Kant's Conception of Life in the Critique of Judgment: Unity and Boundary

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A thesis

submitted to the Faculty of

the department of Political Science

in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Boston College
Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences
Graduate School

March, 2020

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Kant's conception of life is indispensable for understanding Kant's aesthetics and could illustrate the underlying thread as well as the overall theme of the third *Critique*. Kant characterizes the principle of life with a power for self-action and self-determination, and this principle could be regarded as a special kind of causality or the third mode of determination. First, in Kant's theory of the judgment of taste, his conception of life furnishes the judging subject's transcendental aesthetic operation with a special internal causality, the causality, as Kant depicts, of lingering. Second, for Kant's thoughts on beautiful art the notion of life, and its cognates as well, also bears those rich and concrete implications that would show how the principle of life, by which the mind is swinging, would manifest a basis for the unity of the self with the nature in the subjective condition of a creative artistic genius. Third, the judgment of the sublime as Kant develops runs into a moment of abruption of life, and by tracing the occurrence of this moment the light could thus be shed on the true condition of the unity, and the boundary as well, that is proper to the peculiar human way of living. By interpreting Kant's conception and principle of life in such a way, I shall venture to show how the meaning of life, or indeed the meaning behind the peculiar condition of human life, is set out to show itself through the elaboration of the final completion of Kant's critical enterprise.

In seeing nature thus reborn, one feels revived oneself…

It is in man's heart that the life of nature's spectacle exists.

To see it, one must feel it.

—Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*

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INTRODUCTION

The Principle of Life

Human life finds itself to be destined to bear certain disunity, the disunity that remains unsettling and perhaps at bottom irreconcilable through one's course of living. The consciousness of this disunity, which splits our state of existence, leaves human life in an unsatisfied, if not consequently inferior, condition. It would even make the unhappily civilized humans aspire for a kind of wholeness, which, as the aspirers conceive, is in some way accordant with nature; such wholeness could be akin to other ways of living like, on the one hand, that of beasts, plants, or even savages and, on the other hand, that of pure, spiritual, and divine beings. For Kant, however, the wholeness itself is at bottom a problematic idea.[1] Our determinations are dualistic in various aspects, and they are said to be mutually exclusive to each other; the distinctions made according to the duality of Kant's philosophy—to mention a few dyads: intuition-concept, sensibility-rationality, phenomenon-noumenon, receptivity-spontaneity, heteronomy-autonomy, and, most pivotally, nature-freedom—are often considered as the

[1] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A328/B384. All citations of the third *Critique* will be drawn from Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. by Paul Guyer, trans. by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Hereafter I will use parenthetical references to the third *Critique* by giving chapter, volume and page number(s) of the passage in the standard Prussian Academy Edition of Kant's collected works (*Kants gesammelte Schriften*). References to Kant's other writings will all be put in the footnotes, and the volume and page number(s) will be given.

quintessential achievement of his critical system. Through the lens of critical philosophy, we theorize about the appearance of a world of nature that is divided from the nature in itself, and through this theorizing we as free agents in practice further divide ourselves from the nature per se, thereby rendering human nature and human life as a whole in a state of self-division. The disunity of the peculiar human way of life is reflected by a critical self-division, and it is on the basis of such division that Kant builds up his philosophical system into the parallel domains, the theoretical and the practical, and corresponds the disunity of human life with the series of distinctions exemplified by that between nature and freedom. In such a way, it is thus the exact opposite to the longed-for natural wholeness that is recognized as the essential characterization of the peculiar condition of life of human beings: the human life as such is indeed set over against nature and in essence is in discord with nature, either the nature inside or that outside.

For Kant, the third *Critique* is said to show certain solution to such disunity, thereby also healing the division split by the critical philosophy. The solution, that is, a certain kind of unification, is not a matter of canceling the disunity. Neither does it simply resort to another domain for communicating the duality or bridging the previous separation. The possibility of the unification of our way of life refers to certain transcendental principles, which, as Kant suggests, become first manifest to us in our aesthetic experience and also serve as the basis for our exploration of the organic living beings in nature. In this regard, my study here attempts to address this overarching question: how does Kant's development of his various theories in the third *Critique* shed some light on the possibility of unifying the disunity of human life, concerning both its own nature and its relation to the world of nature? In other words, how we as human

beings, who have a peculiar condition of life that has always one essential dimension separated from nature, could still obtain—or merely hope for—certain wholeness or harmony both with and within the nature per se? To what extent—or is it possible at all—could human life, concerning its disunity between physical and moral determinations, still be grounded on a single, unifying principle of life?

Before we enter the third *Critique* for seeking answers to these questions, it is very worth to note that Kant in his pre-critical period *did* make quite an effort to reconcile the tension between nature and freedom in terms of one unifying principle, which is precisely the principle of life, and such a principle is there conceived as the originating source of the unity of human life.[2] Kant's early anthropology lectures, especially the *Friedländer* Lectures in 1775–1776, represents a high point in this effort: by virtue of the principle of life presented there the series of duality such as sense and reason or concept and intuition could be united. While Kant still makes a distinction between the principle of life and the principle of freedom, the latter is assimilated into the former since freedom is taken as "the greatest life of the human being" and thus boosts the principle of life to the highest possible pitch.[3] On the basis of the principle of life, the pragmatic anthropology as Kant conceived in the mid-1770s could even permit us to anticipate world-historically, that is, through the endeavor and development of politics and education, the union of our animal and rational determinations, thereby producing a realizable idea of "humanity" as such for human species. Nonetheless, in his approaching

[2] I owe this point as well the following discussion entirely to the very informative explanations on Kant's early treatments to the conception of life by Susan Meld Shell in her two works: *Kant and the Limits of Autonomy* (Cambridge: Harvard university press, 2009), 95-107 and "Kant as 'Vitalist': the 'Principium of Life' In Anthropologie Friedländer," in *Kant's Lectures on Anthropology: A Critical Guide*, ed. by Alix Cohen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 151-70.

[3] See Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology Friedländer 1775–1776*, in *Lectures on Anthropology*, ed. Robert B. Louden and Allen W. Wood, Trans. Robert R. Clewis and G. Felicitas Munzel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 25: 560.

to the accomplishment of the critical works, Kant's earlier confident insistence on the unity of the human way of life which is made possible by that single unifying principle of life has disappeared in the subsequent course on anthropology, particularly the *Pillau* Lectures delivered the winter semester of 1777–8: the most pivotal division, that is, nature and freedom, is there presented in distinct opposition without apparent means of reconciliation.[4]

To discuss in detail the transition of Kant's positions on the principle of life would exceed the ability of my development here. We could get a temporary conclusion that Kant was once trying to develop one general science of life to explain both our natural and moral determinations and hence give a direct illustration of the possibility of the unity of human life, but later, especially after his critical turn, he seems to abandon this unified approach and gives his final accounts for ethics and morality in terms of a supernatural metaphysical account of freedom and the rational will, which is thoroughly separated from the realm of nature and natural mechanical laws, instead of a combination of theories of life, soul, and spirit, which still is very much rooted in knowledge of natural science and takes the method to study the moral life of human beings to large extent simply equivalent to the study of natural objects. In other words, Kant ultimately decided to use certain concepts related to the notion of freedom instead of those related to the conception of life to serve as the fundamental constituents of his practical philosophy. The single, unifying principle of life is replaced by a dual, critical account of the mechanical causality of nature and the teleological causality of freedom for grounding the two separate sciences of his philosophical system.[5]

[4] See Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology Pillau 1777–1778*, in *Lectures on Anthropology*, 25: 733.
[5] While Kant no longer makes use of his conception of life for constituting the objective domain of cognition, it is still

With regard to this background of the principle of life, I suggest to turn our attention to the issues discussed by Kant in his thoughts on aesthetics. In general, I propose that for Kant our aesthetic experience of beauty and sublimity could be understood in terms of a kind of life-structure. Such life-structure, underlying the aesthetic state of mind, is a substantial and intrinsic feature indicated by Kant's accounts of aesthetic judgment, and it is, in principle, furnished by a special kind of causality that we attribute in teleological judgment to organic living nature as well as the nature in its entirety. This common principle could be identified precisely as the principle of life, and the functioning of this principle in our aesthetic experience, including the occasion of judging the beautiful or the sublime and also that of artistic creation, could be regarded, albeit merely subjectively, as a basis for unification of human life and thereby for overcoming our state of self-division and our disharmony with nature. The principle of life, taken as a third kind of causality or a third mode of determination, shows the possibility of the kind of unity, as well as its boundary, that is proper to the peculiarity of the human way of life.

Kant's discussion of the concept of life is often taken as a contribution to the philosophy of science and to his theory of teleology developed in the second part of the third *Critique*. However, it has not been adequately noticed that Kant's use of the notion

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used by him to elaborate his thoughts on the subjective condition of cognition. Mensch gives a concise study on Kant's longtime investigations on the theme of epigenesis, the theory of the generation of living organism, in his early periods by putting them in the general intellectual context prepared by thinkers like Locke, Leibniz, Buffon, and Tetens. As Mensch presents, Kant's thinking on epigenesis has a transition: Kant gradually realized the ultimate invalidity of affirming a principle of life for the studies in natural science, and yet the conception of epigenesis still plays a crucial role in his critical works: it culminates in an epigenesist conception of mind developed in the first *Critique*. In this sense, the mind has to be viewed as operating in a unity according to the organic logic of reason, which is distinct from the discursive logic of understanding and is modeled on organic cycles of generation and growth. The organic unity of reason, viewed through a teleological lens as both cause and effect of itself, secures the possibility of cognition by showing a transcendental affinity with the coherence of experience and thus gives reason "self-born" into its own history that, like natural history, seems to be self-developing from a merely reflexive point of view. See Jennifer Mensch, *Kant's Organicism: Epigenesis and the Development of Critical Philosophy* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 1-15, 60-9, 125-45.

of life is much broader than such reference to a concept relevant to theoretical philosophy; the term "life (*leben*)" and its cognates indeed appear more frequently in the first part of the third *Critique* and is used to elaborate his thoughts on aesthetics. Life is an important issue throughout the development of Kant's philosophy, and its occurrences in the context of the third *Critique* deserve special attention and some more careful interpretations.[6] The conception of life is indispensable for understanding Kant's theories of the judgment of taste, the product of beautiful art, and the experience of the sublime. This conception, which is further contained in Kant's thinking of the principle of life, and could shed some helpful light on the underlying thread that, on the one hand, unifies the overall theme of the third and final *Critique*, thereby alluding to the unification of Kant's entire philosophical system, and, on the other hand, furnishes a possible basis for us to resolve the unsettling disunity which seemingly belongs solely to our state of being and way of living.

Perhaps I shall note that my discussion below, as well as in the following chapters, is not intended to construct a Kantian metaphysical or anthropological theory of life, but to spell out the significance of this conception, especially in terms of the principle of life, so as to lay the foundation for further analysis of the life-structure in Kant's theory of aesthetics. Throughout a variety of discussions by Kant, the principle of life is similarly characterized and hence is detachable from its metaphysical or anthropological context.

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[6] A notable exception is Rudolf A. Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 88-107. Makkreel offers an informative treatment by examining the concept of life and its relation to imagination in the third *Critique* from the perspective of Kant's epistemology and anthropology. Specifically, he identifies that for Kant the inner source of life is an "interior sense." The interior sense designates an intermediate, responsive mode of consciousness and has a restorative function for an overall equilibrium of the subject's mental life, in which particular activities are balanced (94-5). One of the most suggestive remarks Makkreel has made is that the aesthetic feeling of life, a theme that I shall also discuss, is precisely the empirical representation of the existence of the transcendental ego (105). Zammito also suggests the transcendental relevance of the aesthetic feeling of pleasure as the feeling of life: life is freedom of will in its actuality, and the feeling of life is the awareness of our empirical freedom, our status as practically purposive in the word lf senses. See John H. Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 295.

In order to show how this principle qua principle, as a peculiar mode of determination or a kind of causality, is relevant to Kant's usage of the notion of life in the context of the third *Critique* and especially that of the part on aesthetics, I shall first take a detour by making a sketch of Kant's characterizations of life and the principle of life in the sections below. Then in the following three chapters I shall discuss how the conception and the principle of life used by Kant in the third *Critique* through his three treatments, namely, on the judgment of taste, on beautiful arts, and on the sublime, and could help us see the possibility of the unity of both the human life itself and also the relation between human and nature.

1. Definition

Life is not explicitly defined in the third *Critique*, but as an important theme it has been developed in many other places. We could find that Kant's conception of life has three defining characteristics.

First, in the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the *Metaphysics of Morals*, while the faculty of desire is defined in both places as the faculty to be the cause of the reality of objects' representations, life is defined respectively as "the faculty of a being to act in accordance with laws of the faculty of desire"[7] and as "the faculty of a being to act in accordance with its representations."[8] The definition of life in the second *Critique* follows a further clarification, and it shows that "the subjective conditions of life" means "the faculty of the causality of a representation," a faculty that could cause the reality of

[7] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, in *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary G. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5: 9 note.
[8] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, in *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary G. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 6: 211.

an object or determine a subject's action to produce certain object. Both definitions of life suggest that life involves an active capacity, and this capacity is related to the causality prompted by the faculty of desire. Kant distinguishes the faculty of desire into the lower and the higher one: the lower one is functioning when the beings with this faculty are subject to the determinations of natural inclinations or sensory impulses, as in the case of non-human animals that possess only *arbitrium brutum* instead of *arbitrium liberum* (i.e., the free human *Willkür*); the higher one is also identified as the free will, as in the case of human beings or intelligent beings in general.[9] The being with the higher faculty of desire is able to determine itself through the moral laws of practical reason, to which the noumenal freedom is associated, indicating the subject's capacity of lawgiving and of self-determination.[10] This definition of life shows that life entails a kind of self-reflexivity. But there is a question remained to be settled: concerning solely the connection between life and the faculty of desire without a further distinction between the higher and lower ones, life indicates an active, causal principle that could be used to describe animals (with only lower faculty of desire), the presumably purely rational beings (with only higher faculty of desire), and humans (with both); which kind of faculty of desire as well as its implications is referred to in the conception of life, especially that in the third *Critique*?

The second characteristic, elaborated in Kant's metaphysical reflections on life, would help clarify this question. Life is defined in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* as "the faculty of a substance to *determine itself to act from an internal*

[9] For a more detailed explanation on the distinction of Kant's use of the term *begehrungsvermögen* (the faculty of desire) and *Willkür* (the will), see Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 129-36.
[10] Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6: 226-7.

principle, of a finite substance to change, and of a material substance [to determine itself] to motion or rest, as change of its state."[11] The self-reflexive capacity of life is based on a self-acting and self-determining principle, and this internal principle furnishes the causations of the self-actions of a material being. In his early speculative essay *Dreams of a Spirit-seer*, Kant makes this point more adequately and designates explicitly the higher faculty of desire, *Willkür*, in the immaterial inner principle of life.

> The principle of *life* is to be found in something in the world which seems to be of an immaterial nature. For all *life* is based upon the inner capacity to determine itself *voluntarily* [*nach Willkür*]. …those natures…are supposed to be spontaneously active [*selbst thätig*] and to contain within themselves the ground of life in virtue of their inner force—in short, those natures whose own power of will is capable of spontaneously determining and modifying itself—such natures can scarcely be of material nature.[12]

Thus, the principle of life entails the functioning of free will, and this internal principle could not be understood without referring to an immaterial cause originated in the use of freedom.

This immateriality of the principle of life is further related to the third characteristic of life. For several times Kant rejects very firmly the application of the principle of life to mere matter, because such an internal immaterial principle could not be understood without a reference to the determination of certain intelligence: "we know no other internal principle in a substance for changing its state except *desiring*, and no other internal activity at all except *thinking*;…these actions and grounds of determination in no way belong to…the determinations of matter as matter."[13] The phenomena of the self-actions of living beings are beyond the explicability of materialism and physical

[11] Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, in *Theoretical philosophy after 1781*, ed. Henry Allison and Peter Heath, trans. Gray Hatfield, Michael Friedman, Henry Allison, and Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 4: 544; emphasis added.
[12] Immanuel Kant, *Dream of a Spirit-seer Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics*, in *Theoretical Philosophy, 1755–1770*, ed. and trans. David Walford with Ralf Meerbote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 2: 327 n.
[13] Kant, *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, 4: 544.

mechanism, and they have to be conceived in terms of the kind of causality initiated by a free intelligent being. This point is articulated very clearly in one of his lectures on rational psychology:

> *Life must depend upon an immaterial, thinking principle*; this principle cannot be material, for by the principle of life we always imagine something which determines itself from inner grounds, which matter, which can always be moved only by outer causes, cannot.[14]

In that sense, the principle of life is called forth to describe this paradoxical situation, which is ultimately inexplicable and goes beyond sensible experiences. We observe the phenomena of self-actions in nature, and therefore we are supposed to explain such phenomena, the phenomena of life, according to mechanical laws of nature that we as the judging subjects with the legislative power of understanding impose to all objects which of material existences. On the other hand, the self-acting and self-determining principle that we attribute to life has to exclude its application to mere matter, because the motion of matter, on the contrary, owes entirely to an external cause in the nexus of mechanical causations. The essential feature of matter is inertia, that is, not self-determined or self-active. Matter is completely governed by the law of inertia, the first grounding law of the mechanical Newtonian system of nature, in the nexus of efficient causes, and thereby matter as such is inanimate and has to be separated from the supersensible principle of life.[15]

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[14] Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysik K2*, in *Lectures on Metaphysics*, ed. and trans. Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 28: 765.

[15] It seems that Kant even in his final years was still trying to refine his argument for the exception of a principle which must be distinct from our ordinary conception of causation in the form of the law of inertia: as Guyer notices, in the *Opus postumum*, Kant argues that the law of inertia would render all motion inexplicable in a self-contained universe unless that universe includes an internal source of motion, which can be considered as a *vis vivifica*, a life-force that is apparently sufficient to explain the causality in the phenomenon of organism, although this argument does not adequately settle the relation between the teleological and mechanical views of nature. See Paul Guyer, *Kant's System of Nature and Freedom: Selected Essays* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 90-2.

This paradoxical situation of the principle of life, concerning the relation between the inertial matter and the self-active capacity of free intelligence, is captured in one of Kant's metaphysical lectures before the publication of the first *Critique* in mid 1770s.

