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THE SHIFT FROM RATIONALITY TO IRRATIONALITY
IN GERMAN AESTHETIC THEORY:
KANT, SCHELLING, SCHOPENHAUER

A Dissertation Presented

by

GITA S. van HEERDEN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

February 1992

Department of Philosophy

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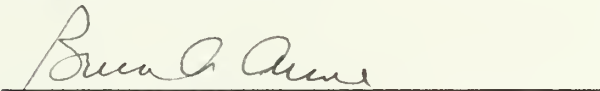
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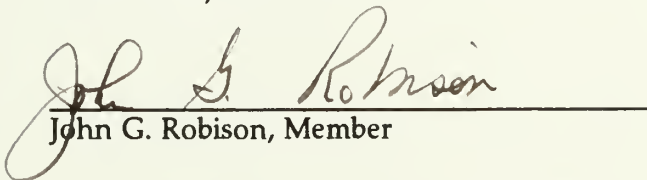
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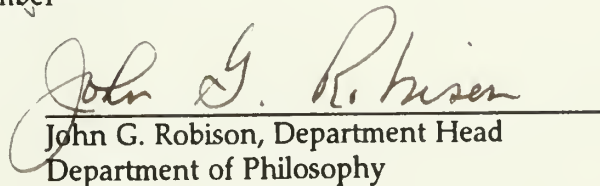
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ABSTRACT

THE SHIFT FROM RATIONALITY TO IRRATIONALITY
IN GERMAN AESTHETIC THEORY:
KANT, SCHELLING, SCHOPENHAUER

FEBRUARY 1992

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This dissertation studies the shift that occurs in German aesthetic theory between Kant's Critique of Judgment (1790) and Schopenhauer's The World as Will and Representation (1818), with Schelling's System of Transcendental Idealism (1800) forming the pivot. This shift is actually part of a much larger movement, and I have chosen aesthetic theory because it mirrors so well the changing focus of the essence of the self which takes place as post-Enlightenment German philosophers delve deeper into the question of what it means to be human.

Kant remains firmly rooted in the rationalist tradition, and provides for his successors both a foundation and the means to undermine it. He gives an explanation for the individual's response to a great work of art which relies on an account of how the mind functions. Schelling and Schopenhauer are deeply influenced by Kant, but regard the human self as containing some inexplicable mystery, an unconscious mythic unity with all other selves, for Schelling, and an irrational desiring will, for

Schopenhauer. Although Kant, too, unwillingly points to the evidence which suggests a non-rational basis for aesthetic response, as well as for an account of the self, he tries to avoid stating this result. By contrast, Schelling and Schopenhauer make this inexplicable aspect a basic premise of their respective works.

In this work, I rely mainly on the three primary texts, with the intent of making the complex arguments, in particular those of Kant and Schelling, more accessible to the reader. I examine first the cognitive theory of each thinker, and then study each one's aesthetic theory in relation to their respective theory of mind. In this way, I show how a decisive shift in focus has occurred in the period under consideration. In addition, I refer to a cross-section of recent literature to clarify and support my position.

The conclusion I draw is that philosophic self-understanding attains a completely new vantage point as the result of Schelling and Schopenhauer's work, a perspective which irrevocably changes the lines of debate about the nature of the self.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CJ	Kant, <u>Critique of Judgment</u>
CPR	Kant, <u>Critique of Pure Reason</u>
DHI	<u>Dictionary of the History of Ideas</u>
EP	<u>Encyclopedia of Philosophy</u>
HWP	<u>Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie</u>
JAAC	<u>Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism</u>
KU	Kant, <u>Kritik der Urteilskraft</u>
STI	Schelling, <u>System of Transcendental Idealism</u>
WWR	Schopenhauer, <u>The World as Will and Representation</u> , vol I
WWRII	Schopenhauer, <u>The World as Will and Representation</u> , vol II

CHAPTER I

A BRIEF HISTORY OF AESTHETIC PROBLEMS PRIOR TO *KANT'S CRITIQUE OF JUDGMENT* (1790)

A. Forward

The guiding concern of this work revolves around what it means to be a human being. This is a statement covering a generalization so broad as to be practically meaningless, and which must therefore be accompanied by a list of what this work is and what it is not. At its most ambitious, this work is an attempt to examine what philosophy is or has become and why it has been so internally divided, but primarily it is an attempt to uncover what it means to be a self. What I am engaged in here is a highly theoretical exercise, unencumbered by social or political baggage, without which, of course, the validity of the result remains qualified. More specifically, I am trying to uncover the roots of the twentieth century European self, for which I often use the shorthand and not entirely accurate adjective 'modern.' The thinkers I discuss are German, and their intellectual heritage is primarily German, British and French.

The vehicle I have chosen as the means by which to examine this self is aesthetic theory. The field of aesthetics occupies a unique interdisciplinary position. It refers both to the range of human expression revealed in works of art, and the individual response to such works. In other words, it tries to explain both how something makes us respond in certain ways, and why we respond. This response is essentially unquantifiable and reveals something about the essence of what it means to

how we view the human being. If we understand artworks as representing formal, rational interpretations of a given subject, we tend to view humans, at their best, as rational creatures. If we view artworks as manifesting a deep, unconscious truth of the nature of the self or world, we tend to view humans as being, at bottom, irrational and willful. In this work, I claim that a fundamental shift in European thought takes place at the beginning of the 19th century, and that this shift can be documented by an examination of the change in the nature of aesthetic theory.

During the course of writing this dissertation, several things grew increasingly clear to me. First of all, my response to my research became essentially one of conflict. The topic was almost too large to do sufficient justice to my claim, but at the same time I felt the need to expand the scope of the work. I resisted this temptation partially because of the constraints of space and time, but also because I began to regard the whole work as an introduction. To do justice to what I viewed as necessary required an explanation of the European historical and political situation, especially the fragmented nature of what would become Germany. It also required a detailed examination of German intellectual and artistic life, and the relationship between it and German society. A historical, political, economic and social background to a study of the artistic life in Germany, or even of Jena and Weimar, between 1790 and 1820, is clearly way beyond the scope of this work. Restricting myself to the relatively short aesthetic theories of three philosophers has been the result. While this work can be criticized for being both too specific and too general, it can also be viewed as a needed introduction to an area which has often been passed over in English language considerations of the history of European philosophy. It is in this spirit that I urge the reader to approach this work.

B. Dissertation Thesis

The fundamental shift in focus of European philosophy, which occurred around the turn into the 19th century, is the subject of this work. I concentrate on how this shift manifests itself in the area of aesthetics, and I measure the change, whose driving force was German thinkers, by examining the aesthetic theories of three influential philosophers: Kant, Schelling and Schopenhauer.

Prior to and including Kant, one finds a general belief in the existence of a firm, rational foundation on which models of the mind are constructed, and rules for art and human conduct are based. Within thirty years, however, the mystery of the unconscious and the capriciousness of the will have become the new foundation for theories of mind, conduct and art. By examining the mechanism of the change, I hope to come to a clearer understanding of the forces which have shaped late 19th and 20th century thought, although this is outside the scope of the present work. Here, the time frame under consideration is 1790 to 1818, from Kant's Critique of Judgment (1790) to Schopenhauer's The World as Will and Representation (1818), with Schelling's System of Transcendental Idealism (1800) forming the pivot.

The reason why I have chosen these particular philosophers is that each of them places the aesthetic realm at the pinnacle of his view of the world: something in aesthetic understanding enables one to achieve a moment of absolute truth. In addition, each of them has exercised a major influence on later philosophers. Schelling is the least well-known to an English-speaking audience, but within the community of German-speakers, he is generally given more weight than Schopenhauer, to the surprise of many English-speakers, for Schopenhauer is one of the few German

philosophers whose work was made readily accessible to an English-speaking audience.

The question which Kant, Schelling and Schopenhauer pose is a dual one: what is the nature of the self? and what is the nature of the world? In addition, what is the relation between self and world? Each of them finds in the aesthetic experience a paradigmatic answer to the nature of self and world, although I do not mean to suggest that any of them come to a truly satisfactory or final conclusion. The study of aesthetics cannot be isolated from other aspects of philosophical thought, for to understand properly how one defines an aesthetic experience requires a prior definition of how one interprets the nature of subjectivity. The nature of subjectivity is, of course, the main focus of all post-Enlightenment philosophical thought, so that in a larger sense it is this problematic which I am studying, but under the constraint of limiting the scope of it to aesthetic theory. The way in which each of the three philosophers treats this problematic reflects the sea change underway in continental philosophical thought as it reformulates the nature of its subject matter in the wake of the Enlightenment.

Kant represents the point of view that there is a rational, explicable order to the phenomenon of beauty; Schelling sees aesthetic objects as reflecting the unknowable, irrational mystery at the center of the subject; Schopenhauer shows that all events in the world are inherently irrational, the physical manifestation of the capricious will which is the ground of all being, and only through aesthetic meaning can a glimmer of truth be revealed. All three share a particular view of the aesthetic object, of what we designate as 'beautiful,' which can best be expressed as *l'art pour l'art*. Or rather, the

artwork is there not so much purely for its own sake but because its creator, the genius, is able to reveal to us the most essential truth of who we are.

In order to have an appropriate framework, the question: "What is aesthetic theory?" must be answered. What does it mean for something to be beautiful, and why is this important? In short, why have I chosen aesthetic theory to calibrate the change I am studying? Philosophy reflects one's views of the world; it does not take place entirely in a vacuum. The field of aesthetics clearly relies on external standards, on works of art, as it tries to explain what is timeless about them. The changing explanations to a set conclusion: this thing, which we consider beautiful, moves us, reveal an underlying set of beliefs. It is this which interests me.

Aesthetics, as a philosophical field in its own right, irrevocably comes into being with Kant's Critique of Judgment. For the reader unfamiliar with the history and content of aesthetic theory, I begin my study with a review of both the nature of aesthetic problems and the history of aesthetics before the late 18th century, concentrating on classical sources and on the 17th and early 18th centuries. Without this background, limited as it must be given the constraints of space, the novelty of Kant's approach remains hidden. Without an adequate understanding of Kant, who synthesizes previous aesthetic theories in an innovative and masterful way, but at the same time provides the tools with which his successors undermine his grand theory of mind, ethics and aesthetics, the efforts of Schelling and Schopenhauer remain obscure because both of them are responding directly to Kant.

After this review, I outline Kant's theory of mind, without a knowledge of which his aesthetic theory remains rather opaque, for the position held by aesthetics within the critical philosophy is difficult to discern if one is unfamiliar with the terrain.

This is a pattern I follow in my treatment of Schelling and Schopenhauer, first reviewing their respective theories of mind, which are essentially theories of self, and then turning to their treatment of aesthetics. Only by this kind of approach can one form an adequate picture of the change under consideration.

Aesthetic theory is ostensibly about works of art, but it is also about one's interpretation of the nature of the self. Indeed, the interest of all three philosophers I consider is more directed towards understanding the human subject than to discussing artworks, although this aspect of aesthetic theory is not entirely neglected. This is a problem which plagues aesthetic theorists, for they try to present a general explanation of an area containing only unique examples. Consequently, the terms 'work of art' and 'artwork' are used with great frequency, but specific examples of works of art are rare. My study reflects this approach. Rather than concentrating on what it is that we can learn about particular works of art, I focus on what it is that we can learn about the nature of ourselves and how we view the world, as a result of how we react to an unspecified great work of art. It is the change in this thirty year period of how the human being understands herself, as measured by her response to the artwork, which is my interest.

This is a large topic, fraught with pitfalls. To avoid getting hopelessly bogged down, I examine each philosopher independently, and limit myself to the work I find most germane. When it is illuminating, I point out where, and how, one reacts to the other, but I do not draw a direct line from Kant to Schelling to Schopenhauer. The latter two certainly are responding to Kant, but Schopenhauer is not writing specifically with Schelling in mind. It is that their final judgments are similar, despite their differences, which is of interest. This, however, is the subject of the conclusion.

1. Note on terminology: aesthetics, philosophy of art and the theory of beauty

Aesthetic theory covers a wide range of topics. So as to define the contours of the domain, the distinction between aesthetics, philosophy of art and art criticism needs to be made. These terms are often conflated, which leads to general confusion. 'Art criticism' refers to the critical analysis and evaluation of specific works of art or genres of art, that is, of objects created by human beings which are considered to be works of art, for example painting and sculpture, as opposed to something purely functional. (Of course, purely functional things are sometimes turned into 'art,' but I do not yet want to get side-tracked into a discussion of what 'art' is.) The critical study of music and literature also belongs to this category. By contrast, the study of the concepts involved in the judgments of art criticism belong to the philosophy of art.

The philosophy of art is a sub-division of aesthetics, which is the study of all aesthetic experience. The difficult question of what aesthetic experience is, and what it means, also lies at the heart of this study. The nature of the beautiful is a category of aesthetic experience, and was, for most of the history of philosophical thought, the defining element of what aesthetic experience meant:

Die ästhetische Reflexion hat sich nicht an der Erscheinung der Kunst, sondern an der Erscheinung des Schönen entzündet; das ist das erste und folgenschwerste Ereignis der Geschichte der Ästhetik.¹

When one considers aesthetic theories in the eighteenth century, the confusion between aesthetics as the study of beauty and aesthetics as the study of art becomes deeper. Because of the vagueness of the concept of beauty and the insufficiency of

¹Alfred Baeumler, Ästhetik (Sonderausgabe aus dem Handbuch der Philosophie), München und Berlin: Verlag von R. Oldenbourg, 1934, p.3.

'beauty' to cover the growing realm of what was considered legitimate aesthetic experience, theoreticians of aesthetics began to change and widen their focus, with the result that: "Schönheit beschränkt sich nicht auf Kunst, während Kunst nicht ausschliesslich das Streben nach Schönheit ist."²

The relation of beauty to art has not always been mutually conditioned, but has often been coincident. Until the beginning of the 18th century, this had been the dominant situation in the West, but now the equation of beauty and art begins to fragment for a wide range of reasons. This is a significant problematic, and although it is not the main focus of this present study, it is important to bear in mind. It becomes increasingly central among Kant's successors as they struggle to define the nature of aesthetic experience. The complicating factor is that since the classical age, the study of beauty has belonged to metaphysics, whereas the study of artworks belonged to other disciplines. Literature, for example, belonged to rhetoric. It is the bringing together of two different types of studies which leads to the complex new field of aesthetics. Untangling the complicated interrelation between aesthetics, beauty and art proves to be a daunting task. Nevertheless, I shall try to point out some of the salient factors that have contributed to and influenced the interwoven tangle known as aesthetic theory, so as to give my focus on Kantian and post-Kantian aesthetics a frame of reference.

Theories of beauty cover a wide field of possible subject matter. Beauty can refer to external or internal qualities, to man-made or natural objects, to an ethical as well as an aesthetic sense. From the age of classical Greece through the Renaissance,

²Tatarkiewicz, Wlasylaw, "Ästhetik," Europäische Enzyklopädie zu Philosophie und Wissenschaft, Hg. von Hans-Jörg Sandkühler, (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1990), p.53.

the theories of beauty in Europe reflect a generally accepted view, called by Tatarkiewicz the Great Theory of European aesthetics.³ He claims that:

...there have been few theories in any branch of European culture which have endured so long or commanded such widespread recognition, and few which cover the diverse phenomena of beauty so comprehensively.

The essence of the theory relies on the assumption that "...beauty consists in...the proportion and arrangement of the parts..."⁴ The proportion theory of beauty successfully covers almost all interpretations of the nature of beauty until the 18th century, when "...the Great Theory was finally ousted by the combined pressure of empirical philosophy and romantic trends in art."⁵ This is not to say it disappeared, but it lost its dominant status.

What beauty and the aesthetic experience means undergoes a radical transformation in the 18th century: a shift takes place which moves the emphasis from an objective theory of beauty to the subjective nature of aesthetic experience. Aspects of the harmonious view of beauty remain integral to aesthetic theory, but the view itself is no longer paramount, for the shift from objective to subjective precludes the means to measure beauty. Shaftesbury (more of whom later), for example, while giving radical impetus to the new aesthetics by shifting the locus of the phenomenon to the subject, nevertheless maintains that it is symmetry in nature to which the creating genius is responding. Gradually, however, the psychological reactions of the viewer and the subjective response of the cognitive faculties come to supplant an

³See Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz, "The Great Theory of Beauty and its Decline," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, XXXI,2 (1972), pp. 165-180 (in future as JAAC). I rely substantially on the main thesis of this article.

⁴Both quotes from Tatarkiewicz, p.167.

⁵Tatarkiewicz, p.169.

objective presentation of beauty. Rather than a general theory of beauty, at the most there is now a general theory about how beauty is experienced:

Hitherto the central task had been to ascertain what properties in the object determine beauty; now it became a search for certain properties in the mind of the subject. And whereas classical theory had attributed the ability to discern beauty to the reason (if not simply to the sight or the hearing), eighteenth-century writers attributed it to the imagination..., to taste..., or, alternatively, postulated a special and distinct "sense of beauty." And the new concepts--imagination, taste, and sense of beauty--were hostile to the rationalism of the Great Theory.⁶

Nevertheless, the founders of the Great Theory, in particular Plato and Aristotle, still had a strong influence on the theoreticians of the 18th and 19th century. In order to see both the continuity as well as the break, a brief review of their contribution is in order before I examine the more direct precursors of Kant.

C. A brief history of aesthetics

1. The influence of classical aesthetics

Despite the fact that Platonic and Aristotelian theories about art have a different focus than the aesthetic theories of the 18th and 19th centuries, they identify certain issues or categories in works of art that are still salient:

A short list would include Plato's conceptions of the artist as the inspired madman, of art as a dangerous pastime, of artefacts as imitations of real things; Aristotle's conceptions of the poet as a maker, of an art work as structured analogously to a living organism, of the capacity of great art to deepen our understanding of life. Many of these notions have become absorbed into the ways we think about art, so that it is no longer necessary to label them as specifically Platonic or Aristotelian ideas.⁷

⁶Tatarkiewicz, p.175

⁷Eva Schaper, Prelude to Aesthetics (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1968) pp.13-14. This book provides an extremely lucid introduction to problems of aesthetics not only in their Platonic and Aristotelian form, but also to how these problems resurface in the late 18th century.

Although Plato is perhaps best known for his hostile attitude towards art and artists,⁸ his struggle to define what art is brings to light some basic assumptions still operative.

The distinction between art and knowledge, which we perhaps take for granted, is an important one which Plato adumbrated. In an age when knowledge was generally acquired by means of a social heritage handed down through constant repetition of poetry and stories, the difference between general ideas (which could be clarified and analyzed, which were philosophically manageable, so to speak) and poetic response was extremely murky. In order to achieve a clear level of discourse about the nature of thinking or proper behavior, a distinct line needed to be drawn between what one could know and what is outside that realm. Art is not knowledge, but how each is defined, and how the distinction between the two is drawn, raises a host of problems. Without considering these problems in any detail, we can say that the recognition that there is such a distinction is an important contribution to the organization of our thought processes. The strong condemnation of the role of the artist in the Republic rests on an assumption about what happens when this distinction is denied. How this critical distinction could be affirmed is not explored, Schaper suggests, because Plato's earlier examinations of it in the Ion led him to "...cast doubt on the very possibility of the distinction he considered essential".⁹ His inability satisfactorily to distinguish art from knowledge led Plato to suppress art as subversive and untrue.

The rock upon which a positive Platonic interpretation of artists and artworks founders is that of mimesis, of imitation. Plato's theory of Forms regards all things in

⁸See especially the Republic Books 6 and 10.

⁹Schaper, p.21.

the world as copies of an ideal, all things, that is, except artworks, which are second degree imitations, copies of copies. Because an art work has no real function, the imitation is solely for its own sake and it cannot have its own Form.¹⁰ These characteristics are regarded negatively by Plato, whose condemnation of art is passed down to posterity. Schaper notes that this is unfortunate because:

...despite Plato's own unfavourable conclusions, his insistence that art has no proper function, that it is useless, and, when mishandled, positively harmful, should be seen as one of the most powerful statements in the history of aesthetics. It has provided the momentum for thought about art as play, art as pure presentation, art without purpose and yet important, art as giving rise to pure enjoyment, and art as peculiarly recalcitrant to systematic analysis.¹¹

These qualities on which Plato placed negative worth are precisely the ones which Kant sees as positive, as providing the unique function which enables artworks to bridge the gap between nature and freedom. Plato decided against art because he measured art by the standard of knowledge and found it inadequate.

Aristotle, while accepting in principle the major distinctions made by Plato, found a positive interpretation for mimetic art, in particular, poetry. The central issues raised by Plato and negatively judged by him are interpreted quite differently by Aristotle; they continue to occupy an important position in aesthetic study. Among them are "...the nature of artistic creation, the structure of the work of art, and the character of the impact of and reaction to art."¹² Aristotle's *Poetics*, which has had a tremendous influence on the development of aesthetic and critical principles in

¹⁰As will be seen later, Schopenhauer discusses Plato's rejection of art at length, and attributes it to Plato's failure to recognize that the work of art mirrors the Idea, not the specific object.

¹¹Schaper, p.54.

¹²Schaper, p.57. For a more detailed background, consult Schaper's book. The notes are full of information and further bibliographical references.

Western thought, addresses these issues, but from a fundamentally different perspective, for:

...Aristotle redefined the distinction between art and knowledge, drastically re-interpreted the meaning of 'mimetic,' and supplied a different conceptual framework for his findings about the emotional effects of art.¹³

Aristotle's approach to the world, including art, is an organic one, whereas Plato sharply divides the physical world from the real world of Forms, an understanding of which one can attain only through pure contemplation. Because a work of art does not have, for Plato, an analogue in the world of Forms, it is incapable of presenting any form of truth and is consigned to the irrational.¹⁴ Aristotle does not maintain this division. While he agrees that artistic creation is very different from discursive reasoning, this only shows that the types of knowledge which result from the two activities are dissimilar. One is practical whereas the other is theoretical, but both can be rationally investigated. After all, it is the finished work and not the artistic process which is being investigated, and the work is available for rational analysis.

The concept of mimesis, or imitation, is central not only to Plato's and Aristotle's theory of art but to aesthetic theory for at least the next two thousand years. What is disputed is the way in which this imitation is understood. Plato ultimately took the stand that art is dangerous and damaging, primarily because of its mimetic qualities. The artist copies something that is already a copy, producing

¹³Schaper, p.58.

¹⁴Plato's condemnation of art requires a much more extended discussion. Of particular interest to me—especially in light of Schelling's emphasis on myth—is the apparent denigration of the irrational in art. Plato was certainly steeped in the religion/mythology of his day, which appears to call on some sort of non-rational power. Why was that acceptable, whereas art, in particular poetry, was not? This fascinating topic unfortunately cannot be treated in the scope of the present work.

something that is only derivatively real and not worthy of serious consideration, but which is capable of manipulating its audience in ways potentially harmful to the good of society. By contrast, Aristotle took imitation to be the heart of artistic endeavour, for it provided the link of relevance between art and life: for Aristotle, "...what art imitates is nature's productive activity."¹⁵ The imitation is not a lifeless copy but the creation of something new. Since everything is mimetic for Plato, artistic creation can find no proper or unique method; all it can do is reproduce something that is already a representation. By contrast, only art is mimetic for Aristotle. What art does is to produce or present something as if it were real:

...art works alone present to us what convinces, not through likeness to what already exists or has taken place, but because it might well be or have been. They convince by the internal coherence with which they present a fiction....They succeed when they show something as if it had taken place, as if it might be the case, as if it were real. In this sense of imitation and not in the copy sense, **mimesis** defines **poiesis**.¹⁶

Mimesis refers not to the activity of imitating but to the character of the work of art. The Aristotelian artist who practices mimesis is a maker who produces mimetic work, who imitates the possibilities of the world, not the world as it is; the Platonic artist who produces mimetic works has merely copied something else.

Although the above is an exceedingly cursory look at the origins of aesthetic analysis, what it does do is to introduce some of the main problems of aesthetics, problems with which Kant, Schelling and Schopenhauer all struggle. The 18th century is a turbulent time in the progression of aesthetic theory, as notions of beauty are relativized and subjectivized. Platonic and Aristotelian themes constantly resurface,

¹⁵Schaper, p.61.

¹⁶Schaper, p.61.

appearing in a remarkable array of disguises and mixtures. Some of the areas which remain influential in the development of aesthetic meaning in the 18th century, and thus directly affect Kant's struggle to re-interpret the nature of aesthetics, are as follows.

Plato denies art works and artists a place in his ideal society because he cannot justify the kind of knowledge produced or revealed by works of art. In doing so, Plato lays the foundation for the long struggle over the nature of the relation between cognitive and aesthetic knowledge which is a cardinal feature of later aesthetic theories. The relation between imitation and creation is another central feature of Platonic and Aristotelian thought. The Platonic idea that there is a dualistic world structure, a world of enduring perfection and one of physical appearance, is extremely influential up through Kant, who divides his world into a noumenal and phenomenal realm. Both Schelling and Schopenhauer respond specifically to the Kantian division of a noumenal and phenomenal world, and Schopenhauer draws directly on the Platonic world of Ideas to support his theory.

The emotional reaction of the spectator, which here has been hardly mentioned, is an area that develops in importance in the 17th and 18th centuries as the psychological and subjective reactions of the viewer become increasingly prominent in the search for the meaning of an aesthetic object or an aesthetic experience. The strength of this reaction, and the power which those who can provoke it hold, contributes greatly to Plato's determination that artists are dangerous. It underlines the moral component which is attached to works of art, for it is clear, to Plato at least, that a work of art can induce bad or undesirable behavior. The Platonic interpretation of the art work as not being necessarily useful or morally uplifting underscores two

aspects of works of art which remain problematic. Kant succeeds partially in cutting the artwork free from the requirements of utility and didactic intent, but even Kant is unable or unwilling to eliminate completely the moral aspect of art, as we will see. Aristotle, by contrast, interprets the reaction of the spectator as confirming that the creative making of the artist unveils some kind of meaning about life by revealing the form of the work under consideration. The form is what is intelligible, what allows us to understand what it means to be that kind of thing, and by extension, what it means to be a maker of such things. It gives us insight into ourselves. Both the idea that the artwork is an organic whole and the relation between form and content become prominent in both neo-classical thought and the Romantic Movement. Neo-Platonism and the rediscovery of Aristotle in the West bring these ancient ideas to life again, and they form a complicated interference pattern on the surface of 18th century aesthetic thought, making it difficult to see clearly the original source of the motion but nevertheless attesting to its presence. The issues which occupy Plato and Aristotle's interest in aesthetics are still lively in the late 17th and 18th centuries, and it is to the consideration of the mainstreams of aesthetic theorizing in that age which we now turn.

2. Neo-classical aesthetics (17th century France)

The most direct influence on Kant's thoughts on aesthetics as put forth in the Critique of Judgement are the different views on aesthetic questions propounded in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. All generalizations have exceptions; nevertheless, I shall generalize about the French, British and German influences on Kant, for he skillfully weaves together the different strands to present a new and

distinct theory of aesthetics. French neo-classicism provides the material against which the British and Germans react. It follows in the rational tradition of Tatarkiewicz's Great Theory of perfect and proportional arrangement, and therefore does not provide too much insight into how the turbulence in 18th century thought arose. Although neo-classicism represents theories of beauty that are no longer considered acceptable or of interest, the overcoming of this approach poses a challenge which needs to be met. The British reaction against the neo-classical tradition is two-fold: intuitionism, as presented by Shaftesbury; and empiricism, represented here by David Hume. These movements had numerous other proponents as well, but Shaftesbury and Hume appear to have had the most direct influence on Kant. The German emphasis on rational systematic philosophy is epitomized by the views of Baumgarten, whom Kant held in high esteem. I begin with a review of neo-classicism, and then turn to the more direct influences on Kant.

Descartes (1596-1650) left a powerful legacy for the humanities in general, not just for epistemological thought. Although he did not put forth an aesthetic theory, his search for clear and distinct ideas, rigorous deduction of concepts and the intuitive certainty held by his basic principles all influenced the neo-classical tradition of aesthetic theory. This approach generally maintained that artists should follow the models provided by classical writers, in particular Aristotle. In addition, the influence of Cartesian rationalism gave impetus to:

...the hope that these rules could be given a more solid, a priori, foundation by deduction from a basic self-evident axiom, such as the principle that art is imitation of nature--where nature comprised the universal, the normal, the essential, the characteristic, the ideal.¹⁷

¹⁷Monroe C. Beardsley, "History of Aesthetics" in *EP*, vol 1-2, pp.24-5.

Truth, beauty, reason and nature are but different expressions of the same thing, of an inviolate order of being revealed through art and natural science. Only after immersing herself in the laws of nature can the artist begin to create, for without an understanding of how nature works, she cannot imitate the truth found there.

The neo-classical approach to art reflects a mechanistic world view, in which everything operates like a large clock and no piece of the machinery is independent; all the parts are strictly regulated by an exact and unchanging set of rules.¹⁸ The function of the artist is to uncover these rules, for it is assumed that the work of art conveys knowledge and should be used for didactic purposes. This mimetic understanding of art is imbued with a strong moral component and is a mixture of Aristotelian and Platonic strains of thought:

This time-honoured maxim of neo-classical art theory was generally associated with an imitative view of art which differed considerably from Aristotle's interpretation of artistic *mimesis*. His theory had been mainly flattened out into a theory of art as skilled reflection of nature in its general or universal aspects, and of human nature in so far as this could be formulated in terms of the typical. Furthermore, the view that art is the imitation of human nature for instruction and delight placed a strong emphasis on the morally worth while and even ideal aspects of that which was thought to be imitated. It could thus maintain that art was capable of imparting a kind of knowledge which might otherwise be missed. In addition, one of the Platonic senses of 'imitation' had

¹⁸Heinrich von Stein describes this process poetically:

"Eine litterarische und ursprünglich rein sprachliche Tendenz, die Richtung auf das Korrekte; und eine Tendenz des philosophischen Denkens, die auf feste prinzipielle Normen dringende Vernunft: diese vereinigen sich, wie zwei gleich gerichtete Wasserläufe zu einem schiffbaren Flusse zusammenströmen. Diese Form der Intelligenz, welche das denkende und schreibende Frankreich, als eine Erbschaft des grossen Zeitalters, für seine ferneren Aufgaben mitbringt, nennen wir (nach Taine) den klassischen Geist."

See Die Entstehung der neueren Ästhetik (Stuttgart: Verlag der Cotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1886) p.55. The chapter on "Der klassische Geist" gives both a good introduction to this period and illuminates the relation between French and German ways of thinking.

strongly reasserted itself: art works were thought to appeal to the imitative capacities of audiences, spectators, and readers.¹⁹

The circle is established that good art imitates that which is morally good, and we in turn imitate that which art teaches us. The function of art is to provide a moral guide for the spectator.

Most works of art of the neo-classical tradition imply an underlying order, something which is imposed on the world and which is not human in origin.²⁰ Consequently, it is assumed that the work of art itself will have no traces of the individual, subjective elements of the artist's personality. During the process of creation the artistic impulse is, of course, subject-driven, but once the work is completed it possesses perfection and objective truth. Art is not governed by the imagination, but by a purely objective law, a law which the artist does not invent but must discover in the nature of things. The neo-classical genius is marked by the keen powers of observation required by this strictly regulated scheme:

Neither the artist nor the natural scientist creates order; they merely ascertain what "is." To be bound to these existing forms and to be obliged, as it were, to follow their laws, is no obstacle for genius; for it is only in this way that genius is protected against arbitrariness and enabled to attain the only possible form of artistic freedom.²¹

Neo-classical aesthetics fulfills the role of being a corollary to true beauty and to truth; all one has to do is know the rules, and everything falls into place.

¹⁹Schaper, p. 121.

²⁰For a more detailed overview, see Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of the Enlightenment, trans. Koelln and Pettegrove (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), pp. 275-297. Examples of the neo-classical approach include: Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, L'Art poétique (1674); Alexander Pope, Essay on Criticism (1711); Jean Philippe Rameau, Traité de l'harmonie réduite à ses principes naturels (1722); and Abbé Charles Batteux, Les Beaux Arts réduits à un même principe (1746).

²¹Cassirer, p. 290.

The strict, mechanistic neo-classical tradition comes under increasing criticism during the progression of the 18th century. It is finally superseded, as a result of Kant's synthesis of the ever harsher attacks against the rigidity of the neo-classical structure, by a more organic view of the nature of aesthetics. Three main alternative interpretations of the nature of beauty or of aesthetics help bring about this demise, two from Great Britain and the other from Germany. The British challenge, reflecting two rival theories, is the more substantially serious one and in this respect ultimately the more significant of the two, although Kant skillfully weaves it together with the systematic formalism of the German approach. It is the British contribution which I now examine.

3. British aesthetic thought in the 18th century

Two parallel movements in British thought influence the course of aesthetic theory: the proponents of the 'inner sense' school and the empiricists. The movements begin with different emphases and slowly start to exert a reciprocal authority on each other as the question of taste gains prominence. If one is to avoid an aesthetic relativism, some standard of measure must be found by which to gauge the beauty of an object. The standard of taste, which initially is understood as a moral force, takes the place of the proportion theory of beauty, whose standard was based on the precise, strictly regulated arrangements of the parts. I begin with a review of Shaftesbury and his doctrine of inner sense. Then, although the early empiricists (Bacon (1561-1626) and Locke (1632-1704)) were predecessors or contemporaries of Shaftesbury (1671-1713), I consider the later empiricist, David Hume (1711-1776). Hume had a significant influence on Kant (1724-1804), and, additionally, Hume's aesthetic

theory is strongly influenced by Shaftesbury's successor Francis Hutcheson (1694-1747).²² What I try to show is how Hume takes from Shaftesbury (and Hutcheson) and yet presents important differences, which Kant in turn further develops by removing taste, and aesthetics in general, from the moral realm. Although Kant made a huge advance in the creation of an independent field of aesthetics, in the end he is unable to resist the moral imperative and subordinates aesthetics to moral law. The changing role of the imagination is as important as the struggle to re-interpret taste. This contribution comes primarily from the empiricists.

a. Shaftesbury and the intuitionists. Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, is credited with having had a great influence on the development of aesthetics, in particular because of the notion of 'disinterestedness,' which first makes its appearance in his writings.²³ Shaftesbury was certainly familiar with the empiricist debates current at the time, for Locke himself was in charge of Shaftesbury's

²²See William H. Halberstadt, "A Problem in Hume's Aesthetics," *JAAC*, XXX,2, (1971), pp.209-14; and Carolyn W. Korsmeyer, "Hume and the Foundations of Taste," *JAAC*, XXXV,1 (1976), pp.201-15, for Hutcheson's influence on Hume. In the interest of time and space, I do not concentrate on Hutcheson; although he refined Shaftesbury's ideas, the latter still remains the source.

²³Shaftesbury is credited by Jerome Stolnitz, among others, with introducing the concept of 'disinterestedness.' See: J. Stolnitz, "On the Significance of Lord Shaftesbury in Modern Aesthetic Theory," *The Philosophical Quarterly* II,43 (April, 1961, 97-113; "On the Origins of 'Aesthetic Disinterestedness,'" *JAAC*, XX,2 (1961), 131-43; "Beauty: Some Stages in the History of an Idea," *Journal of the History of Ideas* XXII,2 (April-June, 1961), 185-204. While agreeing that Stolnitz offers a strong contribution to the understanding of Shaftesbury, the following articles argue that Stolnitz has exaggerated Shaftesbury's contributions and has used them in a misleading fashion to further his own claims about the origins of modern aesthetics: Dabney Townsend, "Shaftesbury's Aesthetic Theory," *JAAC*, XLI,2 (1983), 205-213; David A. White, "The Metaphysics of Disinterestedness: Shaftesbury and Kant," *JAAC*, XXXII,2 (1973) 239-248. I try to thread a middle course.

education,²⁴ but he was more interested in the question of morality and metaphysics. Shaftesbury maintains that morality is independent of religion and that human beings are naturally virtuous; without the control of religion it is not the case that a Hobbesian war of all against all will ensue. Each individual is endowed with a moral sense that is a guide to virtuous action. From his writings on morality comes the idea that in aesthetic considerations, one can respond positively with a feeling that is disinterested, although, of course, one can also respond with an appropriate interest.²⁵ While this is not the main focus of Shaftesbury's writings, the introduction of 'disinterestedness' is a first attempt to isolate what will become the field of aesthetics from traditional notions of beauty.

In many ways, Shaftesbury remains firmly rooted in classical tradition. His metaphysical view is Platonic in its superstructure, with the mind superior to inanimate objects and Mind superior to individual minds:

For we ourselves are notable architects in matter, and can show lifeless bodies brought into form, and fashioned by our own hands, but that which fashions even minds themselves, contains in itself all the beauties fashioned by those minds, and is consequently the principle, source, and fountain of all beauty.²⁶

The relationship between the Good and Beauty is also basic to his position: "I am ready enough to yield there is no real good beside the enjoyment of beauty. And I am as

²⁴See Elmar Sprague, "Shaftesbury, Third Earl of" in *EP*, Vol. 7-8, pp.428-430.

²⁵Townsend's opinion on the importance of this concept for Shaftesbury is, that despite Stolnitz's "...sympathetic and often perceptive reading...it is essentially a way of assimilating [Shaftesbury's] writings to the thought of those who come after him," (p. 205) viz. Burke, Addison, Alison, Hutcheson. In general, however, I follow Stolnitz's lead.

²⁶Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. John M. Robertson (Indianapolis, 1964), "The Moralists, A Philosophical Rhapsody," Vol. II, pp. 132-33. All italics omitted.

ready...to yield there is no real enjoyment beside what is good."²⁷ Shaftesbury does not consider aesthetics from the point of view of the work of art, but rather as part of the answer to a question about character: what is the nature of the law which fashions the inward personal world? He maintains an equivalence between beauty and truth, and understands truth as signifying the inner intellectual structure of the universe. This can only be immediately experienced and intuitively understood by means of a disinterested internal sense. It cannot be known solely through concepts or inductive experience. The phenomenon of the beautiful is the means by which one can grasp this inner structure, and the discovery of this creative source allows for the synthesis between subject and object, the self and the world, the human individual and God.

Intuitive understanding is considered by Shaftesbury to be superior to both reason and experience, for only through it, by moving from the whole to the parts rather than the other way around, is the depths of the aesthetic world made accessible to human comprehension. The value of beauty does not lie in its emotional effect but in the fact that it reveals the realm of form. In order for form to be understood it must be made an independent object of aesthetic consideration and thus distinguished from its effect. One can sense the beautiful, and one can intuit it. The sensation results in an emotional effect, whereas the intuition arises only from a contemplation that is not passive but which is pure activity of the soul. This distinction between mere sensation and feeling, between emotional response and pure intuition, is the foundation of the doctrine of aesthetic disinterestedness which will fundamentally change the nature of aesthetic theory, especially after Kant reworks and finishes it. Although it is left to

²⁷Shaftesbury, "The Moralist...", p.141

Shaftesbury's followers to elaborate on this doctrine and its consequences, he can be appropriately credited with providing the idea.

A closer look at the concepts of 'taste' and 'interest,' which play such an important role in 18th century aesthetics, can help show Shaftesbury's pathbreaking contribution to the change their respective meanings undergo. Until Kant gave it a new definition, taste was considered to be an element of moral education; Shaftesbury's reading of it is no exception.²⁸ Taste is formed by judgment (whereas for Kant it is the basis of judgment) and is open to dispute. While it can lead us to virtue and beauty it can also mislead us. The roots of taste, like everything else aesthetic, lie in the moral; good taste must be learned and controlled. Townsend comments that:

While taste remains more firmly tied to moral and aesthetic values and judgments than in later theories, Shaftesbury has broken decisively with the neo-Platonic tendency to remove beauty from contact with real emotions and judgments. Real art--not the heightened artificialities of Renaissance neo-Platonism--is the object of good taste and thus of the moral man. And art itself, and not its rejection...is a proper subject for character.²⁹

Like taste, disinterestedness also refers to a moral (and thus aesthetic) sense. In opposition to 'interest,' which can have the connotation of the private and self-serving, 'disinterest' is more a public sense and connotes a selfless truth-seeking. Stolnitz notes that: "A man is 'disinterested' now, when he takes no thought for any consequences

²⁸For a background on the history of taste see: Giorgio Tonelli, "Taste in the History of Aesthetics from the Renaissance to 1770," in *DHL*, vol. IV, pp. 253-357; and F. Schümmer, "Geschmack," in *HWP*, Band 3, pp. 444-456. In addition, Gadamer also gives a brief background in *Truth and Method*, translation edited by G. Barden and J. Cumming, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1985, pp.33-39.

²⁹Townsend, pp.210-11.

whatsoever."³⁰ Townsend suggests that a primary motive for Shaftesbury in coining the term 'disinterested' is "...the refutation of Hobbes' claims that all actions are interested in the sense of egoistic."³¹

In general, though, Shaftesbury is more concerned with 'interest,' more precisely with true interest, with the important caveat that interest is separated from our passions. What concerns him more than both interest and disinterest is that there is a proper moral order:

We are thus brought back to Shaftesbury's passion for a kind of moral order which the self can discover for itself. Far from disinterestedness or taste being the basis for such an order, they are only possible according to Shaftesbury as a result of it. Art, soliloquy, self-expression, and the test of public criticism and experience are the only ways that this order can be discovered...³²

The neo-classical view of beauty is closely bound up with moral aspects, and this comes through quite clearly in most of what Shaftesbury has to say on the topic.

Likewise, disinterestedness is almost always presented with moral or religious virtues, with moral character or geometric proof. Stolnitz, however, can cite one passage in a late work where aesthetic perception is not tied to all the traditional baggage. Instead, it refers to scenes in nature, specifically a view of the beauty of the ocean. Stolnitz states:

What is new in the passage is that Shaftesbury opposes disinterestedness to the desire to possess or use the object. This way of putting it is widely adopted in later British thought and in modern aesthetics generally. It may therefore be worth pointing out that disregard for possession or use is only an inference from or a specification of the broader proposition that the aesthetic spectator

³⁰Stolnitz, "On the Origins of 'Aesthetic Disinterestedness,'" p.133.

³¹Townsend., p.211.

³²Townsend, p.212.

does not relate the object to any purposes that outrun the act of perception itself.³³

Although it seems clear that Shaftesbury's successors did indeed play a much larger role in disseminating the idea of disinterestedness, especially with regard to pure aesthetic experience, his pioneering use of the term opened the gates to a new way of thinking about aesthetics and art.

Shaftesbury also makes a novel contribution in the concept of the genius. Historically, 'genius' referred primarily to what we might call today a special talent.³⁴ It was only in the 18th century that the irrational aspect of genius was stressed. Tonelli notes that for Shaftesbury, "...a genius is a person who is able to create as nature does: and nature is a revelation of the universal spirit. Therefore a genius is considered as a second deity, or as a Prometheus."³⁵ Shaftesbury required that the genius respect the rules of art and the requirements of good sense; the genius cannot simply be an uncontrolled, irrational person. What is novel in Shaftesbury's approach is the shift away from genius as a purely intellectual quality to an intuitive one.

Shaftesbury's vision of the genius as one capable of the intuitive understanding of the organic unity of nature lets him promulgate a new form of imitation for the artist, in contrast to the form which tried to copy the surface appearance of things and

³³Stolnitz, "On the Origins...", p.134.

³⁴For a history of the concept of genius, see Giorgio Tonelli's articles: "Genie" in HWP, Band III pp. 279-308; and "Genius from the Renaissance to 1770" in DHI, Vol. II, pp. 293-297. Also in DHI: Rudolf Wittkower, "Genius: Individualism in Art and Artists," Vol. II, pp. 297-312. I quote from the latter article: "...[O]ne must be careful not to confuse talent with genius. The qualities with which the term "genius" has been invested ever since the mid-eighteenth century, such as spontaneity, outstanding originality, and exceptional creativity were not implied in the Latin **ingenium** and the Italian **ingegno**, meaning natural disposition, i.e. talent" (p. 305).

³⁵Tonelli, "Genius...", in DHI, vol. II, p. 294.

which was censured by Plato as disenfranchising art in the philosophical sense.

Cassirer explains that for Shaftesbury:

Art is not imitation in the sense that it is content with the surface of things and with their mere appearance, and that it attempts to copy these aspects as faithfully as possible. Artistic "imitation" belongs to another sphere and, so to speak, to another dimension; it imitates not merely the product, but the act of producing, not that which has become, but the process of becoming.³⁶

The characteristic of the genius lies in the ability to immerse oneself in this process.

The role of the genius assumes a central position in Shaftesbury's aesthetic theory, for it is precisely the fact that the process is hidden and must be intuitive which he views as the key to aesthetic value. To praise the genius for her intuitive capability is far removed from earlier views of genius. These tended to regard the quality of genius on a par with reason, and as limited to the realm of the pure intellect. After Shaftesbury, genius is reserved for the creative forces. The rise of the so-called cult of the genius strongly influences both the nature of the basic problems in 18th century German intellectual history, and the founders of aesthetics as a field in its own right.

Additionally, the cult of genius has a tremendous impact on what becomes the Romantic Movement.

The relationship between beauty and truth is not, for Shaftesbury, a causal one; it involves the essence of nature and art and not the temporal creations. Although in his view, art is strictly confined to nature, this does not mean that for him, art is limited to copying the world of empirical objects. Rather, the deeper sense of nature is the creative power from which the form and order of the universe are derived. The creation of the genuine artist, the genius, is thus not merely a product of his subjective imagination but an expression of an inner necessity and law. The form which genius

³⁶Cassirer, p.317.

produces is the law of nature, with which it is in complete harmony. Genius contains nature and truth within itself, and as long as it remains true to itself will always be in contact with them. Shaftesbury thus maintains a principle of subjectivity in aesthetics in contrast to the imitation of nature demanded by the classical school. His conception of what a subject is, also differs from that of the empiricists. Rather than being a bundle of perceptions, a subject is, according to him, an indivisible unity which gives us immediate insight into the fundamental form of the cosmos.³⁷

Both the 'inner-sense' school and the empiricists approached aesthetic questions from the point of view of the subject rather than the composition of the object, but as just stated, they do not share the same idea of what constitutes a subject. The empirical subject is not something that tries to apprehend the unity of the cosmos in the world around her, but rather something that tries to understand how her mind creates the objects in the world which she is apprehending. The interest in the psychology of art and the emotional appeal art has for the viewer is a form of this practical consideration of the nature of the world, in which the power of the imagination plays a new and exalted role.³⁸

³⁷Kant was well aware of Shaftesbury's contribution to the concept of genius and the truth it reveals. Cassirer notes:

Shaftesbury's conception of truth implies this "nature in the subject" rather than the mere objectivity of facts and things, and makes it the norm of beauty. When Kant in his Critique of Judgment defines genius as that talent (natural gift) which gives to art its rule, he follows his own path in his transcendental exposition of this proposition; but with respect to content alone Kant's definition is in complete agreement with Shaftesbury and the principles and presuppositions of the latter's "intuitional aesthetics."

Philosophy of the Enlightenment, p. 327.

³⁸Among those who discuss the imagination and the association of ideas see: Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan (1651); John Locke, Essay Concerning Human Understanding (4th ed., 1700); David Hume, Treatise of Human Nature (1739-40); David Hartley, Observations on Man (1749).

b. Hume and the empiricists. The imagination had long been recognized as playing a role in artistic creation, but it had been considered an inferior faculty, remote from knowledge claims. Francis Bacon, in Advancement of Learning (1605), accelerated the acknowledgment of the increasing powers of imagination by placing it alongside the faculties of memory and reason. Initially, the ability of imagination to bring about the association of ideas is regarded as a negative, almost pathological, tendency that only leads to confusion. Certainly the Rationalists, led by Descartes, had no interest in imagination. However, the unique ability to associate ideas gradually overcame the deep distrust, directed against the imagination, which was prevalent in the 17th century. Whereas Hobbes and Locke exhibit this distrust, Hume discerns a powerful role for the imagination, although at the same time repeatedly noting that "...the ideas of the memory are much more lively and strong than those of the imagination..."³⁹ Despite the more vibrant quality of memory, Hume considers the imagination as that faculty which guarantees the empirical evidence of causal synthesis:

...’tis evident that the belief arises not merely from the transference of past to future, but from some operation of the fancy conjoin’d with it. This may lead us to conceive the manner, in which that faculty enters into all our reasonings.⁴⁰

For a short introduction, see "Imagination" in EP, vol.3-4, pp.136-8. For a lengthy analysis of the concept, see Richard Kearney, The Wake of Imagination. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

³⁹David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, vol.1, in: David Hume: The Philosophical Works, ed. T.H. Green & T.H. Grose, vol 1, Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1964 (reprint of the new edition London 1886), p.317.

⁴⁰Hume, A Treatise..., p. 437. For Hume’s discussion on imagination, which he uses interchangeably with fancy, and memory, see Book I, Part 1, section 3; Part 3, especially sections 5-13 (pp.385-450); Part 4, section 2 (pp. 487-8).

Through the independence of the imagination, individual experiences can be brought together in memory to form a coherent picture, so that not only the appearance of causal connection but also the apparent continuity between the past and the future can be maintained. Because of the inaccessibility of the mechanism of this process for consciousness, the imagination appears to possess objective validity, even though its origin is subjective. Kant in turn gives the imagination a prominent position by making it essential both to cognitive knowledge and, in a slightly different form, to aesthetic knowledge.

This increasing prominence given to the imagination reveals the turn towards the human subject as the source of knowledge. The inherent and obvious nature of things is no longer the lawgiver of aesthetic objectivism, for the nature of the human being has superseded it. This tendency towards subjectivism, towards finding the answers to the world within the human self, becomes the mode by which epistemology and psychology as well as aesthetics seek further knowledge:

The **mimetic** paradigm of imagining is replaced by the **productive** paradigm. No longer viewed as an intermediary agency--at best imitating some truth beyond man--imagination becomes, in modern times, the immediate source of its own truth. Now imagination is deemed capable of inventing a world out of its human resources, a world answerable to no power higher than itself. Or to cite the canonical metaphor, the imagination ceases to function as a mirror reflecting some external reality and becomes a lamp which projects its own internally generated light onto things.⁴¹

The problem which now comes to the fore is how aesthetics can be prevented from sliding into relativism, for without a rational justification imposed from without there is a great difficulty in claiming general agreement, let alone universality. If all one can count on is empirical evidence, how can aesthetic judgments be explained?

⁴¹Kearney, The Wake of Imagination, p.155.

The concept of taste is brought in to cover the gulf left by the removal of an objective justification of aesthetics. Taste is a troublesome notion, referring to a kind of sense shared by everyone. When Kant begins his discussion of taste, he gives it a primarily aesthetic meaning. This is a new approach, for taste had historically been treated as a moral standard:

...the idea of taste was originally more a moral than an aesthetic idea. It describes an ideal of genuine humanity and its character is due to the effort to take a critical stand against the dogmatism of the 'school'. It was only later that the use of the idea was limited to the aesthetic.⁴²

The establishment of taste as central to aesthetic judgments removes the power of the aesthetic theorist to set which rules the artist must follow and the spectator must appreciate; instead, aesthetics has become the mirror in which both artist and spectator are reflected and in which they can recognize who they are based on their fundamental experiences. The reaction to this reflection is controlled by the phenomenon of taste, which is something that cannot be learned but is like a pure act of perception. The concept of taste preoccupies Kant, and will be examined in detail in that chapter, as will the imagination, which, perhaps not surprisingly, is closely linked to the concept of taste.

