

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER

‘Kallias or Concerning Beauty: Letters to  
Gottfried Körner’ (1793)

Jena, the 25 January [Friday] 1793

So far there has been no storm, although I have not been feeling too well and it is now six days past the time at which the paroxysm of last year overcame me. My concern came not from lack of courage, or from a mere hypochondriac fancy. I am prone to catarrhal illness which is exacerbated by winter – my two infectious fevers came from catarrhals. Equal causes give rise to equal effects. I must thus fear for my chest in winter as I fear my cramps in summer and spring. I am thus placed before miserable alternatives and every new animal sign brings a change in my suffering. And yet, the best I may hope for is to remain as I am, for any change in my condition would certainly be for the worse.

My projects have managed to sustain me, thank goodness. The investigation concerning the beautiful, which can hardly be separated from any part of aesthetics, has led me into a wide field where I may still come across strange lands. And yet I must become master of the whole realm if I am to produce any satisfying work. It is impossibly difficult to construct an objective concept of beauty and to legitimate it completely a priori out of the nature of rationality, in such a way that experience may confirm the concept, but that such confirmation from experience is not necessary for its validity. I have indeed attempted a deduction of my concept of the beautiful but was unable to do so without reference to experience. The

problem remains that people will accept my explanation only because they find it to be in accordance with individual judgements of taste, and not (as it ought to be in an explanation of an objective principle) because they find that the judgement about the beautiful coincides with the explanation. You may say that this is to demand a lot, but as long as we have not succeeded here, taste will always remain empirical, just as Kant believed it must inevitably be. I cannot yet convince myself of the inevitability of the empirical, the impossibility of an objective principle of taste.

It is worth noting that my theory is a fourth possible way of explaining the beautiful. Either one declares it subjective or objective; and either subjective sensual (like Burke among others), subjective rational (like Kant) or rational objective (like Baumgarten, Mendelssohn and the whole crowd of men who esteem perfection), or, finally, sensuous objective: a term which will mean little to you at this point, save if you compare the other three forms with each other. Each of the preceding theories reflects a part of experience and clearly contains a part of the truth, and the error seems merely to be that one has taken the true part of the theory to coincide with beauty itself. The Burkian is completely justified in insisting on the unmediated quality, on the independence of beauty, against the Wolffian; but he is in the wrong against the Kantian to insist that beauty be posited as a mere affection of sensuousness. The fact that by far most experiences of beauty that come to mind are not completely free instances of beauty but logical beings which are subsumed under the concept of purpose such as all artworks and most beauties of nature – this fact seems to have led astray all those who have tried to situate beauty in intuitive perfection; for now the logically good was confused with the beautiful. Kant wanted to cut precisely this knot by assuming a *pulchritudo vaga* [free beauty] and *fixa* [fixed],<sup>1</sup> and by claiming, rather strangely, that every beautiful thing which is subsumed under the concept of a purpose is not a *pure* beautiful thing at all; that an arabesque or something similar, which is seen as beautiful, is seen as purer in its beauty than the highest beauty of humanity. I think that this observation may have the great advantage of being able to separate the logical from the aesthetic. Ultimately, however,

<sup>1</sup> In section 16 of the *Critique of Judgement* Kant distinguishes between free beauty which does not presuppose a concept of what the object is meant to be, and adherent beauty which does presuppose a concept of the object. In the following section, he urges that for an ideal of beauty we require that the beauty be fixed by a concept of objective purposiveness.

this observation seems to miss the concept of beauty completely. For beauty presents itself in its greatest splendour only once it has overcome the *logical* nature of its object, and how can this be done if there is no resistance? How can it provide a form for completely formless material? I am at least convinced that the beautiful is only the form of form and that that which we call its matter must be the at least formed matter. Perfection is the form of matter, beauty however, is the form of this perfection; it relates to beauty as matter does to form.

I have related my scattered thoughts to you and may raise the curtain again when I am in a talkative mood.

So long. A thousand greetings from all of us here to you and yours.

Your S.

Jena, Feb. 8 [Friday] 1793

From this letter you can see that the asphyxiating angel has passed over me so far. Three weeks have passed since the date at which I became ill last year, and four have passed since the day I became ill two years ago. I have great and relatively certain hopes that my nature will remain master over at least the winter. My affairs are running smoothly and this project keeps me afloat. Nothing will be finished for the Easter fair. This business must be thought through.

Your letter, which I received a few hours ago, pleased me greatly and put me in a mood in which I might succeed in giving you a short presentation of my idea about beauty. You will soon see just how close we are with respect to our ideas about beauty and perhaps you will find certain *inchoate* ideas of yours made clearer in *my* account. The terms you use: *life* in external objects, *dominating* power and *victory* of the dominating power, *heterogeneous* powers, *adverse* powers, and the like, are too ambiguous for you to ensure that they do not include anything arbitrary or contingent; they are more aesthetic than *clearly logical* and thus dangerous.

A Kantian will still be able to back you into a corner with a question about which principle of knowledge underlies taste. Your idea of the dominating power is based on the idea of the whole, on the concept of the unity of the connected parts, the manifold, but how can we recognize this unity? Apparently only through a concept; one must have a concept of the whole under which the manifold is united. Your *dominating power*

and the *sensual perfection* of the Wolffian school are not so far apart since the process of judgement<sup>2</sup> is logical in both. Both assume that one must support the judgement with a concept. Now, Kant is certainly right in saying that the beautiful pleases *without* a concept. I can have found an object beautiful for quite a while before I am able to articulate the unity of its manifold, and to determine what power dominates it.

By the way, I am speaking here mostly as a Kantian, since it is possible that in the end my theory will not remain immune to this criticism either. In order to lead you to my theory, I must take a double path; one very entertaining and easy path, *through experience*, and a very dull one, through derivations from reason. Let me begin with the latter; once *it* has been completed, the *rest* will be all the more pleasant.

We behave towards *nature* (as appearance) either *passively* or *actively* or as *both* passive and active. *Passively* if we merely *experience* nature's effects; *actively*, if *we* determine its effects; *both at once*, if we *represent* nature to ourselves.

There are two ways of representing appearances. We are either intentionally directed towards their cognition; we *observe* [*beobachten*] them; or we allow things to invite us to represent them. We merely *watch* [*betrachten*] them.

When we *watch* appearances we are passive in that we receive impressions: *active*, in that we subject these impressions to our *forms of reason* (this is postulated from logic).

For appearances must appear to representation to accord with the formal conditions of representation (since it is this which makes them into *appearances*), they must come from us, the subject.

All representations are a manifold or matter; the way of connecting this manifold is its form. *Sense* [*Sinn*] provides the manifold; reason provides the connection (in the most extended sense), since reason is the power of connection.

If a manifold is given to the senses, reason attempts to give it its form, that is, to connect it according to laws.

The form of reason is the manner in which it manifests its connective power. There are two main manifestations of this connective power and as

<sup>2</sup> The German here is *Beurteilung*, which is sometimes translated as *estimation* in order to distinguish the kind of evaluative (aesthetic) judgement here at stake from cognitive judgement. While the difference is worth noting, since aesthetic judgement relates in dynamic ways to other kinds of judgement for Schiller and Kant, it seems appropriate to keep the word *judgement*.

many main forms of reason. Reason connects either representation with representation to gain knowledge (theoretical reason) or representation with the will in order to act (practical reason).

Just as there are two different forms of reason, there are two types of material for each of these forms. Theoretical reason applies its form to representations and these can be subdivided into immediate (intuitions) and mediated (concepts) types. The former are given through the senses, the latter are given by reason itself (although not without help from the senses). In the first, intuition, it is up to chance whether they agree with the form of reason; agreement is, however, necessary in concepts if they are not to negate [*aufheben*] each other. The latter therefore agree with their form, but the former are surprised if they find agreement.

The same goes for practical (acting) reason. It applies its form to action which can be subdivided into either free or unfree acts, acts either through or without reason. Practical reason demands from the first kind of acts the same thing theoretical reason demands from concepts. It is thus necessary that a free act agree with the form of practical reason; agreement of unfree action with this form is contingent.

One is thus correct in calling those representations which do not come from theoretical reason, and yet agree with its form, imitations of concepts. Acts which do not come from practical reason and still agree with its form are imitations of free actions; in short, one can call both types imitations (*analoga*) of reason.

A concept cannot be an imitation of reason, since it exists through reason and reason cannot imitate itself; it cannot be merely analogous to reason, it must be truly in accordance with reason. A willed act cannot be merely analogous to freedom, it must – or at least ought to – be truly free. A mechanical effect (any effect brought about by the laws of nature) on the other hand, can never be truly *free*, but can be judged to be merely analogous to freedom.

Let me allow you to rest for a moment, especially in order to draw your attention to the last paragraph, since I will probably be needing it to answer the objection I expect you will raise against my theory in what follows. I continue.

Theoretical reason aims at knowledge. By subsuming a given object under its form, it examines whether knowledge can be got from it, i.e., whether it can be connected with a representation we already have. The given representation is either a concept or an intuition. If it is a

concept, it refers to reason already in its very origin, and the connection which already exists is merely expressed. A clock, for example, is such a representation. One evaluates it only according to the concept through which it has come about. Reason thus needs merely to discover that the given representation is a concept in order to decide whether it agrees with its form.

