a general theory of feeling in Kant.

² Some efforts are made in that direction before Kant by Sulzer and Crusius. It is most probably Sulzer who initiated a series of *Akademie Preis* questions about relation and difference between the faculty of cognition and faculty of feeling (*Empfindungsvermögen*) in the mid 50's (cf R 158, AA 25: 57). Crusius argued for distinction of will and faculty of cognition. However, it is clear that Kant had his own original position.

and reason). Unfortunately, Kant presents a precise psychological determination of his understanding of various mental states only in his lectures. I will focus only on one of his later lectures, known as *Metaphysik Dohna*, held in the early 90's, after publishing the of *Critique of the Power of Judgement*. I chose this text, above all because that is where Kant makes the most careful distinction between different mental states, and offers the most precise explanation of “causality of representation,” used to define feeling and desire.

In *Metaphysik Dohna*, Kant first distinguishes between **kinds of determinations** which we have in our soul: “they are either representations themselves (e.g. understanding), or they have reference to representations (e.g. will).” (V-Met/Dohna, AA 28: 672) After he once again reminds the reader of Wolff's erroneous thesis, Kant shows some ways in which certain mental states are not representations of themselves:

[...] Our representations can themselves become efficient causes (and to that extent are not cognition). (V-Met/Dohna, AA 28: 675)

Further, he delineates kinds of causality of representation while also indicating the difference between feelings and desires:

The causality of representation is:

First, subjective – they are causes for producing themselves, maintaining themselves.

Second, objective – since they become a cause of the production of objects.

[...] Thus a representation which produces the effort (*conatum*) for maintaining its state of representation (*statum repraesentativum*) is called *pleasure* [...]“ (V-Met/Dohna, AA 28: 675)

(Note that *differentia specifica* in this definition does not describe which kind of representation it is [for it could be any] rather by which kind of causality a representation is determined)

We thus see that Kant easily differentiates among three kinds of mental states: representations themselves (cognition), subjective causality of representations (feelings of pleasure or displeasure) and objective causality of representations (desires).

Kinds of determinations of the soul	Representations themselves	Determinations which have reference to representations	
		Subjective causality of representations	Objective causality of representations
Basic faculties of the soul	Faculty of cognition	Feeling of pleasure and displeasure	Faculty of desire

It is important to note that causality here does not mean the relation between two things, one of which (the cause) precedes the other (the effect) in time – as the Humean paradigm suggests. At least in this case, we can apply Eric Watkins' interpretation, according to which causality ought to be understood as the exercise of causal power of one substance (Watkins 2005), which we call cause, or determination of a power of some substance to determine effects. (V-Met/Mron, AA29: 845) Thus, in the case of subjective causality of representations, causality is not a relation between representation and some potential effects (another event in time), but the exercise (or determination) of causal power of representation to maintain its state. That this is indeed the case, we can see from Kant's explanation of the phrase objective causality of representation in the definition of the power of desire. (KU, AA 05: 177-8, EEKU, AA 20: 230-1)

Guyer's causal model

In his interpretation of the *Third Critique*, Paul Guyer presents several radical readings of Kant's characterization of feeling. He says that feeling is an opaque sensation, which can be explained in no other way than through the effects that produce them. The various representations (sensations, intuitions (*Anschaung*) or concepts) tied to feelings, are connected only as their causes. Accordingly, we can designate various causes or effects of feelings, but not qualitative difference in the feelings of pleasure and displeasure themselves. Thus, Guyer deprives feelings of their intentional character (etc)

There are plenty of moments in Kant's writing that seem to support Guyer's interpretation. (Guyer 1997, 94) However, there are numerous criticisms of this position. (Aquilla 1979, Zuckert 2007, etc.) To avoid repeating all these criticisms, I will focus here on the one I have not found in most authors, and which I consider to be crucial.

One cannot doubt that Kant often used the term "Empfindung" for feeling of pleasure and displeasure. However, the reason for it could be very simple, for it was the term used for pleasure and displeasure in that time.³ The term "Gefühl" was mostly used to indicate sense of touch – even Kant used this term for sense of touch until the mid 70's (cf V-Anth/Collins, AA 24: 43, V-Anth/Parrow, AA 24: 273, V-Anth/ Fried, AA 24: 495, V-Met-L1/Pölitz, AA 28: 232).⁴ As far as I know the term "Gefühl" held a different meaning when it was introduced in

³ It has to be noted that Thomas Abbt and Eberhard argued for introduction of new term „*Empfindniss*“ in order to made analogous difference to those of french terms „sensatio“ and „sentiment“ which are in that time both translated in german with „Empfindung“. (Abbt 1780: 114-116, Eberhard 1786: 167-168.)