David Hume, whose epistemological argument on the problematic nature of causal connection had done so much to inspire Kant to rethink his Critique of Pure Reason, was also interested in the question of the standard of taste as it related to aesthetic matters, and can perhaps elucidate some of the problems posed by taste. Hume, not well-known for his views on aesthetics, clearly reveals the problems raised by a subjectivist aesthetics. On the one hand, Hume claims that beauty is not a

⁴² Gadamer, p.33.

property of objects but signifies the pleasure that human beings feel in given circumstances, thus pointing in the direction of a relativism based on individual feeling: "Beauty is no quality in things themselves: it exists merely in the mind which contemplates them; and each mind perceives a different beauty"⁴³ and:

To seek the real beauty, or real deformity, is as fruitless an inquiry, as to pretend to ascertain the real sweet or real bitter. According to the disposition of the organs, the same object may be both sweet and bitter; and the proverb has justly determined it to be fruitless to dispute concerning tastes...⁴⁴

On the other hand, he definitely considered certain tastes preferable to others, indicating a standard of some sort:

It is natural for us to seek a **Standard of Taste**; a rule by which the various sentiments of men may be reconciled; at least a decision afforded confirming one sentiment, and condemning another.⁴⁵

This hedging gives rise to the oft-cited comment by Katherine Gilbert that Hume: "...had a refractory tendency to rejoin, after a short independent journey, the well-worn highroad of seventeenth-century reason and neoclassic taste."⁴⁶ However, Korsmeyer argues that despite the apparent ambiguity present in "Of the Standard of Taste," Hume is not simply masking a return to a neo-classical interpretation of beauty. To be sure, he is not advocating a purely subjective, relativistic approach to beauty, which as Sugg notes, from:

⁴³David Hume, Essays moral, political and literary, ed. T.H. Green & T.H. Grose, 2 vol. (London, 1882), vol. I, 266.

⁴⁴David Hume, Of the Standard of Taste and Other Essays, ed. J.W. Lenz, (New York), 1965, p.6.

⁴⁵Hume, Of the Standard..., p.5.

⁴⁶Katherine Gilbert and Helmut Kuhn, A History of Esthetics (New York, 1961 [first published in 1946], p.233. See also Korsmeyer, p. 201 and Redding S. Sugg, Jr., "Hume's Search for the Key with the Leathern Thong," *JAAC*, XVI,1 (1957), p.96.

...the most radical mind of the eighteenth-century British empirical school...[w]e expect a radically empirical theory subverting received aesthetic values and prophesying some which might be recognized as Romantic or modern.⁴⁷

Instead, he is trying to uncover a standard of beauty by means of taste which is subjective but not relative, something inherent in all persons.

When one considers Hume's aesthetics in light of the rest of his philosophy, Korsmeyer is convinced that Hume's call for a standard of taste is not arbitrary:

Hume's theories of aesthetics are all too often regarded as interesting appendages to his more solid philosophy. In fact, if one reads his "solid" works looking for clues as to the sources of a standard of taste, one sees that the answer "we are all constituted similarly, so we all feel alike" is shorthand for Hume's complex analysis of the whole human being. A look at this analysis indicates that there are actually several related sources for a standard of taste.⁴⁸

Despite the fact that rules of art cannot be codified, an examination of the closely interwoven social relations which bind together human society shows that standards of taste emerge which favor the art that most pleases human beings. Through the three kinds of beauty which are related to usefulness, utility and sympathy, a standard of disinterested taste can be uncovered. When these categories are fully investigated, Korsmeyer claims that:

Such an analysis of aesthetic qualities, if not completely articulated by Hume, surely is congruent with this principle of association....Beauty, then, is not the same thing as utility or utilitarian pleasures, but its source, its stimulus, is the perception of these qualities...⁴⁹

⁴⁷Sugg, p.96.

⁴⁸Korsmeyer, p.206.

⁴⁹Korsmeyer, p.209.

What Hume has done is to provide a basis for aesthetic taste, closely modeled on his moral theory, which, while providing a standard for judgment, does not base it on any sort of objective rules, but on something integral to human nature.

This is a decisive challenge to those philosophers who tended to view reason as the foundation upon which their various theories rested. Since reason grounds logical thought and causal inference, on which depends all knowledge of reality, most 18th century philosophers still use it as the measure of all philosophical disciplines. Taste is not classified as a logical process but has the immediacy of a pure act of perception. By giving taste the autonomy to make decisions of aesthetic judgment, feelings no longer have to justify themselves in terms of reason. Cassirer, who interprets Hume's aesthetics as providing a radical shock to traditional philosophy, sums up the essence of Hume's argument:

...reason is summoned before the forum of sensation, of pure "impression," and questioned regarding its claims. And the verdict is that all authority which pure reason had wielded had been unjust and unnatural, in short, had been usurped authority. Reason not only loses its position of dominance; even in its own field, in the domain of knowledge, it has to surrender its leadership to the imagination. Thus reason and the imagination have now changed sides in the controversy surrounding the foundation of aesthetics. Whereas formerly imagination had to fight for recognition and equal rights, it is now treated as the fundamental power of the soul, as the leader and ruler to whom all other faculties of the mind must submit.⁵⁰

This argument and its conclusions are drawn in Hume's essay, "Of the Standard of Taste," where the relation between reason and feeling is examined. The skepticism incurred by the rejection of eternally valid universal and necessary norms is introduced, although it must be repeated that there still are standards, only they come

⁵⁰Cassirer, p.305.

from within and are neither imposed from without nor in some way mirror what is to be found in nature.

Skepticism in the rational sciences is a purely destructive principle, but it retains a different position in the realm of feeling. In the former, judgments contain assertions about objects, whereas in the latter, they contain assertions about the relation between a subject and an object. Since value judgements are always dependent on the mutual determination of two terms, they cover a much broader, if less rigorous, field; by demanding less than the logical judgment, the aesthetic judgment is in the position of being able to achieve more. Because an aesthetic judgment makes predictions only concerning the nature of the subject, it possesses validity only with respect to itself. Still, it can always correctly judge the state of its feelings (*pace* Freud). By contrast, reason is prone to error because its standard is in the nature of the things to which it refers, and not within itself. While this apparently denies theoretical universality to aesthetic judgment, Hume nevertheless maintains a practical universality for such judgments in light of the fact that there seems to be a certain similarity within human beings as members of a single biological species; he accepts this as sufficient to account for the apparent factual agreement among humans concerning aesthetic judgements, even though it is not an a priori agreement. When we turn to Kant, it is clear that Hume inspires Kant's aesthetic considerations as well as his epistemological arguments. What must be considered first, however, is the influence on Kant from his native land, or, to be more precise, from speakers of his mother tongue.

4. Baumgarten and the German approach

The philosophical emphasis in Germany during the 18th century is quite different from that of the twin areas of concentration in Great Britain: empiricism and intuitionism. The rational systematic theories of Leibniz (1646-1714) and Christian Wolff (1679-1754) dominated 17th and 18th century German philosophy. The thought of British philosophers clearly influence Kant, but he also follows firmly in this tradition. It is in Germany that the foundations for a systematic aesthetics is laid: Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-1762) is credited with this accomplishment. Baumgarten, a brilliant logician, tries to bring the individual phenomenon of the beautiful into the systematic fold, but is unsuccessful. Instead, he is forced to conclude that aesthetic knowledge is fundamentally different from cognitive knowledge.⁵¹ Baumgarten's metaphysics closely follows Leibniz's belief that all reality is essentially one, and that differences are a matter of degree. Sensations are therefore considered to be theoretically reducible to clear and distinct notions: "...even sensuous pleasures are really confusedly known intellectual pleasures."⁵² A result of this principle of continuity is that an autonomous basis for aesthetics must be precluded, since all sensations, including aesthetic experience, is theoretically reducible to intellectual cognition and is thereby no longer aesthetic.

⁵¹According to Wessell: "...Baumgarten did 'liberate' aesthetic theory from the confines of rationalistic intellectualism but only at the cost of consistency within the totality of his thought." See Leonard P. Wessell, Jr., "Alexander Baumgarten's Contribution to the Development of Aesthetics," *JAAC*, XXX,3 (1972), p.334. The article is on pp. 333-342. This is an excellent, clear exposition of Baumgarten's contribution to the formation of systematic aesthetics.

⁵²**The Principles of Nature and Grace, Based on Reason in Leibniz: Selections**, ed. Philip P. Wiener (New York, 1951), p.532.

Although Baumgarten remains true to his rationalist metaphysics, which assume a Leibnizian universe ruled by the law of continuity, according to Wessell, his empirical psychology deviates from this system. Psychology, which Baumgarten considers the study of the soul, has both a rational and an empirical part. The rational part "...is concerned with problems of the metaphysical structure of the soul, e.g., its unity. It will suffice to say that Baumgarten presents his followers with a Leibnizian world of monads."⁵³ The empirical part examines the nature of sensible experience, which extends to aesthetic experience. A soul is posited with the possession of two faculties, enabling it to have two types of cognition. The superior faculty is the intellect, which provides conceptual knowledge and forms distinct perceptions of the representations of things. The inferior faculty operates with non-distinct perceptions and forms sensitive representations of things.

While this appears to suggest that any unclarity lies in the mind and not in the object, enabling all knowledge to be reduced to distinct cognitions if only the mind were superior enough, Wessell suggests that Baumgarten unconsciously breaks with the Leibnizian tradition on this point:

Toward the beginning of his major work on aesthetics Baumgarten wrote: "The end of aesthetics is the perfection of sensitive cognition as such [*qua talis*]."⁵⁴ On the face value of these words it would seem that Baumgarten has recognized that there is something irreducible about the laws of aesthetics (both as a theory of sensitive knowledge and as a theory of beauty). If this is so, he has broken with his own metaphysics and ceased being a pure rationalist. This fact allows Baumgarten to attempt a different type of explanation of sensate order than the one open to rationalists like Leibniz or Spinoza.⁵⁵

⁵³Wessell, p.335.

⁵⁴Aesthetica (Frankfurt, 1750; Reprinted as 2 vols. in one, Hildesheim, 1961), §14.

⁵⁵Wessell, p.336

What Baumgarten tries to do is examine the particulars of the universe as ends in themselves, not as manifesting some axiomatic principle from which they are deduced. It is precisely the appearance which must be recognized as knowledge; to go beyond the sensory impact, to demand application of the law of sufficient reason, is to negate the science of aesthetics. The confused nature of the perceptions of aesthetics are only confused in the sense that the individual elements are fused together in an harmonious whole and cannot be isolated from the totality of the intuition. It is these particulars themselves, rather than any abstract principle, which must be observed and recognized as a legitimate, if not a cognitive, source of knowledge. Cassirer states:

The new science of aesthetics strives for such recognition. It abandons itself to sensory appearance without attempting to go beyond it to something entirely different, to the grounds of all appearance. For such a step forward would not explain the aesthetic content of appearance, but destroy it.⁵⁶

Baumgarten himself had given aesthetics its own legitimate sphere, in Reflections of Poetry (1735), the first time this 'new science' has been named:

The Greek philosophers and the Church fathers have already carefully distinguished between **things perceived** and **things known**. It is entirely evident that they did not equate **things known** with things of sense, since they honored with this name things also removed from sense (therefore, images). Therefore, **things known** are to be known by the superior faculty as the object of logic; **things perceived** [are to be known by the inferior faculty, as the object] of the science of perception, or aesthetic.⁵⁷

This is a clear break with the rationalist tradition, even if this new aesthetic theory is given an inferior status. What for the first time has been unequivocally stated is that conceptual thinking and aesthetics occupy different spheres, and to reduce aesthetics

⁵⁶Cassirer, pp.343-4.

⁵⁷Reflections on Poetry, Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's Meditationes philosophicae de non-nullis ad poema pertinentibus, trans. Karl Aschenbrenner and William Holter (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1954), §116, p.78.

to conceptual knowledge destroys whatever it is that is unique about this knowledge gained from sensitive experience. Baumgarten is seeking knowledge about the perceptual experience of sensation, which is not chaotically perceived, but is ordered; the form which determines the organization of sensations is the key to his investigation of sensitive knowledge. Further, aesthetics has to do not with the emotional reaction of the viewer but with perfection of form.

Revealing his break with rational tradition, Baumgarten explains that the science of aesthetics can be understood as an analogy of reason. Cartesian style rationalists maintained that the same, and not analogous, epistemological method could be applied to different fields without affecting the method; an analogy "...implies that there is something the same and something different in the sciences of logic and aesthetics."⁵⁸ It is true that Baumgarten sets up a scale of the sciences according to value and rank and places aesthetics, knowledge of the sensible world, at the bottom. Yet despite its logical low ranking, phenomenologically the science of beauty, sensitive cognition, is now permitted to be a philosophical discipline in its own right. In this way, aesthetics casts off the traditional logical and metaphysical fetters which restrained its previous attempts to attain the status of knowledge.

5. Summary of pre-Kantian status of aesthetic theory

What I have tried to show in the preceding pages is the nature and background of the problems which were commanding the attention of philosophers and aesthetic theorists during the second half of the 18th century, and the attempts which were made to solve them. The three thinkers on whom I have concentrated: Shaftesbury,

⁵⁸Wessell, p.337.

Hume and Baumgarten, each contributed significant elements to the manner and method in which Kant in turn approached the problem of the meaning of aesthetic judgment.

Baumgarten provides the systematic form which Kant uses. Kant tries to bring nature and freedom, reason and ethics together by means of judgment, in specific aesthetic judgment. The logical architectonic and the emphasis on formal qualities which is his hallmark, and the admission of aesthetics as a legitimate form of knowledge, come from Baumgarten. Hume brings several important ideas to the Kantian synthesis. The empirical approach to beauty and to taste calls for a subjective rather than objective validity; Kant in turn struggles with the problem of how to propose a subjective, yet universal, a priori basis for taste. Hume still maintains a close connection between morality and aesthetics, for taste has a distinctly moral component. By contrast, Kant tries to separate morality from aesthetic judgment, with mixed results. The emphasis Hume places on the imagination, the source of creative production, is taken over by Kant and made the key for understanding his new, purely aesthetic definition of taste. The denial of universal and necessary norms for determining beauty in favor of a purely human, mind-created standard puts the entire nature of philosophical debate on radically different footing.

Shaftesbury contributes the important concept of disinterested pleasure by means of which Kant can establish the a priori basis for taste, and thus for a universal yet subjective aesthetic judgment. Here, too, Kant differentiates his theory from that of Shaftesbury by his attempt to draw a line between moral and aesthetic pleasure. Shaftesbury also underlines the importance of the role played by the genius, the human being who serves as a vehicle for producing works of art which reveal the true

nature of things. The genius is responding to a standard which is at the same time above and below historical example and social expectation. Kant in turn makes the role of the genius central to the creation of the artwork.

The concepts of systematic form, disinterested pleasure, taste, imagination and genius, as well as the relation between the aesthetic and the moral, provide the basis for Kant's "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment." In this work, as we will see, Kant performs a tremendous synthesis, bringing together the diverse philosophical traditions of Britain and of Germany, along with their classical predecessors, to present a new way of understanding aesthetic meaning and artistic phenomena. The Critique of Judgment is meant as the capstone of Kant's critical philosophy, of a new way of understanding the power of human subjectivity. It does not form the complete system he was trying to achieve because he will not or cannot accept the human subject as the sole ground of all things, even though he takes radical steps in this direction; Kant still allows for some kind of (divine) plan that has organized the world and which human beings need to uncover and illuminate. Making this divine plan equivalent to the uniqueness of human subjectivity is the task for his successors, notably Schelling and, of course, Hegel.

D. Review of Kant's theory of mind and the role of both pure and practical reason

In the section just completed, I have presented a rough outline of the main problem areas which must be incorporated into the nascent philosophical field of aesthetics. What is still missing is a simple definition of aesthetics, but I hope to have conveyed the fact that this is precisely the problem: the domain of aesthetics constantly changes in response to the changing definition of the self. It is only after a thorough

examination of how the meaning of aesthetics shifts in response to what philosophy means, and can achieve, that one begins to see what the debate on the nature of aesthetics is about. Before turning to a textual analysis of Kant's aesthetic theory, it is almost mandatory to understand how it fits in with the bulk of the critical philosophy, in particular Kant's theory of mind. The approach might appear circuitous, but the Critique of Judgment is greatly reduced in significance without minimal preparatory work in the Critique of Pure Reason.

The position which Kant's critical philosophy holds in the history of Western thought is similar to that of the neck of an hourglass: Kant brings together and synthesizes all the problems with which philosophers had been struggling for centuries, and everyone after Kant must in some way respond to what he has accomplished. The Critique of Pure Reason is, on the one hand, an immense synthesis of many of the more pressing debates in the philosophy of Kant's contemporaries, and on the other hand, a radically new theory of mental activity. One could say that through the latter function, the former problems are recast in such a light as to no longer be problems of serious philosophical interest. This is not to suggest that after Kant there are no more philosophical problems, but rather that the problems are now of a different kind.

Kant's Inaugural Dissertation of 1770 marks the beginning of the new direction he is taking, and the Critique of Pure Reason⁵⁹ of 1781 and 1787 completes this epistemological turn to a subject-conditioned objectivity. The initial impetus for these works was the Leibniz-Clarke Debate of 1715-6 over the nature of time and space;

⁵⁹Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965 (copyright 1929). Hereafter often referred to as CPR.

Leibniz envisioned them as a continuity of monads, whereas Newton, and his defender Clarke, saw time and space as absolute and independent of the existence of bodies. The debate also reveals the difference between the metaphysical view of a God-guaranteed pre-established harmony of monads regnant on the Continent, and the mathematical philosophy dominant in Britain. This division broadly represents what Kant refers to as Dogmatism, the continental rationalist tradition based on the Cartesian assumption that we can have clear and distinct ideas, which leads to objects of our knowledge being independent realities, and Scepticism, the British empiricist tradition which denies the existence of clear and distinct ideas and thereby finds itself in a position of agnosticism about the existence of objects. Kant resolves these differences by appealing not to the internal clarity of an object but to the nature of its origin:

Representations derived from sensibility reveal only appearance, no matter to what pitch of systematic order and distinctness they are brought by logic. Representations derived from intelligence, on the other hand, reveal things as they are in themselves, even if only dimly and with confusion....To the former [Kant] grants the validity of physics and geometry, but restricts their scope of application to appearances (phenomena). To the latter he grants the validity of the metaphysics of nomads, but denies that we have sensitive knowledge of such substances as they are in themselves.⁶⁰

This division of knowledge in the Dissertation into two distinct orders, phenomena and noumena, provides Kant with the mechanism to resolve the differences between the Mathematical and Metaphysical philosophies but at the same time leaves him with the lasting problem of the noumenal world. As Kant realizes in CPR, where he redefines the nature of knowledge, we can know nothing about noumena; they are an

⁶⁰Robert Paul Wolff, Kant's Theory of Mental Activity, Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1973, pp.16-7. I am indebted to Wolff's exposition of the historical background and to his analysis of CPR.

article of faith. In fact, this initial achievement, which appeared to resolve the metaphysical problem of the nature of time and space by proposing an appearance/reality division, leads to the train of thought which ends, in CPR, with the destruction of metaphysics.

In the decade between the Inaugural Dissertation and the first appearance of CPR, Kant not only re-thought the problem of the nature of knowledge but, as a result of a re-acquaintance with Hume's work, realized that he needed to provide an account of the necessity of causal connection to show that it was more than coincidental contiguity. Hume had claimed that our knowledge of matters of fact is never based on a priori reasoning. Kant, who realized that the weak point of the Dissertation was the noumenal or metaphysical world, must answer Hume's sceptical attack if he is to "save" the physical world. Kant is willing to abandon the noumenal world, in theory at least, but wants to show that causal inference is both a priori and concerned with matters of fact. In order to do this, Kant needs to re-think the relationship between the understanding and sensibility, which he had considered independent from one another. In addition, Hume's analysis makes Kant realize that the nature of space and time provides the proof of necessary causal connection. The result of this re-thinking is CPR, where the pure concepts of the understanding are the rules for the synthesis of a manifold of intuition. This means that because I think, that is, have unity of consciousness, I can construct and account for the whole world.

In order to grasp what is meant by the free play between the understanding and the imagination which is necessary for a judgment of taste, a review of the way Kant postulates that the mind works is in order. I will try to explain as briefly and clearly as possible Kant's theory of mental activity as it is of relevance to the Critique

of Judgment, and also show where an obstinate problem lies. Kant completes the revolution begun by Descartes concerning the nature of the relationship between subject and object. Descartes is credited with discovering the problem of subjective consciousness, but his strict criteria lead to two serious problems: how to demonstrate the possibility of non-trivial knowledge about the world, and how to re-introduce the knowing subject into the world of objective existence. Kant recasts the nature of the problems posed by Descartes and Hume by substituting epistemological for metaphysical considerations. By recognizing that there are different kinds of necessity and by shifting from a theory of mental contents to an account of mental functions, as the result of the rule-analysis of concepts, Kant acknowledges that the knowing subject is always primary. Bearing this in mind, I will start with some of the important terms which delineate the relation between subject and object.

Sensibility is the capacity for receiving representations through the mode in which we are affected by objects; objects are thus given to us by means of sensibility, and thereby yield intuitions. The intuitions are then reorganized by the imagination so that they can be subsumed under concepts. Concepts arise from the understanding, which is a faculty of rules, as a result of being thought through it. The categories, which are pure concepts, are the forms of the contents of the understanding and provide the rules for empirical concepts, which in turn are rules for organizing a manifold of sense perception. An object is thus produced from sense perception in the understanding by way of a three-fold synthesis: apprehension in intuition; reproduction in imagination; recognition in a concept. The understanding is non-sensible and therefore cannot be a faculty of intuition, but yields knowledge by means of concepts. However, without the crucial activity of the imagination, knowledge is

not possible. The role that the imagination plays is problematic in two respects. First of all, despite its critical central position in CPR, Kant never distinctly explains just what it is. Secondly, the imagination is also central to Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment, yet seems to operate in a different fashion in Critique of Judgment than in CPR. This second problem will be considered later; for present purposes a brief summary of what Kant does tell us about the imagination is relevant.

The notion of synthesis is essential to the Kantian project, for knowledge is the result of a running through and holding together,⁶¹ of collecting and uniting, the elements of the sensible manifold. As mentioned, this synthesis has three parts. The first is the sensible intuition; the third is the cognitive recognition. Imagination is responsible for the transformation of the one into the other:

Synthesis in general...is the mere result of the power of imagination, a blind but indispensable function of the soul, without which we should have no knowledge whatsoever, but of which we are scarcely ever conscious. To bring this synthesis to concepts is a function which belongs to the understanding and it is through this function of the understanding that we first obtain knowledge properly so-called.⁶²

Kant operates with a two-tiered system, a transcendental level which provides the pure or general rules or concepts, and an empirical level, which follows the guidelines of the transcendental level so as to provide us with knowledge of the empirical world. Kant is trying to show the a priori foundations for knowledge, and it is this that requires the transcendental level, which provides an explanation of how the mind functions before anything is or can be put through the process.

⁶¹See A99 ff. for a description of the procedure of synthesis.

⁶²CPR, A78.

In the subjective deduction, Kant explains that it is necessary to assume a "...pure transcendental synthesis of imagination as conditioning the very possibility of all experience[,]"⁶³ for otherwise there is no way to get a priori intuitions, that is, the representations of space or time, into an empirical form. Time becomes increasingly important to Kant's analysis of cognition, and the categories, which provide the rules for concepts, are ultimately seen as modes of time-consciousness. The imagination is the important if problematic source of the conversion of a subjective time order into an objective time-order. Before explaining this, however, Kant gives his account of the role of imagination in the objective deduction. It is here that Kant divides imagination into its productive and reproductive parts:

The transcendental unity of apperception thus relates to the pure synthesis of imagination, as an **a priori** condition of the possibility of all combination of the manifold in one knowledge. But only the **productive** synthesis of the imagination can take place **a priori**; the reproductive rests upon empirical conditions. Thus the principle of the necessary unity of pure (productive) synthesis of imagination, prior to apperception, is the ground of the possibility of all knowledge, especially of experience.⁶⁴

Pure, productive imagination conditions all a priori knowledge and in this capacity is allowed spontaneity. Reproductive imagination is absolutely determined, for in the empirical synthetic function it provides to cognition, it is completely subject to the laws of the understanding. Only in its transcendental capacity does Kant allow for the possibility of spontaneity in imagination, but then fails to give any indication of what this might mean except the tautological explanation that:

...since all our intuition is sensible, the imagination...belongs to sensibility. But inasmuch as its synthesis is an expression of spontaneity, which is determinative [bestimmend] and not, like sense, determinable [bestimmbar]

⁶³CPR, A101.

⁶⁴CPR, A118.

merely....imagination is to that extent a faculty which determines the sensibility **a priori**; and its synthesis of intuitions, conforming as it does to the **categories**, must be the transcendental synthesis of **imagination**....In so far as imagination is spontaneity, I sometimes also entitle it the **productive** imagination, to distinguish it from the **reproductive** imagination, whose synthesis is entirely subject to empirical laws...⁶⁵

Despite the disappointing dearth of information about what Kant really thinks the imagination is or just how it manifests its spontaneity, and though the imagination is clearly subservient to the rules of the understanding, it nevertheless provides the vital ground for the explanation of how cognitive knowledge is synthesized out of the chaos of sense impressions the world offers. Perhaps 'explanation' is too rigorous a word, for indeed little of the process is explained; it is rather accounted for. The process itself is left shrouded in mystery.

The imagination also provides the key to the problem of necessary connection, for which Kant sought so diligently in order to refute the solipsism of the present moment into which Hume had thought himself. This problem is solved in the Second Analogy, where Kant finally completes his new interpretation of objectivity by establishing the difference between subjective and objective time orders. The essential twist lies in the double way in which representations can be understood: **qua** mental content (as objects of consciousness) and **qua** representations of empirical objects. The subjective time order results from the way in which representations **qua** mental contents are apprehended by the intuition. These representations are then reproduced in the imagination according to the rules of the understanding, are given an objective time order and are then recognized **qua** representations of an empirical object. Wolff's explanation underscores the novelty of this subtle shift in meaning:

⁶⁵CPR, B151-2.

Subjective time order is the order of representations **qua** mental contents. When we synthesize these representations, we reproduce them in imagination according to a rule, and this reproduction produces an order of the manifold **qua** representations. As already indicated by the analysis of synthesis and rule-directed activities, the succession in this new order is a **necessary** succession. It is therefore an **objective** order. **Thus, the synthesis which produces the unity of consciousness is nothing more nor less than the establishment of an objective time order.**⁶⁶

This enables Kant to distinguish between necessary connection and mere subjective association. It also points to the creativity of Kant's approach to explaining what it means for a thing to be necessary. By changing the time-worn definitions of what necessity is and what objects are, Kant has changed the parameters of how the world is regarded. But both his new-found necessity and the switch from object to objectivity rest on the function of the imagination, and this still remains resistant to analysis.

In the Critique of Judgment, the imagination occupies a much more visibly exalted role than it does in CPR, for through the free play in which it engages it assumes a position equal to that of the understanding. The understanding is in both sections of the critical philosophy a very powerful tool. It is the mind's power of producing representations from itself; it enables us to think the object of sensible intuition. The understanding performs the synthesis which is demanded by the unity of consciousness, without which all we could sense would be an incoherent manifold. Consequently, all the concepts which come from the understanding must be connected with each other according to a rule so that we can determine in an a priori manner their systematic completeness. Empirical knowledge is not possible unless we admit a necessity in the relation between all knowledge and its object, for these modes of

⁶⁶Wolff, p.264.

knowledge must agree, must necessarily possess a unity which constitutes the concept of an object. The unity which the object makes necessary can be nothing else than the formal unity of consciousness in the synthesis of the manifold of representations, for only after we have produced synthetic unity in the manifold of intuition can we say that we know the object. Thus all the manifold is determined by a unity of rule which comes from the understanding and is limited to conditions which make unity of apperception possible. What is important to notice here is that Kant's explanation of objects reveals a shift from a theory of mental contents to one of mental functions. Only through a cognizance of how this mental process works is it possible for us to see how powerful the human subject has become, for the human understanding is now "the lawgiver of nature."⁶⁷

Kant admits that this might sound exaggerated and absurd, but as far as experience or appearance is concerned this claim is fully justified:

...the understanding is something more than a power of formulating rules through comparison of appearances; it is itself the lawgiver of nature. Save through it, nature, that is, synthetic unity of the manifold of appearances according to rules, would not exist at all (for appearances, as such, cannot exist outside us--they exist only in our sensibility); and this nature, as object of knowledge in an experience, with everything which it may contain, is only possible in the unity of apperception. The unity of apperception is thus the transcendental ground of the necessary conformity to law of all appearances in one experience.⁶⁸

It is only because the human mind is capable of organizing and unifying the chaos of the manifold of sensible intuition that any experience at all, including that of nature, can be objectified. From the fact that we possess unity of consciousness, which arises through the law-giving power of the understanding, Kant is able to build the whole

⁶⁷CPR, A127.

⁶⁸CPR, A127.

physical world, as it were. This is not to say he ends up a solipsist, for the same process which enables me to have knowledge of the world enables me to have knowledge of myself. In other words, the mind intuits itself as it is affected by itself, and therefore as it appears to itself and not as it is.⁶⁹

What anything really might be brings us to the obstinate problem mentioned earlier, which is the problem of noumena as opposed to phenomena, of things in themselves as opposed to appearances. Both pairs of terms refer to two different realms but do so in slightly different contexts. Appearances and things in themselves are to be understood in relation to the being of something. An appearance is a being in its being thought by us in accordance with our mode of thinking, whereas a thing in itself is a being independent of its appearance to us. Phenomena and noumena, by contrast, refer to objects of intuition. A phenomenon is an object of sensible intuition, which is the sort of intuition with which our mind operates. A noumenon is the object of intellectual intuition or the object of non-sensible intuition, of which we know nothing.

Of the three major faculties of the human mind: understanding, judgment and reason, the first and the third belong to what in the Dissertation was the intelligence. As the law-giver to nature, the understanding only has jurisdiction over the phenomenal world, the world of appearances. Insofar as our sensibility is affected, the three-fold synthesis occurs and we end up with cognitive conceptual knowledge of an object. This belongs to the realm of the understanding. Reason is not so limited, and is constantly trying to understand what the real nature of things are, but this is an illicit extension of the understanding. Although the categories extend further than

⁶⁹See B69 and B276 ff. for Kant's refutation of a solipsistic idealism.

sensible intuition because they can think objects in general without regard to the mode (i.e. sensibility) in which they are given, this does not mean that they actually determine a greater sphere of objects. However, it is a tendency of the understanding to form:

...a representation of an **object in itself**, and so comes to represent itself as also being able to form **concepts** of such objects. And since the understanding yields no concepts additional to the categories, it also supposes that the object in itself must at least be **thought** through these pure concepts, and so is misled into treating the entirely **indeterminate** concept of an intelligible entity...as being a **determinate** concept of an entity that allows of being known in a certain [purely intelligible] manner by means of the understanding.⁷⁰

Kant spends great effort trying plausibly to account for this problematic extension of the understanding to noumena; it is of some relevance to make note of this effort since it is closely tied to the moral realm, and the moral realm does influence Kant's aesthetic theory.

The relation between understanding and reason has formal similarity. The understanding creates unifying order in the sensible manifold by imposing concepts. Reason, which is also constantly seeking unity, imposes ideas on the understanding. Without this regulative (and not constitutive) function of the ideas, the understanding is as chaotic as the unprocessed sensible manifold. Ideas are imposed by reason on the understanding in order to compel the understanding to strive towards a more unified grasp of the world, but the understanding, seeking knowledge, is constrained by the limitations of sensible intuition. Judgment, the faculty of subsuming under rules, governs the understanding, which is the faculty of rules. Judgment distinguishes

⁷⁰CPR, B307.

whether or not something stands under a given rule.⁷¹ The faculty of principles, rather than judgments, is the operative function of reason. Principles a priori both contain the grounds of other judgments and are not grounded in higher, more universal modes of knowledge. The highest principle or universal condition of all judgments in general is that they be not self-contradictory. Reason is thus the driving force behind this desire for unity:

Reason concerns itself exclusively with absolute totality in the employment of the concepts of the understanding, and endeavours to carry the synthetic unity, which is thought in the category, up to the completely unconditioned....Reason accordingly occupies itself solely with the employment of understanding, not indeed in so far as the latter contains the ground of possible experience...but solely in order to prescribe to the understanding its direction towards a certain unity of which it has itself no concept, and in such manner as to unite all the acts of the understanding, in respect of every object, into an **absolute** whole.⁷²

Reason's drive toward the unconditioned which unifies all conditioned knowledge raises problems for the understanding and leads it into antinomies, where the improper extension of the principles of the understanding result in two apparently contradictory yet self-consistent claims.

The possibility of freedom, which is essential if Kant is to maintain a moral realm where individuals are responsible for their actions, seems inconsistent with the absolute determinism of the natural world. In the Third Antinomy of Pure Reason, Kant shows that it is not inconsistent to maintain both freedom and necessity so long

⁷¹Since judgment determines whether or not something stands under a rule, this appears to point to a fundamental relationship between the imagination, which turns sensible intuition into something that can be recognized by a concept, and judgment, which then determines whether this something stands under certain rules. While nowhere discussed in CPR, this relationship has interesting consequences for aesthetic judgment.

⁷²CPR, B383.

as one is aware that they belong to different realms, to different kinds of causality. There are only two kinds of causality conceivable by us: that arising from nature and that from freedom. Causality in nature is the connection in the sensible world of one state with a preceding state on which it follows according to a rule, and which rests on conditions of time. Freedom, by contrast, contains the power of beginning a state spontaneously and therefore cannot be determined in time but must be a pure transcendental idea, containing nothing from experience and referring to an object that cannot be given in experience.

For something to be free, for Kant, means that it is determined independently of sensibility.⁷³ The problem with which Kant is then faced is how to resolve this transcendental idea of freedom with the necessity which prevails in the phenomenal world as detailed in the *Transcendental Analytic*. This can only be accomplished with the presumption of the existence of things in themselves. If appearances are merely representations connected according to empirical laws, then they must have grounds which are not appearances, which are intelligible. The effects of such an intelligible cause appear, and can be determined through other appearances, but its causality is not determined in this way because the causality of the intelligible cause is outside the series of conditions which determine the appearance. Consequently, the causality of the intelligible cause is capable of spontaneously beginning its effects in the sensible world; these effects in turn are always predetermined through antecedent empirical conditions. That freedom is not incompatible with nature is Kant's primary concern, not the actual reality of freedom; freedom and necessity simply belong to different

⁷³See CPR, B585

realms. The spontaneity of freedom arises from reason, as does the strict determinism of causal necessity.

Speculative reason's drive towards unity is perhaps the purest expression of freedom of thought, as there is nothing in the appearances themselves that account for unity. It is only when we try to make sense out of our sense perceptions and the world in which we live that we find ourselves trying to uncover or discover unifying principles, an order in the world, rather than assuming that everything tends towards chaos. Even if the latter may in fact be the case, we still try with all our might to instill order. It is critical to remember here what Kant stated in the Preface to the Second Edition:

...even the **assumption**--as made on behalf of the necessary practical employment of my reason--of **God, freedom, and immortality** is not permissible unless at the same time speculative reason be deprived of its pretensions to transcendent insight. For in order to arrive at such insight it must make use of principles which, in fact, extend only to objects of possible experience, and which, if also applied to what cannot be an object of experience, always really change this into an appearance, thus rendering all **practical extension** of pure reason impossible. I have therefore found it necessary to deny **knowledge**, in order to make room for **faith**.⁷⁴

If we want to maintain the existence of freedom, thereby allowing for moral action, this freedom must be based on belief and not on certainty. We can act as if we have freedom, but we must accept this on faith; we can never know if we are free.

The freedom about which Kant is talking is not so much freedom of action, because action in the world depends on the causal necessity of antecedent conditions. Rather it is an inner freedom, the freedom of reason to create ideas which our understanding then can try to prove. It is this ability of human reason to reach way beyond its knowledge which is a unique feature of the human mind, but at the same

⁷⁴CPR, Bxxx.

time it is precisely this ability, which, when not properly regulated, leads to false beliefs of the powers of understanding which humans possess. When false beliefs are accepted as the truth, people begin to believe they have powers which do not properly belong to them and which result in the curtailing of freedom. It is only by careful analysis of what we can and cannot know that we can engage in what Kant would call truly moral behavior, for genuine morality requires the possibility of thinking in freedom so that we may be responsible for the choices which we make.

The practical extension of pure reason to the moral realm is detailed in Critique of Practical Reason (1788). As already noted, it is with respect to the possibility of morality that Kant needs to establish a transcendental realm and a transcendental self, for a free moral choice depends precisely on the fact that its ground is not in the world of appearances. Although the argument here is worthy of attention, it is not central to the matter at hand; what is important to note is the existence of a realm which is not dependent on causal connection but instead on the human will. The fundamental law of pure practical reason is: "So act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle establishing universal law."⁷⁵ That this dictum of moral judgment establishes a clear precedent for aesthetic judgment will become apparent. The problem that Kant faces is then to show how the two differ; this will be considered later.

⁷⁵I. Kant Critique of Practical Reason, trans. Lewis White Beck, New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1956, p.30 (§7).

E. Summary of Kant's work prior to Critique of Judgment

What I have tried to show in these past few pages is the functional aspect of Kant's cognitive theory as well as the essence of his moral theory so as to better prepare the reader for Kant's aesthetic theory. The danger with all summaries, and this is an especial problem with Kant, is that they do not do justice to the complete argument. The Critique of Pure Reason is so difficult because everything is interconnected to the extent that one feels the need to explain the whole in order to make any sense of the parts. Nevertheless, I have tried to concentrate on the imagination, on the understanding, and on the relation between noumena and phenomena so as to show why Kant needs to postulate a noumenal world if he is to allow for moral freedom. These ideas will be of particular relevance to an understanding of the issues at stake in the Critique of Judgment, and provide the necessary background needed in order to grasp the novelty and creativity of Kant's contribution to the nascent field of aesthetics.

CHAPTER II

THE *CRITIQUE OF JUDGMENT*: AESTHETIC SENSIBILITY AS BESTOWER OF A RADICALLY NEW INTERPRETATION ON THE CONCEPT OF SUBJECTIVITY

A. Introduction to the Critique of Judgment

According to the Kantian theory of mental activity, the faculty of judgment is the cognitive faculty which provides the middle term between the faculty of understanding and that of reason. Kant has examined these two faculties in the Critique of Pure Reason (1781/7) and the Critique of Practical Reason (1788). Pure reason is concerned with theoretical cognition a priori; its realm is that of natural concepts, that is, of concepts conditioned by sensibility, and rests upon the legislative authority of the understanding. Practical reason refers to the extension of reason beyond the domain of the understanding and is concerned with concepts of freedom, which contain the ground of all sensuously unconditioned practical precepts a priori. The Critique of Judgment (1790),¹ which Kant intended to be the capstone of his critical theory, is to provide the bridge between understanding and nature on the one side, and reason and freedom on the other. It presents a unique set of problems as a result of this mediating role, since it is not legislative and therefore has no recourse to

¹I. Kant, The Critique of Judgment, trans. James C. Meredith, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1952 (hereafter referred to as CJ). The references refer not to the page but to the paragraph or original pagination numbers in the margin. On occasion, I give the German translation for a specific word or sentence; the German edition I am using is: Kant, Kritik der Urteilskraft, Hg. Wilhelm Weischedel, Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag, 1974 (hereafter referred to as KU). Unfortunately, the pagination in the two editions do not coincide; the German uses the A,B method and the English appears to refer to an edition of Kants Werke, but which is nowhere cited.

objective laws. Nevertheless, Kant intends to demonstrate that judgment also operates on an a priori principle, even if this principle is subjective and not objective. The notion of 'subjective a priori' seems to be a contradiction in terms and lends a certain opaque quality to the unfolding work. What it means is that judgment needs to furnish a concept which it can then employ as a rule, but which cannot be objective (cognitive), for then it would come under the domain of the understanding or of reason and would no longer provide its unique cognitive function.

The German title, Kritik der Urteilskraft, captures a nuance which is lacking in the translation: 'Urteilskraft' refers more specifically to the power or ability of judgment, rather than the passive completed action implied by 'judgment.' This is important to bear in mind when considering Kant's argument. Kant divides judgment into two types: determinate and reflective. Determinate judgment is very straightforward, and involves subsuming objects under the appropriate category. This is the activity of the faculty of judgment in the acquisition of cognitive knowledge. Reflective judgment, by contrast, is the essential requisite for aesthetic sensibility, but more than that, it can be seen as the prerequisite for judgment in general and thus for providing the foundation for all human mental activity. Kant often points in this direction but he never actually makes this claim. Consequently, although reflective judgment could furnish the means to critique the three critiques, to pull them together into a whole and provide the unity which he wants to achieve, Kant fails in his attempt to unify conclusively the three cognitive faculties. Throughout the critical philosophy and especially in this work, Kant is forced repeatedly to turn to the "supersensible realm" to ground his theory. My contention is that this supersensible realm lies deep within the nature of subjectivity, and that Kant either failed to see this

or refused to admit it, hence the ambivalent character of aesthetic (reflective) judgment.

What I intend to do here is first review and analyze both the 'Introduction' and the 'Critique of Aesthetic Judgment.' I concentrate especially on the 'Analytic of the Beautiful' because it is here that Kant establishes the premises necessary for the transcendental deduction of taste, which is given in the 'Analytic of the Sublime.' Taste, the prerequisite for an aesthetic judgment of beauty, is a difficult concept and reveals how Kant is caught between the demands of his critical philosophy and the results to which his thinking bring him and which he is not yet prepared to accept; these results are incorporated into Schelling and Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory. After Kant concludes his examination of taste, which is the most theoretical aspect of any judgment of beauty, he turns his attention to the work of art itself and to its creator, the genius. An analysis of what makes a work of art beautiful and how the genius functions is revealing, for it is these two mysterious things that provide both the point of comparison and the continuity with those successors who also have tried to freeze the moment of artistic creation in order to uncover the essence of human subjectivity. Kant tries to systematize this essence whereas Schelling and Schopenhauer approach the nature of art and aesthetic creation in quite a different manner.

A question whose answer Kant makes central in this work is whether judgment has independent a priori principles and if so, whether they are constitutive or regulative. According to Kant's system of the human mind as detailed in Critique of Pure Reason, and the innate moral structure of the mind as given in Critique of Practical Reason, judgment is the middle term between understanding and reason,

between cognition and desire. The former terms prescribe a priori laws to the latter terms, respectively. Does judgment analogously perform the same function for the feelings of pleasure and displeasure? If so, how? Since judgment is a cognitive faculty, it is not unlikely that it contains some sort of a priori principle. The problem is that this principle cannot be derived from a priori concepts because concepts are the property of the understanding and judgment is only directed to their application. The concept which judgment provides must therefore be one from which we get no cognition of a thing and one which must be applied as a rule, but not as an objective rule, since if it were objective, judgment would be required to determine whether the rule were applicable.

The difficulty concerning the principle of judgment is chiefly to be found in aesthetic matters, which is to say in matters having to do with "[t]hat which is purely subjective in the representation of an Object, i.e. what constitutes its reference to the Subject, not to the object..."² According to Kant's criteria, that aspect of the subjective side of a representation which cannot become an element of cognition is the pleasure or displeasure connected with it. When this feeling is immediately linked to the representation, Kant allows that this is the aesthetic representation of finality or purposiveness.³ This 'Zweckmässigkeit' gains credence only in terms of the reflective

²CJ, 188.

³Zweckmässigkeit and Zweck can be translated either as 'finality' and 'end' (Meredith) or as 'purposiveness' and 'purpose' (Bernard). Werner Pluhar, in 'How to Render "Zweckmässigkeit" in Kant's Third Critique,' in Interpreting Kant, ed. Moltke S. Gram, pp. 85-98, takes strong issue with the use of finality, seeing it as a mistranslation. He concentrates on four major ways that an incorrect use of Zweckmässigkeit impedes research based on translation and then, citing specific examples, shows why the 'purposiveness' terminology is always superior. Although 'finality' appears initially plausible, "...the crucial defect of the finality terminology is that it is ambiguous, indeed doubly so" (p. 88). The article is impressively documented,

judgment, which brings the cognitive faculties into play without giving them concepts from which to construct objects; the object under consideration has solely subjective formal purposiveness or finality:

If...imagination (as the faculty of intuitions **a priori**) is undesignedly brought into accord with understanding, (as the faculty of concepts,) by means of a given representation, and a feeling of pleasure is thereby aroused, then the object must be regarded as final for the reflective judgment.⁴

An examination of the free play between the imagination and the understanding alluded to here, and its relation to cognitive concepts formed by rules, is necessary to see how and why Kant needs to draw a strict line between determinate and reflective judgment, and to what end this division appears to lead. I will return to this point.

and I include one example, without the accompanying footnotes. Pluhar has just discussed the translation of **Ende** and criticized Meredith's ambiguous interpretation of it as both purposive and temporal: "Kant's temporal **Ende** is found sometimes by itself, but most often in compounds. As an example of the former, Kant's **ohne Ende** (i.e., "without end") is rendered by Meredith as "endless," but **zwecklos** (i.e., "purposeless") comes out similarly as "without end," the important distinction between the two having been erased. But the problem is most severe where these two senses of the finality terminology occur in one and the same compound word, viz., in Kant's very important term **Endzweck** (i.e., "[temporally] final purpose"). Although Meredith refrains from rendering it as "end-end," he finds himself forced to do the next worst thing: he renders it as "final end." This extremely close juxtaposition of the temporal and the purposive sense of this terminology results in a severely ambiguous erasure" (p.89). In a footnote, Pluhar notes that Meredith elsewhere translates **zwecklos** as 'meaningless' and 'senseless.'

Because I am using the Meredith translation (and Pluhar initially notes that of the two standard translations, although both are poor, Meredith's is slightly better than Bernard's) and despite the harsh and substantiated denunciation Pluhar makes of the 'finality' rendering of **Zweckmässigkeit**, I tend to use both interchangeably; nevertheless, I agree with Pluhar that 'purposiveness' and 'purpose' is the better translation.

⁴CL 190.

B. The relationship between Kant's critical philosophy and the
Critique of Judgment: Analysis of the 'Introduction'

The 'Introduction' to Critique of Judgment provides crucial insight into both Kant's intent in the present work as well as his opinion of the interrelation between the different parts of his critical philosophy. It is here that one can clearly see the opposing forces in his thought, for although the hidden nature of the subject is what is under consideration, Kant is incapable of openly admitting that this is his concern. He alludes several times to the underlying essence of subjectivity as indispensable for knowledge, but he relies on an objective, externally imposed form to explain this. The discord which arises is difficult to analyze but provides the key to the problem.

Kant begins with an overview of philosophy: what it means and how it is organized. Philosophy as a whole contains "...the principles of the rational cognition that concepts afford us of things,"⁵ and is generally divided into theoretical and practical principles according to the concept by which the principles of this rational cognition get assigned their object. Logic, which contains the principles of the form of thought in general regardless of the object, is the tool by which philosophy can be analyzed. Concepts of nature allow for a theoretical cognition from a priori principles; concepts of freedom allow for a practical cognition from a priori principles and is called moral philosophy. Morally practical precepts are based entirely on the concept of freedom and although their rules, like the rules of nature, are called laws, unlike the laws of nature which rest on sensible conditions these laws rest on what Kant calls a supersensible condition. The understanding prescribes laws in the theoretical sphere by means of concepts of nature; reason prescribes laws by means of freedom, but only

⁵CJ, 171.

in the practical sphere. Since both the understanding and reason are legislative, it would seem that they are part of a unified system. However:

...between the realm of the natural concept, as the sensible, and the realm of the concept of freedom, as the supersensible, there is a great gulf fixed, so that it is not possible to pass from the former to the latter....still the latter is **meant** to influence the former--that is to say, the concept of freedom is meant to actualize in the sensible world the end proposed by its laws...⁶

The only possible way one can postulate the link between these two legislative faculties is to assume that there must be "...a ground of the **unity** of the supersensible that lies at the basis of nature..."⁷ It is important to bear in mind that Kant accepts more or less unproblematically the idea that both the understanding and reason are faculties capable of imposing an objective, legislative order on the world and that they are linked by a supersensible harmony. What is curious is that Kant never closely examines just what this supersensible harmony might be and how judgment relates to it, for without an adequate account of how understanding, reason and judgment can be linked in the supersensible realm, Kant will be unable to unify his grand theory of human nature. The closest Kant comes to explaining this supersensible realm occurs in CPR, in his discussion of noumena and of things in themselves. One simply cannot by definition make any claims about them; one can only believe that they are there.

1. The faculty of judgment

Judgment, like understanding and reason, is also a cognitive faculty but one which, in its capacity as the intermediate faculty, apparently operates quite differently. Although in the other two critiques Kant has "proved" the a priori, legislative nature of

⁶CJ 176.

⁷CJ 176.

understanding and reason, the claims of judgment appear to be much more tenuous.

Kant maintains of judgment that:

...we may reasonably presume by analogy that it may likewise contain, if not a special authority to prescribe laws, still a principle peculiar to itself upon which laws are sought, although one merely subjective **a priori**.⁸

Kant maintains that there are three basic capacities of the soul: the faculty of knowledge, the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, and the faculty of desire. Since the first and third have a priori principles, one can at least provisionally assume that this might also be the case with the second and that judgment:

...will effect a transition from the faculty of pure knowledge, i.e. from the realm of concepts of nature, to that of the concept of freedom, just as in its logical employment it makes possible the transition from understanding to reason.⁹

These premises are essential to Kant's whole argument and simultaneously illustrate its awkward nature. From a purely geometrical point of view, the necessity of a third critique which fills a parallel function to that of the first two provides the unifying synthesis. At the same time, this critique poses several disturbing questions, or even inconsistencies. The subjective yet a priori nature of judgment is one area that requires closer analysis; reflective judgment and its realm is another.

Kant defines judgment generally as "...the faculty of thinking the particular as contained under the universal."¹⁰ There is, however, an essential division within the domain of judgment which makes possible the discussion of the nature of aesthetic sensibility. The two different methods or types of judgment are: determinate, in which the universal is given and the judgment subsumes the particular under it according to

⁸CJ, 177.

⁹CJ, 179.

¹⁰CJ, 179.

a priori laws of the understanding (deduction); and reflective, in which the particular is given and the universal has to be found (induction). Determinate judgment determines the particular under a priori transcendental laws furnished by the understanding. The universal laws of nature which the pure understanding provide have the limitation that they can be used in judging only the general possibility of nature. In other words, they provide the unity of consciousness which enables human beings to make coherent sense out of the chaos of the manifold of sensory impressions. The great multiplicity of individual objects and events in the world which results from this act of human understanding are not covered by the unifying nature of determinate judgment. This multiplicity is handed over to the so-called "reflective" judgment, whose job it is to discover the "laws" which regulate the profusion of individual appearances. A law, however, must be regarded as necessary on principle and it is the principle for the way in which reflective judgment moves from particular to universal which must be sought. This is the impetus behind teleological judgment, the search for purposiveness in nature. Since what is sought is the establishment of the unity of empirical principles, the principle in question cannot be empirical but must be transcendental, a law which judgment gives from and to itself. A transcendental principle is one through which the universal condition under which a thing can become an object for our cognition is represented a priori. The question which Kant fails to answer, or even to pose, is the way in which the transcendental principle of judgment differs from that of understanding or of reason. Who or what determines the universal nature of laws? This is a key to understanding the ambiguity in the Critique of Judgment.

2. Reflective judgment and its relation to purposiveness in nature

Kant centers his search for (or proof of) the transcendental laws of judgment on the concept of finality or purposiveness in nature. He has made the claim in Critique of Pure Reason that universal laws of nature have their ground in our understanding which then prescribes them to a universal concept of nature so that nature can become an object of our experience.¹¹ Now he turns to the particular empirical laws, which:

...must be regarded, in respect of that which is left undetermined in them by these universal laws, according to a unity such as they would have if an understanding (though it be not ours) had supplied them for the benefit of our cognitive faculties, so as to render possible a system of experience according to particular natural laws.¹²

It is reflective judgment which makes this a priori assumption, for by means of it judgment can give finality (Zweckmässigkeit) to nature in its multiplicity; otherwise we are faced with an utterly chaotic world. This finality has the remarkable characteristic, according to Kant, that it is as if God or some higher understanding contains the ground of this unity of empirical laws. That this unity, pure and simple, might be a general property of the human mind, and not a function of some higher plan, seems not to be seriously considered. Kant states that the subject is the law-giver to nature, but his belief prevents him from accepting this result on an individual basis. This is a pattern that is repeated consistently throughout Kant's work. When his tremendous capacity for thinking a problem through reaches an impasse, Kant tends to look up, to the supersensible; his followers (e.g. Schelling, Hegel and Schopenhauer) tend to look in, to the nature of subjectivity itself.