> matter, as matter, has no inner principle of self-activity, no spontaneity to move itself…An inner principle of self-activity is just thinking and willing, only thereby can something be moved by inner sense; this is simply a principle for acting according to will and the power of choice. Thus if a matter moves, then it follows that there is in it such a separate principle of self-activity. But only a being that has cognition is capable of this principle of thinking and willing…Thus: all matter which lives is alive not as matter but rather has a principle of life and is animated. But to the extent matter is animated, to that extent it is *ensouled*.[16]

Based on this situation, Kant speculates a threefold distinction, including animals, humans, and purely rational beings—a distinction that we have seen above in terms of the possession of the faculty of desire. Animals, as the beings below humans, could only be roughly counted as beings with an inner self-active principle of life, namely, as matter ensouled, since they lack inner sense and are incapable of rational thinking and willing. The purely rational beings, as the beings above humans, seemingly represent most perfectly the principle of life and could be called as spirit, which is entirely separated from the material body and has the capacity to think and will without any object of outer sense. However, for Kant "The concept of animal souls and of higher spirits is only a game of our concepts."[17] These two kinds of beings are only meant to help us understand the principle of life in us and the life of human beings, who, as embodied souls or ensouled bodies, paradoxically have both material existences and immaterial free intelligence.

[16] Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysik L1*, in *Lectures on Metaphysics*, 28:275. cf. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, §73, 5:394.
[17] Kant, *Metaphysik L1*, 28: 278; also 28: 247-50.

In sum, according to Kant's various similar accounts in different occasions, the conception of life has three defining characteristics: life shows a self-acting and self-determining capacity, which shows a self-reflexive feature and is related to the higher faculty of desire; life is based on an inner and immaterial principle, and this principle, the principle of life, is a mode of determination or a kind of causality that is theoretically unknowable and is different from the determination of nature or mechanistic causation, which is the only kind of causality that we could know from the realm of nature; such a supersensible principle could not be attributed to the motion of mere matter but could only arise in the self-actions of a being with intelligence and free will, and it is this intrinsic paradoxical feature of the principle of life—namely, the immateriality of a material being's self-determination—that renders life ultimately incomprehensible for human understanding. Now the question would be: could life, and the principle of life as well, be understood with some more concrete and positive significances? To answer this question, I shall discuss how the principle of life, through the use of analogy, could be further detached, abstracted, and equated to a special kind of causality.

2. Analogy

Since the self-determination of life is related to the capacity of willing and thinking, the causality implied in the principle of life, while it exceeds the explicability of mechanical causality, could thus be related to teleological causality. Nonetheless, Kant also carefully separates life as well as its principle from free intelligence and a real teleological account of determination. Indeed, Kant's basic claim in the *Critique of Teleological Judgment* is that, while an intelligent and free being, such as a human, could

actually be the determining cause of a certain action in accordance with an inner teleological causality (Introduction IX, 5: 196), we must not assertively attribute a real purpose, which is an intelligent cause, to the condition of organic beings in nature; we must always attempt to understand their existence and generation through the application of mechanical causality. Thus, in contrast to the general view, organism is different from life, since the latter is supposed to have an immaterial intelligent principle and a real purpose-oriented capacity. This distinction is made most clearly in §65, where Kant claims that natural organism could be called, more properly than "an *analogue of art*", as "an *analogue of life*" (§65, 5: 374). If life is only analogous to organism, this clearly suggests that organic beings could not be taken as exactly the same as living beings, just as an organism is not identical to an artifact. In fact, Kant in the third *Critique* prefers to classify plants and animals as "organic beings in nature" instead of "living beings," perhaps this is because for his conception of life even non-human animals could be roughly taken as beings possessing the inner immaterial principle of life, and hence it would seem absurd to conceive that a tree has a thinking principle or could move according to a causality of free will.[18]

[18] Kant recognizes that both animals and human beings have life, but it seems that plants are indeed excluded by him from the genus of living beings. See *CPJ*, §90, 5: 464 n.: "Yet from the comparison of *the similar mode of operation* in the animals (the ground for which we cannot immediately perceive) to that of humans (of which we are immediately aware) we can quite properly infer *in accordance with the analogy* that the animals also act in accordance with *representations* (and are not, as Descartes would have it, machines), and that in spite of their specific difference, they are still of the same genus as human beings (as *living beings*). The principle that authorizes such an inference lies in the fact that we have the same ground for counting animals, with respect to the *determination* in question, as members of *the same genus with human beings*, as humans, insofar as we compare them with one another externally, on the basis of their actions" (Emphasis added). While plants could not be counted since the basis of their "actions" could not be found, the external manifestation of the principle of life could be found in animals as well as human beings, especially considering our own animal existence. As Zammito suggests, plants epitomize Kant's conceptual discrimination of life from organism, and Kant's notion of organism is broader than that of life; these two terms do not have the same extension. He also notes that Kant never ascribed psychological desire, even analogically, to plants. See John Zammito, "Teleology then and now: The question of Kant's relevance for contemporary controversies over function in biology," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 37, (2006): 762-3. Hence, strictly speaking, there is no biology, as the study of bios (life, literally), for Kant in his third *Critique*; the study of life is embedded in the study of organs understood as the instrumental parts, which is immediately directed to the consideration of the relation between the ends and the whole. Phrases like "organic life" or "living organism" certainly still make sense, but

On the other hand, Kant does not stress the distinction between organism and life. He suggests that organic beings like plants and animals could be taken *analogously* of living beings. To understand this special connection, we shall pay attention to Kant's account of the use of analogy. For Kant, an analogy could be established between two things if it is about the identity of a certain relation. An analogy concerns only the form of causal connections, or the mode of certain determinations, but does not concern the content, namely, the actual causes and effects, involved in this relation. Both organic beings and intelligent beings indicates the same mode of determination, that is, "determining itself to act according to representations" (§90, 5: 464 note; also see §61, 5: 360), and consequently they have an identical form of causal relation between determining bases and subsequent consequences, regardless of the differences between organisms and intelligent beings about what are really contained (or even not contained at all) as the content of that form. While we must not positively attribute the conception of life to natural organism because the latter is not actually known to have intelligence or freedom, still both organic and living beings share the same mode of determination and indicate the same form of causal connections.

Hence, organisms could still be conceived, formally and analogously, as beings with the supersensible principle of life and an internal self-determining capacity. The grounding principle of organic beings is attributed by us as the same as the principle of life, because the causal relation underlying the phenomena of organic beings could be taken *analogously* as the teleological causality of pure intelligence or intelligent beings with material existence, like human beings. With regard to the formality of analogy, organic beings like plants and non-human animals are also based on the supersensible

for interpreting Kant we do need to have a more careful awareness of certain subtle distinctions in their meanings.

principle of life as an underlying mode of determination. This common mode of determination is a special kind of causality, and this kind of causality, as the principle of life, is suggested by Kant in the so-called "analogue of life" precisely for the sake of explaining the peculiar causal relation involved in the self-formation, self-production, and self-preservation of natural organism; in fact, Kant finds that this analogue of life is more adequate and closer to the inscrutable feature of organism than taking organism as an analogue of artifact.[19]

This common mode of determination, granted that it is merely presumed regulatively for the sake of our cognition, indicates a self-referential and self-oriented causal relation. While a free intelligent being, which has the power of self-determination, is analogous to life, which possesses a self-acting capacity, life is further analogous to organism, which has a "self-propagating formative power" (§65, 5: 374). This underlying self-reflexive form of causal connections exceeds the explicability of natural mechanism but is not qualified to reach an actual teleological account of causations. Thus, the determination of life is not really purpose-oriented but only formally self-oriented. The self-orienting feature of life's determination only has a formal sense, which makes the principle of life conceived neither simply in terms of efficient causes, as in the realm of nature, nor simply of final causes, as in the realm of freedom. Because of the characteristic of self-reflexivity, which is essential to the conception of life, the principle of life has to be rendered as a third principle, apart from mechanism and teleology. It

[19] Ginsborg explains how Kant's two kind of mechanical inexplicability are in parallel to two strands of thought in Aristotle in terms of their similar comparisons between organisms and artefacts. See Hannah Ginsborg, "Two Kinds of Mechanical Inexplicability in Kant and Aristotle," in *The Normativity of Nature: Essays on Kant's Critique of Judgement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 310. However, her interpretation only focus on the capacity of organism as "an analogue of art" but does not notice the "analogue of life." Organic beings are treated the same as living beings by Ginsborg and also by many Kant's scholars, but this treatment deserves some more qualifications for avoiding being oversimplified. Although Kant qualifies that "[s]trictly speaking, the organization of nature is therefore not analogous with any causality that we know," (§65, 5: 375) these two analogies shall still be distinguished more carefully since they reveal different features of natural organisms.

entails a unique kind of lawfulness, namely, the contingent lawfulness, which is identified as the purposiveness, and it has to be juxtaposed as a third one with the other two (and only two) kinds of causality that we know for sure in reality. While for free intelligent beings the grounding principle of determination is the purposiveness *with* purpose, for natural organisms it is merely the purposiveness *without* purpose.

The self-reflexivity of this third kind of causality, which is essential to Kant's characteristics of life, also captures one of the peculiarities of natural organism and renders the latter inexplicable. What makes mechanical causality inadequate, teleological causality illegitimate, and the principle of purposiveness necessary, is related to the phenomena of self-organization and self-formation of organic beings. Any part of an organized being in nature, such as a tree, is both continuously generating itself and is simultaneously generated by the other part. "In such a product of nature each part is conceived *as if* it exists only through all the others, thus *as if* existing for the sake of the others and on account of the whole" (§65, 5: 374, emphasis added). At the same time these parts combine into a whole by being reciprocally, as it were, the causes and the effects and the means and the ends. These phenomena could not be explained at all by mechanical causality. We have to conceive that the "whole" is, as it were, a precedent idea, which is the grounding purpose and the determining cause of both the combination of all "parts" and even the generation of the "whole" itself (§65, 5: 373 and §66, 5: 376). The underlying form of causations is thus rendered self-referential and self-oriented. And the principle of life, as the third mode of determination, could be used to articulate this peculiar self-reflexivity entailed in the causal connection of the parts and the whole.

3. Summary and Overview

By extracting the principle of life from Kant's various similar discussions on this issue and identifying it as the third kind of causality, I shall return to my previous development. My general intention, as I propose above, is to show the significances of the essential characteristics of life so as to understand the occurrences of the conception of life in Kant's presentations of the third *Critique*. In sum, the conception of life refers to a capacity for self-action and self-determination, which is analogous to organism's power of self-propagating and self-persevering. The principle of life could be regarded as a third kind of causality as a self-referential and self-oriented mode of determination, which entails certain self-reflexivity and a unique way of connection between means and ends and between parts and whole. According to this mode of determination, an idea of the whole is taken as both the cause and the end, regardless of the problem that whether this idea actually exists or is merely conceivable. Whereas we could not adequately attribute the conception of life to the organized product of nature, the latter shares with the former the same principle, i.e., the same mode of determination, and, based on the use of analogy, they both show the same kind of causal relation, which renders the principle of life formally the same as the principle of subjective purposiveness. Because of the limitation of our judging capacity, the principle as such refers only to a peculiar third situation and has to be distinguished from the only two kinds of causality, namely, mechanical causality and teleological causality, which we know objectively in actuality and attribute respectively to the realm of nature and to the realm of freedom. And it thus must be fully noted that the principle of life, even it could be validly rendered as a kind of causality, could never be a real account for certain causal connections among objects but is only

referred to as a possible guiding principle that is most apt to illustrate certain ultimately inexplicable conditions or phenomena.

It will be helpful to bear these characterizations in mind for the interpretations in the following chapters would constantly refer to them so as to further develop their implications. Admittedly, it might seem strange and far-fetched to relate Kant's thoughts on aesthetics with the principle of life; and certainly in the first part of the third *Critique* the issue of life has not been addressed in a direct and thematic manner with the most concentrated attention. Nevertheless, in the third *Critique* Kant's use of the term life, and its cognates as well, does not simply serve as some additional and metaphorical illustrations but indeed contains certain crucial and concrete insights. The conception of life is, as I will argue, indispensable for understanding Kant's aesthetics and could thereby illustrate the underlying thread as well as the overall theme of the third *Critique.* In the following chapters, I shall give three interpretations for reconstructing the life-structure, and its meaning as well, implied in Kant's associations of his conception of life with his three discussions on the aesthetic experiences, namely, the judgment of taste, the creation of beautiful art, and the sublime. By interpreting Kant's conception and principle of life in such a way, I shall venture to show how the meaning of life, or indeed the meaning behind the peculiar condition of human life, is set out to show itself through the elaboration of the final completion of Kant's critical enterprise.

With the intention of resolving certain doubts on the validity of associating the conception of life with Kant's aesthetics, in Chapter One I shall first analyze some of Kant's very remarkable but not adequately considered expositions of his theory of the judgment of taste, in which his conception of life plays a crucial role and furnishes the

judging subject's transcendental aesthetic operation with a special internal causality, the causality, as Kant depicts, of lingering. Chapter Two will treat Kant's thoughts on beautiful art. In this context the notion of life, and its cognates as well, also bears those rich and concrete implications that would show how the principle of life would somehow manifest a basis for the unity of the self with the nature in the subjective condition of a creative artistic genius. Finally, Chapter Three will discuss Kant's development of the sublime, which I think is perhaps one of the most genuine accounts that could reflect the character of Kant himself and of his way of thinking. We shall see how the judgment of the sublime runs into a moment of abruption of life; by tracing the occurrence of this moment, I hope to shed some light on the true condition of the unity, and the boundary as well, that is proper to the peculiar human way of living.

CHAPTER ONE

Lingering:

Life in the judgment of Taste

A clue to uncovering the connection between Kant's conception of life and his theory of the judgment of taste lies in a crucial but intriguingly obscure passage of §12, in which Kant is trying to explain the determining ground of the aesthetic judgment of the beautiful:

> The consciousness of the merely formal purposiveness in the *play* of the cognitive powers of the subject…is the pleasure itself, because it contains a *determining ground* of the activity of the subject with regard to the *animation* of its cognitive powers, thus *an internal causality (which is purposive)* with regard to cognition in general.…This pleasure…has *a causality in itself*, namely that of *maintaining the state* of the representation of the mind and the occupation of the cognitive powers without a further aim. We *linger over* the consideration of the beautiful because this consideration *strengthens and reproduces itself*. (§12, 5: 222; emphasis added.)

In what sense is the playful activity of cognitive powers related to the animation (*belebung*), a notion derived from life (*leben*), in an aesthetic judgment? What does Kant mean when he suggests that there lies "an internal causality" or "a causality in itself," by which the subject is in a state of "lingering"?[1] In the following sections, I shall explain

[1] One might have doubt about associating the concept of causality with Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment and treating this connection as real rather than merely metaphorical, since causality is often taken as a notion that belongs to his theory of empirical knowledge. Zuckert, for example, argues that the "formal" purposiveness of aesthetic judgment is different from the "material" purposiveness of teleological judgment because the former is not relevant to any causal relation or any actual existence of objects—she thereby organizes her whole interpretations based on this distinction. See Rachel Zuckert, *Kant on Beauty and Biology: An Interpretation of the Critique of Judgment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 86, 181, and 311. However, this understanding of causality is too narrow. First,

how aesthetic judgment could be understood in terms of an activity of animation and a feeling of life, and how the principle of life, as a specific kind of causality, could be called forth to illustrate the aesthetic judgment of the beautiful. My development below is in large part an effort of reconstruction for the sake of bringing our attention to the life-structure entailed in Kant's exposition of his theory of aesthetics.

1. Free Play and Life

The judgment of taste consists in a free play between imagination and understanding. This famous description is first introduced in the "key" §9. Kant says, it is only through a special kind of feeling of pleasure that this unique relationship between our cognitive powers is manifest to us in our state of mind. The feeling of pleasure, characterized as disinterestedness, is a consequence of the judgment of the beauty, in which the imagination and the understanding have come into a harmonious play. Hence, this aesthetic feeling is also described as "a feeling of the free play" (§9, 5: 217).

§9 is crucial because it is meant to clarify a sequence of transition: in the judgment of taste the judging activity precedes the pleasurable feeling; likewise, the feeling of free play arises from the preceding activity of free play. The first peculiarity of aesthetic feeling, i.e., the disinterestedness, depends on this sequence: while in the

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causality is not only applied to our experience of objects with material existence; it also serves as the foundation of the change such as the succession of time, discussed by Kant in the Second Analogy of the *Transcendental Analytic*, which does not immediately refer to any material existence as in the case of organic generations. See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1998), B234. Second, the essential nature of causality, as Watkins suggests, is the notion of *determining grounds*, which, as the cause, bring about a *change* from one *state* to another—a change Kant calls the effect—by means of certain activity. See Eric Watkins, *Kant and the Metaphysics of Causality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 243-6. Therefore, considering Kant's specific descriptions of aesthetic judgment, which will be more fully discussed below, causal relation has an indispensable role in Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment. Kant explicitly mentions "causality" as well as other relevant notions throughout his descriptions, so it would be very difficult—if not entirely illegitimate—to make the distinction of the purposiveness between aesthetic and teleological judgment based on their relevance to the issue of causality. In fact, the unity of these two parts could, I suggest, be more clearly perceived if we take the issue of causality as a unifying thread.

judgment of beauty the subject has completely detached itself from any concepts or any existence of objects, this judgment could still bring forth a universally valid feeling a priori merely through the playful activity of our subjective powers.

Now a linkage between the aesthetic feeling of pleasure and the transcendental activity of free play is developed in §9 in terms of the sequence of transition in the judgment of taste. But before the development between the connection between feeling of pleasure and free play, the aesthetic feeling has been given another account. In the beginning of the entire "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment," Kant says, in the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, "*subject feels itself* as it is affected by the representation" and "the representation is related entirely to the subject, indeed to its *feeling of life* [*Leben*], under the name of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure" (§1, 5: 204; emphasis added). In this earlier account, the aesthetic feeling is identified as the feeling of the self and as the subject's feeling of life. Now if we associate §1 with §9 and put those two accounts of aesthetic feeling together, the feeling of life could thus be equated to the feeling of free play. Kant does not give more clarifications on this implied commonality between life and free play. How to understand this connection?

The conception of life (*leben*) plays a crucial role in Kant's exposition of the basis of the judgment of beauty. At the end of key §9, Kant places all the weight on the notion "*belebung*". *Belebung*, which could be translated as animation or enlivenment, is referred to illustrate the subjective condition of the aesthetic feeling of pleasure: it is "[t]he *animation* [*belebung*] of both faculties (the imagination and the understanding) to an activity that is *indeterminate* but yet, through the stimulus of the given representation, in unison"; while we become conscious of the indeterminate but harmonious relation

between mental powers through a sensation of this relation's effect on the mind, this effect "consists in the *facilitated play* of both powers of the mind (imagination and understanding), *enlivened* (*belebten*) through mutual agreement" (§9, 5: 219; emphasis added).

