FROM TRANSCENDENTAL TO PRACTICAL INTERSUBJECTIVITY: A SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO KANT'S MUSICAL AESTHETICS

Tristan TORRIANI*

"That is the process of thought. It is taking the attitude of others, talking to other people, and then replying in their language. That is what constitutes thinking." G. H. Mead[1]

ABSTRACT: It is well known that Kant's aesthetics is framed intersubjectively because he upholds the claim of taste to universality. However, the transcendental foundation of this shared universality is a supersensible ground which is taken for granted but which cannot be brought directly into communicative experience. Kant's reliance on the synthetic *a priori* structure of aesthetic judgment also removes it from the sphere of observable personal interaction. This argumentative strategy exposes it to skeptical challenge and generates inaccessible references to inner representations (be they intuitions, categories of the understanding or rational ideas). It is not sufficient, as Kant did, to propose a description of aesthetic experience that is subjectively plausible and thereby claim its intersubjective validity. It is indispensable to embody intersubjectivity in behavior and language. In practical intersubjectivity, aesthetic attitudes are dealt with in a concrete and accessible manner without relying on mentalistic assumptions as a foundation. Conceptual terms such as 'agreeable', 'beauty', 'sublime', 'ugly', 'universality' acquire new meaning in a conversational context and aesthetic claims are tested in a dialogical game semantics model.

KEYWORDS: Kant. Musical aesthetics. Intersubjectivity. G. H. Mead. Roger Scruton.

_____
* Doutor em filosofia pela Universidade Estadual de Campinas e atualmente participa do Programa de Pós-Graduação do Departamento de Música do Instituto de Artes da mesma universidade enquanto professor colaborador voluntário participante.

[1] MEAD, G. H. The problem of society – how we become selves. In: _____. *George Herbert Mead on social psychology*: selected papers, 1956, p. 34.

Introduction

When we approach Kant's philosophy of music from a 21st century perspective, a great number of substantial questions arise: What is tone? What is sound? What is an aesthetic judgment in music and how can it be justified? Is there an intersubjectively operational distinction between the pleasant and the beautiful in music? What are the roles that cognition and emotion should play in music appreciation? To solve such problems related to content we need to first reflect about our methods in order to avoid anachronistic objections which disrespect the immanent logic of Kant's arguments. There is, however, an important distinction to be made between a legitimate disagreement with Kant's fundamental assumptions and a mere misunderstanding of his arguments. Not all disagreements with Kant are due to misunderstanding. A legitimate disagreement will respect the immanent logic of Kant's arguments while not committing itself to his assumptions. It will point out the aporias of his position and show how they can be solved within a different logical framework.

In the 18th century, British and French writers about aesthetics were conceptually very sophisticated but were nonetheless unable to provide an adequate foundation for aesthetic judgment.[2] Kant was the first to do so in his *Critique of Judgment*. He actually provided a logical explanation of its different aspects (or "moments" as he calls them): quantity, quality, modality and relation. This was undoubtedly an outstanding achievement. From his time to ours, however, there have been substantial changes in our understanding of reason, logic and language. Modern philosophers after Descartes made a double assumption that there was something like a "universal reason" shared by all intelligent beings and that the individual could introspectively locate fundamental universal truths in his or her subjectivity. To avoid relativism, early modern thinkers would postulate that what they had found within themselves could be extended to others. However, since there is in fact no such "universal reason", this never succeeded. To avoid a skeptical exit from philosophical discourse, several argumentative strategies were tried out. Hegel's was particularly important because he emphasized the social context of reason and the dialectical character of its unfoldment in history. This was later to be an important influence on G. H. Mead who, also following upon C. S. Peirce's view of scientific research as a collective endeavor, developed the concept of practical intersubjectivity[3] as a fundamental social psychological

---

[2] For a well-articulated reconstruction of pre-Kantian Enlightenment aesthetics, cf. Cassirer (1998).

[3] Hans Joas (1989) proposed this term, which is indeed better than others such as "social behaviorism" (Morris) or "symbolic interactionism" (Blumer).

process that is both behavioral and linguistic. Besides this social psychological turn there was a linguistic one initiated by G. Frege, B. Russell and remarkably developed by L. Wittgenstein, G. Ryle, J. Austin, P. Grice and others. The concept of the mental was gradually translated into the concepts of action, of language and of neurological processes. Language itself could now be understood as developing from sensory-motor behavior and not as some mystifying link between mental representations and words functioning as their labels. The work of G. H. Mead and the later Wittgenstein are both fragmentary but complementary. Mead lacks logical detail, while Wittgenstein did not systematize his analytical insights into a social psychological framework. The integration of their views is an ongoing process and is a promising line of research in philosophy and the social sciences today, for it provides a foundational framework that is committed to intersubjective access and clarity.

Granted that our main concern is to determine how subjective claims can acquire intersubjective validation,[4] it is worthwhile to consider Kant's musical aesthetics from this methodological point of view. To do this I depend on the work of other researchers and it would make no practical sense to try to duplicate what they have already accomplished. As Bernard of Chartres is claimed to have said, if we see farther at all, it is only because we are dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants. Piero Giordanetti (2005) has made a very thorough diachronic and theoretical reconstruction of Kant's philosophy of music and therefore I shall base most of my discussion of Kant on his results. Zeljko Loparic (2001), in the context of his interpretation of what he calls Kant's transcendental semantics, has detailed the propositional structure of aesthetic judgment and emphasized the need to recognize its synthetic *a priori* status. This is a crucial point so as to avoid a merely psychological interpretation of Kant's aesthetics. I do, however, also sympathize with Patricia Kitcher's (1990) recovery of transcendental psychology. In addition, I share Paul Guyer's (1997) concern for critically probing the possibility of intersubjective validation of Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment. Arno Ros (1989-1990, 1991) has pointed out the aporias of Kant's concept of concept and has therefore elaborated an alternative theory based on the later Wittgenstein in which concept-possession is related to the ability to clarify the grammatical rule for the use of a general term. Hans Joas (1984), building upon G. H. Mead's work, has developed a model of practical (i. e., behavioral as well as linguistic) intersubjectivity that emphasizes the creativity of human action[5] (i. e., our world-transforming

---

[4] This is a major concern for Paul Guyer (1997) and others such as Malcolm Budd, cf. "The intersubjective validity of aesthetic judgements" in his *Aesthetic essays.*

[5] Cf. Joas (1996). I believe Joas' creative pragmatism can be very fruitful for a conceptual reconstruction of R. Steiner's Anthroposophy and Waldorf education.

ability to find new solutions for problems). And, last but not least, Roger Scruton (1997) has published a major systematic and analytic examination of musical aesthetics which draws a crucial distinction between sound (in German, *Klang* or *Schall*) and tone (*Ton*). Taken together, these results allow us to not only have a more precise historical understanding of Kant's philosophy of music, but also to explore ways of developing it further that benefit from recent advances in philosophy.

In the following first section I will discuss the most fundamental problems facing a social psychological reconstruction of Kant that is based on the work of G. H. Mead and Wittgenstein so that it is possible for the reader to understand where I am coming from. In the second section I will present a social psychological approach to musical aesthetics giving special attention to Scruton's[6] Kantianism and his distinction between sound and tone. In the third section will briefly discuss musical aesthetic categories and show how aesthetic judgment can be dealt with in a semantic game dialog. In the fourth and last section I then refer back to Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment from a retrospective and externalist view that takes behavior and language as the best starting point as opposed to the conventional, mostly uncritical, acceptance of his representationalist research program. This approach preserves Kant's conceptual terms and tries to salvage their usage and meaning, which are, after all, intrinsically interesting, but without the mistaken expectation of achieving a wide-ranging logically consistent theory that is based on supposed representational inner workings of the mind. In other words, I believe that it is worthwhile to recover Kant's terminology and analytical distinctions. However, it is up to us to systematize them in a coherent way and to give his conceptual terms a clear public use in language and to evaluate their utility by relating them to the grammar of everyday speech and experience.

1 Confronting Kant: From Transcendental Speculation to Embodied Intersubjectivity

It is important to keep in mind that the whole subject of music is in itself quite complex and that while Kant was perfectly aware of this, it was of relatively marginal theoretical interest to him. In other words, Kant quite

---

[6] I must note that there is nothing to indicate that Scruton would agree with my incorporation of parts of his philosophy into a social psychological framework as I propose. On the contrary, I assume that he would insist upon the autonomy of philosophy. While I do recognize the *distinctness* of philosophy as a subject (being a philosopher myself) I reject its *separation* from psychology and sociology.

justifiably believed that his logical investigation of pure reason was the most important task at hand and that other subjects such as music were applied fields to be left to other researchers (GIORDANETTI, 2005, p. 229). This forces us to begin from the very foundations of Kant's philosophical project before we can approach the subject of music.