⁴ Cf C. Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, Auch allen Dingen überhaupt*, § 221., G. F. Meier, *Metaphysik im 4. Theile*, §533. V. Mayer, „*Gefühl ist alles. Zur semantischen*

academic discourse by Spalding (1773: 9-10) and by Lessing's artistic translation of Hutcheson's concept of "moral sense" as "moralische Gefühl" (1756).

Despite Kant's explicit claim that sensations (*Empfindung*) and feelings (*Gefühl*) are different (KU, AA 05: 206), Guyer insists on equating them, by concluding that Kant did not successfully justify the distinction. There are at least two convincing reasons as why feelings cannot be sensations in Kant's psychology. Sensations are the kind of material representations that appear as impressions of our outer senses, how the outer object affects us. As such, they belong to the (lower) faculty/receptivity of cognition. There is no discussion regarding "inner sensations" in Kant's texts from the critical period. Kant (possibly metaphorically) designates feelings as "subjective sensations" in CPJ, clarified later in his *Metaphysics of Morals*, where he clearly states that we should distinguish sensations because they belong to cognition, while feelings are merely relations of representations to a subject (MS AA 06: 212). To say that feelings are sensations is to confuse faculties, namely, feelings of pleasure and displeasure with the (lower) faculty of cognition. This is clarified further due to the second reason as to why feelings are not sensations. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant explains that the only materials for inner sense are outer sensations. (KrV, AA 03: 23,70; Allison 1983, 277) Feelings, on the contrary, do not provide new material for inner sense. (V-Met/Dohna, AA 28: 673) It is therefore impossible to hold that feelings are somehow new sensations that appear in our inner sense; feelings are rather the way in which the already given sensations appear or are arranged.⁵

Zuckert's HOC (higher-order-consciousness) model

Rachel Zuckert is one of the critics of Guyer's model and defends the thesis that Kant takes feelings to be intentional mental states. I chose her work because she gives a more detailed account (compared to other authors) of how feelings can be understood as intentional states. According to her, and predominantly in her reading of §10 of *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, feelings can be understood as second-order consciousness, that has as its contents any other kind of representation (sensation, intuition or concept) and represents a formal relational characteristic of this content, with a tendency to persist:

It can have different "contents" (whatever representation we're having), and represents (is "consciousness of") a formal, relational characteristic of that content, indeed one concerning

genese eine Erfahrungskategorie. It was actually translation from latin *tactus* (1648 wörterbuch), as *tactus secundum* it could designate pleasure and displeasure, <http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/tlt.html>

⁵ One possible way to avoid this critique is to say that feelings are sensations of *sensus vagus*, which is actually one of the outer senses, according to Kant. And Kant had held this position until the mid 80's (V-Anth/ Pillau, AA 24: 742, V-Anth/ Mensch, AA 24: 905). However, he left this position (Cf Anth, AA 07: 154.)

relations in time, the universal form of intuitions. For pleasure is the consciousness of a representation's tendency to persist (into the future) or its future directedness. (So I read our "consciousness of . . . causality . . . so as to keep us in that state.") (Zuckert 2007, 234)

Since Zuckert's interpretation is more recent, I will present the basic objections to it in a more detail. (1) The first set of objections concerns the step in which she reads *Erhalten* (maintain, keep up) as future directedness. Thomas Höwing raises the objection that Kant's definition tends to be transcendental – which means that it contains only pure concepts, without determinations in time. (Höwing 2013, 96) This objection seems problematic, because even the concept of state (*Zustand*) marks determination in time, but is still only a concept, not a concrete determination. Nevertheless, Guyer takes that there is no indication that 'maintaining' could be indeed understood as 'future directedness'. (Cf. Guyer 2009, 207) Additionally, in his early writings, Kant shows that maintaining the state of force does not indicate its specific directedness, but rather a fundamental characteristic, which is a register Kant seems to continue to use in the definition of pleasure: "There would be no force, if there is no aspiration to maintain the state in itself." (GSK, AA 01: 141) However, because in specific cases of pleasure in reflection and good, tendency to persist in one's state is grounded on purposive causality, which is a kind of future directedness, I found it valuable in Zuckert's analysis.