If the given representation is an intuition, however, and reason still wants to see the intuition agree with its form, then for the task to be accomplished, reason (regulative, not, as before, constitutive) must lend the given representation an origin in theoretical reason, in order to be able to judge it in terms of reason. Reason thus adduces an end of its own devising for the object and decides whether the object is adequate to that end. The former occurs in *teleological*, the latter in *logical* judgements of nature. The object of logical judgement is according to reason [*Vernunftmäßigkeit*]; the object of *teleological* judgement is similarity to reason [*Vernunftähnlichkeit*].

I imagine you *will be surprised* not to find the beautiful under the rubric of theoretical reason and that this will worry you a great deal. But I cannot help you, beauty can certainly not be found in theoretical reason since it is independent of concepts; and since beauty must still be counted in the *family of reason*, and practical reason is all there is besides theoretical reason, we will have to search and find beauty there. You will, I think, see from the following that this relationship will not cause you any problems.

Practical reason abstracts from all knowledge and has to do only with the determination of the will, with inner actions. Practical reason and determination of the will from mere reason, are one and the same. The *form* of practical reason is the immediate relation of the will to the representations of reason, that is, to the *exclusion of every external* principle of determination; for a will which is not determined purely by the form of practical reason is determined from outside, by what is material and heteronomous. To adapt or imitate the form of practical reason thus merely means not to be determined from the outside but from within, to be determined autonomously or to appear to be determined thus.

Now, practical reason, just like theoretical reason, is capable of exerting its form on that which is through it (free actions), as well as on what is not through it (natural effects).

If practical reason applies its form to an act of will, it merely determines what it is; reason says whether the action is what it *wants* to be and *ought*

to be. Every moral action is of this type. It is a product of pure will, that is, a will determined by mere form, and autonomously, and as soon as reason recognizes it as such, as soon as it knows that it is an action of a pure will, it becomes evident by itself that it accords with the form of practical reason, for it is fully identical with it.

If the object to which practical reason wishes to apply its form is not produced by the will or practical reason, practical reason acts just like theoretical reason acted with intuitions which appeared with similarity to reason. Reason lends the object (regulative and not, as with moral judgements, constitutive) a power to determine itself, a will, and then examines the object under the form of *that* will (not *its* will, since this would yield a moral judgement). Reason says of the object whether it is *what* it is, through *its pure will*, that is, through its self-determining power; for a pure *will* and the form of practical reason are one and the same.

Reason demands *imperatively* of acts of will, or moral acts, that they exist through the pure form of reason; reason can only wish (not demand) that natural effects be *through themselves*, that they show autonomy. (Let me here reiterate that practical reason absolutely cannot demand that the object be constituted through *it*, through practical reason; for then the object would not be constituted through *itself*, would not be autonomous but through something external, [since every determination of reason acts as external, as heteronomous to it] but through a foreign will.) *Pure self-determination* in general is the form of practical reason. When a rational being acts, it must act on the basis of *pure reason* if it is to show self-determination. If a mere natural being acts, it must act from *pure nature* if it is to show self-determination; for the self of the rational being is reason, while the self of the natural being is nature. If practical reason observes of a natural being that it determines itself, it ascribes to it (just as theoretical reason would, under similar circumstances, ascribe *similarity to the understanding* [*Vernunftfähigkeit*]) *similarity to freedom* [*Freiheitsähnlichkeit*] or just *freedom*. But since this freedom is merely lent to the object by reason, *since freedom as such can never be given to the senses and nothing can be free other than what is supra-sensible* – in short, it is all that matters here that the object *appears* as free not that it really is so; thus this analogy of the object with the form of practical reason is not freedom indeed but merely *freedom in appearance, autonomy in appearance*.

This gives rise to a fourfold of judgement and correspondingly a fourfold of classifications of represented appearances.

Judgement from concepts according to the form of knowledge is logical; judgement from intuitions according to this same form is teleological. A judgement of free effects (moral action) according to the form of a free will is moral; a judgement of unfree effects according to the form of the free will, is aesthetic. The *agreement* between a concept and a form of knowledge is in *accordance with the understanding* [*Vernunftmäßig*] (truth, purposiveness, perfection are merely terms for this), the analogy of an intuition with a form of knowledge is *similarity to the understanding* [*Vernunftfähigkeit*] (I would like to call them *Teleophanie, Logophanie*), the agreement of an action with the form of pure will is morality [*Sittlichkeit*]. The analogy of an appearance with the form of pure will or freedom is *beauty* (in its most general sense).

Beauty is thus nothing less than freedom in appearance.

Here I must stop since I wish you to receive this letter soon and eagerly await your answer. You will be able to surmise and extrapolate a great deal from what I have told you here. I will also be pleased if you hit upon a few results on your own. Please write me a prompt and elaborate response. I would happily give twenty Taler to speak with you for a few hours; surely our ideas would develop even better with a little friction. So long. My wife and sister-in-law send their greetings to you and yours. What do you say to these French events? I actually started a piece for the king, but I was not happy with it and so it just lies here. I haven't been able to read a French paper for 14 days, that's how much these lowlifes disgust me. So long.

Your S.

Jena, the 18. February [Monday] 1793

I see from your letter, which I have just received, that I have only to correct misunderstandings, but no actual misgivings, about my account of the beautiful and I will probably be able to clear up matters just by continuing my theory. Let me start by remarking only the following:

(1) My principle of beauty has, of course, been only subjective up to now since I have only been arguing from reason itself and have not discussed any objects yet. But it is no *more* subjective than all that can be got a priori out of reason. It goes without saying both that there must be something in the object itself which makes it possible to apply the principle to it, and that *I* have the obligation to show this. But that this something (the being-determined-through-itself of the thing) must be noticed by



reason, and is moreover noticed only by chance, this stems necessarily from the essence of reason, and to this extent, it can only be explained subjectively. I do, however, hope to show adequately that beauty is an objective quality.

(2) I must remark that *to give a concept of beauty* and *to be moved by beauty* are two completely different things. I would never think of denying that a concept of beauty could be given, since I myself am giving one, but with Kant, I deny that beauty pleases through a concept. To please through a concept presupposes the existence of the concept before the feeling of pleasure arises in the mind [*Gemüt*], just as is the case with perfection, truth and morality; although the presupposition of these three objects does not appear with the same level of clarity. The fact that our pleasure in beauty does not depend on a pre-existing concept is made clear by the fact that we are still searching for one.

(3) You say that beauty cannot be deduced from morality but that both must be deduced from a common, higher principle. I did not expect this objection after what I just said, since I am so far away from deducing beauty from morality that I almost consider the two incompatible. Morality is determination through pure reason, beauty, as a quality of *appearances*, is determination through pure nature. Determination through reason, perceived as an appearance, is rather the negation of beauty, since the determination by reason of a product that appears is true heteronomy.

The higher principle which you demand has been found and had been presented irrefutably. It subsumes beauty and morality under it, just as you require. This principle is none other than existence out of pure form. I cannot get bogged down in its explication at this point – it will become abundantly clear from my theory. Let me just note that you must free yourself from all lesser ideas with which the religiously oriented thinkers of moral philosophy or the poor amateurs, who meddle with the Kantian philosophy, try to disfigure the discussion of morality; only then will you recognize that all of your ideas, such as I have been able to gather from your previous remarks, are in even greater agreement with the Kantian principles of morality than you might have supposed. It is certain that *no* mortal has spoken a greater word than this Kantian word, which also encapsulates his whole philosophy: determine yourself from within yourself. The same goes for theoretical philosophy: nature stands under the laws of the understanding. This great idea of self-determination resonates back at us from certain appearances of nature, and we call it *beauty*. I will now

rely on my good cause and continue with the already begun discussion, and I will be satisfied if you find it at least half as enjoyable to read as I find it enjoyable debating you.

Thus there is a view of nature, or of appearances, in which we demand nothing other than freedom from them and where our only concern is that they be what they are through themselves. This type of judgement is only important and possible through practical reason, since the concept of freedom cannot be found in theoretical reason and since autonomy is the overriding quality only of practical reason. Practical reason, applied to free action, demands that the action be performed only for the sake of the type of action (form) and that the action be influenced neither by matter nor end (which is always matter). If an object appears in the sense-world as determined only by itself, it will appear to the senses such that one cannot detect the influence of matter or purpose, it will thus be judged to be an *analogy* of the pure determination of the will (but not as a product of the will). Since only a will which can determine itself according to mere form can be called *free*, such a form in the sense-world which appears merely through itself, is an *exhibition of freedom*; and an exhibition of an idea is something which is connected with intuition in such a way that they share *one* rule of knowledge.

Freedom in appearance is thus nothing but the self-determination of a thing insofar as it is available to intuition. One sets it against every outside determination, just as one sets moral action against every determination of material reasons. An object seems less free, however, as soon as one *discovers* its determination in form which comes either from a physical power or from intelligible ends; for now the determination lies not in *the object* but outside of it, and it is no more *beautiful* than an *action with an end* is moral.