¹¹see CPR, A126/7.

¹²CJ, 180.

Kant places the origin of the finality of nature in reflective judgment, which as a purely subjective capability cannot make any objective universal claims even though this finality is an a priori concept. Kant claims that the concept of a finality of nature belongs to transcendental principles according to reflective judgment, a finality that is neither a concept of nature nor of freedom but "...only represents the unique mode in which we must proceed in our reflection upon the objects of nature with a view to getting a thoroughly interconnected whole of experience,"¹³ which is to say that we see a unity because our minds are organized in a certain way. He then refers to this coincidence between our point of view and the systematic unity which we find as a "lucky chance" ("ein glücklicher Zufall").

That Kant here attributes the fact that our minds perceive unity in the world to mere chance raises a warning flag, for in the Critique of Pure Reason he has claimed that we perceive objects as such because our minds process information in particular ways, and he gives this ability to unify experience into a coherent form universal, transcendental a priori validity.¹⁴ Richard Kroner, in the clear analysis of the Critique of Judgment he gives in his two volume overview Von Kant bis Hegel, concisely points out the trap in which Kant finds himself but which he seems incapable of noticing:

Wenn Kant diese Einheit der Vernunft wie eine empirische Tatsache aufnimmt und sie als einen "glücklichen Zufall" preist, so zeigt sich nirgends deutlicher als hierin die Grenze seines kritischen Denkens, das sich selbst verkennt und zu einem bloss empirischen Finden und Feststellen herabsetzt, indem es die Vernunftnotwendigkeit zu der Zufälligkeit eines Zusammentreffens entgegensezter Welten oder Sphären stempelt. Wo überhaupt kann die Vernunft Notwendigkeit finden, wenn nicht in sich selbst? ...Wenn die Reflexion über das Zusammenstimmen der Erkenntniskräfte und Erkenntnissphären nur die Reflexion über einen glücklichen Zufall ist, so

¹³CJ, 184.

¹⁴see CPR, Transcendental Deduction.

verliert die transzendente Deduktion der Kategorien selbst ihre Beweiskraft, ihre Notwendigkeit, denn sie ist gar nichts anderes als diese Reflexion.¹⁵

The way in which Kant presents the relation between reflective judgment and unity, between reflection and purposiveness, is central to an understanding of this Critique for it reveals both the extension and the limit of Kant's critical thinking. In his effort to find the means to cross the gulf between the sensible and supersensible worlds, Kant turns to reflective judgment as the subjective yet transcendental and universal bridge. What he fails to see is that nature and freedom come together not in some supersensible ground but in the subject itself, and that the resulting teleological unity apparent in every aspect of our perception of the empirical world cannot be otherwise, for this ordered appearance is the result of reason's ceaseless striving for unity. Kant appears to place priority on the objective, on knowledge based on concepts, which he invests with universal a priori form. But the objective is only made possible by means of the subjective; they are two sides of the same coin. Kant will only go so far as to say that the reflective judgment mediates between the sensible and supersensible realms, but not that both these realms are a product of the self, of reflective judgment itself. He is confronted with the uncertainty that, while there is a finality both in nature and in freedom, in trying to bring them together, to uncover the very nature of this finality, a "Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck," he loses the meaning and is left with the mere form. This is a problem which will be taken up later in the discussion of the beautiful.

Although Kant's search for finality without an end, for purposiveness without purpose, is perhaps not wholly successful, it brings us to the essence of his

¹⁵Richard Kroner, Von Kant bis Hegel (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1977) Vol.1, p.246.

confrontation with aesthetic meaning and the nature of the beautiful. As mentioned, Kant divides the capabilities of the human mind into three parts: knowledge, governed by the understanding; desire, governed by reason; and pleasure and displeasure, governed by judgment. The questions which need to be posed are: what is pleasure? how is it manifested? how is it related to judgment? To answer these, the concept of finality (*Zweckmässigkeit*) proves essential. However, it must be pointed out that Kant does not provide a definition for pleasure. Although the feeling of pleasure is the foundation upon which all judgments of taste, that is, all claims concerning the beautiful, rest, Kant nowhere explains just what he means by pleasure. It is assumed that we all know what it is and will recognize it when we feel it.

3. The nature of the beautiful

Kant claims that the "...adaptation of nature to our cognitive faculties is presupposed **a priori** by judgment on behalf of its reflection upon it according to empirical laws."¹⁶ The understanding, however, knows that this is simply a contingent necessity, judged to have transcendental finality by the subject because this is the way the subject cognizes the world but in fact not having this finality. (What sort of reality it possesses for the understanding is not clear.) The guiding principle behind the order which we perceive in the world is the feeling of pleasure which we derive from a unity of principle. As Kant says, the "...attainment of every aim is coupled with a feeling of pleasure."¹⁷ At the same time, he notes the curious exception of the ubiquitous case where perceptions coincide with universal laws of

¹⁶CJ, 185.

¹⁷CJ, 187.

nature, the categories. Here, pleasure does not result because the understanding "...follows...its own nature without ulterior aim."¹⁸ In other words, the fact that we can perceive objects brings no particular pleasure. What does cause a feeling of pleasure in us even if we are hardly aware of it is the discovery "...that two or more empirical heterogeneous laws of nature are allied under one principle that embraces them both...,"¹⁹ that we see order in the world around us. The most ordinary experience is impossible without this feeling of pleasure, regardless of whether we notice it, for this pleasure has become so fused with simple cognition that we are no longer aware of it. When we do stop and pay attention to our surroundings, we are immediately aware of the apparently inherent order in them; this is because our judgment "...makes it imperative upon us to proceed on the principle of the conformity of nature to our faculty of cognition."²⁰

According to this way of thinking, judgment is the faculty which makes us human. The challenge offered by the world is to make sense out of it, and the establishment of meaning and order is how we respond to the world. Since it is reflective judgment that brings order to the world, there is no imposed boundary to how far this order-giving capacity may extend. Kant's imposition of transcendental a priori necessity on the understanding and reason can be seen as a function of reflective judgment, for without the striving towards unity and order at this most fundamental level there would be no reason to impose an unchanging, universal order-producing mechanism on the understanding:

¹⁸CJ, 187.

¹⁹CJ, 187.

²⁰CJ, 188.

Die Kategorien und mit ihnen die synthetischen Urteile apriori gelten, weil ohne sie überall keine Wahrheit, d.h. keine Geltungsnotwendigkeit in der Erfahrung wäre. Aus dem Zwecke der Vernunft leitet sich alle Notwendigkeit her, weil die Vernunft Zweck ihrer selbst ist, weil sie durch den Zweckgedanken sich mit sich vermittelt, sich in sich als notwendig reflektiert, weil sie durch Reflexion auf den Zweck ihrer selbst in sich zurückkehrt. Dieses Sich-zurückwenden zu sich ist ihre Notwendigkeit, wie es auch ihre Freiheit ist.²¹

As this quotation from Kroner illustrates, the division between the powers of reason and understanding and that of judgment is artificially imposed, for they are all manifestations of the same self-defining power of reason. Without the capacity of the reflective judgment, nothing else can be realized. It makes determinate judgment possible, thereby allowing for human cognition. We see order in the world because our minds operate in a certain way. The way our mind cognizes the world belongs to the essence of what it means to be a human subject. To attribute this ordering tendency to a lucky chance or to a God denies the simultaneous claim Kant is making, namely that the capacity for human beings to cognize objects in the world is a universal, independent ability and essential to human subjectivity. Before we return to this point, it is instructive to see why Kant thinks he needs to do this. This brings us to aesthetic judgment as revealed in the beautiful.

4. Aesthetic judgment

The representation of an object has both a logical part, by which it can be cognized, and a subjective part, its aesthetic quality, that is incapable of becoming an element of cognition and which is the feeling of pleasure or displeasure connected with it. This aesthetic quality is linked to the notion of finality (Zweckmässigkeit), a

²¹Kroner, I,247.

finality which is prior to cognition of the object. When mere apprehension of the form of an object of intuition, completely divorced from its cognitive content, calls forth pleasure, then this:

...pleasure can express nothing but the conformity of the Object to the cognitive faculties brought into play in the reflective judgement, and so far as they are in play, and hence merely a subjective formal finality of the Object.²²

When this happens, when "...imagination (as the faculty of intuitions **a priori**) is undesignedly brought into accord with understanding, (as the faculty of concepts,) by means of a given representation, and a feeling of pleasure is thereby aroused...,"²³

Kant claims that the object under consideration is to be regarded as final for the reflective judgment, and can be called beautiful. This whole process will be discussed in detail later. It suffices for now to point out that most aesthetic (subjective) judgments, i.e. those based on the feeling of pleasure, do not result in an object being designated as beautiful but rather as agreeable or good.

An aesthetic judgment on the finality of an object is completely independent of the concept of the object, of any cognitive knowledge of it. An aesthetic (purely subjective) judgment in general assumes that what is under consideration has finality for the reflective judgment. The special case of the beautiful is the purest example of an aesthetic judgment, for it calls forth a pleasure that is not even tinged with an ulterior interest:

When the form of an object (as opposed to the matter of its representation, as sensation) is, in the mere act of reflecting upon it, without regard to any concept to be obtained from it, estimated as the ground of a pleasure in the representation of such an Object, then this pleasure is also judged to be combined necessarily with the representation of it, and so not merely for the

²²CJ, 189-90.

²³CJ, 190.

Subject apprehending this form, but for all in general who pass judgement. The object is then called beautiful; and the faculty of judging by means of such a pleasure (and so also with universal validity) is called taste.²⁴

Unlike objects of cognition which depend upon sensation, the beautiful object elicits a response not of sensation but of feeling. It is the examination of this feeling to which the 'Critique of Aesthetic Judgment' is devoted. The pleasure that arises is in response to the unity of imagination and understanding in the subject; this unity is not anchored in concepts or in sensation but is free-floating. This is a somewhat confusing notion that will be examined at length for it is the critical point of this study. Only if it can be accepted that there is such a thing as pure, disinterested pleasure that is based on something absolutely fundamental to what it means to be human, can Kant assert that the singular judgment, 'this is beautiful,' has a priori validity. This claim is immensely complicated by the fact that it cannot be attributed to an objective response but merely to a response which is purely subjective. How is it possible to raise a claim based on a subjective (aesthetic) feeling of pleasure to universal status, to a transcendental law? This is the question posed in the first half of the Critique of Judgment and which will be examined in depth.

5. The subject-object boundary

This raises a problem touched on earlier: where is the boundary between subject and object? In both his cognitive and moral theories, Kant assumes that the mechanism which governs the operation of the human mind is the same for everyone. We can assume that everyone apprehends a physical object or a moral imperative in the same way, because everyone operates with the same set of categories which

²⁴CJ 190.

provide the a priori rules or concepts for determining, and correctly subsuming, the given raw material. The faculty of judgment determines, by means of concepts, all cognitive and moral knowledge. But to determine how judgment itself functions cannot be the task of determinate (objective) judgment, because it cannot belong to conceptual cognitive knowledge. Another kind of judgment, non-cognitive or reflective judgment, must demonstrate how the faculty of judgment possesses a non-cognitive a priori validity. Reflective judgment must reveal what it is that is essential to the subjective process of judging, for only then can determinate judgment find its universal foundation. Kant locates the purest example of reflective judgment in the aesthetic subjective judgment of the beautiful, which is a singular judgment that maintains a claim to universality. Although his examination of the beautiful and subsequent transcendental deduction of it leads directly to the essence of human subjectivity as the source of reflective judgment, which in turn grounds objective judgment, Kant consistently refuses to admit openly that what he refers to as the supersensible realm is actually the mysterious heart of subjectivity. The reason why Kant avoids stating explicitly that objectivity is grounded in subjectivity is because his foundation for what it means to be human, to have unity of consciousness, rests on the cognitive faculties; where they come from is not his primary concern. Clearly, his thinking in CJ leads him in another direction, and although he dutifully follows this path, he does not openly accept the conclusion to which he is brought.

For Kant, that which is purely subjective concerns the apprehension of an object in respect of its form prior to any concept. When this form is in harmony with the cognitive faculties, it is a subjective finality of the form of the object. Objective finality, by contrast, occurs when the concept of the object is given, when judgment

presents the object by giving the intuition a corresponding concept. Kant uses this distinction to explain the division of the Critique of Judgment into aesthetic and teleological judgment:

Natural beauty may, therefore, be looked on as the **presentation** of the concept of formal, i.e. merely subjective, finality and **natural ends** as the presentation of the concept of a real, i.e. objective, finality. The former of these we estimate by taste (aesthetically by means of the feeling of pleasure), the latter by understanding and reason (logically according to concepts).²⁵

The difference between formal (subjective) finality and real (objective) finality gives Kant the distinction needed to let him concentrate on the nature of the beautiful. It is important to notice that Kant here chooses natural beauty as that which epitomizes formal finality, for in the course of his examination of the beautiful his attempt to isolate pure, disinterested beauty begins with natural beauty but ends by calling into question whether there can be such a thing as free beauty, as a pure judgment of taste.

The formal finality of nature is that "...principle without which understanding could not feel itself at home in nature,"²⁶ that is, the principle which determines how our cognitive faculties interact with each other to create order out of the chaos of impressions we receive from the world. Through reflective judgment, the concept of ends in the interest of reason is formed to fit the understanding so as to give nature its formal end. The capacity of judgment to estimate according to a rule raises the question of when the object is to be judged according to a principle of formal purposiveness (aesthetic judgment) and when it is to be judged according to a

²⁵CJ, 193.

²⁶CJ, 193.

universal law of nature (teleological judgment). When a subjective finality of nature is represented in the form of a thing by a transcendental principle:

It resigns to the aesthetic judgment the task of deciding the conformity of this product (in its form) to our cognitive faculties as a question of taste (a matter which the aesthetic judgment decides, not by harmony with concepts, but by feeling).²⁷

Aesthetic judgment retains a special status in comparison to teleological judgment because it estimates according to a rule, not according to a concept. While both of them belong to reflective judgment, the latter simply assigns determinate conditions under which a thing is estimated after the idea of an end of nature, whereas the former contains an a priori principle as the basis of its reflection on nature.

The a priori element in aesthetic judgment is determined by Kant to be the bridge between nature and freedom for which he has been searching. While it is objects of nature which are being judged, the perception of these objects by feeling, not by cognition, and feeling's independence from concepts and sensations, forms the link between the sensible world of objects and the supersensible world of freedom. Although judgment in general is a regulative principle of the cognitive faculties, aesthetic judgment is constitutive with respect to feelings of pleasure or displeasure. The spontaneous play of the cognitive faculties which results in the feeling of pleasure makes the consequences of the concept of a finality of nature as determined by judgment "...a suitable mediating link connecting the realm of the concept of nature with that of the concept of freedom."²⁸ While this sounds like the culmination of Kant's search, the actual examination of beauty turns out to be somewhat less

²⁷CJ, 194.

²⁸CJ, 197.

successful, as Kant is torn between the abstract idea of a pure, disinterested, meaningless natural beauty and the demands of the human subject, the vehicle responding to objects and determining whether or not they are beautiful.

We now turn to a more detailed analysis of the beautiful. It is important to bear in mind the discontinuity which the aesthetic judgment of taste brings to Kant's discussion of its position in the faculties of mind. The judgment of taste should provide the synthesis, the smooth continuity, between nature and freedom. This is what Kant is looking for and which he finds, but which does not quite provide the bridge he thought it would. By making understanding the objective, transcendental law-giver to nature, he fails to realize that this objectivity is grounded in the subject. Or rather, he does not go far enough in this direction to give a truly unifying character to aesthetic judgment. Because Kant models the subjective judgment on the mechanism of cognitive objective judgment, he is never able or willing to determine that it is actually the reflective judgment which provides the basis for cognitive judgment. Consequently, we are left with three critiques without the subjective glue needed to bind them together. This is not to belittle what Kant does accomplish, for his study of the aesthetic judgment of taste, the nature of the beautiful, breaks much new ground in the field of systematic aesthetics.

C. The 'Analytic of the Beautiful'

No less impressive than the actual content of Kant's thought is the elaborate structure he designed to house it: the architectonic of the system of mind, morals and, as it turns out, aesthetics. While providing a needed frame, it is at times suspiciously exact in its breakdown of functions into threes and fours and twelves, a criticism to

which Kant is quick to respond as, for example, he explains the number of basic categories:

This division is developed systematically from a common principle, namely, the faculty of judgment (which is the same as the faculty of thought). It has not arisen rhapsodically, as the result of a haphazard search after pure concepts, the complete enumeration of which, as based on induction only, could never be guaranteed.²⁹

The Critique of Judgment presents no exception to this impressive superstructure, yet the basic argument seems more at odds than ever with the imposed form. To make the argument more accessible, I will first sketch the outline of the Critique as presented by Kant and then show where I think the essence of his argument lies.

On the surface, the Critique of Judgment is first neatly divided into two parts, the critique of aesthetic judgment and that of teleological judgment. We are here only concerned with the former.³⁰ The lengthy introduction establishes Kant's thoughts on the nature of philosophy as a whole and explains why a study of reflective judgment in its teleological and especially aesthetic forms is essential to a completion of the picture. He then turns to the 'Critique of Aesthetic Judgment' which is (unevenly) divided into an analytic and a dialectic, the former being subdivided into an 'Analytic of the Beautiful' and an 'Analytic of the Sublime.' The argument itself, however, is not

²⁹CPR, A81. Cf. Wolff: "Kant's own papers, in which he can be seen working up the doctrines of the Critical Philosophy, reveal that he tinkered endlessly with lists of Judgments and Categories before hitting on the principle of four sets of three. Furthermore, in contradistinction to the order of argument of the Metaphysical Deduction, Kant quite evidently adjusted the Table of Judgments so that it would yield the desired Table of Categories" (p.62).

³⁰As seen in the "Introduction," teleological judgment explains how we see organization in the empirical world in general. It is also a product of reflective judgment but is subservient to aesthetic judgment in that the latter, as we will see, discovers or responds to the pure a priori form of judgment whereas teleological judgment empirically applies this form, in a way analogous to the manner in which the transcendental use of the understanding governs the empirical use.

quite as neat. It seems embarrassingly easy to lose track of what is at stake here, namely the search for what it means to claim: "This is beautiful." How can a personal, subjective judgment which in the end is based on something so insubstantial as a feeling be shown to have a priori validity? This is the task at hand.

Kant begins the 'Analytic of the Beautiful' with a structure roughly modeled on the Table of Judgments found in CPR: the four Moments of the judgment of taste. As he points out in a footnote, what he is doing in these Moments is examining the concept of taste, having assumed that it is the "faculty of estimating the beautiful." Of greater importance, however, will be "...the discovery of what is required for calling an object beautiful [which] must be reserved for the analysis of judgments of taste."³¹ These Moments are primarily descriptive and while rich in information about the nature of the beautiful pose, but do not answer, the question whether a priori aesthetic judgments are possible. They do, however, provide the premises for the transcendental deduction which will decide this question.

This problematic is taken up in the somewhat inappropriately named 'Analytic of the Sublime.' While the 'Analytic of the Beautiful' does, in its 22 sections, confine itself to the nature of the beautiful, the Analytic of the Sublime is not so unified. Sections 23-29 discuss the sublime, which is henceforth almost completely ignored. Sections 30-40 return to the difficulties presented by aesthetic judgments of the beautiful and here provide a significant part of the transcendental deduction of the a priori necessity of judgments of taste. Finally, in sections 41-54, Kant first makes clear the moral component of judgments of taste and then launches into a detailed discussion of fine art and its relation to genius, which, while quite interesting, in

³¹CJ, §1:203FN.

particular the discussion on genius, seems quite at odds with its given place in the architectonic scheme.

The Analytic part has thus been somewhat haphazardly completed, and Kant now turns to the very short Dialectic of Aesthetic Judgment. In sections 55-57 he outlines and then solves the antinomy of taste; in 59-60 he returns to the theme of morality, explaining why, despite all the arguments given in the 'Analytic of the Beautiful' for the importance of the disinterested nature of the beautiful, it is nevertheless an essential function of taste that it has a strong moral component.

In this next section, I will be following Kant's exploration of, and argument for, the relationship between beauty and taste. First I will examine the Four Moments, which contain insights of great importance for post-Kantian students of aesthetics. Then I will discuss the antinomy of taste and its solution, and finally I will sketch the transcendental deduction for the a priori validity of judgements of taste. After the theoretical study of the relation between beauty and taste has been completed, I will turn to the question of the work of art and of genius, so as to illustrate Kant's practical application of taste.

Before a fruitful examination of the text can be undertaken, several terms need to be illuminated, as definitions of them are essential to an understanding of what Kant is trying to formulate. First and foremost, the imagination is required for a central task, much as it also was crucial to the unity of apperception detailed in CPR. Here, however, it is now considered as a full equal to the understanding, but again its precise nature is left unclear. The activity of the imagination is important to watch in the hope of gaining an insight into Kant's hidden thoughts about the process.

Other terms essential to comprehension of the argument are the following: 'taste' (Geschmack); 'finality' or 'purposiveness' (Zweckmässigkeit); 'to be disinterested' (uninteressiert sein); and the difference between 'sensation' and 'feeling' (Empfindung und Gefühl). Only with a working understanding of what these terms mean and how they interact with one another to form the basis of Kant's aesthetic theory can one grasp both the importance and the novelty of Kant's thought. Two additional terms have already been mentioned: 'aesthetic' (ästhetisch) and 'pleasure'/'displeasure' (Wohlgefallen/Missfallen). 'Aesthetic' refers to judgments which are wholly subjective; all judgments of beauty fall into this category. It is noteworthy that Kant uses the adjective (ästhetisch) and not the noun (Ästhetik), for the latter has a different connotation. Aesthetics is certainly based on aesthetic experience, but until one understands what is essential to aesthetic experience, the idea of applying it to a body of objects makes little sense. 'Pleasure' is the feeling which provides the foundation for judging all claims about the beautiful. Kant considers this feeling to be self-evident and nowhere describes what it is or how one feels.

As anyone familiar with Kant's work knows, Kant uses a highly specialized set of technical terms. The terms above are specific to the Critique of Judgment and are in no way an exhaustive list of such terms. However, they are some of the most important ones to pay attention to in any attempt to understand Kant's intentions. Rather than expanding on their meaning here, these terms will be addressed during the course of the analysis about to be undertaken; the study of how Kant uses them will make their meaning and application clearer.

In keeping with the architectonic superstructure, Kant models the 'Analytic of the Beautiful' on CPR's Table of Judgments (A70,B95), which list four headings:

Quantity, Quality, Relation and Modality, each containing three moments. His attempt to model the judgment of taste on this format is, however, more useful in terms of the systematic structure than clarity gained. And oddly, in CJ he inverts the position of quantity and quality, explaining that "...this is what aesthetic judgment on the beautiful looks to in the first instance."³² So as to show as clearly as possible the material with which we will be working, the parameters of the beautiful as derived or drawn from the Four Moments are defined as follows, with the original German to be found in the footnotes:

First Moment: Taste is the faculty of estimating an object or a mode of representation by means of a delight or aversion **apart from any interest**. The object of such a delight is called **beautiful**.³³

Second Moment: The **beautiful** is that which, apart from a concept, pleases universally.³⁴

Third Moment: **Beauty** is the form of **finality** in an object, so far as perceived in it **apart from the representation of an end**.³⁵

Fourth Moment: The beautiful is that which, apart from a concept, is cognized as object of a **necessary** delight.³⁶

³²CJ, §1:203FN. For more detailed discussion on this aspect of the architectonic, see Crawford, Kant's Aesthetic Theory, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1974, pp.15-17. Crawford provides a detailed comparison of the two tables and shows precisely how Kant fails to achieve any sort of parallelism, except in the barest outline.

³³CJ, §5:211. Geschmack ist das Beurteilungsvermögen eines Gegenstandes oder einer Vorstellungsart durch ein Wohlgefallen, oder Missfallen, ohne alles Interesse. Der Gegenstand eines solchen Wohlgefallens heisst schön (KU, B16,A16).

³⁴CJ, §9:219. Schön ist das, was ohne Begriff allgemein gefällt (KU, B32,A32).

³⁵CJ, §19:236. Schönheit ist Form der Zweckmässigkeit eines Gegenstandes, sofern sie, ohne Vorstellung eines Zwecks, an ihm wahrgenommen wird (KU, B61,A60).

³⁶CJ, §22:240. Schön ist, was ohne Begriff als Gegenstand eines notwendigen Wohlgefallens erkannt wird (KU, B68,A67).

Much has been written and claimed about these four Moments.³⁷ What I will do here is summarize the claims Kant is making so as to show more clearly the steps of the transcendental deduction of the judgement of taste.

1. The First Moment

The first Moment of the judgment of taste, that of quality, sets out to differentiate the beautiful, the pure object of pleasure, from the agreeable and from the good. The first three sections respectively establish the subjective, and thus aesthetic, nature of judgments of taste; the essential element of disinterested pleasure in judging something to be beautiful; and the distinction between sensation and feeling. Taste, as "...the faculty of estimating the beautiful,"³⁸ seems to be a very slippery notion which Kant will attempt to fix, in the manner of a photographer fixing a negative, so that the resulting picture remains true to the original shot and does not fade, distort or vanish. In this Moment, however, taste itself is not of such great importance. It is here sufficient to establish that beauty is a feeling and not a sensation, that it refers to the subject and not the object, and that the delight or pleasure which is elicited by something which is beautiful is not tinged with the slightest interest.

To decide whether or not something is beautiful, the representation under consideration is referred, by way of the imagination, to the subject and her feeling of pleasure or displeasure. The cognitive faculties play no direct role in the judgment

³⁷A note on secondary literature: In comparison to the first two critiques, the secondary literature on this critique, especially what is available in English, is meager. It is nevertheless substantial, and I have browsed on it to a certain degree. However, only where I directly rely on an argument put forth elsewhere do I footnote it. The rest of the supporting work appears in the bibliography.

³⁸CL §1:203 FN.

being made because the representation in question has to do solely with feelings; feelings occupy a special place, for they are the only reference of a representation which are incapable of being objectified. Their response to the representation is a purely subjective (aesthetic) one. Judgments of taste compare the representation in the subject with all the representations the mind is capable of feeling and choose the appropriate one. A pure judgment of taste, that is, one which determines whether something is beautiful, has no interest in the real existence of the object, for when something is beautiful, its actual existence is of no importance to our response. Delight in the real existence of an object implies desire and is not a pure judgment because it is not impartial. The delight which is called forth by a beautiful object must be completely disinterested. Kant's incorporation of 'disinterestedness' into his aesthetic theory is a novel contribution to systematic aesthetics. As shown in my introductory chapter, the disinterested aspect of the beautiful has been stressed by some of Kant's predecessors, in particular Shaftesbury; Kant, however, is the first to build this notion into a systematic analysis of the nature of the beautiful.

Another distinction which is critical to Kant's project here is the distinction between sensation and feeling. Sensation denotes an objective representation of sense, for example the coldness and whiteness of snow. Feeling refers to the subjective response, in this case the pleasure taken in viewing a winter landscape, regarded purely as an object of delight. A critical distinction between the two is that feeling is "...absolutely incapable of forming a representation of an object."³⁹ Since the beautiful

³⁹CJ, §3:206. This covers the objection which might be raised by a dream, for example, where what one dreams might not have a correlation to a physical object, but that one can form a representation of the object (rather than just having a feeling-response to the object) is the key criterion. Despite the counter-intuitive sound of it, sensation can refer to imaginary objects for as soon as the manifold of sensation has

evokes a feeling of pleasure, Kant investigates the different kinds of pleasure, for only one very specific kind can elicit the response "this is beautiful." The feeling of pleasure or delight (*Wohlgefallen*) and its opposite is, in Kant's view, the only reference of representations which cannot become objective. While these feelings might seem to us to be only a very narrow interpretation of the feelings which emotions call forth, Kant assumes that the various degrees of pleasure and displeasure and the interest with which they are bound actually covers all possible feelings. When a feeling of delight is coupled with interest, it is agreeable but not beautiful. Similarly, the beautiful cannot be good, because the good always implies an end (usually a moral one).⁴⁰ Of these three kinds of delight which Kant discusses (from his point of view this covers the field completely): the agreeable, the good and the beautiful, "...that of taste in the beautiful may be said to be the one and only disinterested and free delight."⁴¹ The disinterested nature of our feeling of pleasure in the beautiful is an important and original contribution by Kant to the study of the aesthetic realm. It also provides a clear marker to show how the emphasis of Kant's theory of the beautiful shifts, for in this section the disinterested and free nature of beauty is repeatedly stressed whereas later the influence of morality in determining the beautiful plays an increasingly weightier role.

been formed into some sort of recognizable thing, it enters the objective realm.

⁴⁰Despite the strict division here between beauty and morality, Kant appears to undergo a curious reversal in parts of the Third Moment, the *Analytic of the Sublime* and the *Dialectic*, where he contends that "the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good" (§59:353). I will claim that this is due to Kant's ultimately unsuccessful but nevertheless admirable attempt to bridge the subjective-objective gap.

⁴¹CL §5:210.

2. The Second and Fourth Moments

The Second and Fourth Moments, respectively, address the claims of universality and necessity which the beautiful elicits, claims that are made in the absence of any concept. It is in these two Moments that Kant makes the case that the judgment of beauty, despite its concept-less characteristic, is nevertheless an interpersonal, communicable statement. In the Second Moment, that of quantity, Kant maintains it is inevitable that when one is conscious that one's delight in an object is independent of interest, then all human beings will likewise consider this object as containing a ground of delight. Since the delight is not based on any interest on the part of the subject, who moreover feels completely free in taking delight in the object, it can only be inferred that this delight rests on something that must be present in all people and that everyone will accordingly react in the same way. Because judgment about the beautiful is an aesthetic and not a logical judgment, its universality cannot spring from concepts but must be subjective. If this universal delight were founded on a concept, it would then be the good; in the absence of the concept it is the beautiful.

The relation between taste and beauty which has been addressed in the Moment of quality is further explored here in the Moment of quantity, for Kant needs to clarify the different types of delight, which are in turn linked to the notion of taste. Insofar as delight or pleasure is based on sensation, it is limited to the agreeable and is therefore a matter of individual liking or disliking. The beautiful, however, is not a mere claim of individual liking but demands that everyone agrees with this judgment; lack of agreement signifies want of taste. Whereas the good, too, has claim to universal delight, it is by means of a concept and concepts play no role in judgments on the beautiful. Kant does point out that the universal voice of the judgment of taste

is only an idea which imputes agreement to every one; it may not be the case that everyone agrees. Even though something designated as 'beautiful' is considered to be universally so, this agreement is an instance of the rule which is confirmed by the concurrence of others, and not from concepts.

In the final section of the Second Moment, section 9, Kant maintains that the key to the critique of taste lies in solving the problem of the relative priority of the feeling of pleasure in a judgment of taste.⁴² If the pleasure is antecedent to the representation, the result would be the feeling of agreeableness to the senses and would only have private validity. It must therefore be:

...the universal capacity for being communicated incident to the mental state in the given representation which, as the subjective condition of the judgment of taste, must be fundamental, with the pleasure in the object as its consequent.⁴³

But what does this "mental state in the given representation" mean? It is clear that the only things which can be universally communicated are so by means of cognition, e.g. by representations of objects. If the determining ground of the judgment is to be subjective, that is, independent of a concept of the object, and yet universally communicable, then, claims Kant:

⁴²This section provides commentators with widely divergent interpretations. I follow Crawford's argument here (pp. 66-8); he sees this section as providing the first two steps of the transcendental deduction. For the complete opposite view, see Paul Guyer "Pleasure and Society in Kant's Theory of Taste" in Essays in Kant's Aesthetics, eds. Cohen and Guyer, (pp. 21-54). Guyer's aim here is to show "...how the section which should unlock Kant's theory of taste instead throws an extra bar before it...[and] why, in the very place where he should have been most clear, Kant actually managed to become confused over the implications of his own theory" (p.22).

⁴³CL §9:217.

...it can be nothing else than the mental state that presents itself in the mutual relation of the powers of representation so far as they refer a given representation to cognition in general.⁴⁴

Because these cognitive powers are not restricted to any given rule of cognition, they are here engaged in free play, and the mental state called forth by this state of affairs is a "...feeling of the free play of the powers of representation in a given representation for a cognition in general."⁴⁵

Kant tries to explain this by first reviewing how cognitive knowledge of an object comes about, and then using this model, minus the object, to illustrate what he means. For a representation of an object to become a source of cognition, the imagination brings together the manifold of intuition and the understanding provides the unity of concept in what can be considered 'free play' of the cognitive faculties. When the judgment under consideration is determinate, it mediates between the imagination's reworking of sensible intuition into a form which can then receive a concept from the understanding. Determinate judgment ensures that the product of the imagination is properly subsumed under the appropriate category or concept. In determinate judgment, 'free play' is simultaneously determined, for the cognitive faculties interact according to the rigid laws required by objectivity. When an object is represented by means of this interaction, it must be universally communicated:

...because cognition, as a definition of the Object with which given representations (in any Subject whatever) are to accord, is the one and only representation which is valid for everyone.⁴⁶

⁴⁴CL§9:217.

⁴⁵CL§9:217.

⁴⁶CL§9:217.

If, however, this process of universal communicability is not tied to a definite concept, as in the case presented by judgments of taste, then Kant maintains that what is left is: "...nothing else than the mental state present in the free play of imagination and understanding."⁴⁷ Kant has now provided one of the foundations for the judgment of taste in that he has shown its communicability. The case here made for the universally communicable mental state prerequisite for pleasure in the beautiful and the fact that this state is based on the free play of the cognitive faculties will become the first two premises of the transcendental deduction of the judgment of taste.

One of the key assumptions in Kant's cognitive theory is that all minds function in the exact same way when operating properly; this assumption allows him here to suppose that a subjective (aesthetic) response to a representation of an object must be antecedent to the pleasure which we feel when we call something beautiful. From Kant's point of view, what we are now presented with is that in a judgment of taste, the feeling of pleasure which is called forth in response to an object, which he, for example, deems beautiful, is as necessary as if the beauty were "...a quality of the object forming part of its inherent determination according to concepts..."⁴⁸ even though, of course, it has nothing to do with objective concepts.

The Fourth Moment of the judgment of taste, that of modality, tries to establish that the beautiful is an object of necessary delight. This cannot be a theoretical objective necessity, an a priori rule that everyone will feel delight in the object I think beautiful; nor can it be a practical necessity which would make delight the consequence of an objective law stating that one ought to act in such a way without

⁴⁷CL §9:218.

⁴⁸CL §9:218.

an ulterior object. Instead, it must be an exemplary necessity: "...a necessity of the assent of **all** to a judgment regarded as exemplifying a universal rule incapable of formulation."⁴⁹ In other words, every one **ought** to approve of an object which someone deems beautiful. It is here that Kant brings in the notion of common sense (Gemeinsinn), by which he expressly does not mean the more traditional notion of **sensus communis**, defined as common understanding (gemeiner Verstand).⁵⁰ The judgment of common understanding is always by concept and never by feeling even if the principle of the concept is obscure, whereas the judgment of common sense has a subjective principle which determines pleasure only by means of feeling and with universal validity. Without this presupposition of common sense, which would perhaps be better termed "common feeling," there is no basis for assuming a judgment of taste.

Kant gives a detailed justification for the existence of a common sense, predicated on the fact that every one's mind operates in precisely the same fashion. The subjective condition of the act of knowing is precisely the mental state which allows for universal communication and cognition. Without this subjective foundation, knowledge could not arise. This claim, made briefly in passing, points unambiguously to the subjective nature underlying all objective judgments. Kant is quite clearly aware that:

...if cognitions are to admit of communication, then our mental state...from which cognition is to result, must also admit of being universally

⁴⁹CL §18:237.

⁵⁰See Gadamer, Truth and Method (pp.19-29), for a brief history of the term 'sensus communis' and the changes it undergoes between Vico and Kant.

communicated, as without this, which is the subjective condition of the act of knowing, knowledge, as an effect, would not arise.⁵¹

The underlying design of what is essential to the mental activity of human beings must be universal. Kant then expands this explanation for cognitive universality by means of a simple ratio. Since all knowledge arises out of differing ratios of action (depending on the object) between imagination and understanding, as the one arranges the manifold of sense and the other the unity of concept, there is a corresponding relation between these two faculties for cognition in general, which can only be determined by feeling and not concept:

Since...this disposition itself must admit of being universally communicated, and hence also the feeling of it (in the case of a given representation), while again, the universal communicability of a feeling presupposes a common sense: it follows that our assumption of it is well founded. And here, too, we do not have to take our stand on psychological observations, but we assume a common sense as the necessary condition of the universal communicability of our knowledge, which is presupposed in every logic and every principle of knowledge that is not one of scepticism.⁵²

Since "...we tolerate no one else being of a different opinion"⁵³ when we describe something as beautiful, this fundamental feeling is introduced not as a private one but as a public sense. Not everyone will agree with my judgment that something is beautiful, but the operative element here is that everyone **ought** to; judgment of taste is thus an example of common sense endowed with exemplary validity. The ideal norm provided by common sense serves as a presupposition for a judgment that, in accordance with it, is to be converted into a rule for everyone: the subjective principle hereby assumes subjective universality. This universality is another foundation for the

⁵¹CJ, §21:238.

⁵²CJ, §21:239.

⁵³CJ, §22:239.

judgment of taste and will provide the turning point for the conclusion of the transcendental deduction, even though in this Moment Kant is content merely to describe the function of common sense. Whether common sense is a constitutive principle of the possibility of experience or is a regulative principle by a still higher principle of reason, and the related question concerning whether taste is a natural and original faculty, or only an artificial one, will be examined later. At this point Kant is not yet completely willing to allow such a subjective basis for judgment to stand as an a priori universal rule.

3. The Third Moment

The Third Moment, that of relation, presents us with some of the more complicated aspects of CJ, and is the most ambitious of the four Moments. The lengthy discussion about the form of finality or purposiveness (*Zweckmässigkeit*) is of great importance to Kant's attempt to define the nature of the beautiful. In this section, Kant first provides a definition of finality and then argues for the key position of finality in mediating between taste and beauty. Next he discusses the relationship between taste and perfection; finally he addresses the ideal of beauty. The sections covered by this Moment (§§10-17) can be seen as a significant part of his rather fragmented central argument, namely the justification of the universal validity of judgments of taste.

Kant begins by establishing definitions for "end" and "finality:"

An end is the object of a concept so far as this concept is regarded as the cause of the object (the real ground of its possibility); and the causality of a concept in respect of its Object is finality (*forma finalis*).⁵⁴

In other words, we imagine a purpose or end in an object, by which Kant means the real existence of the object and not just our cognition of it, which can only be thought through a concept. When a purpose is tied to the rule-giving nature of a concept, it is also tied to the human action which supplies the concept and thereby to human will. The will is the faculty of desire insofar as the faculty of desire is determinable through concepts; by 'concept' is meant that the representation acts in accordance with an end or purpose. However, there is a very important exception to this:

But an Object, or state of mind, or even an action may, although its possibility does not necessarily presuppose the representation of an end, be called final simply on account of its possibility being only explicable and intelligible for us by virtue of an assumption on our part of a fundamental causality according to ends, i.e. a will that would have so ordained it according to a certain represented rule. Finality, therefore, may exist apart from an end, in so far as we do not locate the causes of this form in a will, but yet are able to render the explanation of its possibility intelligible to ourselves only by deriving it from a will.⁵⁵

That is to say, the formal organization can be sufficient for an object, state of mind or action to be considered purposive even when, so far as we know, it does not have a purpose. The purposiveness can be based on the formal pattern alone, regardless of whether the object actually has a purpose. Kant has hereby shown how he arrives at

⁵⁴CJ, §10:220. "...so ist Zweck der Gegenstand eines Begriffs, sofern dieser als die Ursache von jenem (der reale Grund seiner Möglichkeit) angesehen wird; und die Kausalität eines Begriffs in Ansehung seines Objekts ist die Zweckmässigkeit (*forma finalis*)" (B32,A32).

In light of the difficulties of and differences in translation of "Zweck" and "Zweckmässigkeit" discussed in detail above (FN 3), I have given the German so as to show more precisely how Kant himself uses the terms.

⁵⁵CJ, §10:220.

the famous phrase of "Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck," of purposiveness without purpose. The 'Zweckmässigkeit,' it must be stressed, refers to the form. It is not purposiveness in general but that of form which can be observed by means of reflection in objects without being accompanied by a purpose.

Now that he has shown how it is possible to have purposiveness unaccompanied by a purpose, Kant uses this as the foundation of the judgment of taste. Taste can rest neither on objective cognitive grounds nor on purely subjective grounds, for such a source of delight would imply interest. Only the subjective finality or purposiveness of bare form unaccompanied by any end can elicit a delight which is universally communicable apart from any concept. This delight, which accompanies the judgement of taste, rests on a priori grounds simply because it is a result of a purely internal interaction between different faculties, and has nothing to do with external experience:

The consciousness of mere formal finality in the play of the cognitive faculties of the Subject attending a representation whereby an object is given, is the pleasure itself, because it involves a determining ground of the Subject's activity in respect of the quickening of its cognitive powers, and thus an internal causality (which is final) in respect of cognition generally, but without being limited to a definite cognition, and consequently a mere form of the subjective finality of a representation in an aesthetic judgement.⁵⁶

Plainly put, apprehension of the bare finality of form is the pure judgment of taste which determines beauty.

Judgments of taste exemplify pure aesthetic judgments and are formal only. There are also, however, empirical aesthetic judgments which judge sensations and are material. Only beauty, the pure aesthetic judgment, can be considered the formal judgment of taste proper. Beauty as a pure judgment of taste is completely removed

⁵⁶CL §12:222.

from both emotion and charm; it is also independent of the representation of the good as well as that of perfection. The good is the external objective finality of an object and perfection is the internal objective finality of an object. By contrast, beauty is estimated on the ground of a subjective formal finality, a finality apart from an end, 'Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck.' As a subjective formal finality, beauty involves no thought of a perfection of the object because the only thing that is being felt by the subject is the absolutely disinterested delight produced by the harmony in the play of the mental powers. Kant here links these two very important concepts, that of disinterested delight (uninteressiertes Wohlgefallen) and purposiveness without purpose (Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck). This is a major contribution to the systematization of aesthetic theory, and will be examined in more detail later.

In order to clarify our perspective, another new contribution by Kant, the division of beauty into the categories of free and dependent, must be reviewed. Free beauty presupposes no concept of what the object should be and is self-subsisting. What belongs to it are the purest examples of the judgment of taste. Dependent beauty presupposes both a concept and an answering perfection of the object; it is a conditioned beauty and covers everything related to human beings which is deemed beautiful. Having made this distinction, Kant then proceeds to give examples of what he means, revealing the extreme formality of his aesthetic system in its pure form, since any object which contains meaning is consigned to a lesser sort of beauty. He also presents a certain northeastern European parochialism: flowers, brightly-plumaged birds, designs with no (apparent) intrinsic meaning all represent nothing and therefore are free beauties. In general, things of nature which appear to have no utility for humans are considered to fit the requirements needed for a pure judgment of taste.

All human-related beauty, which presupposes a concept of the end that defines what the thing has to be, and therefore a concept of its perfection, is to be considered dependent beauty, an inferior sort.

Kant is now caught in a trap of his own making, another example of the breadth of his vision coupled with a foundation too narrow and formal to accommodate what he is really trying to unveil. The abstract formalism of the free beauty generated by the pure judgment of taste is empty of meaning but does explain how beauty can have a priori universal validity. When beauty is considered dependent, it is because the pure aesthetic delight has become mixed with an intellectual delight, which arises when the delight is based on a concept. In this case, taste gains in the sense that it has rules prescribed for it and thus becomes fixed with respect to final objects which contain a perfection answering to the concept. To be sure, these are not rules of taste but rather are rules which establish "...a union of taste with reason, i.e. of the beautiful with the good."⁵⁷ This can enable the beautiful to become an intentional instrument with respect to the good. Even though, as he has painstakingly shown, beauty does not gain by perfection, nevertheless:

The truth is rather this, when we compare the representation through which an object is given to us with the Object (in respect of what it is meant to be) by means of a concept, we cannot help reviewing it also in respect of the sensation in the Subject. Hence there results a gain to the **entire faculty** of our representative power when harmony prevails between both states of mind.⁵⁸

After having insisted on the desirability of completely free, untainted beauty, Kant now almost surreptitiously admits to the value of adding human meaning to something considered beautiful. In this way, he attempts to bridge the subjective-objective gap.

⁵⁷CJ §16:230.

⁵⁸CJ §16:231.

Of course, the whole work attempts to cover the gap between nature and freedom, understanding and reason, object and subject, but there are two different approaches to this challenge. The first is the stated goal: to show how the aesthetic judgment of taste, through its pure disinterestedness, is the intermediary between the natural world of objects and the world of freedom, by virtue of the feeling of pleasure elicited by the free play of the cognitive faculties as they respond to the 'Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck' in the form of the object which is described as beautiful.

The second approach is the one Kant never explicitly mentions but which is often alluded to, namely that the subject-object gap can only be bridged within the subject itself because the subject, and not some transcendental noumenal world, grounds the object. I maintain that Kant's reversal here (and in other places) can only be explained by the latter approach. The dry, completely formal definition of beauty is unsatisfying precisely because it completely avoids any sort of human meaning and Kant almost subliminally realizes that, unless a beautiful object contains meaning for its human audience, judgments of taste cannot provide the all-encompassing unifying force with which Kant wants to endow them. To be sure, they can formally hold the structure together but, unless they demonstrate how all human faculties and capabilities are grounded in the subject, judgments of taste cannot provide the synthesis which Kant had hoped to achieve in his study of this cognitive faculty.

Taste is an original faculty; there can be no objective rule of taste which defines by means of concepts what is beautiful. Nevertheless, there seems to be a universal communicability of delight or aversion that exists without concept, for there are products of taste which Kant calls 'exemplary' (exemplarisch). Each person has in her own consciousness an archetype (Urbild) of taste, an idea, against which all other

objects of taste are measured. The idea is a concept of reason; ideals represent individual existence which are adequate to a given idea. The question which then arises is how an ideal of the beautiful arises from the indeterminate idea of an archetype of taste (Urbild des Geschmacks). To begin with, it cannot be an ideal of free beauty but must be fixed by a concept of objective finality. This implies that:

...where an ideal is to have place among the grounds upon which any estimate is formed, then beneath grounds of that kind there must lie some idea of reason according to determinate concepts, by which the end underlying the internal possibility of the object is determined **a priori**...Only what has in itself the end of its real existence--only **man** that is able himself to determine his ends by reason...among all the objects in the world, admits therefore, of an ideal of **beauty**, just as humanity in his person, as intelligence, alone admits of the ideal of **perfection**.⁵⁹

Although Kant has made it quite clear that a pure judgment of taste had to be disinterested and thus could not be related to the good, that is, to moral interest, the ideal of the beautiful, which can only be found in the human figure, "...consists in the expression of the **moral**, apart from which the object would not please at once universally and positively."⁶⁰

What we have at the end of this Moment is several paradoxical conclusions. Immediately after having shown that human beauty is inextricably linked with the moral, Kant defines beauty as derived from the Third Moment as "...the form of **finality** in an object, so far as perceived in it **apart from the representation of an end**."⁶¹

This again reflects his distinction between dependent and free beauty. Free beauty, it turns out, might be the more systematic and formal, but Kant unwillingly realizes that

⁵⁹CL §17:233.

⁶⁰CL §17:235.

⁶¹CL §17:236.

it is empty of meaning, hence the exception of beautiful things related to human ideals. This distinction between free and dependent beauty also illuminates Kant's attempt to bridge the subjective-objective gap discussed above. Through the extreme formalism of his analysis of free beauty, which must universally elicit both a disinterested pleasure and a feeling of purposiveness without purpose, the latter arising from the free play of the imagination and the understanding, beauty can be objectified in all but name. Because this pleasure arises from a purely subjective procedure, precisely from the free play of our cognitive faculties, the basis for the a priori universal feeling which allows us to recognize the beautiful must be subjective. However, since all relations between the cognitive faculties have their interaction in common, although the ratio which determines the dominant faculty changes, this free play, which in the faculty of judgment accounts for an a priori subjective foundation, is the same free play which in the understanding and reason gives rise to an a priori objective foundation. Without the theoretical existence of free play, there is no accounting for any kind of knowledge. Once again, Kant's theory of beauty points to the absolute priority of the subjective in determining the objective.

D. The 'Analytic of the Sublime'

In the 'Analytic of the Sublime' we can see more clearly what it is that Kant has been trying to unpack in the Four Moments, for in the 'Deduction of Pure Aesthetic Judgments,' specifically in sections 30-40, he retraces the mental path he has been following, if somewhat haphazardly, in his discussion of the Four Moments. As Kant remarks in Critique of Pure Reason:

The explanation of the manner in which concepts can thus relate **a priori** to objects I entitle their transcendental deduction; and from it I distinguish

empirical deduction, which shows the manner in which a concept is acquired through experience and through reflection upon experience, and which therefore concerns, not its legitimacy, but only its *de facto* mode of origination.⁶²

That an aesthetic judgment claims universal validity must be grounded on an a priori principle which in turn must be able to be deduced transcendently. The empirical deduction has already been established in the Second Moment:

...the judgement of taste, with its attendant consciousness of detachment from all interest, must involve a claim to validity for all men, and must do so apart from universality attached to Objects, i.e. there must be coupled with it a claim to subjective universality.⁶³

But to believe that something lays claim to universality and to necessity and to prove that this is the case are not the same thing. The judgment of taste is unusual in that what needs to be proved is the universal validity of a single judgment ('this is beautiful') which expresses "...the subjective finality of an empirical representation of the form of an object."⁶⁴ Proving this is complicated for several reasons.

A major problem revolves around the use of the term 'concept,' which is the basis for all cognitive knowledge and is a necessary element for the comprehension of objects. In the first and second peculiarities of the judgment of taste (§32-3), Kant outlines the difficulty in deducing the a priori nature of judgments of taste. On the one hand, in such a judgment everyone must feel the same disinterested delight in a thing of beauty, as if it were an objective quality; on the other hand, no proof can convince me of the beauty of an object, for my response is personal and subjective. Given this apparent contradiction, how is it possible to prove that the judgment of

⁶²CPR, A85,B117.

⁶³CL §6:212.

⁶⁴CL §31:281.

taste is based on an a priori principle? In order to effect a transcendental deduction, whose purpose is to show how a priori principles are essential to judgments of taste, this contradiction must first be removed. Kant does this in the antinomy of the judgment of taste (§56-7), located in the 'Dialectic of Aesthetic Judgment.' However, in terms of the coherence of the argument, the a priori nature of taste can be shown more easily if the antinomy has already been resolved: hence the antinomy will be considered next.

1. The antinomy of taste

A Kantian antinomy is an apparent conflict of reason, a set of arguments where each begins with an accepted and necessary premise and yet the conclusions contradict each other. Arguments about the nature of taste show a manifest contradiction, for there are two basic commonplaces held to be true concerning taste: 'every one has his own taste' and 'there is no disputing about taste.' In the first case, there are no grounds for the agreement of others since the judgment is purely subjective; in the second case, although an objective determining ground is implied, one can only enter into a dispute when definite concepts are there to be disputed. Since one cannot dispute about taste, one cannot reduce it to a definite concept. However, since arguments about taste are a fact, the second commonplace is better expressed as: **"...there may be contention about taste (although not a dispute)."**⁶⁵ This claim is the intermediary between the two above-mentioned commonplaces, namely that everyone has her own taste and that there is no disputing about taste (the determining ground

⁶⁵ CJ, §56:338. "...über den Geschmack lässt sich streiten (obgleich nicht disputieren) (B233,A230).

is objective but not reducible to concepts), although it is at the same time contrary to the first commonplace, for it holds out the possibility of coming to some terms of agreement. Kant now has the antinomy clearly before him:

1. **Thesis.** The judgement of taste is not based upon concepts; for, if it were, it would be open to dispute (decision by means of proofs).