From a methodological point of view, the first thing that needs to be done before any philosophical discussion can take place is to clarify what are the fundamental conceptual distinctions that we shall operate with. If we start by just talking about the subject in a historical way, we will provide context but will not specify what the problem we are trying to examine actually is. Conceptual analysis is thus an indispensable precondition for any fruitful philosophical discussion.[7] An analytical topography (Ryle spoke of a "logical geography"[8]) is hence what I will try to provide in what follows. It is the systematic compilation of conceptual distinctions that provides us with a stable logical framework within which philosophical problems can be formulated and solved. It is, moreover, equally mistaken to try to elaborate deductive arguments without prior conceptual clarification. In Kant's case this restraint is even more necessary, as the conceptual terms in his language are not clearly and unequivocally linked to behavior or any supposed mental content. As A. B. Dickerson (2004, p. 4) points out, although Kant argued using the term 'representation' as a basic concept, he does not adequately define it.

> The *Critique*, after all, is a text centrally concerned with what types of representations we have, how we get them, and what we do with them when we have got them. However, despite the crucial role it plays in his arguments, Kant pays little attention directly to the abstract notion of representation in general – tending to concentrate instead on more specific notions like objectivity, cognition and judgment. [...] In other words, the notion of representation tends to be treated as a primitive notion in Kant's epistemology. There are therefore no key analyses or definitions in the *Critique* upon which an interpretation of Kant's notion of representation can be grounded.

---

[7] Loh (1992, p. 109) proposes a method of sorting concepts in degrees of abstraction or concreteness that is based on Kant's own thought. He also insists (1992, p. 122) that reconstructions cannot be placed in the same category as faithful Kant interpretations. I agree, but do not find that his method would work for me, as it deals with relations between general and particular, but not part and whole (cf. ROS, 1979), and is centered on truth instead of meaning.

[8] Ryle, *The concept of mind*, p. 7: "The philosophical arguments which constitute this book are intended not to increase what we know about minds, but to rectify the logical geography of the knowledge which we already possess."

Patricia Kitcher (1990, p. 66) also warns us that "[...] Kant does not believe that all *Vorstellungen* (representations) represent (see A320/B376). [...] "*Vorstellung*" can be used to indicate the *contents* of cognitive states." So not only is the use of the term 'representation' unclear, but we are told that there are non-representational representations. The disturbing thing about all this is that since representations are private we lack any clear intersubjective criterion by which to decide the issue. The conventional Kantian attempt to solve the problem is by combining interpretation and argumentation within Kant's own terminological private language game. However, it is *a priori* evident that no amount of effort, no matter how serious or intelligent it is, can unravel the transcendental Gordian knot of the critical texts. There is no more certain recipe for confusion in philosophy than to assume that one can build deductive arguments without first examining the meaning of the concepts used therein.

One way out of these difficulties is to take behavior and language as our starting point. Two major thinkers in this line of thought were G. H. Mead and L. Wittgenstein. Due to space constraints, I cannot present their views here, but by now they are relatively familiar to the philosophical community. Andrew Brook, for example, is perfectly aware of this issue concerning behavior and language. It is so important that I will have to quote him (BROOK, 1994, p. 19-20) below at length to substantiate my point.

> If he [i.e., Kant, T.T.] meant it when he said we do not know how things really are, how could he be so sure that minds as they are, are not behaviour? But the real point we should be discussing is not whether Kant's own beliefs about the mind are compatible with behaviourism, but whether what he actually observed and/or inferred is compatible with it. Could Kant's observations and inferences be accommodated by a behaviourist account? Though the language Kant used would probably have to be modified radically, the answer to this question is yes, they could be. [...] Suppose we reconceive Kant's work and substitute 'behaviour' and 'dispositions' for his 'representations', 'experience', 'awareness', and so on. Then suppose we think of Kant as offering a contingent theory of behaviour, especially linguistic behaviour, not an *a priori* 'analytic' of a hidden mental realm. This theory would explain behaviour by postulating a certain unity and certain synthesizing powers. All Kant's insights into unity and synthesis could easily survive even so radical a recasting. (I am not saying, of course, that there would be no other problems with it.)

I fundamentally agree with Brook on all of this and would like to make clear that my objective in this paper is to contribute to the approach he describes above. However, the account I propose would not be behaviorist

in a reductionist sense, but in line with Arno Ros' synthetic materialism (ROS, 2005, p. 254), which is non-eliminativist and explains how we are able to apply conceptual terms for material objects and psychological states or processes on persons by examining our linguistic ability to categorize the same phenomenon in different overlapping spatiotemporal configurations.[9] But let me return to Brook, as he now proceeds to perfectly describe the differences between Kant and Wittgenstein (BROOK, 1994, p. 19-20).

> Of anything in the general neighbourhood of behaviourism, Wittgenstein's remarks on mental 'states', 'processes', and so on are *prima facie* the most unlike Kant's. Though radically intentionalist, Wittgenstein's remarks are also radically unsympathetic to Cartesian inner realms. No doubt a number of things about Kant's work as he himself conceived it would have drawn Wittgenstein's thunder: the idea that mental states and activities are something quite different from human bodies and behaviour, the idea that this mental something exists in a realm that may very well be nonspatial, the idea that philosophy of mind explores the necessary structure of this realm, the idea that we have to use special *a priori* techniques to do so, normal [p. 20] empirical investigation being quite useless - all this and more Wittgenstein would have considered nonsense, literally. If, however, we remove the Cartesian framework from Kant's ideas and reconceive them as empirical explanations of speaking and acting, in the way just sketched, would Wittgenstein still have to object to them? I do not see why. I want to emphasize this point. Even if theories of mind turn out ultimately to have been talking about behaviour, Kant's observations about synthesis, unity, and self-awareness could still be sound and have a place in such theory. How he himself conceived of the mind would have to be jettisoned, of course, but many of his observations and inferences about it would not.

Brook goes on to qualify this statement and I would like to do the same from my own side. The fundamental point for both G. H. Mead and Wittgenstein is that we need to embody what we call the mental in behavior and language. There is no need to jettison the mind itself. We should just not use it as our starting point and assume that it is intersubjectively shared in a universal transcendental reason. We need to begin by listing Kant's conceptual terms and examining their usage. This is basically a descriptive

---

[9] "Grundthese des synthetischen Materialismus: Die Erklärung dafür, dass wir imstande sind, ein und dasselbe Phänomen unter bestimmten Umständen mal als eine Ansammlung von materiellen Phänomenen und mal als psychische Zustände aufweisende beziehungsweise psychische Aktivitäten vollziehende Person aufzufassen, ist in unserer Fähigkeit zu suchen, ein und dasselbe Phänomen in unterschiedliche räumliche und zeitliche Zusammenhänge einzuordnen." (ROS, 2005, p. 255).

task. After this is done we may consider the prescriptive or normative issue as to whether the conceptual terms ought to be used in this or that way. Whether Kant's arguments about synthesis, unity, and self-awareness are valid is hard to tell because it is not clear that in the Meadian-Wittgensteinian dispensation he could even begin a transcendental argument. Speculation on preconditions of knowledge begs the whole question of what knowledge itself is. The mere possibility of some type of judgment is far from sufficient to establish that we do in fact use it or that we ought to use it for whatever argumentative purposes. Although Kant was unquestionably a genius of the highest order, he directed his mind to a path that ends in a bottomless pit. His private language of representation can be understood to a certain degree. Most of his conceptual terms may be given reasonably precise definitions. However, the logic of his argumentation is open to debate. Zeljko Loparic admits that:

> Kant's positions concerning logical forms are based on the logic that existed in his time and are highly unsatisfactory for contemporary standards." (Loparic, 2005, p. 213, footnote, my translation) "The concept of quantification is confused and poorly developed. There is no clarity, for example, concerning the difference between the negation of a proposition or a predicate. The point of view of relation mixes the relation between concepts, expressed by "categorical" judgments, with relations between judgments. The point of view of modality is rather methodological-epistemological than semantic. (LOPARIC, 2005, p. 210, my translation).[10]

This brings us to the vexed question of the relation between logic and language, but also between epistemology and psychology. After drawing a metaphorical comparison between reading letters and linking representations in a linear temporal form, Makkreel (1990, p. 38) explains that:

> One of Kant's main ways of distinguishing epistemology from psychology was to conceive of the contents of consciousness in terms of formal mathematical relations that are constitutive of intersubjective experience. The reading metaphor can be used to extend this formal analysis of consciousness by adding a conventional linguistic dimension to epistemology. In this context the imagination can assume a quasi-linguistic role.