From this illustration we find that the commonality between the notion of animation and that of free play is indicated as follows: in aesthetic judgment, the cognition of objects is not determined by understanding's concepts; this *indeterminate* activity, which is *animated* by imagination and understanding, is an activity of *free play* between these two powers themselves. The process of animating, caused by the playful activity of imagination and understanding, is consequently sensed by the judging subject through a feeling of pleasure; the effect of this animation itself turns out to be exactly the same as that of the activity of free play, and this effect could be described both as a feeling of fee play and as a feeling of life.

By means of this equation, in the judgment of taste the transcendental aesthetic activity of cognitive powers is also identified by Kant as both an activity of enlivening and that of free play. Enlivening results in a feeling of life, just as the free play between two powers produces the pleasurable feeling of free play; both accounts refer to the same sequential transition, which could be characterized by both the conception of free play and that of animation. On the basis of this double identification, Kant later suggests that the principle of taste is precisely the same as the principle of the power of judgment in general, since this principle combines freedom with lawfulness in a peculiar process, in which there is the "reciprocally animating" of cognitive powers:

> [T]he judgment of taste must rest on a mere sensation of the *reciprocally animating* [wechselseitig belebenden] imagination in its *freedom* and the understanding with its *lawfulness*, thus on a feeling that allows the object to be judged in accordance with the

> purposiveness of the representation (by means of which an object is given) for the promotion of the faculty of cognition in its *free play*. (§35, 5: 287; emphasis added.)

In short, the notion of life, on which Kant's elaborations of the judgment of taste rely, characterizes the crucial transition from the aesthetic activity of cognitive powers to the feeling of pleasure, and this sequence of transition is identically characterized by the notion of free play. To see more fully the implications of their commonality, the next two sections will show how Kant interweaves his conception of life, especially with regard to the principle of life, with his exposition of the aesthetic judgment of beauty with the help of the horizon of two interrelated stages.

2. First Stage: The Self-Reflexivity of Life

Besides the connection between the notion of life and that of free play reflected by the sequential transition, there further lies certain reciprocal interactions between these two ways (i.e., animation and free play) of sequential transition (from a preceding aesthetically judging activity to a subsequent pleasurable feeling). As Kant describes, the playful activity of imagination and understanding has the effect of enlivening the mind, and this enlivening, caused by the harmonious relationship between two spontaneous cognitive powers, would in turn facilitate their harmonious play. These two ways of transition interact with each other on the basis of a same mode of causations: the activity of free play and that of enlivening mutually influence each other, respectively receive the facilitations from the other side, and consequently merge into a continuous process. Hence, free play and enlivenment promote each other by being mutually causes and effects; enlivening is embedded in free play, and vice versa. A feeling of pleasure is caused as the effect of either way of transition and also of the continual interweaving of

these two ways. We could say, in the judgment of taste the interactions between these two ways of transition constitute the first stage of the mind's aesthetic operation.

The continuance of this first stage, namely, the reciprocal causal interactions, shows that the aesthetic judgment of taste is self-strengthening, self-maintaining, and also self-reflexive. The twofold activities (i.e., free play and enlivening) of imagination and understanding have a promoting effect on the entire aesthetic mental operation. Unlike the case of ordinary empirical cognitions, in which the legislation of understanding's concepts is superior and dominant, during the judgment of taste both imagination and understanding are proceeding on their own paths by virtue of their own freedom. And yet they do so in such a way that each part simultaneously and spontaneously furthers the operation of the other. They benefit each other, serve each other as, as it were, both means and ends, thereby quickening the entire transcendental operation and turning it into a self-proceeding process. The interactions between the two ways of transition thus become a self-reflexive process of causations. A pleasure is consciously and recurrently felt as the completion of each causation. This interaction could proceed continually, thereby turning the self-reflexive process into a recurrence of causations.

This self-reflexivity is, as we recall, the essential feature of the principle of life. The principle of life shares the transcendental principle of aesthetic judgment with the same kind of purposiveness, namely, the purposiveness without purpose, which as we have identified in previous chapter is a peculiar mode of determination. Thus, the third kind of causality indeed is conceived to underlie both the phenomena of life and the judgment of the beautiful.

The crucial passage of §12, as quoted in the beginning, could be more clearly understood if we build it on this first stage. Kant says, in the judgment of the beautiful we *linger* over this state of mind; this lingering happens, not because the mind is repeatedly and passively received some pleasurable charms from the outside, but because the transcendental aesthetic activity of cognitive powers, the free play as well as the animation, is proceeding spontaneously and restlessly on its own account. The free play itself is also an enlivening activity, and both of them are, as Kant suggests, based on a purposive and "internal causality" (§12, 5: 222). Kant makes it clear that this unnamed causality, involved in this aesthetic judgment, is neither simply mechanical nor adequately teleological, and consequently it produces a disinterested pleasure that is neither agreeable nor intellectual. Yet, by referring to the function of this peculiar kind of causality, we conceive ourselves as consciously remaining in this transcendental state of mind with a pleasurable feeling. The unnamed internal causality enables us to linger on in this aesthetic condition, in which the mind stays in calm contemplation and yet keeps organizing itself restlessly. During this self-reflexive process, even the flow of time could not be normally perceived; time is somehow suspended by a purposive cause, and this supposed cause is future-directed and anticipatory of the continuous engagement of the mind as a whole.[2] In this harmonious and pleasurable state of mind, the free play maintains itself according to "a causality in itself" (§12, 5: 222), just as the phenomena that an organic being is generating itself and preserving itself according to an unknown causality (§65, 5: 376)—the causality that is entailed in the principle of life and is equated to the third mode of determination.

[2] See the helpful discussion in Zackert, *Kant on Beauty and Biology*, 16 and 302. She claims, however, in note 44 on p. 311 that Kant's connection of aesthetic pleasure with causality in this passage is "a slip"—I find this claim unacceptable for reasons given in my note above.

Now if we consider the twofold activities of cognitive powers as two "parts" and the self-reflexive continuance of the lively interplay between these two ways of transitions as a "whole," this first-stage "whole" could be conceived as a purposive activity (§45, 5: 306). This purposive activity—the "whole" first-stage process—is immediately manifest to us through a pleasurable feeling, and this manifestation of the purposive "whole" would, in turn, be taken as the ground, which would thus be further counted as a "part," of the entire transcendental aesthetic operation as the second and more inclusive "whole." This second "whole," the entire state of mind, is a purposive unity, in which the imagination in its freedom harmonizes with the understanding in its lawfulness. Our cognitive powers are performing together in a harmonious voice, just as a tree is flourishing in its full shape. Through their resonating performances, we could linger over a state of mind according to an internally self-preserving and self-promoting recurrence of causations. In order to explore this second and more inclusive "whole," in which the first-stage "whole" would be taken up as a "part" of the entire aesthetic experience of the judgment of taste, we shall then move beyond the first stage and turn to the second stage.

3. Second Stage: The Life of the Whole

The effect of the reciprocal enlivening between imagination and understanding further enlivens the entire transcendental aesthetic operation. At the first stage, the causal relation, which underlies the twofold transitions (from the judging activity to the pleasurable feeling), indicates that the activity of free play, along with the feeling of free play, is interwoven with the activity of enlivening and the feeling of life. Now at the

second stage, when we linger over and remain in this aesthetic state of mind, not only the activities of our two cognitive powers become purposively harmonized with each other, in which the principle of life as a kind of causality for self-actions and self-determinations underpins, but the entire mind is turned into a purposive "whole," to which the same mode of determination is attributed. This internal causal relation, which is self-referential and self-oriented, is conceived as the ground, not only for two first-stage ways of causations and the interplay between them, but for the whole self-proceeding process, the lingering of the life of the mind. This further development lead us to a broader horizon for exploring the life of the mind in the aesthetic state as a whole when it is operating in the self-reflexive second-stage process.

The second stage includes another crucial "part" that has not been taken into account at the first stage: it takes up the form of an object and puts the form come into the subjective play. Kant suggests, the entire subjective aesthetic experience is triggered by something outside the subject. The playful and lively activities of imagination and understanding could transform the mind into a self-organizing and self-promoting state; nonetheless, the entire transcendental operation could get into this state of lingering only because it is initially evoked by a representation of a given object, or more precisely, by an object's form, which is apprehended by imagination and yet to be judged as beautiful. The apprehended form is the initial element that constitutes the entire state of mind, apart from the aesthetically judging activity of cognitive powers and the consequent feeling of pleasure. The form is indispensable for understanding the underlying mode of determination in the judgment of taste. In fact, the concept "purposiveness" is first introduced and attributed to the object's form for explaining the relation between the

judging subject and the determining ground of certain objects (Introduction IV, 5: 180).The form is regarded as purposive because it has revealed a causal relation between itself and the entire transcendental aesthetic operation of mental powers (Introduction VII, 5: 189-90; also see §39, 5: 292). The second-stage "whole," the entire state of mind in the aesthetic experience of the beautiful, hinges on the occurrence of this "part," since the aesthetic judgment "has for its determining ground merely the purposiveness of the form" (§13, 5: 223). Only by including the apprehension of form, the entire mental state could be judged as purposive. Once this ongoing process of the entire state of mind is triggered by the apprehension of an object's form, it becomes self-organizing and self-driving.

Furthermore, in the second-stage "whole" the feeling of pleasure also turns out to be a purposive "part." In the judgment of taste, the aesthetically judging activity brings forth a subsequent pleasurable feeling. At the first stage, the "whole" is regarded as the self-reflexive continuance of the transcendental aesthetic activity, constituted by the first-stage "parts," namely, the two respective spontaneous activities of imagination and understanding as well as the recurrent process of their mutually enlivening interplay; this "whole" first-stage process is always accompanied by a feeling of pleasure. Now for the second-stage "whole," the feeling of pleasure, as a second-stage "part," is the manifestation of the interplay between two other second-stage "parts," namely, between the apprehended form and the operation of the entire mental faculty. Whenever a feeling of pleasure appears and thereby completes the aesthetic activity of cognitive powers, this feeling becomes a "part" that serves as, as it were, the determining basis of this sequential transition. In fact, Kant's very definition of pleasure consists in the self-preserving capacity of life and the underlying causality of this capacity: "The consciousness of the

causality of a representation with respect to the state of the subject, for *maintaining* it in that state, can here designate in general what is called pleasure" (§10, 5: 220; emphasis added). The pleasurable feeling is the consequence of the entire self-oriented recurring activities of enlivening and free play, a consequence that is also grounded on the same mode of determination. Thus, besides being equated to the feeling of life and to the feeling of free play, the feeling of pleasure is also identified, concerning the aesthetic mental operation as a whole, as "the inner feeling of a purposive state of mind" (§40, 5: 296).

To sum up, when "we linger over the consideration of the beautiful," the principle of life, as a kind of causality, is conceived as the determining ground for the entire state of mind, in which the mind in its life could be regarded as proceeding through five moments. First, the subject is evoked by an object's form, which is grasped by imagination and would be "finally" judged as beautiful, and purposive as well, through the manifestation of a pleasurable feeing. Second, by virtue of the apprehension of form, our cognitive powers are set into a free play. At this first stage, the play enlivens itself and turns both powers into a harmonious relationship; this transcendental activity is immediately accompanied with a feeling of pleasure. Third, the play and the animation quicken each other and in turn facilitate their own operations. This reciprocal, self-reflexive interactions turn the first-stage "whole" aesthetic activity into a self-continuing purposive process, which is constituted by two ways of transitions and also produces a feeling of pleasure. This pleasure, in turn, completes the first-stage "whole" and is, as it were, judged to be the determining basis for the operation of the first stage. Fourth, the entire state of mind could be further judged as a more inclusive second-stage "whole,"

which consists in three second-stage "parts," namely, the apprehended form, the self-reflexive proceeding of the enlivening interplay between cognitive powers (i.e., the first-stage "whole"), and the consequent feeling of pleasure. This second-stage "whole" is a purposively self-perpetuating and self-propagating unity. This final unified "whole" further makes the subject notice that the object's form, whose appearance has evoked the transcendental operation of our mind in the first place, should itself be judged as an anticipated purposive cause for determining the entire aesthetic experience of the beautiful. The form in turn makes the aesthetic state of mind, in its life and in its lingering, become as it were its effect, thereby rendering this object itself, from which the subject detaches the from, irrelevant to the aesthetic judgment, but merely as "a favor with which we take nature in and not a favor that it shows to us" (§58, 5: 350). Fifth, through the feeling of pleasure, this entire *self*-oriented, *self*-determining state of mind in the aesthetic experience of beauty makes manifest a kind of *self*-reflexivity, the *self*-reflexivity implied in the internal principle of life—in light of this final moment, Kant's beginning discussion, in which the connection between the judgment of taste and the characteristics of life is brought forward perhaps a little bluntly, could be understood as an effort to set the keynote for his subsequent presentation: in this judgment "subject feels *itself* as it is affected by the representation," which "is *related entirely to the subject*, indeed to *its* feeling of *life*, under the name of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure" (§1, 5: 204; emphasis added).

4. "A Special Kind of Causality" and Reflective Judgment

The principle of life, as a third mode of determination, could also shed light on the motive that underlies the thematic transition of the third *Critique*. This motive is suggested in the beginning chapter of the second part:

> But that things of nature serve one another as means to ends, and that their possibility itself should be adequately intelligible only through *this kind of causality*…For in the previous case the representation of things, because it is something in us, could also quite well be conceived of *a priori* as apt and serviceable for the *internally purposive disposition* of our cognitive faculties; but we have no basis at all for presuming *a priori* that ends that are not our own, and which also cannot pertain to nature (which we cannot assume as an intelligent being), nevertheless can or should constitute *a special kind of causality*, or at least *an entirely unique lawlikeness* thereof. (§61, 5: 359; emphasis added.)

Kant begins his discussion of teleological judgment for making a transition from his critique of aesthetics to that of teleology by introducing "a special kind of causality," which, as we recall, is formally the same as the principle of life and is rendered as the third mode of determination. This presumed causality is beyond the explicability of mechanism but does not fully suffice for a teleological account of causations; rather, it turns out to be a unique kind of causality, the principle of subjective purposiveness, and is laid down as "one more principle" (§61, 5: 360) for furnishing our judging of the nature per se. What is remarkable is that, as Kant says, this kind of causal connections is first manifest to us in our engagement with beautiful nature—while in our aesthetic judgments of natural beauty nature appears purposively as art, now in teleological judgments "we represent the possibility of the object in accordance with the *analogy* of such a *causality* (like the kind we encounter *in ourselves*), and hence we conceive of nature as *technical* through its own capacity" (§61, 5: 360; emphasis added). Thus, the twofold division of the third *Critique* relies on this common reference, namely, a third and internal kind of causality. After all, this self-*reflexive* mode of determination is

grounded on the transcendental principle of *reflective* judgment, to which both aesthetic and teleological judgments belong.

In the judgment of taste, the mind as a whole is transformed into a purposive state. Even we could not attribute a real end to its generation and formation, we could still ground this internal subjective state of mind on the internal principle of life and its mode of determination. In that sense, "the mind for itself is entirely life (the principle of life itself)" (§29 General Remark, 5: 277-8).[3] This transcendental operation of mind is also performed in our judgments of the organic living beings in nature. When the mind is conceived to be operating according to certain self-oriented causations during its lingering over the *beautiful*, the entire mind, in and for itself, is *analogous* to a self-perpetuating *organism* by virtue of the same self-reflexive mode of determination. In our aesthetic experience, each "part" of this state of mind is organized in a way which is also, as it were, organizing the "whole" state of mind, as if the "whole" is the precedent cause and the determining purpose of the self-organization of each "part." While no concept is applied by the aesthetically judging subject to legislate the cognitive activity or to structure the relationship of cognitive powers, all participants are consciously set into an indeterminate but harmonious agreement. Through the feeling of life, the transcendental aesthetic activity of the entire mind would appear immediately to itself in its wholeness and liveliness. The purposive causal relationship of "parts" and "whole" is likewise actualized in such an unmediated expression of a unified self and of the subjectivity in its totality.[4] While the causality underlying our lingering over the beautiful reflects the

[3] Kant does not explain in what sense "the principle of life itself" is referring to in the third *Critique*. It is possible that he might indicate something different from the implications that we have discussed. Nonetheless, this is a suggestive remark for understanding what Kant is thinking of and alluding to when he is trying to explicate one of the most fundamental features of the transcendental condition of our aesthetic experience.

[4] If this aesthetic consciousness is a concrete one, as Cassirer takes it but I have reservation on this point, a subjective

causality which we attributed to organic living beings in nature, the living beings in nature could, in turn, be judged by us as beautiful. And, conversely, once in our reflection of life in nature the idea of a great system of natural ends, in which human being is a member, is rendered valid, the beauty in nature could be considered as belonging to the purposiveness of nature in its entirety (§67, 5: 380) The aesthetic judgment of the beauty in nature, the nature in its "part," echoes the teleological judgment of the entire realm of nature, the nature as a "whole," and vice versa.

5. Heautonomy and Heautonomous Structure

There is one more indispensable Kantian question remained to be clarified: what makes such a mode of determination possible? To put it differently, what capacity of the subject supplies transcendentally the principle of life as the third kind of causality in the aesthetic state of mind? A straightforward answer would be: it is the reflective power of judgment that furnish the aesthetic judgment with its transcendental principle, namely, the principle of subjective purposiveness. This principle is said to relate the realm of nature with the realm of freedom. On the side of natural laws and mechanical causality, the understanding with its concepts is the source of legislation; for the laws of freedom and the causality of ends it is reason that serves as the lawgiver. These two modes of determination exclude each other within their own realms of objects, and they are grounded respectively on the autonomy of understanding and that of reason. In comparison to them, the reflective power of judgment as well as its own principle has some fundamentally different features. The power of judgment also has the capacity of

(not objective) unity of nature and freedom is actualized in the free play and aesthetic feeling. With this unity "a new cosmos" is revealed to the self. See Ernst Cassirer, *Kant's Life and Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 316-35.

lawgiving, but it has neither an objective domain nor corresponding concepts (Introduction III, 5: 178-9). It seems that Kant is reluctant to directly give a name to the "special kind of causality" (§61, 5: 359) maybe because this third mode of determination, as we name here, is after all *not* a causality in *reality* since it contains *no actual* determination of certain objects. It could not adequately furnish an explanation for the relevant objects as either the phenomena of natural beauty or living organisms; indeed, the reflective judgment does not concern the reality of objects at all. Whereas the principle of purposiveness also shows a unique kind of causal connection between the "parts" and the "whole", Kant insists that because of our limited capacity the "whole" must not be taken as an idea that has reality or as a final cause that has actually determined the state of mind. The principle of life, equated to the subjective purposiveness and to the third kind of causality, could only be presupposed subjectively and serve a regulative and heuristic use for our reflections on the organic life and also on the beautiful. In the case of aesthetic judgment, the transcendental activity of the subject's mind is continuing lively and ceaselessly, precisely because this process is indeterminate and is free from the actual determinations of both mechanical causality and teleological causality.