2. **Antithesis.** The judgement of taste is based on concepts; for otherwise, despite the diversity of judgement, there could be no room even for contention in the matter (a claim to the necessary agreement of others with this judgement).⁶⁶

He solves it by showing that 'concept' is not used in the same sense in the two claims; once this is correctly understood the illusion of contradiction can be seen for what it is.

When one makes the claim 'this is beautiful,' an object is implied and hence a concept as well, for without a concept it would be impossible for the judgment of taste to claim necessary validity for everyone. But if there is a concept at the base of a judgment of taste, the judgment could then be determined by cognitive proof. So as to account for the unavoidable existence of a concept, one assumes that there is more than one way to understand what is meant by 'concept.' Simply because a judgment of taste refers to a concept does not imply that it must be proven from a concept. Even though the judgment of taste applies to objects of sense, since the judgment is non-cognitive, it does not determine a concept for the understanding. It is a purely private judgment in that it is a "...singular representation of intuition referable to the feeling of pleasure"⁶⁷: everyone has her own taste. However, since the judgment of taste contains "...beyond doubt an enlarged reference on the part of the representation

⁶⁶CL §56:338.

⁶⁷CL §57:339.

of the Object (and at the same time on the part of the Subject also),⁶⁸ it is this which presupposes that such judgments necessarily extend to everyone. Why this is so is not immediately obvious, partially because it cannot rest on any sort of logical proof. Kant, however, bases his claim of the necessity of the enlarged reference presupposed by the judgment of taste upon some sort of concept:

...but such a concept as does not admit of being determined by intuition, and affords no knowledge of anything. Hence, too, it is a concept **which does not afford any proof** of the judgment of taste. But the mere pure rational concept of the supersensible lying at the basis of the object (and of the judging Subject for that matter) as Object of sense, and thus as phenomenon, is just such a concept. For unless such a point of view were adopted there would be no means of saving the claim of the judgment of taste to universal validity.⁶⁹

The concept cannot be one of the understanding, for then the judgment of taste would be subject to empirical proof, would be cognitive. The only possibility for a non-cognitive concept that has a universal validity which is nevertheless subjective and singular, is to assume that the determining ground of the concept "...lies, perhaps, in the concept of what may be regarded as the supersensible substrate of humanity."⁷⁰

The antinomy is then easily solved by qualifying the nature of the concept: the thesis claims that the judgment of taste is not based on **determinate** concepts; the antithesis claims that the judgment of taste is based on an **indeterminate** concept, namely the supersensible substrate which underlies all phenomena. The only way in which the riddle of the faculty of taste can be solved, the "unique key" ("der einzige Schlüssel der Enträtselung"⁷¹), must be the "...indeterminate idea of the supersensible

⁶⁸CJ, §57:339.

⁶⁹CJ, §57:340.

⁷⁰CJ, §57:340.

⁷¹KU, B238,A235.

within us,"⁷² what Kant calls the subjective principle. In other words, as in the antinomies in CPR, the only possible solution lies beyond the boundaries of the sensible, for only in the supersensible can one postulate the a priori union of human faculties, where reason is brought into harmony with itself. This is to say that, all attempts to the contrary notwithstanding, Kant is repeatedly forced to the conclusion that the essence of human subjectivity in some mysterious way provides the answer to the interaction of our faculties. What is of particular note here is that Kant does not simply refer to the supersensible in general, but to the supersensible **within us**, an unambiguous acknowledgment that the supersensible realm is not meant to allude to some external metaphysical level. Simply because one gains cognitive knowledge from a concept is in itself no more valuable than aesthetic or subjective knowledge, since both are ultimately grounded on the faith that there is an ordered system to how the human mind, morals or aesthetic sensibilities work. Without this underlying assumption, a cognitive judgment is of no more value than an aesthetic judgment, and both are equally capable of being universal, since what they depend on is the structure of the self rather than some external proof.

2. The transcendental deduction of the judgment of taste

The solution to the antinomy makes the grounds of the transcendental deduction easier to follow because the unifying thread of the deduction is the notion of some sort of substrate common to all humanity. This is what Kant means by common sense (**sensus communis**), but it is perhaps best illustrated as it appears in the antinomy. The question which Kant is posing in the first and second peculiarities of

⁷²CJ, §57:341.

the judgment of taste (§32-3) is none other than a form of the general problem of critical philosophy: How are synthetic a priori judgments possible? This question arises inevitably from the peculiarities (and the antinomy), for on the one hand judgments of taste cannot be proved but are based on disinterested pleasure or displeasure, and on the other hand the claim for universal validity would imply a conceptual foundation. In other words:

How is a judgement possible which, going merely upon the individual's **own** feeling of pleasure in an object independent of the concept of it, estimates this as a pleasure attached to the representation of the same Object **in every other individual**, and does so **a priori**, i.e. without being allowed to wait and see if other people will be of the same mind?⁷³

That judgments of taste are synthetic is clear, for the predicate joined to the intuition of the object is a feeling. But how are they to be shown to be a priori?

Kant has already covered much of the proof for the a priori nature of the judgment of taste in the 'Analytic of the Beautiful' but has not explicitly organized it there. The presentation in the 'Analytic of the Sublime' is not much better organized and the deduction itself is extremely short (§38). In the 'Remark' on the deduction, he notes the critical assumption:

All that it [the deduction] holds out for is that we are justified in presupposing that the same subjective conditions of judgment which we find in ourselves are universally present in every man, and further that we have rightly subsumed the given Object under these conditions.⁷⁴

By combining the information given in the 'Analytic of the Beautiful' and in the antinomy of taste, it is possible to reconstruct how the deduction would look had Kant

⁷³CJ §36:288.

⁷⁴CJ §38:290.

carefully enumerated the steps instead of mulling them over in the rather formless fashion in which they are presented.

There are three basic premises to his deduction for the a priori nature of the judgment of taste.⁷⁵ The first two are to be found in the Second Moment and the third in the Third Moment, as well as in the 'Analytic of the Sublime':

Premise 1: Pleasure in the beautiful must be based on a universally communicable mental state.

Premise 2: A universally communicable mental state must be based on the cognitive faculties being harmoniously related in free play.

Premise 3: The harmony of the cognitive powers must be based upon the mere formal purposiveness of the object.

Once this much has been granted, Kant can conclude that there is an a priori validity to judgments of taste which is based on the notion of common sense, by which is not meant a concept-bound human understanding but rather a public sense:

Conclusion: The pleasure in the beautiful is thus based on that subjective element (common sense) which we can presuppose in all men, since it is necessary for all possible cognition.

This *sensus communis*, which Kant wants to translate as "gemeinschaftlicher Sinn," a sense based on the community of humankind, reaches beyond the subjective or personal considerations of the individual; it is the same as the "supersensible substrate of humanity" alluded to in the resolution of the antinomy. It contains "...subjective conditions of the possibility of a cognition in general"⁷⁶ and shares this characteristic with judgments of taste. In fact, Kant maintains that:

⁷⁵I am here following Crawford's reconstruction of the transcendental deduction. For his summary, see Kant's Aesthetic Theory, pp.66-68.

⁷⁶CJ, §39:292.

We might even define taste as the faculty of estimating what makes our feeling in a given representation **universally communicable** without the mediation of a concept....

Taste is, therefore, the faculty of forming an **a priori** estimate of the communicability of the feelings that, without the mediation of a concept, are connected with a given representation.⁷⁷

Taste has now become identified with the universal communicability of the feeling of pleasure based on the underlying public sense which all human beings share. Kant has shown to his satisfaction that when he claims that something is beautiful, he is perfectly justified in assuming that all human beings will also agree with him and feel the same disinterested delight. He does leave open the possibility that, although someone calls an object beautiful, that judgment has been incorrectly subsumed and will not receive universal acclaim. This leaves a significant amount of leeway in judgments of taste, for how is one to know when her feeling of pleasure is truly disinterested? Kant does not address this. Instead, he further obfuscates the issue in his elaboration on the relation between beauty and morality which he now gives.

3. The relation between taste and morality

Kant shows in sections 42 and 59-60 how the feeling of the judgment of taste is exacted from everyone as a sort of moral duty. For the purpose at hand, that argument will not be considered in depth. What is clear, however, is that Kant himself is not consistent about the kind of objects which are judged beautiful. Whereas initially only things bearing no relation to human beings (that is, objects of nature) were examples of free beauty, in the 'Analytic of the Sublime' it seems as if there is no longer such a thing as free beauty, for anyone who takes "...an interest in the beautiful

⁷⁷CL §40:295-6.

in nature can only do so in so far as he has previously set his interest deep in the foundations of the morally good."⁷⁸ The sticking point which Kant always has to return to is that whatever might be considered beautiful is judged so by human beings. Since the moral component of what it means to be human is an a priori element of human action and belongs to that supersensible substrate that defines the very essence of human nature, and since it is this supersensible realm in which the free play of the understanding and imagination which is common to all and which validates the a priori nature of judgments of taste is based, it is thus inevitable that judgments of taste are inextricably linked with a moral sense even though, as Kant stresses, this does not imply that the beautiful has an interest in the good. On the contrary, true beauty is disinterested.

Kant has now completed what might be considered a volte-face. In the Third Moment of the 'Analytic of the Beautiful' he stresses the purity of free beauty as the epitome of the free play of the cognitive faculties. Human-related beauty is considered dependent and impure. Only natural beauty can elicit this completely disinterested delight on the part of the spectator. Now, however, it appears that only one who already has what might be called a good moral disposition is capable of seeing beauty in nature; Kant states that "...the delight in beautiful art does not, in the pure judgments of taste, involve an immediate interest, as does that in beautiful nature..."⁷⁹

This inconsistency results from the inherent difficulty of the subject matter—Kant himself hopes "...that the difficulty of unravelling a problem so involved in its nature may serve as an excuse for a certain amount of hardly avoidable obscurity in its

⁷⁸CJ, §42:300

⁷⁹CJ, §42:301.

solution..."⁸⁰ Paradoxical as all this sounds, it is not inconsistent with other central aspects of the critique, most notably that of 'Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck.' The problem arises because Kant is trying to explain how a disinterested, subjective feeling can expand into a universal, a priori system. The task is logically impossible, and can only work by moving to a supra-logical realm, the realm of the supersensible, what Kant has in other works called the noumenal realm.

The discussion on the judgment of taste has remained quite abstract, focussing on the mental interaction which is required in order to respond appropriately to a beautiful object. Once Kant has determined how it is that a judgment of taste is made, he turns his attention to the criteria of an object representing 'fine art' (schöne Kunst) and to the human creator of such a work, namely the genius. Being the systematic thinker that he is, Kant must first discover the common thread which pulls together the creator, the work and the judge: it is taste. Now he can begin to isolate what kind of work deserves to be called fine art and how it comes to be created.

4. The work of fine art and the role of the genius

Art, in contrast to nature, is a product that has been created through an act of will; nature is a product of forces not under the control of human will. An act of will is a free act based on reason, and a work of art is thus a production through freedom. Art (Kunst) must also be distinguished from science (Wissenschaft); the former is a human ability, a practical faculty (Können) whereas the latter is knowledge (Wissen). This is not to suggest that the division is absolute, for indeed it is essential for a work of art to have a compulsory character, "...a mechanism, without which the soul [Geist],

⁸⁰ CJ, Preface 170.

which in art must be free, and which alone gives life to the work, would be bodiless and evanescent."⁸¹ Kant divides art into mechanical art, which tries "...to actualize a possible object to the cognition of which it is adequate..."⁸² and aesthetic art, which gives rise to an immediate feeling of pleasure. Aesthetic art can then be sub-divided into agreeable and fine art (*angenehme und schöne Kunst*). The pleasure induced by fine art arises not from organic sensation but from reflective judgment. Kant defines fine art as:

...a mode of representation which is intrinsically final, and which, although devoid of an end, has the effect of advancing the culture of the mental powers in the interests of social communication.⁸³

In this case, what is meant by social communication is universal communicability of the pleasure which is elicited.

Now that fine art has been separated from other forms of art, Kant investigates the relationship between nature and fine art. This is of particular interest because of the confusion between nature, art and morality alluded to earlier: in the 'Analytic of the Beautiful' it had seemed as if only nature could exhibit pure, free beauty, but this contention became increasingly cloudy with the introduction of the moral to judgments of taste, whereupon Kant claimed that only beautiful art is untainted by interest.⁸⁴ Kant approaches this interrelation from a fresh angle, completely leaving out the moral aspect which does not, however, make his earlier contention any clearer:

⁸¹CJ, §43:304.

⁸²CJ, §44:305.

⁸³CJ, §44:306. "...eine Vorstellungsart, die für sich selbst zweckmässig ist, und obgleich ohne Zweck, dennoch die Kultur der Gemütskräfte zur geselligen Mitteilung befördert" (B178/A176).

⁸⁴See CJ, §42.

A product of fine art must be recognized to be art and not nature. Nevertheless the finality in its form must appear just as free from the constraint of arbitrary rules as if it were a product of mere nature....Nature proved to be beautiful when it wore the appearance of art; and art can only be termed beautiful, where we are conscious of its being art, while yet it has the appearance of nature.⁸⁵

By having the appearance of nature Kant means that fine art must not appear intentional, must not seem as if the artist has been following rules of form. The free play of the cognitive faculties as they apprehend the final form of the object under consideration must not be hampered by any trace of the human presence of the artist; although recognized as art, the finality of the product "...must be clothed **with the aspect of nature...**"⁸⁶

There is only one kind of person who is capable of producing an artwork that fulfills these qualities: one who is endowed with genius. Kant defines genius as "...the innate mental aptitude (**ingenium**) **through which** nature gives the rule to art."⁸⁷

This clear statement once again raises the question: what exactly is nature? Nature is everything that is not human, and, as already seen, appears organized because of the way we cognize the world and because of the striving towards unity which is the basic impulse of our reflective judgment. But what it really is cannot be said. Occasionally it shines through our ordered cognition and stops our thinking as we recognize some fundamental pattern of the world, but the essence of nature cannot be put into words. Since fine art, as a product, must presuppose a rule, and yet judgments of beauty cannot be derived from a rule which is determined by a concept

⁸⁵CL §45:306.

⁸⁶CL §45:307.

⁸⁷CL §46:307.

(that is, an object), Kant draws the conclusion that it is nature, as manifested in the essential harmony of the cognitive faculties, which gives the rule to art. This can only happen through a human vehicle who acts or creates without knowing how the ideas have entered her head: the genius. Genius produces that for which no definite rule can be given, and is original; is exemplary and not imitative; can only be attributed to art and not science. Genius cannot be learned. The greatest scientific discoveries would eventually happen because they are waiting to be uncovered, but true poetry can never be taught:

In matters of science, therefore, the greatest inventor differs only in degree from the most laborious imitator and apprentice, whereas he differs specifically from one endowed by nature for fine art.⁸⁸

In deference to great scientific achievements, Kant maintains that scientists are superior to geniuses, for whereas science continually advances towards ever greater perfection in knowledge, "...genius reaches a point at which art must make a halt, as there is a limit imposed upon it which it cannot transcend."⁸⁹ He then curiously adds: "This limit has in all probability been long since attained." Since genius is not serial, in that every individual so endowed is unique, there cannot be an ever increasing product of genius as there is of science. Whatever the rule is which genius furnishes, it can only serve as a model which can be followed and handed down, whereas a scientific rule serves as a foundation upon which ever larger edifices can be built. This is not to suggest that the products of genius are completely free-floating, for the material furnished by genius must then be hewn into form, and this elaboration requires a mechanical or academic training.

⁸⁸CL §47:309.

⁸⁹CL §47:309.

In order to judge a beautiful object, taste is needed. This is the case for both natural beauty and fine art. The difference between these two types of beauty is that genius is required to produce the latter, for while "[a] beauty of nature is a **beautiful thing**; beauty of art is a **beautiful representation** of a thing."⁹⁰ This differentiation leads Kant to make a claim which will be strongly disputed by Schelling and Schopenhauer, namely that in judging the beauty of art, the perfection of the thing must be taken into consideration. Kant maintains this because at the foundation of a product of art lies a concept of what the thing is to be, and "...the agreement of the manifold in a thing with an inner character belonging to it as its end constitutes the perfection of the thing."⁹¹ By contrast, to appreciate beauty in nature one need only be pleased by the pure form. Here again, we see Kant struggling with the distinction between natural and human-created beauty, trying to keep the one free and purely formal so as to give to the other the means to express whatever it is that nature is trying to tell us about ourselves and our relation to the incoherent world behind the ordered appearance.

E. Conclusion: Two different interpretations
of the meaning of the work of art

In this examination of the nature, power and limits of judgment undertaken in the Critique of Judgment, Kant points unequivocally in the direction which leads to the establishment of the reflective judgment as the basis for all judgment, and therefore also as the unifying force between the subject and the natural world, between art and

⁹⁰CJ, §48:311.

⁹¹CJ, §48:311.

nature. Kant, however, has been trying to establish a bridge between nature and freedom, the latter term referring specifically to the moral realm. Consequently, any thing which might represent this bridge must be in conformity with the moral law, which is a result of freedom. The faculty of taste, the means of judging the beautiful, fulfills these qualifications:

Taste makes, as it were, the transition from the charm of sense to habitual moral interest possible without too violent a leap, for it represents the imagination, even in its freedom, as amenable to a final determination for understanding, and teaches us to find, even in sensuous objects, a free delight apart from any charm of sense.⁹²

Rather than seeing reflective judgment as undergirding all human cognitive ability, Kant is more interested in showing how the moral law imposes its form on all human cognitive ability. Both these ways of interpreting who we are and how we relate to the world can be discovered by means of the work of art. The difference between these two ways of regarding the work of art is one of emphasis. Although the elements required for both standpoints are to be found in the Critique of Judgment, Kant chooses to introduce moral considerations as an integral part of the work of art, thereby undermining the radical aspect of the claims about the nature of subjectivity he is simultaneously making.

What is clear is the related nature of aesthetics and of the moral, for both are rooted in a realm about which we can know nothing, but which we designate as providing the essence for our beliefs about what it means to be human. As explained in the introductory chapter, Kant regards this noumenal realm of freedom as predominantly moral. He has shown a consistent effort in his critical philosophy to uphold the existence of a noumenal world precisely so that he can justify the

⁹²CL §59:354.

coterminous existence of both determinate causal necessity in the world of appearances and the freedom of choice necessary for making moral judgments. It is not surprising therefore, that the aesthetic judgment, the bridge between nature and freedom, should display a strong moral component. The situation is somewhat analogous to the impetus behind the Critique of Pure Reason. Kant initially wanted to find an intermediary position between metaphysical claims and empirical claims but ends up responding primarily to empirical claims. Here, Kant wants to bridge the differences between nature and freedom (that is, nature and morality) and ends up with a moral solution, a synthesis which reveals the overarching influence of the moral law.

As I have tried to indicate throughout the analysis of Critique of Judgment, the direction in which Kant's thinking is taking him leads to the conclusion that the nature of subjectivity, the very essence of reflective judgment, grounds not only all determinate judgment and thereby both our ability to cognize objects and our tendency to organize the world teleologically, but also our striving for freedom, however one wants to interpret the consequences of freedom, moral or otherwise. It is the work of art, the product of genius, where the essence of subjectivity is revealed, the a priori nature of whatever it means to be a subject. Kant needs to impose a moral reading on this a priori nature; the result is a disturbance in the thought process, much as an underwater rip tide disturbs the smooth flow of the surface current.

Despite the ongoing battle over the nature of the beautiful, whether it is the result of a completely disinterested feeling of pleasure or whether such a feeling only arises in a moral framework, it is clear that Kant believes he can logically prove how the mind works, and thus how one can feel beauty. Since the basis for his conclusion lies in the noumenal realm, in the realm of unsubstantiated ideas, Kant commits the

error he warns against in CPR, namely accepting as fact what one can only accept as belief. This happens because Kant is on the cusp of a changing view of the self. He wants to believe that, with enough concentrated intellectual power, everything, even feelings, can be cognitively explained. But the actual results at which he arrives speak differently. Something inexplicable within the subject, the power of reflective judgment, enables the subject to make determinate judgments. Kant essentially states this, but does not believe it and continues as if he had not said it. That the world is ordered because our minds impose order is clear, but why our minds should work this way is a question he does not answer. It is unacceptable, or perhaps merely uninteresting, that our tendency to order is inexplicable.

By making aesthetics into a systematic philosophical enterprise, Kant both legitimizes it and opens the field to those who will dig deeper into the workings of the mind, to try to discover what it is that makes us feel the way we do when we call something beautiful. The conclusion of his successors, Schelling and Schopenhauer, would have been dismissed by Kant. The model of the human being they imply is, at the heart, irrational, whereas Kant is the last true believer in the fundamental rationality of human beings and their belief structures. His path-breaking work on aesthetics testifies to this.

CHAPTER III

SCHELLING'S SYSTEM OF TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM (1800): THE WORK OF ART AS REFLECTION OF THE ABSOLUTE AND AS HERALD OF A NEW AGE

A. Part One

1. Introduction

Kant's immense effort to rethink and articulate anew the nature of knowledge, and his tripartite division of philosophical problems into cognition, ethics and aesthetics, activated an immediate and engaged response. In particular, the legitimation of the aesthetic realm conferred by the Critique of Judgment provided the so-called Romantic Movement in the early 19th century with philosophical justification, especially in the wake of Schelling's reinterpretation of Kantian thought. Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775-1854) occupies a pivotal role in German idealistic thought and is often described, along with his early mentor Fichte, as being a transitional figure between Kant and Hegel. This easy dismissal, however, does Schelling a disservice. In particular, Schelling's unique vision of the role of art is an important key to understanding not only the concurrent literary movement but also later philosophers, for example Nietzsche and Adorno.

In this section, I concentrate almost exclusively on Schelling's most complete work, System of Transcendental Idealism (1800)¹. In order to understand the position this work takes in the evolution of Schelling's thinking, some personal and

¹F.W.J. Schelling, System of Transcendental Idealism (1800), trans. Peter Heath (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978). Hereafter referred to as STI. The German edition which I use is: System des transzendentalen Idealismus (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1957).

philosophical background is necessary. It is also important to see in what way Schelling differentiates himself from Kant, and what his goal is in doing this. Finally, the primacy which he gives to the philosophy of art and to the artwork provides a novel and unique interpretation of the meaning of philosophy in general.

Schelling was a brilliant young student. He entered the Tübinger Stift at the precocious age of fifteen and spent five years studying philosophy and theology in the company of Hegel and Hölderlin, among others. The political implications of the French revolution and the philosophical effects of the Kantian revolution were topics of immediate and burning interest. Fichte's self-proclaimed attempts to complete Kant's work were also examined and discussed in great detail by the students at Tübingen. In 1798 Schelling received a professorship at Jena. The intellectual atmosphere in Jena and Weimar was unique; the Schlegels, Novalis, Schiller, Goethe and Hegel lived and worked in close proximity to one another and provided each other with a stimulating and critical exchange of ideas. Schelling thrived both personally and intellectually in this climate, and published prolifically.

Schelling's earliest published works are strongly influenced by Fichte's identity philosophy but he soon showed an increasing independence of thought and, to the irritation of his mentor, broke intellectually with Fichte around the turn of the century.² To go his own way, however, meant that he needed to come to terms with Kant himself, and not Fichte's interpretation of Kant. Schelling presents a certain problem to the reader and even more so to the non-reader of German. He is accused

²Fichte's influence can clearly be seen in "Vom Ich als Prinzip der Philosophie" (1795). By 1797 Schelling had turned his attention to philosophy of nature: "Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Nature" and in 1799 "Erster Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie."

by some of constantly changing his focus but this apparent transmutation can also be interpreted as the manifestation of the breadth of his investigations into the nature of being, which take him from a Fichtean principle of self-identity, to a philosophy of nature, to a philosophy of art, to a new mythology and finally to a theological interpretation of the world, as he seeks to find a way to unify philosophy of the natural world with philosophy of mind. While generalizations are always suspect, with Schelling they are particularly problematic. When combined with the fact that after 1812 Schelling published no books of length, instead using lectures to espouse his ideas, and that:

...the early writings, though extensive and to some extent very original, were in certain senses superseded by the work of Hegel, and were in any case more or less repudiated by the author himself in his later period[.]³

it is clear that there is no easily accessible way neatly to encapsulate the essence of Schelling's philosophy.⁴ Schelling, however, does provide us with one unique interpretation of the nature of being and the purpose of philosophy, and this is his radical claim about art.

Schelling's philosophy of art, and more specifically his views on art as they appear in System of Transcendental Idealism from 1800, is the focus of this study. Schelling remained in Jena from 1798 until 1803, and it is during this time that his thoughts on the philosophical importance of art coalesced. With the exception of his System, however, most of his ideas on art were presented in lecture form and are to be

³Julian Roberts, German Philosophy: An Introduction (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1988), p.123.

⁴This problem is compounded by the dearth of English translations of his writings. His best known work, STI, was only translated in 1978. While the last decade has witnessed a growing interest in Schelling with a concomitant increase in translations, a great deal remains only available in German or French.

found scattered through a number of publications.⁵ The most likely sounding title, Philosophie der Kunst, contains lectures from 1802/3 but it only appeared posthumously, published by his son in 1859. Clearly, by the time Schelling had completed this lecture series, he no longer believed that art had the revelatory powers of the absolute he had once thought, and he needed to investigate the problem anew. Consequently, for the purpose at hand, namely the investigation of aesthetics in German philosophical thought, the focus will remain on Schelling's thought from 1800.

a. Schelling's relation to Kant. In the Critique of Judgment, Kant tried to bring together freedom and nature by positing the idea of a "Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck" which is to be found in the reflective aesthetic judgment called forth by the object of beauty. His attempt was not wholly successful, as shown, because he consistently grounded this unity in the unknowable thing-in-itself; his successors, however, were greatly interested in exploring precisely the possibility of the existence of an ontological foundation for the unity of freedom and nature. The search for this synthesis, in the 1790's and the turn of the century, marks the generation of Romanticism, with Schelling considered the resident philosopher. The System of Transcendental Idealism can be regarded as Schelling's attempt to rewrite Kant's three critiques in such a way that the cognitive and the aesthetic are brought together in what he calls intellectual intuition.

⁵In: "Philosophische Briefe über Dogmatismus und Kritizismus" (1795); "Das älteste Systemprogramm" (1796/7); "Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums" (1802); "Bruno" (1802); "Über das Verhältnis der bildenden Künste zu der Natur" (1807). While art receives an exclusive position only in STI, Schelling's interest in aesthetics is longstanding.

Before turning directly to this work, two essential differences between Kant and Schelling must be mentioned. The first is the problematic terminology of beauty and aesthetic response, for though Kant operates almost exclusively with the old concepts of beauty and the beautiful object, the ideas which he is putting forth are completely new. Schelling for the most part drops the use of the term 'beauty', and refers only to aesthetic response. The question becomes more directly one of what the essence of this response is, and what it means, issues with which Kant was concerned but which he expresses exclusively through the notion of beauty. The second major difference concerns the nature of reflective judgment. Kant divides reflective judgment into aesthetic and teleological judgment, and makes clear that they are not the same thing. Teleological judgment provides us with an organizing ability so that we can have an objective basis for natural science. Aesthetic judgment provides us with the subjective ability to respond universally to a beautiful object without basing our judgment on the object itself. Schelling's contribution and inspiration is to unite the two, so that aesthetic judgment becomes teleological and illuminates for us the true nature of the world. In order to reach this conclusion logically, he divides his system differently than Kant divided his.

Schelling's System is much shorter than Kant's and the style reveals, among other things, the difference in their ages and personalities. The first version of the Critique of Pure Reason was completed when Kant was 47, and the Critique of Judgment when he was 66. By contrast, Schelling was a mere 25 years old when he published System of Transcendental Idealism. Whereas Kant's Critiques are somber, carefully argued claims, Schelling comes across as exuberant and bursting with enthusiasm, at times perhaps at the expense of clarity. This tendency is exacerbated by

his intention, which is to reveal, as much as possible the unity in the absolute of conscious and unconscious activity. Although as we have seen in CJ, Kant keeps being driven back to grounding aesthetic judgment, and by extension all judgment, in an overarching unknown, he resists this force with his full strength, doing everything he can to retain his footing on the firm foundation of rational argument. Schelling has no such inhibitions, instead flinging himself gleefully into the whirlpool of the unknown. As Mary Warnock drily notes:

It is all too easy to lapse with Schelling into a gasping sentiment of the profound which for many people is still what they believe philosophy ought to bring them. But though it is, to my mind, extremely desirable to avoid such floundering, yet there is a real point in being aware of it as a possibility.⁶

It is precisely this possibility which is important to examine for it provides a key to the direction taken by a major branch of post-Kantian philosophy. This will be discussed at a later point.

Schelling makes the bold and original claim that the philosophy of art is "...the universal organon of philosophy--and the keystone of its entire arch..."⁷ While for Kant the critique of **judgment** was the keystone to his system, to place **art** directly into this position is a different matter. In order to show how Schelling reaches this conclusion and what the consequences of such a view are, I first provide the reader with a somewhat lengthy overview of the first four parts of STI, in preparation for a more detailed analysis of parts five and six. There are two reasons for this. First, it is important to understand both in what way Schelling differentiates himself from Kant and how his system provides for the unique and powerful position of art. Second,

⁶Mary Warnock, Imagination (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p.70.

⁷STI, p.12.

Schelling's thought is likely to be unfamiliar to the English-speaking reader; this is an attempt to introduce the reader to the basic terminology and concepts with which Schelling is operating so that she can understand the significance of Schelling's turn towards the philosophy of art as the way to reveal the unconscious world of being in its moment of truth. Without this turn towards art, we only have access to the limited conscious form of the world. Since we are incapable of consciously or rationally understanding the true nature of the world, we are left in ignorance as to what it is and who we are. Only through the art work, according to Schelling, can we gain a moment of genuine insight.

The path which Schelling follows as he uncovers his system of philosophy is, despite its complicated line of thought, relatively straightforward. The essential matter is the elucidation of human consciousness or self-consciousness: what is it and how do we become aware of it? This involves a theory of mind which favors the creative imagination and a detailed analysis of what the self must go through in order to come to an understanding of how its thought processes work. Consciousness by itself can never uncover the secret of its mechanism, and a strict reliance on conscious activity alone results in an extreme limitation of what it means to be human. To disregard the vast territory of the unconscious is to forego the uniquely human ability to make a choice that is based on freedom:

Anyone...for whom in all the activity of the mind there is nowhere anything unconscious, and no region outside that of consciousness, will no more understand how the intelligence can forget itself in its products, than how the artist can be lost in his work. For him there is nothing other than the ordinary moral bringing-forth, and nowhere any producing in which necessity is united with freedom.⁸

⁸STL p.75.

It is precisely the unification of freedom with necessity, of subject with object, of the conscious with the unconscious, that Schelling seeks.

The System of Transcendental Idealism is ostensibly divided into six parts, prefaced with a Forward and an Introduction. This framework does not adequately reflect the divisions within the work but rather serves to obscure Schelling's organization. The work is actually a composite of two superimposed systems. The first system is Schelling's original contribution and consists of two relatively long parts of equal length and a much shorter third part. The first part (Parts 1,2 and Part 3 through the Second Epoch) analyzes the nature of subjectivity and is what Schelling refers to as transcendental philosophy. The second part (the rest of Part 3 and Part 4) analyzes the nature of objectivity and is a recapitulation of Schelling's philosophy of nature. The third part (Parts 5 and 6) brings the first two together by means of the relation between teleology and art, and represents the union of transcendental and nature philosophy in an all-encompassing system of transcendental idealism. The second system is modeled on Kant's three critiques and represents Schelling's re-interpretation of them. The first part (Parts 1-3) corresponds to the analysis of pure reason, that is, of the nature of knowledge; the second (Part 4) to the analysis of practical philosophy; and the third part (Parts 5 and 6) to teleology and aesthetics, that is, judgment. Schelling is attempting to explain or deduce that all existence is the product of a dynamic, self-contained system that is the unification of mutually opposed forces. As a result, it does not matter whether one begins by trying to explain subjectivity or objectivity, because each relies on the other for its own identity.

The inherent problem in trying to articulate a complete system is to choose an arbitrary point of departure. What I have done is simply to follow closely Schelling's

path, so that to a certain extent I give a direct gloss on Schelling's system. Schelling's method is to present a series of deductions, whose purpose is to prove the superiority of the system of the transcendental method over all previous philosophic attempts to provide an intellectual explanation of the world. Schelling first elucidates the mechanism of this process and explains its advantages; he then deduces the construction of the self, consciousness, freedom, intelligence, intuition and time. I begin by explaining the method which Schelling uses, and then unravel what Schelling means by the key terms which make up his system. This is somewhat complicated due to the heavily interrelated use of the concepts in question, but is essential to an understanding of the two final sections of the work, on teleology and philosophy of art. Schelling's radical interpretation of the seminal role played by the artwork and the artist in revealing the true nature of the world requires careful preparation in order to present, in a rational way, an idea that is fundamentally irrational. Consequently, I devote considerable space to preparing the reader for Schelling's remarkable revelation. Without this build-up, it remains unclear how Schelling seeks to differentiate himself from Kant, for while Schelling is clearly influenced by the latter's Critique of Judgment, he goes far beyond Kant's comparatively tame conclusions about the work of art.

2. Schelling's 'Forward' and 'Introduction'

Schelling appropriately uses the 'Forward' and 'Introduction' to STI to outline his intentions and to introduce us to the difficult concepts he assumes as common currency. The crucial relationship between nature philosophy and transcendental philosophy is alluded to in his opening statement, as is the tool through which he intends to bring the two together, namely human self-consciousness:

Now the purpose of the present work is simply this, to enlarge transcendental idealism into what it really should be, namely a system of all knowledge....The means...whereby the author has sought to achieve his aim of setting forth idealism in its full extent, consist in presenting every part of philosophy in a single continuum, and the whole of philosophy as what in fact it is, namely a progressive history of self-consciousness, for which what is laid down in experience serves merely, so to speak, as a memorial and a document.⁹

Neither transcendental philosophy, which is the theoretical analysis of intelligence or mind, nor philosophy of nature, which is the analysis of the empirical world, is by itself sufficient to give a complete account of the whole world; each needs the other as a diametrically opposed twin explanation so as to allow both forces to unify in a complete (aesthetic) intuition. Schelling is intentionally differentiating himself from Fichte and more importantly from Kant, because he is not going to give absolute priority to the system through which he attempts to explain the mechanism of human cognition, that is, the system of transcendental philosophy. As he points out:

The author's chief motive for devoting particular care to the depiction of this coherence, which is really a **graduated sequence** of intuitions, whereby the self raises itself to the highest power of consciousness, was the parallelism of nature with intelligence; to this he has long since been led, and to depict it completely, neither transcendental philosophy nor the philosophy of nature is adequate by itself; **both sciences together** are alone able to do it, though on that very account the two must forever be opposed to one another, and can never merge into one.¹⁰

Schelling's views on the philosophy of nature were already available to the public, so he begins his system by elaborating on the transcendental philosophy of mind, that is, on the essence of what it means to be a subject. As I have already pointed out, in the

⁹STL p.1-2. That Schelling and Hegel shared a certain systemic philosophical view is apparent. Note that Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit appeared only in 1807. Hegel's later popularity embittered and infuriated Schelling, who regarded his ideas as stolen.

¹⁰STL, p.2.

first part of this work (roughly Parts 1-3), the emphasis remains on the intuitive or subjective side of the argument, with primary emphasis given to consciousness as it slowly becomes aware of itself. Schelling presents an exact analysis of each stage which consciousness goes through in its journey towards comprehension of the unified whole, the point where transcendent philosophy and nature philosophy are united to form the system of transcendental idealism. It is this process which we now examine.

One might wonder who it is who is examining this process of self-consciousness, since presumably someone (e.g. Schelling) has already reached the required level of awareness and is now recounting it. The examiner is referred to as the transcendental philosopher. It is important to bear in mind the relation Schelling postulates between the consciousness which is itself going through this process of increasing self-awareness, and the philosophic observer, or transcendental philosopher, who has already gone through this process and is now commenting on it. The role of the philosophic observer is, to my mind, never properly explained, but it does give Schelling a means whereby he can provide an Archimedean point so as to place into relief a system which otherwise, due to its nature, can never properly be grasped. In a later section I will discuss in more detail the problems raised by the transcendental philosopher, but for the present that such a being is guiding the process is duly noted. The existence of determinate external objects or things is something which needs to be proven for the subject who is examining the world, since only through the mechanism of intuition can such objects be constructed. What intuition is, and how it constructs objects that can be considered real, is thus an essential element of transcendental philosophy.

a. Subjective and objective knowledge. Schelling begins his investigation by stating that "[a]ll knowledge is founded upon the coincidence of an objective with a subjective."¹¹ He defines that which in our knowledge is 'objective' as pertaining to nature, and that which is 'subjective' as pertaining to the self or intelligence. Another way of putting this is to call the objective side, the form, **natura naturata** and the subjective side, or intelligence, **natura naturans**, an imaginative force which shapes the form. Each side needs the other to complete itself, yet these two aspects are intrinsically opposed to each other. Nevertheless, in every knowing there must be a concurrence of the two. The problem is how to explain this, and how to decide whether one is primary over the other. The first way is the domain of natural science, and is the attempt to show a necessary tendency whereby nature is rendered intelligent; this is the subject matter of nature-philosophy. The second way, in which the objective must be derived from the primary subject, becomes the domain of what is to be called transcendental philosophy, that is, the study of how one can make nature out of intelligence, as opposed to intelligence out of nature. Transcendental philosophy provides an intellectualized explanation of the world as it is brought forth through an individual self's intuition of itself; nature philosophy provides a purely materialistic account of the world. What Schelling does is to establish a dialectic between subject and object, intelligence and nature, so as to try to regain the unified whole which he believes modern philosophy has destroyed through the increasing alienation between mind and nature which had reached an apex with Hume.

¹¹STL, p.5.

The transcendental philosopher must begin with a general doubt as to the reality of the objective, since she holds the self to be the sole principle through which everything else can be explained. This doubt is placed in juxtaposition with the most fundamental of all human prejudices, namely that there are things outside of us.

Herein lies the goal of transcendental philosophy:

The contradiction, that a principle which by nature cannot be immediately certain is yet accepted blindly and groundlessly as one that is so, is incapable of resolution by the transcendental philosopher, save on the presupposition that this principle is not just covertly and as yet uncomprehendingly connected with, but is identical with, one and the same with, an immediate certainty, **and to demonstrate this identity will in fact be the concern of transcendental philosophy.**¹²

This identity is one which equates the existence of external objects with the proposition 'I exist;' certainty of the one guarantees certainty of the other. The demonstration of this identity is complicated due to the difference between transcendental and ordinary cognition. Ordinary cognition assumes the existence of real external objects, and does not mark a separation between the existence of the self and the existence of these objects. Transcendental cognition, by contrast, understands the appearance of external objects to be a mere prejudice and at the same time gives priority to the existence of the self. The transcendental philosopher must therefore make what is subjective the immediate object of her cognition, which leads to what can be called a meta-knowing, that is, knowledge of the purely subjective process of knowing. Parts 1 and 2, and through the "Second Epoch" of Part 3, are devoted to explaining how this process works.

This way of knowing goes against the grain of the way we ordinarily perceive our world: the transcendental mode of apprehension is an artificial one. Ordinarily,

¹²STI, p.8.

we think in terms of concepts. Transcendentally, we think in terms of the concept as an act, that is, what the concept of a concept is. In other words, we are constantly analyzing the process of our thinking:

...that which in all other thinking, knowing, or acting escapes consciousness and is absolutely nonobjective, is therein brought to consciousness and becomes objective; it consists...of a constant objectifying-to-itself of the subjective.¹³

The challenge of the transcendental way of thinking is to be aware at all times of this duality between the act of thinking and the concept of being thought. Only by discovering what the absolute certainty of subjective existence is, is it possible to understand how all other certainties are mediated in order to account for the existence of the external world. This is Schelling's initial assumption, which he then proceeds to clarify.

The question from which the unfolding of the system devolves is simple: what is knowledge? Without an adequate definition of knowledge, it is well-nigh impossible to start making claims about the nature of the world or the nature of the self. Schelling maintains that there are two basic ways of understanding the nature of knowledge. The first is the empiricist view that what we see out in the world as objects is what is out there; the things we see are the things in themselves. This view rests on the same assumptions that are required for theoretical philosophy, which investigates the possibility of experience. The second and "no less basic conviction," (which is less basic from an ordinary point of view, but perhaps not for a philosophic point of view schooled in the Cartesian and Kantian tradition), is essentially that objects conform to our concepts. Presentations (Vorstellungen) "...arising **freely and**

¹³STL, p.9.

without necessity in us pass over from the world of thought into the real world, and can attain objective reality."¹⁴ Buried in this second conviction is the ground for the possibility of free action, for we can freely generate a presentation in ourselves which determines the objective. Schelling locates the solution to this counter-intuitive claim in the realm of practical philosophy.¹⁵

The problem the (transcendental) philosopher faces is how to resolve these two opposed assumptions (the primacy of the real world over our presentations versus the dominance of the ideal, or thought, world over the world of sense) for if we want that both "...our knowledge should contain truth and our volition reality..."¹⁶ there must exist some sort of resolution, the discovery or proof of which is the job of the transcendental philosopher. Schelling claims that this resolution can only be discovered on a higher plane than that of either theoretical or practical philosophy, that is to say, in some pre-determined harmony from which the original unity of these opposed ways of understanding the world has sprung. This can only be the case if in essence both ways of viewing the world are identical.

Schelling proposes that this identity can be discovered by assuming that free action is consciously productive, whereas that action which brings about the world is unconsciously productive:

Nature, both as a whole, and in its individual products, will have to appear as a work both consciously engendered, and yet simultaneously a

¹⁴STL, p.11.

¹⁵Schelling follows the Kantian division of theoretical and practical philosophy, which has always seemed to me somewhat confusing. Whereas I think of the investigation into nature as practical and that concerning free will theoretical, the meaning is the exact reverse.

¹⁶STL, p.11.

product of the blindest mechanism; **nature is purposive, without being purposively explicable.** --The philosophy of **natural purposes**, or teleology, is thus our point of union between theoretical and practical philosophy.¹⁷

In a nutshell, working out this complicated and somewhat counter-intuitive claim is the goal and purpose of the system which lies before us. The essential question to be asked is where this principle of activity, whether conscious or unconscious, belongs: in nature or in ourselves. Only if this identity can be demonstrated as its own principle, that is, as being in the self, can the system of knowledge which transcendental philosophy is trying to uncover be regarded as completed. Otherwise, the self will not be able to determine what it is and how nature stands in relation to it. There will still be a duality, whereas Schelling is trying to uncover the unitary principle underlying all things and all knowledge.

The unifying theme throughout STI is the attempt to show how conscious and non-conscious activity are simultaneously exhibited in the self, the subjective, consciousness itself. From the start of this investigation of the overarching unity which provides the link between subjective and objective, two things must be kept in mind: the object under consideration is the subject or self; the organ of this transcendental philosophy is inner sense. In other words, to uncover the nature of knowledge is to demystify the subject; the means by which the construction of the subject is to be uncovered is through intuition. The activity of transcendental philosophy requires that one must both be constantly producing or intuiting acts of the intellect, and then reflecting on these products. Schelling postulates that the means to this end require switching from an intellectual mode of intuiting the process

¹⁷STI, p.12. The German reads: "sie ist zweckmässig, ohne zweckmässig erklärbar zu sein." This is, in effect, Kant's 'Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck' which, as shown, is one of the most important concepts in CJ.

of finding unity in opposition to an aesthetic mode of intuition: at its deepest or highest level, philosophy cannot explain the essence of the relationship between nature and the self, but only show it:

...philosophy depends as much as art does on the productive capacity, and the difference between them rests merely on the different direction taken by the productive force. For whereas in art the production is directed outwards, so as to reflect the unknown by means of products, philosophical production is directed immediately inwards, so as to reflect it in intellectual intuition. The proper sense by which this type of philosophy must be apprehended is thus the aesthetic sense, and that is why the philosophy of art is the true organon of philosophy.¹⁸

However, to understand properly just how this comes to pass one must first follow the self-discovery of consciousness.

Schelling begins his investigation of the nature of knowledge, which he has defined as the coincidence between a subjective and an objective, by looking for a universal mediating principle to provide the sole ground of knowledge. He assumes that our knowledge is a self-supportive, internally self-consistent system, the absolute principle of which must lie within knowledge itself. Since transcendental philosophy is the science of all knowledge and is purely subjective, this universal principle must then also be one that is completely abstracted from what is objective. At this point, it appears that what Schelling is seeking belongs exclusively in the realm of epistemology and not in metaphysics: "There is no question at all of an absolute principle of being....what we seek is an absolute principle of **knowledge**."¹⁹ The question does not concern the ultimate ground of knowledge in general, but rather the ultimate ground in our knowledge itself. This primary knowledge, which can be considered the

¹⁸STI p.14.

¹⁹STL, p.16.

object of the subjective, is knowledge of oneself, or self-consciousness. Schelling senses that this universally mediating principle will be found at the boundary of our knowledge. Since it never becomes an object but functions as a limit, thus enabling us to have knowledge, we are never aware of it. Whether or not self-consciousness might be a modification of some form of intelligence independent of it is irrelevant to the present investigation. As we progress through STI, we notice that although the emphasis is on knowledge rather than on being, Schelling is actually operating on the cusp, where being and knowledge seem to determine each other. Whereas Kant was of the opinion that one could only have knowledge about cognitive and not intuitive experience, Schelling tries to push the boundary much farther back so that the distinction between metaphysics and epistemology becomes unclear. Through his attempt to recast the solution (or lack thereof) of the critical philosophy, Schelling brings back the indistinctness Kant had been trying to banish from philosophy.

b. The science of the self. Schelling's problem now is how to prove that he can derive a science from something as ungraspable as the inner workings of the self; he has the content, but how is he to postulate the form without getting caught up in inconsistencies? The first question to be posed is 'what is a science?', which he answers as "...a body of propositions under a **determinate** form."²⁰ A system of science based on this principle must determine not only the content of the science, but also the form. Philosophy, which possesses a systematic form, presents a problem not found in other sciences: while other sciences presuppose their form without deducing it, the object of philosophy is the very possibility of such a form, and hence the form

²⁰STI, p.19.

must be deduced. This leads to an infinite circle, for a "...science of knowledge is itself already a science, and would thus require a science of knowledge concerning itself..."²¹ The question which must be resolved is how to account for this circle, and, according to Schelling, it can only be explained if the original form of knowledge presupposes the original content, and vice versa, so that they mutually condition one another. In order to accomplish this, some act of primordial cognition must be discovered which would be the point both where content and form are generated, and which is identical with the principle of all knowledge. This point would be considered as a first principle of philosophy.

This raises the issue of logic, because by assuming a first principle, mutually conditioned or not, the laws of logic are invoked. While logic is an important tool, Schelling points out that it would be a mistake to take the principles of logic as unconditioned:

The analysis $A = A$ presupposes the synthesis A . So it is evident that no formal principle can be thought without presupposing a material principle, or a material without presupposing a formal one....logic can only arise as such by abstraction from determinate propositions. If it arises in a scientific manner, it can do so only by abstraction from the highest principles of knowledge, and since these, as principles, themselves on the other hand already presuppose the logical form, they must be such that in them both factors, the form and the content, reciprocally condition and involve each other.²²

In other words, logic is at the same time conditioning and conditioned. Transcendental philosophy, or the science of knowledge, is both the foundation of logic and yet adheres to logical laws. It must be both the most perfect embodiment of scientific form and at the same time completely autonomous in form and content. To reach an

²¹STI, p.19.

²²STI, pp. 20-21.

adequate understanding of how this can be is the challenge which Schelling intends to meet.

Schelling wants to begin his deduction of the highest principle of what we can know by claiming that it must be unconditioned. At the same time, the only thing which we can know unconditionally must be within the subjective. This leads directly to the problem of analytic and synthetic knowledge. The only thing about which we can claim unconditional knowledge is an analytic statement, an identical proposition. But identical propositions ($A = A$) contain no knowledge claims, for they are tautological; only a synthetic proposition, wherein the object is outside of the subject, can lead to a knowledge claim. A knowledge claim can only be certain if it is based on an unconditional certainty such as self-identity which, however, contradicts the claim to knowledge. The way out of this contradiction, suggests Schelling, will be to back up another step to where the synthetic and identical are one and the same:

This contradiction would be soluble only if some point could be found in which the identical and the synthetic are one, or some proposition which, in being identical, is at once synthetic, and in being synthetic, is at once identical.²³

That there is such a point is perhaps questionable, but Schelling here makes his leap of faith by pointing out that either there is an infinite regress, which leaves us with no firm footing ever, or the series is not infinite, and at some point starts forward from a moment of absolute truth, from a proposition that cannot be denied. The only way we can attain certainty from a synthetic proposition is if it is absolutely true; the only way to be convinced that the absolutely true must exist is to assume that our knowledge is not based on an infinite regress but at some point must have an end. It is the "covert

²³STL, p.22.

feeling" (das dunkle Gefühl) of the certainty of this end that is the task of philosophy to uncover. In his later writings, Schelling tends towards a religious interpretation of the world. In 1800, the religious aspect is not so overt but it is nevertheless present. What Schelling does here, though, is something radically new. For whereas God as creator has always been outside or above the world, Schelling transfers this original creativity to a point within the human self. It is no longer a question of the human mind cognizing and thereby "creating" the world; rather, the act of artistic creation which calls forth consciousness is the same whereby the world is created. It is this basic creative act which Schelling unpacks in the work under consideration.

Absolute truth is identical; knowledge is synthetic. If knowledge is ever to contain absolute truth, then it must at some point spring from an identical cognition, even though it is at the same time synthetic. At some point, that is, the object and its concept (or presentation) must be originally one:

...There is absolutely no explaining how presentation and object can coincide, unless in knowledge itself there exists a point at which both are **originally one**....the task, in a nutshell, consists of **finding the point at which subject and object are immediately one.**²⁴

This can only possibly occur within self-consciousness, because only here can an act of thinking (for example an identical proposition, in which a thought is compared with itself) become an object to itself. By self-consciousness Schelling means "...the act whereby the thinker immediately becomes an object to himself..."²⁵ Self-consciousness for Schelling is quite a different thing than it is for the post-Freudian reader, and it is important to bear this in mind. It has many different levels, but in its

²⁴STL, p.24.

²⁵STL, p.24.

simplest form it assumes that one is able to "...discriminate oneself as a thinker and as thought, and in so discriminating, again to acknowledge oneself as identical..."²⁶ The realization that one can think a thought is an act of self-consciousness and has nothing to do with psychological behavior. What is uniquely important about the act of self-consciousness is that, according to Schelling, it is an exercise of absolute freedom: it is an act to which one can be directed but not compelled.

Every act of thinking gives rise to a determinate concept, which is the result of the thinking process and cannot exist independently of it. Self-consciousness also gives rise to a concept, which is that of "becoming-an-object-to-oneself."²⁷ This is where Schelling places the original identity of thought and object, or of appearance and reality:

The self simply has no existence, prior to that act whereby thinking becomes its own object, and is thus itself nothing other than thinking becoming its object, and hence absolutely nothing apart from the thought.²⁸

Empirical consciousness is quite different from self-consciousness, for in the former, one is aware of oneself as a subject of presentations, as one of many other presentations, whereas in the latter, one is aware of oneself originally, with no determinations. The reason why a great number of people never reach even this simple stage of self-consciousness is that they neither perform this act in freedom nor are able to reflect upon what arises in themselves as a result of it: the thought as object. The path of self-consciousness, and the many different levels within it, is the focus of most of STI.

²⁶STI, p.24.

²⁷STI, p.25. The German reads: "der Begriff des Selbstobjektwerdens."

²⁸STI, p.25.

