

Can we Modify our Pleasures? A New Look at Kant on Pleasure in the Agreeable

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Abstract

Many of us are all too familiar with the experience of taking pleasure in things we feel we ought not, and of finding it frustratingly hard to bring our pleasures into line with our moral judgements. As a value dualist, Kant draws a sharp contrast between the two sources of practical motivation: pleasure in the agreeable and respect for the moral law. His ethics might thus seem to be an unpromising source for help in thinking about how we can bring our agreeable pleasures into line with our moral values. But I argue that a careful reading of Kant's texts reveals a helpfully realistic view about the extent to which we can modify our agreeable pleasures. On my interpretation, Kant shows us how to hold together two seemingly incompatible ideas: on the one hand, that pleasure in the agreeable is resistant to rational direction, and on the other hand, that we can cultivate these pleasures with a view to ethical self-transformation.

Keywords: Kant, pleasure, agreeable, sensation, cultivation

This article explores whether Kant's conception of pleasure in the agreeable allows for the possibility that we can modify our pleasures, and in particular, whether we can reshape our pleasures so as to bring them into line with our moral judgements.¹ Consider an example from Kant's lectures on ethics:

Man must have discipline, and he disciplines himself according to the rules of prudence; he often, for example, has the desire to sleep late, but compels himself to get up, because he sees that it is necessary . . . This discipline is the executive authority of reason's prescription over the actions that proceed from sensibility. (V-Mo/Collins, 27: 360)²

Whatever Kant's view on this matter, the agreeable pleasures of sleeping in exemplify the difficulty of providing one clear answer as to whether such pleasures can be altered. On the one hand, it is easy to imagine someone who, by sticking to her routine, eventually finds getting up early no longer to be painful, and even comes to enjoy getting up early. On the other hand, it is just as easy to imagine someone who never comes to enjoy being an early riser, even though he has the self-discipline to stick to this schedule and regularly forgoes the pleasures of sleeping in.³

Kant's insistence that reason, not sensibility, should be authoritative in our actions, and that the cultivation of feeling should be focused on the cultivation of *moral* feeling through the performance of morally good actions, may make it seem like the possibility for deliberately cultivating one's own agreeable pleasures is of negligible interest. Why bother with moulding what a person finds agreeable if all agreeable pleasures are in some important sense unfree and need the disciplinary constraints of reason to be appropriately incorporated into action.⁴ The structure of Kant's practical philosophy is a value dualism that divides our practical interests into that which is morally good and that which agrees with an individual and so contributes to her happiness. Kant's value dualism, where the active, agential power of reason is on one side of this divide and the passive, experientially given pleasure in the agreeable is on the other, seems to imply that we cannot rationally modify our pleasure in the agreeable, since the pleasure itself seems beyond the reach of reason. It seems the only way for reason to exert control over our sensual agreeable pleasures is by assuming authority within the agent's actions and denying and repressing any pleasures that do not fit reason's moral regime.

I will show that this view of reason as impotent to alter our agreeable pleasures does not follow from Kant's dualism. Instead, Kant's account of agreeable pleasures can accommodate two seemingly incompatible ideas: that agreeable pleasure can be resistant to rational direction and that we can rationally cultivate our agreeable pleasures with a view to ethical self-transformation. Kant's focus on the functional role of pleasure in the agreeable in practical reasoning provides resources to explain why many of our agreeable pleasures seem frustratingly stuck on some object that conflicts with our deeply held moral commitments. This functional role also explains why, through doing difficult work on our pleasures through our actions, we can succeed, at least sometimes, in cultivating our agreeable pleasures.

In section 1 I clarify why it seems like Kant is committed to inconsistent claims regarding how the Agreeable relates to the Good, and how the Agreeable operates in practical reasoning. To mark the tensions within Kant's theorization of pleasure in the agreeable, I use two contemporary readings. These contrasting readings of Kant's conception of pleasure in the agreeable together show the need for a different and new interpretative lens, one that opens up a middle path through the tensions documented in this first section. In section 2 I use Kant's functional account of pleasure to generate a dynamic picture of agreeable pleasures. First, though, I survey the textual evidence that shows that Kant associates pleasure in the agreeable with sensation; this linkage makes the problem of how we could possibly cultivate our agreeable pleasures a deep worry. Rather than fully resolve this deep worry, I argue we can responsibly subordinate this interpretative problem to Kant's explicit interest in theorizing pleasure in the agreeable, which is to mark this pleasure's functional role in practical reasoning. The particular functional role of an agreeable pleasure is to serve as the determining ground for the faculty of desire, thereby giving rise to a practical interest. Kant describes a practical cycle, where pleasure in the agreeable is the motor that pushes the process forward from pleasure in the representation of the object, to desire for that object, to action in pursuit of the pleasurable object, to pleasure in getting the object, to desire, to action, to pleasure, etc. In other words, pleasure in the agreeable is incipiently habitual. In section 3 I use this functional, dynamic account of pleasure in the agreeable's role in practical reasoning to show how we can change our agreeable pleasures. The quick answer is that we change our pleasures by changing our actions. The more complicated answer is that we change our pleasures through changing our subconscious and conscious activities of imagination and attention, which happens through changing our actions. For Kant, reason has the ability to modify our agreeable pleasures, not by directly reconstituting the pleasure, but indirectly by its control over action. This means our pleasures in the agreeable are, in a certain way, in our power, even though our direct control of our experiences of these pleasures is quite limited.

1. Two Readings of How the Agreeable Relates to the Good in Kant's Practical Philosophy

Before explaining how Kant's account of pleasure in the agreeable can accommodate the variability we experience in the openness of our agreeable pleasures to cultivation, I want to situate my argument in relation to two contemporary readings of Kant on pleasure in the agreeable. The two views take opposing positions on whether agreeableness for Kant is a

kind of goodness, or whether it is best to think of the agreeable as its own, wholly separate, practical consideration. Each view captures some aspect of pleasure in the agreeable, but as irreconcilable accounts of the value of agreeable pleasures, each is unable to accommodate the insights of the other. I will show that there is no single answer as to how the agreeable and the good as values relate, since experiences of pleasure in the agreeable are not uniformly passive/active, nor rational/nonrational to the same degree. Janelle DeWitt focuses on pleasure in the agreeable's active contribution to practical evaluation, whereas Markus Kohl focuses on pleasure in the agreeable's passive reception of sensory value, but both consider pleasure in the agreeable as a single, static, practical consideration or input. By recognizing the dynamic nature of the functioning of pleasure in the agreeable in practical reasoning, we can see how reason is active within a largely passive cycle of agreeable pleasures, and thereby account for the varying rationality of agreeable pleasures.