(2) The second set of objections is more serious and refers to the thesis that feelings are second-order states. I must admit that I initially had a dilemma how we are to understand this second order state? First Zuckert uses 'consciousness of' indeterminately (it could be higher-order-monitoring, higher-order-representation etc), even sometimes claiming that it is probably not a second order state but rather "in that [first order] representation". Throughout the work more and more clarifications of second-order-state suggest that it is like a representation, whereby its main function is to represent. Finally, according to her reading, feelings are a (non-discursive) representation and their main function is quasi-cognitive, representational (Zuckert 2007, 233), which is exactly what the faculty of feeling does not do. Because feeling is only the "receptivity of the subject to be determined by certain representations for the preservation or rejection of the condition of these representations" (Anth, AA 07: 153), thus, receptivity for a subjective causality of representation is to be determined and not for representing it. The crucial challenge set by Kant is to characterize feeling as *sui generis* mental state, which means as a mental state that is not representation itself. In my opinion, both Zuckert and Guyer miss this point.

Höwing points out that Zuckert neglects the definition from the *First Introduction* which states that pleasure is “a state of the mind in which a representation [...]” Pleasure being a second-order state about a representation and its tendency to maintain itself is entirely different from pleasure being, as the definition indicates, a state in which a representation has a tendency to maintain itself. (Höwing 2013, 96) Guyer also tells us that this interpretation lapses into infinite regress, if we accept that pleasure is a state we want to prolong – since it is not clear in Zuckert’s account, which state we actually wish to prolong. (Guyer 2009: 208)

Furthermore, in my opinion, Zuckert also fails to address the second part of the definition from §10, that is, of displeasure: “displeasure is that representation that contains the ground for determining the state of the representations to their own opposite.” Her reading is based on the thesis that the beginning of the definition of pleasure – “Consciousness of [Das Bewußtsein des Kausalität] causality of representation” – be read as objective genitive: second-order consciousness about causality of representation. However, it is impossible to read the definition of displeasure, that is meant to parallel that of pleasure, in this way because it is immediately obvious that displeasure is defined as what Zuckert calls first-order state with its formal characteristic “that representation that contains the ground for determining the state of the representations to their own opposite.”⁶ Thus, it is plausible to read the phrase “Das Bewußtsein des Kausalität” as subjective or qualitative or *Eigenschaft* genitive. Accordingly, the definition of §10 could be read as follows: The causality of a representation with respect to the state of the subject, for maintaining it in that state, is the very/ the kind of consciousness, that can here designate in general what is called pleasure.

This suggests that Kant thought that causality of representation does not demand higher-order-consciousness for us to be aware of it, but is rather one of the ways in which we come to be aware and itself manifests as awareness.

In what follows, I will attempt to show that some of the advantages of Zuckert’s interpretation could be preserved, if we keep to the formal structure that consists of representation and its relational property (to maintain its state), while avoiding the contradictions that emerge with the introduction of second-order consciousness.

Feeling as subjective causality of representation

According to my thesis, subjective causality of representation is not a mental state of which we are aware by way of higher-order consciousness (designated by Zuckert as feeling).

⁶ Compare the mentioned definition from *Metaphysik Dohna*: „Thus a representation which produces the effort (*conatum*) for maintaining its state of representation (*statum repraesentativum*) is called *pleasure*”

Rather, it is itself the means with which we are aware of a mental state, that is, subjective causality of representation, which manifests itself phenomenologically as consciousness, even without a second-order representation, that is, as feeling of pleasure or displeasure. In that sense, the supposition of higher-order mental states or representations is unnecessary. On the other hand, this does not mean that feelings are a kind of sensation that can in no way be further explained (other than through its own causes); rather, they are a complex phenomenological structure that consists of two components: (1) the representational component, representations themselves (sensation, intuition or concept) and (2) the causal component, its tendency toward maintaining its state of representation (subjective causality). The term “component” is probably not fully adequate. These two components in one feeling are of course, not separable. It is not representation *plus* subjective causality. It could be argued that feeling proper is only subjective causality. However, subjective causality of representation (to maintain themselves) is not a new, additional thing, on top of the representation itself, but a subjective characteristic (*Beschaffenheit*) of a cognitive state, one, albeit, which cannot be reduced to the cognitive state itself. Thus, there could not be a phenomenological state of subjective causality (a feeling) which would not contain a representation as its ground. On the other hand, it would not make sense to speak of representations themselves as a *separable* component of feelings, for its subjective causality is a way as to how we become conscious of this representation in a state of feeling.