In this distinction between empirical and pure (or self-) consciousness, Schelling both makes a clear reference to the Kantian influence and yet illustrates the way in which his system is markedly different. The proposition 'I think' arises from the identity of the subject among its presentations and, as Kant points out, accompanies all presentations and preserves the continuity of consciousness between them.²⁹ While Kant clearly maintains that there is something non-empirical prior to thought, namely intuition, he attributes it to the transcendental unity of consciousness, a concept which fits in neatly with his division of things into empirical existence and things-in-themselves. But since one cannot say anything about this non-sensible realm, there is little point in discussing the nature of this transcendental self. Schelling, by contrast, splits his notion of the self into a thinking self and a being self:

It is this 'I think' which accompanies all presentations and preserves the continuity of consciousness between them. --But if we free ourselves from all presentations, so as to achieve an **original** self-awareness, there arises--not the proposition **I think**, but the proposition 'I am', which is beyond doubt a higher proposition. The words 'I think' already give expression to a determination...of the self; the proposition '**I am**', on the contrary, is an infinite proposition since it is one that has no **actual** predicate, though for that very reason it is the locus of an infinity of **possible** predicates.³⁰

²⁹Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B131-2: "It must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me which could not be thought at all, and that is equivalent to saying that the representation would be impossible, or at least would be nothing to me. That representation which can be given prior to all thought is entitled intuition. All the manifold of intuition has, therefore, a necessary relation to the 'I think' in the same subject in which this manifold is found. But this representation is an act of **spontaneity**, that is, it cannot be regarded as belonging to sensibility. I call it **pure apperception**, to distinguish it from the empirical apperception, or, again, **original apperception**, because it is that self-consciousness which, while generating the representation 'I think'...cannot itself be accompanied by any further representation. The unity of apperception I likewise entitle the **transcendental** unity of self-consciousness, in order to indicate the possibility of a **priori** knowledge arising from it."

³⁰STL, p.26.

By immersing oneself in the nature of being, one can learn a great deal about the nature of thinking, for unless one has some sort of awareness of this most fundamental phenomenological aspect of what it means to be a self, one cannot hope to gain any self-consciousness.

Despite the fact that Schelling insists that his system relies not on questions of being but questions of knowing, one cannot understand the nature of knowledge without first examining its ontologic base. Schelling is walking along the fine line which separates one from the other, and is thus part of both as the limit of each. Because the self can be nothing else beyond its own thinking, it is not a thing. It is an object for itself, but is not originally in the world of objects, and hence is infinitely nonobjective. All other things are objects for intuitants outside; they are something known, never a knower. Only the self becomes an object from inside, by making itself into an object for itself: "The character of the self consists in this very fact, that it has no other predicate than that of self-consciousness."³¹ In other words, the self is the unconditioned. It cannot be found in any thing, for things are objects of knowledge whereas the self is the principle of all knowledge. The self "...can in no way become an object of knowledge originally, or in itself, but only **through a specific act of freedom.**"³²

c. Intellectual intuition. The problem with which we are now confronted is how it is possible to have any kind of knowledge of something that is not an object, for the self is pure act and, as the principle of all knowledge, is itself non-objective.

³¹STL, p.26.

³²STL, p.26.

Schelling claims that the type of knowing through which the self can become an object of knowing must be completely different from ordinary knowledge. It must be absolutely free, that is, not arrived at by way of proofs or inferences, and consequently in essence an intuition. In addition, it must be a knowing that is "...simultaneously a producing of its object—an intuition freely productive in itself, and in which producer and product are one and the same."³³ In contrast to sensory intuition, whereby objects are perceived and which is marked by the fact that the intuited is distinct from the intuiting process, Schelling calls this type of knowing 'intellectual intuition.' Knowledge of the self exemplifies intellectual intuition, for it arises out of the fact that it knows of itself; it is a knowing that simultaneously produces itself as object. Intellectual intuition, says Schelling, "...is the organ of all transcendental thinking..."³⁴ As such, it will be the guide to be followed during the investigation of the system of transcendental philosophy. The idea of intellectual intuition is critical to an understanding of Schelling's system. Despite the rational sound of it, it is rather pre-rational. It is intellectual in the sense that it has to do with mind, with the subject, as opposed to nature or object. It is to be contrasted with the aesthetic intuition in a later stage of the system. It has no analogue in Kant's theory of mind, for it would be considered part of the unknowable thing-in-itself, a distinction Schelling does not make.

The concept of intellectual intuition is the only way by which the nature of transcendental thought can be illuminated:

³³STI, p.27.

³⁴STI, p.27.

...[transcendental thinking] sets out to objectify to itself through freedom, what is otherwise not an object; it presupposes a capacity, simultaneously to produce certain acts of mind, and so to intuit that the producing of the object and the intuiting itself are absolutely one; but this very capacity is that of intellectual intuition.³⁵

Without the ability to engage in intellectual intuition, the attempt to understand transcendental philosophy will be fruitless, since intellectual intuition is to transcendental thought what the objective world is to ordinary (empirical) cognition. Without the ability to know of itself, the self as an object ceases to exist: "...intellectual intuition is for [transcendental philosophy] precisely what space is for geometry."³⁶ Since this becoming an object to itself is an absolutely free action, it cannot be dependent on a proof, but must be demanded and hence only postulated. In short, it is impossible that philosophy be put entirely on a scientific basis, for there can be no objective first principle from which it starts. Instead, it proceeds from a free act by means of which the subjective becomes objective. This claim, that "[t]he self is nothing else but a **producing that becomes an object to itself**, that is, an intellectual intuition[,]"³⁷ is central to Schelling's system.

The self is thus both producing and produced, which leads us back to the identity formula of self (producing) = self (produced) but which in this case is synthetic since, although identical, is at the same time not identical. This is the point Schelling set out to find which is the principle of all knowledge and which demonstrates that there is in identity a fundamental duality. This principle is at the

³⁵STL, p.27.

³⁶STL, p.28.

³⁷STL, p.28. The German reads: "Das Ich ist nichts anderes als ein sich selbst zum Objekt werdendes Produzieren..."

same time the ground for both form and content of knowledge; it is the self, a principle that becomes an object to itself. Only something that is not originally an object can make itself into an object, thereby becoming one. Pure self-consciousness, the state which yields empirical consciousness, is "...an act lying outside of time, and by which all time is first constituted."³⁸ Empirical consciousness, by contrast, arises in time and is fixed within the succession of presentations; it cannot be considered to be free. Because the self is not a thing, it has none of the predicates which are attached to things, which means that one cannot say that the self exists. One cannot say this precisely because the self is "being-itself":

The eternal timeless act of self-consciousness which we call self, is that which gives all things existence, and so itself needs no other being to support it; bearing and supporting itself, rather, it appears objectively as eternal becoming, and subjectively as a producing without limit.³⁹

The definition which Schelling gives for being is "freedom suspended." The entire system, the explanation of which is the task of transcendental philosophy, is different forms of being, or in other words, different forms of congealed freedom. The suspension of freedom does not here signify its downfall but instead its ubiquity; one must only realize what it actually means to have freedom, for to have freedom means to relinquish being.

From the above overview of the aim of this system of transcendental idealism, several terms appear repeatedly, and indeed are crucial to a further understanding of the system. To begin with, the whole nature of the self, where it comes from and what it is, is still somewhat murky. And in order to come to a clearer vision of what

³⁸STL, p.32.

³⁹STL, p.32.

Schelling means by the self, its mode of intellectual intuition, and its relationship to the opposed pairs of freedom and necessity and consciousness and unconsciousness, needs to be made somewhat more explicit. In addition, the role which time plays in this transcendental schema must be reviewed. And finally, with a glance towards Kant, the way Schelling treats the thing-in-itself needs to be examined. After the attempt to clarify and simplify the main body of STI, I will show how Schelling comes to see art and aesthetic intuition as providing the foundation for any sort of philosophic understanding.

3. Deduction of the nature of the self

Schelling has introduced us to some of the essential components of his system; now he sets out to deduce the nature of the self. I will briefly cover Schelling's argument for the existence of self-consciousness, and then examine the different stages of the growing self-awareness of self-consciousness, which he refers to as epochs. Part of the reason for closely following the construction of Schelling's system is to make clearer what Schelling means by some of the key concepts which he repeatedly uses: 'intellectual intuition,' 'freedom,' 'time,' 'thing-in-itself.' He borrows liberally from Fichte and Kant, but the result is his own; his system is based on different premises from those of Fichte or Kant. At times, the argument becomes quite confused and very detailed, and I try to simplify it as much as possible, bearing in mind the goal before us, which is to understand why Schelling turns to aesthetic intuition as the mode through which the nature of being, the absolute, is revealed.

Schelling first needs to explain how transcendental idealism is neither transcendental philosophy nor nature philosophy, but rather the unification of the two

into something more than the sum of their parts. Transcendental idealism can be deduced from the fact of self-consciousness, which is based on the existence of the self. The first and most fundamental deduction which Schelling must prove is how the self appears: what is it and where does it come from? He begins with the ontological claim 'I am.' As he has already explained, in being thought, the self is brought into existence. Once in existence, the self is then real for itself and becomes the grounding point for a system of idealism, which refers to the formal laws imposed by the mind. Schelling states that:

...if the proposition 'I am' is the principle of all philosophy, there cannot indeed be any reality save what is equivalent to the reality of this proposition.⁴⁰

The problem is that at this stage, the self is real only for itself. In order to construct a system of philosophy based on the idealistic claim of being, Schelling must deduce the reality of the self in general: an investigation of the self needs to treat both its ideal and real aspects. It is rather a momentous claim to maintain that not only is the self a product of its own thought, but that the entire system of human knowledge: history, the objective world and so forth, is also posited through the self. Nevertheless, this is what Schelling intends to do. Kant's essential starting premise in CPR was unity of consciousness; given that, he could account for all cognitive knowledge. Schelling goes further, for from a self-reflecting ideal awareness of one's self, he intends to prove the real existence of the entire world.

To explain the world, one must thus first explain the self. Schelling has already described the nature of the self: the self is not a thing; the original self is infinite activity as it continually produces itself. Only by becoming an object to itself, by

⁴⁰STI, p.34.

imposing limits on itself, can the self become finite, an essential requirement for self-consciousness. In other words, the self as infinite activity is unrestricted, but as product is restricted. Schelling maintains that the only way one can go about the task of showing that the self must be necessarily both restricted and unrestricted, as transcendental philosophy itself is both practical and theoretical philosophy united in a seamless whole, is through freedom:

Freedom is the one principle on which everything is supported, and what we behold in the objective world is not anything present outside us, but merely the inner limitation of our own free activity. Being as such is merely the expression of an impeded freedom. It is our free activity...that is fettered in our knowledge.⁴¹

Schelling needs to uncover the essence of the self so as to lay bare what freedom is. Because he interprets the one as simply a limited form of the other, an explanation of one will paradoxically enable us to understand its direct opposite. Freedom appears to be the situation of the world or universe before anything has come into being, that is, become an object, when everything is pure potential.⁴² Since it is virtually impossible as a finite being to return to this infinite original state, the most one can do is see how close one can come to achieving an awareness of what it must have been like.

The way in which transcendental philosophy operates is constantly to raise the self to a higher level of understanding, to lead it to ever deeper levels of self-intuition. This continual self-questioning has the goal of ultimately leading one back to the original free and conscious act of self-consciousness, the point at which the self

⁴¹STL, p.35.

⁴²Schelling considerably revised his interpretation of freedom in succeeding years, and by 1809 with the publication of Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom had, as the title indicates, switched to a more personal idea of freedom. In the present work, however, freedom has an abstract and impersonal meaning.

becomes aware of its existence. This step-by-step method leads back to the beginning, where:

If the self is originally infinite activity, it is therefore also the ground—and inner principle, of all reality. For if a ground of reality were to lie outside it, its infinite activity would be initially restricted.⁴³

The self not only produces itself but at some point also becomes aware of itself as product; this is the original moment of self-consciousness. In becoming aware of itself, the self limits itself. The system of transcendental idealism is derived from the self's limitation, from the premise of self-consciousness. Only by combining the idealism of theoretical philosophy, which postulates the infinite activity of the self, with the realism of nature philosophy, which operates in the world of being, can the unified, holistic system of transcendental idealism in which everything is interrelated, arise.

a. Deduction of transcendental idealism. The relation between being infinite activity and becoming a phenomenological object is analogous to the relation between the ideal and real self; the critical element of division is the concept of boundedness. So as to understand this, I will as briefly as possible review the deduction of transcendental idealism with which Schelling operates, for otherwise much of what follows remains quite mysterious. This deduction is consciously modeled after Fichte's Wissenschaftslehre, but I am assuming that the reader is not familiar with that work, and will refer only to Schelling's interpretation. For someone oriented to an analytic or rational progression of ideas, the highly abstract nature of Schelling's deduction may seem almost nonsensical, a lot of sound and fury signifying nothing. This does

⁴³STL, p.36.

him a disservice for it pre-judges what he wants to achieve. As already stated, Schelling is trying to reintroduce the wholeness, which had been destroyed and banished by his predecessors, back into philosophy. His ideal world is that of Greek philosophy; the unity found in the thought of antiquity remains for him the model of a lost golden age. The alienation of the individual from God and nature needs to be overcome, but this can only occur if it happens at an abstract, theoretical level beyond the destructive mechanism of rational analysis, for as soon as one speaks in that language, there is no chance of overcoming modern fragmentation. As a result, Schelling is often in danger of sounding chaotic. Some of his ideas are expressed with the breathless exuberance of one who has envisioned something indescribable, and the reader needs to practice patience. The bits and pieces, considered apart from the unified whole, can seem far-fetched. Bearing this in mind, what follows is a summary of the birth of self-consciousness in the self as it becomes an object for itself from the infinite activity it once was.

The necessary proposition is that through the act of self-consciousness, which comes about through freedom, the self becomes an object to itself. Two propositions are inherent in this original one: that the self is only an object for itself; and that the self is originally not an object. Since the self is originally not an object, it must be opposed to what an object is, that is, it must be unlimited activity. The question then arises as to how the (limited) condition of self-consciousness can be thought. To begin with, the self as unlimited activity must set a limit to itself so that it can come forth as self. In other words, it must oppose something to itself, thereby ensuring that its self-positing is both identical and synthetic. The (infinite) self and the self-as-object are opposed to each other in the manner of positive and negative quantities. The self-as-

object can only attain as much reality as is cancelled out in the self-as-infinite-activity: "...the self as self is limited only in that it intuits itself as such, for a self is simply and solely what it is for itself."⁴⁴ What needs to be shown is how the originally infinite activity of the self must limit itself, that is, become finite: "...the self qua self can be unlimited only insofar as it is limited, and conversely, that it is limited as a self only insofar as it is unlimited."⁴⁵

To begin with, the self is everything it is only for itself. If it is infinite for itself, it is infinite for its self-intuition. But in intuiting itself, it becomes finite; it is infinite becoming. Since becoming is only thinkable under limitation, the self must therefore be both infinite and finite, unlimited and limited. The boundary of the limited self can only be a condition of the unboundedness of the self in that it stretches to infinity. The self can only extend this boundary in that it acts on it, and it can only act on it if the boundary is not part of the action of the self. The boundary must be real, and can only have become real by an action from the self, thereby demonstrating the boundary's independence of the self. If the self did not act against the boundary, the boundary would not be noticed as such.

How, then, does this boundary become ideal, that is, how does the self gain knowledge of this limitation? Only by being aware of this limitation can the self become limited for itself. It can become ideal solely through being intuited, and thus limited, by the self. To account for this, Schelling postulates two diametrically opposed activities which constitute the self: an infinitely outreaching, centrifugal activity, which discovers a real boundary (the objective action); and a non-objective, opposing,

⁴⁴STI, p.37.

⁴⁵STI, p.38.

illimitable, centripetal activity which is ideal (the subjective action), through which comes knowledge or intuition of the limitation. These real and ideal activities mutually presuppose each other, and the entire mechanism of the self must be derived from this reciprocal presupposition. Theoretical philosophy explains the ideality of the boundary, how the limitation comes to be intuited; practical philosophy explains the reality of the boundary, how the originally purely subjective limitation becomes objective. Only through the mutual action of both idealism and realism, theoretical and practical philosophy, does the complete system of transcendental idealism arise.

What remains to be investigated is how this boundary is posited as an act, for this original union of ideal and real is only thinkable as an absolute act, and what influence this positing has on the nature of consciousness. To begin with, the original act of self-consciousness is both ideal and real, in principle ideal, but real in that the self is there for us. The boundary is posited through self-consciousness alone, for within self-consciousness are the two opposed activities of limiting and being limited. Beyond or before the act of self-consciousness, the self is "pure objectivity," which Schelling calls "...the one and only **in-itself** there is."⁴⁶ Pure objectivity is, more precisely, non-objective, something indefinable. Objectivity can only be contrasted to subjectivity, and this pure state is antecedent to the existence of subjectivity; only through self-consciousness does the self gain subjectivity:

To this original, **purely** objective activity, that is limited in consciousness, there stands opposed the limiting activity, which cannot, on that very account, itself become an object. --To come to consciousness, and not to be limited, are one and the same....The fact of limitation must appear as independent of me, since I

⁴⁶STI, p.43.

can discern only my own limitedness, never the activity whereby it is posited.⁴⁷

The self arises from neither the limiting nor the limited action taken in isolation. The limiting action, which does not come to consciousness, is the activity of the pure subject, but "...the self of self-consciousness is not the pure subject, but subject and object together."⁴⁸ The limited activity is that which becomes an object, and is the purely objective element in self-consciousness. The self of self-consciousness is engendered through a third activity which oscillates between the two: "The self is thus a compound activity, and self-consciousness itself a synthetic act."⁴⁹

As stated above, the self is a paradox of centrifugal and centripetal activity. This is beyond doubt a way of thinking which seems artificial. That Schelling himself is a little confused about just why it is necessary for all this to come about is clearly expressed, although he is quite self-confident about **how** it happens:

The outgoing, by nature infinite activity is the objective in the self; the self-reverting activity is nothing else but the striving to intuit oneself in that infinitude. Through this action as such, the inner and the outer are divided within the self, and with their separation is posited a conflict in the self that only the necessity of self-consciousness can explain. Why the self should have originally to become aware of itself, is not further explicable, for it is nothing else but self-consciousness. But within self-consciousness a clash of opposing directions is necessary.⁵⁰

In the clash between these two opposed directions, there can be neither a mutual neutralization, for then the self would be abolished, nor a continuation of the opposition in and of itself. It continues because it is necessary to do so, because the

⁴⁷STL, pp. 43-4.

⁴⁸STL, p.44.

⁴⁹STL, p.44.

⁵⁰STL, pp.44-5.

ongoing identity of the self results from this clash. No single action can result in a unification; this can only come about through an infinite series of actions: the self is an absolute synthesis. Since the subject and object are absolutely opposed, they cannot be real because they are absolute: in their opposition they are ideal. If the self is to become real, the subject and object must lose their absolute character and give rise to "...a third activity of the self, that wavers between them."⁵¹ We see here the famous triadic pattern which marks so much of idealist thought as well as thought which idealism influenced. Schelling, like Kant, sees this tendency as more than pure coincidence:

This advance from thesis to antithesis, and from thence to synthesis, is therefore originally founded in the mechanism of the mind, and so far as it is purely formal...is abstracted from this original, material sequence established in transcendental philosophy.⁵²

As a final word on the origin of the self as an act of self-consciousness, Schelling underscores that, whereas objective activity within self-consciousness is limited, subjective activity is not, and is in fact "absolutely illimitable,"⁵³ whereas it is unfree with regard to matter it is free in its form: "...this illimitability of the ideal activity is the basis of all construction in theoretical philosophy."⁵⁴ Since self-

⁵¹STL, pp.46-7.

⁵²STL, p.47. As mentioned, Kant placed strong emphasis on the importance of the architectonic. In CJ he defends himself against his critics by noting: "It has been thought somewhat suspicious that my divisions in pure philosophy should almost always come out threefold. But it is due to the nature of the case. If a division is to be a **priori** it must be either analytic...and then it is almost always twofold...or else it is **synthetic**...[T]o meet the requirements of synthetic unity in general, namely 1) a condition, 2) a conditioned, 3) the concept arising from the union of the conditioned with its condition, the division must of necessity be trichotomous" (197FN). QED.

⁵³STL, p.49.

⁵⁴STL, p. 50.

consciousness has an infinite conflict, the task of revealing how the entire world is constructed out of this act is also infinite. Schelling simplifies this herculean labor by limiting his work to what he considers the essential philosophic epochs that constitute the history of self-consciousness, thereby showing that the task of theoretical philosophy, "...to explain the **ideality** of the boundary, is equivalent to that of explaining how even the ideal activity, hitherto assumed to be illimitable, can in fact be limited."⁵⁵ Otherwise stated, Schelling intends to show how the real world of objects and events must be premised on the existence of the ideal world.

b. The epochs of the history of self-consciousness. Through a recapitulation of the events of each of these epochs, the terms mentioned above: 'intellectual intuition,' 'freedom,' 'time,' 'thing-in-itself,' are illuminated. Again, it is important to grasp what Schelling means by these concepts, so as to see why he feels that art and aesthetic intuition provide the solution to the mystery of being. The titles of the three epochs reveal their respective contents: "From Original Sensation to Productive Intuition;" "From Productive Intuition to Reflection;" and "From Reflection to the Absolute Act of Will." At times the level of discussion becomes quite complicated, and I will try to avoid getting caught up in the details of the many arguments, painting the picture instead with broad strokes.

Two basic divisions are here being woven together, both of which are integral to the completed system. The first division is that between theoretical and practical philosophy. In the first two epochs, Schelling limits himself primarily to an analysis of idealism, of how the mind constitutes the self, and of what is taking place solely within

⁵⁵STL, p.50.

consciousness itself as it moves from a self-image of product to that of producer. In the third epoch (and Part IV, "The System of Practical Philosophy According to the Principles of Transcendental Idealism") the focus has switched to the relation of consciousness with the world, to action in the real world. It is here that Schelling shows how the (philosophical) self is responsible for the formulation of the external world. The second division which needs to be unified is that between the philosophic observers and consciousness itself. In the first two epochs, it is these observers who are in the position to explain what is happening within consciousness; beginning with the third epoch, consciousness is reaching the point of self-awareness, where its discoveries are beginning to coincide with what the philosophic observers already know.

i. The First Epoch. The first epoch contains three distinct stages which focus on the self's relation with itself as it struggles to reach a free and conscious act of self-consciousness. The first stage is that of the most primitive self-consciousness, in which the self comes into being by limiting itself, but without having any understanding of the activity in which it is engaged. This action is, for the self, neither free nor conscious:

In the original act of self-consciousness the self strives to become just a sheer object to itself, but this it cannot do without (**for the observer**) becoming in that very process a **duality**.⁵⁶

This raises the issue of the philosophic observer: why does Schelling repeatedly call on her or him to point the way? Perhaps the path of self-consciousness which he postulates is simply too counter-intuitive to imagine without the concurrent knowledge

⁵⁶STL, p.51.

that we **are** both subject and object, but just need time to realize this. In any event, it is clear that if the self's calling itself into being is unconscious, there needs to be some conscious way of explaining this fact. For this reason, the existence of the philosopher is postulated.

In the second stage, the self intuits itself as being in a state of limitation, but it is not aware that it itself has posited this limitation, and hence perceives itself as pure subject. The intuiting is manifested as sensing opposition to itself in the form of objects. These objects are actually the negation of the self's activity, and thus the self is merely sensing its self in the form of its suspended activity. The philosophic observer is able to understand this in a way the self cannot:

Here for the first time we may perceive very clearly the difference between the philosopher's standpoint and that of his object. We, who philosophize, know that the limitation of the objective has its sole ground in the intuitant or subjective. The **intuiting self as such** does not and cannot know this, as now becomes clear.⁵⁷

Although the self is not aware that it is itself the cause of its limitation, the observer knows that the cause of sensation (of objects) in the self is the duality between self and thing-in-itself, which, for Schelling, is what was there before the self as such came into existence.

Schelling is constructing matter concurrently with the conscious self, for each stage of the development that the self undergoes is meant as a parallel stage in the construction of matter. This second stage, for example, which explains the nature of sensation for the intelligence, is analogous to the existence of electricity in nature. This dual construction is at best far-fetched, and certainly illustrates the creative nature of Schelling's attempt to find a unity in all aspects of the world. Unfortunately, the

⁵⁷STL, p.54.

general effect is too chaotic, and provides grounds to dismiss Schelling's contributions, but this is to throw the baby out with the bath. While in certain places one finds an exaggerated attempt at world-unity, in general Schelling's effort to rework how one perceives the history of philosophy, and indeed what should be considered important in philosophy, is commendable in that it tries to provide a new order for an increasingly fragmented world.

In the third stage, the sensing-self becomes an object to itself and has become identical with the third and final phase of the creation of matter:

This product, namely matter, is thus a complete construction of the self, though not for the self itself, which is still identical with matter. If the self in the first act is intuited only as object, and in the second only as subject, it now becomes objectified in the third act as both at once--for the philosopher, of course, not for itself. For itself it is objectified in this act as a subject only. That it appears merely as matter is necessary, since in this act it admittedly is a subject-object, but without intuiting itself as such.⁵⁸

Matter is not conscious of itself as such, and thus the self as matter is also not conscious of itself, for it has not yet become an object to itself. Until this happens, transcendental philosophy is incomplete and the need for the philosophic observer remains. While it is clear that this a priori construction of matter appears as somewhat suspect, Schelling forestalls criticism by pointing out that "...the ultimate causes of natural phenomena can never be investigated by the aid of experience" and that one can therefore either:

...renounce knowing them altogether, or...invent them as atomistic physics does, or else...discover them **a priori**, which is the sole source of **knowledge** remaining to us apart from experience.⁵⁹

⁵⁸STL, p.91.

⁵⁹STL, pp.92-3.

That this a priori discovery is so very different from the "inventions" of the physicist strikes the modern reader as amusing, and indeed I do not seek to defend Schelling's grand synthesis in the way he intended it to be taken, that is, literally. Instead, as stated, I am attempting to recreate the chain of his thinking so as to see how he comes to his original views on art. To return to that process, we see that at the end of the first epoch in the history of consciousness, the self has been elevated to the level of intelligence, but in its productive capacity is still blind and unconscious: it can only act as intuitant, not yet be intuited. The self, as primary opposition, continually seeks to return to its original state of pure and absolute identity, and as long as this conflict is waged, the result is productive intuition. If it should end, the intelligence would cease to exist as such and be congealed as object.

ii. The Second Epoch. The second epoch is devoted to showing how the self becomes consciously productive, to exploring how the self learns to intuit itself in the product. The major problem to be overcome here is that once the self becomes aware of itself as producing, it is rather difficult to apply, or find, the needed limit so that the self can achieve the necessary distance to intuit itself as subject in the product as object. In order to make the leap from intuition to reflection, however, this boundary must first be discovered and explored. In this section, Schelling begins to struggle in earnest with the Kantian system. Before plunging into the matter at hand, he stakes his claim:

Since our whole philosophy proceeds from the standpoint of intuition, not that of reflection, occupied, for instance, by Kant and his philosophy, we shall

also derive the now incipient series of acts of the intelligences as acts, and not, say, as concepts of acts, or as categories.⁶⁰

As shown in the analysis of Critique of Judgement, reflective judgment provides Kant with the means to establish the basis for cognitive knowledge. Schelling intends to put this point of origin one step further back; reflection already presupposes that there is something upon which one can reflect, whereas intuition is the initial perception of that thing. With this in mind, Schelling redefines, and then illustrates, both the nature of the thing-in-itself and the nature of time. So as to see more clearly how Schelling is distancing himself from Kant, a cursory glance at these two concepts is in order.

To begin with, there are two types of restriction within the self. The first or original one is posited through ideal activity, or through the thing-in-itself, which limits the real or objective self; the second one limits the ideal self. It must be emphasized that Schelling's thing-in-itself is not quite the same thing that it is for Kant. For Kant, the self is an appearance whose true ground is the transcendental ego or thing-in-itself, a definition which leaves unclear just what the thing-in-itself actually is. Schelling solves this problem of the nature of the self with one sentence: "The question of whether the self is a thing-in-itself or an appearance is itself intrinsically absurd. It is not a thing at all, neither thing-in-itself nor appearance."⁶¹ This does not yet answer what the thing-in-itself is, for whether or not the self is related to it, it certainly has a definite meaning in Schelling's system. For Schelling, the self is simply the result of a self-conscious limitation of endless activity, and the question at hand concerns the level of development of this self-consciousness. The thing-in-itself,

⁶⁰STL, p.95.

⁶¹STL, p.32.

however, does play a role. As already seen, Schelling defines it as that which is there before the entrance of self-consciousness, or as the unlimited activity of the not-yet self. This is hardly more enlightening than Kant's vision but does contain a crucial difference, for Kant assumes the thing-in-itself to be in existence simultaneously with an object or self, only unknowable for our kind of cognition.⁶²

Schelling's understanding of the relation between thing-in-itself and self is dialectical. They cannot both exist at the same time, for they are in pure opposition. Instead, there is a constant oscillation between the two states, which results in a limited self that is constantly producing itself, and which is both real and ideal. This gives rise to a complicated explanation about the kind of intuition required to grasp the type of self under consideration, for once the self has moved beyond the simple stage of self-consciousness and has begun producing, it is both ideal and real, and cannot be limited by a purely ideal boundary. Consequently there must be a second restriction, in which the ideal self or the thing-in-itself is limited by a real boundary. Schelling has already stated that:

The thing-in-itself is...nothing else but the shadow of the ideal activity, now over the boundary, which is thrown back to the self by intuition, and is to that extent itself a product of the self.⁶³

⁶²Schelling perceptively notes what has been an inadmissible fact for Kant, even though it is a point to which Kant repeatedly returns, especially in CJ:

By the thing-in-itself, which he introduced into philosophy, Kant has at least provided the first impulse which could carry philosophy beyond ordinary consciousness, and has at least shown that the ground of the object that appears in consciousness cannot itself again lie in consciousness; but he never even considered clearly, let alone explained, that this ground of explanation lying beyond consciousness is in the end no more than our own ideal activity, merely hypostatized into the thing-in-itself (STI, p.99).

This ideal activity comes close to what Kant referred to as the free play of the cognitive faculties in CJ.

⁶³STI, p.68.

Again, this is not terribly explicit, but it does establish that the process by which the self becomes a self, or limited infinite activity, is productive.

The concept of boundary is essential to an understanding of Schelling's thinking, for the entire system rests on this indefinite notion. A boundary is never an exact line, but is the product of an infinite oscillation between a product and its opposite or negation. Because this does not rely on clear-cut definitions, the only way to reach an awareness of this boundary is through intuition. Schelling assumes the hypothesis that the self has an intuition of itself in its producing. Then, since the intuition of a producing self requires the intuition of a non-producing self, he establishes the necessity of both a simple (non-productive) and complex (productive) intuition which, in order to be opposed to one another, must coincide in a higher concept, for else there would be no relation between them.⁶⁴ The higher concept is that both are intuitant; the ground of difference is that one is simple, one complex. Schelling explains the way of intuiting the self from the thing-in-itself by means of an inner (simple) and an outer (complex) intuition.

The self itself is the object of simple intuitant activity and is called inner intuition. It resides within the boundary posed by the ideal self. The compound intuitive activity has both self and thing-in-itself as object, and thus partially oversteps the boundary between the two; it is outer intuition. The boundary between inner and outer intuition is the same as that between self and thing-in-itself:

⁶⁴Schelling follows this triadic pattern throughout, which he states most concisely in explaining the necessity of having three activities in the self: "...one simple, one compound, and a third which divides them from each other and relates them together" (STL, p.96). This third activity is also a simple one, for the rather confusing reason that were it not so "...it could not distinguish the combination for what it is" (...denn ohne das könnte sie die zusammengesetzte nicht als solche unterscheiden).

Outer sense begins at the point where inner sense leaves off. What appears to us as the object of outer sense is merely a boundary point of inner sense, and hence both of them, outer and inner, are also in origin identical, for outer sense is merely inner sense subjected to a limit. Outer sense is necessarily also inner, though by contrast, inner is not necessarily also outer.⁶⁵

While it might seem that the terms are reversed (i.e. 'thing-in-itself' should be simple and 'self' complex), there cannot be any reference to the thing-in-itself without the self, for only the self can strive to return to its pre-limited status. Therefore, the active self is complex and the passive self is simple.

It is at this point that Schelling brings in time and space: the self as inner sense becomes an object to itself through the intuition which is time; the self as outer sense becomes an object to itself through the intuition which is space. The intuition of time forces the self into a state of self-awareness, for in opposing an object to itself the self is trapped in the present and becomes aware of its commitment to the object: time arises as a limit. Once the self's inner intuition becomes aware of the opposed object in time, the outer intuition becomes aware of it in space. The axes of the objective world are thus composed of time and space: Schelling has finally reached the point from which Kant begins his first critique. He then, in a matter of two or three pages, covers the nature of causality which gave Kant so much trouble. For Schelling and the idealist, the fact that the succession in a causal relation is necessary lies in the unconscious act of producing and not in any cognitive act:

The succession must come before us as inseparable from the appearances, just as the appearances present themselves as inseparable from the succession. For experience, therefore, the result is the same, whether the succession be linked to the things, or the things to the succession. The judgment of common sense is merely that both are absolutely inseparable. It is thus in fact completely illogical to attribute the succession to an act of the intelligence, while the objects, by contrast, are held to arise independently thereof. At least we should

⁶⁵STI, p.98.

proclaim both, the succession no less than the objects, to be equally independent of our presentations.⁶⁶

This is a direct attack on Kantian causality, in particular as it appears in the Second Analogy. Kant attributes objective appearance to the law of causality, which essentially states that the objective appearance of an object of experience is a product of unity of consciousness; one initially perceives the object in a subjective time order, but through the three part synthesis (apprehension in intuition; reproduction in imagination; recognition in a concept) the object gains universal (objective) validity.⁶⁷

For Schelling it is not a question of human cognition providing the law to nature, thus giving rise to the objective world. For him:

The self is neither originally productive, nor is it even so by choice. It is a primary opposition, whereby the essence and nature of intelligence are constituted.⁶⁸

This opposition between ideal and real, between intelligence and matter, is the motor which drives the whole universe. (Schelling is by no means a scientist in the modern sense, but the idea behind his equation of intelligence with matter, depending on the level of ideality or reality, is curiously similar in **concept** (no math involved!) to Einstein's equivalence between energy and mass. In his own primitive way, Schelling is seeking a unified field theory, the necessary interrelation of the entire universe. Having the mathematics to substantiate one's position is crucial to appearing serious to

⁶⁶STL, p.108.

⁶⁷See CPR B233-256. E.g.: "...the understanding by virtue of the unity of apperception, is the **a priori** condition of the possibility of a continuous determination of all positions for the appearances in this time, through the series of causes and effects, the former of which inevitably lead to the existence of the latter, and so render the empirical knowledge of the time-relations valid universally for all time, and therefore objectively valid" (A211).

⁶⁸STL, p.113.

a Western audience; otherwise one runs the risk of being branded a flake.) In order for this system to function, Schelling needs to establish two distinct spheres, an ideal one, which is eternal and timeless, and a real one, which is rooted in everyday reality and in time; one which is absolute self and absolute intelligence, and one which is individual. Without this basic opposition, there can be no organized or coherent system in which the apparently chaotic forces of living beings are brought together, for it is precisely this opposition which imposes intelligent order on an otherwise shapeless mass.

It must be noted that Schelling's two spheres are not the same as Kant's noumenal and phenomenal world; Kant could say nothing about the noumenal world, for it was not intuitable by human cognition. Schelling has no such feelings of restraint in talking about the ideal world, for he considers it as much a part of the real world as matter. Schelling is, after all, not trying to establish the basis of cognitive knowledge but is searching for the absolute truth of being, a quest which, in Kant's view, would be a return to the discussion on metaphysics and would rest on pure speculation. Schelling would counter this by pointing out that he is just as concerned with physical reality as Kant is, and that Kant has not sufficiently accounted for the objective world, because he has provided no real motor to drive the life force. It is this which Schelling believes he reveals: "One may say that organic nature furnishes the most obvious proof of transcendental idealism, for every plant is a symbol of the intelligence."⁶⁹ While Kant also believes that organic unity is a result of divine

⁶⁹STI, p.122. By 'intelligence' Schelling means the basic stuff of the universe, and not the human tendency to see order in the world.

rationality, what we actually see is a result of our type of cognition, and not proof of a cosmic order.

In the Second Epoch, Schelling has recreated for us the productive intuition of the self. The interaction of the real and ideal actions of the self as it creates the boundaries and limits which determine not only itself, but also the nature of time and space and organic unity is at this point clear to us, the philosophic observers. The self, however, is incapable of reflecting upon its products; they are simply there, the products of its unconscious activity. Only through reflection can the self engage in free and conscious production, and it is to this problem which Schelling now turns.

iii. The Third Epoch. The Third Epoch, "From Reflection to the Absolute Act of Will," documents the conscious separation which takes place between the intelligence, or self, and the product, a separation which guarantees the existence of the empirical, objective world. Until this point, the philosophical observer has recounted the story of the self, but for itself the self has been both subject and object together, without separating these two aspects. Here it achieves the breakthrough. In addition, Schelling continues his confrontation with the Kantian system, for he uses many of the same concepts which Kant uses but he gives them completely new meanings, e.g.: 'concept,' 'object,' 'schematism,' 'categories' and the relation between a priori and a posteriori.

Schelling has created a completed self that has been arrived at by a series of synthetic acts; these acts now form a closed circle. The self is not yet conscious, although synthetically complete, and therefore the act of reflection, which brings consciousness forth in the self, must be analytic, for no new knowledge will be gained

that is not already (unconsciously) present. The intelligence, which is the force behind the coming-into-being of the self, must first differentiate itself from its product:

...[the intelligence] will be unable to arrive at any intuition of itself through the products until it has separated **itself** from the **products**; and since **in itself** it is nothing else but the determinate **mode of action whereby the object arises**, it will be able to arrive at itself only by separating its acting as such from that which arises for it in this acting, or...from the items produced.⁷⁰

This separation of the acting from the product leads to the concept of the product, the first sign of the emerging consciousness of the self. For Kant, the concept we have of an object is the result of our mode of cognition, since we can know nothing about the object in itself. The concept provides the rule for the reproduction in imagination of a manifold of intuition, which then gives rise to an object. Schelling finds this artificial:

--That which arises for us, when we separate the acting as such from the outcome, is called the concept. The question as to how our concepts conform to objects has therefore no meaning from a transcendental viewpoint, inasmuch as this question presupposes an original difference between the two. In the absence of consciousness, the object and its concept, and conversely, concept and object, are one and the same, and the separation of the two first occurs with the emergence of consciousness.⁷¹

Kant's mistake, Schelling is saying, is that by limiting his analysis of objectivity to the conscious self, the original identity behind the apparent conformity between concept and object remains hidden, rendering any explanation of this conformity incomplete. Despite this, Schelling tends to slip into Kantian language when using these terms, which makes the difference he is trying to establish somewhat hazy.

Schelling continues with his unfolding of the working of the conscious self by following Kant's lead but reinterpreting the terminology. This is not the place to enter into a detailed comparison and contrast of Kant's and Schelling's respective

⁷⁰STI, p.134.

⁷¹STI, p.135.

development of cognitive theory. At the risk of doing both an injustice, I will only briefly present the gist of Schelling's argument. To explain how concept and object become separated, a special act which opposes them in consciousness is required. This is judgment, which "...is not a comparison of concept with concept...but of concepts with intuitions."⁷² Judgment takes place by first separating the concept from the object and then in turn relating them to each other, a process which occurs through intuition. This is not productive intuition, however, but an intuition which borders on one side on the concept and on the other on the object. Schelling calls this type of intuition 'schematism;' it can only be learned from one's inner experience. The schema "...is not a presentation determinate in all its aspects, but merely an intuition of the rule whereby a specific object can be brought forth."⁷³ Through the schema, judgment is able to equate an intuition with a concept. The schema has both an empirical and a transcendental level, the former being the "sensorily intuited rule," whereby an object can be brought forth empirically, the latter being the "sensory intuition of the rule,"⁷⁴ whereby an object can be brought forth as such, or transcendently. Transcendental abstraction is postulated as the condition of empirical abstraction, which in turn is the condition of judgment; consequently, every judgment rests on a transcendental abstraction, which Schelling states is the same capacity as that for a priori concepts.

⁷²STL, p.136

⁷³STL, p.137.

⁷⁴STL, p.143. It is not clear to me what Heath is trying to express by using these two different adjectives, for the German in both cases is "sinnlich." In any event, it is not obvious how a transcendental schema can be intuited via sense, an empirical function. Another of Schelling's mysteries!

The task remaining for Schelling is to show how consciousness can recognize itself in the intelligence. Only by breaking the enclosed circle of ordinary consciousness, which at most reaches the level of empirical abstraction, can the self elevate itself above everything objective and consciously recognize itself as intelligence. This recognition is closely bound up with the relation between a priori and a posteriori knowledge. The capacity for a priori concepts is "...as necessary to every intelligence as self-consciousness itself..."⁷⁵ although this does not mean that every self will realize this capacity. To reach awareness of transcendental abstraction or a priori knowledge is actually no longer a function of theoretical philosophy; it is an act of absolute abstraction, and therefore cannot be explained by any other acts in the intelligence.

Schelling elaborates:

...there remains in regard to [this act of absolute abstraction] only the absolute demand: there **shall** appear such an act in the intelligence. But in so saying, theoretical philosophy oversteps its boundary, and crosses into the domain of practical philosophy, which alone posits by means of categorical demands.⁷⁶

Before turning to consider practical philosophy, Schelling still needs to clarify the relation between a priori and a posteriori concepts, which he claims originate in the intelligence itself. Transcendental idealism can demonstrate this concluding enquiry of theoretical philosophy because it is capable of transporting itself "...into a region lying beyond ordinary consciousness."⁷⁷ By opening up not only the conscious, but also the unconscious realm to investigation, it is possible to complete a thoroughgoing analysis of the world and the self:

⁷⁵STL, p.148.

⁷⁶STL, p.149.

⁷⁷STL, p.151.

In that we project the origin of the so-called **a priori** concepts beyond consciousness, where we also locate the origin of the objective world, we maintain upon the same evidence, and with equal right, that our knowledge is originally empirical through and through, and also through and through a **priori**.⁷⁸

In other words, all knowledge is a priori to the extent that the self produces everything from itself, but at the same time as long as we are unaware of this producing, everything is a posteriori and nothing is a priori. The only way we can become aware of this act of producing is to abstract from everything material to the purely formal concepts, and this is action that does not take place automatically "...but by a special exercise of freedom."⁷⁹ The only genuine distinction which exists between these two kinds of knowledge "...is made simply and solely in regard to philosophic consciousness[,]"⁸⁰ whose task it is to retrace the origins of the self and world.

c. Freedom and the will. This brings us to Part Four, "System of Practical Philosophy according to the Principles of Transcendental Idealism;" the subject matter is the actions of the conscious intelligence, which is willing. Schelling is not referring to ordinary, everyday, determinate acts of will, but to "...a transcendental self-determining, or...the original act of freedom."⁸¹ This transcendental willing is closely linked to freedom, and freedom's relation to necessity. In order to illuminate the abstruse concept of freedom, I first want to return to the concept of intellectual intuition, which plays such a large role in this work, because through it we gain a

⁷⁸STL, p.151.

⁷⁹STL, p.152.

⁸⁰STL, p.154.

⁸¹STL, p.156.

means of access to the notion of freedom and its bond with the individualized, self-conscious self.

The relation between intellectual intuition and consciousness is central to an understanding of Schelling's system because of the true nature of the self, which is neither object nor thing but is instead infinite activity. Since the self is the principle of all knowledge, it cannot be objective, for knowledge of objects only arises as a result of the self's action of consciousness. Consequently, in order for the self to be known, the type of knowing must be completely different from that of ordinary knowledge, because ordinary knowledge is about things. Ordinary knowing is independent of its object and is not free. The type of knowing which can know the self must be both absolutely free, that is not dependent on inferences or proofs and thus essentially intuitive, and it cannot be independent of its object, since the knowing simultaneously produces the object. Knowledge about things results from the sensory intuition of objects. Knowledge about the self is gained through a different kind of intuition, which is:

...freely productive in itself, and in which producer and product are one and the same.

In contrast to sensory intuition, which does not appear as a producing of its object, and where the **intuiting itself** is therefore distinct from the intuited, an intuition of the above type will be called **intellectual intuition**.⁸²

Knowledge of the self is thus gained through intellectual intuition: it is a knowing that simultaneously produces itself as object. Intellectual intuition is, consequently, "...the organ of all transcendental thinking[,]"⁸³ which is the kind of thinking needed for the self to be able to objectify to itself that which is not an object. It can only do this

⁸²STL, p.27.

⁸³STL, p.27.

through freedom. The self is intellectual intuition, for through its knowledge of itself, it comes into being.

Another way to explain intellectual intuition is to recall the discussion between inner and outer sense, where it is claimed that outer sense is "...inner sense subjected to a limit." This is proof, says Schelling, that "[a]ll intuition is in principle intellectual, and hence the objective world is merely the intellectual world appearing under restrictions."⁸⁴ Schelling's use of the term 'intellectual' might, to a modern reader, conjure up ideas of rational, logical thought. This would be completely misguided, for 'intellectual' here refers to the intelligence, the basic matter of the universe, which is either active as intelligence or passive as matter, and is determined by the self's self-awareness of its infinite productive activity. What intellectual intuition does is enable its possessor to get in touch with, or intuit, the absolute, the underlying sense or meaning in the world, which can never be done through a purely individual knowing:

Die intellektuale Anschauung als intuitives Wahrnehmung des Absoluten ist keine inhaltlich bestimmte Erkenntnis, da eine derartige Erkenntnis schon wieder auf der Distanzierung des erkennenden Subjekts vom erkannten Objekt beruhen würde. In der intellektualen Anschauung aber sollen Subjekt und Objekt, Anschauender und Angeschautes gerade eins sein. Sie ist ein Zustand der Unmittelbarkeit jenseits des Denkens und Sprechens: ein mystischer Zustand, der das absolut Identische repräsentiert.⁸⁵

Intellectual intuition enables the individual, by an act of absolute abstraction, to transcend her individuality, to understand what the absolute self and absolute intelligence is, and in turn, to understand the relation to the individualized self. This knowing or intuition must be absolutely free, which means in this case not dependent

⁸⁴STL, p.98.

⁸⁵Jochen Schmidt, Die Geschichte des Genie-Gedankens in der deutschen Literatur, Philosophie und Politik 1750-1945 Band I (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftlich Buchgesellschaft, 1985).

on any other form of knowledge. This returns us to the discussion on freedom, to what it means and how it can be obtained.

The act of absolute abstraction can be explained only through a self-determining act of the intelligence upon itself, which as already stated, is the original act of freedom. In order to account for this act of freedom, Schelling posits the existence of a pre-established harmony, by which he means the indirect reciprocity within an act which must be explicable from something that simultaneously is and is not a producing of the intelligence. On the one hand, since the act of freedom is unconditioned, it must appear as lying outside of the intelligence and thus inexplicable. On the other hand, since the intelligence only contains what it produces, it must be able to explain the nature of freedom. The problem is solved through this indirect reciprocity, in which:

...the ground of free self-determination must be a producing on the part of the intelligence, although the negative condition of this producing must lie **outside** it;...since the intelligence is but an act, [this negative condition] will have to be a nonaction of the intelligence.⁸⁶

This relationship is only conceivable through a pre-established harmony, a harmony imaginable "...only between subjects of equal reality,"⁸⁷ which is to say it must proceed from another, external intelligence. This raises several complicated questions about the determination of individuality, for only through a restriction of freedom is individualization possible. The most important question which the self-conscious individual poses is the following:

For if...all influence of rational beings upon me is posited through a negation of free activity in myself, and yet that first influence, which is the condition of

⁸⁶STL, p.160.

⁸⁷STL, p.161.

consciousness, can come about before I am free (for freedom only arises with consciousness), the question is, how then can freedom be restricted in me even before I am conscious of being free?⁸⁸

The answer simply posits that, from the start, there is in the individual a free but unconscious nonacting, by which is meant "...the negation of an activity which, if it were not originally suspended, would be free."⁸⁹ Because it is suspended, one is prevented from becoming conscious of it as an activity which integrally belongs to oneself, simply because this free negation of activity is unconscious; that which defines one as an individual does not operate at a conscious level. That the individual is free, even if this freedom is suspended, is necessary so that Schelling can establish "...not a moral philosophy of any kind, but rather a transcendental deduction of the thinkability and explicability of moral concepts as such[,]"⁹⁰ which is to say the basis for a practical philosophy. His concern is not to establish rules for a moral code of conduct, but to show that such a code is both possible and necessary.

What, however, is meant by being free? There is a great emphasis placed on it, but it still remains elusive. Paradoxically, one cannot understand what freedom is without understanding what necessity is, for in end effect they are one and the same, a mystery that Schelling calls "...the supreme problem of transcendental philosophy."⁹¹ As we have already seen, the self and everything individual and real is formed through a series of limits. Where, however, does this ability to limit come from? In the beginning of his deduction of self-consciousness, Schelling states:

⁸⁸STI, p.169.

⁸⁹STI, 170.

⁹⁰STI, p.155.

⁹¹STI, p.204.

The action that is **cause** of all limitation, and can no longer be explained by any other, must be **absolutely** free. But absolute freedom is identical with absolute necessity....Such an act is the original act of self-consciousness; **absolutely free**, since it is determined by nothing outside the self; **absolutely necessary**, since it proceeds from the inner necessity of the nature of the self.⁹²

Freedom is inherent in the very nature of the way things are, and is indeed:

...the one principle on which everything is supported, and what we behold in the objective world is not anything present outside us, but merely the inner limitation of our own free activity....This necessary coexistence of a free but limited, and an illimitable activity in one and the same identical subject must, if it exists at all, be **necessary**, and the deduction of this necessity appertains to that higher philosophy which is both theoretical and practical at once.⁹³

Only through a grasp of the whole of transcendental idealism can this relation between freedom and necessity become clear. Otherwise, in order for freedom to appear it must manifest itself as a natural phenomena, and then it is subject to natural laws and is, **qua** freedom, abolished.

This abstruse relationship between freedom and necessity can be more clearly put into language we can understand by placing it in the context of the relationship between conscious and unconscious action, for both pairs of opposition are essentially different manifestations of the same relationship:

Freedom is to be necessity, and necessity freedom. But now in contrast to freedom, necessity is nothing else but the unconscious. That which exists in me without consciousness is involuntary; that which exists with consciousness is in me through my willing.

To say that necessity is again to be present in freedom, amounts, therefore, to saying that through freedom itself, and in that I believe myself to act freely, something I do not intend is to come about unconsciously, i.e., without my consent.⁹⁴

⁹²STL, p.47.

⁹³STL, p.35.

⁹⁴STL, p.204.

This explains the experience of much of the human condition; it expresses transcendently the relationship "...between freedom and a hidden necessity, at times called fate and at times providence."⁹⁵ The nature of fate or providence is what needs to be elucidated: how is it that through free, conscious action, something happens which we never intended and which would not have happened had we not acted?

Schelling derives a grand theory of historical inevitability and of moral and religious order from this which serves to illustrate that there necessarily must be an absolute identity of subject and object, freedom and necessity, conscious and unconscious in order to account for the lawfulness in the world. He interprets history as "...a progressive, gradually self-disclosing revelation of the absolute..."⁹⁶ which can only reveal itself partially, for were it ever to come forth in its completeness the appearance of freedom would be abolished: it would be the same as predetermination. Likewise:

The opposition between conscious and unconscious activity is necessarily an unending one, for were it ever to be done away with, the appearance of freedom, which rests entirely upon it, would be done away with too.⁹⁷

Only by means of postulating this opposition can we grasp the interrelated nature of all things. Unconscious activity is thus crucial to the transcendental system, for without its unseen presence there could be no accounting for the self and the world.

Intellectual intuition, the special knowing by which the self both constitutes and cognizes itself, intuitively and reproduces the infinite self in a finite form. This finitude prevents intellectual intuition or intelligence from being fully revealed and

⁹⁵STI, p.204.

⁹⁶STI, p.211.

⁹⁷STI, p.210.

prevents self-consciousness from becoming fully self-aware. Self-consciousness, which arises through intuiting and producing, is the result of a continual translation from unconscious to conscious activity and needs this opposition so that it can come into existence. If the opposition achieved the unity it is striving for, there would be no more self. Consequently, we possess a fragmented consciousness at best, but through mediation we can approach the lost wholeness by thinking our way back to the original act of opposition: the task of the transcendental philosopher is to chart this mediation. It is the unconscious nature of the producing self that drives Schelling to the necessity of postulating an aesthetic intuition as the true basis for all philosophy, and it is to an examination of this which we finally now turn.