In 'The Normativity of Prudence', Kohl argues that 'Kant seems to hold that we value our (consciousness of) pleasant sensations not *as a good* but *as a weal*' (Kohl 2017: 521). He uses a passage from the second *Critique* where Kant distinguishes the good from weal or well-being and evil from woe (*KpV*, 5: 58–62) to assert that:

For Kant, the empirical desire for pleasure is the ultimate normative foundation of all 'material' (non-formal, non-moral) practical principles: such principles are *solely* (*nur*) 'grounded on' our susceptibility to feel pleasure and displeasure. Accordingly, the motivating force of such material rules depends on our non-rational, empirically given desire for pleasure as well. (525)

Kohl acknowledges that 'the representation of an end as a weal does not belong solely to non-rational desire' (522); reason has a role to play in the determination of ends. However, he argues that, for Kant, an object desired as weal or well-being does not become subsumed under the category of good simply by being taken up by practical reasoning as an end. Instead, the actions chosen as means to what is desired because agreeable can be accurately described as good because of their instrumental goodness, but the end remains valued as (part of) weal. Thus Kohl argues for a hard-line value dualism based upon Kant's arguments that 'the concept of goodness is a concept of reason whereas the value-concept of weal is an empirical concept derived from our experiences of pleasant sensations' (523).

Kohl's aim in sharply distinguishing the agreeable from the good is to explain Kant's contrasting descriptions of two kinds of reasoning, moral and prudential. For Kant, on Kohl's reading, moral reasoning is genuinely practical reasoning since wholly free. By contrast, prudential reasoning belongs, in some crucial way, to the theoretical realm, since it concerns how best to manipulate the natural realm to achieve desired ends, but also because the end of prudential reasoning, happiness, is largely determined by natural causes. On this picture, agreeable pleasures happen to the subject, bestowing prudential interest in various objects desired as agreeable. The subject then uses prudential reason in a theoretical, calculative way to figure out, not whether these wants are worthy of pursuit, but rather how best to satisfy the multifarious, empirically given wants that together form her idea of happiness.

This reading captures the truth that, for Kant, the agreeable is a basic source of practical ends, independent of, and often in contradiction with, what reason judges good. There are two different sources of wants: things wanted because judged good by reason, and things wanted because experience of them is agreeable. Kohl's reading moves from the distinction between different kinds of value to defence of a hard-line value dualism, where pleasure in the agreeable, as empirically given, is defined by passivity and stands in contrast to the activity of moral reasoning. This is a natural reading of Kant's own descriptions and his comparisons of pleasure in the agreeable to other kinds of pleasure; it is consistent with what I will call 'the standard view' found in the scholarly literature regarding Kant's conception of pleasure in the agreeable.⁵

The problem for Kohl's strong separation of the agreeable and the good as values that structure two separate kinds of reasoning towards action is that it is not clear how to allow the integration of these values into one unified practical perspective. Kohl acknowledges this worry, and answers that, for Kant, concern for the agreeable and prudential reasoning should be subordinate to moral concerns and moral reasoning. This response is correct but does not resolve the worry: if the expression of each value demands its own wholly separate form of reasoning, how could an individual merge these two sorts of value into a single course of action, as for instance, when a person integrates her idiosyncratic agreeable pleasures into, say, her performance of imperfect duties? Or how could her moral commitments bear upon actions done in pursuit of happiness, such as whether to order meat when dining out? Even more problematically, this picture implies that the only way for our agreeable interests to change is

for certain sensations to come and go (or to change in intensity) as an effect, by virtue of natural causality, that may or may not result from our rational reflection and choices. But this dissociates rational causality too absolutely from our agreeable pleasures in a way that seems inadequate to all our various experiences of the agreeable.⁶ While some phenomenological, natural causal change might need to underlie any change in a subject's agreeable pleasures, such natural causal explanations are not usually explanatorily helpful for describing why the subject's experience of some pleasure changed, e.g. cases where a pleasure, upon reflection, loses its allure. More troubling, on this picture of what follows from Kant's hard-line value dualism,⁷ everything that pertains to a subject's experience of the agreeable happens through a sub-rational process that is essentially arbitrary from the rational point of view. This reading of what hard-line value dualism requires reduces the cultivation of agreeable pleasures to behavioural conditioning processes, where the success (or failure) of such attempts is, at bottom, accidental.

In response to the worry that the standard picture emphasizing the passivity and non-rationality of the agreeable requires a 'deep rupture between fundamental parts of the subject's psychology', where 'reason can only exercise control as an alien force external to his lower nature' and the subject can never successfully achieve 'a single agential perspective', DeWitt argues in 'Feeling and Inclination: Rationalizing the Animal Within' that this cannot be Kant's account (DeWitt 2018: 68). Instead, on her reading of Kant's conception of the agreeable, 'our rational nature will cross the metaphysical divide and structure our animal nature all the way down to sensations of pleasure and pain', thereby resulting in 'a sophisticated, *cognitive* account of nonmoral motivation' (69). DeWitt uses the example of how the warmth and caffeine of coffee will motivate someone who is 'currently cold, tired, and with still more writing to do' to drink it (74). She argues that Kant's description of pleasure as 'the representation of the agreement of an object or an action with the subjective conditions of life' (*KpV*, 5: 9, n.) means that:

When I judge the coffee in this way, as positively fitting (or *agreeing*) with my needs and activities, then I am at the same judging the coffee to be *good* (i.e., to be *pleasing or agreeable*). These pleasures, then, are a type of judgment that involves attributing to the object the subjective/evaluative predicates of *good/bad*, or more precisely, of *agreeable/disagreeable* (a subset of the general category of good/bad) (Ak. 28: 245). (74)

DeWitt asserts that if instead I need to go to sleep soon, ‘I would then judge the coffee to be *bad* (i.e., *displeasing* or *disagreeable*), and so would avoid drinking it’ (74). Thus DeWitt defends an account of Kant on pleasure in the agreeable where ‘the function of pleasure is to judge an object to be good in relation to the needs and circumstances of the subject’, since ‘it is only through the gratification of a need that our animal life is furthered’ (76).

In arguing that the agreeable is a subset of goodness, DeWitt addresses the need for each agent to integrate into one practical perspective and one ongoing course of actions those things that appear good because they agree with her. She rightly emphasizes that, as one kind of thing we want, and as a practical end we necessarily have under the totalizing idea of happiness, the agreeable has value in itself. This means agreeable objects have an appearance of goodness for the agent, simply because they agree with her. In deciding how to act, the agent must be able to compare various objects and actions desired because of their agreeableness, but also how to integrate these prudential concerns with moral demands and interests.

