

ARTICLE

Feeling, Orientation and Agency in Kant: A Response to Merritt and Eran

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Abstract

On my interpretation of Kant, feeling plays a central role in the mind: it has the distinct function of tracking and evaluating our activity in relation to ourselves and the world so as to orient us. In this article, I set out to defend this view against a number of objections raised by Melissa Merritt and Uri Eran. I conclude with some reflections on the fact that, despite being very different, Merritt and Eran's respective views of Kantian feelings turn out to have something potentially problematic in common: they blur the boundary between feelings and other kinds of mental states.

Keywords: Kant; feeling; emotion; agency; orientation; pleasure; desire; intentionality

Although Kant's view of feeling has drawn surprisingly little attention until recently, I believe that the faculty of feeling plays a central role in the Kantian mind. On my interpretation, it has the distinct function of tracking and evaluating our activity in relation to ourselves and the world so as to orient us. In this sense, feelings are irreducible, *sui generis* mental states, what I call affective appraisals, that make us aware of the way our faculties relate to each other and to the world. As such, they play an indispensable orientational role for agency.¹ This interpretation of Kantian feelings presents an attractive model for thinking about what we now call emotions. For by combining a feeling-based account of emotion with a robust conception of mental agency, it offers an alternative to 'feeling-theories' of emotions that reduce them to biological phenomena.²

As Melissa Merritt and Uri Eran convincingly show in this journal (references by page number to this issue), many if not most of my claims are controversial. I am grateful to them both for taking the time to write such thoughtful and challenging responses to my view, and I appreciate the opportunity to both clarify and refine it. While they each raise many important points, I focus on what I take to be their most significant objections. On the one hand, Merritt worries that, insofar as feelings as I define them are somewhat independent from the activity they appraise, first, my account ends up turning them into cognitions, and second, they cannot fulfil the orientational role I assign them. On the other hand, Eran questions both my identification of Kantian feelings with what we now call emotions, and my account of the

intentionality of feeling. After discussing these objections in turn, I conclude with some reflections on the fact that, despite being very different, Merritt and Eran's respective views of Kantian feelings turn out to have something potentially problematic in common: they blur the boundary between feelings and other kinds of mental states.³

1. Feeling, appraisal and orientation: a response to Merritt

Merritt endorses the broader interpretative claim I defend according to which feeling and agency are importantly connected for Kant: feeling is an affective manifestation of the subject and her activity. What she objects to is my account of the connection between feeling and agency, and in particular the fact that the subject and the feeling that appraises her are somewhat 'independent' of each other (p. 364). She raises two particular worries. First, if feeling is independent from the activity it appraises, it starts to appear cognitive. By describing feelings as mental states distinct from, and caused by, our mental activity, she argues, '[my] account ends up assimilating feeling to some kind of self-cognition', which would undermine my claim that they are non-cognitive (p. 363). Second, she objects that, insofar as the affective awareness afforded by feeling is independent of the activity it manifests, feeling cannot fulfil the orientational function I assign to it. Taking these objections in turn, I begin by explaining why I take feelings and cognitive states to be different kinds of mental states. Not only do they involve different faculties, cognitive states inform me about objects whereas feelings are evaluative of the subject: they are affective appraisals of the self as it is affected. I then turn to the orientational function of feeling and show that Merritt and I disagree on the orientational role feeling plays for agency because we hold different and incompatible interpretations of what Kant means by orientation. Where we do agree, however, is that feeling plays a central role in orienting agency.

1.1 Feelings as non-cognitive affective appraisals

According to Kant, feelings are kinds of sensations. Although his account of sensation is too complex to do it justice here, what is directly relevant to my argument is that sensation is 'a modification of [the subject's] state' in inner sense that results from her being affected (CPR, A320/B376). But sensation can be either '*objective* sensation, as perception of an object of sense' or '*subjective* sensation, through which no object is represented', namely feeling (CJ, 5: 206).⁴ Both types of sensation are an awareness of the self in the sense that they manifest the state of the subject as she is affected by the world or by herself.⁵ By contrast with objective sensation, however, in feeling, the object is considered only 'as an object of satisfaction (which is not a cognition of it)' (CJ, 5: 206). Feeling is thus an evaluative mental state, what I call an affective appraisal.⁶ This feature of feeling is manifested by the fact that it presents as pleasure or pain – it is valenced – whereas objective sensations do not present in this way; they have no valence.⁷ Feeling and objective sensation are thus two distinct and irreducible ways in which the subject is aware of herself as being affected: the former is evaluative and the latter is not. As a result, contrary to Merritt's objection, the fact that the subject and the feeling that appraises her are somewhat independent does not turn