---

[10] "As posições de Kant a respeito das formas lógicas baseiam-se na lógica que existia em sua época e são altamente insatisfatórias para os padrões contemporâneos." (LOPARIC, 2005, p. 213, nota de rodapé) "O conceito de quantificação é confuso e parcamente desenvolvido. Não há clareza, por exemplo, quanto à diferença entre a negação proposicional e predicativa. O ponto de vista da relação mistura a relação entre conceitos, expressa pelos juízos "categóricos", com relações entre juízos. O ponto de vista da modalidade é antes metodológico-epistemológico do que semântico." (LOPARIC, 2005, p. 210).

Makkreel mentions above that formal mathematical relations, which are quantitative, would establish intersubjective experience. This happens to be very important for Kant's musical aesthetics, for, according to Giordanetti (2005, p. 212), the apprehension of mathematical proportions in tones provides the *a priori* foundation for the universal claim of the judgment of musical beauty. It is also important to remind ourselves that Kant does, after all, have a concept of intersubjectivity. The problem is whether this mathematical intersubjectivity makes sense without behavioral and linguistic interaction. After Piaget one would say that it does not: we cannot acquire mathematical concepts without such interaction. Makkreel also touches upon the issue of giving a linguistic dimension to epistemology so that imagination can be verbalized. This is exactly what somebody with G. H. Mead's and Wittgenstein's concerns would be interested in. However, there is a problem of priority. What comes first, language or logic? Can we learn logic without language? Or can we learn logic only after we acquire a natural language? According to Loparic:

> The abstract study of the "forms of thought" or of the "laws of understanding and of reason in general", which belongs to formal logic, has a "very close kinship" to that of universal grammar, which studies the "forms of language" in general, leaving aside words as something belonging to "matter". This kinship is based on the fact that the forms of language, that is, the formal properties of language, are founded on the forms of thought (in categorical operations and its rules). For Kant, universal grammar stands upon logic, and not vice-versa. Essentially, it is not language that creates or conditions thought, but it is conceptual thought that expresses itself in language. Besides, neither logic nor grammar are an organon, that is, a mechanical device to generate logical truths or grammatical sentences, but only a canon to judge the correctness of constructions. (LOPARIC, 2005, p. 209-210, my translation).[11]

---

[11] "O estudo abstrato das "formas de pensamento" ou das "leis do entendimento e da razão em geral", que pertence à lógica formal, tem um "parentesco muito próximo" com o da gramática universal (1783, § 39, p. 118), que estuda as "formas da linguagem" em geral, deixando de lado as palavras como pertencendo à "matéria" (1800, p. 4). Esse parentesco se baseia no fato de que as formas da linguagem, ou seja, as propriedades formais da linguagem, se fundamentam nas formas do pensamento (nas operações categóricas e suas regras). Para Kant, a gramática universal assenta na lógica, e não vice-versa. No essencial, não é a linguagem que cria ou condiciona o pensamento, mas é o pensamento conceitual que se expressa na linguagem. De resto, nem a lógica, nem a gramática, são um organon, isto é, um dispositivo mecânico para gerar verdades lógicos ou sentenças gramaticais, mas apenas um cânon para julgar a correção de construções." (LOPARIC, 2005, p. 209-210).

Kant clearly gives priority to logic and tends to see language as an outgrowth from it. This seems plausible if we think abstractly and in terms of increasing levels of complexity. However, when we observe human development, we realize that bonding and interaction from the earliest stages onwards involves multiple levels, including linguistic behavior. It is true that one should not exaggerate the role of language and neglect its development from sensory-motor abilities (ROS, 1979). Cognitions and intentions are already formed in the sensory-motor stage and linguistic behavior depends upon such abilities. Loparic (2005) himself approaches the problem of meaning in Kant from the standpoint of the philosophy of mathematics. In his view, the critique of pure reason is best interpreted as the foundation of a theory of the solubility of reason's unavoidable problems. He traces Kant's transcendental methodology back to the ancient Greek mathematicians' method of combining analysis and synthesis and then goes on to explain how the transcendental analytic can be reconstructed as a transcendental semantics, that is, as an aprioristic theory of meaning and reference. The strengths of his reconstruction are (a) his meticulous care with syntactical and semantical details (for ex., of aesthetic judgment, as I will return to later on) and (b) his unquestionable command of Kant's texts. This allows him to provide enlightening and faithful reconstructions of how, according to Kant, the mind operates with representations. The problem is that Kant's cognitive operations (*Operationen, Handlungen*) with meaning and reference lack a behavioral dimension. It is therefore only possible for Loparic to provide a syntax and a semantics, but not a pragmatics. The plausibility of this representationalist formal semantics is greater in a mathematical context. But its insertion within natural language is missing and it remains unclear that we could acquire logical abilities without sensory-motor and linguistic development.

2 Scruton's Kantianism

Roger Scruton draws arguments from Kant (objective rationality of morality), Frege (meaning as understanding), Husserl (intentionality, the *Lebenswelt* concept) and later Wittgenstein (private language argument, aspect-perception) and welds them at the very foundation of his philosophy of music. Since it is impossible to address all of these arguments at once, I will have to concentrate here on Scruton's Kantianism, although one should keep in mind that the other above mentioned influences are often amalgamated with it. The major difficulty is to understand how he reconciles Kant, Frege and Husserl on the one hand with the later Wittgenstein on the other.

2.1 Preliminary Distinctions

Philosophical arguments about music can be divided into three major categories: (a) causal-empirical, (b) logical-constructive and (c) normative-moral.[12] Some of Kant's arguments are causal-empirical when they relate to the physics of sound (acoustics), as well as to the psychology of tone perception. Other arguments are logical-constructive because they concern the structure of aesthetic judgment, its claims and its communication to other speakers. And still other arguments have moral and social import because of their anthropological character. It is important to distinguish between these three types of argument to avoid confusion.

Confused arguments about music often arise from the unconscious combination of sociological and psychological explanations of behavior related to music ("Millions of people bought artist X's CDs because they were sorry for the way he died.") to aesthetic judgment ("Artist X's music is beautiful because it uses five-note chords built on thirds that intrigue me."). In our mass democratic culture, it is very tempting to commit the fallacy of "popularity implies quality": "Artist X's CD sold more than Y copies, therefore its music is beautiful." This confusion between the logical-constructive and the causal-empirical is not accidental. It happens because when we talk to others about how a certain piece of music makes us feel and how we rationalize our feeling to ourselves, thereby exposing our taste (or lack thereof), we also feel the need to find support for it in something that can be considered objective, be it the behavior of others or identifiable structural aspects of the piece itself. As is well known, Kant was aware of this inclination and sought to introduce a distinction between the agreeable (or pleasant), which would not make any claim to objectivity or universal consensus, and the beautiful, which would. However, when we follow Frank Sibley's seminal idea of examining how we actually talk about music, it appears that the difference between the pleasant and the beautiful is a matter of degree and not a dichotomous distinction.

To deal with this complex articulation between social psychological causal-empirical explanation on the one hand and logical-philosophical rationalization or justification on the other, it is necessary to operate with a wider understanding of aesthetic judgment while at the same time avoiding an indiscriminate naturalization as we often see in the sociology of music. All aesthetic rationalizations may be ultimately relative and subjective, but they need not be completely groundless and arbitrary. An individual's exercise

---

[12] I adopt this tripartition from Ros (1979, p. 9).

of rational autonomy may seem arbitrary to an observer if the reasons used by the individual are not publicly accessible and reconstructible (ROS, 1979). An aesthetic judgment in music may, for example, contain indexical references that specify what passage is disagreeable, what chord is mysterious, and so on. There is the possibility of sharing the experience by listening to a piece together with others and talking about it. Anyway, the reason why I judge something to be beautiful lies in my feeling. That is what I communicate to others. The cause of my behavior will be probably related to past experiences, but feeling is the only legitimate foundation for an aesthetic judgment. This means that while the etiology of aesthetic experience can be explained by the social psychologist on the causal-empirical level, the philosopher has to deal with the logical consistency of the aesthetic subject's attendant rationalizations, as it makes no sense to argue about what one should or not feel. We should be forewarned, however, for Rogerson (2008, p. 101) informs that "...judgments of taste for Kant are a species of imperatives. Specifically, a judgment of taste issues a demand to all persons (i.e., universally) that if they attend properly to the object, which I judge as beautiful, then they ought to take pleasure in that object." More on that later.