The problem, though, for DeWitt’s assimilation of the agreeable and the good by seeing agreeableness as a subset of goodness is that it is easy to think of examples where what seems agreeable to the agent conflicts with what she knows to be good. Arguably, Kant’s moral psychology is built around just such conflict. DeWitt’s own example can be manipulated to generate conflict between what seems agreeable to the agent and what would be good for the agent to do: a person could have the experience of coffee seeming agreeable to drink in the moment, the perfect finish to a lovely dinner, even though knowing coffee would not now be good to drink because of early commitments the next morning.⁸ DeWitt smooths over conflict between the agreeable and the good as two kinds of value by attributing to Kant the claim that empirical pleasures ‘are all ultimately directed toward satisfying one’s own needs’ and the satisfaction of a need is good (DeWitt 2018: 76). Likewise, she uses Kant’s discussion of instincts, propensities and other natural animal drives as support for a confluence of what is agreeable for an agent and what is (teleologically) good for that individual because needed to further his activity (77–84). But the appeal to need to explain how the agreeable is a subset of the good gives rise to an interpretative bind: either every object desired by the subject as agreeable constitutes a need that must be satisfied as part of the agent’s total idea of happiness or, once reason adequately grasps that some object desired as agreeable is not in fact

needed, its agreeableness disappears.⁹ Either way leaves little to no room for the cultivation of agreeable pleasures, since wayward agreeable pleasures are simply taken on as yet another additional need for happiness, or corrected by reason's grasp of what is truly needed, which should be able to dispel such contrary appearances of agreeableness as illusory.

The difficulties for capturing how agreeable pleasures are shaped by the agent's view of what would be good to do are instructive: seeing some *x* as good because agreeably pleasant cannot be straightforwardly assimilated to seeing *x* as good. To accurately preserve Kant's distinction between the agreeable and the good, the account of how agreeable pleasures contribute to practical reasoning must include some constraint upon how rationally responsive agreeable pleasures can be. Moreover, the account should avoid providing one simple answer to whether all agreeable pleasures are equally good, rational and reflective of agential activity. For Kohl, as empirically given, pleasure in the agreeable is not good, not rational, and passive. For DeWitt, as informative and evaluative, pleasure in the agreeable is good, rationally responsive and active in practical reasoning. The account of Kant's conception of agreeable pleasure should instead allow for the varying goodness, rationality and degrees of active manipulation of the various pleasures that fall under this heterogeneous class of pleasures.

In what follows, I mark out a middle ground that preserves the insights of each of these two conflicting accounts of pleasure in the agreeable and its relation to judgements of goodness. Much of the literature on this topic has focused on the question 'How rational are experiences of pleasure in the agreeable?', and so 'To what extent are these agreeable pleasures beliefs, belief-like, or like forming a judgement?'. But I want to ask, 'How modifiable are our experiences of pleasure in the agreeable in light of our moral principles, and if so, in what way?' The first question prompts answers that present a static picture of what experiences of pleasure in the agreeable are, considered as isolated states. Answering the second question requires a dynamic picture of how pleasure in the agreeable matters for practical reasoning, and thus brings in Kant's notions of virtue, habit and self-cultivation. Once we switch to a dynamic picture of how pleasure in the agreeable works over time, we can marry Kohl's insights regarding the empirical, passive, non-rational aspects of pleasure in the agreeable with DeWitt's insights regarding the rational, practical, evaluative aspects of this kind of pleasure.

2. The Functional Role of Pleasure in the Agreeable

Kant secures reason's ability to modify our agreeable pleasures in a way that, though not direct, is also not merely accidental, through his account of the functional role of pleasure in the agreeable. For Kant, whatever knowledge we have of pleasure comes through examination of its functional role, and the functional role of pleasure in the agreeable is to motivate all non-moral actions by putting the object of the agreeable pleasure forward as *to be pursued*. This functional role shows pleasure in the agreeable to be: (1) incipiently habitual, because any experience of this pleasure points forward to realizing future experiences of this pleasure; (2) intentional, since the pleasure is taken in, or is about, a representation of an object as an instance of *a type of object* to be pursued, and (3) imaginatively holistic, where the subject, through her actions and representations, develops a history of pursuit of this type of object as agreeable.

First, though, to see how reason can non-accidentally influence our agreeable pleasures, we must clarify the relation between pleasure in the agreeable and sensation. For the standard view, as exemplified in Kohl (2017), is indisputably right that pleasure in the agreeable lies in sensation. Across various texts, Kant is remarkably consistent in asserting that pleasure in the agreeable is grounded in sensation, so that sensation is the source of pleasure in the agreeable: the agreeable is 'that which pleases the senses in sensation' (*KU*, 5: 205); the agreeable 'rests entirely on sensation' (*KU*, 5: 207); 'the feeling for the agreeable [is] sensuous pleasure in the sensation of an object' and 'pleasure through sense' (*Anth*, 7: 230, cf. *GMS*, 4: 413); the feeling of pleasure in the agreeable 'accompanies sensation' (*KU FI*, 20: 230); 'if something pleases in sensation, then it *gratifies*, and the object is agreeable ... [the agreeable] refers to the private sensation of the subject' (*V-Met-LI*, 28: 250). Yet while the standard view is right that sensation plays this key role in our agreeable pleasures, proponents either stop at this point and do not consider how pleasure in the agreeable is also part of and responsive to practical reasoning, or they assume that since pleasure in the agreeable belongs to the faculty of sensibility, a set of interpretative possibilities for the rational responsiveness of these pleasures is foreclosed. Kant's linkage of pleasure in the agreeable with sensation is often taken to show that there is nothing to be done about the pleasurable experience itself because as something that *happens to us*, unlike a judgement, it leaves no room for cultivation. Instead our only option seems to be the management of these pleasures through judgements and actions that respond to these pleasures as given.¹⁹ Rather than confusedly attempt to cultivate experiences of agreeable pleasure, it looks like

we are limited to trying to minimize, control and contain the role of agreeable pleasures in our practical reasoning.¹¹

But emphasis on pleasure in the agreeable as grounded in sensation, to the detriment of consideration of the relation of pleasure in the agreeable to practical reasoning, is completely contrary to what Kant tells us we should prioritize in trying to make sense of pleasure in the agreeable. According to Kant, whatever understanding we have of our pleasures arises from our grasp on their functional roles in our lives:

It can be readily seen here that pleasure or displeasure, since they are not kinds of cognition, cannot be explained by themselves at all, and are felt, not understood; hence they can be only inadequately explained through the influence that a representation has on the activity of the powers of the mind by means of this feeling. (*KU* FI, 20: 232)