the awareness she has of herself through feeling into some kind of self-cognition. For as I have argued, the awareness we have of ourselves through feeling is different in kind from the awareness we have of ourselves through cognitive states: the former is valenced while the latter is not.

It is because of the central role I assign to the valence of feeling that my interpretation cannot accommodate Merritt's own proposal. She suggests that the best way of understanding feeling as a manifestation of the self is to align it with apperception, for 'both are ways in which "self" is manifest as a subject, rather than as some kind of object' (p. 365). While she does not provide much detail on the nature of this alignment, she relies on a passage from the *Anthropology* (A, 7: 127) where Kant points to a felt mode of self-manifestation in children that precedes the way adults think themselves as subjects (i.e. apperception). She takes the former to be an affective form of self-consciousness that accompanies our activity and that enables us to feel ourselves as subjects just as we think ourselves as subjects. If correct, this would involve modelling the relation between feeling and agency on the relation between apperception and thought, thus making it an internal relation rather than an external one, as in my account. But while it may well be the case that we have such a capacity for affective self-consciousness, I simply do not see how such feelings can belong to the faculty of feeling, a faculty Kant repeatedly calls 'feeling of pleasure and displeasure' (e.g. *CJ*, 5: 197–8, 20: 245–6).⁸ For as Merritt herself notes, the feelings she describes are 'not obviously specifiable as any kind of pleasure or pain' (p. 368). In this respect, her proposal is at odds with Kant's very definition of the faculty of feeling.

1.2 What is orientation?

Merritt's second objection also pertains to the fact that, on my account, the subject and the feeling that appraises it are somewhat separate. She argues that, if the affective awareness afforded by feeling is independent of the activity it appraises, feeling cannot fulfil its orientational function. For it is unable to provide the subject with the guidance she needs in order to act. I believe that Merritt's objection arises because we hold different interpretations of Kant's notion of orientation. To show why this is the case, I follow Merritt's lead and compare feeling with proprioception.

Merritt thinks that proprioception is not a good model for understanding the orientational function of feeling because it alone cannot give us direction: it cannot orient us, in her sense of 'orientation' (p. 367). In my sense, by contrast, orientation consists in determining where I stand in relation to myself and the world. Proprioception is thus an excellent model for understanding the orientational function of feeling. For it is the felt awareness of my body's position and movement – it makes me aware of how I am moving as I am moving without needing to think about my movement.⁹ On my account, feeling plays the same role for the mind: it is the affective awareness of myself and my activity as I am acting.¹⁰ Both enable me to be immediately aware of myself and my activity. That is, both provide me with an awareness of my activity that does not require me to think about it. And I believe that it is this kind of felt awareness of myself that is necessary for orienting myself. To support this claim, I will show that moving purposefully requires orientation, and orientation requires proprioception to provide a felt sense of myself. And the same

goes for agency: acting requires orientation and orientation requires feeling of pleasure and pain understood as an affective sense of myself.

To understand why orientation requires feeling, note that, according to Kant, orienting myself in space is not simply locating my position in the world; it involves determining where I stand in relation to objects in the world (e.g. whether the south is on my left or my right). To do so, Kant argues, objective landmarks are not sufficient; I need another point of reference, one that pertains to me rather than to the world. As he writes, 'I orient myself *geographically* only through a *subjective* ground of differentiation', namely 'the feeling of a difference in my own subject' (e.g. 'the mere feeling of a difference between my two sides': *WOT*, 8: 134-5).¹¹ Although a lot could be said about Kant's account, what matters for the purpose of my argument is that spatial orientation requires feeling to provide a subjective point of reference, a felt sense of myself that is akin to proprioception. My claim is that the same goes for agential orientation. It is not simply a matter of determining what I am doing or where I am going (i.e. what activity I am engaged in and what its ends are); it involves determining how I am doing (i.e. how my activity is going, including how it is going in relation to its ends).¹² Doing so requires a subjective point of reference, one that pertains to the sense I have of myself as an agent, that is as a being who acts rather than merely behaves and whose ongoing activity needs to be evaluated in light of my ends. On my account, this sense of myself is provided by feelings: they enable my awareness of how I am and how I am doing. This is why, just as spatial orientation requires proprioception, agential orientation requires feeling.