B. Part Two

1. Teleology

The final two sections of the System of Transcendental Idealism are Schelling's version of the Critique of Judgment. The terminology has a familiar Kantian ring, but it is used to present an alternative vision of the relationship between the individual and the world. Schelling's focus is different, although he, too, uses the domain of aesthetics and teleology to effect a grand synthesis. In CJ, Kant has examined the nature of reflective judgment, first its aesthetic and then its teleological aspect. In Kant's view, we regard nature as exhibiting organization but this is as a result of our mode of cognition.¹ Therefore, all we can do is assign a regulative and not a constitutive function to teleology. The critique of teleological judgment ends by presenting a moral proof of the existence of God; Kant again reaches to something beyond our cognitive capabilities to prove the order in the world. Schelling approaches the matter from a diametrically opposed position.

At the most obvious level, Schelling has reversed the order, first discussing teleology and then art.² As his segue from the first four parts into the last two parts

¹See CJ, 361: "For we are bringing forward a teleological ground where we endow a conception of an object--as if that conception were to be found in nature instead of in ourselves--with causality in respect of the object, or rather where we picture to ourselves the possibility of the object on the analogy of a causality of this kind--a causality such as we experience in ourselves--and so regard nature as possessed of a capacity of its own for acting **technically**; whereas if we did not ascribe such a mode of operation to nature its causality would have to be regarded as blind mechanism."

²Schelling rarely uses the term 'aesthetic,' except to qualify intuition. He primarily talks about art, and never refers to the work of art as an aesthetic object.

of STI, he distinctly refers to one of the key concepts from Kant's analysis of aesthetic judgment, giving us a hint as to how his interpretation will differ:

But now if all conscious activity is purposive, this coincidence of conscious and unconscious activity can evidence itself only in a product that is **purposive**, without **being purposively brought about**. Nature must be a product of this sort, and this, indeed, is the principle of teleology, in which alone we may seek for the solution of the problem posed above [viz. the original identity of unconscious with conscious activity].³

Kant made this purposiveness without purpose the criterion for the judgment of beauty, but did not apply it to nature as such. Schelling's interpretation of nature and its relation to the self assumes that the two are different manifestations of the same absolute, and are related to each other through the hidden wholeness of the universe. Kant will not go this far, instead relying on the power of reason to account for the bridge between all aspects of the universe. For Kant, it "...is only **reason** by its moral principles that has been able to produce the conception of **God**..."⁴ Schelling's view of the universal and of the mutual relationship of all things is, by contrast, both anarchic and irrational. He intends to reveal the interconnection between everything, but this has little to do with morality or with teleology in the way Kant understands it. Part Five is called "Essentials of Teleology according to the Principles of Transcendental Idealism;" the essentials here referred to are quite different from previous teleological explanations.

Schelling's explanation of how nature can both be and not be purposive is closely connected to the relationship between freedom and the conscious self. As shown, freedom is to be found in the absolute identical activity which we only see in

³STI, p.214. The German reads: "...das zweckmässig ist, ohne zweckmässig hervorgebracht zu sein."

⁴CJ, 447.

its divided form, where it has become both conscious and unconscious, so that it can appear; we only perceive freedom in its suspended form, where the existence of the conscious self is proof that the infinite self willed itself into existence through an act of freedom. Nature, by contrast, is what Schelling understands by necessity, as that which lies before or beyond this separation and is brought forth without freedom. Nature appears as a product that is purposive, but its production is not in accordance with any purpose:

...the peculiarity of nature rests upon this, that in its mechanism, and although itself nothing but a blind mechanism, it is nonetheless purposive. If I take away the mechanism, I take away nature itself. All the magic which surrounds organic nature...rests upon the contradiction, that although this nature is a product of blind natural forces, it is nevertheless purposive through and through.⁵

Organic nature is the unification of freedom and necessity in the external world; it is "das Seiende im Ganzen."⁶ The natural product is both free and necessary, a contradiction which we can deduce through transcendental principles but which cannot be accounted for by means of a teleological explanation. The separation of the original identity, which has taken place for the purpose of the appearance of the self, exacts a heavy price. Unlike natural products:

Man is forever a broken fragment, for either his action is necessary, and then not free, or free, and then not necessary and according to law. The complete appearance of freedom and necessity unified in the external world therefore yields me organic nature only...⁷

⁵STL, p.215.

⁶Dieter Jähnig "Die Schlüsselstellung der Kunst bei Schelling" in Manfred Franks Materialien zu Schellings philosophischen Anfängen, (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1975), p.337.

⁷STL, p.216.

While it appears to us as if nature is a producing that has become objective and therefore seems free, according to the duality established in transcendental philosophy, nature is also an unconscious intuition of producing and is thus a blind producing.

As a result of its synthesizing capabilities, Schelling claims that only the system of transcendental idealism can account for the seeming contradiction that a product is both blind and purposive, that it is both unconscious and conscious. All other systems postulate that either matter itself is intelligent, or that matter is inert and an outside intelligence has put purposiveness into its form (this is aimed at Kant). Both of these explanations, according to Schelling, are faulty, and neither can account for the apparent logical contradiction of transcendental idealism, which is actually the constitutive basis of the world. Teleological modes of explanation in fact "...do away with all true explanation of nature..." because "...the purposive concept that corresponds to the conscious activity tak[es] precedence over the object that corresponds to the unconscious activity."⁸ Because teleological explanation operates at a relatively superficial level, it completely misses the true nature of things; it is precisely the true nature or ultimate harmony of subject and object which the transcendental philosopher has set out to establish, not so much for herself, but for the self itself.

The transcendental philosopher knows that the principle of this underlying harmony is "...that ultimate in ourselves which already undergoes division in the primary act of self-consciousness."⁹ Although nature represents the original identity

⁸STL p.217.

⁹STL p.217.

of conscious and unconscious activity, it has not convinced the self that the self itself is the ultimate ground of this identity:

Die Organisation der Natur ist wohl der Vereinigungspunkt von theoretischer und praktischer Philosophie, aber ein Vereinigungspunkt ausserhalb des Bewusstseins, so dass das objektive Ich zwar Analogiebeziehungen zwischen dem philosophischen Identitätspostulat und der Natur feststellen, aber nicht erkennen kann, dass der letzte Grund des exoterischen Vereinigungspunkts "im Ich selbst liegt."¹⁰

This moment of recognition is the goal of transcendental idealism: to show how the ultimate harmony between subject and object, which is revealed in the natural product, becomes an object for the self itself, so that it can recognize the wholeness of which it was once part. What needs to be found for the intelligence is a special intuition:

...whereby in **one and the same** appearance the self is at once conscious and unconscious **for itself**, and it is by means of such an intuition that we first bring forth the intelligence, as it were, entirely out of itself; by such an intuition, therefore, that we also first resolve the entire [the supreme] problem of transcendental philosophy (that of explaining the congruence between subjective and objective).¹¹

In contrast to intellectual intuition, which was limited to consciousness of the inner self, both conscious and unconscious activity become objective in the same intuition. This intuition, claims Schelling, can only be the intuition of art because of the extraordinary role which art plays in revealing the true nature of things. This is the point towards which Schelling has been meticulously building, and he now launches into an exposition of the phenomenal abilities of both the art product and the producer of art, the genius.

¹⁰Hans Freier, Die Rückkehr der Götter (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1976), p.161.

¹¹STI, pp.217-8.

2. Art and aesthetic intuition

The aspect of Schelling's System of Transcendental Idealism which caused the most excitement and which has, in certain circles, been most influential, is Part Six: "Deduction of a Universal Organ of Philosophy, or: Essentials of the Philosophy of Art according to the Principles of Transcendental Idealism." In this complicated and dense section, Schelling establishes the art product as that which closes the gap between subject and object, whereby the opposition between the two activities which create the subject becomes objective for the subject. This completes the circle of transcendental idealism for Schelling, and at the same time gives both the producers and products of art a position of highest importance, a ranking which was enthusiastically greeted by the members of the contemporary literary movement known generally as Romanticism. Before engaging in a critical analysis of Schelling's philosophy of art as it appears in STI,¹² I first present a summary of this final part. Schelling divides his study of art into three sections: deduction of the art product; description of the art product; relation between art and philosophy. Only through understanding the pivotal role of the genius, is it possible to see the relationship between art and philosophy.

a. Deduction of the art product. The purpose of the deduction of the art product is to discover the intuition which unites the conscious and the unconscious aspects of the self, and to do so in such a way that the self itself becomes conscious of

¹²As mentioned, Schelling's writings on art are scattered throughout a number of works. For the sake of simplicity, I have restricted my study almost exclusively to STI. For further reading on this topic, the Reclam anthology edited by Werner Beierwaltes, Texte zur Philosophie der Kunst, provides an excellent introduction to Schelling's writing on art in the decade 1797-1807. (Reclam 5777)

this identity. One might think that this was the task of the intellectual intuition, and this is not an entirely mistaken assumption. But only the transcendental philosopher can recognize this theoretical unity; now it needs to be made objective. The product of this intuition must "...verge on the one side upon the product of nature, and on the other upon the product of freedom, and must unite in itself the characteristics of both."¹³ Only in this way can Schelling account for the unification of object and subject in an object which the self can in turn understand as its own product. The product which is here being sought must share with freedom the condition that it is consciously brought forth, yet share the unconscious element which determines the natural product. Whereas the natural product, although unconscious, had always appeared conscious and purposive, the exact opposite now takes place: "...the conscious activity will...be reflected out of the product here under consideration as an unconscious (objective) one[.]"¹⁴ In contrast to the organic product, which begins with unconscious, non-purposive production and ends with a conscious purposive product, the product here under consideration reflects a conscious, productive activity which ends with a non-purposive product determined by the unconscious; the production itself is purposive but the product is not. The task which now falls to the transcendental philosopher is to find a way to explain this to the self itself; this task has been the goal of STI. In other words, the way in which unconscious activity can be consciously explicated, in particular that point where the conscious and the unconscious, subjective and objective, freedom and necessity attain identity with each other, must be deduced.

¹³STI p.219.

¹⁴STI p.219.

The first problem concerns the possibility of something objective being brought forth with consciousness, because, by definition, "[t]he objective is simply that which arises without consciousness."¹⁵ If the unconscious activity operates through consciousness, then in effect it becomes identical with consciousness and the difference between the two is abolished: the activity appears necessary. As we have seen, in order to appear free, conscious and unconscious activity can never be absolutely identical, for in absolute identity the object becomes necessary and not free; how, then, does one account for the element of freedom in the product? The object of the free act must be infinite (that is, never reaching the point of identity of subject and object), for as soon as it attains finitude, it is no longer free but determined. The problem which Schelling is intent on solving is how an object can be both simultaneously free and determined. He conjectures how that takes place:

Now that which was utterly impossible through freedom is to become possible through the act here postulated, though as the price of this the latter must cease to be a free act, and becomes one in which freedom and necessity are absolutely united.¹⁶

This leaves, however, a second problem: what now needs to be explained is how conscious and unconscious activity can be both united and thereby identical, and at the same time, if the self is to be conscious of their production, separate and not identical. Without separation, there is identity, to be sure, but not for the self itself.

Schelling solves this contradiction by admitting that while the two activities must be separated for the appearing or the becoming objective of the production, in the actual product they are united:

¹⁵STL, p.219.

¹⁶STL, p.220.

The identity of the two was to be abolished only for the sake of consciousness, but the production is to end in unconsciousness so there must be a point at which the two merge into one; and conversely, where the two merge into one, the production must cease to appear as a free one.¹⁷

Production must absolutely stop, for the condition of producing is the opposition between conscious and unconscious; when they coincide "...within the intelligence all conflict has to be eliminated, all contradiction reconciled."¹⁸ At this point, Schelling maintains that the intelligence or self will completely recognize the identity expressed in the product as one which lies within itself, that is, it will completely intuit itself.

Just how this happens is not quite clear, and Schelling appears incapable of being more explicit. This is the type of recognition where, to one who has experienced it, it is obvious, and to one who has not, it sounds somewhat crazy and quite unlikely. It is the point where freedom and necessity meet: self-intuition is the result of the free action whereby the intelligence is divided from itself, establishing the dialectic; the complete identity expressed in the product is recognized by the intelligence as its own self-intuition and as necessary. As a result of this recognition, the intelligence will feel "blessed" by this union and will regard it:

...in the light of a bounty freely granted by a higher nature.... [which is] none other than that absolute [the primordial self/das Urself] which contains the common ground of the preestablished harmony between the conscious and the unconscious.¹⁹

It is this absolute which is radiated back from the product, and which the intelligence regards as something above the product. In contrast to freedom, this absolute "...brings an element of the unintended to that which was begun with consciousness and

¹⁷STI, p.220-1.

¹⁸STI, p.221.

¹⁹STI, p.221.

intention."²⁰ This invokes for us Schelling's metaphysical view of the interrelatedness of all things, for we are now allowed momentary flashes of the truth, a truth that cannot be completely revealed without congealing all action into absolute necessity. One can at most live at the nodal points, catching an occasional glimpse of the absolute behind the appearances. This element of the unintended can never attain to consciousness for these reasons, and instead must radiate its unconscious message back from the product:

...[it] is for the producer precisely what destiny is for the agent, namely a dark unknown force which supplies the element of completeness or objectivity to the piecework of freedom; and as that power is called destiny, which through our free action realizes, without our knowledge and even against our will, goals **that we did not envisage**, so likewise that incomprehensible agency which supplies objectivity to the conscious, without the cooperation of freedom, and to some extent in opposition to freedom...is denominated by means of the obscure concept of **genius**.

The product we postulate is none other than the product of genius, or, since genius is possible only in the arts, the **product of art**.²¹

With this statement Schelling concludes his deduction of the art product, leaving us to wonder what exactly he has in mind as an example of such a remarkable object.

We are also left wondering how we suddenly discovered the product of art, since there has been little preparation for this solution, aside from several comments in the introductory sections. Schelling initially offers rather weak arguments as to why it is the artistic activity which is the source of ultimate truth. He states inductively:

The fact that all aesthetic production rests upon a conflict of activities can be justifiably inferred already from the testimony of all artists, that they are involuntarily driven to create their works and that in producing them they merely satisfy an irresistible urge of their own nature...²²

²⁰STI, p.222.

²¹STI, p.222.

²²STI, p.222.

At the completion of this creative act, which apparently is set in motion by the contradiction between the conscious and unconscious, the artist experiences a "...feeling of an **infinite** harmony."²³ The artist attributes this feeling of harmony not to a personal ability, but to something higher, to a bounty which has been granted by her nature. Schelling regards artists as exceptional in the fullest sense of the word, for they are able to access that which is ultimate in themselves through a free act, that is, through the contradiction between conscious and unconscious. Once this artistic urge is set in motion, however, it takes on a life of its own until it resolves the "...final and uttermost contradiction within us."²⁴

b. The product of art and the role of genius. Schelling is laying the groundwork for a more detailed presentation of the abilities of the genius, a concept which has been of increasing importance throughout the 18th century. But Schelling's explanation of and praise for the genius, and in particular the product of genius, goes further than other philosophers who are proponents of the cult of the genius. Genius is neither conscious nor unconscious, but is that which presides over both. What is ordinarily called art refers to the conscious aspect, to what can be learned and taught. The unconscious element, which cannot be learned or practiced but is inborn, Schelling calls "...the element of **poetry** in art."²⁵ Both are needed to operate simultaneously or identically, for poetry without art engenders only dead products and art without

²³STL, p.223.

²⁴STL, p.222.

²⁵STL, p.224.

poetry, although somewhat more successful, can only give rise to a semblance of poetry and a superficiality. Schelling concludes that it is clear:

...that, since the identity of the two can only be innate, and is utterly impossible and unattainable through freedom, perfection is possible only through genius, which, for that very reason, is for the aesthetic what the self is for philosophy, namely the supreme absolute reality, which never itself becomes objective, but is the cause of everything that is so.²⁶

Here is where we find the link between philosophy and art, but clearly, in order for us to understand it, the nature of both the artwork and the genius first needs to be studied.

The basic character of the work of art is of an unconscious infinity that is the synthesis of nature and freedom. In addition to what she has intentionally contributed to the artwork, the artist has depicted an infinity "...which no finite understanding is capable of developing to the full."²⁷ This is why a genuine work of art has a timeless quality about it; it contains an infinity of meaning and purposes and can always be fruitfully approached anew. The unique aspect of the true work of art is that it is impossible to determine whether this infinity lies in the artist or only in the work; an imitation, by contrast, copies only the artist's conscious activity and therefore contains a superficial purpose and rule. One merely reflects on the object of imitation, whereas the genuine artwork is an object for intuition, a contemplation that can only end in

²⁶STL, p.224. Freier is of the opinion that this is arguably the most important sentence concerning the relation between the transcendental system and art. He elaborates on the meaning:

Er bringt zum Ausdruck, dass die Objektivität des Schönen ebenso wie die Objektivität der Natur einem nicht-objektivierbaren Prinzip entspringt, das als archimedischer Punkt in der unzugänglichen Tiefe des Selbstbewusstseins die auf der Erscheinungsebene auftretenden und scheinbar unversöhnlichen Gegensätze zur Einheit zusammenbindet (Freier, p.171).

²⁷STL, p.225.

the infinite. The essence of a true work of art is the resolution of infinite contradiction and gives an outward expression of calm, silent grandeur no matter what the subject matter. A problem which becomes obvious by omission is what exactly is meant by the artwork. Although in Philosophy of Art Schelling spends time discussing specific artworks, in general and certainly in STI, he remains at an abstract level, rarely descending to the concrete work of art for confirmation. Schmidt explains the difficulty faced by the philosopher of art:

Es kann hier nur angedeutet werden, welchen Schwierigkeiten diese Konzeption der Kunst als einer nicht begrifflichen, sondern symbolischen Repräsentanz des Absoluten ausgesetzt ist. Vor allem kann Schelling nicht angeben, welche Struktur ein Objekt haben muss, um Kunst zu sein....Jede Philosophie, welche die Kunst in eine wesensmässige Beziehung zur Wahrheit stellt, hat diese Unzukömmlichkeit.²⁸

This raises the question, to be considered later, of why it is art which fulfills the need of a concrete example of the absolute.

Schelling designates beauty as one of the basic features of a work of art. Beauty has been an increasingly problematic concept in aesthetic theory. Kant's contribution places the quality of beauty in the center of the new field of aesthetic theory, where it refers to a disinterested feeling of delight called forth by the "Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck" interplay of the cognitive faculties. Schelling defines beauty as "the infinite finitely displayed,"²⁹ which is not quite the same thing as what Kant meant. Whereas Kant clearly placed the response to an object of beauty on a non-emotional level, Schelling views the emotional response as integral to the

²⁸J. Schmidt, Die Geschichte der Genie-Gedankens..., p.394.

²⁹STI, p.225.

experience of beauty. Engell explains the problems of, and response evoked by, the term:

All Romantics inherited the word "beauty," which became something of a deadweight around their necks. With too many common connotations, "beauty" could not convey the combined aesthetic, moral, and philosophic sensibility that was expected of it. Hampered with this unfortunate term, poets and critics attempted repeatedly to explain it until their special meanings, meant to be clarifications, became confused, and people fell back on the lowest common denominator, beauty as something agreeable or pleasing to the senses...

For Schelling, beauty in an object frees in the psyche a total and harmonious response, a feeling which itself may be called beauty....All elements of the self, according to Schelling, are called on together and are unified by a corresponding harmony in the external object. The senses, understanding, reason, moral feeling, judgment, and emotion all focus on one end. This end, or beauty, is a cipher or code....It reveals the organic interconnection of the universe and symbolizes the world's processes. It suggests, embodies, and reveals these processes and relations in concrete and specific form, so that the psyche can at once be aware of what would otherwise be a multiplicity of experiences.

Beauty focuses, distills, intensifies, and fuses nature with experience. The beautiful object dissolves any barrier between the subjective self and the objective world. Beauty is thus a product of genius and of the creative imagination. It realizes the latent potential for synthesis that is in the psyche. Beauty is economy and shows in the most concentrated way that all things in nature and all faculties in man exist and owe their identity to their many relationships with each other.³⁰

Schelling is very careful not to use the term 'beauty' itself too often. In fact, after having equated it with the finite display of the infinite, he prefers to use that terminology rather than that of beauty, for the latter carries with it too much extraneous baggage. He does mention the division of the beautiful and the sublime,

³⁰James Engell, The Creative Imagination: Enlightenment to Romanticism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp.325-6. The length of the quotation is due to my opinion that Engell has expressed so clearly the problems inherent in this indefinite yet crucial term.

since this has become such a standard feature of aesthetic theory and, following Kant, designates the sublime as the aesthetically less important concept.³¹

The essential characteristic of a beautiful work of art is thus the resolution of the subject and object in an object understood as a product of the subject. The way in which conscious and unconscious are united in this process shows the distinction between a work of art and an organic product, for the former exhibits that which is united after a separation, whereas the latter displays that which is originally unseparated: the artwork proceeds from consciousness and thus from infinite contradiction, whereas the organic product proceeds from unconsciousness, where no contradiction yet exists. In Schelling's interpretation, what we call natural beauty does not provide us with principles of art, for it is not the case that art imitates nature; rather, we judge nature to be beautiful because it conforms to the principles of perfection in art.

The way in which the aesthetic product is to be distinguished from the common artifact is that the artwork is created from a contradiction that lies within the artist herself, whereas the common artifact is created from a contradiction, but one which is outside of the producer, and therefore always has a goal outside itself. *L'art pour l'art* is the hallmark of the aesthetic product:

This independence of external goals is the source of that holiness and purity of art, which goes so far that it not only rules out relationship with all mere sensory pleasure, to demand which of art is the true nature of barbarism; or with the useful, to require which of art is possible only in an age which supposes the highest efforts of the human spirit to consist in economic discoveries. It actually excludes relation with everything pertaining to morality,

³¹Even though Kant does not spend much time discussing the sublime, by far the larger part of CJ appears to be devoted to an analysis of it.

and even leaves far beneath it the sciences...simply because they are always directed to a goal outside themselves...³²

Art and science, despite their opposed tendencies, are, according to Schelling, in essence the same at the highest level, which if science should ever reach would merge into art. Following Kant's dictate about the place of genius, Schelling maintains that there cannot be genius in science, for everything which could be solved by genius can also be solved mechanically: "Only what art brings forth is simply and **solely** possible through genius."³³ Genius is present only where the idea of the whole precedes that of the parts, where what one says and maintains is not and cannot be entirely understood; where something is asserted with apparent consciousness, but which can only have come from the unconscious. Although this, too, happens in science, technique eventually catches up with theory and the point is proved mechanically. This can never happen in art because the truth is **behind** appearance.

Through genius, in contrast to mere talent or skill, a "...contradiction is resolved, which is soluble absolutely and otherwise by nothing else."³⁴ As with the work of art, Schelling does not elaborate concretely on specific examples of the genius beyond making comments on her powers of resolution; the concept remains almost completely abstract. Indeed, for Schelling, it is not so much the genius herself but the **product** of genius which is so important. Kant envisioned the genius as "...the innate mental

³²STL, p.227.

³³STL, p.228.

³⁴STL, p.228.

apptitude (*ingenium*) through which nature gives the rule to art."³⁵ Schelling has gone beyond Kant's conception of genius, as Freier explains:

Gründet die Geniekonzeption, transzendentalphilosophisch betrachtet, in einer Leerstelle des begrifflichen Wissens, nämlich in der Unfähigkeit der Philosophie, die Einheit von Freiheit und Notwendigkeit theoretisch zu beweisen, so bestand der aus ihr zu schöpfende praktische Gewinn für Kant darin, an Günstlingen der Natur exemplarisch zeigen zu können, dass die Idee eines intelligiblen Substrats der Natur, die doch nur in praktischer Absicht legitimierbar ist, in der Kunst eine unverhoffte Unterstützung findet.

Für Schellings Rezeption ist indessen ein anderes Motiv, das Motiv der Streiterfahrung, wichtiger geworden, weil er schon mit seinem Entwurf eines transzendentalen Wissens ursprünglich-synthetischer Einheit den Boden verlassen hatte, auf dem Kant gestanden war.³⁶

Certainly Schelling, like Kant, saw the genius as bringing forth a truth that lies beyond cognitive knowledge, but whereas the genius satisfied Kant's desire to reveal a non-cognitive yet intelligible substrate of nature, Schelling uses the genius to reveal the nature of self-consciousness, the "Urselbst," that which is completely independent from anything which lies outside consciousness. Schmidt finds in this shift of emphasis the signs of fetishization of the genius, for instead of a living, creative restlessness there is now the stillness of completion:

Dass das denkerische Bemühen nicht mehr der Problematik des Genie- und Kunstbegriffs gilt, wie noch bei Kant, sondern umgekehrt der Genie- und Kunstbegriff zu einem Vehikel des Philosophierens gerät, zeigt eine Krise des Denkens an und zugleich das Stadium einer Dogmatisierung von Genie und Kunst. Und dass es Schelling dabei weniger auf das Genie und seinen Schaffensprozess als auf das fertige "Genieprodukt" ankommt, deutet bereits auf Fetischisierung.³⁷

³⁵CJ, 307.

³⁶Freier, p.163.

³⁷Schmidt, p.396.

Before examining the crisis of thinking which Schmidt detects in Schelling's view of genius, the rest of Schelling's theory of art needs to be explored before a judgment about his role in the history of aesthetic theory can be handed down.

For now, what is important is to remember that all producing has an unconscious component, but only genius can resolve the infinite contradiction between conscious and unconscious which results in aesthetic producing. The term 'aesthetic,' like the term 'beauty,' is not always so easy to define. Engell here also provides a useful clarification:

The word "aesthetic"...comes from the Greek meaning to perceive truly or clearly, and what Schelling means by art is not the fine arts alone but an aesthetic perception, in the most profound sense, of the universal process.³⁸

This enables us to perceive more clearly how Schelling is organizing the layers of his system as he moves from the intellectual to the aesthetic.

c. The relationship between philosophy and the work of art, and the role of mythology. Now that both the nature and characteristics of the true work of art and of the genius has been brought into relief, even if it is still unclear what a true work of art is or how one recognizes a genius, the relationship between art and philosophy, which the system has been building up to, can finally be examined. The importance of this relationship rests on the nature of complete identity, which is the first principle of all philosophical investigation; an understanding of this is essential if one is to grasp the true meaning of the vehicle of the absolute, which Schelling unveils as the work of art. As shown, Schelling assumes absolute identity as the original premise and, with the aid of intellectual intuition, constructs his system of transcendental idealism. Now

³⁸Engell, p.323.

he raises the question as to how intellectual intuition, which has as its object the absolutely identical, that is to say something completely nonobjective, is possible. In other words, how can intellectual intuition become objective for us, for if there is no way of appealing to experience:

How...can it be established beyond doubt, that such an intuition does not rest upon a purely subjective deception, if it possesses no objectivity that is universal and acknowledged by all men?³⁹

The answer is that the universally acknowledged objectivity of intellectual intuition is art itself: "...aesthetic intuition simply is the intellectual intuition become objective."⁴⁰

The work of art reflects the absolutely identical, which is divided for the self the moment it becomes conscious, and provides proof of the first principle of philosophy. This is Schelling's major contribution to aesthetic theory, or more specifically to the phenomenology of the artwork.

The relationship between art and philosophy which Schelling now details presupposes a distinct view of what philosophy is and why we study it. It reflects neither the Platonic division of one and many nor the multiplicity of an Aristotelian approach. Rather, it is an endless series of duality, each striving towards the unity from which it originally came. In this sense, it could be argued that Schelling is presenting a neo-Platonic vision of the world, but the postulation of an infinite dialectic, which is the only way objectification can arise, is novel. Philosophy is not a serene discipline, where sufficient clarity of thought and the help of the razor of logic can lay all mysteries bare. Rather, it reflects the bubbling, struggling infinite activity of life itself as this life force seeks to find rest in a unity which it can never attain and

³⁹STI, p.229.

⁴⁰STI, p.229.

simultaneously remain alive. Without the presupposition that "[p]hilosophy sets out from an infinite dichotomy of opposed activities...,"⁴¹ Schelling's whole project is hard to fathom. However, if one grants him the initial division of the absolute identity, then his argument no longer appears so extraordinary, instead offering a new vision of the nature of the philosophic enterprise.

Schelling claims that this infinite duality or dichotomy is not only the basis of philosophy but also the basis of every aesthetic production. The most obvious difference between the two is that the removal of this opposition in philosophy by productive (intellectual) intuition is theoretical, based on the claims of the philosopher, whereas in art it is actual. The power of productive intuition in philosophy:

...is the same whereby art also achieves the impossible, namely to resolve an infinite opposition in a finite product. It is the poetic gift...It is one and the same capacity that is active in both, the only one whereby we are able to think and to couple together even what is contradictory--and its name is imagination.⁴²

Schelling's location of the creation of philosophy, and indeed of the world, in the poetic gift (*Dichtungsvermögen*) and in imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) is a radical step. It places the full weight of creation on 'Einbildungskraft,' which "...not only permits art but also rescues philosophy from its personal and metaphysical subjectivity."⁴³

Imagination plays an important role throughout *STI* and appears in several different forms as the self gains in self-consciousness. In general, Schelling calls imagination that "...activity...which wavers in the middle between finitude and

⁴¹*STI*, p.230.

⁴²*STI*, p.230.

⁴³Engell, p.322.

infinity."⁴⁴ But as there are different manifestations of finitude, so are there different kinds of imagination, each of which is in some way productive; they are also referred to as productive intuition (*produktive Anschauung*). The first layer of imagination is sensory intuition and belongs in nature philosophy; the second is intellectual intuition and is the power in transcendental philosophy; the third and highest is aesthetic intuition and provides the uniting force of transcendental idealism. The true creative imagination implicit in aesthetic intuition enables the complete unification of the real and the ideal; it produces both "...that which appears to us outside the sphere of consciousness, as real, and that which appears within it, as ideal, or as the world of art."⁴⁵ Thus both the real and ideal world are brought forth through the same activity, but the fact that one originates from outside consciousness, whereas the other comes from within it, marks the eternal, unresolvable difference between the two. Only in the work of art is this moment of dual creation brought to a standstill, where we can see it.

The dual claim that both the world of art and the real world arise from the same opposition, and that all the individual products of art depict the infinite, leads to a somewhat difficult conclusion. Outside the conscious realm, the opposition is infinite insofar as it is exhibited in the objective world as a whole, never as individual objects. But in art, this opposition is infinite with regard to every single object. This apparent contradiction leads Schelling to postulate that:

...if aesthetic production proceeds from freedom, and if it is precisely for freedom that this opposition of conscious and unconscious activities is an absolute one, there is properly speaking but one absolute work of art, which

⁴⁴STL, p.176.

⁴⁵STL, p.230.

may indeed exist in altogether different versions, yet is still only one, even though it should not yet exist in its most ultimate form.⁴⁶

What precisely Schelling means is not satisfactorily explained, and we are left with a mythic view that it is possible that everything, even natural products, could be works of art. After hinting about this pantheistic view of artworks, Schelling pulls back, for such a view no longer leaves the genius in a privileged position. He repeats that the original identity between the unconscious and conscious elements in producing can never be depicted by philosophy in its external (i.e. non-intuitive) form; philosophy thus needs art in order to make its original unity visible. Once one grants that aesthetic intuition is the objective form of intellectual intuition, then "...it is self-evident that art is at once the only true and eternal organ and document of philosophy..."⁴⁷ Only through art can all the divisions in the world be healed. The mythological and religious language which Schelling draws on to present his account of the relation between art and philosophy points not only to the inexplicability of the subject matter but also to where Schelling's true interests lie, in explaining that which cannot be explained.

Through aesthetic creation, Schelling has found the means by which to close his system, to bring the end back to the beginning. Through the absolute identical which radiates out from the artwork, the self has completed its journey and now stands where the philosophic observer stood at the beginning:

The ultimate ground of all harmony between subjective and objective could be exhibited in its original identity only through intellectual intuition; and it is precisely this ground which, by means of the work of art, has been brought forth entirely from the subjective, and rendered wholly objective, in such wise,

⁴⁶STI, p.231.

⁴⁷STI, p.231.

that we have gradually led our object, the self itself, up to the very point where we ourselves were standing when we began to philosophize.⁴⁸

Caught up in this unifying rhetoric, and carried away by the thought of the absolute identity which we gain access to through the work of art, Schelling draws the final conclusion, based on his claim that "Philosophy was born and nourished by poetry in the infancy of knowledge." The circle has now been completed for philosophy, and when all the sciences which are guided towards perfection by philosophy attain it, then they will all "...flow back like so many individual streams into the universal ocean of poetry from which they took their source."⁴⁹ This will happen through the medium of a mythology whose creation will be authored by a new race, sometime in the course of future history.

Before considering the implications of a new mythology, the relationship between art and philosophy must be properly understood. Schelling has stated that art is the true document of philosophy, but this does not imply that art is superior to philosophy:

Zwischen intellektueller und ästhetischer Anschauung herrscht demnach kein Verhältnis von Hypothese und Beweis, sondern ein Komplementaritätsverhältnis, das sich darin ausdrückt, dass beide Anschauungsweisen als Weisen des Reflexionswissens bestimmt, also beide mit dem Charakter des Wissens ausgestattet und nur medial unterschieden werden. Nur die Komplementaritätsthese erklärt denn auch, warum Schelling behauptet, das Prinzip der ästhetischen Anschauung, das Genie, sei für die Ästhetik dasselbe wie das Prinzip der intellektuellen Anschauung, das Ich, für die Transzendentalphilosophie.⁵⁰

⁴⁸STL, p.232.

⁴⁹STL, p.232.

⁵⁰Freier, p.154.

Only art can complete the philosophic synthesis of mind and cosmos; only philosophy can explain the significance of the artist's imaginative creation. Philosophic reason and artistic imagination are different sides of the same coin. The concept of imagination as 'In-Eins-Bildung' is integral to both, because both philosophy and art attempt to freeze the moment of the one, the absolute. The moment of unity present in the ultimate philosophical idea of intellectual intuition is the same as that present in the work of art, the product of genius. It is in this sense that philosophy and poetry are united.

3. Concluding remarks

a. 'General Observations on the Whole System'. Schelling has now reached the conclusion of his system. As if he were not completely satisfied with the clarity of its progression, however, he offers a 'General Observation on the Whole System,' in which he recapitulates the different stages of the self-intuition of the self. Three things should be remarked upon. First, the reminder of the relation between intellectual and aesthetic intuition: "What intellectual intuition is for the philosopher, aesthetic intuition is for his object,"⁵¹ the object being the self. This explains how philosophy, which as such can never gain a wide following since it requires a special cast of mind, can find a universal currency in the work of art, for the latter objectifies the subjective intellectual intuition and provides a mirror to all human beings so that they can gain access to the original unity from which their self-consciousness springs. This raises an interesting question. Schelling states that:

—Philosophy attains, indeed, to the highest, but it brings to this summit only...the fraction of a man. Art brings **the whole man**, as he is, to that point,

⁵¹STL, p.233.

namely to a knowledge of the highest, and this is what underlies the eternal difference and the marvel of art.⁵²

It is as if art is the democratization of philosophy, that an encounter with the Mona Lisa or Oedipus Rex will bring enlightenment to whoever happens by. But this is not the case, as Freier points out:

Die Autonomie, die dadurch dem transzendentalen Wissen, dem erkenntniskonstituierenden Handeln des Philosophen zugesprochen wird, schliesst ein, dass die Genieproduktion nur noch der Selbsterkenntnis des objektiven Selbstbewusstseins zu dienen hat. Das aber bedeutet, logisch-immanent betrachtet, dass das objektive Selbstbewusstsein, in dem doch die Allgemeinheit repräsentiert sein soll, zum **Künstler** werden muss, da weder die Beschreibung noch der Genuss der künstlerischen Produktion die Selbsterfahrung des Künstlers ersetzen kann, von der allein die vom Transzendentalphilosophen geforderte Einsicht zu erwarten wäre.

Schelling hat diese Konsequenz nicht mit der gebotenen Deutlichkeit herausgearbeitet....Wenn die Selbsterkenntnis jenes Ichs an die Erfahrung des Kampfes und an die Erfahrung des Sieges gebunden ist, die der Künstler mit seinem Werk macht, dann ist sie ebensowenig wie die des Philosophen nur einigen wenigen Auserwählten vorbehalten. Wird die Philosophie durch die ästhetische Produktion objektiv, so noch nicht einmal für das ohnehin spärliche Kunstpublikum, sondern eigentlich nur für die Künstler selbst.⁵³

Only the philosopher or the artist is capable of grasping this moment of the highest intuition, for only she is properly prepared to intuit what it means in its fullest sense. Because of the extreme difficulty of the subject matter, the nature of the absolute, an art or a philosophy (or even a religion) that purports to reveal the absolute cannot be universalized without being trivialized, or at least not at our present stage of collective awareness.

The leads to the second remark, which concerns the nature of this original unity, of the absolutely identical which is the first proposition of all philosophy:

⁵²STI, p.233.

⁵³Freier, p.164.

(What the identical may be, abstracted from and, as it were, prior to this act [where the identical first becomes at once both subject and object, i.e. a self] simply cannot be asked. For it is that which can **only** reveal itself through self-consciousness, and cannot anywhere part company from this act.)⁵⁴

One has to assume that there is some kind of universal material, whether it be God, Being, intelligence, the unconscious or whatever, out of which all knowledge is formed, but one can only talk or write or philosophize about that which is already in knowledge. It is always tempting to fall back onto pure metaphysical speculation about the nature of the world, but for such claims there can be no proof. The closest one can approach to obtaining evidence of the ultimate nature of things is to investigate what lies on the border between being and becoming, unconscious and conscious; it is precisely the work of art which captures this congealed moment of being, of absolute identity.

The third remark concerns freedom, with that which differentiates the intelligence from nature. Two things are of note here. First, one can only speculate on the existence of freedom: "...freedom, if it exists (though **that** it does so, cannot be theoretically demonstrated), must be superior...to nature."⁵⁵ Freedom thus shares the same type of assumptions on which absolute identity is based. Assuming the existence of freedom, one rapidly ascends, by way of willing, to the activity of choice, of "...free activity accompanied by consciousness."⁵⁶ When choice is intuited in its original identity with the objective, which is impossible through freedom since, paradoxically, freedom presupposes the act of will which divides the self into subject and object, the

⁵⁴STL, p.234.

⁵⁵STL, p.235

⁵⁶STL, p.236.

highest power of self-intuition is obtained. This brings us to the second thing of note, for this highest power of self-intuition:

...since it already lies out beyond the **conditions** of consciousness, and is indeed itself the consciousness that creates itself **ab initio**, must appear, where it exists, as absolutely contingent; and this absolute contingency in the highest power of self-intuition is what we designate by means of the idea of **genius**.⁵⁷

Absolute identity, freedom and genius are the three essential ingredients for Schelling's system of transcendental idealism, and all have in common the fact that they exist beyond the boundaries of what human beings can know or understand.

This leads back both to Schelling's mysterious final sentence that "...a new mythology is itself to arise, which shall be the creation, not of some individual author, but of a new race, personifying, as it were, one single poet[,]"⁵⁸ and to his hint at the existence of only one absolute artwork. Both statements point in the direction of his later philosophy, a religious-mythical search for revelation, and underline the fact that he is not satisfied with the current conclusion of his system. It is self-contained, but it is not self-contained **enough**, because it is still an individual experience. This reminds us of Schelling's step-by-step reconstruction of the fully self-conscious self, in particular that stage where the self must postulate the existence of other individuals in order to gain consciousness of itself as subject:

...[the rise to consciousness] is possible only if that purely objective element in the self becomes objective **to the self itself**....But **outside** the individual, i.e., independent of him, there is only the **intelligence itself**. But [according to the mechanism deduced] the intelligence itself, where it exists, must restrict itself into individuality. Hence the ground we are looking for outside the individual can only lie in **another individual**.⁵⁹

⁵⁷STL, p.236.

⁵⁸STL, p.233.

⁵⁹STL, p.235.

Somehow, this individualization which takes place needs to attain a higher level, so that everyone can share in the knowledge of the absolute from whence they came. The careful process undertaken to uncover the work of art has not reached its expected end, for Schelling already tells us that the system must have a still hidden mytho-poetic culmination.

Critics of Schelling, and the later Schelling himself, denounce the exceptional emphasis placed on the artwork as explicated in STI, but though Schelling only maintained an equivalence of art and philosophy for a short time, this is not to say his attempt to find the point of ultimate unification is invalid. Jähnig insists that there is a good reason for Schelling to have emphasized this role of art:

Doch gerade diese Lage liesse auch eine ganz andere Vermutung zu, nämlich die, dass die instrumentale Funktion der Kunst nur darum im Fortgang, unter den neuen Fragen der Philosophie, so wenig mehr zur Diskussion stand wie vor dem Transzendentsystem, weil ihre Aufgabe eben in der Erwirkung jenes geschichtlichen Wendepunktes bestand. Die Kunst könnte dann in den folgenden Stadien der Philosophie als "Organon" eben darum nicht mehr gebraucht worden sein, weil sie diese Aufgabe **erfüllt** hatte.⁶⁰

Jähnig goes on to suggest that perhaps the meaning of the organon function of art has been misunderstood because the meaning of transcendental philosophy itself has been misunderstood, and that one is faced not so much with a question about the philosophy of art but a question concerning the history of philosophy: "Die Frage nach der Rolle der Kunst in der Philosophie Schellings führt auf die Frage nach der Rolle Schellings in der Geschichte der Philosophie."⁶¹

⁶⁰Jähnig, "Die Schlüsselstellung...", p.336.

⁶¹Jähnig, p.338.

b. Schelling's theory of art: A bridge between two worlds. This is an appropriate question with which to draw some conclusions about System of Transcendental Idealism because this work, written in 1800, bridges two worlds and two different interpretations of philosophy and its aims:

Written at the turn of the century, it belongs to two different epochs. Its origin lies in the classic calm of the philosophy of consciousness which dominated European thought from Descartes through Kant; its impulse is toward the uneasy philosophies of will which were to dominate the nineteenth century and which define man, not in terms of the infinite reach of the concept timelessly attained in *theoria*, but in terms of a dialectic of striving, need and finite fulfillment.⁶²

Vater's comment neatly captures the essence of the problem we face in following the thread of STI, for it is modelled on the organization of Kant's critiques, provides deductions for each of its arguments, and yet what it is deducing is beyond logic and is, in this sense, doomed to fail; its arguments are not comparable to the rigorous mode found in CPR. Warnock sees this type of philosophy, where one is faced with "obscure, dark and perhaps profound" statements, as symptomatic of a "...tremendous deterioration in the rational climate," and gives the reason for this change as the fact that:

...the sharp distinction which Kant had drawn between what could and could not be known, between legitimate thought, and impossible, empty metaphysical speculation, had been done away with.⁶³

Engell interprets the approach to philosophy which Schelling takes quite differently. While admitting that Schelling is often abstract to the point of being murky, more speculative than empirical, nevertheless:

⁶²Michael Vater, "Introduction" to STI, p.xv.

⁶³Warnock, Imagination, pp.63-4.

...Schelling's strengths and virtues capture those fresh and wonderful years of philosophy, science, and art when the Enlightenment flowered into Romanticism. He combines the best of both worlds. He attempts what every great philosopher must: he confronts the basic puzzles of life. He asks why there is something instead of nothing. He combines science, philosophy, religion, art.⁶⁴

Schelling wants to discover the truth that can rejoin man with nature, to find the way back to the wholeness which he sees as marking the world of antiquity and which has been forever lost in its original form. To regain this unity, one must somehow rediscover it, thereby healing the split between nature and man which philosophy has been driving apart; the way to do this is either to engage in transcendental philosophy and, through intellectual intuition, recognize the whole, or to grasp it through aesthetic intuition, by a response to the art product of genius.

The problems posed by both these methods crop up repeatedly in STI, despite Schelling's efforts to repress them. The transcendental approach raises the unresolved issue of the transcendental observer who aids consciousness as it returns to its original unity. Schelling has proposed the relationship between intellectual and aesthetic intuition as proof that the path of the transcendental observer is not based on subjective illusion. The artwork is concrete proof that the original unity, the absolute, is, in its divided state, the cause of individual being; the philosopher helps its object, which is the subject, to the conclusion theoretically, and the artwork helps the subject to it concretely. Freier asks an essential question about this relationship between the philosopher and her object:

Wenn der Transzendentalphilosoph vorgibt, mehr zu wissen als sein Objekt, und wenn er dieses Wissensgefälle kraft der Kunstanschauung auszugleichen trachtet, dann gibt er zu verstehen, dass er der Kunstanschauung nicht im gleichen Masse bedarf wie das von ihm entwickelte Selbstbewusstsein. Er

⁶⁴Engell, p.303.

unterstellt hiermit, dass die vollständige Selbsterkenntnis des objektiven Ich an ein anderes Medium gebunden ist als seine eigene, die sich wohl auch im Medium der Anschauung, aber in der nichtobjektivierbaren Anschauung des inneren Sinns vollzieht.

Warum aber soll das objektive Ich, um sich die Sehweise des Transzendentalphilosophen aneignen zu können, einer anderen Anschauung bedürfen als der Transzendentalphilosoph selbst? Wäre es nicht auch möglich gewesen, den Gang der transzendentalen Entwicklung, die Annäherung der Sehweise des objektiven Ich an die Sehweise des Transzendentalphilosophen, so zu konzipieren, dass das objektive Ich am Ende ebenfalls bis zur intellektuellen Anschauung gelangt?⁶⁵

Why indeed is aesthetic intuition set equal to intellectual intuition, and not seen as an intermediary step to the achievement of the latter? The answer which I offer is that Schelling thought he had discovered the means through which everyone had the potential to realize the absolute in herself, to gain full self-consciousness of the unconscious element in her being, only to realize that this actually could not be the case, that something else was needed to prepare everyone appropriately for this cosmic awakening, and this could only happen through a new mythology. Art does not quite provide the universal source of enlightenment for which Schelling had hoped.

Schmidt reserves harsh criticism for Schelling's attempt to discover the rules of the absolute:

Was in der Anknüpfung an Kants transzendente Fragestellung noch den Anschein erkenntnistheoretischer Legitimation hat, ist idealistisch verkappte Theologie. Die **transzendente** Fragestellung wird zum Instrument einer Etablierung von **Transzendenz**.⁶⁶

In other words, Schelling has committed the sin of openly attempting to gain knowledge about that which Kant set beyond our cognitive boundaries. This criticism is not quite fair, for Kant's views on art and on genius border dangerously close to

⁶⁵Freier, pp. 145-6.

⁶⁶Schmidt, p.400.

theology, arguably even closer than Schelling's. But what really plagues Schmidt is the idealism of Schelling, for Kant never put the individual before the creations of God:

Wie kaum eine andere Formulierung macht Schellings schöpferische "Selbstaffirmation" auch die innere Problematik des radikalen Genie-Denkens deutlich. Denn ein Schöpfertum, das aus blosser Selbstaffirmation besteht, scheint nicht so sehr auf Produktion als auf sterile Selbstreproduktion hinzudeuten. Unter diesem Aspekt ist auch Schellings "Genieprodukt"--so nennt er ja das Kunstwerk--wesentlich eine Reproduktion. Ja, es drängt sich die Frage auf, ob diese völlig abstrakte Konzeption des Kunstwerks mit ihrem Absolutheitsanspruch überhaupt noch die Pluralität verschiedenartiger Kunstwerke vorstellbar erscheinen lässt und nicht vielmehr ein blosses Stereotyp darstellt.⁶⁷

Schmidt condemns Schelling's most creative solution as a sterile self-reproduction, but this does Schelling an injustice. Schelling is himself aware that, as it stands, his claims about the unifying power of art are not yet conclusive, but that does not mean that he has changed his mind about the absolute and its relation to the individual. As long as the individual is able to intuit this relationship, the product of this intuition is the work of genius and is not sterile. But this criticism indirectly points to another problem, one which is not satisfactorily answered and perhaps, without the aid of a new mythology, can never be answered: how can one know when one is in the presence of a genuine work of art? Schelling gives no examples and leaves it for granted that the work of genius will be recognized by all. Often, however, what might be considered a great work of art is not at all evident at the time of its completion, all the more so if the artist is expressing some unconscious truth. It is a weak point that, for all the value which is placed on the work of art as the objectified unification of subject and object for the self itself, we have no concrete example of what Schelling means.

⁶⁷Schmidt, p.401.

Schelling's System of Transcendental Idealism is a tremendous effort to reveal the roots of the nature of being. It takes as its starting point Kant's division of cognitive and aesthetic judgment and attempts to unify them. Kant had hinted at the critical role of reflective judgment, as that which enables cognition to come into being. Schelling extends this logic to account for the individuation of the absolute. This effort cannot be considered successful, but this is due more to the impossibility of the task than to the system itself. The question as to why Schelling chose art as the source of ultimate revelation is, according to Schmidt, simply historically determined:

Dass aber diese Postulat nach einer symbolischen Manifestation des Absoluten sich gerade auf die Kunst richtet, lässt sich historisch aus dem überragenden Stellenwert erklären, den die Kunst im 18. Jahrhundert erhalten hat und der erst vom Genie-Gedanken her begründet wurde.⁶⁸

The fact that Schelling needed to postulate a new mythology to support his claims about the work of art, a mythology in which the unity of the individual comes from the same force which leads to the synthesis of society, is also seen by Freier as a response to the current historical situation, an artificial idea which evaporates:

...in diesem Zirkel zur Schimäre: zur idée fixe einer Philosophie, die, den Zwangscharakter des in der Französischen Revolution zur Herrschaft gelangten Rechtsbewusstseins reflektierend, die geschichtsphilosophische Idee einer universellen Rechtsverfassung mit der Vorstellung einer gesellschaftlichen Synthesis überbieten möchte, die Rechtsbeziehungen in religiöse Solidaritätsbeziehungen und Gattungsgebote in Gegenstände des inneren Triebes verwandeln würde.⁶⁹

Beyond doubt, one is partly a product of one's historical position but this does not mean that one's interpretation of the world is inevitable.

⁶⁸Schmidt, p.394.

⁶⁹Freier, p.174.

Schelling would certainly see the individual's understanding of the world as the result of the moment of freedom in which one wills oneself into being. However historically determined the subject matter might be which one chooses as the tool, by means of which one chisels out an interpretation of one's world, it is nevertheless a reflection of both the general intellectual climate and the uniquely individual attempt to create a foundation. From this base, one can then explore the meaning behind the appearances, which in and of themselves are unable to answer the questions of meaning which philosophy poses. Schelling's effort to reconstruct the enclosed system of being reflects a time which both fears a loss of meaning in the wake of a breakdown of divine order and yet maintains a faith that a wholeness is still there to be discovered. Schelling's radical contribution is to posit this wholeness inside the individual, to view the conscious individual as resting on an unconscious foundation which she can neither control nor consciously explore, and which she can only gain access to through a congealed moment of the absolute, as it radiates the veiled truth of the unconscious from its revelation in the work of art.

c. Aesthetics and the philosophical enterprise. Schelling has moved the debate within aesthetics to a new level. Kant legitimized aesthetics as a proper subject for philosophical exploration. Now, through the vehicle of aesthetics, Schelling questions the whole nature of the philosophical enterprise. Philosophy no longer can be the domain of carefully delineated explanations, of precise models of the mind and of nature. Before Kant, the idea of God or a divine order was called upon to justify most philosophical systems; the human being, the rational animal, occupies a top rung on the ladder of creation. Kant establishes separate spheres for what we can know and

what we can only speculate about, and envisions the aesthetic realm as providing a bridge between these domains. Schelling turns this triad on its head, so to speak. Only in the aesthetic realm can we directly grasp the world as it is, by attaining insight into the relation between the real and the ideal. The aesthetic realm is a direct product of our unconscious being; in other words, it is our unconscious self which brings forth the world. One can come to an intellectual understanding of this process through philosophical thought, but the process can only be intuited as a whole in the finished work of art.