If the judgement of taste is to be absolutely pure, one must completely abstract from it the intrinsic (practical or theoretical) worth of the beautiful object, out of what matter it is formed and what purpose it might serve. May it be what it will! As soon as we make an aesthetic judgement of it, we only want to know if it is what it is through itself. We are so little concerned with its logical constitution that we even ascribe its 'independence from ends and rules as the highest attribute'. – Not as though purposefulness and regularity were incompatible with the beautiful in themselves; every beautiful object must subject itself to rules: but rather because the *visible* influences of the end and of a rule appear as constraints and bring along

heteronomy in the object. The beautiful object may, and even must, be rule-governed, but it must *appear* as *free of rules*.

However, no object in nature and even less so in art is free of constraint and rules, *none is determined through itself*, as soon as we reflect on it [*nachdenken*]. Each exists through another, each exists for another, none has autonomy. The only existing thing which determines itself and exists for itself must be sought outside of appearances in the intelligible world. Beauty, however, resides only in the field of appearances and there can be no hope to find freedom in the sense-world either by theoretical reason or by contemplation [*nachdenken*].

But everything changes if one leaves theoretical investigation aside and takes the objects only *as they appear*. A rule or a purpose can never *appear* since they are concepts and not intuitions. The real ground [*Realgrund*] of the possibility of an object thus never lies in the field of the senses and is as good as absent 'as soon as the understanding is not incited to search it out'. Judging an object as free in appearance depends simply on completely abstracting it from its grounds of determination (since not-being-determined-from-the-outside is a negative representation of being-determined-through-oneself, which is its only possible representation, because one can only think freedom and not recognize it, and even the philosopher of morals must make do with this negative representation of freedom). Thus a form appears as free as soon as we are *neither able nor inclined* to search for its ground outside it. For if reason were compelled to look for the object's ground, it would *necessarily* have to find it outside of the thing; it is determined either by a *concept* or by an accidental determination, both of which are heteronomous for the object. It is thus a tenable principle that an object presents itself as free in appearance, if its form does not compel reflective understanding [*reflektierender Verstand*] to seek out a ground for it. A form is therefore beautiful only if it explains itself; explaining itself here means to explain itself without the help of a concept. A triangle explains itself but only through the mediation of a concept. A curving line explains itself without the mediation of a concept.

A form is beautiful, one might say, if it *demands no explanation*, or if it *explains itself without a concept*.

I imagine that some of your doubts will have been dispelled, at least you can see that the subjective principle can be led over into the objective. New light will be shed when we finally come to the field of experience, and

only then will you rightly understand the autonomy of the sense-world. But let me continue:

Every form which we find possible only under the presupposition of a concept shows heteronomy in appearance. For every concept is something external to the object. Strict regularity is such a form (the highest manifestation of it being mathematical) because it *forces* upon us the concept from which it originates: strict purposefulness (especially *usefulness*, since it always refers to something else) is such a form because it recalls the purpose and use of the objects to us, thereby necessarily destroying the autonomy of appearance.

Supposing we undertake a moral project with an object – the form of the object will be determined by the idea of practical reason, not by itself, and will thus become heteronomous. This is why the moral purpose of a work of art or an action contributes so little to its beauty that these moral purposes are best hidden, and must appear to come from the nature of the thing completely freely and without force, if their beauty is not to be lost. Thus a poet may not excuse the lack of beauty in his work by its moral intentions. Beauty always refers to practical reason because freedom cannot be a concept of theoretical reason, since it refers merely to the *form* and not the material. A moral *end* belongs to either substance [*Materie*] or content, and not to mere form. To highlight this difference, which seems to have provoked your objection, I will add this: practical reason requires self-determination. Self-determination of the rational is pure determination of reason, morality; self-determination of the sense-world is pure determination of nature, beauty. When the form of the non-reasonable [*nicht-vernünftig*] is determined by reason (theoretical or practical, both are the same here), its natural determination is constrained and beauty cannot arise. In this case [the outcome] is a *product*, not an *analogy*, an effect not an imitation of reason, since the imitation of a thing requires that the imitator and the imitated have in common merely form but not content, not matter.

This is why moral conduct, if it is not at once related to taste, will always appear to be heteronomous exactly because it is a product of the autonomous will. Since *reason* and *sensibility* have different wills, the will of sensibility is broken when reason insists on its will. Unhappily, however, it is the will of sensibility which falls to the senses; just at the point that reason exercises its autonomy (which can never occur in appearance) its

eye is insulted by heteronomy in appearance. But the concept of beauty is also wrongly applied to morality, for this application is here empty. *Moral beauty* is a concept to which something [must] correspond in experience even though beauty only exists in appearance. There is no better empirical proof of the truth of my theory of beauty than to show you that even the wrong use of this word only occurs in cases in which freedom shows itself in appearance. I will thus jump ahead to the empirical part of my theory, although this is contrary to my plans, and let you rest a little while I tell you a story.

'A man has happened upon some robbers who have undressed him and have thrown him out onto the street in the bitter cold.

'A traveller passes by to whom he complains of his lot and whom he begs for help. "I suffer with you", says the moved traveller, "and I will gladly give you what I have. I only request that you do not ask for any of my services, since your appearance revolts me. Here come some people, give them this purse and they will help you." – "That is well meant", said the wounded man, "but one must also be able to *see* the suffering if duty to humanity [*Menschenpflicht*] requires it. Reaching for your purse is not worth half as much as doing a little violence to your tender senses.'"

What was this action? It was neither useful, morally generous nor beautiful. It was merely impulsive, kind-hearted out of affect.

'A second traveller appears and the wounded man renews his plea. This second man does not want to part with his money but still wants to fulfil his duty to humanity. "I will lose making a guilder if I spend time with you." he says. "If you will compensate me for the time I spend with you, I will load you onto my shoulders and carry you to a monastery which is only an hour away." – "That is a clever answer", the other says. "But one must say that readiness to help does not well become you. I see a courier over there who will give me the help for free that you wanted a guilder for.'"

And what was this action? It was neither generous nor dutiful, neither magnanimous nor beautiful. It was merely useful.

'The third traveller stands silently as the wounded man repeats the story of his misfortune. After the story has been told the man stands there contemplatively and battling with himself. "It will be difficult for me", he says at last, "to separate myself from my coat, which is the only protection for my sick body, and to leave you my horse since my powers are at an end. But duty commands that I serve you. Get onto my horse

and wrap yourself in my coat and I will lead you to a place where you will find help.” – “I thank you, good man, for your honest opinion”, the other replies, “but you shall not suffer on my behalf since you yourself are in need. Over there I see two strong men who will provide the help that you could not readily furnish.”

This action was *purely moral* (but also no more than that), because it occurred against the interests of the senses, out of pure respect for the law.

‘Now the two men approach the wounded man and start asking him about his misfortune. No sooner has he opened his mouth than both shout with surprise: “It’s him! It’s the one we are looking for.” The wounded man recognizes them and becomes afraid. It is revealed that both recognize in him a sworn enemy and the originator of their own misfortunes, and have travelled after him to revenge themselves on him violently. “So satisfy your hatred and take your revenge”, the wounded man says, “I expect only death and not help from you.” – “No”, responds one of them, “so that you see who *we* are and who *you* are, take these clothes and cover yourself. We will pull you up between us and take you to a place where you will find help.” – “Generous enemy”, calls the wounded man full of remorse, “you shame me and disarm my hatred: come embrace me and complete your charity by forgiving me.” – “Calm yourself, friend”, the other responds frostily, “I help you not because I forgive you but because you are wretched.” – “So take back your clothes”, calls the unhappy man, as he throws them from himself. “May become of me what will. I would rather die a miserable death than to owe such an enemy my life.”

‘As he gets up and tries to move away, he sees a fifth traveller who is carrying a heavy load approaching. “I have been deceived so many times”, he thinks to himself, “and this one does not seem like someone who would help me. I will let him pass.” As soon as the wanderer sees him, he lays down his load. “I see”, he says of his own accord, “that you are wounded and tired. The next village is far and you will bleed to death ere you arrive there. Climb onto my back and I will take you there.” – “But what will become of your load which you leave here on the open road?” – “That I don’t know, and it concerns me little”, says the carrier. “I do know, however, that you need help and that I am obliged to give it to you.”

Greetings from all of us here. In the meantime, think about why the action of the carrier was *beautiful*.

Your S.

the 19. February 1793

I can add a few more lines to yesterday's letter and do not want to owe you the *fabula docet* [the moral of the tale] of yesterday's story.

The beauty of the fifth action must lie in that characteristic which sets it apart from all the previous ones.

(1) All five wanted to help; (2) most of them chose an adequate means for the job; (3) several of them were willing to have it cost them something; (4) some overcome their own self-interest in order to help. One of them acted out of purest moral purpose. But only the fifth acted *without solicitation*, without considering the action, and disregarding the cost to himself. Only the fifth forgot himself in his action and 'fulfilled his duty with the ease of someone acting out of mere instinct'. – Thus, a moral action would be a beautiful action only if it appears as an immediate [*sich selbst ergebenden*] outcome of nature. In a word: a free action is a beautiful action, if the autonomy of the mind and autonomy of appearance coincide.

For this reason the highest perfection of character in a person is moral beauty brought about by the fact that *duty has become its nature*.