Yet one may worry that the analogy between proprioception and feeling is actually a non-starter because there is a fundamental difference between them. While proprioception enables me to distinguish up from down, left from right, clockwise from counter-clockwise, it does not present any particular direction as to-be-pursued or to-be-avoided. Feelings are not neutral in this way. Through their valence, they present objects or activities as to-be-pursued or to-be-avoided (*CJ*, 20: 230-1; *CJ*, 5: 220). Does this not mean that feelings do more than proprioception? That instead of just situating us, they do in fact guide us, as Merritt suggests? I do not think so. For on my account, the valence of feeling should not be taken to be prescriptive. I can always, and often ought to, choose pain over pleasure. After all, Kant's account of agency is not hedonistic.¹³ In this sense, it is true that feeling and proprioception differ in the way just noted. Whereas proprioception is the felt awareness of the position and movement of my body ('what my body is doing'), feeling is an evaluative manifestation of myself and my activity ('how I am' or 'how I am doing'). But despite this difference, their orientational role is the same: they enable the affective awareness of myself and my activity that is necessary for orienting myself. However, while it may well be true that proprioception is the only way of being aware of my body and its movement in this way, it is less clear that feeling is the only way of making me aware of how my activity is going as it is going on. While the claim that agential orientation requires self-appraisals is plausible enough, why think that feeling alone can provide them? Why can they not be done cognitively, through introspection and reflection?

Kant supports the claim that feeling is necessary for orientation by showing that it captures something about myself that cannot be articulated cognitively and yet that is necessary for orienting myself. As he argues, I have to orient myself in space on the

basis of a felt sense of the difference between my left and right because this difference cannot be captured conceptually (WOT, 8: 135).¹⁴ In the same way, he shows that, when reason leaves the bounds of experience to explore the supersensible,

it is no longer in a position to bring its judgments under a determinate maxim according to objective grounds of cognition, but solely to bring its judgments under a determinate maxim according to a *subjective ground of differentiation* [i.e., reason's feeling of its own need]. (WOT, 8: 136; my emphasis)

The line of argument from geographical orientation to metaphysical orientation is extremely rich, and I cannot possibly do it justice here.¹⁵ What is relevant to my argument, however, is that I believe that the same goes for feelings of pleasure and pain: they capture something about me that cannot be articulated cognitively, namely how I am doing and how my activity is going as it is going – an immediate affective appraisal of myself and my activity.

Of course, one could object that these appraisals can also be achieved cognitively through introspection. However, introspecting my activity as it is going on is at best inconvenient and at worst disruptive, which makes real-time cognitive appraisal problematic if not impossible. Not only is introspection cognitively very costly and thus potentially too slow, turning my attention to myself as I am acting instead of focusing on my activity as it is going on interferes with the activity, and at worst interrupts it all together. By contrast, feelings are immediate appraisals that neither distract nor interrupt the activity they appraise.¹⁶ It is in this respect that they are the best if not the only way of appraising and thus orienting our activity as it is going on.¹⁷ Of course, a lot more needs to be said to defend this claim fully. But within the remit of this article, it suffices to show that, contrary to Merritt, feelings are necessary to orient ourselves despite the fact that they are independent of the activity they appraise.

Where Merritt is right, however, is that, on my account, feelings should not be taken to orient us in and of themselves. For I cannot know what kind of feeling I am feeling simply by feeling it. Judgement is necessary to interpret the feeling as the kind of feeling that it is in light of its context. In this sense, feelings are necessary but not sufficient to orient my activity: orientation also requires judgement. Merritt worries that, if so, 'it is no longer clear that *feeling* does the distinct work of orienting activity' (p. 367), which I take to mean that it now looks like it is judgement that performs the role of orienting us, not feeling.