Kant's conception of pleasure in general is the experience of harmony or agreement between a representation (*Vorstellung*) of some object or action and the subject (20: 231).¹² From this general picture of pleasure as a relation of fit between a representation and the subject, Kant delineates three kinds of pleasure. Pleasure may precede desire and action, when the experience of harmonious agreement produces the desire to realize my representation in reality: this is pleasure in the agreeable. Pleasure may be the effect of desire and action, as resulting from the representation of some willed action as harmonious with the law of duty: this is pleasure in the moral. Pleasure may be contemplative, having no direct relation to desire and action: this is pleasure in aesthetic judgement, which encompasses pleasure in the beautiful and in the sublime (*MS*, 6: 212; *KU*, 5: 209–10). In tracing out certain patterns in our experiences of pleasure, Kant illuminates the nature of pleasure the only way he thinks possible.¹³

For Kant, pleasure in the agreeable is defined by the functional role it fulfils within practical reasoning as 'the basis of the faculty of desire' (*KpV*, 5: 9, n.). Pleasure in the agreeable functions to put some (type of) object forward for integration into the agent's practical agenda, as desirable because agreeable and so as belonging within the agent's happiness. Often when Kant refers to 'pleasure', this is shorthand for pleasure in the agreeable, which stands in for our general relation to pleasure because of its centrality for practical reasoning. We directly aim at agreeable pleasures, and not at moral or aesthetic pleasures.

Pleasure in the agreeable functions as the source of determinate ends for practical reason to pursue, since pleasure in the agreeable is any relation between a subject and the representation of an object that serves as a determining ground for the faculty of desire. The represented object is felt to agree with the subject, where this agreement is more than mere liking: the agent desires the existence of the represented agreeable object in relation to herself, generating a practical interest.

Now, that a judgment by which I declare an object to be agreeable expresses an interest in that object is already obvious from the fact that, by means of sensation, the judgment arouses a desire for objects of that kind, so that the liking presupposes something other than my mere judgment about the object: it presupposes that I have referred the existence of the object to my state insofar as that state is affected by such an object. . . . It is not mere approval that I give it, rather inclination is thereby aroused . . . (*KU*, 5: 207)

Pleasure in the agreeable explains why we take up any material object as an end to be brought about through our actions. Indeed, all non-moral actions are marked by this functional role of pleasure in the agreeable as determining the faculty of desire (see *KpV*, 5: 22).

This functional role for pleasure in the agreeable as the goad to all non-moral actions means that, although Kant claims that ‘the agreeable is that which pleases the senses in sensation’, the feeling of agreeable pleasure is best characterized not as the aim or end of non-moral action, but rather the motive of the agent for pursuing the represented object as an end.¹⁴ The agent experiences some object, say, red curry tofu; this experience involves a cognitive representation of the object. The representation is experienced by the subject as gratifying, i.e. the subject’s sensibility passively receives the representation of the object as to be enjoyed. But this experience of an object as to be enjoyed is inseparable from the representation causing the agent to desire red curry tofu; the desire is a push to take up this desired object as an end, e.g. by ordering red curry tofu again the next time she is at a Thai restaurant.¹⁵ As felt awareness of the determination of the faculty of desire by the representation of an object, pleasure in the agreeable is logically antecedent to this determination of the faculty of desire, even though the feeling of pleasure in and the desire for the represented object are indistinguishable in experience. It is likely, although not certain, that when fulfilling her desire by eating red curry tofu again, the agent will experience pleasurable feeling.¹⁶ But this

latter pleasurable feeling is yet again felt awareness of the determination of the agent's faculty of desire to pursue red curry tofu.¹⁷

Consideration of its functional role shows pleasure in the agreeable to be incipiently habitual. All experiences of the agreeable point forward, to maintaining or securing at some future time the agent's relation to the agreeable object. In pursuing objects represented as agreeable, our nature becomes inclined to the enjoyed object; the agent develops an inclination, which is a habitual desire or more precisely, a 'persisting cause of desire', for this kind of object that arises from repeated pursuit of it as agreeable.¹⁸

Consideration of its functional role also shows pleasure in the agreeable to be intentional because directed towards, about, or taken in some conceptualized object or aspect of the subject's experience. As Kant explains, 'through sensation [the agreeable] excites a desire for objects of the same sort' (*KU*, 5: 207). As this quote makes clear, agreeable pleasure is taken in an object as instantiating a type: when my representation of a sandwich moves me to go to the kitchen to fix a sandwich, it is not (usually) a representation of some particular sandwich that strikes me as agreeable.¹⁹ Kant tends to refer to the 'object' of agreeable pleasure, yet his account must be expansive enough to accommodate examples like Anscombe's of enjoying the fact *that* I am riding with N (it puffs my pride), while not particularly enjoying riding with N (N is a boor, the ride is chilly and the seat uncomfortable).²⁰ Given the opportunity, my *pleasure that* I am riding with N may lead me to do it again, and Kant can explain why, but only if we do not assume too reductive or constraining a role for sensation in his account of pleasure in the agreeable.

Kant further specifies how the way that pleasure in the agreeable is about the (type of) object differs from how sensation is about the object. While Kant describes sensation as 'a perception that refers to the subject as a modification of its state', sensation is the grounds for empirical cognition (A320). By contrast, Kant repeatedly describes pleasure in the agreeable as 'merely subjective':

[W]e will call that which must always remain merely subjective and absolutely cannot constitute a representation of an object by the otherwise customary name of 'feeling'. The green color of the meadows belongs to objective sensation, as perception of an object of sense; but its agreeableness belongs to subjective sensation, through which no object is represented, i.e., to feeling,

through which the object is considered as an object of satisfaction (which is not a cognition of it). (*KU*, 5: 206, see also *GMS*, 4: 413, *MS*, 6: 211–12, 215)²¹

Pleasure is a relation of fit between the subject and the object; in particular, agreeable pleasure ‘is determined not merely through the representation of the object but at the same time through the represented connection of the subject with the existence of the object’ (*KU*, 5: 209, see also 189, 207). Because pleasure in the agreeable just is the relation of agreeable fit between the subject and the representation of the object that prompts the subject to bring about or maintain connection to that object in existence, ‘agreeable’ cannot be predicated of the object and is not productive of cognition of the object nor the subject. The mere subjectivity of agreeable pleasure means no amount of abstract reasoning will answer the question, ‘What will please/agree with *S*?’. This question can only be answered empirically, by seeing what does in fact happen to agree with *S* (see *MS*, 6: 215–16).