Schelling's analysis of aesthetic sensibility shares with Kant's that, at the end, the reader has at best a vague idea of how this determines the work of art itself. This is not surprising, however, for both Kant and Schelling have focussed on the nature of the reaction of the individual. The assumption is that there are great works of art out there, which move us. We feel a particular sort of pleasure when we encounter such a work, a feeling that time is suspended and that we have suddenly realized something of which we were previously unaware. Why do we feel this way, and what have we seen?

Kant deciphers our feeling by hypothesizing how our minds work. Schelling explains his transcendental vision by detailing the mechanism of the nature of things; recognition of this mechanism dawns when we encounter a work of art. The human being, Schelling is saying, possesses the mystery of all being. This is the mystery which philosophy tries to explain intellectually, and which art reveals directly. There is nothing beyond this unconscious world, neither God nor hierarchy; everything is determinable from within. Schelling's aesthetic theory takes philosophy in a radical, new direction by reinterpreting the very nature of the human being.

CHAPTER IV

THE WORK OF ART AS ESCAPE FROM THE WORLD: SCHOPENHAUER AND *THE WORLD AS WILL AND REPRESENTATION* (1819)

A. Part One

1. Introduction

The problematic of the relation of objects to a knowing subject which characterizes idealism is taken up anew by Schopenhauer, who finds Kant's work path-breaking but not complete, and the contributions of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel thoroughly insufficient if not downright contemptible. Schopenhauer shares with Kant and Schelling, however unwillingly, the belief that the work of art and the genius are the source of some moment of ultimate truth about ourselves and the world, a truth which is otherwise (with the notable exception of the saint) impossible to glimpse. However, whereas Kant finds that the object of beauty confirms his rational model of the mind, and Schelling sees it as illuminating the ecstatic unity of all things, Schopenhauer finds the work of art to reveal the true nature of the will, which appears as phenomena in its restless, ceaseless, ultimately directionless striving. Schopenhauer's genius sees through the individual striving to the essential nature and enables us to catch a fleeting glance at the truth of the world before returning to the vagaries of the will. Schelling and Schopenhauer share the view that truth is pre-conscious and comes from within, but whereas for Schelling it is precisely the joyful unity of the multiplicity of phenomena which one glimpses, for Schopenhauer it is the

This chapter is constructed along the following lines. Before turning to a detailed examination of Schopenhauer's interpretation of the world, so as to better understand the man behind the work, I provide a brief account of Schopenhauer's family background. Then I begin with a general introduction to the work, and give an overview of the principle of sufficient reason; Schopenhauer assumes that all his readers are familiar with this first treatise for he insists that his dissertation be read as an introduction to his main work. Next I discuss the relationship between Schopenhauer and Kant, in particular the Appendix, which presents his "Criticism on the Kantian Philosophy." Finally I turn to Schopenhauer's own interpretation of the world, as divided into will and representation. After studying what this means, the role of the genius and the work of art are examined, for they provide the means to rise above the everyday world. This can also be accomplished through attaining a completely ascetic lifestyle in the manner of saints and holy persons, both eastern and western, and I will briefly review this but for the purpose at hand, namely aesthetic theory, it is not of great importance. Lastly, I will discuss the relationship between art and philosophy which is entailed by Schopenhauer's view.

a. Relation to contemporaries. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) was born in Danzig to a successful merchant family. In 1793, his father moved to the free city of Hamburg when Prussia incorporated Danzig. Schopenhauer began his schooling there after having spent two years with a French family in Le Havre. Rather than following the traditional route of attending Gymnasium, Schopenhauer spent the years from 1800-1804 travelling with his parents through Europe with the intended goal of preparing for the business life. The result of his travels and observations was "...eine

seinen Stil kennzeichnende Vielsprachigkeit...und eine weltbürgerliche Gesinnung."¹

Soon after the return to Hamburg in 1805, Schopenhauer's father was killed and his mother and sister left for Weimar.² Schopenhauer remained in Hamburg, torn between his father's wish for him to continue with business and his own intellectual desires, and immersed himself in the writings of Matthias Claudius, Wackenroder and Tieck. The pull towards the intellectual life soon dominated his feelings of filial responsibility, and Schopenhauer left for Weimar to prepare himself for university.

In 1809 he was immatriculated at the university in Göttingen, where he began to study medicine. It was there that he came into contact with the philosopher G.E. Schulze, who introduced him to Plato and Kant. In 1811, Schopenhauer moved to Berlin to study philosophy, ostensibly with Fichte and Schleiermacher. Their actual presence changed his admiration to scorn, and in 1813 he returned to Thüringen and wrote his dissertation in Rudolstadt. Relations with his mother, who still lived in Weimar, were not good. She found his presence depressing and did not want him around. Through her social circle, however, he met Goethe, who was one of the first readers of the dissertation, titled "On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason," and was impressed with the young Schopenhauer, who in turn became

¹Wolfgang Weimer, Schopenhauer (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1982), p.ix.

²Royce suggests that the circumstances of the father's death "...strongly indicated an insane suicide" and notes that Schopenhauer's ancestry "...was somewhat burdened...in respect of nerves..." His mother by contrast was "...indeed personally quite free from noteworthy nervous defects, unless heartlessness be reckoned as such." By all accounts, Johanna Schopenhauer's treatment of her son was appallingly callous and did little to provide him with a positive view of the world. The above quotes are to be found in: Josiah Royce, The Spirit of Modern Philosophy (1892; rpt. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1983), p.241. Additional biographical information is taken from: Walter Abendroth, Arthur Schopenhauer mit Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumentation (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1967).

involved with Goethe's work on color theory, publishing his own contribution in 1816.³ At this same time, Schopenhauer was introduced to Indian philosophy by Friedrich Majer, an event which had a profound influence on all his later thinking. In 1814 Schopenhauer moved to Dresden and began work on The World as Will and Representation, which he finished in 1818 and handed over to Brockhaus to publish.

Schopenhauer shares with Schelling the external facts that he completed a major work of philosophy at a very young age, and that he was clearly influenced by the poets and writers of the Romantic movement.⁴ But whereas Schelling saw the world and its future in primarily positive and optimistic terms, Schopenhauer has already crossed the threshold into the modern world and sees the world in negative terms; for those who have not read his works, and even for some of those who have, the adjective 'pessimistic' has practically become a synonym for 'Schopenhauer.' This is too simplistic a reading of Schopenhauer, however, and betrays not only a clear prejudice in favor of a belief in the rational self-improvement of the Enlightenment's bequest to Western thought, but also several misconceptions about what it is that Schopenhauer means; this will be examined later. Like Schelling, Kant strongly influenced his thinking and Schopenhauer, too, sees himself as completing Kant's

³Über das Sehn und die Farben. Unfortunately, this did not result in a warm welcome for Schopenhauer:

Goethes Deutung hat Schopenhauer tief bewegt. Er musste bald genug die Einsamkeit und das Zurückverwiesensein des schöpferischen Menschen auf sich selbst erfahren, als er seine Farbenabhandlung, das Werk, das er als Dankesdienst an Goethes Farbenlehre und ihre wahre Vollendung ansah, von dem Verehrten mit kühler Höflichkeit zurückgewiesen sah.

See Arthur Hübscher, "Das Genie bei Schopenhauer," Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft, 18 (1973) p.108.

⁴See A. Hübscher, "Der Philosoph der Romantik," Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch, 34 (1951-2) 1-17.

thought. Schopenhauer appears to the reader as extremely self-assured, even arrogant, eager to name names of those whom he considers incompetent. These include nearly all of his contemporaries, and practically all western philosophers with the exception of Plato and Kant, who also receive their share of criticism but no scorn.

b. Background information on *The World as Will and Representation*.

Schopenhauer reveals his self-assurance throughout *The World as Will and Representation*.⁵ The first edition was completed in 1818, when he was thirty years old, and appeared in 1819. Twenty five years later, in 1844, a second edition was published, this time in two volumes. The first volume was essentially a reprint of the original work, and the second volume contained supplementary chapters. In the "Preface" to the second edition he states that "...I am glad that after twenty five years I find nothing to retract; my fundamental convictions have been confirmed, at any rate as far as I myself am concerned."⁶ Schopenhauer is more than ever in agreement with his earlier thinking, and indeed chooses the format of a supplementary volume to protect the first from "...the carping criticism of old age."⁷ Only in the Appendix on Kant have substantial criticisms been incorporated into the original text. I concentrate almost exclusively on the first volume because I do not want to stray too far away

⁵Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. E.F.J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, 1969). The work consists of two volumes: Volume 1 is the almost unchanged original from 1819; Volume 2 is the added commentary from the second edition of 1844. I use volume 1 almost exclusively, and hereafter it is referred to as WWR. When volume 2 is cited, it appears as WWRII. The German edition which I use is: *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, 4 volumes, (Zürich: Diogenes Verlag, 1977).

⁶WWR, p.xxi.

⁷WWR, p.xxii.

from the intellectual climate of the turn of the century; I want to examine as closely as possible the shift from rationality to irrationality in German aesthetic theory which occurs within this thirty year period from 1790 to 1818. Only with reference to the discussion on the art work do I also consider the later edition.

On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason, which was published in 1813 and served as Schopenhauer's dissertation, is "...his most technical book, with the least of his genius in it."⁸ While it exhibits the philosophical concepts and interests of his predecessors, especially in Germany, it does not reflect what one has come to expect from Schopenhauer, namely the fundamental reality of the will as the Kantian thing-in-itself. In essence, the principle of sufficient reason is "...the dictum that there is a reason, that is, an explanation, for any fact or existent whatever."⁹ In other words, everything in the phenomenal world is tightly knit into a web of relations which determine its existence. The explanation of all things is divided into four principles: physical, logical, mathematical and moral. The physical explanation, which examines change in the physical world, and the moral explanation, which explains human and animal action in terms of their motives, and which is treated in depth in his essay on the freedom of the will, are the real contribution to philosophic thought. The other two modes of explanation are obscure at crucial points and play no great role in Schopenhauer's later thought even though he does not abandon them. Taylor is of the opinion that:

Schopenhauer's analyses of causation and kindred concepts, which he quite rightly considers to be involved in the Principle of Sufficient Reason as it

⁸Royce, p.249.

⁹Richard Taylor, "Introduction," On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason, trans. E.F.J. Payne (La Salle: Open Court Publishing Co., 1974), p. ix.

applies to all change in the physical world, surely rival and probably surpass in their depth and brilliance the more celebrated discussions of David Hume on the same topic. Where Hume grossly oversimplified these problems and left them riddled with paradoxes, Schopenhauer disentangled them and on many crucial points shed light on what had before seemed hopelessly dark.¹⁰

In particular, one of Schopenhauer's most fertile suggestions, and one which is an important point of contention with Kant, is his claim that perception is the product of the understanding and not of sensation, a claim which for him provides proof of the a priori nature of causality. Because cause and effect take place within the world, there can be no first cause or last effect, and hence no such metaphysical entity as God. All things are merely changes of state of matter, which neither increases nor decreases.

These basic tenets of Schopenhauer's view of causality appear repeatedly in WWR, if not in the neatly categorized form presented by his dissertation. Although Schopenhauer remarks that his work needs to be as long as it is and contains no superfluous information, at times one feels like a spectator at Wagner's Ring, when the story is retold many times in slightly different words. That has a certain artistic effect, and one could almost suggest Wagner took this habit directly from Schopenhauer, for while the aphorisms make clear reading, the arguments are often juxtaposed, so if a point were missed somewhere it inevitably is repeated elsewhere. Despite the authorial insistence on the necessity of reading his prior work, the essentials of that work are given to us in numerous places in WWR.

In the first preface, Schopenhauer tells the reader that an acquaintance with both Kant's works and his own work on the principle of sufficient reason is presupposed; in addition, the reader best prepared for Schopenhauer's thoughts will also be familiar with both Plato and the Indian philosophy found in the Vedas and the

¹⁰Taylor, "Introduction," p.xi.

Upanishad. And finally, the reader should start with the Appendix on Kant, then begin at the beginning, and finally reread the whole work. Schopenhauer also loses no chance to make biting fun of German philosophers, and professors in particular. Part of his antipathy stems from his experience as a professor in Berlin, when he intentionally scheduled his lectures to coincide with those of Hegel, who at the time was extremely popular. Hegel's lecture hall overflowed with eager listeners whereas, as Abendroth notes: "Schopenhauers Vorlesungen waren infolgedessen so wenig besucht, dass er sie für die nächsten vier Semester zwar noch ankündigte, aber nicht mehr hielt. Es war ein katastrophaler Misserfolg."¹¹ This only added to his intense dislike of Hegel and his philosophy. Fichte and Schelling are also the main targets of his scorn:

...[M]y writings bear the stamp of honesty and openness so distinctly on their face, that they are thus in glaring contrast to those of the three notorious sophists of the post-Kantian period. I am always to be found at the standpoint of reflection, in other words, of rational deliberation and honest information, never at that of inspiration, called intellectual intuition or even absolute thought; its correct names would be humbug and charlatanism. Therefore, working in this spirit, and meanwhile constantly seeing the false and the bad held in general acceptance, indeed humbug and charlatanism in the highest admiration, I long ago renounced the approbation of my contemporaries.¹²

Schopenhauer views himself as the true heir to Kant, whom he regards as a genius, as the greatest contributor to philosophy in millennia, and who is for this reason someone who cannot and will not be understood for many years. Schopenhauer

¹¹Abendroth, p.66. This experience as well as the reception accorded WWR obviously took place after the publication of the first edition. I assume that the extreme bitterness in tone towards the philosophical world were added for the second edition, where "...the alterations in the first volume...nowhere touch what is essential, but relate to matters of only secondary importance" (WWR, xxi).

¹²WWR, xxi. Payne footnotes that "humbug" refers to Fichte and Schelling and "charlatan" refers to Hegel.

states simply: "...I cannot see that anything has been done in philosophy between [Kant] and me; I therefore take my departure directly from him."¹³ He then proceeds to point out where he feels Kant has erred, although making quite clear that in general Kant's contribution is valuable beyond measure. It is to his interpretation of Kant to which I first turn, for it provides an insight into Schopenhauer's own thinking process and an introduction to his method of philosophizing.

2. Schopenhauer, Kant and the agreement to disagree

The first thing one notices about Schopenhauer is the clarity of his prose. He does not build elaborate arguments, made negotiable via complex tables of contents; he states his opinion in aphorisms. The Appendix on Kant does not fit this form quite as neatly as does the main body of the work, for here Schopenhauer is arguing against specific philosophical claims which Kant makes, and to this end he needs to be very precise. This is not to suggest he is imprecise elsewhere, but rather that he is not required to be so rigorous. He states his purpose very clearly:

What I have in view in this Appendix to my work is really only a vindication of the teaching I have set forth in it, in so far as in many points it does not agree with the Kantian philosophy, but actually contradicts it. Yet a discussion thereof is necessary, for evidently my line of thought, different as its content is from the Kantian, is completely under its influence, and necessarily presupposes and starts from it...¹⁴

One might receive the impression that Schopenhauer actually disagrees fundamentally with Kant, for the Appendix finds little that is correct, but this would be a mistake. In taking the time and care to analyze so thoroughly his points of disagreement, at least

¹³WWR, 416.

¹⁴WWR, pp. 416-7.

with the Critique of Pure Reason, Schopenhauer shows Kant a vast measure of respect, especially in comparison with the polemics he blasts at Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, who rarely receive the benefit of substantive criticism.

a. The merit of the thing-in-itself. Schopenhauer begins with the bold claim that what he finds as Kant's greatest merit is the distinction of the phenomenon from the thing-in-itself, a distinction most other critics have found only to cause unnecessary problems. This resonates so strongly with Schopenhauer because of his contention that the intellect always stands between the individual and a thing, that perception is not the product of sensation but of understanding. That people like Fichte and Schelling tried to assert the absolute identity of the phenomenon and thing-in-itself is "...nothing but the vapouring of intellectual intuition"¹⁵ and reveals a complete misunderstanding of Kant's intentions. Schopenhauer interprets Kant as propounding in a new and original way the truths found in Plato, that the world of the senses is not the world of being but only of becoming, and comprehension of the physical world is not knowledge but an illusion, incidentally a view which coincides with that to be found in the Hindu and Buddhist philosophy which impressed Schopenhauer so greatly. Kant himself makes no mention of Plato in terms of his epistemological theory, and one would think that even an oblique reference would be found in the chapter on Phenomena and Noumena if he were actively writing with this in mind. This lack of explicit connection does not disturb Schopenhauer's conviction that Plato and Kant are operating with the same basic premises. He

¹⁵WWR, 419.

generously assumes that the underlying or unconscious intention is the same, which results in an extremely straight path from Plato to Schopenhauer by means of Kant.

Kant's stroke of genius from Schopenhauer's point of view was to realize that the laws which rule with necessity in existence cannot explain existence itself, but are conditioned by the subject's manner of knowing. His mistake was that he incorrectly deduced the thing-in-itself and failed to recognize it in the will itself, which leaves the task to Schopenhauer. Kant's accomplishment was to move the level of philosophical debate from realism, from the fleeting phenomenon, to idealism: whereas before Kant we were in time, now time is in us. The danger to which Schopenhauer exposes himself here is a blurring of the lines between idealism and metaphysics, as will become clearer in the course of this study. He himself says:

It was therefore reserved for Kant to help the fundamental idealistic view to obtain the ascendancy in Europe, at any rate in philosophy, a view which prevails in the whole of non-Mohammedan Asia, and is in essence even that of religion.¹⁶

Both Schelling and Schopenhauer stand open to the accusation that they are trying to bring precisely that back into philosophical knowledge what Kant excluded, namely metaphysics, under the guise of idealism. This of course raises the vexing problem of what idealism is and which sort is being discussed.

Kant, the young Schelling and Schopenhauer all claim to be representing transcendental idealism. This view holds that the world is conditioned by the mind, but that objects out there are empirically real. At the same time, there is a transcendental similarity between all humans which guarantees that the phenomenal world is the same for each of us. Kant locates this similarity in the transcendental self,

¹⁶WWR, p.424.

which gives rise to the empirical self. Upon closer observation, however, the transcendental self starts to look like some kind of universal spirit. Schelling, despite calling his system 'transcendental idealism,' sounds much more like an absolute idealist, for the unconscious unity, accessible through intellectual intuition, also sounds like a world spirit. And as we will see, Schopenhauer, for all his criticism about the inanities put forth by Schelling and Hegel, postulates one will of which everything is a manifestation. In other words, as soon as the move to an idealist, mind-conditioned world has been made, the slide down the slippery slope back into the sea of metaphysics begins. The ultimate explanation of all things is referred to as 'transcendental self,' 'universal spirit,' or 'will,' terms which can be interpreted as other names for 'God.' Kant recognizes this danger and actively tries to skirt it; the level of his success is debatable, and his theory of the beautiful relies specifically on a universal non-cognitive knowledge.

Schopenhauer's admiration for the Kantian revolution and the final defeat of scholasticism is unbounded but not uncritical. Precisely the enormity of Kant's contribution, and the concomitant lack of a simple system to which lesser minds could adhere, leaves room for significant error, which in turn produces "strange and monstrous" ideas as Kant's less clear-thinking adherents try to make sense from his ideas. Schopenhauer intends to untangle the strands of confusion, to separate that which has been poorly said from that which is simply nonsensical. While Schopenhauer has some peculiar ideas of his own in the reading he gives the critical philosophy, one cannot fail but to be impressed by aspects of his criticism, which strike at some of the murkier claims that Kant makes. A remarkably clear and precise writer himself, Schopenhauer first finds justified fault with Kant's style:

...Kant's exposition is often indistinct, indefinite, inadequate, and occasionally obscure. This obscurity is certainly to be excused in part by the difficulty of the subject and the depth of the ideas. Yet whoever is himself clear to the bottom, and knows quite distinctly what he thinks and wants, will never write indistinctly, never set up wavering and indefinite concepts, or pick up from foreign languages extremely difficult and complicated expressions to denote such concepts, in order to continue using such expressions afterwards, as Kant took words and formulas from earlier, even scholastic, philosophy.¹⁷

Schopenhauer complains that this obscurity gave Kant's successors free license: Fichte and Schelling among many lesser known "scribblers" made ample use of this privilege to swathe their meaninglessness in obscure phraseology. He continues to vent his spleen on his rivals with the following comment: "But the greatest effrontery in serving up sheer nonsense, in scrabbling together senseless and maddening webs of words, such as had previously been heard only in madhouses, appeared in Hegel..." whose works are to be a "lasting monument of German stupidity."¹⁸ While Schopenhauer never wastes an opportunity to heap withering scorn on the three philosophers just mentioned, it is remarkable how similar some of his own ideas are to what he considers the worst excesses of Schelling and Hegel, as we will see when we consider the main body of the work.

Schopenhauer locates the source of most of the difficulties in Kant's love of symmetry and the architectonic form of his work, and continuously points to the foolishness of such an approach, in particular the deduction of the categories which:

...later become the fearful Procrustean bed on to which he violently forces all things in the world and everything that occurs in man, shrinking from no violence and disdaining no sophism in order merely to be able to repeat everywhere the symmetry of that table.¹⁹

¹⁷WWR, 428-9.

¹⁸WWR, 429.

¹⁹WWR, 430.

Schopenhauer discounts eleven of the categories, upholding only that of causality as the source of all phenomena. The other serious mistake which Kant makes is his failure to distinguish between knowledge of perception and abstract knowledge. This marks the starting point for the real difference between Schopenhauer and Kant. Before digging into the heart of the matter, though, Schopenhauer details the inconsistencies to be found in Kant's use of terminology, where such central concepts such as 'rules,' 'principles,' 'understanding' and 'concept' itself are defined differently at different places, and often seem to be arbitrarily distinguished from one another. The deeper problem behind this lack of investigation is that the distinction between different terms has been the focus of attention, rather than the terms themselves. This apparent lack of sufficient, consistent consideration about the nature of perception, reflection, reason and so forth also is to be found in questions concerning the nature of an object, of its distinction from a representation, about the nature of existence, the nature of a subject and the like. For although Kant located objectivity in the subject, as far as Schopenhauer is concerned, the exact nature of an object or a subject is never satisfactorily investigated.

b. The problem of the subject and of the nature of perception. Schopenhauer initially finds it curious, given Kant's distinction between phenomenon and thing-in-itself, that Kant never properly concluded that all objects are dependent on the existence of a subject, and that an object, as mere phenomenon, exists neither in itself nor unconditionally. He locates this problem in the confusion between the first and second editions of Critique of Pure Reason, for Schopenhauer finds the first edition, which he only discovered long after having been acquainted with the extant version,

which was the second edition, to be clear and concise, and to express Kant's idealism in a non-contradictory manner. The second edition, which is the only one in print between 1787 and 1738, by contrast is "...a mutilated, spoilt, and, to a certain extent ungentine text."²⁰ Whereas a great number of Kant scholars hold the position that Kant found his first edition to be unsatisfactory, thereby necessitating a rethinking of the problems he is trying to solve, and that the second edition contains the most important insights, Schopenhauer takes the opposite view, and in addition finds the true worth in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*; he labels the *Transcendental Analytic* confusing, obscure and inconsistent. While no one claims that the *Transcendental Analytic* is a model of clarity and consistency, it nevertheless contains some of Kant's most original thinking.

Schopenhauer locates the problem with the deduction of the thing-in-itself in Kant's assumption that empirical perception, and sensation in general, must have an external cause. Kant proves the a priori nature of the law of causality, thereby placing it in our intellect and giving it a subjective origin; sensation and all empirical perception also remain on a subjective foundation. This clearly points, according to Schopenhauer, to the impossibility of bringing in something independent of subjectivity as the thing-in-itself. The only way to account for something that is outside the realm of our representations is to introduce self-consciousness, and thereby the will, for the will is the in-itself of our phenomenon. This is, of course, what Schopenhauer does, thus "correcting" this error of Kant's faulty deduction. This is

²⁰WWR, 435. Schopenhauer credits himself with convincing the editor, Professor Rosenkranz, to reprint the first edition (in 1838).

considered in detail later; what is important to keep in mind here is Schopenhauer's praise of Kant's recognition that every phenomenon has a thing-in-itself.

Schopenhauer finds a real problem in Kant's claim that the object of perception is **given** to us, and holds this to be an example of Kant's concentration on form to the detriment of content. He maintains that Kant never sufficiently explains how empirical perception enters our consciousness, or how knowledge of the world originates in us. Neither objects nor representation are given to us, states Schopenhauer. The only thing that we receive from outside is a sensation in the sense-organ:

...only by the application of the **understanding** (i.e., of the law of causality), and of the forms of perception, of space and time, does our **intellect** convert this mere **sensation** into a **representation**. This representation now exists as **object** in space and time, and cannot be distinguished from the latter (the object) except in so far as we ask about the thing-in-itself; in other respects it is identical with the object.²¹

The mistake which Kant makes is to attribute to knowledge of empirical perceptions both receptivity of impressions, through which the object is given, and spontaneity of concepts, through which it is thought.²² By contrast, Schopenhauer maintains that knowledge of perceptions requires neither concepts nor thinking; animals are capable of representations but not of thinking, something for which Kant cannot account. By bringing thinking into perception, Kant lays the groundwork for the confusion of intuitive and abstract knowledge; he also fails to offer an explanation for how perceptions enter our head, other than that they are somehow "given" to us.

The problem in Kant's claim that the understanding is the lawgiver of nature by prescribing the laws a priori, is that nature is perceptible and not an abstraction; the

²¹WWR, 438-9.

²²See CPR, A50,B74.

understanding would therefore have to be a faculty of perception. However, Kant also claims that objective succession and the coexistence of objects of experience are not sensuously apprehended, but are apprehended by the understanding, thus enabling nature to become possible. This leads to the contradiction that the understanding is both a faculty of perception and of abstract thought; Schopenhauer sees in this contradiction the reason for the obscurity of language which prevails, especially in the *Transcendental Logic*. What Schopenhauer finds most peculiar is that despite the monumental machine that Kant postulates as the faculty of knowledge, with its categories, syntheses and so forth, there is no real attempt to explain perception of the external world except to say that it is given to us, in fact that it is given through the object.

From Schopenhauer's point of view, perceptions are not given reality by our thinking. Thinking is only related indirectly to objects through concepts, but the objects always remain perceptible. Kant errs in that he:

...ascribes the objects themselves to **thinking**, in order thus to make experience and the objective world dependent on the **understanding**, yet without letting the understanding be a faculty of **perception**. In this connexion, he certainly distinguishes perceiving from thinking, but he makes particular things the object sometimes of perception and sometimes of thinking. But actually they are only the object of perception; our empirical perception is at once **objective**, just because it comes from the causal nexus. Things, and not representations different from them, are directly its object.²³

Individual things are perceived by the senses and in the understanding, whereas thinking has to do with universal concepts without perceptibility, after which the results of thinking can be applied to individual things. The act of perception is based

²³WWR, 443.

on empirical reality, on experience, but, and this is a major point which Schopenhauer makes repeatedly, perception comes about

...only by the application of knowledge of the causal nexus, the sole function of the understanding, to the sensation of the sense. Accordingly, perception is really intellectual, and this is just what Kant denies.²⁴

As a result, Kant postulates a three-fold division: the representation, which is the concern of sensibility; the object of representation, which is the concern of the understanding, thought through the twelve categories; and the thing-in-itself, which lies beyond knowledge. For Schopenhauer, the middle step is superfluous, resting on a distinction which is unfounded and providing the source of Kant's errors. But without this step, "...the doctrine of the categories as concepts *a priori* also falls to the ground; for they contribute nothing to perception, and are not supposed to hold good of the thing-in-itself..."²⁵ Given Kant's commitment to the architectonic, it is clear that he is not about to abandon the categories. As a result of these errors, Schopenhauer states that it has been left to him both to answer the question concerning the thing-in-itself and to furnish the only valid proof of the *a priori* nature of the law of causality. For Schopenhauer, only the category of causality is real; the other eleven are "...merely blind windows."²⁶ The essential difference between the two outlooks is that for Kant, there are only concepts of objects, no perceptions. For

²⁴WWR, 443. Schopenhauer directs us to the CI for an admirably clear expression of this assumption of Kant's which he disagrees with: "To form a cognitive judgement we may immediately connect with the perception of an object the concept of an object in general, the empirical predicates of which are contained in that perception. In this way a judgement of experience is produced. Now this judgement rests on the foundation of *a priori* concepts of the synthetical unity of the manifold of intuition enabling it to be thought as the determination of an Object" (§36).

²⁵WWR, 444.

²⁶WWR, 446.

Schopenhauer, objects exist primarily only for perception, and concepts are always abstractions from the perception.

Schopenhauer dismisses the doctrine of categories out of hand, but he regards the table of judgments as correct. However, his method differs from Kant's, in that Kant "...starts from indirect, reflected knowledge, whereas [Schopenhauer] start[s] from direct and intuitive knowledge."²⁷ Kant is measuring the shadow, whereas Schopenhauer is measuring the tower itself, again as a result of Kant's failure to separate reflection, or abstract knowledge, from perception, or intuitive knowledge. Schopenhauer proceeds to investigate each moment of judgment, which for our purposes is unnecessary, and then continues with a section by section analysis of CPR. In nearly every aspect of Kant's epistemology which Schopenhauer finds problematic, the failure to distinguish intuitive from abstract knowledge is the cause of the confusion, along with the concomitant inability to recognize that all knowledge of objects is originally perception and not thinking.

c. Kant and the work of art. The one other area which is of interest to the topic at hand, namely the unique function of the work of art, is the possibility of freedom of the will, which Kant explores in the Third Antinomy. Schopenhauer maintains that he is merely extending the natural line of Kant's argument:

Kant did not arrive at a conclusion to his thinking; I have merely carried his work into effect. Accordingly, what Kant says merely of the human phenomenon, I have extended to every phenomenon in general which differs from the human only in degree, namely that their essence-in-itself is something absolutely free, in other words, a will....

The truth is that on the path of the representation we can never get beyond the representation; it is a closed whole, and has in its own resources no thread

²⁷WWR, 452.

leading to the essence of the thing-in-itself, which is *toto genere* different from it. If we were merely representing beings, the way to the thing-in-itself would be entirely cut off from us. Only the other side of our own inner nature can vouchsafe us information regarding the other side of the being-in-itself of things. I have pursued this path.²⁸

This is an example of why it is important to first become acquainted with the appendix on Kant before turning to Schopenhauer's own thinking, for it is here that he shows where he deliberately differentiates himself from Kant. Schelling, for example, among many others, rarely refers so specifically to Kant even though he, too, starts from the critical philosophy. Although Schopenhauer's tone at times borders on arrogance, he must be commended for being clear, precise and definite, traits which are unfortunately all too rare among the philosophers Schopenhauer considers. He constantly points out the abuses and castigates the offenders. Schopenhauer states his objections to Kant with precision, and then consistently maintains his position. Schelling, by contrast, never states so explicitly where he differs from Kant, and often struggles with the master's ideas, as if unconvinced by his own point of view. Such uncertainty never appears in Schopenhauer's writing.

Schopenhauer has now explained where Kant makes the fatal mistake concerning the thing-in-itself, namely in the application of the law of causality. For Schopenhauer, it is obvious that causality is applied a priori, prior to experience, to the changes felt in the organs of sense. The law of causality thus has as subjective an origin as the sensations themselves; it can therefore never lead to the thing-in-itself. Although Kant has forbidden all knowledge of the thing-in-itself, by making an artificial differentiation between the object as conditioned by the subject and the object's appearance as conditioned by the subject's form of knowledge, he is

²⁸WWR, 502.

maintaining that the object, known a posteriori, is a result of the thing-in-itself as it passes through the forms known only a priori. Schopenhauer denies that it would ever be possible to infer the existence of the thing-in-itself from knowledge of objects. This seems a rather odd point to make, for Kant has always insisted that the thing-in-itself cannot be known. Schopenhauer's real problem here is not so much the doctrine, which he holds to be correct, but the proof. Kant consistently treats the thing-in-itself as object, all the while maintaining it is unknowable. Schopenhauer simply transfers the thing-in-itself deep inside human subjectivity and claims it is completely different from the world of causality. His reasoning about the thing-in-itself is quite different from Kant's, but his belief in it is the same.

Schopenhauer states that the thing-in-itself can only be known through one's own will as the concept of freedom, for the will as thing-in-itself is free from the principle of sufficient reason, from necessity, which rules everything in the phenomenal world. The will is often confused with phenomenon, thus giving rise to the delusion of individual unconditioned freedom; this delusion is a result of ordinary consciousness which has not been enlightened by philosophic thought. Kant fails to locate the origin of the concept of freedom in human consciousness, instead placing it either as an inference from the speculative idea of an unconditioned cause or as a presupposition of the categorical imperative. Schopenhauerian freedom springs directly from consciousness and is the manifestation of the will as thing-in-itself. In fact, he is so sure of his interpretation of thing-in-itself as will, he generously offers that Kant, too, in his heart of hearts and despite all the inconsistencies, shared this belief: "Therefore I actually assume, though it cannot be proved, that whenever Kant

spoke of the thing-in-itself, he always thought indistinctly of the will in the obscure depths of his mind."²⁹

Most of the appendix is devoted to the Critique of Pure Reason, but Schopenhauer also touches on Kant's ethical and aesthetic theory. To be sure, this is covered in much greater detail in the main text itself, but a brief comment about each area is a useful introduction. Schopenhauer maintains that Kant makes a serious error in the very foundation of his ethical theory, using the same word that denotes practical reason (Vernunft) to mean both behaving in a rational fashion and acting in good conduct. He adds:

...all times and all nations and languages have always clearly distinguished the two, and regarded them as two entirely different things; and so also do all those even at the present day who know nothing of the language of the modern school, in other words, the whole world with the exception of a small handful of German savants. All except these understand by virtuous conduct and a rational course of life two entirely different things.³⁰

Despite this unfortunate choice of definitions, Kant's great service to ethical theory is that he freed it from the world of experience, from the test of direct or indirect happiness as the means to show the good--and this despite use of the categorical imperative with its unconditioned ought, which Schopenhauer considers a contradiction in terms and as having as little sense as the concept of a scepter made from wooden iron. Schopenhauer is of the opinion that the categorical imperative provides an excellent basis for political science, but is worthless as the basis of ethics, because egoism, desire for well-being, remains the source of the principle. To demand that virtuous action be calculated coldly and deliberately from abstract maxims of law

²⁹WWR, 505.

³⁰WWR, 515.

is as if one demanded that only precisely applied aesthetic rules could result in a genuine work of art: virtue is, like genius, to a great extent innate. Despite the great effort on Kant's part, Schopenhauer concludes that Kant never penetrated the real significance of the ethical content of actions, which is clearly shown by the "...complete absurdity of this Kantian view regarding the highest good."³¹

Schopenhauer is not much more generous with his assessment of Kant's aesthetic theory, although he similarly credits Kant with doing aesthetics the great service of removing the investigations of the beautiful from the empirical realm, from the objective conditions. While others had begun to investigate the universality of aesthetic principles in relation to the subject, Kant is the one who first seriously investigated the stimulation itself, the feeling which gave rise to the act of calling an object beautiful. That Kant's investigations of aesthetic theory took an entirely subjective direction was clearly correct, for to explain the phenomenon from the effects one must first know the effects, so as to determine the cause accurately. This is as far as Schopenhauer is willing to give Kant credit: "He suggested the method for this investigation, paved the way, but otherwise missed the mark."³² For Schopenhauer, Kant's crucial mistake is that he did not start from the beautiful itself, but from the poorly named judgment of taste and from statements about others concerning the beautiful. This, of course, misses the heart of the problem which Kant is trying to solve, namely how one determines that one's subjective feeling of beauty is actually universal. Schopenhauer does not have this problem because he already assumes the

³¹WWR, 527.

³²WWR, 530.

universal substrate of the will. Kant is pushed unwillingly in the direction of a universal foundation, but refuses to admit to it.

Again in contrast to current scholarship, Schopenhauer finds that the most successful part of CJ is Kant's theory of the sublime, which, he declares, almost provides a real solution to the problem in terms of method of investigation and the means of achieving the method. The critique of teleological judgment merely is a good example of "...Kant's peculiar talent for turning an idea about and about, and expressing it in many different ways, until a book has come out of it."³³ The basic idea of that section is that, although organized bodies appear to us as if they were constructed according to a purpose, we are not justified in assuming that this is objectively the case. Schopenhauer finds the mixture of aesthetic and teleological judgments to be odd, and attributes it to Kant's love of the architectonic, which is particularly maladapted to the subject matter at hand.

This appendix provides the reader with a useful guide to Schopenhauer's starting point with regard to Kant. Because of Schopenhauer's style, one can easily be convinced of the validity of his criticisms and solutions, but they are not always justified, sometimes apparently based on a misreading of Kant, sometimes on the advancement of his own personal agenda. It is, however, the case that Schopenhauer takes valid issue with a number of points which are undeniably murky and rest very much on interpretation. Schopenhauer then gives them meaning with respect to how he sees the world, namely divided into will and representation.

The underlying consideration here is the nature of idealism: is it possible to assume a subject-conditioned world, that does not ultimately rely on an absolute, and

³³WWR, 532.

that can account for both one's similarity with other beings as well as the reality of the external world? Kant avoids answering this question, concentrating instead on the mechanism of mental activity in the individual human being. His postulate of the existence of a transcendental self, and his reference to that self directly in his ethical theory and indirectly in his aesthetic theory, points to the conclusion one inevitably draws when all the aspects of his system are brought together, namely that there appears to be a supersensible absolute from which all objects and beings derive their physical presence, as well as their ethical and aesthetic framework. Schopenhauer does not need to struggle with this problem, for it is his basic presupposition. Unlike Kant, who seems to hint that every object has its own thing-in-itself, whatever that might be, Schopenhauer assumes something that is completely removed from even the possibility of imagining it as some kind of invisible object, namely will.

Kant comes from the world of the Enlightenment, where rational structures are the building blocks of all understanding: with enough insight, even the most complicated, self-referential activities can be taken apart and explained. Neither Schelling nor Schopenhauer believe this. Schelling tries to explain mental activity and the subject-object relation in terms of self-consciousness and the unconscious which grounds it, assuming an original blissful unity as the source and motor of the manifold opposition in the world. Schopenhauer is even more extreme, proffering the inexplicable strivings of the will as the foundation for all phenomenon: all activity and things are grounded on this irrational, implacable force which has no goal. The appendix is devoted to criticism, not to elaborating Schopenhauer's points of agreement with Kant. It makes the task of following Schopenhauer's intellectual path

easier, for the directions are clearly marked. Now we turn to the main work, to Schopenhauer's interpretation of how one is properly to understand the world.

3. The world as representation and will

The World as Will and Representation is divided into four books: two are devoted to the world as representation and two to the world as will. The first half of the work examines will and representation in its first aspect, and the second half in its second aspect. Roughly translated, this means that the first half considers the bare facts of will and representation, whereas the second examines the ways through which one can rise above the absolute necessity, or fate, of being in the world. The first consideration of will and representation is about two thirds as long as the second, and primarily functions as an introduction to Schopenhauer's epistemological and metaphysical point of view. In order to see how Schopenhauer comes to regard the work of art and the genius as occupying a special place in the hierarchy of the world, which is the subject of book three, a summary of the first two books is necessary. The fourth book, which will only be reviewed briefly, reflects the moral sphere, the world of action. Paradoxically, Schopenhauer's goal here is to explore how one can permanently remove oneself **from** this world, a problem which has an essentially religious solution. Art, although capable of letting us glimpse the truth of the world through the turmoil of the will, can function only as a temporary balm.

a. Representation

i. The subject-object relationship. Schopenhauer begins his work with the simple sentence: "The world is my representation."³⁴ This standpoint clearly reveals his idealism: only in reference to the subject is the world there. The one certain truth is that everything which exists for knowledge is as object in relation to a subject. As already seen, Schopenhauer believes that Kant's first mistake is to neglect this principle, a criticism which seems misplaced. Schopenhauer is consciously following the Vedantic outlook, and finds no contradiction between empirical reality and transcendental ideality. In order to understand fully this compatibility, one must know that the world is not only one's representation, but also one's will; a reality that is neither of the above but an object-in-itself is "...the phantom of a dream."³⁵ A problem shared by all systematic explanations of the world is that the beginning always presupposes something of which we are not yet aware. One must understand that the will is the other side of the coin from representation, but the latter is the chosen point of departure. This makes good sense, for it is easier to start from something graspable than from something completely intangible.

The essential difference between the subject and the object is that the former lies outside of space and time, whereas the latter is bounded by space, time and causality. The subject and object limit each other reciprocally, for the boundaries of the object lie a priori in the consciousness of the subject, the discovery of which is due to Kant. Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason denotes these boundaries of the object of which we are a priori conscious. Representations are divided into two basic

³⁴WWR, §1, p.3.

³⁵WWR, §1, p.4.

sorts: intuitive and abstract. Intuitive representations embrace the entire world of experience; abstract representations are to be found in concepts, and only human beings are capable of them. Space and time, in accordance with Kant's discovery, are unique in that they can be both thought in the abstract and directly perceived. Since the properties of space and time are known a priori, as independent of experience, experience must be thought of as dependent on them. Consequently, Schopenhauer considers pure time and space, the universal forms of intuition which Kant discovered, as a special class of representations. Equally important, however:

...is the quality of time and space that the principle of sufficient reason, which determines experience as the law of causality and of motivation, and thought as the law of the basis of judgments, appears in them [time and space] in quite a special form, to which I have given the name **ground of being**. In time this is the succession of its moments, and in space the position of its parts, which reciprocally determine one another to infinity.³⁶

Time as constant succession is an ongoing present, a continual boundary between past and future which, apart from the consequences of their contents, are empty and unreal. Space also has only relative existence; everything that exists in time and space, which is to say everything subordinate to the principle of sufficient reason, is eternal flux, endless becoming. Since the entire world of representation is determined by the principles of time and space, it can never be the truth behind existence.

Matter is the perceptible form of the unity of time and space, which means that matter is the combination of succession and position, the forms of time and space, respectively, under the constraints of the principle of sufficient reason. Matter is nothing but causality: "...cause and effect are the whole essence and nature of matter;

³⁶WWR, §3, p.7.

its being is its acting."³⁷ The mutual reciprocal limitation of time and space gives both meaning and necessity to the principle of sufficient reason, which in turn unites space and time, overcoming their inherent opposition to each other and giving rise to duration, to matter. Since the object in general exists only for the subject, and each special class of representations exists for a special faculty of knowledge in the subject, the "...subjective correlative of matter or of causality, for the two are one and the same, is the **understanding**....To know causality is the sole function of the understanding[.]"³⁸ The first manifestation of the understanding is perception of the actual world. The perception of objects is immediate, non-reflective, not abstract, and necessary. The pure understanding, by uniting space and time into matter, converts the sense-data of the eye, hand, ear into the perception of objects; the world of representation exists only through the understanding. Schopenhauer maintains that this interpretation of the world of perception is the first which successfully refutes Hume's skepticism. Instead of claiming that knowledge of the causal law results from experience, perception itself presupposes the causal law: the a priori character of causality is demonstrated through the dependence of all experience on it.

Kant's refutation of Hume is similar, but there is a crucial difference. Kant postulates that we perceive sense impressions in a subjective time order, which in turn is reorganized by the understanding according to a rule into an objective time order: the mechanism of our mind is what determines objective time order, the fact that we all see the same object when we look at a house. As soon as something receives objective time order by the understanding, it also is recognized in a concept. This is

³⁷WWR, §4, p.9.

³⁸WWR, §4, p.11.

Schopenhauer's main point of contention. He maintains that in order for a sense perception to be perceived, the law of causality has already been invoked, for the perception of matter is nothing but the perception of causality. The net result of both Kant and Schopenhauer's view with respect to the principle of sufficient reason appears to be the same. Kant says:

This rule, by which we determine something according to succession of time, is, that the condition under which an event invariably and necessarily follows is to be found in what precedes the event. The principle of sufficient reason is thus the ground of possible experience, that is, of objective knowledge of appearances in respect of their relation in the order of time.³⁹

For Schopenhauer, the principle of sufficient reason is also the ground of possible experience; the difference lies in the moment its law is invoked. Kant places it a split second later than Schopenhauer does, giving rise to the significant difference that Schopenhauer views perception as located in the understanding: it is intellectual. In Kant's view, perception is the raw material which the understanding shapes into an object and at the same time designates by means of a concept. For Kant, the principle of sufficient reason covers everything perceptible, thus organizing, or giving the law to, nature. For Schopenhauer, the principle of sufficient reason ensures that we perceive, and by perceiving create, as it were, the material world.

ii. The coexistence of empirical reality and transcendental ideality.

Schopenhauer is adamant about the existence of the external world, and finds that the debates between the dogmatists (both realists and idealists) and the skeptics about its reality are based on false assumptions. Perception is the result of causality, but this is not a relation of cause and effect between subject and object, but between a mediate

³⁹CPR, B246,A201.

and immediate object. The perceived world, as pure causality, is just what it appears to be; it is empirically real. At the same time, the world of objects is always conditioned by the subject; it is transcendently ideal. One does not have to choose either one or the other way of regarding the world, for they are mutually inclusive. The question whether transcendental ideality denies empirical reality, because life may then simply be a dream, is null and void. If it is a short dream, we wake up and realize we were dreaming, and if it is a long dream from which we do not wake, then all the connections necessary for the principle of sufficient reason are unbroken and it does not matter whether we are awake or in a dream, for the result is the same. Schopenhauer adds that in the Indian view of knowledge of the world, known as the web of Maya, the simile of a dream is often used. The continuity is what is important, not the rather academic point of whether it takes place in a dreaming state or in a waking state.

One's body is the representation which forms the starting point of the subject's knowledge of the world, and the body is presented as an extended, articulate thing only in the brain, for all knowledge of a representation of perception in space exists only through the understanding. Knowledge is thus not the special domain of human beings, of a capacity for abstract reasoning, but is characteristic of all animal life. Abstract reasoning organizes that which is immediately understood, but it can never bring about the understanding itself. Schopenhauer considers the fruits of his thinking unique, because he recognizes that we start neither from the object nor the subject, but from the representation that presupposes both. As stated, for him the

principle of sufficient reason holds only between objects and never, as in other philosophies, between subject and object.⁴⁰

Materialism is based on the "fundamental absurdity" that its ultimate ground of explanation starts from the objective as existing in and of itself. Since all natural science is based on materialist principle, it "...can never reach a final goal or give an entirely satisfactory explanation. It never aims at the inmost nature of the world; it can never get beyond the representation..."⁴¹ The claim that there is no object without a subject renders all pure materialism impossible; only the existence of the knowing subject supports the existence of the world as the representation that it is. The contradiction or antinomy that one falls into as a result of maintaining that the existence of the world depends on the first knowing being and that the first knowing being is wholly dependent on the chain of causality which preceded it:

...finds its solution in the fact that, to use Kant's language, time, space and causality do not belong to the thing-in-itself, but only to its appearance or phenomenon, of which they are the form. In my language, this means that the objective world, the world as representation, is not the only side of the world, but merely its external side, so to speak, and the world has an entirely different side which is its innermost being, its kernel, the thing-in-itself.⁴²

To give a full explanation for the novelty of beginning with the representation, and thereby to show for once and all how materialism and Fichtean-style idealism can never provide an adequate account for the way things really are, Schopenhauer

⁴⁰Schopenhauer admits that there is arguably a third way, namely starting from the Absolute, "...knowable through reason-intuition, which is neither object nor subject, but the identity of the two" (§7, p.26). The heavy sarcasm of his following description, aimed at Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, leaves the reader in little doubt as to what Schopenhauer really thinks of this third way.

⁴¹WWR, §7, p.28.

⁴²WWR, §7, pp.30-1.

repeatedly comes back to the will, for without an understanding of how this relates to representation his arguments lack persuasive power.

iii. Reflection and rational knowledge. Before turning his attention to the will, Schopenhauer first discusses the intellectual capacities of human beings. Unique to humans is the ability to reflect, which is a consciousness at a completely different level than that of sense perception and understanding. Reflection enables one to live in the future and the past, not just an ongoing present, and to determine a course of action based on abstract concepts independent of the present moment. Whereas both humans and animals feel, perceive and will, humans in addition think and know. It is speech in particular which marks the reflective faculty of reason; speech is reason's first product and necessary instrument. Whereas the unique function of the understanding is the immediate knowledge of cause and effect as manifested in perception of the world, the unique function of reason is the formation of the concept.

Concepts can never be demonstrated in experience, for they can only be conceived, not perceived. The effects which are produced through them by human beings are, however, objects of experience: language, deliberate action, science and the concomitant results. Despite the fundamental difference between concepts and representations of perceptions, they still stand in a necessary relation to one another; as reflection is a special kind of copy of the original world of perception, so can concepts be considered representations of representations. To demonstrate what he means and how concepts are interrelated with each other, and also to show how one recognizes the relation of a subject to a predicate by judgment, Schopenhauer treats us

to a visual explanation which covers all the aspects of logic in an intuitive way by means of intersecting spheres. He maintains that:

...it is not necessary to load the memory with these rules [of syllogistic theory], for logic can never be of practical use, but only of theoretical interest for philosophy. For although it might be said that logic is related to rational thinking as thorough-bass is to music, and also as ethics is to virtue, if we take it less precisely, or as aesthetics is to art, it must be borne in mind that no one ever became an artist by studying aesthetics, that a noble character was never formed by a study of ethics...that we do not need to be masters of thorough-bass in order to detect discord. Just as little do we need to know logic in order to avoid being deceived by false conclusions. But it must be conceded that thorough-bass is of great use in the practice of musical composition, although not for musical criticism.⁴³

Logic is too cumbersome for practical use, for the derivation of the particular case from general rules cannot be compared with what is immediately known to us. It retains, however, philosophical interest in that it is a "...special knowledge of the organization and action of the faculty of reason"⁴⁴ and thus plays a role in the establishment of judgments and the attainment of certainty in knowledge and science.

In and of itself, reason is only empty form and, as Schopenhauer quaintly notes, "...is feminine in nature; it can give only after it has received."⁴⁵ Logic can be considered a pure science of reason because its content is not received from representations of perceptions, but from concepts in general; only abstract knowledge is rational knowledge (Wissen) and is conditioned by the faculty of reason. Although animals have both knowledge of perception and recollection of it, and are therefore capable of imagination, they cannot rationally know anything. Rational knowledge fixes in concepts of reason what is generally known in another way. In other words,

⁴³WWR, §9, p.45.

⁴⁴WWR, §9, p.46.

⁴⁵WWR, §10, p.50.

reason does not extend our knowledge, but merely gives it another form; its value lies in the fact that abstract knowledge can be fixed, retained and communicated. In and of itself, however, it is not necessarily better than immediate perception or feeling (Gefühl), which is present in consciousness but is not conceptual and does not belong to abstract knowledge of reason.

In the search for complete understanding, one must go beyond the surface-bound network of information which solely gives us rational knowledge **that** a thing is as it is, but not **why** it is so; insight into the ground of being leads us to the latter. Using mathematics as an example, Schopenhauer claims that Euclid's mistake was that he remained in the realm of the **that**: we admit that the demonstration of the proof appears correct, but we do not know why. It is Kant who finally shows how space and time are a priori, independent of and unconditioned by the senses, leading to the assertion that:

To improve the method of mathematics, it is specially necessary to give up the prejudice that demonstrated truth has any advantage over truth known through perception or intuition, or that logical truth, resting on the principle of contradiction, has any advantage over metaphysical truth, which is immediately evident, and to which also belongs the pure intuition of space.⁴⁶

Not only mathematics, but also science in general, can be improved by overcoming this prejudice, for truth in science can always be only relative, dependent on the relation of one phenomenon to another: "Every explanation of natural science must ultimately stop at...a **qualitas occulta**, and thus at something wholly obscure."⁴⁷

There are only two things that are inexplicable as phenomenon, that do not lead back to the principle of sufficient reason but that can lead us to the true ground

⁴⁶WWR, §15, p.73.