To see in what sense the function of feeling can be said to be orientational despite the fact that it requires the exercise of judgement to fulfil its function, let us return once more to Kant's argument about the necessary role of feeling for orientation. On my reading, it is not meant to show that feelings orient in and of themselves, but rather that, and more importantly why, they are necessary for orientation. Take his account of orientation in space (WOT, 8: 135). What it shows is that, while the feeling of left and right is indeed necessary to orient myself, it is not sufficient to do so; spatial orientation also requires judgement. For judgement is necessary to relate the felt awareness of my body to its spatial environment, judge the distance between my body and the objects that surround it, draw inferences to situate it relative to them, and so on. However, the fact that spatial orientation requires judgement as well as feeling does not entail that feeling thereby loses its distinctive orientational

function, which, recall, consists in providing a subjective point of reference, a point of reference that pertains to the subject (e.g. ‘the feeling of a difference in my own subject’, ‘the sense of the difference between my left and my right’: *WOT*, 8: 134). In this sense, what does the orienting is feeling, not judgement. In the same way, it is the feeling of pleasure and pain that does the work of orientation by enabling my awareness of how I am doing; judgement simply interprets the feeling in light of its context – a role I will return to in section 2.2.

In conclusion, I have argued that Merritt and I disagree on the orientational role feeling plays for agency because we hold different and incompatible interpretations of the meaning of orientation.¹⁸ However, not only do we agree that feeling is supposed to play a significant role in orientation, we share a more fundamental belief, namely that there is for Kant a deep connection between feeling and agency.

2. Emotion, feeling and intentionality: a response to Eran

2.1 *Emotion versus feeling*

As is now well-known, Kant did not have a concept of emotion.¹⁹ One may thus worry that any Kantian account of emotion will be *de facto* anachronistic. However, this is not Eran’s worry. His concern is rather that my identification of emotion with Kantian feeling lacks justification since, he argues, my account is premised on a particular view of emotion that I fail to argue for (p. 374). And as Eran rightly points out, what constitutes an emotion is a matter of debate. Not only are there disagreements about whether individual mental states should be considered emotions, there is no consensus about the very nature of emotion and whether it constitutes a unified class.²⁰ Some hold that emotions are irreducible mental states; others that emotions can be reduced to other mental states.²¹ Eran is thus undoubtedly correct to draw attention to the fact that whether one thinks that emotions can be identified with Kantian feelings will depend on the view of emotion one holds (pp. 374–5). Where he is incorrect, however, is in interpreting my account as presupposing a particular view of emotion. What it does presuppose is Kant’s faculty psychology.

Readers of Kant have tended not to take his faculty psychology seriously or give it much weight.²² But it is the ‘textual bedrock’ and a guiding-thread of my interpretation, as Merritt rightly notes (p. 363). In fact, I take one of Kant’s most fundamental insights to be that there is a faculty distinct from the faculty of cognition and the faculty of desire – the faculty Kant calls ‘the feeling of pleasure and pain’. On my reading, this entails that, since the function of the faculty of cognition is to know the world and the function of the faculty of desire is to change it, it follows that feeling has a function that is both distinct from and irreducible to the mind’s cognitive and conative functions. Furthermore, since ‘there is always a great difference between representations belonging to’ each faculty (*CJ*, 20: 206; see also *A*, 7: 153), it follows that feelings are distinct mental states that differ from and are irreducible to conative and cognitive states.

Why, then, do I take what we now call emotions to be Kantian feelings? To begin with, my proposal would be entirely unmotivated if some significant proportion of the states we now call emotions did not count as Kantian feelings. But as it happens, a significant proportion does, although as Eran rightly points out, there are a number of cases that do not work. Notwithstanding, my view does not entail that we should

identify the set of all the states we now call emotions with the set of states that Kant calls feelings. On the contrary, it entails that some of the states we now call emotions are not Kantian feelings and thus should not be considered emotions; and that mental states that we do not call emotions are in fact Kantian feelings and so should in fact be considered emotions. In this respect, bodily feelings of pleasure and pain, what Kant calls 'sensuous pleasures' (A, 7: 230), present an interesting case.