Nevertheless, in our aesthetic judgment a peculiar causal relation between "parts" and "whole" and between "means" and "ends" has appeared to us through a pleasurable feeling. Hence, an a priori legislation is required for underpinning such experience, and it is in this occasion Kant refers to the reflective power of judgment. This newly discovered subjective power, in contrast to the lawgiving activity of understanding, prescribes a law only to the power itself rather than to other objects (Introduction V, 5: 185-6). Its

legislation is utterly different: it is subjective and self-applicable in an absolute sense. To describe the unique lawgiving activity of the reflective power of judgment, Kant coins the term heautonomy (*heautonomie*), which derives from the Greek (*ἑαυτονομία*). In order to see how the linguistic meanings of this term could indicate the connection between peculiar legislation in the reflective judgment and the third kind of causality, I shall make a digression for tracing the nuance of this newly-coined term and its difference to the legislation of autonomy.

In the case of the more commonly-used notion autonomy (*αὐτονομία*), *auto* (*αὐτο*)—the Greek intensive pronoun—refers to the self (e.g., herself, itself, or themselves). The autonomy of a subject indicates its independence and spontaneity, as in the subject's autonomous legislation of understanding and reason. Autonomy emphasizes that one does not follow directives from someone else, so that it is contrary to heteronomy. Linguistically speaking, autonomy has not yet specified, but has to further specify, that what is this lawgiving activity directed to: as, for example, in the situation "he *himself* washes something" or "her *herself* governs someone", the agent of the referred action is emphasized by the use of a self-reflexive pronoun (i.e., *auto*), but we do not yet know what he washes or what she governs; when using the pronoun *auto*, it modifies grammatically only the subject of the verb. Autonomy is a subjective and formal capacity, but such an autonomous normativity is necessarily related *to* another thing and involves certain content to complete its application: in the case of understanding, the subject itself gives laws *to* objects in nature; in the case of practical reason, the subject itself gives laws *to* the subject itself. Even the actor and the one being acted are the same, as in the case of our moral self-legislation, the law-giver and law-receiver have to

differentiated in the first place and are placed on two sides in such formulation. The laws legislated by autonomy are first detached from the subject and drawn out of the autonomous agent, and hence they would become a kind of mediation in this legislation: in the case of understanding, its categories mediate between judging subject and judged objects; in the case of practical reason, its moral laws would ultimately draw back to the subject in a mediated way. Hence, autonomy is not purely subjectively self-reflexive; it has to open to something else and to associate itself with the latter, even the latter has its origin in the former. And it is only through this structure that the subject determines the object (or the subject itself as its object) through its autonomous capacity. By virtue of this inherent association with the Other in its operative structure, the autonomy of understanding correlates with the efficient cause, making possible the mechanical causality in the realm of nature, and the autonomy of reason correlates with the final cause, making possible the teleological causality in the realm of freedom.

On the other hand, *heauto* (*ἑαυτο*)—the third-person personal reflexive pronoun—also has the self-referential implication, and generally speaking it could also be used as herself, itself, or themselves, etc. But grammatically it is different from *auto*. The pronoun *heauto* itself is the already specified object of the related activity: as in the situation "he washes *himself*" or "she governs *herself*," the agent is exactly the direct intended object of the referred action, and this action is not relevant to any other things; when using *heauto*, this pronoun modifies grammatically the object of the verb rather than the subject of the verb, and indeed it implies no distinction between the subject and object at all. By using the notion heautonomy, Kant suggests that nothing else needs to be further specified in a normativity which is heautonomous. The legislation of the reflective

power of judgment is independent and spontaneous, but it is *merely* subjective and does not associate with the Other. Through this capacity alone, the reflective power of judgment completes its operation in its lawgiving activity. This operative structure does not involve a moment of detachment; there is no objective laws or concepts as the mediation in such a legislating process. As Kant puts it,

> [T]he *a priori* principles of the pure power of judgment in aesthetics judgments, i.e., in those where…*it is itself, subjectively, both object as well as law*. (§36, 5: 288, emphasis added.)

The reflective power of judgment, which has created the law by itself, becomes—or merges into—the law of itself, and this mergence consequently fulfills the power without any contact to something else. The law is generated by this power, imposed upon this power, and simultaneously identified by this power as this power itself. The reflective power of judgment does not exercises outwardly and entails no association with the Other. It is unconcerned with any objects or concepts but only attaches a guiding principle to itself for its inward use. Unlike the open association of the autonomous understanding and reason, the operation of the reflective power of judgment is self-contained and self-enclosed. For the heautonomy underlying the reflective judgment, the subject is immediately the law-giver, the law-receiver, and also the law itself; it is simultaneously the source, the path, and also the end.[5]

Thus, when Kant says that, by *analogy*, the power of judgment also contains a priori a legislative principle (Introduction III, 5: 177), he is referring to the commonality of the mere formal relation that is involved in both autonomy and heautonomy: they both construct a legislative structure, regardless of whether this structure opens to something

[5] Allison discusses the Greek etymologies of *heautonomy* and clarifies the self-reflexivity of *heautonomy* in terms of the nature of its normativity; reflective power of judgment is both the source and referent of its principle. See Henry E. Allison, *Kant's theory of taste: A Reading of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 40 and 169.

else, or it is simply an empty shell that is assimilated into the legislative power itself, thereby rendering the form itself as the content of this form. The reflective power of judgment by its own freedom generates a unique lawfulness heautonomously, and in this occasion the self could not prescribe any objective law—even a merely formal law—autonomously *to* the Other (Cf. §29 General Remark, 5: 270). Unlike the autonomy of understanding or reason, by which the form is provided for determining other content, for the heautonomy of the reflective power of judgment the form, the operative structure, is all it has; this mode of determination, taken separately, is identical to the legislative structure of the former two capacities, thereby sufficing the use of an analogy.

Nevertheless, it is precisely because of the thorough mergence among the power, the form, and the content that in the use of heautonomy a deeper kind of formality is revealed by the subject. And it is by virtue of this formality, which discloses a deeper significance of subjectivity, we could envisage a third and special kind of causal relation, i.e., the principle of subjective purposiveness. This formality indicates a deeper subjectivity, because the entire transcendental operation of our cognitive powers, either in the occasion of aesthetic judgment or that of teleological judgment, depends on the subject's adjustment to a cognitive proceeding under the legislation of a heautonomous structure. In other words, for the judgment of taste it is the heautonomous structure, constructed by the reflective power of judgment, provides a platform for the apprehension of a beautiful form, for the lively interplay of imagination and understanding, and for the consequent emergence of the feeling of pleasure. It is heautonomy that makes the causality of lingering possible. Hence, whereas the legislation of the reflective power of judgment is completely self-enclosed, it is not operative as an

additional agency supervening the entire process in the judgment of taste, but discloses a possibility for the concord of our cognitive powers. Heautonomy becomes a more basic kind of lawfulness for furnishing the harmony of faculties. And in the occasion of the judgment of taste the principle of life, as the third kind of causality, finds its source, lying more interiorly in the subject, in the formality furnished in this heautonomous structure.[6]

In sum, the formality of the third mode of determination is rooted in the subjectivity of heautonomy. Reflective judgment with its heautonomy initiates "the unique way" (Introduction V, 5: 184), along which our cognitive powers would proceed differently from the way leading the subject to empirical knowledge. Our cognitive powers are thus made possible for operating and organizing themselves according to the principle of life into a state of lingering. The operation of the reflective power of judgment is self-oriented and self-enclosed, and the third kind of causality corresponds to this self-reflexivity. The principle of purposiveness is therewith laid down in such a self-oriented activity.[7] This *self-enclosed* legislation *discloses* a new possibility for the operation of other cognitive powers: heautonomy opens up a platform for the free and enlivening play; it provides the framework in which alone our aesthetic (as well as teleological) reflection on nature is possible. Within this interior structure disclosed by heautonomy, our imagination and understanding could then proceed in their own spontaneity, freedom, and liveliness, therewith coalescing into a "harmonious

[6] The deeper formality supplied by reflective power of judgment shows a deeper spontaneity and originality of the subject. Compare Deleuze's claims: reflective judgment manifests and liberates a *depth* which remained hidden in the determinate judgment; even a determinate accord of the faculties under a determining and legislative faculty, as in the case of cognition, presupposes the existence and the possibility of the free indeterminate accord, as in the case of aesthetic reflection. See Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 60-1.

[7] For later German Idealists, as Pippin suggests, the priority and centrality of such a reflective self-orienting and its principle of purposiveness show the general significance of aesthetic experience for the entire "system" problem, of which the issue of intellectual intuition/intuitive intellect is at stake. See Robert B. Pippin, "Avoiding German Idealism: Kant, Hegel, and the Reflective Judgment Problem," in *Idealism as Modernism: Hegelian Variations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 142-53.

(subjectively purposive) occupation" (§39, 5: 292).[8] The apprehension of certain beautiful forms and the consequent feeling of pleasure are also made possible by such a legislation and could thus be judged as purposive. The entire transcendental aesthetic activity could not occur without the formal structure of heautonomy. The reflective power of judgment regulates the whole self-oriented process by a purely self-applicable principle, therewith revealing a deeper kind of subjectivity for underpinning the self-referential mode of determination. Whereas the reflective power of judgment does not directly constitute this process as a participant of the judgment of taste, the mind in its life is playing with itself, organizing for itself, animating in itself, and lingering over itself throughout the heautonomous reflection by virtue of its life of subjectivity.

When the judgment of taste occurs, the subject lingers on its judging and feels the life of the self in its wholeness. While such occasion is triggered by the subject's encounter with certain phenomena, especially phenomena in nature, the Self's encounter with the Other would be cut off immediately once the subject has detached the forms, which are yet to be judged as beautiful, from the initial objects and holds the forms up into the harmonious play of the subjective faculties according to an internal causality, i.e., the principle of life, in its self-enclosed state of lingering. The unity of the subject's life is sensed at most subjectively by virtue of a self-reflexive lawful structure formulated by the subject's own power of heautonomy. The nature, out of which we felt the pleasure in a sense of life, is judged to be purposive to us, and yet in such a way it is contemplated by

[8] Sallis suggests that the judgment in the judgment of taste undergoes a certain erosion of the cognitive operation of the power of judgment; rather, it is assimilated to the dual operation of imagination, as in its apprehensive operation and in its operation in the free play with understanding. And yet, as Sallis says, the erosion of judgment entails an aesthetic operation, which constitutes the very opening of the space in which the object is first let to present itself as beautiful, that is, in which the beautiful can shine forth (το ἐκφανέστατον). See John Sallis, *Spacings—of Reason and Imagination: In Texts of Kant, Fichte, Hegel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 97-9

us with complete disinterestedness. The free and playful harmony arises only between imagination and understanding and only lets us aware of the life of the inner Self in a heautonomous reflection without a mediated association with the Other. By merely judging the nature, even the beautiful in nature, the unity of nature and humans has by no means been achieved in reality, and nonetheless, a prospect for the possibility of reconciliation is opened up through the aesthetic experience, which solely belongs to the human way of life. Now the aesthetic experience exceeds the mere lingering over one's contemplation; the subject engages its own life-activity upon the very production of the beautiful, thereby rendering the actual existence of the beautiful interwoven with and to some extent united with its own life. For Kant, it is through the artistic creation that the principle of life could penetrate both the subject and the object in a more active condition, and human beings, at least some of them, could strive to find an unusual and perhaps unintelligible basis for the unity between the self and the nature.

CHAPTER TWO

Swinging:

The Life of Beautiful Arts

In the judgment of taste, the aesthetic state of mind is enlivened by itself. It maintains its liveliness in a disinterested way, that is, by reorganizing, reorienting, and reproducing its own proceeding, without any more stimulus from the outside, according to an internal causality, the causality of lingering. For this transcendental state of mental activities, the underlying mode of determination, i.e., the principle of life, is concerned merely with the subjective reflection of the beautiful, that is, of something that only in our aesthetic judgment appears to be purposively arranged for us. This operation (namely the continuance of this whole state of mind) as well as its recurrent effects (namely the feeling of pleasure) is purely self-reflexive. This situation, however, does not suffice to illustrate the judgment of the beauty of artifacts. Whereas in the judgment of natural beauty we do not need to pay regard for the actual constitution and the causation of that natural object, in the case of a beautiful art, we are necessarily aware of its objective condition and the cause of this artificial product. The state of mind in the judgment of taste and its internal mode of determination, as the causality of lingering, still belongs to the characterizations of the judgment of a beautiful art, but in the case of the latter the

aesthetic consciousness entails an additional consideration of the kind of causality entailed in the actual production of that object. Thus, in his elaboration of beautiful arts Kant gives his attention to analyzing the transcendental mental activity, not so much in one's own reflection of the beautiful, but rather in the subjective condition of one's creation of artistic beauty. My investigation on the life of beautiful arts shall also begin by first clarifying this subjective condition, which, as we will see below, would in fact exceed the principle of life rendered in our aesthetic contemplation as the causality of lingering.

1. A Causality Transcending: Beauty of Artifacts

Besides certain natural phenomena, the beauty could also be grasped through the judging of an artifact. But unlike the beautiful object of nature, which appears to us as something unintentional and yet could still be taken as something purposive, the production of any artifact is a consequence of an intentional and purposive activity, by which the overall existence of that product has been determined. As Kant defines, "only production through freedom, i.e., through a capacity for choice that grounds its actions in reason, should be called art" (§43, 5: 303); in contrast to a product of nature, which is always explained in terms of mechanical causations, a product of art has to be ascribed to a rational creator, and this creator is explicitly its producing cause or a preceding purpose, to which the very existence of this artificial object owes its formation.

Hence, a product of art is always accompanied by a purpose. A purpose is, as Kant defines, "the concept of which can be regarded as the ground of the possibility of the object itself"; or simply put, it is, prior to the thing's actual being, "what sort of thing

it is supposed to be" (§15, 5: 227). Thus, the production of artifacts also entails a concept of perfection. If the combination of the manifold in an artifact, which is yet to be perfected, agrees with that presupposed concept of end because the latter determines the former beforehand, then the production of this artifact would achieve its perfection in such a technically practical context (§48, 5: 313; also §15, 5: 227). This perfected artifact, as the consequence of that preceding determination, indicates an inner and actual objective purposiveness. While we can regard the beautiful in nature, according to the merely formal and regulative use of the principle of subjective purposiveness, as something originating in an at bottom inexplicable phenomenon, we have to somehow provide a real and concrete explanation for the kind of purposiveness involved in our judgment of a beautiful artifact, since the artifact qua artifact is caused distinctly by the free production of a rational being. For this explanation we have to refer to a teleological account of determination. Therefore, for artifacts in general, a real purpose and a concrete teleological causality are necessarily presupposed, and in this mode of determination the producing procedure is aimed at actualizing the perfection of the artifact at hand. This sort of technical perfection is excluded from the operation of physical mechanism, since a perfectible object could only be perfected by the use of free will.

On the other hand, Kant insists that the perfection of any freely produced artifact, namely, the technically practical perfection, is still a concept of nature. Unlike the morally practical perfection, which is based on our free use of practical reason, the production of a perfectible artifact is still bound to a mechanistic account of causations (I, 5: 172). Even if an aesthetic satisfaction, i.e., a feeling of pleasure, is added into the preceding concept of perfection and constitutes the internal purpose that determines the

producing procedure of that object, the determination of this feeling is still irrelevant to the beautiful as such in our aesthetic judgment of that object (§16, 5: 230). In that sense, Kant distinguishes beautiful art from "mechanically intentional art," since in the case of the latter the pleasing feeling depends on "the attainment of determinate ends" (§58, 5: 351; §45, 5: 306). If a technically perfect product is merely a "mechanically intentional art," its production involves both teleological and mechanical operations. We could say, these two operations constitute the regular mode of determination of products of art in general: mechanical operation is subordinated and useable as a tool to the end intended by a teleological view, and teleological operation, at the same time, needs mechanism to connect the yet-to-be-developed "parts" according to the pre-perceived perfect "whole." Thus, the regular mode of determination of artifacts consists in a combined operation of both teleological and mechanical causality, in which the connection of efficient causes could at the same time be judged as an effect through an intentionally presupposed final cause (cf. §65, 5: 373, §78, 5: 414, and §81, 5: 422). And in this condition that combined determination always refers to the concept of perfection. In short, the production of a mechanically intentional art has to be understood in terms of the determinate concept of a real and internal objective purposiveness.

But why from this general condition could certain artifacts stand out and be judged by us as beautiful? It is in our judging of artistic beauty—indeed in the judging of beauty in general—the distinction between nature and art is to some extent blurred:

> Thus the purposiveness in the product of beautiful art, although it is certainly intentional, must nevertheless not seem intentional; i.e., beautiful art must be *regarded as* nature, although of course one is aware of it as art. (§45, 5: 307)

This blurring, also described by Kant as that "Nature was beautiful, if at the same time it looked like art; and art can only be called beautiful if we are aware that it is art and yet it

looks to us like nature" (§45, 5: 306), reflects the limit of the general account for the production of artifacts that we have just discussed above. The blurring of art and nature also reflects the limit of, in Kant's phrase, the "realism of purposiveness" in our judging of the beautiful in nature as well as in art (§58, 5: 347). Hence, the peculiarity of a beautiful artifact is its transcendence over that regular mode of determination. This transcendence consists in, by contrast, the "idealism of purposiveness."

In the production of a beautiful art, the combined operation of teleological and mechanical causality is involved, but for our judging of artistic beauty this general condition, entailed in the production of any artifacts, is no longer capable of furnishing an adequate explanation. The kind of causality that underlies the production of a beautiful art transcends the combined determination of mechanism and teleology as well as the concept of perfection. Kant has argued (in §15) that the beauty qua beauty is independent of and irreducible to the concept of perfection; now in the case of a product of art, the creation of the beautiful indeed exceeds the horizon of the perfection. What goes beyond the requirement of technical perfection is the pure ideality of the kind of purposiveness in artistic beauty. The ideality of this purposiveness transcends the real and internal purposiveness entailed in the concept of technical perfection. "In beautiful art the principle of the idealism of purposiveness can be recognized even more distinctly" (§58, 5: 350), and this does not mean that artistic beauty is superior to natural beauty—for Kant it is the opposite; rather, it is because for a product of beautiful art the procedure is more clear: we have to first begin our judgment of this product in terms of a real objective purposiveness as well as the two kinds of causality that are known to us, but nevertheless we are then aware of the absolute inadequacy of this general condition, and thereby yield

the transcendence of a still unknown mode of determination, underlying the creation of artistic beauty, over both mechanism and teleology as well as their combined operation.