Although logical-constructive and causal-empirical explanations are conceptually distinct, both can become intimately related (ROS, 2005, p. 93). For example, individuals A and B may both like the same Beatles's "She loves you" song for similar reasons ("It is a happy song.") but the concrete process through which they arrived at that judgment was different (A heard it live in his youth, B just watched a Beatles video on the Internet). Social psychology of music (BEHNE, 1993; NIKETTA, 1993) distinguishes between judgments of concrete pieces (*Urteile*) and general attitudes (*Einstellungen*) and investigates several social mechanisms that condition taste. In the early 1970s David Berlyne began a "New Experimental Aesthetics" that gave particular importance to variables such as complexity, ambiguity and novelty. There have been several subsequent experimental approaches to judgment formation. Behne (BEHNE, 1993, p. 345) has tried to extend the Piaget-Kohlberg developmental study of moral judgment to aesthetic judgment in music. The bottom line is that the great potential variability and difference of both empirical causes and logical reasons that affect different subjects should not lead us to confuse causes with reasons. A may like the same song B likes for different reasons and different associations. The causal processes may be the same (both were exposed to the song in the same circumstances) or not. But causes explain to us how and why something came to be, while reasons are an attempt to make sense of aesthetic experience by justifying it.

A good example of the utility of observing these distinctions is Giordanetti's careful parallel interpretation of Kant's philosophy of music. In his view, Kant developed his logical analysis of aesthetic judgment side by side with empirical and normative considerations and because they appear this way in the text of the *Critique of Judgment* they often get mixed up in the readers' minds. The distinction between logical-constructive and causal-empirical explanations is also indispensable for those who, like Kitcher and Brook, are interested in transcendental psychology.

When we talk about philosophy of music it is also useful to distinguish between: (a) ontological problems related to the existence of the musical work of art as a series of events (SCRUTON, 1995, p. 9), as a score, as a practice, and so on; (b) aesthetic problems concerning the beautiful, the ugly, the pleasant, the sublime, the sentimental, the useful, the perfect in music; (c) semantic problems regarding meaning, representation, imitation, expression, association and (d) pragmatic problems related to performance. Scruton's recent work, for example, observes these distinctions, thereby rendering his arguments more amenable to discussion and further analysis. When these distinctions are not made, what we get is confusion.

The fundamental methodological question we are then faced with is: How should we approach Kant's texts, taking into consideration this array of distinctions? On the one hand, if we emphasize the points in which Kant and our contemporary views disagree, we run the risk of being unfair and appearing provocative. On the other hand, if we focus on the points that have prefigured our current views, we may appear condescending. Given the choice I prefer the latter. My perspective is therefore retrospective (or backward-looking) and in the philosophical *querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* I am decidedly for our contemporaries. The pragmatist approach I suggest is first to be mindful of our actual behavior (including language) and only then to consider what Kant is proposing. This avoids an uncritical acceptance of his arguments.

2.2 Music as a Phenomenon: Sound and Tone

In the current discussion in analytic philosophy of music, Scruton has championed the distinction between sound as we hear it and the tones (and tonal relations) that we discern in it. This is a distinction that Kant could very well have understood, and it is probable that he would have endorsed it because he was perfectly aware of the need to distinguish between acoustics and aesthetics. Tone for Kant is also an indispensable component of language. As H. Parret (PARRET, 1998, p. 261) notes, "Even when Kant speaks more generally about language, he maintains that every linguistic expression has

a *tone*, not as decorative accompaniment, but as a condition of possibility for the exteriorization of its semantic content. So, in a certain sense, this tonality which musicalizes language confers a transcendental status on music." The German terms for sound and tone would be respectively *Klang* (or *Schall*) and *Ton*. Euler distinguished between *Schall* and *Ton* much as we would distinguish between noise and tone: the former is irregular in its oscillations, while the latter is regular and appropriate for music-making (GIORDANETTI, 2005, p. 29). Kant's former student, J. G. Herder, used this distinction in his philosophy of language[13] and music[14] as well. The distinction between sound and tone actually has a traceable origin in Indo-European languages[15]. However, during the 18th century, by way of Rousseau's influence, the concept of tone suffers a conceptual shift from

---

[13] "Herder's understanding of language relies on *Schall*, but he distinguishes between different sounds. He calls language both: cry and articulated speech. Language, considered as unarticulated speech, is a *Schall* that does not differ from the animal's voice. Man's articulated voice, however, is a *Ton* that differs from "ächzen" or "wimmern," much as the animal differs from the men." (WEISSBERG, 1989, p. 552).

[14] Herder locates singing already in the primordial human language and recognizes developmental stages for it. This and the fact that he does not restrict his concept of language to the verbal allows him to admit the coexistence of different types of language, including music. "Wenn Herder dagegen gelten macht, dass auch die erste Menschensprache Gesang gewesen sei, so zeigt das zunächst, dass er beim Gesang verschiedene Entwicklungsstadien zu unterscheiden weiss. Mit dem Hinweis, dass auch "eine Sprache durch musikalische Töne möglich" sei, wird dann vollends deutlich, dass Herder den Begriff *Sprache* nicht an die Wortsprache bindet, sondern dass seine Sprachtheorie ein Nebeneinanderbestehen mehrerer möglicher Sprachen impliziert. Dass zudem eine rein musikalische ,Sprache' existiert, ist eine Schlussfolgerung, die sich aus seiner Zeichentheorie im Zusammenhang mit der Systemisierung der Künste ergibt." (KÖHLER, 1995, p. 215).

[15] Although there are many roots for sound words (imitations of humming, 'bell' from *bellan*, "to bark"), most words for singing originate from words for calling and screaming. Words for tone are related to the act of tightening a string. "Die indoeuropaischen Einzelsprachen und offenbar auch die Grundsprache, aus der sie stammen, enthalten zahlreiche Wörter, welche Schälle, wie Summen oder Brummen, nachahmen. Einige von diesen Schallwörtern haben später auch musikalische Bedeutung erhalten, so *Klang* und ai. *svárah*. Aus einer alten Wurzel, die in ags. und ahd. *bellan* „bellen" erhalten ist, stammt unter anderem engl. *bell* "Glocke". Allerdings ist gerade bei Schallwörtern mit Polygenese zu rechnen. Aus Wörtern für Rufen und Schreien haben sich Wörter für Singen gebildet. Weit über das Griechische hinaus waren Interjektionen aus zwei Vokalen verbreitet, wie *iô* und *ioú* oder *iú*. Daraus sind nicht nur griechisch *iôç* "Schall", "Geschrei" und *iýzô* „schreien" hervorgegangen, sowie Juchzen, Juchschrei, Jauchzen, Johlen, sondern auch zwei wichtige Termini für Arten des Singens: *Jubilus* und *Jodeln*. Ein anderer Herkunftsbereich waren Ausdrücke für Handlungen, an denen Musikalisches teilhatte. Man benannte zum Beispiel den Ton, der aus einer gespannten Saite erklang, nach dem Akt des Spannens." (WIORA, 1974, p. 131).

being the result of mathematical proportions as it was for Euler and Kant, to having its origin in feeling itself, thus becoming the "language of the heart" for Forkel and Herder. [16]

When Scruton talks of sound and tone he means to distinguish between the objective physical-mathematical aspect and the subjective experience we have. For him, the primary object is the sound wave, the secondary object our sensation of sound, and the tertiary object is the work of music which is made of up tones that possess intentional properties to us (such as the intrinsic coherence of tonal harmonic progressions) that sounds simply do not have (SCRUTON, 1997, p. 161). Scruton's example of the distinction between sound and tone is excellent (SCRUTON, 1997, p. 233). It requires, unfortunately, minimal knowledge of music theory. The cadence with triad G followed by triad C can be heard as I – IV or as V – I depending on whether the listener understands the tones to characterize the tonality G or C respectively. This is what Scruton means by tonal understanding. However, acoustically, the sounds of the G – C cadence are strictly identical. He also describes aesthetic experience as having what he calls "double intentionality" (SCRUTON, 1997, p. 220), because we experience both sounds and tones simultaneously. In other words, he suggests that the difference between sound and tone can be made *from within* subjective experience:

> Double intentionality, I suggest, is explained by our ability to organize a single *Gestalt* in two ways simultaneously – in one way as something literally present, in another way as something imagined. The literal perception and the imaginative perception can cohabit the same experience, since they do not compete. … one way to understand the point is through the contrast between literal and figurative uses of a predicate. Your experience of the music involves the concept of movement, but it is a concept that is being metaphorically applied to what is literally a sequence. (SCRUTON, 2009, p. 43).