Although there is no space to discuss them in detail, for Kant, they are full-blown feelings, as is confirmed by the fact that he defines them in the same way as he defines non-sensuous ones (A, 7: 230–1). Thus, as Eran points out, I am committed to the claim that these sensuous feelings are emotions. Eran is unconvinced by this claim, and he cites Kant's examples of pleasure in wine and laughter (CJ, 5: 212, A, 7: 262) as cases of sensuous pleasures that are implausible as emotions on the ground that they are too primitive (p. 375). But I do not share his reservations, for not only are they clearly affective appraisals of the self, they are not as primitive as Eran takes them to be. They could be interpreted in many different ways and thus manifest rather complex states of the subject (e.g. a pleasure in wine could be interpreted as a manifestation of snobbery, the fulfilment of the aim to get drunk or a personal taste for fruity wines). But more generally, many contemporary accounts of emotion include bodily feelings, so Kant's account is not particularly outlandish in this respect.²³

Another type of mental state that is of particular concern to Eran is desire. He rightly notes that, insofar as I suggest that emotions be understood as Kantian feelings, and the faculty of feeling be distinct from the faculty of desire, it follows that on my account nothing that Kant calls a desire falls under the category of emotions. Eran questions this claim, arguing that at least some of the mental states that belong to Kant's faculty of desire should be considered emotions (p. 375). So let me conclude this section by showing why I disagree with Eran on this point.

Eran finds my claim that we should not conceive of desires either as emotions or as constitutive parts of emotions particularly problematic in light of what he calls 'the reasonable and generally accepted assumption that what we call "emotions" refers to mental states of the faculty of feeling *and* the faculty of desire' (p. 375). I believe that this assumption is motivated by an intuition that strikes me as right, namely that emotions are connected with action in a way that suggests that they have motivational powers. Categorizing desires as emotions or parts of emotions makes sense of this intuition: emotions motivate us to act in certain ways because they include desires. But emotions do not need to comprise desires to have motivational powers. To see why, let me turn briefly to Kant's account of the relationship between feeling and desire.

On my reading of Kant, he holds a causal view of the connection between feelings and desires according to which some feelings cause desires and some feelings follow desires as their effect. Most of our feelings are causally connected to desires in this way – they are what Kant calls 'practical pleasures'.

That pleasure which is necessarily connected with desire (for an object whose representation affects feeling in this way) can be called *practical pleasure*, whether it is the cause or the effect of the desire. (MM, 6: 212; see also LM, 29: 877–8 and CPrR, 5: 72)

The fact that many feelings necessarily cause desires explains the widely shared intuition that emotions are motivational, but it does so without requiring the inclusion of desires into the category of emotion.²⁴

In conclusion, if my claim that Kantian feelings, and only feelings, are emotions is ultimately grounded on a presupposition, it is not the one Eran identifies. Rather, it is grounded on a functionalist reading of Kant's faculty psychology. It is on the basis of my reading of Kant's account of the faculty of feeling that I interpret Kant as putting forward a non-assimilative theory of the emotions according to which they are distinct from, and irreducible to, both beliefs and desires.²⁵ This interpretation is undoubtedly rather controversial, and it may well put off Kantians and non-Kantians alike. But what I hope to have shown is that Kantian feelings offer a credible model for thinking about what we now call emotions.

2.2 *The intentionality of feeling and the role of reflective judgement*

As Eran rightly observes, my account of feeling tries to make sense of and hold on to Kant's insistence that in feeling 'nothing at all in the object is designated' (*CJ*, 5: 203). However, he objects that I have 'an unnecessarily strong reading' of this claim, for I take it to entail that feelings have no intrinsic intentionality (p. 376). To show in what sense this description of my view is not quite right, I clarify my account of the intentionality of feeling and how I understand judgement's contribution to it.

On my account, I can be aware of a feeling without it making sense to me, that is without knowing exactly what I am feeling. Feelings need to be reflected upon and interpreted in order to acquire a particular meaning. Since such reflection and interpretation is the work of judgement, judgement is the condition of the intentionality of feelings: we cannot understand what they mean unless we reflect on them in light of their external context (what triggered them, their causal history, but also the way the world is more generally) as well as their internal context (my past experience, my emotional history, my personality and so on).²⁶ But what Eran puts pressure on – fairly, since I do not discuss this issue in much detail in my original paper – is the status of feelings *sans* judgement. Do they lack intentionality entirely? I believe that my account commits me to denying this. For the fact that feelings are affective appraisals entails that they have the form of proto-judgements: first because they are appraisals, and second because their appraisals manifest through their valence.²⁷ In this sense, feelings alone already present a form of aboutness: they are an awareness of something.²⁸ But what are they an awareness of?