Thus, the blurring between nature and art does not simply cancel the categorical distinction between physical, mechanical motions and teleological, voluntary actions. It preserves this distinction through the functioning of the general condition of production and yet further reveals an excessive condition and the transcendence of the beautiful. This blurring indicates a crossing[1], a crossing between, on the one side, nature as the unintentional and purposive phenomenon, which lies ultimately in the supersensible substratum, and, on the other side, art as the intentional and free activity, aiming at bringing a conceptual possibility into its empirical reality. This crossing, granted its inexplicability, makes us judge a product of beautiful art as purposive and free from constraint of any human arbitrary rules (§45, 5: 306). The crossing would always be consciously—perhaps also more clearly than that in the case of natural beauty—recognized in our judging of the product of artistic beauty, and the transcendence of the beauty of artifacts is built upon such a crossing that has manifested itself to us.

What makes the artistic creation of beauty display such a crossing? To put it differently, what drives the causality of the production of a beautiful art into the transcendence over the regular mode of determination of artifacts? Kant claims that, for the production of beautiful art, even when it could be roughly taken in our judgment of taste as beautiful, it would still be regarded as a merely technically perfect and mechanically intentional art—thereby not truly beautiful—if in its producing there

[1] I borrow this term from John Sallis, *Transfigurements: On the True Sense of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 27, fn. 2. As Sallis suggests, Kant's redetermination of the relation between art and nature is more than the reversal of the traditional mimetic account of this relation; Kant not only poses art and nature in their opposition but further draws them together by introducing a crossing of art and nature, a crossing of each over to the other. In this crossing, each, while remaining itself (and while we are aware of it as itself), must take on the look of the other.

involves no spirit (§49, 5: 313). In Kant's theory of artistic beauty, spirit is the new version of the principle of life as the third and special mode of determination.

2. An Animating Swing: Spirit and Aesthetic Ideas

In the condition of producing a beautiful artifact, the principle of life is not simply functioning in a self-enclosed and self-contained subjective condition; here it is not only a matter of taste that is of concern. The state of mental powers is more than being set into a self-organizing and self-perpetuating process within the mere reflection of a judging subject. Now the principle of life turns out to be a creative principle, a principle that could bring a beautiful product into its sensible reality. For Kant, this aesthetic state of mind belongs solely to the mind of genius, and the artistic genius alone is capable of creating original and exemplary work of beautiful art (§46, 5: 307-8). Hence, if the transcendence of the causality in the production of a beautiful art is based on a higher artistic intelligence that transcends the capacity of ordinary artisans, this higher capacity could only lie in the nature of genius (cf. §85, 5: 307). For an artistic genius, the functioning of the principle of life is more intensive and more dynamic than that in the state of lingering as we simply reflect on the beautiful. It is more dynamic in the sense that this mode of determination not only grounds a state of mind as internally felt subjective condition, but by virtue of this kind of causality certain concrete existence is to be produced, fabricated, materialized, or objectified, with externally sensible reality, through the aesthetic operation of a subject. In this dynamic state the cognitive powers are now set into "a free swing [*freien Schwunges*]" (§48, 5: 312), and the principle of life as such is referred to as the spirit:

> *Spirit*, in an aesthetic significance, means the animating principle in the mind. That, however, by which this principle animates the soul, *the material* which it uses for this purpose, is that which purposively sets the mental powers into *swing* [*Schwung*], i.e., into a *play* that is self-maintaining and even strengthens the powers to that end. (§49, 5: 313; emphasis added; translation modified.)

This crucial definition deserves careful analysis. Spirit animates the mind, so the animation of spirit also bears the general characterizations of the principle of life. Hence, while this state of mind, in common with that in the judgment of taste, is self-maintaining and self-strengthening, spirit indicates a self-acting, self-determining capacity as well as a self-reflexive mode of determination, which would purposively continue the animation of spirit for the sake of the animating process as a whole. In this regard, the principle of spirit is identical to the principle of life as the third form of causality.

On the other hand, unlike that in the state of lingering, the self-proceeding of the animated mind does not begin its entire process because of the trigger of the apprehension of an object's form: the spirit in the mind by itself is a kind of formative principle that makes use of "the material" to enliven the subject's mind and consequently somehow objectifies such material in the production of a beautiful art. Under the formative influence of spirit, the functioning of the material constitutes the purposive mental operation. But the question remains: what exactly is the material that is made use of by the spirit of artistic genius? The material, as Kant shortly after clarifies, is the imagination's intuition of certain expression of aesthetic ideas:

> *genius*…presupposes…a representation (even if indeterminate) of the material, i.e., of the intuition…; it displays itself not so much in the execution of the proposed end in the presentation of a determinate *concept* as in the exposition or the expression of *aesthetic ideas*, which contain rich material for that aim, hence the imagination, in its freedom from all guidance by rules, is nevertheless represented as purposive for the presentation of the given concept. (§49, 5: 317)

And it is in dealing with this sort of material that the spirit, as the dynamic principle of life, turns out to be "nothing other than the faculty for the presentation of aesthetic ideas" (§49, 5: 314). Now the question becomes: what is this sort of ideas? Kant further suggests, the essential characters of an aesthetic idea is its indeterminacy and inexpressibility: it is indeterminable because no concept could possibly grasp the idea qua idea; it is thus inexpressible because no language, which is itself made up of concepts, could possibly make such an idea intelligible. The spirit, as a formative principle, resides in an activity of cognitive powers that drives itself toward aesthetic ideas. It is in the feeling of an effort to give a clear and distinct designation for the unnamable ideas that the cognitive faculties are enlivened and "the mere letter of language" is combined with spirit (§49, 5: 316). Thus, the more concrete manifestation of the animation of spirit, with regard to a mode of determination, lies in the genius's effort to determine the indeterminable aesthetic idea through a particular artistic expression. A product of beautiful art is the objectified result of the subjective functioning of the spirit's animation, the animation occurred through the spirit's purposive handling of aesthetic ideas.

Likewise, the interaction between spirit and aesthetic ideas also bears the characterizations of life, and therefore this interaction turns out to be a self-reflexive process. For the judgment of taste, the self-reflexivity characterizes the whole purposive aesthetic activity and indicates the continuance of the lively interplay of cognitive powers as well as the recurrence of its underlying causations. What is unique to the aesthetic consciousness in the creation of beautiful arts is related to the essential characters of aesthetic ideas: the mental operation of artistic genius keeps proceeding ceaselessly precisely because the proceeding as such could never be completed whatsoever; the artist,

as a finite human being, is at bottom incapable of fully attaining the goal at stake, that is, the infinitely indeterminable and inexpressible aesthetic ideas. The mind continues to enliven itself and strengthen itself, thereby becoming self-referential and self-oriented, because the cognitive faculties are recurrently pushing themselves to the very edge of the limits of their capacities in order to exhaust the possibility of the most fitting aesthetic expressions of the idea that has been somehow intuited in view. It is due to the ultimate indeterminacy and inexpressibility of aesthetic ideas that the spirit's self-maintaining, self-strengthening animation becomes not just possible but necessary.

This self-reflexive proceeding is not so much a state in which the mind is simply moving back and forth like in a self-sufficient and all-inclusive whole—such self-reflexivity is more apt to describe the state of mind in the pure judgment of taste, i.e., a state of lingering, in which we stay in the consideration of the beautiful. The subjective condition of a creative genius is a state in motion, a motion that is advancing along a single, upward direction, and it has a momentum or an impetus that continuously drives the moving thing to deviate from falling downward to a state of rest—or, as another translation of the term *Schwung* in Kant's definition of spirit, the aesthetic activity of cognitive powers is a swing. In Kant's early account of cosmology, *Schwungskraft* refers to the tangential force of a planet in its circular rotation.[2] Such a force by itself would make the planet drive away from its initial position in a straight line. The circular motion is a result of the interaction of tangential and the centripetal forces, because the power entailed in swinging motions [*Schwungsbewegung*] counterbalances the gravitational

[2] See Immanuel Kant, *Universal natural history and theory of the heavens or essay on the constitution and the mechanical origin of the whole universe according to Newtonian principles (1755)*, in *Natural Science*, trans. Olaf Reinhardt, ed. Eric Watkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1: 229 and editor's note 11 in page 707.

force of attraction of the sun.[3] *Schwungskraft* prevents the object from sinking into the center and consequently coming to eternal rest. The swing indicates a continuous, one-directional motion, and the state of swing is full of force and energy, keeping the motion strong and persistent. Its direction has been beheld, but the way is yet to be explored. While the swing is one-directional, it is also self-determining and self-reflexive, since the motion as such is indeterminate and therefore continually varying, and it has a restless force to prompt imagination to leave recurrently away from the control of other powers.

The state of swinging is a result of the unfinishable interaction between spirit and aesthetic ideas. The animation of spirit resides in the free, purposive swing of mental powers, and the swing could keep swinging because this undecidable motion is purposively facilitated by the animating spirit. The swing enlivens itself, and by virtue such an animation the swing becomes a self-action. It is a restless striving toward the ideal artistic presentations. The genius is doing his or her utmost to determine the undeterminable and to express the inexpressible. And it is precisely the ultimate unattainability of aesthetic ideas that has rendered the whole animating swing purposive even without a determinate preceding "whole" as its real purpose. The full attainment of an aesthetic idea could be regarded as the unrealizable—and indeed unnamable—"whole," but nonetheless all "parts" of a creative mind, including imagination, understanding, spirit, and taste (§50, 5: 320), could mutually agree with each other, enliven each other, and gather together in a swing upward for the sake of producing the beauty in artifacts. The animating swing thus makes manifest the dynamic principle of life in the subjective

[3] See Kant, *The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of The Existence of God*, in *Theoretical Philosophy 1755-1770*, 2: 418

condition of the creation of artistic beauty. And yet another question follows immediately: by what could the genius get into this state of swinging?

3. A Space to Think More: The Life of Imagination

Let us again come back to Kant's definition of spirit. The swing is also a play. This could mean, as in the overall context of aesthetic judgments, that the transcendental aesthetic operation is a free play of imagination and understanding. But in the creation of artistic beauty what is unique to the playful relationship between cognitive powers is the engagement of creative imagination. The undeterminable and inexpressible aesthetic ideas, as we have seen above, are still in some way beheld by an artistic genius. In such a way it is the free and playful activity of the creative imagination that has held these ideas in the artist's inner intuitions and transform those undeveloped intuitions into the material for the spirit's animation of the whole state of mind (c.f., §57, 5: 343). Since this sort of material consists in ideas, to which no concept can be fully adequate, the imagination is now operating in a self-acting and self-determining fashion and has a freedom on the level that has surpassed the lawfulness of the operation of understanding.

Now creative imagination has been uplifted to a higher—perhaps the highest—position among cognitive powers. The aesthetic idea of imagination is the counterpart of an idea of reason, since imagination "emulates the precedent of reason" (§49, 5: 314).

> Now if we add to a concept a representation of the imagination that belongs to its presentation, but which by itself stimulates so much thinking that it can never be grasped in a determinate concept, hence which aesthetically enlarges the concept itself in an unbounded way, then in this case *the imagination is creative, and sets the faculty of intellectual ideas (reason) into motion*, that is, at the instigation of a representation it gives more to think about than can be grasped and made distinct in it (although it does, to be sure, belong to the concept of the object). (§49, 5: 315; emphasis added.)

The mental powers are set into a swing upward, because the creative imagination, in its striving for attaining the maximum of aesthetic expressions, is swinging beyond the proper bounds of experience and thereby beyond the limitations of concepts—and it is in such a swing towards the unattainable that the possibility of conceptual determination is being tried out in a creative aesthetic consciousness. Furthermore, while the swing of imagination has transcended the horizon of understanding, creative imagination has reached a vision in common with reason. Imagination enlivens the functioning of reason. Now imagination not only goes "beyond that concord with the concept" (§49, 5: 317) and takes the leading role in its play with understanding, but further sets reason, the highest cognitive faculty, into motion; it stimulates reason to participate in such a play: reason has been prompted to think more, i.e., to think of its own intellectual ideas, which are as incomprehensible as aesthetic ideas. Reason with its own vision of the transcendent joins in the free and playful swing and consequently provides more materials for the self-determining activity of imagination.

The playful swing needs the opening of a space for the transcendental cognitive activities. It is a space in which the mind is made possible to gain the momentum to carry out the full potential of swinging. The restriction on imagination is loosen up. Imagination, in its spontaneity and freedom, has envisaged such a space and opens up this space for the mental operation in artistic creation. It is only in the space opened by imagination that the purposive play of mental powers could take place. Understanding and reason are set into motion along the direction that has been perceived and revealed through the vision of imagination. When the cognitive powers respectively take their proceedings and also come into a play within this space, they run together into a self-

active process, through which the mind not only gathers but also maintains the momentum of advancing toward the indeterminate goal of the ideal artistic presentation. The space of creative imagination thus provides a kind of form for its aesthetic materials, the materials intuited not for empirical cognition but for producing beauty. This space does not presuppose exact boundaries; through the advancing of swing the imagination is venturing to reach the infinite, and it is only in this procedure that the imagination would finally delimit the possibility of this space with a playful concord with understanding and reason. The actual outcome of this delimitation is a particular expression of aesthetic ideas in a product of beautiful art. Therefore, the disclosure of the space is itself purposive, since it is prepared not only for the proceeding of playful swing but also for its completion, a completion which would in turn brings the space to its final closure.

We recall that in the occasion of the judgment of taste, the entire aesthetic activity takes place in an operative structure formulated by the reflective power of judgment. This structure is regulated by the subject's heautonomy, by which the reflective power of judgment is legislative over the free and lawful relationship between understanding and imagination. Now the freedom of creative imagination even goes beyond the lawfulness imposed by the heautonomy of reflective judgment. The space of artistic creation exceeds that subjective structure, since the imagination becomes unconstrained in the space created by itself. It uses its full freedom to get in contact with ideas, i.e., certain representations about the total, the infinite, the unconditioned, and the transcendent. By virtue of the original freedom and creative spontaneity of imagination, the genius is free from certain caution in the "impetus of his spirit [*Geistesschwunges*]" (§49, 5: 318) so as to produce something inimitable. Nonetheless, in such a condition Kant still insists that

the side of genius and imagination, "in its freedom from all guidance by rules" (§49, 5: 317), has to be restrained by another side, the side of taste and the power of judgment: the latter side, in a negative way, "is the discipline (or corrective) of genius, clipping its wings and making it well behaved or polished," and it also, in a positive way, "gives genius guidance as to where and how far it should extend itself if it is to remain purposive" even it will "permit damage to the freedom and richness of the imagination" (§50, 5: 319-20). It is by virtue of the restraint of the heautonomous structure constructed by reflective judgment that the playful swing of cognitive powers would not get lost in wild infinity, and the space of imagination would not degenerate into a lifeless vacuum.

In the space disclosed by creative imagination, the play between reason and imagination establishes a dialogue, in which the former's intellectual ideas and the latter's aesthetic ideas could somehow be beheld together in a united horizon. Through such a dialogue the engagement of one side animates that of the other side. Imagination, with its aesthetic ideas, serves the idea of reason so as to "animate the mind by opening up for it the prospect of an immeasurable field of related representations" (§49, 5: 315), and vice versa. This reciprocally animating process enables the genius to think of both sides in one vision and to conjoin them in one artistic presentation. In light of this situation, we can see the significance of Kant's two peculiar examples of artistic beauty: in the first example a poet recollects "everything agreeable in a beautiful summer day, drawn to a close, which a bright evening calls to mind," and thus "animates his idea of reason of a cosmopolitan disposition" by means of his imagination—such an aesthetically animated idea "arouses a multitude of sensations and supplementary representations for which no expression is found"; conversely, in the second example a poet gains a

"consciousness of virtue, when one puts oneself, even if only in thought, in the place of a virtuous person," and thus animates the idea of imagination "in the description of a beautiful morning" by means of his reason—for such an intellectually animated idea "no expression that is adequate to a determinate concept fully captures" (§49, 5: 316). Indeed, it is only beneficial but critical to keep the dialogue between reason and imagination and develop an inseparable connection between imagination's idea with reason's idea, the idea of morality, so as to "moderate the momentum [*Schwung*] of an unbounded imagination" and not "let it reach the point of enthusiasm" (General remark on the exposition of aesthetic reflective judgment, 5: 274)—to prevent itself from being "seduced into poetic enthusiasm" is precisely reason's highest calling (§78, 5: 410).

Reason and imagination enliven each other with their respective visions of the transcendent. Both intellectual and aesthetic ideas, as two "parts," not only animate the mind respectively but further promote the animation of each other, and thereby turn the interaction between imagination and understanding into a purposive "whole," letting the spirit animate the entire state of mind. It is through this animating process that the creation of artistic genius has shed an inner light on our judgments of it. This light, penetrating the unbounded space opened up by imagination, makes manifest the boundary of conceptual comprehensibility and yet lets the beautiful appears in association with the moral.[4] Such a presentation of artistic beauty is an achievement of, we could say, the fusion of horizons. It is a fusion of two highest visions into one aesthetic consciousness without blurring the proper characters, i.e., their abilities and scopes, of each side. And in the space of imagination, like the hermeneutic condition of horizontal fusions, the process of mutual animation underpinned by the principle of life is

[4] Speaking of light, it is remarkable that these two and only examples used by Kant both refer to the sun.

an ongoing one, precisely because there would never be a final and absolute completion, by which the ideas (either intellectual or aesthetical) could be grasped in a determinate linguistic expression. On the other hand, the opening of this space is purposively oriented to its closure, and a beautiful art is still a kind of completion; it completes the purely internal and subjective fusion of horizons, through which all mental powers have purposively come into a lively and playful concord.

Now imagination does not simply correspond to understanding in a harmonious relationship. In the space opened up by its own freedom, imagination obtains a power of self-action and self-determination and further guides the proceeding of understanding in their playful relationship. While for ordinary empirical cognitions, intuition without concept would be blind; now the intuition of creative imagination is shining a light too bright, a light that makes concepts seem to be empty and renders understanding incapable of seeing clearly. Imagination "aesthetically enlarges the concept itself in an unbounded way," not in the sense that the lawfulness of understanding has been impaired or the general empirical cognition has broken down, but that imagination, in its free swing, stretches the capacity of understanding, exhausts the possibility of understanding, and carries understanding into the swinging upward within its freely operative space.