A third feature of pleasure in the agreeable that becomes clear from examination of its functional role is the way that the relation of agreeableness between the subject and the object is imaginatively holistic and, after some time of repeated pursuit, has a history. The holism and historicity of the agreeableness of a type of object is similar to and arises because of the activity of our mental faculties in ‘sense-making’ with regard to any sort of experience in the first place, especially the activity of the faculty of reproductive imagination.²² The appearance of any object is imaginatively holistic, informed by what has happened immediately previously but also the subject’s history with that object; this is even more true for the appearance of an object as agreeable. As shown in the Transcendental Deduction, our experience of an object involves more than what is actually ‘given’ to us in the present, particular moment. Rather, through the syntheses of apprehension and (inseparably) reproduction, imagination gathers together a manifold of past (but also associated therewith ‘anticipated’) representations, in principle referable to the object in question, and brings them to bear on some object it takes (or at least imagines) as present: ‘this apprehension of the manifold alone would bring forth no image and no connection of the impressions were there not a subjective ground for calling back a perception, from which the mind has passed on to another, to the succeeding ones, and thus for exhibiting entire series of perceptions, i.e., a reproductive faculty of imagination’ (*A121*).²³ In the Lectures on Metaphysics, Kant further specifies how (reproductive) imagination holds together the temporal moments of *past* representations through the faculty of imitation, *future*

representations through the faculty of anticipation, and *present* representations of the world around us through the faculty of illustration, all of which are at issue in the experience of the object (V-Met-LI, 28: 235–6).²⁴ This activity of reproductive imagination is not under our control, nor is it conscious.²⁵ But it is necessary for any sort of representation of objects at all and generative of ‘holistic representations of objects from multiple sides and points of view’.²⁶ Just as the activity of reproductive imagination generates a necessarily holistic representation of an object itself, how *pleasant* any object will be in its appearance to a subject not only can, but must be shaped by the changing history of the subject’s experiences of that kind of object.²⁷ The holism of the relation of agreeableness between the subject and object explains the context-sensitivity of agreeable pleasure and also how preferences develop, e.g. the agreeableness of wine to a subject develops into preferences for certain varieties, from certain regions, etc. Kant gives the example of watching a ship move downstream to show how the recognition of it as the same ship and of it as moving are inseparable and arise from the activity of reproductive imagination as holding together successive appearances (B236). Similarly, because agreeableness is a relation between the subject and a type of agreeable object, we can mark changes in how that same type of object appears to the subject. The identification of an agreeable pleasure with its type of object enables us to track changes in its appearances as agreeable over time, including the cessation of an agreeable pleasure, e.g. ‘cigarette smoking used to be a pleasure of mine’.

3. How we Modify our Pleasures

Because pleasure in the agreeable is an integral part of practical, prudential reasoning, we can modify our agreeable pleasures. The functional role of pleasure in the agreeable as putting forth objects as agreeable and so for integration into the agent’s pursuit of happiness shows pleasure in the agreeable to be incipiently habitual, about a type of object, and imaginatively holistic. Moreover, this functional role as motivational push via the determination of desire towards action makes this pleasure apt for cultivation. In deciding to act upon the direction given by pathological pleasure, reason has a clear, identifiable locus for its activity with respect to such pleasure. These decisions to act, whether in future actions directed to securing or revisiting these pleasures or in smaller, more timely actions aimed at redirecting the agent’s attention, grant reason the power to shape these pleasures to make them expressive of rational will.

The way that we modify our agreeable pleasures is through our actions, and reason’s power to will (or not will) an action: we are *affected* but not

determined by sensible impulses to action (MS, 6: 213, V-Met/Mron, 29: 896). For Kant, ‘The will itself, strictly speaking, has no determining ground; insofar as it can determine choice, it is instead practical reason itself’ (MS, 6: 213, see also 214, 381, 385 and *KpV*, 5: 21). The will exercises its freedom, its power, in the transition from desiring some object as agreeable to directly taking up this object as an end. Pleasure in the agreeable, by being the determination of desire, puts some type of object forward as a component of happiness and so worth including in the agent’s practical agenda. But in choosing to act (or not) upon the prodding of some agreeable pleasure, reason exercises agency by its approval (or disapproval) of the represented intentional object as worthy of pursuit as agreeable and so able to serve as a reason for action in its pursuit.

Importantly, the choice to reinforce by revisiting the agreeable pleasure through action, or instead to undermine by refusing to act upon the pleasure’s urging, is effective. Re-engagement with the represented agreeable object normally grows into inclination (*Neigung*), which is habitual desire for the (type of) object (MS, 6: 212).²⁸ Just as importantly, rejection of action toward some represented pleasurable object usually lessens the pleasurable representation’s pull upon us. Because of the holism of an object’s appearance as agreeable, the rejection of some type of object as worthy of inclusion in one’s practical aims can, especially when repeated over time, make the object appear less agreeable, lessening its practical, agreeable pull on the subject. The subject’s relation to her agreeable pleasures can thus be described as having two stages. The first stage, the initial experience of some represented object as agreeable, is characterized as passive and given to us through experience. But at the second stage, the agent’s decision to continue and deepen her relationship of agreement with that represented object in action or to sever that relation through abstention involves the free, active exercise of reason. Because of our rational agency at the second stage, we can assume some direction over what we immediately experience as agreeable at the first stage, since our relation to agreeable pleasures is not once and done, but a self-perpetuating, incipiently habitual, practical cycle.

While reason’s control of action is most manifest in overt actions that endorse or repudiate a prospective agreeable pleasure by directly pursuing it or rejecting such pursuit, the subject may also perform localized, primarily mental, actions to try to exert rational influence on an agreeable pleasure through the conscious direction of her attention. Kant describes attention as a more or less conscious and more or less