I would like to suggest that feeling alone, *sans* judgment, is an awareness of subjective purposiveness. While this may seem like a strange claim, there are in fact numerous passages where Kant seems to identify feeling with subjective purposiveness.²⁹ For instance, he writes that 'the concept of the formal but subjective purposiveness of the object ... is fundamentally identical with the feeling of pleasure' (*CJ*, 20: 230). He also talks about 'the empirical consciousness of subjective purposiveness, or the feeling of pleasure in certain objects' (*CJ*, 20: 228), suggesting that subjective purposiveness and pleasure are connected in some fundamental way.³⁰ To shed light on the nature of this connection, recall that, insofar as feeling is the appraisal of the way in which I am affected by an object or an activity, pleasure is in effect the manifestation of its purposiveness for me (and vice versa for the

counter-purposiveness of pain).³¹ So when Kant defines pleasure as ‘the representation of the agreement of an object or of an action with the subjective conditions of life’ (CPrR, 5: 9n.), what I take him to mean is that pleasure is the manifestation of the fact that the way in which I am affected “agrees” with me (whether it is with my ends, my desires, my interests, my nature and so on). On this basis, Kant’s identification of pleasure and subjective purposiveness can be interpreted as follows: for a rational embodied subject, to feel pleasure is to be aware of something as ‘purposive for her’. As a result, contrary to Eran’s reading of my account, feelings alone do have a form of aboutness. What I am aware of when I feel pleasure is that I am being affected in a way that agrees with me. But it is an indeterminate form of aboutness since, as I hinted at in section 1.2, making sense of a feeling beyond the fact that it is pleasurable or painful in certain ways requires the exercise of judgement.

To support this claim, it is crucial to note that, according to Kant, the power of judgement contains the *a priori* principle of feeling (CJ, 5: 196). While commentators have often struggled to understand this statement, on my interpretation it makes perfect sense. For reflective judgement confers its particular meaning to a feeling by applying its own principle, the principle of subjective purposiveness, to the feeling.³² More precisely, it is by reflecting on the feeling guided by the principle of subjective purposiveness that reflective judgement is able to interpret the feeling either as the manifestation of the attainment of a particular end (in the case of pleasure), or as the manifestation of the failure to attain an end (in the case of pain). Thereby, the subject becomes aware of the feeling as the kind of feeling that it is (e.g. jealousy rather than mere pain). In the case of lower feelings, for instance, insofar as they are appraisals of the hedonic potential of objects for our lower desires, judgement interprets agreeableness as the manifestation of the purposiveness of certain objects for us (e.g. this wine suits my taste). Higher feelings function in the same way. Judgement makes sense of them by interpreting them as the manifestation of the activity of our faculties, and in particular their progress (or lack thereof) towards their ends. For instance, I am aware of a feeling of pleasure as a feeling of moral contentment because judgement interprets it as manifesting the agreement between my faculty of desire and practical reason: what I have chosen to do is in agreement with what I ought to do.³³ While this agreement manifests as a feeling of pleasure, it is judgement that enables my awareness of it as the kind of feeling that it is (i.e. moral contentment) rather than simply as pleasure. In this sense, the power of judgement is transcendently necessary for feeling as the faculty that enables the subject to be affectively aware of its own state.

So to sum up, Eran and I share a lot more than he suggests in his paper. For I agree with him that Kantian feelings do have a form of intrinsic aboutness. For us to become aware of them as the kinds of feelings that they are, however, requires the exercise of judgement guided by its principle.