Clearly the violence against our drives which practical reason brings to bear on our moral determination of will appears as something insulting and embarrassing. We never want to see coercion, even if it is reason itself which exercises it; we want even nature's freedom to be respected because 'we regard every being in aesthetic judgement as an end in itself' and it disgusts (outrages) us, for whom freedom is the highest thing, that something should be sacrificed for something else, and used as a means. That is why a moral action can never be beautiful if we observe the operation through which it is won from the sensory-world. Our sensory nature must thus appear free, where morality is concerned, although it is really not free, and it must appear as if nature were merely fulfilling the commission of our drives by subjugating itself to the mastery of the pure will, at the expense of its own drives.

You can see from this little sample that my theory of beauty will hardly be threatened by experience. I challenge you to find a single theory among explanations of beauty, Kant's theory included, which resolves the problem of the wrong use of [the term] beauty as well as I hope to have done here.

Write to me again as soon as you can. In eight days I will let another such load loose on you.

Your S.

Jena, the 23. February [Sunday] 1793

The result of the previous demonstrations is this: there is a way of representing things which looks only for freedom and abstracts from all else, that is, whether the object appears as self-determined. This way of representation is necessary since it comes from the nature of reason, the practical use of which constantly demands autonomy in determination.

I have not yet shown that the quality of things which we call beauty is one and the same with this freedom in appearance; and this shall be my task from now on. I must show two things: *first*, that the objective fact about things which enables them to appear free is the very same which enables them, if it is present at all, to appear beautiful, and if it is not present, destroys their beauty; even if they possess no other advantageous qualities [*Vorzüge*] in the former case, and if they possess all other such qualities in the latter case. *Second*, I must show that freedom in appearance necessarily carries with it such an effect on our capacity for emotion which is the same as the emotions we feel when experiencing a representation of the beautiful. (Although it seems to be a hopeless project to prove the latter point a priori since only experience can teach us whether and how we should feel something during a given experience. For clearly the existence of such a feeling cannot analytically be got out of either the concept of freedom or the appearance of such a feeling, nor indeed can a synthesis a priori be derived thus; one is thus restricted to empirical proofs and I hope to accomplish whatever can be accomplished: namely to show by induction and by psychological means that a feeling of pleasure [*Wohlgefallen*] must flow from the combined concept of freedom and appearance, the harmony between reason and sense, which is the same as pleasure and which regularly accompanies the representation of beauty.) Let me note that I will not come to this latter part for a while, since the explication of the former should fill up several letters.

*Freedom of appearance is one with beauty*

I mentioned just recently that *freedom* does not really attach to any object in the sense-world, though it may appear to do so. But it may not even *appear* to be positively free since this is merely an idea of reason to which no intuition can be adequate. But how can we seek an objective ground of this representation in things, insofar as they appear, if they neither possess nor show freedom? The objective reason must be constituted such that



its representation simply necessitates us to produce the idea of freedom from within ourselves, and to apply it to the object. This is what must be shown now.

It is the same thing to be free and to be determined through oneself and from within oneself. Every determination occurs either from the outside or not from the outside (from the inside) – that which is not determined from the outside and yet appears as determined must be represented as determined from the inside. *'But as soon as determination is thought, not-being-determined-from-the-outside indirectly becomes the representation of being-determined-from-the-inside or of freedom.'*

Now how is this not-being-determined-from-the-outside represented in turn? Everything depends on this: if this is not necessarily represented as pertaining to an object, then there is no reason to represent being-determined-from-the-inside or freedom. The representation of the latter must be *necessary* however, because our judgement of the beautiful contains necessity and *demand*s everyone's agreement. It thus cannot be left to chance whether we take freedom into consideration in representing an object, but the representation of the object must necessarily include the representation of not-being-determined-from-the-outside.

This requires that the thing itself, in its objective constitution, invites us, or rather requires us to notice its quality of not-being-determined-from-the-outside; this is because a mere negation can only be recognized *if a need for its positive opposite is presupposed*.

A need for the representation of the being-determined-from-the-inside (ground of determination) can only come to be through the representation of *determination*. Though it is true that everything that we represent is determinate, not everything is represented as such and what is not represented scarcely exists for us at all. Since the object which says nothing is almost the same as nothing, something must lift the object out of the endless succession of non-saying and empty objects and pique our cognitive drive. It must show itself as something *determinate*, since it must lead us to something determining.

Since the understanding is the faculty which searches out the ground of an effect, the understanding must be put into play. The understanding must be spurred to reflect upon the form of the object: merely about the *form*, for understanding has only to do with form.

The object must possess and show a form which permits a rule to be applied to it; for the understanding can conduct its business only

according to rules. It is, however, not necessary that the understanding *recognize* the rule (since recognizing the rule would destroy all semblance of freedom, as is indeed the case with every strict regularity), it is sufficient that the understanding be led to a rule – no matter which one. One need examine only a single leaf to be made instantly aware of the impossibility that the manifold can organize itself from nowhere and without rules, even if one abstracts from teleological judgement. Immediate reflection at its sight teaches us, without it even being necessary, to recognize this rule and to create a concept of its structure for oneself.

A form which points to a rule (which can be treated according to a rule) is art-like or *technical*. Only the technical form of an object compels the understanding to search out the ground of an effect and the relationship between determining and determined; and insofar as this form awakens a need to ask about the ground for determination, the negation of the *being-determined-from-the-outside* necessarily leads to the representation of *being-determined-from-the-inside* or freedom.

Just as freedom of will can only be thought with the help of causal and material determinations of will, freedom can only be exhibited sensuously with the help of technique. In other words: the negative concept of freedom is only conceivable through the positive concept of its opposite, and just as a representation of natural causality is necessary to lead us to a representation of freedom of will, a representation of technique is necessary to lift us from the realm of appearances to freedom.

Here we come to a second principle of beauty, without which the first would remain an empty concept. Freedom of appearance may be the ground of freedom, but *technique* is the necessary condition for our *representation* of freedom.

One could also express it in this way:

The ground of freedom is everywhere freedom in appearance.

The ground of our representation of beauty is technique in freedom.

If one unites both the foundations of beauty and the representation of beauty, this explanation arises:

Beauty is nature in artfulness [*Kunstmäßigkeit*].

Before I can make a secure and philosophical use of this explanation, I must determine the concept of *nature* and guard it from being misunderstood. I prefer the term *nature* to that of *freedom* because it connotes

both the realm of the senses, to which beauty is limited, and the concept of *freedom* as well as its intimation in its sphere in the sense-world. Set against technique, *nature* is what is through itself and *art* is what is through a rule. *Nature in artfulness* is what gives itself the rule – what is through its own rule. (Freedom in the rule, the rule in freedom.)

When I say: *the nature of a thing: the thing follows its nature, it determines itself through its nature*, I am contrasting nature with all that is different from the object, what is regarded as merely coincidental and can be abstracted without negating its essence. It is as it were the person of the thing through which it is distinguished from other things which are not of its kind. That is why those qualities which an object shares with all other objects, even though it cannot do without these qualities without ceasing to exist, are not considered part of its nature. Only that which makes the determinate object become what it is, is designated by the term *nature*. For example, all objects are heavy, but we count only that heaviness to an object's nature which brings about the specificity of the object. As soon as gravity acts on an object in itself and independently of any specific constitution of the object, functioning rather as a *general force* of nature, gravity is seen as a foreign power and its effects are seen as heteronomous to the nature of the thing. An example will clarify this. A vase, considered as an object, is subject to gravity, but the effects of gravity must, if it is not to deny the *nature of the vase*, be modified, i.e. specifically determined and made necessary through its specific form. Every effect of gravity on the vase is contingent and can thus be abstracted from the vase without losing the essence of the form of the vase. Thus gravity functions outside of the economy, outside of the nature of the thing, and appears as an alien force. This occurs when the vase *ends* in a broad belly, because here it seems as if gravity had reduced the length of the vase and instead had given it breadth, in short, it seems as if gravity had prevailed over form and not form over gravity.

The same goes for movement. A movement belongs to the *nature* of the thing if it necessarily comes from the specific constitution or from the form of the thing. A movement, however, which is prescribed to the object, independently of its specific form, by the general rule of gravity, lies outside of its nature and consequently shows itself as heteronomy. Place a workhorse next to a light Spanish palfrey. The weight which the former has become accustomed to pulling has so robbed it of its natural movement that it trots just as tiredly and clumsily as if it were still pulling

a wagon, even when it is not pulling one. Its movement no longer springs from its nature but rather reveals the pulled weight of the wagon. The light palfrey in contrast has never become accustomed to exerting greater effort than it feels like exerting in its most perfect freedom. Each of its movements is an effect of its nature that has been left to itself. This is why it moves over so lightly, as if it weighed nothing at all, the same area over which the workhorse moves as if it had feet of lead. 'The specific form of the horse has overcome the nature of bodies, which must follow the rules of gravity, to such an extent that one is not reminded that it is a *body* at all.' The clumsy movement of the workhorse, however, instantly conjures in us the representation of mass and the *particular* nature of the horse is dominated by the *general* nature of its body.