According to Scruton, as we try to describe our aesthetic experience of music, we use concepts that suggest physical motion (such as high and low, *andante più mosso*, etc.) but without the intention to suggest that this

---

[16] "Wie in der Musikgeschichte die Art des Tones den Grundcharakter der Musik entscheidet, so seine Wesensbestimmung die Musikauffassung. Wo, wie bei Forkel (und Herder und allen späteren "Ausdrucksästhetikern"), der Ton seinem Ursprung nach als Empfindungslaut gilt, da ist es verwehrt, im "Logos", im Geistigen selbst Wesen und Gehalt der Musik zu erkennen. Es ist nur Attribut, steht nur im Dienst der Musik, die, indem sie durch die musikalische Logik zur Sprache wird, dennoch ihrer Bestimmung nach Ausdruck von Gefühlen bleibt, wie es im Begriff der Empfindungssprache unentrinnbar beschlossen liegt." (EGGEBRECHT, 1961, p. 97).

movement is actually happening in the world. We are referring to how it feels to us. We are consciously using predicates in a figurative way, while understanding that their literal use would describe the physics of sound. Scruton also refers to Kant's understanding of how concepts and intuitions are connected:

> Kant was probably the first philosopher to recognize that the empiricist account of experience is untenable, since experience has both a sensory and an intellectual component – there is the 'intuition', located in time, and the atemporal 'concept' that somehow informs it. But when it came to saying how the two are joined, Kant referred to a 'transcendental synthesis': a process that does not take place in time and which is therefore not a process. A better way of putting Kant's point is surely to say that the reference to the concept is presupposed in any attempt to identify the intuition, even though the concept can be identified independently, through thought alone. (SCRUTON, 2009, p. 45).

One of the difficulties I see in Scruton's account of concepts is that he seems to assume that they are mental categories, given in reason, and are atemporal. This epistemological framework apparently underlies his view of values so that "[...] to the one who has them, values are universal, indefeasable, absolute, and transhistorical." (SCRUTON, 1997, p. 474). This suggests that if you do not hold your values to be absolute, or if you simply admit that they have a history, you do not really believe in them. The possession of concepts and values, however, depends on our being able to articulate them in an expressive language (TAYLOR, 1989, p. 18). Wittgenstein and Morris Weitz considered aesthetic concepts to be open, that is, having a central set of properties recognized as paradigmatic, but which is neither necessary nor sufficient for the concept's application (e.g., games, baldness). Anyway, if we know that the conditions of concept-possession require that the speaker be able to clarify the rule for the proper use of a general conceptual term, we may draw the conclusion, as Ros (1989-1990) does, that concepts are after all linguistic (and not just mental) abilities, then it is not clear how they could be considered absolute or universal without intersubjective validation and consensus. We can only access, use and reflect upon concepts and values by participating in linguistic behavior, which is in no sense constant transhistorically.

As one might imagine, this linguistic view is not Kant's position. Rogerson (2008, p. 113-114) puts it better than I ever could. Not surprisingly, it leads to a vicious circle.[17]

---

[17] Cf. also (ROS, 1989-1990, v. 2) for a systematic exposition of these aporias.

For Kant concepts are rules describing the order of a manifold. Apart from this new way of [p. 114] looking at concepts, Kant's account of empirical concept acquisition is quite similar to a standard empiricist's story. We go about noticing similarities between a number of individual objects and, in the end, pronounce them to be members of a "kind." Subsequently, we judge a new object to be a member of the kind if its manifold is governed by the rule (concept) we found in common with our original collection of objects. However, it is argued variously by proponents of new epistemological interpretation that Kant's account of empirical concept acquisition has a problem. Before we can begin to compare several individuals for their similarities (and disregarding irrelevant differences) it seems as though we must already possess something like a concept (rule) to narrow down the right sort of objects to consider. To use Kant's example from the *Jäsche Logic*, if I am to form my concept of tree by comparing what "a spruce, a willow, and a linden" have in common, it seems as though I must already know that spruce, willow, and linden are appropriately similar before I begin to form a concept of tree. But this implies that I must already know that the objects in question are trees (know the "tree rule") in order to form my concept of tree—an obviously vicious circle.

Relating concepts to linguistic behavior helps us to realize that Scruton's double intentionality can be understood as a complex language game in which we synthesize two different overlapping verbal abilities: one to talk about the external, physical world, and another about our immediate subjective experience.[18] I do not believe, however, that the distinction between sound and tone can be drawn without conceptual terms, hence, without language, within phenomenal experience. As Scruton himself notes, Wittgenstein would have probably spoken of "hearing" and "hearing in", as he did of "seeing" and "seeing as" the duck-rabbit figure (cf. *Philosophical Investigations*, Part II, section xi).[19] When we listen to music, we hear both sounds and tones simultaneously. Scruton formulates this in a somewhat circular way: "Tones are what we hear in sounds, when we hear sounds as music." (SCRUTON, 1997, p. 161). This is not informative for someone who does not understand music as an aesthetic experience. One must already

---

[18] Ros (2004, p. 254) relates our ability to categorize a phenomenon in different spatiotemporal contexts to Kant's concept of synthesis and this allows him to propose a solution to the mind-body problematic which he call a synthetic materialism.

[19] M. Budd discusses this as well (BUDD, 2008, p. 80). Ros (2005, p. 94f) emphasizes that while cases such as the duck-rabbit figure are perceptual, in philosophy we generally have to deal with transitions between conceptual frameworks (for ex., explain to a materialist how he can use psychological concepts as well).

understand what Scruton means by "to hear music" to make sense of this distinction. He is assuming that we already know what the experience of music is and then indicates where the distinction would be drawn. But the circularity of this formulation, which makes it unhelpful, does not invalidate Scruton's proposal. The problem is that in the duck-rabbit case we either see the rabbit or the duck, but not both at the same time. In the case of sound and tone we do experience both at the same time. The analogy with the duck-rabbit figure is valid in the above example of the G – C cadence. Either you hear it as a V – I or as a I – IV. Aspect perception hence does make sense within the sphere of tonal perception, but it does not illustrate the difference between sound and tone. Fortunately, these minor slips can be easily corrected, so I believe that Scruton's proposal remains nevertheless viable and sound (no pun intended).[20]

Perception and interpretation can become confused while listening, for example, to a recording of vocal music from far away. We will often be able to hear only parts of the melody and hardly any of the underlying harmony at all. In this kind of situation we need to "fill in" what is missing and may then even recognize the piece. Just as the duck-rabbit figure, we may notice some aspects of it as part of one song, others as belonging to another. In the musical case, however, we will rely on our memory to help us out, which would not make sense in the duck-rabbit case. When we see something as an X, we apply a conceptual term to a phenomenal experience. When we listen to something as a song Y, we recognize a piece we heard before. The recognition of a tonal pattern happens in time as a process, while the recognition of a duck or rabbit is a sudden event. When we hear just a sound, we do not recognize any tonal structure in it, so we understand it (if at all) as noise. When we listen to music, we recognize tonal relations in it such as consonance and dissonance, resolution of perceived tensions, rhythmic movement and the ups-and-downs of melodic contour.

When dealing with the theory of aesthetic judgment in music Scruton also refers (and to a certain extent defers) to Kant and defends a conflation of objectivity with rationality (SCRUTON, 1997, p. 376). Like Hanslick, Scruton believes that musical beauty must have an objective dimension. He admits that we cannot expect aesthetic judgments to be "alethic" or true in an objective sense. Scruton's strategy is to adopt the sense of objectivity in

---

[20] Schueller (1955, p. 239) argues that time is more important than tone because it is indispensable for musical form, while tones are not. However, I suppose Scruton's natural response to that would be that he already assumes a temporal framework in tonal perception, even if there are no single tones in a given piece. Parret (1998, p. 258) also raises the issue.

Kant's moral judgment and see if he can plausibly extend it to aesthetic judgment. He criticizes F. Sibley and the theory of aesthetic perception because it tries to equate the objectivity of aesthetic judgment with judgments of secondary qualities (such as color) in which there is agreement among normal observers. Scruton's objection is that one may be convinced to revise one's own aesthetic judgment through reasoned argument, while color judgments are (a) incorrigible, (b) do not require first-hand experience, and (c) are not based on understanding. An intersubjective agreement among normal observers' judgments is hence not sufficient to establish the objectivity of aesthetic judgment. He then (SCRUTON, 1997, p. 378) goes on to propose a distinction between a person with taste and one without it, but admits that he cannot prove that aesthetic judgments may at times attain universal validity (that is, become "objective").