In such a relation with the conceptual faculty, imagination, very remarkably, "gives more to think"—imagination, when it is functioning epistemologically by representing a certain object in inner intuitions, produces something more about this object, something as a peculiar kind of forms or, in Kant's phrase, aesthetic attributes, which are supplementary and yet akin to the object as such. Those attributes do not contradict the more basic kind of forms in our cognition, namely, the logical attributes,

provided by the understanding; they go alongside the logical ones. While the logical attributes constitute the regular conceptualization of an object but represent what lies in those concepts in a definite, limited way, the aesthetic ones, provided by the imagination in the first place, in turn stimulate the imagination "to think more [*mehr denken*]" (§49, 5: 315): aesthetic attributes represent what lies in those intuitions by promoting the imagination to further create a multitude of kindred representations concerning this object. This multitude of aesthetic representations, derived from aesthetic attributes, exceeds the logical and conceptual representations of certain objects, thereby yielding an aesthetic idea, and the aesthetic idea is based on the transition made by imagination from the additional aesthetic attributes to the unmeasurable aesthetic representations. By producing those attributes and transforming them into ideas, imagination involves itself in a space to think more, a space created by and for its own life.

> The animation of spirit also originates in the potential of aesthetic attributes:
>
> > [Beautiful arts] derive the spirit which animates their works solely from the aesthetic attributes of the objects, which go alongside the logical ones, and give the imagination an impetus [*Schwung*] to think more, although in an undeveloped way, than can be comprehended in a concept, and hence in a determinate linguistic expression. (§49, 5: 315)

In other words, with regard to the entire animating process, it is the imagination that, in its operation for intuition, first attributes certain forms to an object and then uses those forms to evoke itself, enliven itself, for the purpose of producing more thoughts, the thoughts that are ultimately incomprehensible but are contained in certain ideas, about this object. In such occasion, imagination is not only functioning as a power of intuition, but is thinking by itself and indeed is thinking more in and for itself. Imagination in its free swing produces those unbounded thoughts in a self-acting and self-determining way; these thoughts, prompted by certain intuitions, are always accompanied by logical

attributes or concepts, and nonetheless they also transcend the ability of mere concepts, the concepts that stands over against intuitions. And hence, imagination, in its swinging and in this self-created space to think more, is on the verge of breaking out the limitation set by the critical opposition between intuitions and concepts.[5]

While these thoughts are still undeveloped, yet they are purposively oriented toward a particular expression of aesthetic ideas. The production of those thoughts furnishes the material for the spirit. Nourished by such undeveloped material, imagination creates a space for itself and moves itself for developing the ideal artistic presentation. It is through the impetus or the swing of imagination that the spirit brings a beautiful art to life. In its swinging the imagination has manifested its own life. The essential characters of the creation of artistic beauty, namely, its indeterminacy and inexpressibility, are rooted in the imagination's freedom to open up a space in and for itself to "think more." Spirit enlivens the mind as well as the artifact, because, as we shall see below, it transmits the life of imagination to creative genius and to beautiful art.

[5] Here it seems very striking that, in the subject's transcendental operation of artistic creation, imagination, by producing aesthetic attributes and ideas, both intuits and thinks—imagination as such seems to be precisely the same as intuitive intellect/intellectual intuition. And the equation of the genius's imagination with intellectual intuition seems almost to be unavoidable so as to understand the peculiar condition of beautiful art, which as a real product reveals a causality that transcends the simple distinctions between particular and universal, and between mechanism and teleology: the originality of an unintentionally created artifact is a particular contingency from the perspective of a mechanical explanation, and yet this product of artistic genius also agrees with a universal condition, as kind of rule that is exemplary, which therefore renders this contingent existence also as a lawfully and purposively constituted whole. For Kant's discussion on intellectual intuition, see especially §77, 5: 407-9, §80, 5: 420-1. The issue of intellectual intuition as well as its relation to imagination is very crucial to post-Kantian philosophy especially German Idealism. In G.W.F. Hegel, *Faith & knowledge*, trans. Walter Cerf and H.S. Harris (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), there are some very intriguing suggestions made by early Hegel on this issue: "Since beauty is the Idea as experienced or more correctly, as intuited, the form of opposition between intuition and concept falls away" (87); "The *Idea* of this archetypal *intuitive intellect* is at bottom nothing else but the *same Idea* of the transcendental imagination" (89); "Kant himself recognized in the beautiful an intuition other than the sensuous" (91). Hegel is more ambitious and is trying to identify the imagination as such, that is, not just as creative imagination of artistic genius but as the transcendental imagination in general discussed also in the first *Critique*, as the intellect intuition. Perhaps we could find a clue to these bold remarks—since they would be destructive to the reservation of Kant's philosophy and indicate the philosophical effort to break out of the Kantian critical system—made by young Hegel in Kant's own reconsideration of the power of imagination in artistic beauty. Also compare my note 6 in this chapter below.

4. Transmitting Life: Between Art and Nature

The displaying of the life of imagination yields further puzzle: by what is imagination set alive to open up the space for the creation of beauty? Why could imagination attribute certain forms or produce those materials in the first place? Kant suggests, very remarkably, the ultimate source of imagination's creativity is nature.

> The imagination (as a productive cognitive faculty) is, namely, very powerful in *creating, as it were, another nature, out of the material which the real one gives it.* We entertain ourselves with it when experience seems too mundane to us; we transform the latter, no doubt always in accordance with analogous laws, but also in accordance with *principles that lie higher in reason* (and which are every bit as *natural to us* as those in accordance with which the understanding apprehends empirical nature); in this we feel our freedom from the law of association (which applies to the empirical use of that faculty), in accordance with which material can certainly be lent to us by nature, but the latter can be transformed by us into something entirely different, namely into *that which steps beyond nature*. (§49, 5: 314; emphasis added.)

These attributes or materials, which are oriented toward aesthetic ideas and consequently enable the spirit to animate both the subjective condition of genius and a particular product of beautiful art, are made out of nature. It is through our experience of nature that nature has first provided us the original material for producing a beautiful art. And yet the creative imagination is free from the constraints of the empirical cognition of nature; it could take up the empirically cognized nature and further "steps beyond nature." The original natural material is apprehended by the functioning of imagination for empirical cognition, and it is in turn transformed by the creative operation of imagination into the material of artistic beauty; the latter would then be further cultivated and would result in a particular presentation of artistic beauty. Creative imagination has the freedom to swing. It does not simply borrow the material that is merely "lent to us by nature." Now imagination is the author of the material transformed itself and by right is thus the owner of the kind of nature created through its self-acting and self-determining lively play.

While in the general condition an artifact is produced through the combined operation of teleological and mechanical causality, a beautiful art, since it is produced purposively without a mechanical intention as its real purpose, has to be judged in terms of a unique kind of causality, which is, as we recall, the principle of life—for artistic creation, the principle of life prompts imagination to swing. For the regular mode of determination, we recall that an artifact has to be ascribed to an intelligent creator; in the case of the production of a beautiful art, imagination "emulates the precedent of reason" and becomes the creator of the material for artifact beauty "in accordance with principles that lie higher in reason." By virtue of its own freedom and its own life, imagination transforms the original empirical nature and produces, as it were, another nature. Thus, the beautiful art in its highest achievement could let the subject consider nature "freely, self-actively, and *independently of determination by nature*, in accordance with points of view that *nature does not present by itself in experience* either for sense or for the understanding," and it is because of the transformation made by imagination in the creation of beauty that the mind feels its capacity to use nature "for the sake of and as it were as *the schema of the supersensible*" (§53, 5: 326-7; emphasis added). Imagination has somehow sensed the supersensible nature, holds it in the intuitive vision, and thus reveals a capacity of self-determination in the effort to schematize the nature as such.

The nature that consists in the aesthetic material, as the nature beyond nature, would be brought into life in a beautiful art by the animation of spirit. The spirit, as a formative principle, could animate both the mind and the beautiful art, because it has to ability to unify that which it has apprehended in "the rapidly passing play of the imagination" into a concept (§49, 5: 317). In other words, the spirit is set into functioning

through transmitting, both internally and externally, the life of imagination. Imagination, in its free swing, transmits its own life to the nature both internal and external—that is, to the creativity of genius, which is an inborn natural disposition, and to the aesthetic material, which is the nature created out of nature. Both artistic genius and beautiful arts take nourishment from the life of imagination. On the one hand, the animation of imagination resides subjectively in a motion towards the unattainable aesthetic ideas, and thus its free and playful motion is self-maintaining and in principle would be ceaselessly ongoing. On the other hand, this process has to be finished and objectified when its potential has been tried out, and consequently it brings a beautiful art into concrete actual existence. What underlies both internal and external conditions of the production of creative imagination is the principle of life. The principle of life, via its creative outpouring, enables the whole operation of creating a particular artifact transcends the principle of technical perfection, and it further renders the beauty of such an artifact unattainable for the explicability of both mechanism and teleology.[6] The imagination's free and animating swing entails a productive causality, a causality that transmits a sense of life to an artificial product through the free activity of a living genius. It is through this

[6] There is one, perhaps only one, "organic" or "life-giving" power of human artifice that is at least practically comprehensible in an analogous way: the product of this kind of human artifice is the civil organization of republic. For in this political artifact as a whole, "each member should certainly be not merely a means, but at the same time also an end, and, insofar as it contributes to the possibility of the whole, its position and function should also be determined by the idea of the whole" (§65, 5: 337n). As Shell suggests, the ideal contractual republic brought to life is an organic whole to whose inner workings we are uniquely privy, inasmuch as we as members intentionally share this idea and participate in its actualization through certain fundamental transformation; this is the one case of "palingenesis" (See Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6: 340) that Kant is willing critically concede. See Susan Meld Shell, *The Embodiment of Reason: Kant on Spirit, Generation and Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 240. Shell remarks that for Kant this civil condition as a living organism, in which human beings become knowing members of the intelligible world on the basis of our recognition of a moral principle that unite all autonomous rational beings, is the state as the humanly intelligible Platonic idea, that is, a community of substances as individually self-determined things in themselves linked lawfully through a reciprocally necessitating determination—this ideal community, the so-called kingdom of ends, is the moral analogue to nontemporal, nonspatial schema of the divinely created community, to which we can never intuit or understand but can be morally certain (See 146-7, 154-5). And see Shell's Chapter 7 in 161-89 for a careful and suggestive interpretation that shows how Kant's theory of history is interwoven with his conceptions of artful making, life procreation, and divine schema. And see my note 5 in Chapter Three.

kind of causality that imagination infuses its own life into artistic creation. The principle of life, now manifesting itself as the causality of swinging, makes beauty embodied.

The embodiment of beauty bears the sense of life supplied by the imagination. Nonetheless, imagination itself still serves as a medium for passing down the principle of life. It is in nature that the imagination's self-maintaining swing finds its ultimate source. But such nature is not the kind of nature that is taken as appearance and could be conceptually processed in our empirical cognition of the world. It is the nature, regarded as the supersensible substratum, lying internally and also externally, that provides the nourishment for all kinds of animation, occurred both subjectively and objectively, in the creation of artistic beauty. In the subjective condition of the transmission of life, the supersensible substratum, underlying the nature of the subject, constitutes the mind of genius, since the genius itself, as an inborn productive faculty, belongs to nature (§46, 5: 307). The natural faculty of genius is the internal supersensible nature conceived as a purposive predisposition, which could set all cognitive powers come into harmony, and by virtue of its transcendence it serves as "the subjective standard of that aesthetic but unconditioned purposiveness in beautiful art" (§57, 5: 344). From the internal supersensible nature, the sense of life could be further transmitted externally to a beautiful art, because through genius "nature gives the rule to art" (§46, 5: 307). This objectified transmission of life yields a product of beautiful art, a product that is thoroughly enlivened and full of spirit. The beautiful art, because of its exemplary originality, has thus acquired its own life: a life that could not never be copied mechanically and intentionally, but could only be transmitted, in an inspiring way, to another genius. The product of genius becomes the occasion for another talented

individual to imitate that original creative process, by which that exemplary product has been brought to life; and by becoming attuned to the lively play of the genius's faculties, especially to the animating swing of the genius's imagination, to which that product of beautiful art owes its existence, the space for the life of creative imagination would thus reopen to another subject, and a new creation of beauty would come into existence through this talented individual's own living experience with nature. Only through such imitation, that is, a transmission of life, do the dead works of the past become alive again.[7] Thus, the beautiful art, through the functioning of the dynamic principle of life, is made possible to transform the original nature, to create another nature, and, finally but most significantly, to appear again as nature. And this, as we recall, is the crossing of art and nature, in which both art and nature have to be understood in terms of a causality transcending both mechanism and teleology and of the idealism of purposiveness; in light of this transcendence, the nature in its crossing with art shows "the possibility of a unification of two entirely different kinds of causality" (§81, 5: 422), which again could not be comprehended as the empirically and conceptually grasped phenomenon but has to be conceived as lying in the supersensible substrate. Any appearance of beauty must be thought back to its natural origin, especially when the nature is transfigured into art.

From the crossing of nature and art, the principle of life emerges. A sense of life links art with nature. It is in its linkage with the supersensible nature, namely, the nature that goes beyond the empirically real nature and yet is envisioned by creative imagination,

[7] See Rodolphe Gasché, *The Idea of Form: Rethinking Kant's Aesthetics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 188-9. Gasché treats the animation in the harmonious agreement of mental powers or the life of faculties themselves, characterized by Kant in his elaboration of the aesthetic experience of beauty, as a transcendental minimal condition for the mind's general epistemological functioning: such animation results in "a mood favorable to cognition in general" (48), and discovers "the possibility of its own autonomy," which is isolated from "the serious business of cognition and morality" (58) and yet makes such business possible by bringing in an indeterminate but purposive way about "the minimal arrangement of the faculties" necessary for" both "cognition in general" and "morality in general"(203-4). And it is through hypotyposis—the imagination's peculiarly vivid way of presenting or schematizing the supersensible—that accounts for the mind's life and its self-affection (206-18).

that a beautiful art shows its transcendence over the artifacts in general. The crossing of art and nature would reach the acme of transcendence "in the judging especially of living objects in nature," such as a beautiful human being: in this case nature is no longer judged as it appears as art, but "to the extent that it really *is* art," "albeit superhuman" (§48, 5: 311); for this seemingly superhumanly determined creature, the ground for that supreme crossing indicates a kind of causality transcending the combined determination of mechanism and teleology as well as a kind of artistic intelligence transcending the condition of the artifacts freely produced by human beings. Only in the supersensible substratum of nature there lies the ground for such double transcendence, of which we can cognize nothing but to which the way of operation of a creative genius artist is in common analogously—in this sense, the artist is godlike (cf. §78, 5: 414 and §90, 5: 465). The crossing as such is the full manifestation of the principle of life as a third and peculiar mode of determination. The beauty of living beings reveals most vividly, although no less mysteriously, that the determinations of both nature and freedom intersect at that embodiment of the principle of life.

And the life of human beings alone, the only kind of beings existing in the physical world and at the same time having moral ends in themselves, could fully reflect the determinations of both nature and freedom. When and only when it is the beauty of human figure that one is judging or trying to present, the crossing of nature and art would yield another—and perhaps the highest—transcendence: in such an occasion a unification of "pure ideas of reason and great force of imagination" (§17, 5: 235), that is, a dialogue between reason's moral ideas and imagination's aesthetic ideas, is required, and based on this unification or dialogue one can strive to produce in oneself something that contains

and thereby transcends these two kinds of ideas—this highest crossing is, in Kant's phrase, "the ideal of beauty," which is "merely an ideal of the imagination" (§17, 5: 232). The ideal of beauty is singular, but it could not be manifested by any human individual. It contains and yet transcends the idea of reason that projects the highest moral vocation of humanity, and in the same fashion it also contains and transcends the aesthetic normal idea of imagination that produces a highest model for representing the standard image of human (or any particular animal) species, the image which "nature uses as the archetype underlying her productions in the same species" (§17, 5: 234) and which "has as it were grounded the technique of nature" (§17, 5: 233). "The technique of nature" refers only to the nature as a total sum of phenomenon, which in its entirety is teleologically judged according to a regulatively attributed analogy with the art in general (thus not to a crossing of nature and art in the occasion of beauty); it is only related to the aesthetic normal idea as only one part of the ideal. The ideal of human beauty implies an ultimate purposiveness of nature, which goes beyond and further grounds the technique of nature. Now the nature is conceived not in its sensible appearance but in its highest transcendence. The nature as such is supposed to create human species for the purpose of, as it were, enabling human beings to live according to the double determinations of life. Nature, in its crossing with art, makes it possible for humans to embody the ideal beauty.

When the nature in its transcendence is recognized by both judging and producing artistic beauty, which constitute a process involving both causality of lingering and causality of swinging, the transmission of life is thus accomplished. It is through the free and self-determining activity of imagination that life is transmitted from nature to art. While out of nature a sense of life has been intuitively captured by imagination, such

nature also brings imagination alive; while in its own space imagination takes up the supersensible nature and prompts itself to think more than what is measurable and intelligible, it transmits its own life to an artifact and in turn lets the art appear as nature. In the operation of creating beautiful art, nature, through the medium of the free and enlivening imagination, circles back to nature itself. The nature internal thus lives in concord with the nature external. Nature, art, life, and imagination: their involvements constitute a unity, a unity that, furnished by certain circulations, is felt in the subjective consciousness and expressed in the existence of a transcending artifact. Such a unity could be conceived only subjectively and yet displays the entire world, within which our way of life is thought to be divided from nature, as if it is a purposive "whole"[8]—and from such a "whole," the beautiful is shining forth.

[8] According to Cassirer, the actual existence of any supreme beautiful art, which might be called a truly accomplished "miracle," not only "points to a new unity of the sensible and the intelligible, of nature and freedom" but is itself "the expression and the immediate guarantee of this unity"; and "[e]ven if the objective agreement of nature and freedom remains a never-completed task, even if the paths of the two intersect only at infinity, their full subjective unity is actualized within the sphere of concrete consciousness itself, in the feeling of art and the creating of art"—this manner of aesthetic contemplation leads to the teleological reflection on the objective reality of the unity of being. See Cassirer, *Kant's Life and Thought*, 331-3. The hope for the objective unity of the dual determinations of human beings leads to a kind of rational faith. It is a hope that is at bottom underpinned by certain theological attitudes and consists more concretely in a reserved aspiration for our self-unification through the trial and error of politics, culture, and education in the infinite progress of history. In the context of the third *Critique* compare especially §60, §83, §87, and §91. For a careful interpretation of the connection between on the one hand the critical philosophical system as an architectonic and organic unity, which is guided by the moral ends or the final ordering telos of legislative reason, and on the other hand the historical development of reason itself, which addresses Rousseau's insights and is supposed to resolve various dual conflicts through the progress of culture as a whole, see Richard L. Velkley, *Freedom and the End of Reason: On the Moral Foundation of Kant's Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 136-63 and 164-8. With a special attention to the question of unity in the third *Critique*, in Richard L. Velkley, *Being after Rousseau: Philosophy and Culture in Question* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 93-109, he also offers an interesting discussion on Kant's account of the metaphysical eros of human beings as *Homo sapiens* for seeking an unconditioned unity of reason and nature, which is also the self-justification of such erotic rational beings' inherent unjust self-contradiction, that is, of the contingently unified embodiment of both reason and desire. And in this discussion, Velkley suggests that the progress of human culture is for Kant the expression of an unfathomable third mode of natural causality, which is neither mechanical nor teleological by design: "this *modus efficiendi* of nature or the supersensible substrate, as divested of all anthropomorphism of intention, can be humanly experienced (but not comprehended) in the beautiful art of genius, whose production unites the unconscious impulses of nature with the disciplined reflection of rational freedom"; and thus genius enacts the "contingent lawfulness of nature's 'technic'" (108-9)—I propose, this so-called third mode of natural causality, which is supposed to underlie the historical resolution of the final self-harmonization of human species, is precisely the principle of life as I have developed throughout my discussion. Also see my note 4 above in this chapter and the note 1 in Chapter Three.