If one casts an eye onto the kingdom of animals one sees that the beauty of animals decreases with the degree to which they become more mass-like and seem only to serve gravity. The nature of an animal (in aesthetic terms) appears either in its movements or in its form, both of which are constrained by mass. If mass has influenced the form, we call it plump; if the mass has influenced movement, we call it awkward. Mass plays a visible role in the form as well as in the movement of the construction of the elephant, the bear, the bull, etc. Mass is at all times beholden to gravity which has an alien potential with respect to the organic body's *own* nature.

We perceive everything to be beautiful, however, in which *mass is completely dominated by form* (in the animal and plant kingdom) and by living forces (in the autonomy of the organic).

Clearly the mass of a horse is of unequal weight compared to the mass of a duck or a crab; nevertheless, the duck is heavy and the horse is light; this is simply because the living forces of each have different relationships to mass. In the former case, it is matter which dominates force; in the latter case, it is force which is the master of matter.

In the animal kingdom it is the birds which are the best proof of my claim. A bird in flight is the happiest depiction of matter dominated by form, of power overcoming weight. It is not unimportant to note that the ability to overcome heaviness is often used as the symbol of freedom. We express freedom of the imagination by giving it wings; when we want to describe Psyche's freedom from the bonds of matter, we let her soar above the world with the wings of a butterfly. Clearly gravity is the bond of every organic being and a victory over it is thus considered a good depiction of freedom. Now, there is no better depiction of something conquering

gravity than a winged animal whose inner life (autonomy of the organic) determines itself by its opposition to gravity. The relationship of gravity to the living power of the bird is about the same as – in a pure determination of the will – inclination is related to law-giving reason.

I will resist the temptation to further illustrate the truth of my claims with reference to human beauty; this matter deserves its own letter. You can see from what I have said so far what I consider to be part of the concept of *nature* (in its aesthetic meaning) and what I consider to be outside of it.

The nature of a technical thing, insofar as we set it against the non-technical, is the technical form itself against which we consider as heteronomous and violent everything which does not belong to this technical economy, and which is external, and which has influence upon the thing: but this is not yet to say that a thing which is determined by its technique is purely technical; for this also goes for every strict mathematical figure which, nonetheless, may not be beautiful.

The technique itself must again appear as determined by the nature of the thing, which one can call the free consent of the thing to its technique. Here the nature of the thing is again distinguished from its technique, though it has just been declared identical to it. But this is only apparently a contradiction. The technical form of the thing behaves towards external determinations as nature; but it can behave as something external or foreign towards the inner essence of the thing in its technical form; for example, it is the nature of a circle that it is a line which, at each point, keeps the same distance from a given point. Now, if a gardener wants to cut a tree into a circular figure, the nature of the circle demands that the tree be cut completely round. As soon as a circular figure is *announced*, it must be completed, and it insults our eyes if the circle is not carried out perfectly. But the demands of the nature of circles and the nature of the tree are at odds with each other, and since we cannot help but respect the personality of the tree, we suffer at the violence inflicted upon it, and it pleases us when the external technique is destroyed by the tree's inner freedom. Technique is something foreign wherever it does not arise from the thing itself, is not one with the whole existence of the thing, does not come from it, but comes to it from the outside, is not necessary and innate in the thing, but is merely given or is accidental.

One more example will help us see eye to eye. The musical instrument a skilled craftsman makes may be purely technical but still may not lay claim

to beauty. It is purely technical if everything is form, if it is everywhere the concept and not matter, or if it is a lack on the part of his art which determines the form. One might also say that this instrument has autonomy; one could say this as soon as one places the *αὐτόν*<sup>3</sup> into thought, which is completely and purely law-giving and which has dominated matter. But if one places the instrument's *αὐτόν* into what is its nature and that through which it exists, the judgement shifts. Its technique is recognized as something foreign, something independent of its *existence*, coincidental, and is thus regarded as outside violence. It becomes clear that this technical form is something external, that this technical form has been violently imposed by the artist's understanding. Although, as we have supposed, the technical form of the instrument *contains* and expresses pure autonomy, the form is itself still heteronomous towards the object in which it finds this autonomy. Although the form suffers *coercion* neither from the side of the material nor from the side of the artist, it nonetheless *exerts* coercion on the very nature of the thing as soon as we regard it as a natural thing which is compelled to serve a logical thing (a concept).

What would nature be in this sense? The inner principle of the existence of a thing, which can be at the same time seen as the ground of its form: *the inner necessity of form*. The form must, in the true sense of the word, be self-determining and self-determined; it needs not merely autonomy, but also heautonomy.<sup>4</sup> But, you will object, if form and the existence of the thing must be one in order to produce beauty, what becomes of beauty in art, which can never have this heautonomy? I will answer you only once we have arrived at a discussion of beauty in art, for this requires its own chapter. I can only tell you this much in advance, that art is not independent of these requirements, and that the forms of art and the existence of the formed object must become *one* if they are to lay claim to the highest beauty: and because they cannot in reality accomplish this,

<sup>3</sup> Schiller is probably here using the Greek root of autonomy to signify the independent idea of the instrument, hence its nature.

<sup>4</sup> In the *Critique of Judgement* Kant employs the concept of *heautonomy* in place of autonomy with respect to reflective judgement's adoption of a principle of reflection – that we assume that nature is coherently ordered through a hierarchical system of genus and species – which cannot be regarded as truly determinative of nature. Hence, heautonomy refers to a necessary self-determination of the power of judgement in its relation to nature which is nonetheless merely subjective since it is not legislative for nature. Schiller is using the term in an analogous way: nature's artfulness involves the necessary ascription of 'technique' (as the ground of form) to the object which does not belong in actuality to it. The heautonomy of the object is its appearing autonomy.

since the human form is always incidental to marble, this means that the artworks must at least appear to be one.

What then, is nature in artfulness? Autonomy in technique? It is the pure coincidence of the inner essence with form, *a rule, which is at once given and obeyed by the thing*. (The beautiful is merely a symbol of the completed and perfect, because it does not, as does the purposeful, require anything outside itself, but commands and obeys itself for the sake of its own law.) I hope that I have put you in a position to follow me without difficulty when I speak of nature, of self-determination, of autonomy and heautonomy, of freedom and of artfulness. I hope you will also agree with me that nature and heautonomy are objective characteristics of the objects which I have been describing, for they remain, even if they have been abstracted from by the thinking subject. The difference between two beings of nature where one of them is pure form and perfect domination of living power over mass and where the other is dominated by the mass, remains even after all judgement by the subject has been taken away. In this same way the difference between a technique through the understanding and technique through nature (as in everything organic) is completely independent of the existence of a rational subject. The difference is objective, and it is thus the concept of nature in technique which bases itself on this very difference.

Of course reason is necessary to make such use of the objective qualities of things as is necessary in the case of beauty. But the subjectivity of this use does not negate the objectivity of this ground, for even the perfect, the good and the useful are constituted such that their objectivity rests on much the same basis. 'Of course the concept of freedom itself or the *positive* aspect of reason are only placed into the object by considering the object under the form of the will, but reason does not give the *negative* aspect of the concept to the object since it finds it already present. The ground of the object's already granted freedom thus does lie in *it* itself, although *freedom* lies only in reason.'

Kant makes a claim in the *Critique of Judgement* (p. 177<sup>5</sup>) which is immensely fecund and which, I think, will find its full explanation only in my theory. Kant says that nature is beautiful when it looks like art; art is beautiful when it looks like nature. This claim turns technique

<sup>5</sup> *Critique of Judgement*, tr. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), p. 306: 'Nature, we say, is beautiful [*schön*] if it also looks like art: and art can be called fine [*schön*] art only if we are conscious that it is art while yet it looks to us like nature.'

into an essential prerequisite of natural beauty and turns freedom into an essential prerequisite of artistic beauty. But since artistic beauty already includes the idea of technique and since natural beauty includes the idea of freedom, Kant himself must admit that beauty is nothing but nature in technique and freedom in artfulness [*Kunstmässigkeit*].

*First of all*, we must know that the beautiful thing is a natural object, that is, that it is through itself; *secondly*, it must seem to us as if it existed through a rule, since Kant says that it must look like art. The two claims: *it is through itself* and *it is through a rule* can only be combined in a single manner, namely if one says: *it is through a rule which it has given itself*. Autonomy in technique, freedom in artfulness.

From the previous discussion it might seem as if *freedom* and *artfulness* had the same claim in pleasing that beauty instils in us, as if technique and freedom stood on the same level – I would then be quite wrong in explaining beauty (autonomy in appearance) by concentrating on freedom alone, without reference to technique. But my definition is well balanced. Technique and freedom do not have the same relationship to beauty. *Freedom* alone is the ground of beauty, technique is merely the ground for the representation of freedom, the former is thus the immediate ground, the latter only the mediating condition of beauty. Technique contributes to beauty only insofar as it serves to stimulate the representation of freedom.

Perhaps I can explicate this sentence further, although it should be quite clear from what went before.