3. Conclusion

I set out to defend my view of Kantian feeling against a number of objections raised by Merritt and Eran. Unfortunately, my response is incomplete in various ways since I could not possibly address many important points raised in each set of comments. But their insightful probing has allowed me to refine, extend and improve my original

account, and I am grateful to them for that. Instead of recapitulating the claims I have defended, I would like to conclude by drawing attention to the fact that, despite their very different views of feeling, Merritt and Eran have something in common: they both argue in favour of counting some mental states that are not feelings of pleasure and pain as emotions. Merritt wants to include non-valenced feelings of one's own constitution, and Eran wants to include desires. Thus both defend what I have called a mixed model of emotions (Cohen 2020: 432–3), though in different ways: Merritt blurs the line between feeling and cognition by interpreting feeling on the model of apperception, and Eran rejects the boundary between feeling and conation by characterizing some desires as emotions. Thus unwittingly or not, they forego what I and many others take to be an important desideratum for any theory of emotions, namely the unity requirement – the requirement that any satisfactory theory of the emotions must have the resources to explain what they have in common.³⁴ Of course, this is not a problem from the perspective of contemporary debates on the emotions since many accounts adopt a similar position.³⁵ But I believe that it is potentially more problematic from the perspective of Kant's account of the mind. For the fact that they blur the line between feelings and other kinds of mental states suggests that they might be overlooking, or at least underplaying, what I take to be a central tenet of Kant's view of the mind, namely that our mental powers are constituted by three faculties and that each faculty has a unique function and gives rise to distinct and irreducible mental states. My interpretation of Kant's account of feeling takes this Kantian doctrine seriously, too seriously perhaps. But what I hope to have shown is that doing so can yield a fruitful way of thinking about the Kantian mind.

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Notes

1 I have defended this interpretation in Cohen 2020.

2 See James 1884 and Prinz 2004 in particular.

3 As the following works by Kant are cited frequently, I use the following abbreviations: *A* (*Anthropology*), *MM* (*Metaphysics of Morals*), *CJ* (*Critique of the Power of Judgement*), *CPR* (*Critique of Pure Reason*), *CPrR* (*Critique of Practical Reason*), *LA* (*Lectures on Anthropology*), *LM* (*Lectures on Metaphysics*), *WOT* (*What does it Mean to Orient oneself in Thought?*). Except for *CPR*, citation is by volume: page in the Akademie edition of Kant's works, using the translations from the Cambridge Edition of Kant's Works (Kant 1997, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2007, 2014).

4 See also *CJ*, 20: 245–6, 5: 196–7. For an enlightening discussion of the distinction between feeling and sensation, see Zuckert (2007: 232–6).

5 As Kant writes, in feelings of pleasure and pain, 'the subject feels itself as it is affected' (*CJ*, 5: 204). For recent discussions of Kant's account of feeling in connection with inner sense, see for instance Kraus (2020: 39–40) and Liang 2020. Since my focus is solely on feeling, I set aside issues that pertain to the nature of objective sensations. For a discussion of it, see Falkenstein 1990.