While during the lingering contemplation of the beautiful the judging subject feels its life as a whole and becomes aware of a purposiveness of uniting with nature, the unity between nature and the human subject does somehow occur in the creative activity of a genius artist. It is, nonetheless, only for the transcendental subjective consciousness of a creative artist that the concord of his own life with the nature per se could be sensed in full swing. Such unity is rare occasion; it belongs at most to these extraordinary persons and to their godlike ability and way of life. And the transcendence that has been yielded in such occasion renders the basis for this kind of unity at bottom inexplicable. We thus find it necessary to ask: what, for Kant, is the truth about the possibility of the unity of the human way of life? What is the truly human condition, by which the human beings are set into the proper way to live with nature? Whereas our aesthetic experience of the beautiful somehow blurs nature with the human art and thus lets the subject harmonize with nature or even blurs the life of the subject with the nature as a whole, would this kind of blurring have certain limitations? Could the nature still be judged aesthetically in a different way and in a different occasion, through which the nature would set an unsurpassable boundary upon the condition of the life of human subject and would even frustrate any attempt to resort to a single principle for unifying the self with the nature?

CHAPTER THREE

Abruption:

The Sublime and the Trace of Life

The characterization of the principle of life has pointed out a power of self-action and self-determination; this power comes out of a metaphysical background and is set in reference to a special kind of causality that underlies certain inexplicable natural phenomena. On the other hand, when the moral significance of the principle of life is under consideration, this principle as such, although it is substantially relevant, is yet still inadequate for revealing a real and objective causality of self-determination, a causality that entails the power of projecting a real purpose by and for itself. Because of its uncertain status and its association with the sensible nature in general, the conception of life is unable describe the absolute distinctness of the latter causality, namely, the teleological causality projected by the human subject and truly knowable for the subject; it has to be reformulated in terms of the conception of supersensible freedom and the determination of practical reason. For Kant, the principle of life, as a special mode of determination, could only be used, from the perspective of a judging subject, to indicate a shadowy condition as a state in-between, but could never serve as an objective basis for

connecting the nexus of efficient causes with that of final causes or unifying the realm of natural necessity with that of moral freedom.

Nonetheless, in the domain of freedom and morality there still remains a trace of the principle of life. This trace is left by the overstepping of imagination: in our aesthetic judgments of the sublime, imagination overreaches itself and consequently finds its impotence and inadequacy. It is a trace that shows the exhaustion of the life of imagination. Imagination is exhausted, because it is now facing with a particular kind of appearance of nature that, either in its magnitude or in its might, seems to be absolutely great; the imagination, as the greatest and the most capable faculty of sensibility (§27, 5: 257), is unable to grasp the nature as such in one intuition and is inadequate to comprehend this appearance as a whole. It is in its effort to make a full comprehension of such appearance of nature, the "raw nature" (§23: 5: 253), the nature "in its chaos or in its wildest and most unruly disorder and devastation" (§23, 5: 246), that the imagination becomes aware of nature's immeasurability and irresistibly on the one hand and its own ultimate limits on the other. Unlike its free concord in the judgment of taste or its unbounded swing in the artistic creation, here in the occasions of the sublime imagination could proceed no more. It could never make valid progress for holding the raw nature in its vision, because due to its limited power there is "a greatest point beyond which it cannot go" (§26, 5: 252)—imagination stops at this point because it is as it were standing on the edge of "an abyss, in which it fears to lose itself" (§27, 5: 258). The appearance of the immeasurable and irresistible nature is "doing violence to our imagination" (§23, 5: 245). Imagination becomes aware that its life is endangered because it is about to overstep its limits. The liveliness of its free play in the occasions of the beautiful has now

been stifled. Imagination no longer has the freedom to animate itself or to determine its own operation according to an underlying principle of life. Raw nature humiliates our sensibility. Imagination is humiliated by its inadequacy and impotence. Now imagination has to retreat from the sight of that abyss and withdraw from that not only futile but indeed fatal adventure. As a faculty of sensibility, imagination has to abandon its attempt to reach the nature that appears supersensible for it. The nature as such is judged as contrapurposive to the operation of imagination. Because of the inhibition of the life of imagination, the judging subject thus becomes aware of this inhibition in a feeling of displeasure.

Nonetheless, in the occasions of the sublime imagination does not simply surrender its life to the contrapurposiveness appeared in nature's magnitude and might. Imagination strives to advance to the infinite in order to comprehend the nature in total, and it is only after it has made the greatest effort that imagination comes to realize its incapability, as a faculty of sensibility, of presenting the supersensible and attaining what is infinite and total. Imagination will not stop trying to step beyond its limits unless the consequence of its overstepping has been felt out displeasingly. And yet in such a defeated effort, the power of imagination has been enlarged (§25, 5: 249), and thereby the mind itself is enlarged. Such enlargement occurs precisely because of the emergence in our aesthetic judgment of a transcending vision of the supersensible, of what is infinite and total, which, on the one hand, appears abysmal to the sensibility of imagination but, on the other hand, awakens in our mind the operation of another faculty for the purpose of dealing with this unattainable vision. Whereas the nature as such is not sensible, we are still able to think of it in its whole, precisely because we have indeed already come up

with an idea of the nature as a whole. The vision that has transcended our experience with the phenomenon merely makes us aware of the "idea of a noumenon" (§26, 5: 255), an idea that has already been presupposed transcendentally in our thinking regardless of the operation of sensibility. It is reason that is called up to hold such a vision in its ideas, since reason itself is a supersensible faculty in us (§25, 5: 255). Now the raw nature, the nature in its immeasurability and irresistibility, is rendered in the supersensible but intelligible substratum, which underlies all intuitions transcendentally (§26, 5: 255). Whereas the nature as such appears superior to our greatest power of sensibility, reason has a greater superiority over nature even concerning its immeasurability and irresistibility, because reason is completely independent of the determination of nature and the entire domain of sensibility (§28, 5: 261).

The vision of the infinite and the total, the vision that is fatal to the life of imagination, is thinkable within the vision of reason and in fact has to be envisioned in rational ideas, instead of intuitions, as the ideas of infinity and totality. Just as, in the occasions of artistic creation, the power of understanding is enlarged by imagination "in an unbounded way" (§49, 5: 315) precisely when the understanding fails to grasp the indeterminacy of imagination's aesthetic ideas that transcend the determinacy of its concepts, similarly, in the occasions of our experience of the sublime, the enlargement of imagination occurs in its failure to attain the supersensible, by which imagination "feels itself to be unbounded," precisely because of the "elimination of the limits of sensibility" (GR., 5: 274; also §26, 5: 255) caused by the "awakening" (§27, 5: 260) of ideas of reason—it is on the verge of breaking down its proper limitation (either of understanding or of imagination), which is also the edge of a deadly abyss, that another power of self-

determination (as creative imagination in the former or as practical reason in the later) is awakened to its life and holds that transcending vision, thereby stretching the former to the maximum and expanding the space for the former's operation. In this condition, imagination turns out to be "an instrument of reason and its ideas" (GR., 5: 269); its intuition of the seemingly contrapurposive nature is useful to "make palpable in ourselves a purposiveness that is entirely independent of nature" (§23, 5: 246). Imagination's failed attempt of overstepping is thus judged as a purposive operation for the awakening of ideas of reason and for the revealing of a higher purposiveness, "the subjective purposiveness of our mind…for its supersensible vocation" (GR., 5: 268), that is, the morality of human beings as the highest end itself (§84, 5: 435).

Hence, in our aesthetic judgment of the sublime, the transition from the contrapurposiveness to the higher purposiveness, or from the side of imagination and phenomenal nature to the side of reason and noumenal freedom, consists in double movements. While the imagination in the effort to extend its maximum "sinks back into itself" and consequently gives rise to a feeling of displeasure, there also arises "an emotionally moving satisfaction," into which imagination is transported (§26, 5: 252)—it is precisely from the displeasure felt in the sinking of imagination, which is the first movement, that immediately arises a pleasurable satisfaction, through which our supersensible moral vocation is made manifest to us, and such satisfaction derives from the second movement, that is, the awakening of rational ideas. It is precisely by means of the objective inadequacy of imagination in its greatest effort to present raw nature as a whole that we turn to judging the whole of nature as adequate for ideas of reason and thereby as subjectively purposive for our mind (GR., 5: 269). Since the transition

constituted by such double movements is itself a movement of the mind, the feeling of this transition, namely, the feeling of the sublime, also consists in the double feelings of that entire movement, i.e., the movement from the sinking of imagination to the awakening of reason (c.f. §24, 5: 247). The feeling of the sublime is emotional, since this kind of pleasing feeling consists exactly in a feeling of that transitional movement: the emotional feeling of the sublime is brought about, as Kant defines, only by means of the transition from a preceding momentary inhibition of vital power [*Lebenskraft*] to an immediately following "stronger outpouring of the vital force" (§14, 5: 226; §23, 5: 244). Thus, the first movement, as the sinking of imagination, is also felt as the contrapurposive inhibition of a power of life, the life nourished by the activity of imagination and springing from its effort to intuit the sensible nature; the inhibition immediately generates the second movement, as the awakening of reason, which is thus also felt as the purposive outpouring of a force of life, the life empowered by the self-determination of reason and independent from the entire realm of nature. As Kant says, "the subject's own incapacity reveals the consciousness of an unlimited capacity of the very same subject, and the mind can aesthetically judge the latter only through the former" (§27, 5: 259)—in other words, it is exactly in the dying out of the life of imagination that reason with its ideas is coming to life and coming to power.

Nonetheless, imagination has not completely died out, nor has reason become fully alive. It is a movement qua movement. We judge reflectively the movement from the sinking of imagination's life to the awakening of reason's life, and this movement is thus also judged as a movement of elevating. This elevating is not a completed elevation. It elevates the judging subject to the consciousness of our rational vocation and moral

duty, but it has not made the subject obey the moral laws and act according to the determination of freedom. We have not yet given positively and adequately a rational account for the superiority of the realm of freedom and morality over the realm of nature. The self-elevating could only occurs along with a sense of self-humiliation, namely, the humiliation of our sensibility caused by our own effort the grasp the immeasurability and irresistibility of raw nature. It is only the defeated and yet instrumental operation of imagination that has elevated us to assert the superiority and independence of the ideas of reason in a negative and intuitive way (GR., 5: 269 & 5: 275). Hence, while the imagination is sinking back and the reason is not awakened in full, the elevating occurred through those double movements is about the inadequacy of our sensibility for the attainment of the rational idea as such, the idea that itself is a law produced by reason for setting the imagination, regardless of its ultimate failure, into a striving for that attainment—for Kant, the feeling of this self-elevating is the feeling of respect.

Now the feeling that is aroused initially by our encounter with raw nature turns out to be irrelevant to objects in nature. It is due to, in Kant's terms, a "certain subreption" that the sublime is ascribed to nature. By exposing this subreption, that is, by uncovering what is initially concealed in this subreption, we thus reveal the proper place for the sublime. Through a deeper reflection, the concealment of subreption has been removed. The feeling of the sublime in nature turns out to be a feeling of respect for the humanity in the subject itself. The sublimity should be attributed to the moral law, to our supersensible vocation, and to the causality of our noumenal freedom. In the feeling of respect, the subject, by revealing that which is concealed, elevates itself from the life of imagination to the life of reason, and this feeling "as it were makes intuitable" the

superiority of the determination of reason and supersensible freedom over the power of imagination and the entire realm of sensible nature (§27, 5: 257). Therefore, we could still call the raw nature sublime, only because it "excites the ideas of the sublime" (§23, 5: 246) and could "elevate the strength of our soul" (§28, 5: 261) through a feeling of displeasure; in this displeasing feeling, our mind is "incited to abandon sensibility and to occupy itself with ideas that contain a higher purposiveness" (§23, 5: 246) through a consequent feeling of pleasure. For Kant, "what is properly sublime cannot be contained in any sensible form, but concerns only ideas of reason" (§23, 5: 245); the true sublimity is not grounded in the things of nature but merely "in ourselves and in the way of thinking" that introduces the idea of sublimity into our subjective representation of nature (§23, 5: 246). It is only the faculty holding a vision of "the absolutely great" in its idea that is itself absolutely great. Through the exposing of that subreption, we finally discover: in the aesthetic judgment of the sublime, what is truly sublime is the moral law; what is truly sublime is the humanity as an end in itself; what is truly sublime is our rational vocation and the determination of our supersensible freedom. The true sublimity, in contrast to the case of the beautiful, is entirely grounded on the purposiveness of the subject and indicates absolutely nothing purposive in nature itself, even it is nature, in its crossing with art, taken as the nature in its transcendence (§23, 5: 246). For the judgment of the sublime, whereas the side of imagination and nature seems to be unified with the side of reason and freedom by this single reflection in a harmonious way, in which the subject feels itself to be elevated, this unification is based on a serious (not simply playful) contrast and on the most fundamental division (c.f., §27, 5: 258).

Therefore, in this subjective self-elevating movement, no matter how closely the sinking of imagination is connected to the awakening of reason, or how immediately the displeasing feeling of inhibition is followed by the pleasing feeling of outpouring, an utter abruption occurs. This abruption originates from the awareness of the transition between the double movements in our experience with the raw nature. In the aesthetic reflection of the judging subject, the awareness of the inadequacy and powerlessness of our sensibility leads to the sinking of the life of imagination, which is also the sinking of the vital power of the subject itself; this first awareness is then interrupted by our awareness of the adequacy and powerfulness of our rationality, and it is at this moment of abruption that the sinking of the subject's life is interrupted by the awakening of the life of reason and is thus further substituted by the awakening of the subject's power of life in a much stronger degree. As we recall, the feeling of pleasure in the judgment of the beautiful is equated by Kant as the feeling of life, and the animation of the mind, occurred in the harmonious play of cognitive powers, is grounded on the principle of life as its special kind of causality; the crossing of nature and art, appearing in the judgment of taste and especially in genius's artistic creation, further links the principle of life, as in the causality of lingering and in the causality of swinging, with a sense of life, which as it were has its origin in the nature in its transcendence. Nonetheless, art only shows the effect of our supersensible freedom upon the sensible nature in a technically practical context; even it could lead us into a reflection of a transcending causality, the principle underlying both the continuous feeling of the promotion of life and the crossing of nature and art is still considered entirely in the domain of nature. Now the feeling in the judgment of the sublime is a feeling of life that involves not a continuous promotion but a

sudden abruption of the life of the judging subject itself.[1] This feeling of life consists in two distinctly separated feelings of life: it starts negatively but ends up more powerfully, and via a moment of abruption this interrupted feeling of life points to a more powerful kind of causality. Sublimity indicates our noumenal freedom as the cause per se in its true context, that is, its morally practical context (c.f. Introduction I, 5: 172). The abruption in that one aesthetic judgment reflects the gulf between nature and freedom in a nonetheless unified way, since the abruption in the judgment of sublimity still occurs, just as the lingering in the judgment of beauty, within the structure of heautonomy provided transcendentally by the subject's reflective power of judgment. From the perspective of reflective judgment, the moment of abruption lies, judging from one side, at the limit of sensibility, at the edge of overstepping, and at the abyss of imagination, and also, judging from the other side, in the emerging of a transcending vision, in the revealing of our rational determination, and in the elevating to ideas of freedom and moral law; both sides of abruption are connected to each other via, empirically, a feeling of abruption of life and on the basis of, transcendentally, the subject's heautonomous reflection.

At this moment of abruption, our aesthetic judgment of the sublime calls forth our higher power "to regard those things about which we are concerned, (goods, health and *life*) as trivial" (§28, 5: 262; emphasis added). The following stronger outpouring of vital power, interrupting the previous inhibition, is not simply a reaffirmation of our life in sensibility. In the elevating from the life of imagination to the life of reason, our physical

[1] This kind of connection between beauty and sublimity is also addressed, as Shell notes, in Kant's early work *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*. In this work beauty and sublimity represent two interrelated principles of life, one pointing toward a kind natural, lateral harmony, the other toward spiritual uplift; and the reciprocal aesthetic relation between beauty and sublimity (or natural and spiritual life) is further entangled by taking their moral implications into account, in which virtue alone is truly noble, that is, both sublime and moral in the highest sense. Susan Shell, "Kant as Propagator: Reflections on 'Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime'," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35, no. 3 (2002): 457.

life itself is judged to be trivial and thereby inessential for the condition of humanity. The abruption of life opens to the judging subject a vision of the sublimity of a higher way of human life, that is, the moral life.[2] In the conclusion of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant famously expresses his "ever new and increasing admiration and reverence" for two things, namely, "the starry heaven above me" and "the moral law within me," to which we could to some extent both attribute the sublime in the aesthetic judgment (c.f., GR. 5: 270); to finish this discussion, Kant suggests a distinction based on, as I have called above, the abruption of life:

> The first view of a countless multitude of worlds annihilates, as it were, my importance as an *animal creature*, which after it has been for a short time provided with *vital force* (one knows not how) must give back to the planet (a mere speck in the universe) the matter from which it came. The second, on the contrary, infinitely raises my worth as an *intelligence* by my personality, in which the moral law reveals to me *a life independent of animality and even of the whole sensible world*, at least so far as this may be inferred from the purposive determination of my existence by this law, a determination not restricted to the conditions and boundaries of this life but reaching into the infinite.[3]

In this self-elevating movement between two kinds of life, while our sensible physical life shows its finitude and is as it were annihilated by the abruption, it is precisely at this moment that our rational moral life is made manifest to us and lets us recognize the infinity of the self. What follows this abruption of life is our awareness of our power of life according to the determination of freedom. The moral life, the life independent of the sensible world and reaching into the infinite, is the truly purposive, self-determining, and autonomous way of life prompted by the teleological causality of supersensible freedom. The causality of freedom supersedes this physically-relevant kind of causality, i.e., the principle of life, so as to serve as the ground for separating our rational and moral life

[2] C.f., Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 5: 89.
[3] Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 5: 162; emphasis added.

entirely from the domain of nature. Whereas the life of imagination has been utterly exhausted, a new way of living, free and distinct from our sensory and physical determinations, is revealed to the subject by the imagination itself at the endpoint of its life's journey, which is therein replaced abruptly by the upper road elevating the subject to the new condition of life that is truly proper to humanity.