Where natural beauty is concerned, we can see with our own eyes that it stems from itself; understanding, not our senses, however, tells us that it comes from a rule. Now, the rule is towards nature as coercion is to freedom. But since we only *think* the rule but *see* nature, we think coercion and see freedom. The understanding expects and demands a rule, the senses teach us that the thing is through itself and not through any rule. If we were concerned with technique, its failure would disappoint our expectation, rather than give rise to pleasure. Therefore, we must be interested in freedom rather than in technique. We expected to find heteronomy in the logical form of the thing, but to our surprise found autonomy. The fact that we are pleased with this discovery and that our worry (which has its seat in our practical powers) is assuaged, proves that we do not gain as much through regularity as through freedom. It is merely a need of our theoretical reason to think of the form of the thing as dependent on rules; but that it is not through a rule, but through itself



is a fact for our senses. How can we ascribe aesthetic value to technique and still derive pleasure from perceiving its opposite? The representation of technique, then, serves merely to recall the independence of the products from technique in our mind and to make freedom all the more attractive.

This leads me automatically to the difference between the beautiful and the perfect. Everything perfect, except the absolutely perfect, the moral, is contained under the concept of technique, since it is constituted by the accordance of the manifold and the one. Since technique contributes to beauty only through mediation, insofar as it draws attention to freedom, but the perfect is contained under the concept of technique, one can see right away that it is merely *freedom in technique* which distinguishes the beautiful from the perfect. The perfect can have autonomy insofar as its form is purely determined by its concept; but heautonomy is possible only in beauty, since only its form is determined by its inner essence.

When the perfect is shown with freedom it is instantly transformed into the beautiful. It is shown with freedom, if the nature of the thing appears as coinciding with its technique, if it appears as if technique flowed freely out of the thing itself. One might express what came before simply thus: an object is perfect if everything manifold in it coincides with the unity of its concept; it is beautiful when its perfection appears as nature. Beauty grows when perfection is assembled and nature does not suffer thereby; for the task of freedom becomes more difficult as the number of relations grow and hence its happy solution surprises all the more.

Purposefulness, order, proportion, perfection – all are qualities in which one thought one had found beauty – have nothing to do with it. But where order, proportion, etc. belong to the *nature* of the object, as is the case with everything organic, they are *eo ipso* untouchable, not for their own sake, but because they are inseparable from the nature of the thing. A crude injury of proportion is ugly, but not because observing proportion is beautiful. Not at all, but rather because it indicates an injury to nature, and thus heteronomy. I must note in general that the whole error of those who seek to derive beauty from proportion or perfection is due to this point; they found that injury to order or perfection makes the object ugly and concluded, against all logic, that beauty is contained in the close observation of these qualities. But all of these qualities are merely the *material* of beauty which can change in every object; they can belong to the truth which, however, is just the material of beauty. The form of beauty is a loose [*freier*] contract between truth, purposefulness and perfection.

We call a building perfect if all of its parts are purely determined according to its concept and the purpose of the whole, and when its *form* is determined by the idea. But we call it beautiful, if we do not need to be helped by the idea to see the form, if the form is free and purposeless and comes from itself, and all the parts seem to limit themselves from within themselves. This is why, by the way, a building can never be a completely free work of art, and can never achieve the ideal of beauty – it is completely impossible to regard a building that needs stairs, doors, chimneys, windows and stoves without making use of a concept and thus invoking heteronomy. Only artistic beauty, whose original can be found in nature, is completely pure.

A pot is beautiful if it resembles the free play of nature without contradicting its concept. The handle of a pot is caused merely by its use and thus its concept; if the pot is to be beautiful, its handle must spring from it so unforced and freely that one forgets its purpose [*Bestimmung*]. But if the body were suddenly to make a right angle and if the wide body were suddenly to turn into a narrow neck, and so forth, this abrupt change of direction would destroy all semblance of beauty and the autonomy of appearance would disappear.

When does one say that a person is well dressed? When freedom suffers neither through the clothes on the body nor the body through the clothes; if the clothes look like they have nothing in common with the body and still fulfil their purpose completely. Beauty, or rather taste, regards all things as *ends in themselves* and will not permit one to serve as the purpose of another, or to be under its control. Everyone is a free citizen and has the same rights as the most noble in the world of aesthetics, coercion may not take place even *for the sake of the whole* – everyone must *consent*. In this aesthetic world, which is quite different from the most perfect Platonic republic, even the gown I wear on my body demands respect for its freedom from me, much like a humble servant who demands that I never let on that he is *servicing* me. In exchange, it promises to use its freedom in such a way that it will not curtail my own freedom; and if both keep their word, the world will say that I am well dressed. But if the gown *pulls*, both it and I lose some of our freedom. That is why both *very tight* and *very loose* clothes are not beautiful – for even leaving aside the point that both constrain movement, tight-fitting clothes show the body only at the expense of the clothes and loose clothes hide the shape of the body by blowing themselves up and reducing their master to a mere carrier.

A birch, a pine, a poplar are beautiful if they grow straight up, while an oak is beautiful if it bends; the reason for this is that the latter bends naturally if it is left to itself, while the former all grow straight up. If the oak grows straight up and the birch bends, neither are considered beautiful, since the direction they grow reveals foreign influence, heteronomy. Then again, we find the poplar bending in the wind beautiful because its swaying manner reveals its freedom.

Which tree will the artist seek out and most prefer to use in his landscapes? Surely the one which makes use of the freedom which is given to it despite the technique of its structure – the one which does not slavishly follow its neighbour's wishes but daringly searches something out, steps out of order, and turns this direction or that out of its own will, even if it leaves a gap here or there, or confuses things through its untamed entry. But the artist will pass up that tree in indifference which always remains turned in one direction, even if its species has granted it more freedom, whose branches remain in order as if they had been pulled thus by a string.

It is necessary for every great composition that the particular restrict itself to let the whole reach its effect. If this restriction by the particular is at once the effect of its freedom, that is, if it posits the whole itself, the composition is beautiful. Beauty is power limited through itself; restriction of power.

A landscape is beautifully composed if all of the particular parts out of which it is constituted play along together so well that they set their own limitations, and the whole becomes the result of the freedom of the particular parts. Everything in a landscape must refer to the whole and yet the particular should only be constrained by its own rule, should only seem to follow its own will. But it is impossible that the process of cohering to a whole should not require some sacrifices on the part of the particular, since a collision of freedoms is unavoidable. The mountain will want to cast a shadow on much that one would prefer to have illuminated. Buildings will limit natural freedom, they will obscure the view; branches will be bothersome neighbours; humans, animals, clouds will want to move since the freedom of living things expresses itself in action. The river does not want the shore to rule its direction, but wants to follow its own; in short: each particular wants to follow its own will. But what becomes of the harmony of the whole if each only looks out for itself? Freedom comes about because each restricts its inner freedom such as to allow every other to

express *its* freedom. A tree in the foreground might cover a nice spot in the background; to *require* of the tree that it not do this would come too close to its freedom and would reveal dilettantism. What does the able artist do? He allows that branch of the tree which threatens to cover the background to sink down *under its own weight* and thus freely make place for the view behind it; thus the tree fulfils the will of the artist by following its own.

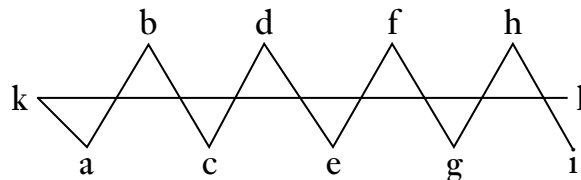
A versification is beautiful if each verse gives itself its length and shortness, its motion and its pause, if each rhyme comes from inner necessity and yet comes at just the right moment – in short, when no word or verse seems to take notice of the other, seems merely to be present for its own sake but comes as if on cue.

Why is the naïve beautiful? Because nature is in the right against artistic creating and representation. When Virgil wants to let us glance into Dido's heart to see how her love is progressing, he, as the narrator, could have done so quite well in his own name; but then this depiction would not have been beautiful. But if he chooses to allow us to make this same discovery through Dido herself, without her intending to be so open with us (see the conversation between Anna and Dido at the beginning of the fourth book), we call this truly beautiful; for it is nature itself which spills its secret.

The style of teaching wherein one progresses from the known to the unknown is good; it is beautiful if it progresses Socratically, that is, if the same truth is elicited from the head and the heart of the listener. In the former convictions are formally *demande*d by the understanding, while in the latter they are *elicite*d.

Why is the curving line considered the most beautiful? I have tested my theory on this, the simplest of all aesthetic tasks and consider the trial to be decisive because there is no room for deception through auxiliary causes.

A follower of Baumgarten will say that the curving line is the most beautiful because it is the most perfect to the senses. It is a line which always changes direction (manifold) and always returns to the same direction (unity). But if it were beautiful for no other reason the following line would also have to be beautiful:



which is certainly not beautiful. Here too there is a change in direction; a manifold, namely a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i; there is also a unity of direction which reason adds to it and which is represented by the line k l. This line is not beautiful even though it is perfect to the senses.

The following line, however, is beautiful, or could be such if my pen were better.



Now, the whole difference between the second and the first line is that the former changes its direction *ex abrupto* while the latter does it unnoticed; the difference of their effects on the aesthetic feeling must be based on this single noticeable difference in quality. But what is a sudden change of direction if not a violent change? Nature does not love jumps. If we see it making one, it appears that it has suffered violence. A movement seems free, however, if one cannot name the particular point at which it changes its direction. This is the case with the curving line which is different from the line above only in its *freedom*.

