

*The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment*. By John H. Zammito. University of Chicago Press. 1992. pp. 479.

Though nearly twenty years have passed since the first appearance of book-length studies in English on Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, the fifteen or twenty volumes published in the last two decades may be divided—and one need not even qualify the division as rough—into two sorts. On the one side are books in the vein of Donald Crawford's *Kant's Aesthetic Theory*, or Paul Guyer's *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, or Eva Schaper's *Studies in Kant's Aesthetics*, all of which pursue an epistemological or cognitive description of the project of the Third Critique. The other side receives its most lucid and compelling expression in Salim Kemal's *Kant and Fine Art*, and also includes Rudolf Makkreel's *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant*, and Paul Crowther's *Kantian Sublime*; on this side of the divide Kant's aesthetics is elaborated as a primarily cultural and indeed moral project. In short, the expanding bulk of recent work on the *Critique of Judgment* has persisted in portraying that book either as some—sort of culmination of the epistemological programme of the *Critique of Pure Reason* or as the final fruition of the ethical programme of the *Critique of Practical Reason*.

The most remarkable feature of John Zammito's *Genesis of Kant's 'Critique of Judgment'* is its attempt to argue both sides of the divide. And though Zammito does not ultimately succeed in this attempt—or perhaps one might say he succeeds all too well—his book nonetheless is to be recommended as a watershed in the recent history of the reception of the Third Critique.

Zammito divides his book into three parts—corresponding to what he argues are three decisive 'turns' in the development of the *Critique of Judgment*, the first part, entitled *The Genesis of the 'Critique of Judgment'*, explains how Kant was brought back (i.e., the first 'turn' is a return) in September 1787, by 'both a contextual and an immanent' cause, to the questions of taste and aesthetics. The immanent cause of Kant's return (he had already published in 1764 his *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*) was a change heart from his *First Critique* belief in the impossibility of a transcendental ground of taste. In a letter to K. L. Reinhold in late 1787 Kant waxes enthusiastic about his 'discovery' of *a priori* principles for all three faculties of mind: cognition (First Critique), desire (Second Critique), and 'the faculty of feeling pleasure and displeasure'. It is this third discovery, Kant relates, that fuels the writing of his 'Critique of Taste', in the late summer of 1787. The contextual cause of Kant's return to aesthetics was his increasingly public quarrel against Herder and the influence of the nascent *Sturm and Drang* sentiment. And though Zammito on occasion reduces the forces at play in the 1780s to a rather simple battle between a Kantian Enlightenment and a Herder-driven Romanticism, this diminishes very little his erudite and intriguingly written intellectual history of that rich and complicated decade. Throughout his treatment of the whole corpus of Kant's texts and letters, and within his detailed discussions of Herder, Lessing, Hamann, and the resurgence of Spinozism in the so-called 'Pantheism Controversy',

Zammito consistently displays the acuity and breadth of a very fine intellectual historian.

Part two, *The Genesis of the 'Critique of Teleological Judgment'*, consists of an explication of the second of the three 'turns' Zammito claims were decisive in the composition of the Third Critique. The second of these is the 'cognitive turn', and what Zammito means by this is, as he well explains, Kant's elaboration of the faculty of judgment as not only determinant, but more importantly—and crucial for the exposition of the Third Critique—reflective. The idea of a reflective judgment posits the independence of the faculty of judgment from determination by concepts of the understanding. That is, the idea of a reflective rather than merely determinant judgment thereby entails the possibility of the faculty of judgment being potentially self-producing; judgment is thus elevated from simply playing the role of a regulative function within rational beings to a central, constitutive faculty of human existence in general. The entire middle section of Zammito's book is to be recommended both for its extensive discussion of the often neglected second half of the Third Critique, as well as for its treatment of teleology against the backdrop of Kant's critique of contemporary science and its attendant concept of hylozoism. This central section concludes with a discussion of Kant's position in the Pantheism Controversy, which prepares the ground for the third and final section—and third and final 'turn' of the book. As Zammito himself puts it in the introduction: 'My most important claim is that there was yet a third turn, occurring in late summer or early fall 1789, which I designate the ethical turn. That ethical turn resulted directly from Kant's struggle with pantheism, and introduced a much more metaphysical tone into the whole work, emphasizing the idea of the supersensible as the ground of both subjective freedom and natural order' (p. 7).

With this final turn the last third of Zammito's book, entitled *The Final Form of the Critique of Judgment*, becomes a platform for a series of speculations on the ultimate place and meaning of the Third Critique in Kant's *oeuvre*. It is here that Zammito makes his boldest and most provocative claims about the importance and centrality of the Third Critique within the Kantian architectonic, but it is also here that his interpretation of some of the key notions of Kant's aesthetics is faultiest. One might well be inclined to cheer Zammito's arrival at the recognition of the importance of the Third Critique without, however, thereby wishing to follow the path of an occasional heavy-footed argument or stumbling interpretation which delivers him to that summit. In short, I want to suggest that Zammito's conclusion is laudable and correct, though both his method of attaining it and what he attempts to append to it are questionable.

The clue to the use Zammito would like to put Kant's Critique of Judgment is perhaps best contained in the assertion, 'Aesthetics was the key to anthropology' (p. 292). On the face of it, this assertion is not at all suspect until one investigates just what sort of anthropology is to be served by Kant's aesthetics. And the anthropology envisaged by Zammito is one wholly constrained by the images of an at once rational, and moral, human being, culled respectively from the First and Second

Critiques. Although Zammito introduces the concept of anthropology in the concluding section of his study in order to present the Third Critique as the means for constructing a unified theory of human being, unfortunately this unification occurs at the cost of excluding any and all mention of anything remotely aesthetic, which is after all the ostensible content of Kant's book. In short, the price for explicating aesthetic judgment in terms of both reason and morality is the wholesale reduction of taste and the absence of its most immediate and obvious component.

The most poignant loss is that of pleasure. This loss is all the more perplexing if we recall Kant's claim, in his letter to Reinhold, that it was the discovery of 'the faculty of feeling pleasure and displeasure' that motivated his return to the problems of aesthetic judgment. But in Zammito's study we find only a handful of scattered remarks on pleasure, such as the following: 'If, as I infer, the object of transcendental explanation is to transpose into a cognitive key all (or as much as possible) of human experience, then to find any rendering of pleasure—for Kant the most recalcitrantly irrational component of that experience—in a transcendental form must have been an extremely heady accomplishment, and one that would indeed confirm Kant in his view of the aptness of his system' (p. 63). In so far as pleasure is here described as something that requires 'transposition' into a form of cognition in order for its transcendental aspect to be revealed, pleasure thereby still exists as something independent of its rational reformulation. When, however, some fifty pages later Zammito writes that 'What the transcendental philosopher thus discursively establishes, the subject experiences as pleasure . . .' (p. 118), we have lost any distinction between reason and pleasure. One might quite reasonably object here that the foundational premiss of the *Critique of Judgment* is that aesthetic pleasure is neither synonymous nor interchangeable with reason.

In sum, *The Genesis of Kant's 'Critique of Judgment'*, is to be recommended both for its engaging intellectual history of the context in which Kant formulated the problems of the Third Critique, and perhaps more importantly, as the summation and symptomatic expression of the insistent portrayal of Kant's aesthetics in the terms of both the First and Second Critiques.

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