And yet it is in such a way that the abruption of life, which almost degrades the entire realm of nature and directs our whole attention to the moral self-determination, leaves a trace of the principle of life as a special mode of determination, a trace that remains its presence even in the realm of freedom. At this moment of abruption, the vision of our moral life is opened up to us, and hence we still find in the domain of freedom and morality a trace of the principle of life. The connection between morality and life reflects the dual characters of the use of reason in its demarcating of boundary—negatively speaking, even the causality of the existence of our physical life as well as the power of life as such is as inscrutable and mysterious as the causality of freedom for our theoretical reason;[4] and in a positive sense, our practical reason strikes down all moral enthusiasm and designates only our consciousness of duty, the sole motive for moral

[4] And such mysteries also lie in our theoretical explanations for the causality of the self-procreating capacity of organism and for the causality of the history according to divine providence. See Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, in *Religion and rational theology*, trans. Allen W. Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 6: 144n. In a more positive manner, Kant says, "[p]rovidence signifies precisely the same wisdom that we observe with admiration in the preservation of a species of organized natural beings, constantly working toward its destruction and yet always being protected, without therefore assuming a higher principle in such provisions than we assume to be in use already in the preservation of plants and animals." See Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, in *Anthropology, History, and Education*, ed. Günter Zöller, and Robert B. Louden, trans. Mary Gregor… [*et al*.] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 7: 328-9. Also compare §89, 5: 460-1: "just as theology can never become theosophy for us, so rational *psychology* can never become *pneumatology* as an informative science, yet at the same time is also secured against the danger of lapsing into *materialism*; rather, it is really merely an anthropology of the inner sense, i.e., knowledge of our thinking self *in life*, and as theoretical cognition it also remains merely empirical; while as far as our external existence is concerned, rational psychology is not a theoretical science at all, but rests on a single inference of moral teleology, and its entire use is necessary solely on account of the latter as our practical vocation."

actions, as "the supreme *life-principle* of all morality in human beings."[5] In this sense, whereas the trace of the principle of life is no doubt based on an abruption, a division, or a gulf, and thereby must not be taken as a basis for unifying two domains, still this trace by itself reveals a certain peculiar unification for a way of life that is properly human: it does not simply display the disunity of two sides but rather presents the disunifying itself, by which two sides are brought together so as to be separated apart at precisely the same moment.

In fact, even when we separate our way of life from the world of nature for showing the supernatural determinations of humanity, the nature in itself is not therefore degraded at all; we abandon our attempt to fully capture the nature in its appearance so that the incomprehensible nature, the nature in its transcendence, is left intact. In front of the nature in its transcendence, imagination sinks back "into itself" in a self-reflexive way, and it results not in the total annihilation of the operation of imagination, but in the recovery of the proper operation of imagination, that is, a schematizing, by which the apprehensive difference between the incomprehensible nature and our sensible powers further discloses the difference between the sensible and the supersensible within us in a sensible presentation (§29, 5: 265 and GR. 5: 269).[6] Such reflexive sinking of imagination arouses in us a sense of humiliation, a sense that is hereafter always present to the subject. This humiliation is indispensable for the awakening of reason and for the consequent awareness of the sublimity of humanity. The superiority of humanity should

[5] Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 5: 86.
[6] See Sallis, *Spacings—of Reason and Imagination*, 112-5. In the self-reflection of imagination, Sallis further develops, the sublime, by disclosing the classical metaphysical opposition between sensible and supersensible, serves to disclose within man the field, delimited by this opposition, of metaphysics as such and the essential orientation within this field, that is, the orientation of the sensible toward the supersensible, the upward way of metaphysics; and this disclosure is followed by a secondary reflection back upon nature, which refers the initial abyss to the ground of reason, thereby constituting a certain circulation that is bot began and ended by reason itself. See 120-31.

not be taken as justification of humankind's mastery over nature. The starry heaven is no less wonderful and admirable than the moral law; even nature is strictly speaking not something respectable and does not possess the dignity equal to humanity, nonetheless it must not be treated disrespectfully and suffers the indignity of being enslaved. For Kant, human dignity is not a kind of arrogance or vain-glory that we take delight in estimating the greatness of the Self and in contempt for the importance of the Other.[7] Instead, the self-elevating is made possible only because it originates in a sense of self-debasing, and the subject's judgment of the sublime is necessarily built upon the continual presence of the subject's sense of humiliation. After all, however complete the withdrawal from natural objects into the subject, there could be no judgment of the sublime without them: the discovery of the respectability of the subject occurs inextricably in the occasion of a preceding fatal failure of the subject.[8] Our recognition of the nature in its transcendence

[7] Cf. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 5: 86; Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6: 435 and 465-6.

[8] Preoccupied by the so-called Heidegger's critique to the "subjectivization" or "narcissism" of western metaphysical tradition and Arendt's critique to the "anthropocentrism" of "*homo faber*" in Kant's thinking of human condition, Beiner argues that Kant's analytic of the sublime indicates a position on the relation between human and nature that is more radical than his famous parallel statements at the end of the second *Critique*, since in the third *Critique* the awesomeness of "the starry heaven above" is completely nullified by and is consequently reduced to that of "the moral law within"; by designating the moral worth as the single ultimate source of awe, Kant thus justifies the utmost mastery of human subject over nature. See Ronald Beiner, "Kant, the Sublime, and Nature," in *Kant and Political Philosophy: the Contemporary Legacy*, ed. Ronald Beiner and William James Booth (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 276-288. Also see Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 156: "For the same operation which establishes man as the 'supreme end' permits him 'if he can [to] subject the whole of nature to it,' that is, to degrade nature and the world into mere means, robbing both of their independent dignity." This kind of interpretations, which represents a very common criticism against the Kantian subjectivity, is oversimplified. It is certainly correct to notice that Kant stresses the ultimate superiority of human over nature in the judgment of the sublime as well as in many other occasions, but this conclusion should not be considered one-sidedly. To consider Kant's claim of human superiority in the abstract would provoke moral enthusiasm, which is a kind of extreme that is criticized by Kant himself, and consequently it would endanger Kant's emphasis on the proper respect for our supernatural vocation. In fact, for Kant it is necessary to argue for the dignity of human beings precisely because human dignity is always at stake and has to be rescued from its fatal situation. Thus, I am more inclined to agree with Velkley's observation that Kant's emphasis on the inscrutability of the power of self-organization in certain natural phenomena prevents us from imposing a mechanical causality upon nature and from expanding the human calculative technical control of nature; conversely, the reflection on our freedom provides limited insight into questions of how humans exercise causality over nature. Therefore, as Velkley suggests, whereas in one respect Kant's thinking is an expansion of anthropocentrism, in another respect it is a deep critique of anthropocentrism: being lord of nature consists partly in contemplating how little one knows; the abyss of ignorance is not only compatible with but necessary to the hope in the seriousness of the unfinished striving for moral duty. The feeling of the sublime is based on the ambiguity of such ennobling reflection. See Richard Velkley, "Kant on Organism and History: Ambiguous Endings," in *Mastery of Nature: Promises and Prospects*, ed. Svetozar Y. Minkov and Bernhardt L. Trout (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 155-170. After all, it seems very unlikely to me that Kant, who famously considered

does not simply vanish; it makes possible the concealment of subreption, through which, albeit not entirely properly, we could attribute the sublime to natural phenomenon. When we come to aware of this improper subreption, which nevertheless implies our reflection on the transcendence of raw nature, the transcendence of the subject itself is reflected, and the revealing of the latter in turn confirms concealing of the former.[9] The boundary would not demean any side, and each side demarcated by this boundary could remain itself only in its recognition of the inscrutability of the Other that lies aside. By making manifest the disunifying in the demarcating of boundary, the human subject could prevent itself from an illusion of unity that would be achieved by the tyrannical dominion of one side over the other for lack of soberness and self-restraint. And it is in such a way that we can thus hope for and indeed must yield the possibility of a basis of "the *unity* of the supersensible that grounds nature" with the supersensible which "the concept freedom contains practically" (Introduction II, 5: 176).

We can sum up in the following six steps. First, the subject encounters the spectacle of raw nature and stretches itself to intuitive this phenomenon of nature through the operation of imagination. Second, the subject's entire life of sensibility has been endangered, so the subject has to admit its own ignorance and yields to the transcendence of such nature. Third, by leaving this impenetrable phenomenon of nature to the nature itself, the imagination is sinking back to itself, and the subject rescues its life, its subjectivity, from such phenomenon; it is precisely at this moment the abruption occurs

himself being set upright by Rousseau, the wholehearted admirer of nature, would show contempt for the spectacle of nature.

[9] This, as Cassirer calls, is a mutual mirroring of the ego and the world, of feeling of self and feeling of nature, which, by setting the self and the nature in a reciprocally reflecting opposition, comprises both the essence of aesthetic contemplation in general and also the essence of that contemplation which finds its expression in the sublime. See Cassirer, *Kant's Life and Thought*, 330-1.

to the subject through its deeper self-reflection, and the operation of reason is awakening and lets the subject acknowledge a way of life that is determined to be superior to the nature as such. Fourth, the initial concealment has been exposed; by virtue of that abruption, the subject thus feels revived, acknowledging the life of subjectivity in its full sense. The awareness of the transcendence of the self makes manifest to the subject the demarcating of boundary—the boundary between the self and the nature, the nature both outside and inside the self—through its feeling of respect. Fifth, the sublimity refers the subject again to nature, the nature in its transcendence, and therein the subject's knowledge of boundary turns out to be a mediation for the subject's self-knowledge, which hinges on the admission of self-ignorance in front of certain natural phenomenon. In this way, the subject's sense of its own superiority would by no means let the subject ignore that precedent humiliating situation; such ignorance is acknowledged and always present. Sixth and finally, the subject's initial ignorance in the sinking of the life of imagination circles back to itself in the awakening of the life of reason as the more concrete knowledge of the subject's peculiar way of living. The abruption occurs and interrupts the continuance of the life of the subject, and yet the continuance does not collapse but is restored in a mediated way. The human life disunified by its self-demarcated boundary finds a kind of unity that is not simply confined in the sphere of aesthetic consciousness, but opens up a prospect, albeit still subjectively, for the objective reality of such unification, that is, a prospect for the unity of life which must, with a proper significance of dignity, rest on the knowledge of ignorance.

This kind of unity, consisting in preserving the continuance as a delicate equilibrium on the everlasting disturbance of disunity, could here be discovered by

tracing the appearing of a boundary that disunify the human way of living, that is, by tracing the moment of abruption in a heautonomous reflection on the principle of life. The harmony between nature and our condition of life, the harmony that we also experienced aesthetically in judging or creating the beautiful, would be illusory if we forget the mere self-reflectivity of the principle of life, as Kant repeatedly cautions against the attempt to cognize an objective basis of nature's unity with us in nature itself. Such prospect has to be kept within the structure regulated by the reflective power of judgment. Only a deeper power of subjectivity, consisting here in the heautonomy of reflective judgment, could sustain that abruption of life and serve as a basis for the peculiar continuance and unity. The principle of life belongs ultimately not to the science of objects, namely, the study of organic living nature, but rather to the revealing of the life of subjectivity. The heautonomous structure, which is self-legislated in a completely self-enclosed manner, contains the critical disunifying accomplished by the autonomy of reason and further discloses the teleologically projected prospect of unification in a heuristic way. Whereas the general concern of the third *Critique* is about the possibility that the realm of freedom would somehow realize itself in the realm of nature and, by showing this possibility of transition, which is we could say a descent from freedom to nature, a ground of unity could thus be shown (Introduction II, 5: 176), the experience of the sublime shows an ascent, an ascent from nature to freedom, that also indicates the ground of transition and unity and yet, just as the descent, demarcates the boundary abruptly for that continuance. The boundary that we felt in judging the sublime has to be traced transcendentally through the heautonomous reflection, and thus by tracing this boundary heautonomously, we are tracing the demarcating of boundary. The tracing of

boundary is an effort of remembering, in which we recollect the manifesting of both unity and boundary of the life of humanity—

The genuine condition of the *possibility* of a unified human way of life is not to be directly accounted by the principle of life, but is reflected by the trace, indeed the tracing, of the *impossibility* of a smooth transition by virtue of an overarching and unifying principle of life. The trace is a result of the imagination's failed attempt of overstepping in the occasion of the sublime. This trace records the sinking and inhibition of life in the exhaustion of sensibility, and also records the awakening and outpouring of life for the sake of rationality. The trace presents that moment of abruption, the abruption between sensibility and rationality, between nature and freedom, and between physical life and moral life. While the abruption leads us to think of, not the principle of life and the nature in its transcendence, but the causality of freedom and the humanity in its transcendence, the trace of this abruption reminds us to retrace its origin, its path, and its prospect beyond. This abruption of life, as well as the tracing of this abruption, reminds human beings to live up to our dignity. This trace sheds light on, not a blurring or a crossing, but an utter separating and a clear delimiting. Therefore, the trace itself reveals to us the boundary per se. with regard to the one side of this boundary, the trace of the principle of life shows the enclosing of the life of imagination—the self-acting and self-determining power of life in our playful aesthetic experience—as well as the enclosing of the entire realm of nature for the judging subject; with regard to the other side, the trace shows the disclosing of the life of reason, as the truly self-determining and autonomous power of life for our serious moral vocation, by which the realm of freedom is disclosed to the person. In such a trace, the movement of self-elevating is not a finished transition from

the one side to the other, but a manifesting in one's self-consciousness of both enclosing and disclosing. The enclosure humiliates us and displeases us, and yet it is accompanied by the disclosure, which elevates us and ennobles us.[10] Thus, the trace of the principle of life makes manifest the delimiting as such, namely, the delimiting of the boundary between nature and freedom. The trace lets us recollect this delimiting, which is also opening to us the sublimity of our higher capacity and our higher way of life. Therein certain phenomenon of nature is reflected upon and left exterior by the "Self" as the impenetrable "Other," and it is through encountering the "Other" as well as the ensuring ideas of totality and infinity that the "Self" reflects upon itself and illuminates the interior and its full life of subjectivity. By virtue of the delimiting as well as the opening, one side is sinking into darkness, and the other side is awakened by the broad light. The former is to be enclosed and concealed contrapurposively, for the sake of the disclosing and the revealing of the later in a purposive way. And, in turn, it is by virtue of the ineffaceable and uncompromising presence of the darkness that the light is perceived and preserved. Both light and darkness could be manifested through our remembering of such tracing in an aesthetic experience. The moment of the abruption of life transcends the mere aesthetic situation and leads to a unification of life that is intrinsically self-divided. In this way of life, the *vita contemplative*—in which we remain detached as mere spectators of the world—and the *vita active*—in which we are engaged as agents of duty and virtue—have to be, in the first place, alienated from each other by the insertion of a self-declared boundary into one's consciousness of living, and nevertheless they are also both depend

[10] Concerning this dyadic status, virtue is, likewise, "always *in progress* and yet always starts *from the beginning*.—It is always in progress because, considered *objectively*, it is an ideal and unattainable, while yet constant approximation to it is a duty. That it always starts from the beginning has a *subjective* basis in human nature, which is affected by inclinations because of which virtue can never settle down in peace and quiet with its maxims adopted once and for all but, if it is not rising, is unavoidably sinking." See Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6: 409.

on this mediation so as to correspond with each other in a unitary prospect for a life in wholeness. The unity of life hinges on the recurrent tracing of this boundary, through which we recollect the abruption of the continuance of our state of being, about the knowledge mediated by an indispensable admission of our ignorance—such self-knowledge is an critical self-examination that, we could say, consists precisely in the tracing of the boundary and unity of our peculiar way of living. The demarcating of boundary shall never be forgotten, so that we can have access to the full significances of the human lifeworld. And it is this kind of unity that is truly apt for both the actuality and the possibility of humanity. For Kant, however much the person may be conscious of one's present actual powerlessness, or in other words, however much the realizability of our vacation in this spatiotemporally conditioned course of life still remains obscure, with regard to, I suggest, the light shed by the tracing of the seemingly "far-fetched and subtle" principle in the judging of sublimity, a tracing for both delimiting and opening and for both enclosing and disclosing, Kant says, in a perhaps surprisingly blunt way—"herein is truth [*hierin ist Wahrheit*]" (§28, 5: 262).[11]

[11] Translation modified. Whereas it is clear that by putting his words in this way Kant wants to give special emphasis on this point, admittedly, I am still not sure about how far we could take this very suggestive but seemingly strange statement of "truth" made by Kant. Concerning this quotation, there are two things that I think would be helpful to mention. First, it is a remark of Arendt in her "Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy" that has brought my attention to this sentence. Although Arendt is often considered as not a very faithful interpreter of Kant's texts and her intention to discuss this issue in that lecture is irrelevant to my discussion above, she notices that in the third *Critique*, unlike the other two *Critiques*, Kant does not speak man as an intelligible or a cognitive being, and therefore, very intriguingly, "[t]he word truth does not occur—except once, in a special context." See Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 13. Arendt neither specify nor further discuss this "special context" of the occurrence of the word "truth," and it is possible that what she is referring to is different from my quotation. In addition, while Arendt's general point of view is certainly valid and insightful, this observation itself is in fact not correct—the word truth does occur not just for once but for several times (such as 5: 293, 322, 355, 392, and 480) in the third *Critique*. Nonetheless, while its occurrences in other places, as far as I conceive, are quite understandable and unsurprising, its occurrence in the context of the judgment of the sublime, which is also its first occurrence, seems to be very peculiar and unexpected, even a little mysterious. Second, my interpretation on this reference to truth made by Kant is to some extent inspired by Heidegger's remark on the general characters of Kant and his philosophy: "Kant has something in common with the great Greek beginning, which at the same time distinguishes him from all German thinkers before and after him. This is the incorruptible clarity of his thinking and speaking, which by no means excludes the questionable and the unbalanced, and does not feign light where there is darkness." See Martin Heidegger, *What Is a Thing?*, trans. W. B. Barton, Vera Deutsch, and Eugene T. Gendlin (South Bend, Ind.: Gateway Editions, 1967), 56.