I could pile up examples to show that everything which we call beautiful merits this predicate only by gaining freedom from its technique. But the proofs I have given will suffice for the moment. *Beauty* does not belong to material but exists only in its handling; but if everything which the senses represent to themselves appears as technical or non-technical, free or not free, it follows that the realm of beauty is vast indeed, since reason can and must ask about freedom in everything which the senses or the understanding immediately represent for it. That is why the realm of taste is the realm of freedom – the beautiful world of the senses is the happiest symbol, as the moral ought to be, and every object of natural beauty outside me carries a guarantee of happiness which calls to me: be free like me.

For this reason we are bothered by every sign of the despotic intrusion of the human hand into a natural realm, for this reason we are bothered by every dancing instructor's intrusion into positions, by every artifice in custom and manner, by every obtuseness in relations, by every insult to freedom of nature in constitutions, habits and laws.

It is striking how one can develop gentility (beauty in social relations) from my concept of beauty. The first law of gentility is: *have consideration*

*for the freedom of others.* The second: *show your freedom.* The correct fulfilment of both is an infinitely difficult problem, but gentility always requires it relentlessly, and it alone makes the cosmopolitan man. I know of no more fitting an image for the ideal of beautiful relations than the well danced and arabesquely [*mit vielen verwickelten Touren*] composed English dance. The spectator in the gallery sees countless movements which cross each other colourfully and change their direction wilfully but *never collide.* Everything has been arranged such that the first has already made room for the second before he arrives, everything comes together so skilfully and yet so artlessly that both seem merely to be following their own mind and still never get in the way of the other. This is the most fitting picture of maintained personal freedom and the spared freedom of the other.

Everything one commonly calls *hardness* is nothing but the opposite of *freedom.* It is this hardness which often robs the greatness of the understanding, or even the moral of its *aesthetic* value. Gentility will not even excuse *brutality* in the highest accomplishment, and virtue itself only becomes beautiful through kindness. But a character, an action, is not beautiful if it shows the sensual nature of the person who is its recipient under the coercion of law, or constrains the senses of the viewer. In this case the actions will produce mere *respect*, not favour or a good disposition; mere respect humbles the person who receives it. This is why we like Caesar far better than Cato, Cimon better than Phocion, Thomas Jones far better than Grandison. We sometimes prefer *affected* actions to pure moral action, because they are voluntary, because they are accomplished not through commanding reason against the interests of nature (affect) – this may be the reason we prefer mild virtue to heroic action, the feminine to the masculine; for the female character, even the most perfect, cannot act but from inclination.

I will write you a separate letter about taste and its influence on the world, where I will develop all of this further. I think you will be satisfied with this missive for today. Now you have enough data to check my ideas thoroughly and I await your comments impatiently. Take care.

Your S.

Jena, the 28. Feb. [Thursday] 93

I shall surprise you with a new work by Kant in a few weeks, which will cause you much wonder. It is printed here and I have read the half that

is so far finished. The title is: *Philosophische Religionslehre* [*Philosophy of Religion*]<sup>6</sup> and the content – will you believe it? The shrewdest exegesis of the Christian concept of religion on philosophical grounds. As you have already noted several times, Kant loves to give writers a philosophical meaning. As becomes evident quickly, he is not so much concerned with supporting the authority of scripture as with connecting up the results of philosophical thinking with children's reasoning and at the same time to popularize it. He seems to be governed by a principle which *you* yourself are fond of; namely by this: not to throw out that which is present as long as a result can still be expected of it, but rather to ennoble it. I deeply respect this principle and you will see that Kant does it honour. But I sincerely doubt whether he should have taken up the task of giving the Christian religion philosophical foundations in the first place. All we can expect from the well-known quality of defenders of religion is that they will accept the support but will throw away the philosophical grounds, and so Kant will have done nothing more than to have patched up the decaying house of stupidity.

In any case, I am enthralled by the text and can hardly wait for the remaining sections. It is true, however, that one of his first principles gives rise to a feeling of indignation on my, and probably your, part. For he claims that the human heart has a propensity towards evil, which he calls radical evil, and which ought not be confused with the temptations of the senses. He presupposes it in the *person* of the human, as the seat of freedom. But you will read it yourself. One can find no objection against his proofs, as much as one would like to.

Let me also note in passing that he will not find much thanks among the theologians for he suspends all the authority of church doxa and makes rational faith the highest interpreter; he also quite clearly indicates that church doxa is merely subjectively valid and that it would be better if it could be done without. But since he is not convinced that we can do without it, nor will be able to do so in the near future, he makes it a duty of conscience to respect it. The logos, redemption (as philosophical myth), the representations of heaven and hell, the kingdom of God and all of these beliefs are most perfectly explained.

I don't know whether I have written to you already that I am considering a theodicy [*theodisee*]. If possible, it will happen this spring, in order to

<sup>6</sup> Schiller is almost certainly here referring to Kant's *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*.

include it in my poems, which I will be publishing this summer in a very nice edition at Crusius. I am looking forward to the theodicy, especially since the new philosophy is a lot more poetic than Leibniz's and has far more character. Besides the theodicy I am still working on a poem with philosophical content from which I expect even more. But I cannot write you of this yet.

If my circumstances allow it, I will include it in my collection as well. If you can get *Jakob und sein Herr*<sup>7</sup> by Diderot, which Mylius has translated (it has not yet been published in French) by all means read it. Minna too will enjoy it very much. I have taken great pleasure in it.

This summer we will live out of town in a pleasant country house. My second sister will be with us and perhaps I will keep her indefinitely. If this happens I will have more of a family life and less noise about since I will then no longer take lodgers. Since my wife is often sickly, it will be a comfort for me to know that someone who is attached to me and healthy is about. Whether I will travel to my fatherland in the summer or fall will depend on my health which has not been the best since the arrival of spring three weeks ago.

We here recall the death of young Ludwig, who went to Kurland, and I really wish that nothing had happened to the poor devil. NB. I have just received word from Dorchen's letter of a funny misunderstanding.

Mainz still seems to be in quite a fix. The elector is at present in Erfurt where the coadjutor has also just arrived. The latter only receives half of his income and could not live on the whole income before. Heavens knows what will come of it.

If I find time, I will include the continuation of my theory. But it is also up to you to think about it. A thousand greetings to all of you.

Your S.

The news about Hubern has frightened me greatly. He is about to make a terrible decision from whichever side one looks at it. It can be predicted with certainty that both people will find each other insufferable within half a year. And to demand his resignation on top of it! Where will he go to find employment after he has severed his Mainz connections and has brought himself into disrepute by marrying F. Does he intend to live off his writing? He will have to take small bites. Ms Forster has nothing

<sup>7</sup> Presumably *Jacques The Fatalist*.



and wants him to support her and her child, although he cannot even support himself. I don't know what he means to do. Maybe he hopes to get an appointment at a university? But he will hardly better himself as an adjunct [*Extraordinarius*] and he cannot hope for professorship anywhere since he hasn't learned anything.

I will do my best to make him see this; but I fear that time has already run out. Do you know if he *had* to resign so as not to be sacked? Since one wants to make even *your* association with him a crime, one must think very badly of him indeed. But he must not rely on his parents. They are a mean pair who would rather have their son become desperate than pay a Heller on his behalf. I regard it as foolish, even from his point of view, for him to go to Dresden. For there he will surely find the most dreadful situation. Under no circumstances ought he come to you, but that will become clear to him, I think.

A letter addressed to him, which seems to be from his parents according to the address, arrived at my house along with yours. He probably had it sent to me himself. I am thus sure he will come.

What I am sending along was already finished before your letter arrived. I thus enclose it. I hope that my last package will answer the first part of your letter.

S.

### Beauty in Art

There are two types: a) beauty of choice [*Wahl*] or of matter – imitation of natural beauty. b) beauty of depiction or form – imitation of nature. Without the latter there could be no artists. The unity of both makes the great artist.

Beauty of form or depiction is *specific* to art. 'The beauty of nature', Kant says quite rightly, 'is a beautiful thing; the beauty of art is a beautiful representation of a thing.' The ideal beauty, one might add, is a beautiful representation of a beautiful thing.

In beauty of choice one is concerned with *what* the artist depicts. In beauty of form (artistic beauty *stricte sic dicta*) one is merely concerned with *how* he depicts it. The first, one might say, is the free depiction of beauty, the second, the free depiction of truth.

Since the first limits itself to the conditions of natural beauty but the second deals with the specificity of art, I shall deal with the latter first;

for it must first be shown what the artist does in general before one can speak of the great artist.

A product of nature is beautiful if it appears free in its artfulness.

A product of art is beautiful if it depicts a product of nature as free.

Therefore the concept which we are dealing with here is freedom of depiction.

One *describes* an object if one makes its specific qualities explicit, turns them into concepts and places them into a unity of knowledge.

One *depicts it* if one displays the connected qualities immediately to intuition.

The faculty of intuition is the power of imagination. An object is said to be depicted if its representation is immediately brought before the power of imagination.

A thing is free which determines itself or appears to be doing so.