Faculty of feeling as a way as to how we become conscious

The crucial challenge for my interpretation is to show that it is possible that we become conscious of representation through its subjective causality. Kant follows Wolff and Leibniz (contra Locke and Descartes) and claims that we could have unconscious representations (...). Of course, Kant’s understanding of consciousness is very complex, and I can only briefly refer to why Kant gave a special status to the faculty of feeling. In his lectures on logic Kant follows Wolff in that the way as to how we become conscious of representations is in the faculty of discrimination (*Unterscheidungsvermögen*, Cf Wunderlich). We have consciousness of representations insofar we could distinguish them, therefore they become clear (*klara*) and insofar as we distinguish all of its marks it becomes distinct. In a §1. Of the *Critique of Power of Judgement* Kant calls the faculty of feeling “an entirely special faculty for discriminating”:

To grasp a regular, purposive structure with one’s faculty of cognition (whether the manner of representation be distinct or confused) is something entirely different from

being conscious of this representation with the sensation of satisfaction. Here the representation is related entirely to the subject, indeed to its feeling of life under the name of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, which grounds an entirely special faculty for discriminating and judging that contributes nothing to cognition but only holds the given representation in the subject up to the entire faculty of representation, of which the mind becomes conscious in the feeling of its state. (KU, AA 05: 204)

First, note that this is actually the same example that Kant gave in his *Logic* to distinguish forms of cognition (perceptual and conceptual/ Log, AA 07: 33). However, Kant immediately indicates that the situation here is entirely different. It is not a question of how distinct or confused a representation is – but rather how this representation is related to the mind (*Gemüth*) of the subject (through a determination of subjective causality of this representation). Kant concludes, that it is an entirely specific way of how we become conscious of representations. This, however, could not mean that in a feeling we become conscious of some objective qualities of the representation (cognizing them), but rather that we merely distinguish this representation as pleasurable or unpleasurable. For example, if I feel pain, because I get stubbed in my feet, I immediately could distinguish the sensation of the stub in my feet from other sensations, as painful (which in the case of sensible pain affects my (passive) attention, cfp KU, AA 05: 222) – even if I do not cognize which object stubbed me etc. (although, I will refer to (non)existence of this object through immediately affected interest, and it would not be anymore merely an unknown object, but *the* (unknown) object which brings me pain, as merely object of displeasure, not of cognition).

Definition of pleasure in mere reflection §12

In §12, Kant defines pleasure in a mere reflection as follows:

The consciousness of [*Das Bewußsein des*] the merely formal purposiveness in the play of the cognitive powers of the subject in the case of a representation through which an object is given is the pleasure itself, because it contains a determining ground of the activity of the subject with regard to the animation of its cognitive powers, thus an internal (*innere*) causality (which is purposive) with regard to cognition in general[...] [This pleasure] has a causality in itself (*in sich*), namely that of **maintaining** the state of the representation of the mind and the occupation of the cognitive powers without a further aim. (KU, AA 05: 222)

In accordance with his causal model, Guyer thinks that in this place we ought not to speak of one, but two different causalities. He claims that *internal* (*innere*) causality is the power of representation to produce a pleasure, while *intrinsic* causality (*in sich*) next mentioned is the

efficacy of the feeling of pleasure itself to produce a tendency toward its own continuation. (Guyer 1997: 194) However, in order to read this definition in such a way, he had to modify the translation. While Kant's text has to be read such that "consciousness [es] contains a determining ground [...] thus an internal causality," Guyer substitutes the pronoun *es* with the phrase "an aesthetic judgement:" "an aesthetic judgement involves a determining ground [...] thus an internal causality" (Guyer 1997: 193) – there is no basis for this in the original German.

Furthermore, Guyer overlooks the main point of §12, which concerns a moment of relation in an aesthetic judgement. For Kant, some inner (*innere*) relation is one when the determining ground of predication contains itself in a (logical) subject. (Longuenesse 2003: 155) An example of outer causality would be all the physical causal relations in nature (KrV, AA 03: 224; OP, AA 21: 419), while a good example of inner causality would be Leibniz's monads or the causality of free will mentioned in the same passage. Thus, Kant says that merely formal purposiveness in the play of cognitive powers contain in itself a determining ground for its causality to maintaining its state.

Zuckert finds Kant's definition "a slip," since "Kant thus suggests that aesthetic pleasure has "causality" or that we linger in judging the beautiful because it is pleasurable," which would imply that pleasure precedes judging, which is incoherent with Kant's claims (Zuckert 2007: 311n). Yet this problem emerges if she insists on her reading that feelings are a second-order consciousness *about* inner causality of judging. But if we read this paragraph so that reflection is structured as tendency toward maintaining its state (formal purposiveness in play) and that this very state is by definition a feeling of pleasure (which has causality), then the problem disappears. This pleasure is transcendently grounded in judging, but pleasure is nothing other than this judging structured as a tendency toward maintaining its state.