voluntary selection and lifting of some representations out of an immense field of otherwise obscure representations, making the representations attended to distinct and clear representations. According to Kant, ‘Clear representations . . . contain only infinitely few points of this field [of sensuous intuitions and sensations] which lie open to consciousness; so that as it were only a few places on the vast *map* of our mind are *illuminated*’ (*Anth*, 7: 135). This is an image of attention as a sort of flashlight that illuminates a certain representation and then connects it to another, and so on, through its illuminating focus. The subject has some control over what representations she connects together (where the flashlight points) by bringing obscure representations into clarity in becoming directly conscious of them. Yet the interplay of passivity and activity is definitive of the faculty of attention.²⁹ Attention may be grabbed or pulled, and this passivity is important for how attention functions; Kant speaks of a baby following with his eyes shining objects held before him and of the bad habit of attention ‘to fix itself directly, even involuntarily, on what is faulty in others’ (7: 127, 132). On the other hand, we direct or give our attention to something, and this active control is why Kant characterizes attention as ‘the voluntary consciousness of one’s representation’ (7: 131).³⁰ Importantly, the voluntary direction of attention is also always reactive; Kant describes how ‘understanding still cannot prevent the impression that a well-dressed person makes of obscure representations of a certain importance. Rather, at best it can only have the resolution afterwards to correct the pleasing, preliminary judgment’ (7: 137). This description shows how attention can help shape our pleasures, bringing them more into alignment with our values and understanding. It seems like there is nothing to be done in the moment of pleasure, since the ‘Pleasure of [agreeableness] . . . comes into the mind through the senses, and we are therefore passive with regard to it’ (*KU*, 5: 292). Yet even in the moment of pleasure when reason’s efficacy is quite circumscribed, there is still the possibility for responsive management of one’s pleasure that can become, over time, the foundation for ongoing behavioural change. For the subject can take the action of consciously redirecting her attention to try to actively reconceptualize the meaning of what’s happening, bringing into view a fuller picture of the represented object and potentially altering its initial pleasing/displeasing appearance.

For Kant, attention works in two different ways: I can pay attention to a representation (*attentio*), which is to bring it into direct consciousness, or conversely, I can ‘turn away from an idea of which I am conscious (*abstractio*)’ (*Anth*, 7: 131).³¹ Kant defines abstraction as ‘a real act of the cognitive faculty of stopping a representation of which I am conscious

from being in connection with other representations in one's consciousness. That is why one does not say "to abstract (isolate) something" but rather "to abstract (isolate) *from something*" (*Anth*, 7: 131). Abstraction has an even more central role in happiness than attention, because it disrupts the association of a representation with pleasure or displeasure:

To be able to abstract from a representation, even when the senses force it on a person, is a far greater faculty than that of paying attention to a representation, because it demonstrates a freedom of the faculty of thought and the authority of the mind, in having the object of one's representations under one's control . . . Many human beings are unhappy because they cannot abstract. The suitor could make a good marriage if only he could overlook a wart on his beloved's face, or a gap between her teeth. But it is an especially bad habit of our faculty of attention to fix itself directly, even involuntarily, on what is faulty in others . . . this faculty of abstraction is a strength of mind that can only be acquired through practice. (*Anth*, 7: 131–2)

To abstract is to step back from the grip a representation of some object may have on yourself in the moment, by breaking the imaginative, attentive, habitual connection this present representation of the object has with past representations of this type of thing as pleasant or unpleasant. There is a mental willing to not see this object as so pleasant or, in Kant's example, so unpleasant, by isolating that reactive attitude from its normal, associated representations and actions, and simultaneously by bringing certain alternative descriptions of the object to one's attention. This shift in attention places the represented object in a different context, possibly modifying the pleasure or displeasure. As Kant tells us, abstraction is something we voluntarily do, and that we can get better at through practice. In the context of our pleasures, we can use abstraction to remind ourselves just how many calories are in that dessert, breaking its pleasurable hold on us. Conversely, we can use abstraction to remind ourselves that, however unpleasurable it seems to start cooking dinner after working all day, it will taste better and be more satisfying than getting takeout.

Yet someone might object that Kant's example of abstraction from the wart on your potential fiancée's face falls short, in two different ways, of showing that we can modify our agreeable pleasures. First, one could object that the initial displeasure felt in relation to the woman's wart is not itself modified by whatever additional inputs of sensation result from the mental action of abstraction or other more overtly physical actions

taken to counteract the displeasure. The displeasure felt towards the wart may lessen, but this is not the initial feeling of displeasure being itself altered, but rather supplanted by related but different pleasures and displeasures as inputs of sensation continue to accumulate. Secondly, one could object that the initial displeasure felt in relation to the woman's wart is not itself modified but rather resituated in a new context through consideration of more long-term pleasures and displeasures (such as the pleasures of financial security and more leisure, her kind disposition, etc.) attended to through abstraction. The initial displeasure is not altered, but merely outweighed by these other, more long-term, prudent, pleasures and practical considerations.

While the active direction of attention, abstraction and other actions done by the subject to shape a pleasure will not necessarily successfully modify the pleasure itself, it is not merely accidental when they so do. Both explanations for why rational will can never punch through and actually modify the pleasure itself are incompatible with Kant's account of how pleasure in the agreeable functions in practical reasoning. An agreeable pleasure is not a single sensation snapshot, nor is it a momentary practical consideration. While it is possible to isolate and consider only this feeling of agreeable pleasure in this moment, Kant's focus on how agreeable pleasures function as the source of prudential ends and take shape as inclinations show his primary interest is to individuate agreeable pleasures as indexed to a type of object. The nature of pleasure in the agreeable as an ongoing, holistic, incipiently habitual relation to a type of object means it is possible to rationally modify some agreeable pleasure itself, where success is not merely accidental.

This way of individuating agreeable pleasures as indexed to a type of object enables Kant to explain both why we can change our agreeable pleasures to make them expressive of rational will, but also why these pleasures are resistant to reason and may not change despite our best efforts. For Kant, 'we are free enough to tighten or loosen [the fetters we make from our natural drives and desires], to lengthen or shorten them, as the ends of reason require' (*KU*, 5: 432). To break the imaginative and attentive hold a pleasure has on us, it is not enough to rationally judge the pleasure to be bad. Instead we need to form new imaginative and attentive patterns and habits, which requires changing our patterns and habits of behaviour. Cultivation through the rational control of action is not restricted to the decision of whether to act on the promptings of some pleasure, but also demands practice in abstraction (*Anth*, 7: 131–2) and in directing attention (7: 212–13). The incipiently habitual nature of

pleasure explains why this is so difficult to do, but also why sustained changes in behaviour can, sometimes, change our pleasures.

4. Conclusion

I have argued that Kant provides a different way of thinking of pleasure than is usually attributed to him. Instead of thinking of pleasure as an informational input that reason must then choose what to do in response to, he conceives of pleasure in the agreeable as more tightly integrated into practical reasoning. A dynamic picture of its functional role shows agreeable pleasure to underpin the practical cycle of pleasure, desire, action, pleasure, etc. Reason has the ability to change our pleasures, not directly in the moment of pleasure, but indirectly in its control over action: reason can follow the prompting of agreeable pleasure through its determination of desire, thus developing and deepening the agreeable relation to the object, but if reason refuses or attempts to counteract the agreeable pleasure's practical missive, this bears upon the agreeable object's appearance of agreeableness. Through the subconscious and conscious activity of imagination and attention, sustained behavioural changes can often, over time, change our pleasures. This means our pleasures in the agreeable are, in a certain way, in our power, even though our direct control of our experiences of these pleasures is quite limited.