The fundamental problem with Scruton's proposal is that it seems to operate with a typically modern (although not Cartesian, at least Kantian) division between subject and object. By defining objectivity as universal normative validity, Scruton creates unhelpful confusion, thereby compromising his argument, which is after all meaningful, for aesthetic judgment does have some claim to objective reference. We certainly circumscribe a series of objects and events as pertaining to our aesthetic experience and indicate them in the world ("That painting…", "That (performance of) symphony Z…"). The utterance of an aesthetic judgment is always an interaction, a social act, as Mead would put it. The starting point is not an isolated subject who has to overcome his or her solipsism to find external validation among other atomized individuals. The social act of uttering a judgment is already both subjective and objective, both private and public. Scruton seems to be aware of all of this in his critique and revision of the theory of *Einfühlung* (SCRUTON, 1997, p. 361f), but by drawing on Kant's theory of moral judgment he leaves us unsure as to how far he is committing himself to Kant's fundamental assumptions in general. While Scruton is aware of the later Wittgenstein's objections and duly conforms to them, he still tries to maintain a representational theory of the imagination that is grounded in Kant, Frege and Husserl. For the reader, it is often hard to tell whether and when Scruton has fallen back into a Kantian position or not.

3 A Minimal Musical Aesthetics

Before I briefly discuss some of the aesthetic categories we apply to musical experience I would like to emphasize the phenomenon of habituation to dissonance. Musicians working with contemporary atonal styles usually develop a greater capacity to tolerate and recognize dissonant intervals. This leads them to reassess their experience of what most people accustomed to

tonal music conventionally consider to be consonances. Lay listeners with sufficient exposure may also develop this ability. There are several psychological theories that try to explain the causal-empirical process by which we feel consonance or dissonance (EBERLEIN, 1993). However, from an aesthetic point of view, we are only interested in the phenomenological experience as a subjective ground to utter our judgment.

As is well known, Kant does not provide us with any concrete examples of pieces that would illustrate his aesthetic categories. It would therefore be a worthwhile exercise to try to do so, even if only on a personal basis and in an experimental spirit. This is, of course, a matter of taste, but I chose my examples based above all on *prima facie* impressions, that is, how these pieces affected me when I first heard them. This makes my examples also a matter of personal history. By calling them examples, I do not mean them as models for imitation. In the *Critique of Judgment* (§47), Kant distinguishes between *Nachmachung* (to adopt as a model for copying) and *Nachahmung* (to imitate by just following a particular instance) or *Nachfolge* (§32) (LLOYD, 1989, p. 41, 43). He also uses terms such as *Muster* for a model, *Beispiel* for a particular instance of a general concept, and *Exempel* for a particular case of a practical rule that didactically represents the doability (*Thunlichkeit*) or not of an action that ought to be followed (*Nachfolge*) (BUCK, 1971-2007).[21] Unfortunately, it is not possible to go into the logical details of Kant's theory of exemplification in the theoretical, practical and aesthetic spheres. I want to merely try to exemplify some of the most prominent aesthetic categories to see what happens:

(1) <u>Agreeable</u>: this means pleasure without formal concerns or a claim to wider recognition (Tchaikovsky, *The Nutcracker*).

(2) <u>Beautiful</u>: pleasure with formal appreciation and a claim to wider recognition (Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book I, Fugue in C major). The musical beautiful would be further subdivided[22] into (a) free beauty: absence of a concept (Charlie Parker, *Ornithology*) and (b) adherent beauty: with a given purpose (Mozart, *Requiem*).

---

[21] Parret (1998, p. 261) finds that Kant's examples of bird song and *Tafelmusik* neutralize his own arguments.

[22] As to the comparative merits of free and adherent beauty, Eva Schaper (GUYER, 2003, p. 117) writes, "[...]we cannot on the basis of that distinction insist on the view that what figures in pure judgments of taste - free beauty - is aesthetically preferable and intrinsically more valuable than what figures in impure judgments of taste - dependent beauty."

(3) <u>Sublime</u>: (a) awe or admiration (M. Mendelssohn) without sudden formal appreciation[23] (Beethoven, *Eroica* Symphony) and (b) terror without formal appreciation (Schönberg, *Erwartung*, op. 17).

(4) <u>Comical</u>: hilarious and agreeable (Rossini, *La Cenerentola*, Act II, "Sia qualunque delle figlie"); the timbre of the *krummhorn*.

(5) <u>Ugly</u>: apparently unintentional clumsiness (only the beginning theme of the third movement of Prokofiev, *Violin Concerto No. 2 in G minor,* Op. 63, III. Allegro, ben marcato).

(6) <u>Perfect</u>: Ravel's orchestrations in general but perhaps his *Bolero*, which is utterly monotonous if played on a single instrument. As Kant correctly recognized, perfection is not sufficient for beauty. Issues of craftsmanship belong here.

(7) <u>Useful</u>: Muzak, therapeutic applications of music, work songs, etc.

(8) <u>Morally good</u>: a clearly nonsensical category, no concrete example.

These categories and examples are, of course, open to question, but if we want to use categories in our aesthetic experience, we need to instantiate them. The interplay between categories and instances may lead us to revise or reject the former, but it helps us to define ourselves in relation to the cultural products we may be exposed to in the public sphere. It is also undeniable that our categories have been formed historically through the influence of both causal-empirical and logical-constructive factors.

3.1 Dialog Game

Since even before Plato, philosophical problems have been understood as a dialogue between a proponent and an opponent. These two complementary roles do not necessarily require two persons. When we examine the "pros and cons" of an issue we are thinking with ourselves in a dialogal form. From the late 1950s on, mathematical logicians such as Paul Lorenzen (followed by Kuno Lorenz) and Jaako Hintikka began to develop respectively dialogical logic or game semantics. In the game, a proponent (or verifier) has to respond to challenges of an opponent (or falsifier). Although dialogical logic was initially used in a more mathematical context, it can be extended to aesthetic argumentation.[24] I will give an example of this below,

---

[23] The formlessness of the sublime is a complicated subject I cannot discuss here and it is also related to the problem of concatenated appreciation raised by J. Levinson.

[24] Ros (1989-1990, v. 2, p. 109) applies this dialogical method to the perception of color (*ultramarin*) in a painting.

which is also useful to highlight the difficulties involved in trying to extrapolate a universal claim from subjective experience. Instead of a rose, let us take a rock song as an example. I will keep the indexical 'this' in spite of it not being a proper subject for a judgment.

Proponent: I declare (to you), that this rock song is beautiful.

Opponent: I very much doubt it.

Prop.: When I listen to it, I experience a free play of my faculties of imagination and understanding.

Opp.: So what? I don't!

Prop.: But we are both rational beings who participate in a common sense of humanity!

Opp.: That may be true but it does not justify your claim that I should agree with your taste. Your liking that song is a purely subjective matter. Keep your universalistic claims to yourself.

Prop.: But you should (or ought) to like it!

Opp.: But I don't! It's not a matter of my willing it or not! Etc.

The most important point of this dialog is to realize the uselessness of appealing to a supposed representational machinery operated by faculties of the mind as a foundation for aesthetic judgment. The outcome shows that the proponent's subjective experience is not a sufficient reason to obtain assent from the opponent. There is no possible argument to compel the opponent to like the rock song, for it is not even a matter of will or conviction. When we further develop this dialogue, we realize that the difference between the agreeable and the beautiful, although indeed qualitative and not just a matter of degree, for the latter involves appreciation of form, is not as great as it appears speculatively. Neither the agreeable nor the beautiful can dispense with pleasure. A report that a piece of music is agreeable to me without my feeling anything is a lie. A report that I find a piece to be beautiful without any concurrent sensations is a mere intellectual assent to its structural qualities as I perceive them. The fugue, sonata or symphony in question may be fascinatingly intricate and possess the greatest musical interest. But this is not sufficient. Unless we change the meaning of the conceptual term 'beautiful', the subjective experience of pleasure is a necessary condition to talk meaningfully of the beauty of some tones to me. As to universality, we can also realize that in actual fact the agreeable is more likely to be generalizable than the beautiful, not the other way around as Kant would have it. In the culture of a mass democracy, readily available

and simple forms of expression tend to prevail, while more sophisticated forms of art are used by individuals who feel a need to differentiate themselves from the majority. There is no shared universality "at the top", for there is no consensual hierarchy of values anymore beyond those that assure the maintenance of a liberal democracy. What the proponent can do is to invite the opponent to listen to a piece. But the latter's judgment of it will nevertheless remain dependent upon his own subjective experience, which is not open to argumentation or negotiation. As Ros (2005, p. 620) notes, there are, after all, also limits to intersubjectivity:

> One can in principle never explain sufficiently well to somebody who is incapable of smelling something because of some damage to his perceptual capacities what it means to have the aroma of a ripe, freshly plucked orange in one's nose. / Further systematically insuperable limits of a methodical reconstruction of concepts are … a consequence of the circumstance … we mentioned earlier: concepts for psychological phenomena are often not only connected, as the concepts for sensory qualities are, to moments of sensory experience that are only accessible to whom has certain sensory organs at his disposal and uses them; these concepts are often linked in addition also to moments of conscious individual subjective experience and therefore with moments that in the framework of an inescapably intersubjective methodical conceptual reconstruction can never be completely disclosed.[25] (ROS, 2005, p. 620, my translation).