6 Unfortunately, there is no space to defend fully this claim here. I have done so in Cohen (2020: 439–45).

- 7 While the view that all feelings that fall under the faculty of feeling are feelings of pleasure and pain is widely shared, one exception is Sethi 2019.
- 8 In this sense, contrary to what Merritt suggests, it is not the case that the dimension of feeling she points to is missing from my account (p. 365). It is rather that my account focuses solely on making sense of the faculty of feeling, a faculty that, as she herself notes, Kant consistently speaks of in terms of pleasure and pain.
- 9 See Fridland 2011.
- 10 Note that, as I have shown in the previous section, insofar as feeling is the affective awareness of being affected, it encompasses the affective awareness of my activity as it is going on as well as the affective awareness of the world as it affects me.
- 11 The similarities between Kant's account of geographical orientation and proprioception are clear, but they are the clearest when he describes 'this faculty of distinguishing, without the need of any difference in the objects, between moving from left to right and right to left and moving in the opposite direction' (WOT, 8: 135). Unfortunately, due to space restrictions, I cannot explore them fully here.
- 12 Feelings also enable my awareness of how I could be doing, although I cannot develop this claim here.
- 13 For a discussion of whether Kant's theory of action is committed to hedonism, see Allison (1990: 102–3).
- 14 For a discussion of Kant's argument, see Tinguely 2013 (2017: ch. 7) and Earman 1991.
- 15 For an account of the role of the feeling of reason's need in orienting theoretical reason, see Cohen 2017.
- 16 Of course, feelings may sometimes distract or interrupt the activity they appraise, especially in pathological cases of affects. But it is a contingent fact whether they do or not, whereas self-observation always interrupts the activity it aims to capture because of its very nature. This is why introspection as a potential source of self-knowledge gives rise to unique challenges. As Kant often notes, observing myself in order to reach conclusions about myself and the state of my activity interferes with and thus modifies the thing I am trying to observe (A, 7: 121). In addition, Kant doubts the overall reliability of self-observation (A, 7: 134 and *Metaphysical Principles of Natural Science*, 4: 471).
- 17 This is often noted in contemporary debates on the emotions. On some views, their function is precisely to track our cognitive activity in a way that cannot be done cognitively (e.g. Hookway 2002).
- 18 A rather crude way of capturing our disagreement is to say that, for Merritt, orientation is a form of guidance that requires feelings to be manifestations of our vocation (p. 367). On my reading by contrast, the kind of guidance she has in mind requires not only feelings, but also judgements and the norms of practical reason.
- 19 Kant uses the terms *Affekt*, *Leidenschaft*, *Neigung*, *Gefühl*, *Rührung*, *Begierde*.
- 20 E.g. surprise (Depraz and Steinbock 2018).
- 21 For the former, see Goldie 2002, Ratcliffe 2005 or Helm 2009. For the latter, see Nussbaum 2001, Oddie 2005 or Reizenzein 2009.
- 22 This distaste for Kant's faculty psychology is fading away however, at least in the Anglo-American tradition (e.g. Frierson 2018: 107–19 and 2014b: ch. 2, Wuerth 2014: ch. 6 and Land 2018). Contrast with Strawson (1966: esp. 32). For a discussion of the origin and historical context of Kant's faculty psychology, see Dyck 2014.
- 23 For an interesting discussion of this issue from a contemporary perspective, see Teroni forthcoming.
- 24 For a contemporary argument against the inclusion of desires with emotions, see Deonna and Teroni (2012: 10–11, 29–38).
- 25 Contrast with the mixed-model of emotion defended by Frierson 2014a, DeWitt 2014, Borges 2004 and 2019, Sorensen 2002 and Wood 2014.
- 26 Note, however, that reflection and interpretation can happen very quickly, especially after repeated experiences of the same type of feeling. In this sense, the role of reflective judgement in interpreting feelings should not be over-intellectualized.
- 27 This feature of feeling is very well captured by Aquila's account of aesthetic pleasure (Aquila 1982).
- 28 In Cohen (2020: 436–7), I describe the intrinsic intentionality of feeling in terms of what I call its phenomenological character.
- 29 Allison also points to the fact that Kant links the feeling of pleasure with the representation of subjective purposiveness, although his account focuses on the feeling of aesthetic pleasure: 'the feeling serves as the vehicle through which we perceive the aptness or subjective purposiveness (or lack thereof)

of a given representation for the proper exercise of our cognitive faculties' (Allison 2001: 71). My account is broader, for it is intended to capture the connection between feeling and subjective purposiveness in general.

30 See also *CJ*, 5: 221–2, 290.

31 While I cannot get into the detail of Kant's account here, note that insofar as lower feeling is the appraisal of the effect of a representation on the subject and higher feeling the appraisal of the effect of the subject's activity on itself, there are two kinds of subjective purposiveness depending on whether is lower or higher feeling, namely material and formal purposiveness (*CJ*, 20: 224).

32 The principle reflective judgement gives itself as a condition of its exercise is the principle of subjective purposiveness (*CJ*, 5: 177 and 186, 20: 225). Kant himself notes that the relation between the principle of subjective purposiveness (i.e. the *a priori* principle of reflective judgement) and feeling is 'puzzling' since this principle 'has no immediate relation to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure' (*CJ*, 5: 169). For an insightful interpretation that discusses the *a priori* principle of aesthetic feeling from the perspective of the development of Kant's third Critique, see Frierson 2018.

33 For a more detailed account of the feeling of moral contentment, see Cohen (2020: 450–1).

34 For a compelling defence of the unity requirement, see Deonna and Teroni (2012: 32).

35 For examples of contemporary accounts of emotion that reject the unity requirement, see n. 22.

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