This account of the possibility for changing our agreeable pleasures over time through changing our behaviour manages to hold together the insights of DeWitt's and Kohl's accounts of pleasure in the agreeable, while avoiding the shortcomings of each. This dynamic account preserves Kohl's insights that: (1) Kant characterizes the experience of pleasure in the agreeable as passive and happening to the individual subject through sensation, and (2) as its different origin reveals, the kind of value that pleasure in the agreeable has is separate and distinct to the value of (moral) goodness. But this account also preserves DeWitt's insights that: (1) the task of our practical reason is to strive to integrate these two practical interests into one practical agenda, and (2) our pleasures can, over time, make manifest the individual's judgements about what is good for her in her life. The boundary between the agreeable and the good is more porous than Kohl indicates. But this dynamic account of agreeable pleasures avoids some difficulties that beset DeWitt's account, which will struggle to explain why, if the agreeable is a subset of the good, the agreeable is resistant to our reasoned judgements of goodness. This account also avoids the troubling implication of Kohl's account that what we experience as agreeable is wholly exterior to reason's power.

Because it is possible to shape them through our actions, the concern to get our pleasures in the agreeable right is part of the province of Kantian virtue. While the task of cultivating our agreeable pleasures can only be imperfectly executed and imperfectly achieved, commitment to the task itself is morally valuable because embodying the right sort of humility regarding our limitations as moral agents. In trying to answer how pleasure matters for judgements regarding moral character, we may feel like we must choose between two thoughts. On the one hand, there is the thought traditionally associated with Kant: that pleasure is not the measure of a person's character, rather actions are. And on the other hand, there is the thought we find in Aristotle and that most readers suspect Kant cannot accommodate: that pleasure is an accurate reflection of a person's values and moral commitments. A dynamic account of the relation between pleasure in the agreeable and action makes it possible to see Kant as providing a way to hold these two thoughts together. We are directly, morally responsible for our actions. But because pleasure in the agreeable is incipiently habitual and deeply connected to our actions, the actions that we choose indirectly shape our pleasures.³²

Notes

- 1 It seems similarly hard to explain how prudential concerns could successfully alter what the subject finds agreeably pleasant. But this article is focused on probably the most difficult form of this question, which is whether, and if so how, moral concerns can alter our agreeable pleasures.
- 2 Admittedly, Kant casts the decision to get up early as belonging to prudential and not moral reason. However, this example is from a discussion of moral self-mastery in which Kant asserts, 'self-control according to the rules of prudence is an analogue of self-mastery' (V-Mo/Collins, 27: 362). A person might decide getting up early is important for fulfilling the imperfect duty of developing her talents. If this seems to stretch moral concern too thin, it is not hard to generate more straightforward examples of agreeable pleasures the subject wishes to bring into alignment with moral judgement. For all works by Kant other than the first *Critique* (in standard A/B format, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood in Kant 1998), citations appear by abbreviation followed by volume and page number from *Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Königlich Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften (and successors) (Berlin: Georg Reimer, later Walter de Gruyter, 1900–). *Anth* = *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (trans. Robert Louden in Kant 2007); *GMS* = *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, *KpV* = *Critique of Practical Reason*, *MS* = *The Metaphysics of Morals* (trans. Mary J. Gregor in Kant 1996); *KU* = *Critique of the Power of Judgement* (tr. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews in Kant 2000) (*FI* = First Introduction); V-Mo/Collins = Lectures on Ethics/Collins (tr. Peter Heath in Kant 1997a); V-Met-L1 and V-Met/Mron = Lectures on Metaphysics L1 (Pölitz) and Mronovius (tr. Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon in Kant 1997b).
- 3 Kant himself seems to have fallen into the latter camp regarding the pleasures of sleeping in. According to Kuehn, 'He got up at 5:00 a.m. His servant Martin Lampe, who worked for him from at least 1762 until 1802, would wake him. The old soldier was under orders to be persistent, so that Kant would not sleep longer. Kant was proud that he never got up

- even half an hour late, even though he found it hard to get up early. It appears that during his earlier years, he did sleep in at times' (Kuehn 2001: 222).
- 4 My interest is in the possibilities for bringing the content of an agent's pleasures into alignment with her moral judgement, and not how to do morally good actions despite these pleasures. This article assumes the basic correctness of Allison's 'incorporation thesis', which holds that for Kant we are free to incorporate (or not) our inclinations for the agreeable into actions (Allison 1990). For Kant, all ends are freely chosen (*MS*, 6: 381), as illustrated in his example of a man controlling supposedly irresistible 'lustful inclination' upon learning 'he would be hanged on [a gallows] immediately after gratifying his lust' (*KpV*, 5: 30).
 - 5 See e.g. Zangwill 1995 and Korsgaard 1996: 225, which evocatively calls agreeable pleasures 'stupid'. Zuckert 2002 and Gorodeisky 2018 contrast pleasure in the agreeable with pleasure in the beautiful to bring into relief the latter's rational features. Guyer 2018 claims Kant accepts the phenomenological model of moral and nonmoral pleasures as simple sensations in arguing for a dispositional model of Kantian pleasure in the beautiful or sublime.
 - 6 Kant's description of prudence as 'the determination of happiness' as a unified, temporally extended whole means prudential reasoning cannot simply be the maximal satisfaction of agreeable pleasures/desires as given (*V-Mo/Collins*, 27: 246). For an account of Kantian prudential reasoning and difficulties assimilating it to theoretical reasoning, see Holberg 2018, especially n. 13. Often the question whether Kant espouses some (bad) form of hedonism serves as proxy for worries about the possibilities for the free activity of judgement in the pursuit of happiness (see Reath 1989; Johnson 2005; Herman 2007).
 - 7 I am not sure Kohl would endorse the details of this picture of pleasure in the agreeable, as his article is focused instead on how prudential reasoning could count as theoretical reasoning.
 - 8 DeWitt (2018: 85) argues that, in this sort of case, because coffee does not 'further [the agent's] life or activity *as a whole*', 'then the subject will judge it to be (what I call) disagreeable in general'.
 - 9 The first possibility is supported by the passage from *KpV*, 5: 25, which DeWitt (2018: 78) quotes to support her fusion of the agreeable and good via need. I read Kant as here suggesting that *all* matter of the faculty of desire 'determines', or factors into, what is needed for happiness for this agent. DeWitt seems to embrace the second possibility through her treatment of conflict between what is agreeable and good for the agent (see her n. 10).
 - 10 I am thinking of management as like weeding; we remove or try to contain weeds to certain areas, where the ideal would be eradication. Cultivation is what we do with garden beds; there is a vision of what we want the garden to be, where this means encouraging the growth of some plants, bringing in new plants, rearranging by replanting, or removing a plant not faring well or spreading like a weed. Borges (2008: 46, 54) argues this point in relation to the emotions, namely that 'affects cannot be directly controlled by reason' because it is 'nonsensical to deliberate about something that is not entirely rational'; instead management of affect should happen through physiological interventions.
 - 11 Forman 2016 argues that not only virtue but prudence itself recommends the constraint and minimization of our sensible desires and inclinations as the best method for attaining happiness. Some of Kant's practical counsels regarding the inclinations suggest that minimization, not cultivation, is the best that we can do with our agreeable pleasures (see *GMS*, 4: 428).