4 Back to Kant: Aesthetic Judgment in Music from a Social Psychological Perspective

Kant presents us with a particular difficulty because he understands judgments (*Urteile*) in general as the logical subject-predicate connection between representations, being therefore mental (what else could they be?),

---

[25] "Man kann jemandem, der aufgrund einer Beeinträchtigung seiner Wahrnehmungsfähigkeiten außerstande ist, etwas zu riechen, aus prinzipiellen Gründen niemals hinreichend verdeutlichen, was es heißt, den Duft einer reifen, frisch gepflückten Orange in der Nase zu haben. / Weitere systematische unüberwindliche Grenzen einer methodischen Rekonstruktion von Begriffen sind, …, eine Folge des Umstands, den wir … angesprochen haben: Begriffe für psychische Phänomene sind häufig nicht nur, wie die Begriffe für Sinnesqualitäten, mit Momenten *sinnlichen* Erlebens verknüpft, die nur dem zugänglich sind, der über bestimmte Sinnesorgane verfügt und diese auch gebraucht; diese Begriffe sind darüber hinaus auch häufig mit Momenten bewussten individuellen, *subjektiven* Erlebens verknüpft, und daher mit Momenten, die im Rahmen einer unumgänglicherweise intersubjektiv angelegten methodischen Begriffskonstruktion niemals zur Gänze erschlossen werden können" (ROS, 2005, p. 620).

although supposedly not psychological, anthropological or historical in a causal-empirical sense. We are then faced with a dilemma. If we affirm that what Kant is talking about in the *Critiques* is a mental process, we commit the error of what is called a psychologistic interpretation. If we, however, less incorrectly recognize that Kant's task in the *Critiques* is logical, then we get stuck with his mentalistic and representationalist arguments. Today it is widely understood that judgments can only be constituted in language and that pre-verbal cognition is not sufficient for that. Judgments are linguistic acts, not abstract mental associations. Wittgenstein has also shown that if concepts are understood as mental rules as Kant did, there is no way to know whether the rules are being followed if the speaker does not explicitly clarify them in language. A social psychological approach based on G. H. Mead and Wittgenstein will have to recognize that both the logicistic and the psychologistic interpretations are complementary and partially true. Kant's self-understanding cannot be taken at face value. One thing is what Kant says he does, quite another is what he actually does. Of course, determining what he actually does may be a matter of interpretation. He may be misinterpreted and there is no way he could protest to defend himself. But in my view what he tries to do is to produce a logical foundation by means of transcendental speculations about the preconditions of knowledge in a representational model of the mind without any adequate realization of the role of language in the process.

When we consider Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment, we have to face up to the fact that there are several conflicting interpretations. For example, O. Höffe on the one hand explains that aesthetic judgments are not synthetic *a priori*:

> [...] Kant does not of course affirm that judgments of taste would be synthetic *a priori*. Indeed they only become possible by means of an *a priori* moment, but are of empirical nature like the concrete judgments about a landscape or a work of art.[26] (HÖFFE, 1996, p. 264).

Loparic (2001) claims, on the other hand, that aesthetic judgment contains an *a priori* synthesis because there is an *a priori* feeling that is caused by the subject's freedom (understood as a "supersensible causality"). Whether these two positions really contradict each other depends on how one understands the role of *a priori* synthesis. Although it is impossible to

---

[26] "Damit behauptet Kant freilich nicht, Geschmacksurteile seien synthetisch a priori. Zwar werden sie erst durch ein apriorisches Moment möglich, sind aber als konkrete Urteile über eine Landschaft oder ein Kunstwerk empirischer Natur." (HÖFFE, 1996, p. 264).

examine this issue in depth here, it is worthwhile to be aware of the problematic status of Kant's "supersensible". Guyer (1997, p. 302) does not delude himself:

> However, Kant's argument [that the indeterminate concept of the supersensible is the only one available to ground the judgment of taste, T.T.] is clearly invalid. For even if we do have the concept of the supersensible ground underlying both the object of taste and the phenomenally distinct subjects whose agreement we claim, it is not the only indeterminate concept that we have. The concept of the harmony of the faculties, or the subjective conditions of knowledge, is also an indeterminate concept as the latter has been defined, for by its very nature it cannot be specified by any rule; and, if Kant's deduction is valid, this concept meets the requirements imposed at the outset of the present argument. But the concept of the harmony of the faculties is clearly not identical with the concept of any supersensible object. The indeterminate concept of the harmony of the faculties, as we have seen, either is a purely epistemological concept, of the conditions under which manifolds of intuition can be unified, or is a psychological concept, of the mental state in which unity is felt to obtain. The concept of the supersensible, by contrast, is neither an epistemological nor a psychological concept, not being a concept of a property or state of any phenomenal object at all. Rather, it is an ontological concept, a concept of an object – an object of which, to be sure, we know little, but which we nevertheless think to be that which both empirical objects and empirical subjects are in themselves, or the ground of their existence.

Loparic's concern for semantics is certainly justified. Kant tries to provide a solution to the antinomy of taste by disambiguation (§57), distinguishing between concepts of understanding and concepts of reason. Guyer (1997, p. 299) correctly notes the semantic basis of the antinomy of taste, for it lies in a "double sense" of the term 'concept', which has to be properly clarified by distinguishing between a concept of the understanding and a rational idea. However, this is insufficient from the linguistic and behaviorial view of practical intersubjectivity (JOAS, 1989) because both types of concepts are still understood mentalistically. The distinction, to be operational, would have to find some definite linguistic expression (speech act) that other speakers could recognize as being related to understanding or reason.

According to Loparic's reconstruction, Kant's aesthetic judgments have a complex mixed or composite semantic and syntactical structure, both empirical and synthetic *a priori*. Although it lacks the pragmatic dimension, his treatment of the propositional component of aesthetic judgment has

brought to light a mistake that practically everybody in the field has made: not to realize that the indexical "this" in "This X is beautiful" cannot be the subject of a judgment![27] Loparic formulates the propositional content of pure aesthetic judgment in these terms:

"*a*, which is P, is (is not) beautiful (ugly)".

He also provides a long formula for aesthetic judgment:

> Every human being, if he/she reflects upon the perceptual form of *a*, will notice the formal subjective finality of the quickening of his/her cognitive faculties by this form, and the awareness of this finality is disinterested pleasure, a state of soul that tends to perpetuate the presence of the object's form in the subject.[28] (LOPARIC, 2001, my translation).

In Loparic's view, aesthetic judgment has empirical content but also *a priori* connections between perceived forms and disinterested pleasure (or displeasure). As far as Kant's view of musical form is concerned, it is important to distinguish between the objective mathematical form and the subjective tonal form. As Dahlhaus (1953, p. 343) notes, Kant recognized that contemplation of the mathematical form of tonal sequences was insufficient to serve as a foundation for a judgment of the musically beautiful. What matters for Kant is the subjective form as a freely produced *a priori* aesthetic feeling. Giordanetti (2005, p. 156f, 217) therefore explains that Kant is not a formalist in the sense that he does not eliminate pleasure if it is *a priori*, but only if it is *a posteriori*. What there is of form is what is judged by reflection (2005, p. 163, 188, 204). Kant actually seems to be more of a phenomenological holist as well as an apriorist, and the greatest limitation of his aesthetics is due to its exclusion of the concrete and objective aspects of the work of art. To complement that dimension we need a social psychological approach. Anyway, the assumption of subjective universality in common sense (*CJ*, § 21, 39) is not tenable in face of skeptic questioning

---

[27] The list of commentators who have uncritically accepted Kant's misleading "This rose is beautiful" formula (suggested but not directly stated in § 8 of *The Critique of Judgment*) is long and distinguished: (LEBRUN, 1970, p. 357); (KULENKAMPFF, 1978, p. 28); (GUYER, 1997, p. xvi, 132); (MAKKREEL, 1990, p. 48); (DICKIE, 1996, p. 88, 109, 120, 150); (KEMAL, 1997, p. 33, 49); (Longuenesse in KUKLA, 2006, p. 194) and the more recent (WENZEL, 2005, p. 35, 43).