An object is said to be depicted freely if it is presented to the imagination as self-determining.

But how can it be presented to the imagination as appearing to be determined by itself, if the object is not even there, but is only imitated in something else and does not represent itself in person but in a representative?

For natural beauty it is not nature itself but its imitation in the *medium* which is completely different from the imitated material [*Materialiter*]. *Imitation* is the formal similarity of materially different things.

NB. Architecture, beautiful mechanisms, beautiful gardening [*Gartenkunst*], dancing and so on, may not serve as objections since these arts are also subject to this principle, as will be evident soon, even though they either do not imitate a product of nature or do not require a medium.

The nature of the object is not depicted in art in its personality or individuality, but through a medium which:

- (a) has its own individuality and nature,
- (b) depends on the artist, who must also be considered as a nature in his own right.

The object is thus placed in front of the imagination by a *third* party; but how is it possible that the nature of the object is still represented as pure and determined through itself, given that the material in which it is imitated and the artist who works on the material both possess their own natures, and act through them?

The object dispenses with its vitality and is not present itself, a completely foreign matter has taken over its cause, and it now depends on this foreign matter for how much of the object's individuality is saved or lost.

Now, the foreign nature of the matter steps *between* object and imitation and not only it, but also the equally foreign nature of the artist who must give the matter its form. And each of these things necessarily acts according to their nature.

Thus there are three natures which grapple with one another: the nature of the object to be depicted, the nature of the matter depicting the object and the nature of the artist which is supposed to bring the other two into harmony.

But it is merely the nature of the imitated object which we expect to find in the product of art; and this is the meaning of the phrase that it should be presented to the imagination as self-determining. But as soon as either the nature of the *material* or that of the *artist* enters, the depicted object is no longer determined through itself and instead there is heteronomy. The nature of the depicted thing suffers violence from the depicting matter as soon as the latter makes use of its nature in depicting the thing. An object may thus only be termed *freely depicted* if the nature of the depicted object has not suffered from the nature of the depicting matter.

The nature of the medium or the matter must thus be completely vanquished by the nature of the imitated [thing]. Now, it is merely the *form* of the imitated object which must be transferred; it is thus the form which must win over the matter in artistic depiction.

In an artwork, the *matter* (the nature of the imitating [object]) must lose itself in the *form* (the imitated [object]), the *body* in the *idea*, the *reality* in the *appearance*.

*The body in the idea:* for the nature of the imitated object is nothing bodily in the imitating material; it exists merely as an idea in the latter and everything which is bodily in the artwork belongs only to it and not to the imitated object.

*Reality in appearance:* reality here means the *real*, which, in an artwork, can only ever be the *material* and must be set against the *formal* or the *idea* which the artist must effect on the material. Form in an artwork is mere appearance, that is, marble *seems* to be a person, but remains, in reality, marble.

The depiction would thus be free if the nature of the medium were to appear as completely annihilated by the nature of the imitated object, if

the *imitated* object could maintain its personality even in its representative, if the representative seems to have been completely replaced by shedding or by *denying* its own nature – in short, if nothing is through material and everything is through form.

If the carved column reveals its origin in stone even in a single mark, which originates not from the idea but from the nature of the material, its beauty suffers; for there is heteronomy. The nature of marble which is hard and brittle, must fully disappear into the nature of flesh which is flexible and soft and neither feeling nor the eye may be reminded of its disappearance. If a single stroke of the pen or the pencil, the paper or the copper plate, the brush reveals the hand which leads it, [the drawing] becomes *hard* or *heavy*; if it reveals the *specific taste* of the artist, the nature of the artist, it is *mannerly*. The depiction becomes ugly if the movement of the muscle (in a copper plate) suffers because of the hardness of the metal or the heavy hand of the artist, for here it is determined not by the idea but by the medium. If the specificity of the depicted object suffers because of the intellectual peculiarity of the artist, we say that the depiction is mannerly.

The opposite of this *manner* is *style*, which is none other than the highest degree of independence from all subjectively and objectively contingent determinations in depiction.

The essence of the good style is *pure objectivity*: the highest principle of the arts.

‘Style is to manner as the type of action from formal principles is to action from empirical maxims (subjective principles). Style rises completely above the contingent to the universal and necessary.’ (But this explanation of style already includes the *beauty of choice*, which we will leave for later.)

The great artist, one could say, shows the object (its depiction is purely objective), the mediocre artist shows himself (his depiction is subjective), and the bad artist shows his material (his depiction is determined by the nature of the medium and by the limitations of the artist). All of these three cases become clearer in the case of the actor.

1. When Ekhof or Schröder play Hamlet, their persons behave towards their *role* as matter to form, as the body to the idea, as reality to appearance. Ekhof was the marble out of which his genius formed Hamlet, and his (the actor’s) person was completely submerged in the artistic person of Hamlet because only the *form* (the character Hamlet) and not the *matter* (nowhere

the real person of the actor) was noticeable – the fact that everything in him was pure form (only Hamlet) permits one to say that he acted beautifully. His depiction was full of style, *first* because it was completely objective and did not include any subjective elements; and *second* because it was objectively necessary, not merely contingent (more of this later).

2. When Madame Albrecht plays Ophelia one sees the nature of the matter (the person of the actress) and not the pure nature of what is to be depicted (the person Ophelia), but a wilful idea of the actress. For she has made it her subjective maxim to depict the pain, the madness and the nobleness of the character without concern for whether this depiction is objective or not. She has only shown *manner* and not *style*.

3. When Mr Brückl plays a king, one can see the nature of the medium dominate its form (the role of the king), for in every action the actor (the material) is apparent in all of his disgustingness and amateurishness. One sees the low effect of the *lack* of ability at once, for the artist (here the understanding of the actor) is unable to form the matter (the body of the actor) according to the idea. The performance is miserable because it makes both the nature of the material and the subjective limitations of the artist clearly visible.

In drawing and the plastic arts it is obvious enough how much the depicted nature suffers if the nature of the material is not fully dominated. But it might be more difficult to apply this principle to *poetic* depiction as well, which must be derived from it. I will try to give you an idea of this.

Here too, you must remember, we are speaking not of *beauty of choice* but merely of *beauty in depiction*.

It is presupposed that the poet already grasped the whole objectivity of his object in his imagination *truly*, *purely* and *completely* – the object stands before his soul *ideally* (that is, turned into pure form), and all that is now left to be done is for it to be *depicted outside of him*. This will require that the object in his mind does not suffer heteronomy from the nature of the medium which is to depict it.

The poet's medium is *words*; abstract signs [*Zeichen*] for types and species but never for individuals; and their relations are determined by *rules* of which *grammar* is the system. It does not present a problem that there is no *material* similarity (identity) between words and objects; for there is no similarity between a *carved pillar* and the *human being* depicted by it. But there is some difficulty in the mere *formal* similarity between words and things. The thing and its expression in words are connected

only contingently and arbitrarily (a few cases notwithstanding), merely related by agreement. However, this would be of little importance since the concern is not what the word is in itself but what image it conjures up. If there were only words or phrases which represent to us the most individual character of things, their most individual relations, – in short their whole objective particularity, it would be of little importance whether this came about due to *conventions* or through inner necessity.

But just this is the problem. Words as well as the conditional and connecting laws are very general things which do not serve as signs to *one* but to an infinite number of individuals. This problem is compounded in the case of naming *relations*, which are constituted according to rules and which are applicable to countless and completely different cases at once, and which can only be fitted to an individual representation through the operations of the understanding. The object to be depicted must thus *take a very long detour* through the abstract realm of concepts in which it loses much of its vividness (sensuous power) before it can be brought before the imagination and can be turned into an intuition. The poet has no other means than the artistic *construction of the universal* to depict the particular. ‘The lamp standing before me is falling over’ is such an individual case, which expresses a relation through general signs.

The *nature* of the medium, which the poet helps himself to, is thus made up of ‘the tendency to *universality*’ and thus conflicts with the description (which is its task) of the individual. Language places everything before the *understanding* but the poet must place (depict) everything before the *imagination*; the art of the poet wants *intuition*, language provides only *concepts*.

Language thus robs the object, with whose depiction it has been entrusted, of its sensory nature, of its individuality, and imposes its own quality (universality) which is foreign to the object. To make use of terminology, it mixes the nature of the thing depicting, an abstraction, with the nature of the thing which is to be depicted, something sensuous, and thus brings heteronomy into the depiction. The object is thus not determined by itself for the imagination, but is moulded through the genius of language, or it is only brought before the understanding; and thus it is either not depicted as free or it is not depicted at all but merely described.

If the poetic depiction is to be free, the poet must ‘*overcome language’s tendency to the universal by means of the highest art and vanquish matter* (words and their inflections and laws of construction) *through form*

(namely its application)'. The nature of language (this is its tendency to the universal) must completely subjugate itself under the form, the body must lose itself in the idea, the sign in the term and reality in appearance. The object to be depicted must step forth freely and victoriously from the depicting object in spite of all the chains of language and stand before the imagination in its whole truth, liveliness and personality. In a word: the beauty of poetic depiction is: *'free self-activity of nature in the chains of language'*.

(The continuation will follow with the next mail.)