- 12 See also Zuckert 2002. This basic conception shows pleasure to be intentional (about something) and future-directed (pleasure directs the subject to bring about or maintain her connection to the represented object).
- 13 Thus Kant has something like a dispositional account of pleasure (in contrast to a phenomenological account) for all three types of pleasure and not only for pleasure in aesthetic judgement, as argued in Guyer 2018.
- 14 Reath (1989: 47) makes this same point, although he calls pleasure the 'origin' of the action instead of the 'motive'. Pleasure in the agreeable as motive is substitutable for other descriptions Kant gives of the non-moral motive, i.e. self-interest, self-love, inclination.
- 15 See Engstrom 2007 for more on pleasure in the agreeable as determining the will to action.
- 16 Pleasure in the agreeable acts as a determining ground of desire by prompting future encounters with the desired object, but also by prompting continued engagement with the thing the agent is doing that is occasioning the feeling of agreeableness. Both bringing and maintaining connection to the desired object fit Kant's general definition of pleasure (see *KU*, 5: 220).
- 17 Since at least Plato, many philosophers have advanced a conception of pleasure as the experience of filling a lack, or desire satisfaction. Kant inverts this sort of account: instead of pleasure in the agreeable being what we experience when we get what we want, for Kant, pleasure in the agreeable explains why we want what we want. Kant's conception of pleasure in the agreeable can be thought of as an amalgam of two accounts of pleasure usually thought to conflict: sensation accounts and dispositional accounts. Like those who defend 'sensation' accounts, for Kant, the source of pleasure in the agreeable is sensation. Yet Kant rejects certain features typical of sensation accounts of pleasure, most importantly, the idea that some unique, positive feel identifies experiences of pleasure. Instead Kant insists the crucial commonality of such heterogenous experiences of agreeable pleasure is its functional role of motivating action.
- 18 Wilson 2016: 216, quoting Lectures on Anthropology, 25: 1514. Zangwill 1995 raises good questions about how this account can handle 'sated pleasures'.
- 19 Even for experiences enjoyed as agreeable that are fundamentally ephemeral and non-repeatable, e.g. the agreeable pleasure of being with this person on this beach right now as the sun sets on the first night of our honeymoon, the agreeable pleasure is still taken in this as a type of object, i.e. this sort of ephemeral and non-repeatable experience is experienced as to be pursued as agreeable. Sensation concerns the particular in experience, whereas pleasure in the agreeable is about the type of object agreeably enjoyed.
- 20 Anscombe 1981: 95.
- 21 Admittedly Kant describes sensation as 'merely subjective' at *KU*, 5: 189, but he then asserts its customary contrast of sensation as used for empirical cognition and pleasure as 'the subjective aspect in a representation **which cannot become an element of cognition at all**'.
- 22 At B151–2 and *Anth*, 7: 167–8, Kant contrasts the productive imagination, which is inventive, with the reproductive imagination, 'a faculty of the derivative presentation of the object', which is 'merely *recollective*'.
- 23 See especially A98–102, A115, B160–3. At A120, n., Kant asserts that imagination is 'a necessary ingredient of perception itself'. Matherne 2015 uses this claim to ground her explanation of the synthetic activity of imagination in perception.
- 24 Aquila 2016 considers how the reproductive imagination, playing a crucial role in the systematic unification of the perceptual field, may concern 'the incorporation of anticipation', so that the associative syntheses involved include associative anticipation

- (see especially 16–22). The binding together of past, present and future by imagination is evocative of the temporal structure of pleasure in the agreeable, as binding together past agreeable experiences in this present experience, which directs us to continue or pursue such experience in the future.
- 25 At V-Met-LI, 28: 236, the involuntary (reproductive) faculty of imagination that belongs wholly to sensibility is contrasted with the voluntary, fictive, imaginative faculty.
 - 26 Matherne 2015: 756.
 - 27 Similar to how the history of the flow of our experiences of some object shapes its present appearance, Kant describes the empirically established associative flow of ideas: ‘The law of association is this: empirical ideas that have frequently followed one another produce a habit of mind such that when one idea is produced, the other also comes into being’ (*Anth*, 7: 167).
 - 28 Wilson 2016: 213 argues that Kant conceives of inclination as ‘having a particular kind of disposition or tendency rather than experiencing an itch, urge or yen’.
 - 29 Merritt 2019 aims to show that rational activity is a basic component of the faculty of attention, making the healthy, sound judgement of the virtuous person always active in her healthy, sound perception of the world. My argument is focused instead on conscious, explicit actions to direct attention by reason, although the resultant progress towards a healthy, virtuous condition of attention is an important part of how a person’s agreeable pleasures become expressive of rational will.
 - 30 Kant states we are all able to perceive just how much attention affects our experience of, here, ourselves as appearance (B156–7, n.).
 - 31 Merritt 2019 explains that ‘the dynamics of attention and abstraction – presented here as flip sides of the same coin, so that one attends *as* one disregards this or that – presuppose some kind of unified background of representations’ (84). She then explains that while dynamically linked, we can distinguish attention, which may or may not be voluntary, from abstraction, which is in some sense under one’s deliberate control (Merritt 2019: 84–5).
 - 32 I would like to thank the participants of ‘Aristotle and Kant in Conversation’ at Auburn University in March 2016, the September 2016 Tennessee Value and Agency Conference on Pleasure and Pain, and the Society for German Idealism and Romanticism at the 2020 Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association, especially Keren Gorodeisky, Jennifer Lockhart, Jeremy Schwartz and Krista Thomason. Rachel Zuckert provided sage, timely feedback. Jay Elliott and Daniel Wack provided invaluable support. I am grateful for the critical, encouraging engagement from the journal’s two anonymous referees, and especially, Richard Aquila.

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