[28] "Todo ser humano, se ele refletir sobre a forma perceptiva de a, notará a finalidade subjetiva formal da vivificação das suas faculdades cognitivas por essa forma, sendo a consciência dessa finalidade o prazer desinteressado, estado de ânimo que tende a perpetuar a presença de forma do objeto no sujeito".

and presupposes a shared reason that logically precedes language. Thus, one assumes that mental meanings would exist before the use of language, which would be understood as a system of labels to designate mental contents. But this does not explain how these mental contents came up in the first place, neither does it guarantee their semantic links in their supposed universal communicability. A transcendental semantics without natural language is not possible. Practical intersubjectivity can show a way out by emphasizing behavioral and linguistic interaction. However, mathematical form in musical appreciation ceases to have the supposed foundational role it had in Kant's transcendental intersubjectivity.

According to Wicks (2007, p. 260), "[...] Kant's aesthetics can be regarded as one string in an ideally-tuned philosophical harp, constituted and played by our reason." If this is an adequate metaphor for transcendental intersubjectivity, the alternative metaphor for practical intersubjectivity would be a duet constituted and played by interaction. Anyway, the most important point is that while transcendental intersubjectivity is universalistic, practical intersubjectivity is pluralist. Individuals can participate in symbolic interaction, sharing their tastes, without having to commit themselves to transcendent universals. Instead of a mentalistic and ultimately solipsistic model, we need a communicative and pluralist model of aesthetic argumentation. Kant's concept of a judgment as a mental logical structure is not tenable anymore, and therefore neither is its claim of universal validity. However, this does not mean that grounds or reasons cannot and should not be provided when we discuss aesthetic matters. It just means that our claims have a more limited scope and that they address the sensitivities of individuals and particular groups of people who may be interested (or not) in certain art forms.

RESUMO: É bem sabido que a estética de Kant está estruturada intersubjetivamente, porque ele honra a reivindicação do gosto pela universalidade. No entanto, o fundamento transcendental desta universalidade compartilhada é uma base suprasensível tida por certa, mas que não pode ser trazida diretamente para dentro da experiência comunicativa. O apelo kantiano à estrutura sintética a priori do juízo estético também remove-o da esfera da interação pessoal observável. Esta estratégia argumentativa expõe-no a desafios céticos e gera referências inacessíveis às representações internas (sejam elas intuições, categorias do entendimento ou idéias racionais). Não é suficiente, como faz Kant, propor uma descrição da experiência estética que seja subjetivamente plausível e, a partir disso, reivindicar sua validade intersubjetiva. É indispensável encarnar a intersubjetividade no comportamento e na linguagem. Na intersubjetividade prática, lida-se com as atitudes estéticas em um modo concreto e acessível, sem depender de pressupostos mentalistas como fundamento. Termos

conceituais como 'agradável', 'belo', 'sublime', 'feio', 'universalidade' adquirem novo significado em um contexto interativo e reivindicações estéticas são testadas em um modelo dialógico de jogo semântico.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Kant. Estética musical. Intersubjetividade. G. H. Mead. Roger Scruton.

Bibliography

BEHNE, K.-E. Musikpräferenzen und musikgeschmack. In: BRUHN, H. et al. (Ed.). *Musikpsychologie:* ein handbuch. Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1993. p. 339-353.

BROOK, A. *Kant and the mind.* Cambridge: CUP, 1994.

BUCK, G. Beispiel, exempel, exemplarisch. In: RITTER, J. et al. (Ed.). *Historisches wörterbuch der philosophie.* Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 1971-2007. v. 1, p. 819-823.

BUDD, M. *Aesthetic essays.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

CASSIRER, E. *Die philosophie der aufklärung.* Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1998.

DAHLHAUS, C. Zu Kants Musikästhetik. *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 10. Jahrg., H. 4, p. 338-347, 1953.

DICKERSON, A. B. *Kant on representation and objectivity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

DICKIE, G. *The Century of Taste*: the philosophical odyssey of Taste in the Eighteenth Century. Oxford: OUP, 1996.

EBERLEIN, R. Konsonanz. In: BRUHN, H. et al. (Ed.). *Musikpsychologie*: Ein Handbuch. Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1993. p. 478-485.

EGGEBRECHT, H. H. Musik als Tonsprache. *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 18. Jahrg., H. 1, p. 73-100, 1961.

GIORDANETTI, P. *Kant und die Musik.* Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005.

GUYER, P. *Kant and the claims of Taste.* 2nd ed. Cambridge: CUP, 1997.

_____. (Ed.). *Kant's critique of the power of judgment*: critical essays. New York: Rowman & Little, 2003.

HANSLICK, E. *Do belo musical*: uma contribuição para a revisão da estética musical. Campinas: Ed. da Unicamp, 1992.

HÖFFE, O . *Immanuel Kant.* München: Beck, 1996.

JOAS, H. *Praktische Intersubjektivität*: Die Entwicklung des Werkes von G. H. Mead. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989.

_____. *Die Kreativität des Handelns.* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996.

KANT, I. *Kritik der Urteilskraft*. Edited by K. Vorländer. 6. ed. Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1924.

KEMAL, S. *Kant's aesthetic theory*: an introduction. 2nd ed. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.

KITCHER, P. *Kant's transcendental psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

KÖHLER, R. Johann Gottfried Herder und die Überwindung der musikalischen Nachahmungsästhetik. *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 52. Jahrg., H. 3, p. 205-219, 1995.

KUKLA, R. (Ed.). *Aesthetics and cognition in Kant's critical philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

KULENKAMPFF, J. *Kants Logik des ästhetischen Urteils*. 2nd ed. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1978.

LEBRUN, G. *Kant et la fin de la métaphysique*: essai sur la "Critique de la faculté de Juger". Paris: Armand Colin, 1970.

LLOYD, D. Kant's examples. *Representations*, n. 28, p. 34-54, 1989.

LOH, W. Kant-Forschungen als Beispiel für Selbstverschuldeten Methodenmangel. *Journal for General Philosophy of Science /Zeitschrift für allgemeine Wissenschaftstheorie*, v. 23, n. 1, p. 105-128, 1992.

LOPARIC, Z. Acerca da sintaxe e da semântica dos juízos estéticos. *Studia Kantiana,* v. 3, n. 1, p. 49-90, 2001.

_____. *A semântica transcendental de Kant*. 3. ed. rev. Campinas: Ed. UNICAMP, 2005.

MAKKREEL, R. A. *Imagination and interpretation in Kant*: the hermeneutical import of the critique of judgment. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990.

MEAD, G. H. *George Herbert Mead on social psychology*: selected papers. Edited by A. Strauss. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956.

NIKETTA, R. Urteils- und Meinungsbildung. In: BRUHN, H. et al. (Ed.). *Musikpsychologie*: Ein Handbuch. Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1993. p. 329-338.

PARRET, H. Kant on music and the hierarchy of the arts. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, v. 56, n. 3, p. 251-264, 1998.

ROGERSON, K. F. *The problem of free harmony in Kant's aesthetics*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008.

ROS, A. *Begründung und Begriff. Wandlungen des Verständnisses begrifflicher Argumentationen.* Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1989-1990. 3 v.

ROS, A. Kants Begriff der synthetischen Urteile *a priori. Kant-Studien*, v. 2, p. 146-172, 1991.

_____. *Materie und Geist. Eine philosophische Untersuchung.* Paderborn: Mentis, 2005.

_____. *Objektkonstitution und elementare Sprachhandlungsbegriffe*. Königstein: Hain, 1979.

RYLE, G. *The concept of mind*. London: Hutchinson & Company, 1949.

SCHUELLER, H. M. Immanuel Kant and the aesthetics of music. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, v. 14, n. 2, p . 218-247, 1955. Second Special Issue on Baroque Style in Various Arts.

SCRUTON, R. *The aesthetics of music.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

_____. *Understanding music*: philosophy and interpretation. London: Continuum Press, 2009.

TAYLOR, C. *Sources of the self*: the making of the modern identity. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.

WEISSBERG, L. Language's wound: herder, philoctetes, and the origin of speech. *MLN*, v. 104, n. 3, German Issue, p. 548-579, 1989.

WENZEL, C. H. *An introduction to Kant's aesthetics*: core concepts and problems. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005.

WICKS, R. *Routledge philosophy guidebook to Kant on judgement.* New York: Routledge, 2007.

WIORA, W. Zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte der musikalischen Grundbegriffe. *Acta Musicologica*, v. 46, fasc. 2, p. 125-152, 1974.

WITTGENSTEIN, L. *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, Werkausgabe Band 1, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984.