⁴⁷WWR, §15, p.80.

behind such explanations: the principle of sufficient reason itself, which provides the form of all phenomenal explanations, and the thing-in-itself, which is not bound by this principle, as will be seen. It is at this point that philosophy reveals its abilities: unlike the sciences, it presupposes nothing and therefore cannot be dependent on proofs or principles. The principle of sufficient reason explains relations between phenomena, but not the phenomena themselves; this is left for philosophy. The real task of philosophy is not:

...to say **whence** or **for what purpose** the world exists, but merely **what** the world is. But here the **Why** is subordinated to the **What**, for it already belongs to the world, as it springs merely from the form of its phenomenon, the principle of sufficient reason, and only to this extent has meaning and validity. Indeed, it might be said that everyone knows without further help what the world is, for he himself is the subject of knowing of which the world is representation, and so far this would be true. But this knowledge is a knowledge of perception, is in the concrete. The task of philosophy is to reproduce this in the abstract, to raise to a permanent rational knowledge successive, variable perceptions, and generally all that the wide concept of **feeling** embraces and describes merely negatively as not abstract, distinct, rational knowledge.⁴⁸

In other words, through philosophy one can gain immediate knowledge of the world in its entirety. There is in the (individual) human consciousness a complete reflection of the world in abstract concepts, in which all the parts are in harmony with one another, and the true philosopher will comprehend this by recognizing the one in the many and the many in the one. This kind of talk sounds dangerously reminiscent of the claims of Schelling and Hegel, which Schopenhauer finds so absurd. In order to understand his position more clearly, or why he thinks that what he is doing is so very different from their work, he needs to explain the role of the will, for only

⁴⁸WWR, §15, p.82.

through the will can one understand not only the essence of phenomena but also human action and its relation to ethics. This brings us to the second book.

b. Will

i. The will as the key to phenomenal existence. Causal connection gives the rule and relative order of the appearance of representations in space and time but no further knowledge. The question which now needs to be explored is whether the world is nothing more than representation. If there is something else, (and of course there is), it must be fundamentally different from representation, and consequently the inner nature of things can never be reached from without. The starting point for this investigation is the self as a purely knowing subject that is nevertheless rooted in the world by means of the representation which is one's body. It is the word 'will' which gives the subject of knowledge:

...the key to his own phenomenon, reveals to him the significance and shows him the inner mechanism of his being, his actions, his movements...The act of will and the action of the body are not two different states objectively known, connected by the bond of causality; they do not stand in the relation of cause and effect, but are one and the same thing, though given in two entirely different ways, first quite directly, and then in perception for the body.⁴⁹

Willing and acting are in reality the same thing, but in reflection they appear to be different; the will can be considered a priori knowledge of the body, whereas the body is a posteriori knowledge of the will. Pain and pleasure are not representations but are immediate affections of the will in its phenomenon. Knowledge of the will cannot be separated from the body, for the will can only be known in time through individual acts; the body is the condition of knowledge of the will. Knowledge of the will cannot

⁴⁹WWR, §18, p.100.

be brought under the conditions of the principle of sufficient reason, but is instead the "...reference of a judgment to the relation that a representation of perception, namely the body, has to that which is not a representation at all, but is *toto genere* different therefrom, namely will."⁵⁰ The truth of this knowledge is designated by Schopenhauer as philosophical truth.

Fine and good, we say, but what in the world does he mean by will? And how is this different from, say, absolute spirit? These are essential questions to keep in mind as Schopenhauer explores the nature of will, for it is never clear why he thinks there is no other way to understand the phenomenal world. Although the details are dissimilar, the idea of this unified whole is not so radically different from Schelling's view of the world. So as to approach this question of the nature of the will from a slightly different angle, I quote at length from Royce's description of it, for it captures well the nuances of the will and shows where Schopenhauer diverges from Kant in their respective explanations:

Why, given sea waves and star clusters and city streets, we should be bound to think them as in some sort of interconnection, Kant has told us. Only no such laws of nature can explain why there should be the phenomena there that are thus to conform to law. This is capricious. This is due to our common but irrational nature. The world of true idealism isn't so much the world of the rational and divine self, as it is the world of the deep unreason that lies at the very basis of all of our natures, of all our common selfhood....Let us call this ultimate nature of ours, which forces us all alike to see a world of phenomena in the show forms of space and time, simply our own deep common Will. Let us drop the divine name for it. Will, merely as such, isn't precisely a rational thing; it's capricious. It wills because it does will; and if it wills in us all to be of such a nature as to see just these stars and houses, then see them we must, and there is the end of it.⁵¹

⁵⁰WWR, §18, p.102.

⁵¹Royce, p.238.

We are faced with an irrational world based on the principles of idealism: the world has existence only as we perceive it, and the facts of the world are based on experience and not on transcendental deductions of absolute spirit, as Hegel has it, or on the absolute unity of the original pre-conscious oneness of the universe, as Schelling sees it. The deepest ground is a capricious will that wills in such a fashion just because it does. The world manifests this caprice, despite our best efforts to make sense out of it. Unlike Schelling's view, where the attempt to return to the original unity is what gives rise to life, for Schopenhauer life is simply a random and voracious desiring with no goal except the temporary fulfillment of one wish after another.

Schopenhauer claims: "Besides the will and the representation, there is absolutely nothing known or conceivable for us."⁵² He forestalls the objection that if we know ourselves to be will, and yet all other things are merely representations, what reason is there for us to believe that other people actually exist, that they are not just figments of our imagination? He merely notes that a point of view which denies the reality of the external world is theoretical egoism. It can never be disputed by proof, is used in philosophy only as a sceptical sophism, for the sake of appearance, and is only seriously maintained by madmen. In actuality, the fact that our knowledge is tied to our individuality means that each person can only be one thing, although she can know everything else. This limitation creates the need for philosophy but is not an adequate reason to doubt the reality of the external world.

Since the will lies outside of the realm of sufficient reason, only the phenomenon of the will in time is determined by this principle; the will itself is groundless. My body is my will become visible; bodies in general are the will in

⁵²WWR, §19, p.105.

general become visible. Schopenhauer does his theory a disservice in that he often falls back on a very primitive physiognomy to prove his point, sounding positively medieval and giving a bizarre twist to the not-yet published discoveries of Darwin.⁵³ The fact that one has feelings, which are the knowledge of the inner nature of one's self or phenomenon, is the manifestation of will. Schopenhauer considers feelings to be concrete, for they are immediately perceived. The will is also concrete, since it is what is most immediate in consciousness. It is this immediacy, which is neither representation nor concept, that provides one with the key to the whole of nature. The individual recognizes what is immediate in her consciousness as that will which is also present in other representations:

...continued reflection will lead him to recognize the force that shoots and vegetates in the plant...the force by which the crystal is formed, the force that turns the magnet to the North Pole....as different only in the phenomenon, but the same according to their inner nature.⁵⁴

⁵³...to the individually modified will, namely the character of the individual, there corresponds the individual bodily structure..." (WWR §20, p.108). This is generally put; later he gives graphic descriptions to prove his point:

Now as a rule, knowledge remains subordinate to the service of the will, as indeed it came into being for this service; in fact, it sprang from the will, so to speak, as the head from the trunk....This distinction between man and animal is outwardly expressed by the difference in the relation of head to trunk. In the lower animals both are still deformed; in all, the head is directed to the ground, where the objects of the will lie. Even in higher animals, head and trunk are still far more one than in man, whose head seems freely set on to the body, only carried by the body and not serving it. (§33, p.177).

It is clear that at the time of writing, Schopenhauer was imbued not only with the wonders of physiognomy and what one could tell about an individual from face and body, but also from Goethe's color theory, which he passionately defends against Newton's (correct) theory.

⁵⁴WWR, §21, p.110.

Once we have reached this stage of recognizing our affinity with every phenomenon in the world, our reflection will inevitably lead us on to the thing-in-itself, which is the will:

...the innermost essence, the kernel, of every particular thing and also of the whole. It appears in every blindly acting force of nature, and also in the deliberate conduct of man, and the great difference between the two concerns only the degree of the manifestation, not the inner nature of what is manifested.⁵⁵

This realization is similar to Schelling's intellectual intuition and is open to the same criticism, namely that if you possess it the result is obvious, but if you do not see the connections, the claim sounds a little bit crazy.

ii. The will as thing-in-itself. Schopenhauer retains Kant's formulation, but his thing-in-itself is not the same as Kant's, for Schopenhauer allows access to it through human consciousness, or rather, through self-consciousness. Schopenhauer's thing-in-itself is not to be inferred, an unknown quantity, but is known absolutely and immediately; will is in fact the thing that we know best. The will as thing-in-itself is, however, quite different from will as phenomenon, for the former lies outside of causality, outside of time and space, whereas the latter is bound by the constraints of the world. Although human will is called the source of free and independent action, this is not true. Though the will is free, the action is always constrained:

...because in self-consciousness the will is known directly and in itself, there also lies in this consciousness the consciousness of freedom. But the fact is overlooked that the individual, the person, is not will as thing-in-itself, but is **phenomenon** of the will, is as such determined....Hence we get the strange fact that everyone considers himself to be **a priori** quite free, even in his individual

⁵⁵WWR, §21, p.110.

actions...[b]ut **a posteriori** through experience, he finds to his astonishment that he is not free, but liable to necessity...⁵⁶

In particular, Schopenhauer means that one cannot change one's character, that one must live out one's fate. However, the will's activity is by no means limited to human beings, but is to be found everywhere, from the highly differentiated individuality of human beings to the undeviating universal laws of natural forces. Schopenhauer always has examples at hand, from the natural world or from human interactions, to support his statements, and he rarely loses an opportunity to demonstrate his knowledge on a wide variety of subjects.

Schopenhauer takes his cue from Kant by placing time, space and causality in our consciousness according to a rule, and independent from the objects that appear in them; what Kant calls appearance or phenomenon, Schopenhauer calls representation. The forms in which they appear can be considered to be the boundary between subject and object. After noting this, Schopenhauer then reveals his bias, or perhaps one might say his faith:

Now if the objects appearing in these forms are not to be empty phantoms, but are to have a meaning, they must point to something, must be the expression of something, which is not, like themselves, object, representation, something existing merely relatively, namely for a subject. On the contrary, they must point to something that exists without such dependence on something that stands over against it as its essential condition, and on its forms, in other words, must point to something that is **not a representation, but a thing-in-itself.**⁵⁷

Why must they? Or rather, how does this presupposition differ from those of his contemporaries whom he so virulently attacks? The answer appears to be one based more on issues of personality than on deep-seated differences of outlook. Once again,

⁵⁶WWR, §23, pp.113-4.

⁵⁷WWR, §24, p.119.

Royce provides a succinct explanation of this point, and compares Schopenhauer with Hegel:

For Hegel, self-consciousness is...essentially the longing to be more of a self than you are. Just so, for Schopenhauer, if you exist you will, and if you will you are striving to escape from your present nature. It is of the essence of will to be always desiring a change....Curiously enough, this, which is precisely the thought that led Hegel to the conception of the absolutely active and triumphant spirit, appears to Schopenhauer the proof of the totally evil nature of things.⁵⁸

Whereas Hegel interprets the longing and unrest among humans as positive proof of a higher force, leading us unwittingly to participate in a great end which will justify all the misery of the world, Schopenhauer sees no such plan. He faces the daily grind of existence with no optimistic expectation that all will be happily resolved. Only by lifting oneself above this grind, not by giving in to it, can one achieve salvation.

iii. The intermediary role of the Platonic Ideas. The equation of the one will and the many phenomena is the basis of Schopenhauer's world view. Our a priori knowledge of space, time and causality applies only to the things as they are known by us, and is not a property of the thing-in-itself or will, for the plurality of things that are the objectivity of the will do not concern the will at all; it remains indivisible. Schopenhauer has borrowed the idea of the thing-in-itself from Kant, and he now borrows another central aspect of his philosophy: Plato's Ideas. Again, he slightly changes the meaning to suit his purposes. It must be understood that the

⁵⁸Royce, pp.259-60. It is perhaps extreme to describe things as "totally evil," for I do not think Schopenhauer had quite such a Manichaeian outlook. For a detailed discussion of this, see: Julian Young, "A Schopenhauerian Solution to Schopenhauerian Pessimism," Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch, 68 (1987) 53-69.

objectification of the will has many different grades, although the will itself is equally in all things:

There is a higher degree of this objectification in the plant than in the stone, a higher degree in the animal than in the plant; indeed, the will's passage into visibility, its objectification, has gradations as endless as those between the feeblest twilight and the brightest sunlight....But as the gradations of its objectification do not directly concern the will itself, still less is it concerned by the plurality of the phenomena at these different grades....The will reveals itself just as completely in **one** oak as in millions.⁵⁹

Schopenhauer claims that these grades of the objectification of the will are nothing but Plato's Ideas. He elaborates: "...by **Idea I** understand every definite and fixed **grade of the will's objectification**, in so far as it is thing-in-itself and is therefore foreign to plurality."⁶⁰ In other words, this table or this laptop is not an example of the Idea; the Idea is the intermediary essence between the particular appearance and the undifferentiated will.⁶¹ The introduction of Platonic Ideas plays a particularly important role in Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory, as we see in the next book. First, however, Schopenhauer, needs to explain more precisely the grades of the objectification of the will.

Universal natural forces are the lowest grade of the will's objectivity but have in common with human conduct, which is the highest grade, the fact that they are groundless; these forces are neither cause nor effect, but are the pre-supposed conditions of cause and effect, which in turn reveal their own inner being. The higher

⁵⁹WWR, §25, p.128.

⁶⁰WWR, §25, p.130.

⁶¹These are both bad examples, as Schopenhauer would consider the material which makes up such artificial things the objectification of the will, but not the artificial object itself. This includes the famous Platonic examples of the Idea of a table or chair, which Schopenhauer regards as examples of concepts but not of Ideas.

grades of objectification are distinguished by individuality, and the most prominent marks of individuality are to be found in human beings. Although Schopenhauer does maintain that all is one and one is all, within this framework the highest place is clearly reserved for human beings (and among humans, the highest place is for the genius). One can make generalizations about plants and most animal species, for they are determined by their physiognomy and are completely predictable. Humans, however, can only be understood on a case by case basis, and even then are not completely predictable. Schopenhauer defines the relation between the Ideas and the law of nature as follows:

...every universal, original force of nature is, in its inner essence, nothing but the objectification of the will at a low grade, and we call every such grade an eternal **Idea** in Plato's sense. But the **law of nature** is the relation of the Idea to the form of its phenomenon.⁶²

To imagine this hierarchy organically is to imagine a tree: the will is the trunk, the Ideas are the main branches, and the myriad phenomena are the smaller branches, twigs, leaves, nuts and seeds. Only by virtue of the life force being pumped up from the trunk, can the branches bring forth the broad spectrum of phenomenal life. In order to see clearly the relationship between the phenomena, and not to confuse the forces from which they come, one needs power of judgement. Only with proper judgment can one broaden one's insight into, say, physics. To enlarge one's experience is, however, quite a different matter.

Schopenhauer's explanation of the different grades of the will is his version of Kantian teleology. Since laws of nature are merely the observed rule by which nature always proceeds, a complete statement about nature would be simply a catalogue of

⁶²WWR, §26, p.134.

facts, a morphology which "...enumerates, compares, and arranges all the enduring forms of organic nature."⁶³ Philosophy, by contrast, considers only the universal; its object in nature is the universal forces, the different grades of objectification of the inner nature of the world. The search for the inner relationship between all things, which is to be found through the realization that one and the same will reveals itself in all forces of inorganic nature and all forms of organic nature, shows Schopenhauer's self-admitted continuity with Schelling's attempts to uncover the universal: "To discover this fundamental type has been the main concern, or certainly at any rate the most laudable endeavour, of the natural philosophers of Schelling's school."⁶⁴ Since all things in the world are the objectivity of the same will, and therefore identical in inner nature, it must be possible to discover the fundamental type of everything that fills the forms. Schopenhauer thinks that Schelling's endeavors in this respect are shared by the ideas represented in the Kabbala, by the Pythagoreans, and by the Chinese in the *I Ching*.

The objectified will is characterized by constant strife as each of its grades of objectification fights for the matter, space and time of another. In this sense, it is similar to Schelling's postulate that the world is composed of opposing forces, which are trying to attain their original state of repose but cannot, because of their inherent opposition; it differs in that there is no original state of repose for the will. This universal conflict is most clearly seen in the animal kingdom, where every living creature preys on and is preyed on by others: "Thus the will-to-live generally feasts on itself, and in different forms its own nourishment, till finally the human race,

⁶³WWR, §27, p.141.

⁶⁴WWR, §27, p.142.

because it subdues all the others, regards nature as manufactured for its own use."⁶⁵
 At this point, the world is no longer mere will, but is also representation, that is, object of the knowing subject. With the appearance of reason, the infallibility of the will's manifestations is almost entirely lost, and is replaced by deliberation, which
 "...begets...irresolution and uncertainty."⁶⁶ All knowledge proceeds from the will itself, and thus belongs to the will's objectification as a means of preserving the species and therefore, despite itself, remains almost completely subordinate to the will. There are only two exceptions to this, and they are the subject of the next two books, respectively. The first exception is:

...in individual persons, knowledge can withdraw from this subjection, throw off its yoke, and, free from all the aims of the will, exist purely for itself, simply as a clear mirror of the world; and this is the source of art.⁶⁷

This is, however, a temporary solution, for one must always return to the world dominated by the will. Only by completely renouncing the will-to-live and yet still living, (suicide does not count), can one achieve salvation from the endless striving of the will which is the world. This asceticism is the subject of the fourth book; it can be described as a religious goal.

It is Schopenhauer's view of the will, and of the world in which such a will is operative, that has earned him the sobriquet of pessimist. It is also this view which places him directly in the tradition of the transcendental idealists, even though, for

⁶⁵WWR, §27, p.147.

⁶⁶WWR, §27, p.152.

⁶⁷WWR, §27, p.152.

some reason, this is rarely identified with his philosophical outlook.⁶⁸ Since it is the one will that appears, and everything that exists is a grade of objectification of this will, the will as the thing-in-itself remains unmoved in the middle of constant change. The difference between such a will and a Hegelian absolute spirit is that the latter appears to have a positive goal towards which it strives, even if we are incapable of discerning what this might be. The goal of Schopenhauer's will is, by contrast, endless, directionless striving which results in a permanent state of restlessness for its phenomenon: "...this springs from the fact that the will must live on itself, since nothing exists besides it, and it is a hungry will. Hence arise pursuit, hunting, anxiety and suffering."⁶⁹

Since all existence is a manifestation of the will, it might be puzzling how individuals can be so different from each other. Schopenhauer accounts for this by pointing out that individual character can be regarded as a special Idea, which corresponds:

...to a particular act of the objectification of the will. This act itself would then be his intelligible character, and his empirical character would be its phenomenon. The empirical character is entirely determined by the intelligible

⁶⁸As Margitta Dobrleit-Helmich so rightly points out in "Ästhetik bei Kant und Schopenhauer: Ein kritischer Vergleich," *Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch*, 64 (1983) 125-137:

Die in der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts einsetzende kontroverse Diskussion um Schopenhauers Ästhetik mündete in eine generelle Kritik der Schopenhauerschen Philosophie, die für eine Verhältnisbestimmung zur Kantischen Ästhetik unergiebig blieb. Letzteres gilt ebenfalls für die ab der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts einsetzende literarische Schopenhauer-Rezeption, da sie philosophisch allzusehr auf der Oberfläche verblieb und Schopenhauer primär als Vorläufer Nietzsches, nicht aber als Nachfolger Kants sah (125).

Although she is referring primarily to Schopenhauer's aesthetics, the same can be said of other aspects of his philosophy.

⁶⁹*WWR*, §28, p.154.

that is groundless, that is to say, will as thing-in-itself, not subject to the principle of sufficient reason...⁷⁰

In other words, every human being is a microcosm of the world, for as the will has an in-itself and phenomenal side, so has the individual an intelligible and empirical side; the in-itself of the world, the will, is the same will which provides the motor for every individual human being. Both the world and the human individual are nothing but will, and at same time, nothing but representation. Although in both there is an appearance of order, an appearance of goal and direction, in reality the essential nature of the will is nothing but endless, aimless striving: "...the will always knows, when knowledge enlightens it, what it wills here and now, but never what it wills in general."⁷¹

⁷⁰WWR, §27, p.158.

⁷¹WWR, §28, pp.164-5.

B. Part Two

1. The Platonic Ideas and the object of art

The rather bleak picture which has been painted for us of the world as will and representation is not unalleviated misery: it is possible for one to rise both temporarily and permanently above the demands of the will. For the purposes of this work, it is the temporary solution which is of interest; it is accomplished by the genius through the work of art. The third book, as its title suggests, concentrates on a remarkable feature of the second aspect of the world as representation: "The Representation Independent of the Principle of Sufficient Reason: The Platonic Idea: The Object of Art." The fourth book considers the permanent solution.

To understand properly the special function of the work of art, it is essential to accept Schopenhauer's re-interpretation of the Platonic Ideas and his view of the genius, a view rooted in the romantic understanding of the genius but pointing in a different direction.¹ As seen, Schopenhauer's version of the Platonic Ideas places them

¹See Arthur Hübscher, "Das Genie bei Schopenhauer" Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft, 18 (1973) 103-126. The essence of the article is summed up in the following quote:

Mit diesen Forderungen kommt die Romantik in den Umkreis einer Auffassung des Schönen, die sich von Kant zu Schiller and über Schelling weiter zu Hegel verfolgen lässt: Man ist auf höherer Ebene da angelangt, wo Gottsched und Baumgarten begonnen haben. Die Kunst gilt als ein Ausgleichen der Gegensätze in der menschlichen Natur. Eben dies aber war nicht die Sache, nicht das Ziel Schopenhauers. So sehr er, in der Nähe Wackenroders und Tiecks, Schlegels und Schellings, die Kunst als eine das Menschliche steigernde und befreiende Macht empfand, -- es ging ihm nicht um Ausgleichen und Versöhnen auf irgendeiner Stufe der Entwicklung: die Erhebung zum Schönen ist ihm ebenso wie Platon ein Losreißen des Menschen von der niederen Hälfte seines Wesens. Unsere Fähigkeiten sollen nicht ins Gleichgewicht gebracht werden; eine soll die Vorherrschaft über alle übrigen erhalten (109).

between pure will and phenomenon; the Ideas provide the form for the plurality, which is found in the world of space and time, of all things subordinate to the principle of sufficient reason. The Ideas themselves are above that principle, and manifest neither plurality nor change. Individuals as such, who achieve their form as a result of an Idea, can never attain knowledge of that which gives form to all their knowledge as subjects. Only by abolishing individuality in the knowing subject can the Idea become an object of knowledge.²

Schopenhauer's relation to Kant is both fruitful and problematic. He sees himself as beginning where Kant left off, bringing the needed and correct interpretation to the critical theory. Schopenhauer's entire theory of Ideas raises a special problem, however, for Kant means something quite different when he refers to ideas. A Kantian idea is a concept of reason:

Reason concerns itself exclusively with absolute totality in the employment of the concepts of the understanding, and endeavours to carry synthetic unity, which is thought in the category, up to the completely unconditioned.³

Reason is always striving towards the unconditioned, that which is beyond knowledge, and ideas provide the means to chart this territory: "I understand by idea a necessary concept of reason to which no corresponding object can be given in sense-experience. Thus the pure concepts of reason...are **transcendental ideas**."⁴ This is quite different from the meaning which Schopenhauer gives to Ideas:

²As might be surmised, Schopenhauer's appropriation of the Ideas became a rich source for criticism. For a summary of the problems raised by the Ideas, see: Wolfgang Weimer, Schopenhauer (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1982), pp.80-93.

³CPR, B383.

⁴CPR, A327.

Diese transzendentalphilosophische Bestimmung der Idee als Vernunftnotwendigkeit steht bereits im strikten Gegensatz zu Schopenhauers metaphysischer Ableitung der Idee aus dem gänzlich unvernünftigen Willen (als adäquater Objektivation).⁵

Schopenhauer imposes his interpretation on Kant's definition of the idea, seeing it as the model for what is meant by the thing-in-itself, and determines that it is very similar to Plato's theory of Ideas. The link between them is for him clear:

Now if for us the will is the **thing-in-itself**, and the **Idea** is the immediate objectivity of that will at a definite grade, then we find Kant's thing-in-itself and Plato's Idea...to be, not exactly identical, but yet very closely related, and distinguished by only a single modification. The two great paradoxes, just because, in spite of all inner harmony and relationship, they sound so very different by reason of the extraordinarily different individualities of their authors, are even the best commentary on each other, for they are like two entirely different paths leading to one goal.⁶

The "single modification" which distinguishes them is that the Idea is only the immediate objectivity of the thing-in-itself, the will. The similarities, once they have been discovered, are for Schopenhauer impossible not to see. In both cases, the phenomenal world is in actuality void and empty; its meaning and reality is borrowed from that which expresses itself through the phenomena, namely the Idea or the thing-in-itself. The apprehension of things in the world is immanent; what Schopenhauer is trying to depict is the apprehension which is transcendental, which is conscious of the true state of things. This is naturally somewhat difficult to put into words.

Kant's great mistake is, for Schopenhauer, the failure to notice that, if the thing-in-itself is free from all form, it cannot have at the same time the form of being-object-for-a-subject, the form of all representation. Strictly speaking, Kant did not say

⁵M. Dobrileit-Helmich, p.130.

⁶WWR, §31, p.170.

this, but Schopenhauer nevertheless solves this problem by positing the intermediary existence of the Idea, since the particular thing is only an indirect objectification of the will: "Between it and the thing-in-itself the Idea still stands as the only direct objectivity of the will..."⁷ The Idea is to be understood as providing the form for knowledge of representation in general, of being-object-for-a-subject. Schopenhauer admits that, in actual fact, Plato and Kant are not talking about the same thing, but the compelling similarities of the ground of their agreement, the presence of a non-representational form which accounts for the myriad of phenomenal existence, leads him to postulate that their intentions are the same. If our body did not ensure that we apprehend particularity through its mode, that is, through concrete individuality, and we were capable of apprehending through unclouded knowledge the pure thing-in-itself or the pure Ideas, our world would be an eternal unchanging present. The demands of the body anchor us in the world of things, and the dictates of time break up the eternal, unchanging form of the Ideas.

Because knowledge in general belongs to the objectification of the will at its higher grades, it is completely the servant of the will; it, too, is nothing other than objectified will. All it really knows about objects is their relationship to one another; science is consequently only differentiated from ordinary knowledge by means of its systematic form. This lends further support to the claim that Schopenhauer is engaged in a completely different enterprise from Kant's. Kant's primary concern is the functioning of the mind; once this is settled, he builds his ethical and aesthetic systems. Although it can be argued that his ethics and aesthetics are at odds with his epistemology, and are in fact based more on metaphysical than cognitive grounds, he

⁷WWR, §32, p.175.

perceives himself as establishing a theory of mind. Schopenhauer has a different concern, for a theory of mind per se is never his primary interest. From the start, he wants to show how that which we cannot see determines our entire world. The fact that this is perceived idealistically of course admits a mind-conditioned reality, but the details of the workings of the mind are not as central for him as they are for Kant. Or rather, Schopenhauer thinks that Kant's elaborate system of knowledge is full of sound and fury but misses the essential point. He proposes a much simpler, primarily metaphysical, theory.

For Schopenhauer, all relation has only relative existence. All being in time therefore: "...is also a non-being, for...what separates its beginning from its end is simply time, essentially an evanescent, unstable, and relative thing, here called duration."⁸ Despite this ephemeral quality, time is the universal form of knowledge that is subordinate to the will. Only by tearing itself free from the will and from time, can the subject escape individuality and become a pure will-less subject of knowledge. In this condition, the final goal of a time-bound existence, namely the when, where, and whither, loses its meaning, and the what becomes of supreme importance. Abstract thought, the concepts of reason, are banished from consciousness and we:

...devote the whole power of our mind to perception, sink ourselves completely therein, and let our whole consciousness be filled by the calm contemplation of the natural object actually present...We lose ourselves entirely in this object...we forget our individuality, our will, and continue to exist only as pure subject, as clear mirror of the object, so that it is as though the object alone existed without anyone to perceive it, and thus we are no longer able to separate the perceiver from the perception, but the two have become one...⁹

⁸WWR, §33, p.176.

⁹WWR, §34, p.178.

In this process of losing oneself in contemplation, what becomes known is not the particular thing but the Idea of the thing; at the same time, the viewer also loses her particularity and becomes a pure will-less, timeless subject of knowledge. This way of knowing goes completely against the grain of Kantian rationalism and points to the influence of the Romantics and of the Eastern mystics on Schopenhauer's world view.¹⁰

2. Aesthetic knowledge and the nature of the genius

Kant allows for aesthetic knowledge, as seen in Critique of Judgment, specifying that it is non-cognitive. Aesthetic knowledge enables one to appreciate the beautiful in a purely theoretical way. Schopenhauer follows this lead, but proposes a very different content. The only kind of knowledge which exists independently of all relations, and which reveals the true content of the phenomena, "...is **art**, the work of genius. It repeats the eternal Ideas apprehended through pure contemplation, the essential and abiding element in all the phenomena of the world."¹¹ The aim of art is to communicate the truth of the Ideas. Science is incapable of doing this because it is firmly embedded in the demands of the principle of sufficient reason, but art is everywhere at its goal, at the truth behind the appearance. Schopenhauer's theory of the genius is highly detailed, more so than that of either Kant or Schelling, although

¹⁰In his search for Romantic influence on Schopenhauer's philosophy, Hübscher finds four areas which tie Schopenhauer closely to the Romantic world: "...seine Erhöhung der Musik über alle anderen Künste, seine Auffassung des Genies, sein Anknüpfen an die mittelalterliche Mystik und sein inniges Verhältnis zur Weisheit der Inder." It is the latter in particular which provides "das entscheidende Bildungserlebnis" for the young Schopenhauer. See A. Hübscher, "Der Philosoph der Romantik," p.7.

¹¹WWR, §36, p.184

following in their tradition that only genius produces great works of art. The difference lies in how the genius operates. For Schopenhauer, the nature of genius consists in an exceptional ability to engage in contemplation of that which is universal in a specific object, enabling her access to the Idea. The gift of genius is thus nothing but the most complete objectivity:

...genius is the ability to leave entirely out of sight our own interest, our willing, and our aims, and consequently to discard entirely our own personality for a time, in order to remain **pure knowing subject**, the clear eye of the world; and this not merely for moments, but with the necessary continuity and conscious thought to enable us to repeat by deliberate art what has been apprehended...¹²

The relation between subjectivity and objectivity can sometimes be confusing, for when one has become pure knowing subject, one has attained complete objectivity.

The pure knowing subject has lost all consciousness of herself as subject and what remains is:

The pure objectivity of perception, by virtue of which we know no longer the individual thing as such, but the Idea of its species, [which] is conditioned by the fact that one is conscious no longer of oneself, but only of the perceived objects, hence that one's own consciousness has been left merely as the supporter of the objective existence of those objects.¹³

The pure will-less knowledge which is gained from an interaction of this sort is genuine knowledge, and not simply knowledge of relations; it is knowledge that rises above the dominion of the will. It is the genius who has a predominant capacity to achieve this kind of knowledge. Genius is not to be confused with talent: talent is what the ordinary person can have, enabling her to think more quickly and accurately than others; genius enables one to see a completely different world by looking more

¹²WWR, §36, pp. 185-6.

¹³WWR II, §30, p.369.

deeply into this world. Although the genius has access to the unchanging world of Ideas, in her own life she reflects a constant restlessness, with no chance of finding calm, driven by the ongoing search for new objects to contemplate.

An essential element of one who is endowed with genius is imagination, but in and of itself, imagination is not proof of genius.¹⁴ The imagination of the ordinary person deepens insight into the relations between objects or, if it is manifested creatively, leads to building castles in the air or indulging in self-centered dreaming, for the ordinary person can only be directed at things which have some relevance to her life and will. By contrast, the genius uses imagination to rise above the reality of personal experience; imagination extends "...the mental horizon of the genius beyond the objects that actually present themselves to his person, as regards both quality and quantity."¹⁵ The unusual strength of imagination possessed by the genius leads to knowledge of Ideas; this knowledge is in turn communicated through art. The knowledge of the genius is thus quite different from ordinary knowing, for it is not bound to the principle of sufficient reason. As Schopenhauer so poetically puts it: "Whereas to the ordinary man his faculty of knowledge is a lamp that lights his path, to the man of genius it is the sun that reveals the world."¹⁶ Although both Kant and Schopenhauer share the view that nature is the source of their inspiration, the respective results of this process are quite different:

¹⁴Schopenhauer's imagination is **Phantasie**, whereas for Kant it is **produktive Einbildungskraft**. For both, imagination lets the genius "...see in things not what nature has actually formed, but what she endeavoured to form..." (§36, p.186). The difference lies in how the attempts of nature are viewed.

¹⁵WWR, §36, p.187.

¹⁶WWR, §36, p.188.

Während jedoch bei Kant Resultat der Schöpfungen des Genies die Schaffung einer "anderen" Natur ist, ist es bei Schopenhauer die Anschauung und Darstellung der "idealisierten" Natur, der Dinge als Ideen. Von einer freien Produktivität kann in diesem Sinne bei Schopenhauers Geniebegriff nicht die Rede sein, da das Genie kontemplativ an die intuitive Erfassung der Idee gebunden ist.¹⁷

Schopenhauer's genius bores intensively into the inner nature of things; Kant's sees different configurations in the material present and produces different versions of the world. Both are active as artists creating works.

a. Characteristics of the genius. Unlike Kant and Schelling, Schopenhauer discusses at length the type of personality and quirks which one might expect to find in the genius. While some of his observations are perceptive and illuminating, others strike one as strange. First and foremost, one marks among geniuses a disinclination for mathematics, since the logical procedure entailed is repugnant to the artistic genius.¹⁸ The genius can also be recognized by an abnormal excess of intellect, for whereas the ordinary person is two-thirds will and one-third intellect, the genius

¹⁷M. Dobrileit-Helmich, p.134.

¹⁸Perhaps it is the case that great scientists make good musicians but great musicians make poor scientists. To prove his point here, Schopenhauer heaps scorn on the opponents of Goethe's color theory and makes the following bold claim: Goethe was reproached enough with his want of mathematical knowledge by the ignorant opponents of color theory. Here, where it was naturally not a question of calculation and measurement according to hypothetical data, but one of direct knowledge by understanding cause and effect, this reproach was so utterly absurd and out of place, that they revealed their total lack of judgement...The fact that even today, nearly half a century after the appearance of Goethe's color theory, the Newtonian fallacies still remain in undisturbed possession of the professorial chair even in Germany, and that people continue to talk quite seriously about the seven homogeneous rays of light and their differing refrangibility, will one day be numbered among the great intellectual peculiarities of mankind in general, and of the Germans in particular (§36, p.189).

possesses the reverse ratio. This leaves the genius unfit to participate normally in the everyday events of the world, the world of the practical person. Physically, the genius is marked by the following characteristics:

The fundamental condition is an abnormal preponderance of sensibility over irritability and reproductive power; in fact, what makes the matter more difficult is that this must occur in a male body. (Women can have remarkable talent, but not genius, for they always remain subjective.)¹⁹

As already noted, reason is feminine in nature; it can give only after it has received. It is thus clear that reason cannot be a distinguishing mark of the genius. Schopenhauer continues with his study of the genius by detailing brain shape and weight, as well as family circumstances. This attempt to be scientific strikes the reader on two counts. First, in comparison with Kant and Schelling it is of note that Schopenhauer tries to specify the details of person one might expect from the genius, thereby descending from the highly abstract realm in which the other two remain. Second, precisely by this descent into the graspable, Schopenhauer runs the risk of making claims which date him and which can undermine his theoretical insights, as already shown. However, in one area, Schopenhauer's investigations into the sociology and psychology of the genius raises a very interesting question, and this is the relationship between madness and genius.

i. Genius and madness. Schopenhauer devotes much space to his discussion of irrationality and its relation to genius. That geniuses are known for outbursts of passion is not necessarily a result of any weakness in the faculty of reason, but is often due to the unusual energy of will which resides in the genius: "In such men the

¹⁹WWRII, §31, p.392.

extremely energetic impression of the perceptive outshines the colorless concepts so much that the conduct is no longer guided by the latter, but by the former, and on this very account becomes irrational."²⁰ Consequently, one can well expect unorthodox behavior from a genius, and Schopenhauer provides us with some examples. However, often this irrational behavior deteriorates into madness, and this fascinates Schopenhauer; madness and the behavior of people in insane asylums is something Schopenhauer has clearly studied and thought about.²¹ He designates the memory as the measure for a sound or a mad mind. Madness is "...the **broken** thread of this memory...;"²² it is revealed by means of a faulty link with the past, which is either absent or else has been constructed by means of false or changing relations which combine with various fictions to create a confused and distorted view of the individual's place in the world.

It is here that the link with genius is to be found. The madperson is aware of the present and of particulars in the past, but the connections are inconsistent. It is

²⁰WWR, §36, p.190.

²¹Again, see Royce, pp.241-4 for his suggestion that Schopenhauer's family background, as well as his own tendencies, provide the focus for this interest. After briefly noting the pettier aspects of Schopenhauer's personality, Royce comments: Specially interesting, however, in Schopenhauer's case, is the relation of contrast between the peevishness of his private temper and the self-controlled calm and clearness of his literary style. To such a man intellectual work is a blessed relief from the storms of trivial but violent emotion....His reflection, therefore, throughout, is a negative self-criticism, a sort of **reductio ad absurdum** of the tempestuous natural man (243).

It is perhaps not appropriate to bring in circumstantial aspects of personality to account for certain philosophical theories, but Schopenhauer himself does this, as when he notes:

Kant's whole theory of law is a strange tangle of errors, one leading to another, and he attempts to establish the right to property through first occupation. I can explain this only by Kant's feebleness through old age (§62,336).

²²WWR II, §32, p.399.

this inconsistency which Schopenhauer interprets as the link with the genius: "...for he too leaves out of sight knowledge of the connexion of things, as he neglects that knowledge of relations which is knowledge according to the principle of sufficient reason, in order to see in things only their Ideas..."²³ The genius stands before the constant danger of slipping over the edge of her creative drive into madness. The strain of contemplation of the Ideas can gradually prize one loose from the worldly demands of the will:

In der aufsteigenden Reihe der Lebewesen treten Intellekt und Wille immer weiter auseinander; wenn dieses Auseinandertreten im Genie seinen höchsten Grad erreicht, wenn es zu einer **völligen Ablösung** des Intellekts vom Willen kommt, dann wird die Vorstellung zwar vollkommen und frei, doch nur unter der steten Gefahr der Selbsterstörung....Die Vorstellung zerstört sich selbst, wenn sie sich ablöst vom Willen. So kann die höchste Erkenntnis immer umschlagen in jene Zerstörung des Erkennens, die mit dem Wort "Wahnsinn" benannt wird, weil der Wahnsinn im engeren Wortsinn die grauenvollste Störung und Zerstörung des Erkennens ist.²⁴

For Schopenhauer, the experience of the creative artist, the genius, takes place high on the ladder to salvation, to the complete overcoming of the will. This inevitably can have severe consequences for the bodily vessel, even if the genius, unlike the saint, is

²³WWR, §36, pp.193-4.

²⁴Otto Pöggeler, "Schopenhauer und das Wesen der Kunst," Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung, 14 (1960) p.365. Pöggeler remarks at the beginning of his essay:

Nur um der Frage nach dem Wesen der Kunst willen gehe ich in diesem Aufsatz dem Gedanken nach, **Genialität und Wahnsinn** gehörten zusammen....

In den Titel dieses Aufsatzes liess sich freilich die Formel "Genie und Wahnsinn" nicht setzen, und das schon deshalb nicht, weil sich an sie zuviel des übelsten wissenschaftlichen Dilettantismus angehängt hat. Der Titel hätte falsche Erwartungen erweckt, denn das Thema "Genie und Wahnsinn," so wie ich es hier behandle, ist kein **Thema der Psychiatrie**. Der Wahnsinn, von dem die Rede ist, ist kein Wahnsinn im strengen Sinne des Wortes (p.353).

That geniuses often suffer is true, but Pöggeler maintains that this is rarely rooted in psychopathologic grounds, despite Schopenhauer's claims to the contrary.

not intentionally striving to attain perpetual peace.²⁵ It is this lack of concern with the material world which accounts for the marked discrepancy which often exists between the profound insight into the human character which a poet might reveal, and the concomitant lack of insight into individual characters who might well be duplicitous cheats; it accounts for the child-like quality of the genius.

b. The nature of aesthetic pleasure: Ideas versus concepts. Consideration of the nature of aesthetic pleasure is essential to a philosophy of art, for without an account of how and why one reacts to an artwork or an object of beauty there is not much point to the discussion. It is precisely this aspect on which Kant centers his exploration of aesthetic feeling. In addition, the meaning of the words "beautiful" and "sublime" needs to be examined, for on this turns the effect of an object so designated. It is this effect which is the subject at hand. For Schopenhauer, access to the Idea of an object is essential for aesthetic sensibility; clearly, this ability to know the Idea, independent of the principle of sufficient reason, must be present in varying degrees in all people, or else they would be as incapable of enjoying a work of art as producing one. If they were not capable of this momentary divestment of personality, the words 'beautiful' and 'sublime' would have no meaning for them. While it might be the case that some people are incapable of aesthetic pleasure, most do not fall under this

²⁵In the article on "Das Genie bei Schopenhauer," Hübscher also discusses this relation between genius and madness, which is found in Democritus, Plato and down through the centuries. But now something new appears: "Prometheus ist verschwunden. Das Genie wird mit den Massstäben des Psychiaters gemessen. Ein krankes Zeitgefühl ist dem Kranken zugewandt" (121). The suggestion that lack of sympathy for the "wannsinnige" actions of the genius has destroyed Prometheus is intriguing. And despite Pöggeler, it raises the difficult question of how to determine madness.

category. Schopenhauer maintains that pleasure produced by contemplation of the beautiful arises from two inseparable constituent parts: "...knowledge of the object not as individual thing, but as Platonic **Idea**,...and the self-consciousness of the knower, not as individual, but as **pure, will-less subject of knowledge**."²⁶ Aesthetic consciousness is marked by the disappearance of the characteristics of ordinary consciousness. Ordinary consciousness consists of four essential features: each person is an individual in a particular body in the world; objects around us are interesting and we place practical demands on them; we falsify how we perceive ordinary experience, subordinating our cognition to the demands of the will; and our existence is marked by suffering and anxiety.²⁷ In aesthetic consciousness, we rise above the individualizing aspects of ordinary consciousness and attain an exalted state, in which the pure subject and the Idea "...no longer stand in the stream of time and of all other relations. It is then all the same whether we see the setting sun from a prison or from a palace."²⁸

This disinterested contemplation of the Idea is reminiscent of Kant's disinterested pleasure which accompanies aesthetic contemplation, but there is an essential difference:

Kants "Interesselosigkeit" bedeutet eine Absage gegenüber einem begehrenden Bezug auf das Objekt; Schopenhauers "Willenslosigkeit" dagegen bedeutet Überwindung einer daseinskonstituierenden metaphysischen Instanz.²⁹

²⁶WWR, §38, p.195.

²⁷See J. Young, "Schopenhauer on Art," pp.434-8.

²⁸WWR, §38, p.197.

²⁹M. Dobrileit-Helmich, p.129.

Kant is more concerned with the nature of the feeling which is produced, with the free play of the cognitive faculties. Whereas Kant shows how the subject-conditioned object of aesthetic interest loosens itself from the rigorous conceptual boundaries which define all objects, while at the same time remaining as object, Schopenhauer goes behind or beyond the subject-conditioned nature of the object to its Idea, as close to the thing-in-itself as one can get. He is no longer interested in the object as such. Unlike Kant, he does not give a detailed cognitive description of what happens in the mind to cause aesthetic pleasure; the details of the interaction of the cognitive faculties are not his concern.

Instead, he follows, if unwittingly and unwillingly, more in Schelling's path, where aesthetic intuition is something that is beyond words. Schmidt rightly notes this somewhat hypocritical tendency in Schopenhauer in terms of his theory of genius; the same can be said for his explanation of aesthetic pleasure:

Obwohl Schopenhauer die idealistische Annahme einer intellektualen Anschauung an anderer Stelle vom philosophischen Standpunkt aus als Windbeutelerei kritisiert, geht er in seiner Genie-Konzeption gerade von ihr aus. Genialität ist ihm nicht mehr ein naturhaftes und subjektivistisch-irrationales Produzieren wie für die Stürmer und Dränger, sondern...ein durch intuitive Erkenntnis legitimes geistiges Vermögen.³⁰

The transition from seeing the object as object to seeing it as Idea is simply the temporary transition, for us, from a world of violent agitation to one of peace. The world of peace, of contemplation of the Ideas, points to the claim that every single object can be beautiful, if it is rightly perceived. Although Schopenhauer leaves open the possibility that all humans can attain this state, if only temporarily, he also is of the opinion that most never attain it, but remain abandoned to their woe.

³⁰Jochen Schmidt, "Schopenhauer: Genialität als Fähigkeit zu Erlösender Idealität in der Welt als Wille und Vorstellung" in Die Geschichte der Genie-Gedankens..., p.486.

Leaving the human lot aside for now, we turn to the distinction of Ideas into beautiful and sublime.

c. The beautiful and the sublime. Ideas are the result of perception and are very different from the apprehension of concepts, which remain tied to the rational world of the will. A concept is:

...abstract, discursive, wholly undetermined within its sphere, determined only by its limits, attainable and intelligible only to him who has the faculty of reason, communicable by words without further assistance, entirely exhausted by its definition.³¹

By contrast, the Idea, is "...the adequate representation of the concept,"³² is purely perceptive and absolutely definite even though it represents an infinite number of individual things. It can only be known by one who has raised herself above willing, who has become a pure subject of knowing, and thus is no longer an individual as such. Both the beautiful and the sublime are the result of the perception of the Idea; the difference lies in whether the will-less subject of knowledge or the Idea has predominance in the resulting feeling of pleasure. This is a very subtle distinction, but Schopenhauer places great worth on it.

More than both Kant and Schelling, Schopenhauer is fascinated by the sublime, the subjective side of aesthetic pleasure; he interprets the beautiful, the more objective side of pleasure, as relatively easy to achieve:

Thus what distinguishes the feeling of the sublime from that of the beautiful is that, with the beautiful, pure knowledge has gained the upper hand without a struggle, since the beauty of the object, in other words that quality which facilitate knowledge of its Idea, has removed from consciousness, without

³¹WWR, §49, p.234.

³²WWR, §49, p.234.

resistance and hence imperceptibly, the will and knowledge of relations that slavishly serve this will....On the other hand, with the sublime, that state of pure knowing is obtained first of all by a conscious and violent tearing away from the relations of the same object to the will which are recognized as unfavourable, by a free exaltation, accompanied by consciousness, beyond the will and the knowledge related to it. This exaltation must not only be won with consciousness, but also be maintained, and it is therefore accompanied by a constant recollection of the will, yet not of single individual willing, such as fear or desire, but of human willing in general, in so far as it is expressed universally through its objectivity, the human body.³³

It is this state of exaltation which Schopenhauer finds so compelling, and it is this which differentiates the sublime from the beautiful. It is the desire to be emotionally involved, and the overcoming of this desire, which makes the perception of the sublime more valuable for him; by contrast the beautiful is pale and wan, the weak younger sibling. Schopenhauer gives examples of the different grades of the sublime, all of which occur in natural settings, in lonely regions with massive rocks, threatening clouds, stormy seas. What is, of course, important in all these situations is that one does not allow personal danger to gain the upper hand, for then the will takes over, so as to save its individual existence. The feeling of sublime arises precisely from the fact that something that is unfavorable to the will becomes an object of contemplation. It is here that Young finds legitimation for his claim that Schopenhauer would, indeed must, accept the expressiveness of art:

...the discussion of the sublime implies a general account of how there can be emotion in art. On this account, expression is a matter of appropriate emotions being aroused in the spectator, the difference between art, on the one hand, and phenomena like pornography, on the other, lying in the fact that while **personal**, action-prompting emotions are roused by the latter, disassociated, impersonal emotions are aroused by the former.

³³WWR, §39, p.202.

Actually, a refinement can be added to this account of expression in art; the emotions it arouses are, I think, better described as **universal** rather than merely de-personalized.³⁴

The real opposite of both the sublime and the beautiful is what is charming or attractive, or as Young has it, the pornographic, for these awaken the will and draw the viewer away from a state of contemplation to one of direct involvement.³⁵

The state of the sublime is reached by a free, conscious exaltation above the will; that of the beautiful is characterized by the appearance of pure, will-less knowing, and by the disappearance without opposition of will from consciousness. In object, however, the beautiful and the sublime are essentially the same, for the object is always the Idea. In both cases, we become completely objective, that is, will-less, timeless subjects of knowing, and we recognize in the object not the individual thing but the Idea; these must always appear simultaneously in consciousness as the necessary correlatives of the response to the beautiful. This response lies outside of causality, time and space: the beautiful flower I contemplate is not a specific flower but

³⁴J. Young, "Schopenhauer on Art," p.432.

³⁵Schopenhauer gives as an example of the charming or attractive in art the Dutch still life paintings of food, and historical paintings which depict nudity, for they both excite different kinds of appetites (§40, p.208). A few pages earlier, however, he has commended the Dutch still life paintings for directing "...such purely objective perceptions to the most insignificant objects, and set[ting] up a lasting monument of their objectivity and spiritual peace..." (§38, p.197). Young, in his discussion of Schopenhauer's insistence on the disinterested character of aesthetic consciousness, also finds Schopenhauer's treatment of the 17th century Dutch still-life paintings problematic. He footnotes:

I am told, however, that his art history is deficient, that such "**vanitas**" paintings were intended and understood as deploying the painter's illusionist skills to remind the spectator of the illusory, worthless nature of all things of the flesh, so that, in their proper context, they would not, in fact, have stimulated the taste buds (Young, "Schopenhauer on Art," P.430, FN7.

the Idea of the flower. It could be anywhere, anytime. Because everything is an expression of an Idea, everything is capable of being considered beautiful.³⁶

Every existing thing has an Idea, and thus everything has the potential to be beautiful. There is, however, one thing that is more beautiful than all other things, because it facilitates the purely objective contemplation needed to see the Idea: the human being itself. This is because the Idea of the human being is a very high grade of the will's objectification; consequently, "...man is more beautiful than all other objects, and the revelation of his inner nature is the highest aim of art."³⁷ This explains why, in Schopenhauer's view, the greatest works of art all have the human being as their subject. And, as we will shortly see, it explains Schopenhauer's hierarchy of the arts. To know an Idea is not to have access to a realm ontologically distinct from that of representation but instead to concentrate on the essential and significant aspects of a thing, rather than on the trivial aspects; it is to discover the universal in the particular.

It is precisely here where Schopenhauer locates the "...source of one of the greatest and best known errors..." of Plato, namely his rejection of art in general and poetry in particular. Plato's error lies in that "...he teaches (Republic, X [601]) that the object which art aims at expressing, the prototype of painting and poetry, is not the

³⁶Here Schopenhauer notes: "That even the most insignificant thing admits of purely objective and will-less contemplation and thus proves itself to be beautiful, is testified by the still life paintings of the Dutch, already mentioned in this connexion in para. 38" (§41, p.210). This is **not** where he condemns the charming or attractive. On the one hand, Schopenhauer admits that everything, even that which is disgusting or ugly, can be beautiful; on the other hand, he seems uncomfortable with this inclusiveness, and continually objects when certain kinds of objects are made the subject of art.

³⁷WWR, §41, p.210. This claim leads to the Orwellian paraphrase that all things are beautiful but some are more beautiful than others.

Idea but the individual thing."³⁸ Schopenhauer by contrast maintains the very opposite. In fact, that which is trivial or individual cannot be considered art, or at least not great art. It is not entirely arbitrary that Schopenhauer sees the human form as the highest source of beauty. Kant and Schelling, among many others, share this point of view. The self-referential element is not coincidental, but reveals the respective underlying beliefs in the highest truth to be found in the nature of the human being: for Kant it is moral, for Schelling mythic and for Schopenhauer the breaking free from the world ruled by the will.

3. The hierarchy of the arts

In order to understand better Schopenhauer's view of the redemptive power of art, a survey of his hierarchy of the arts is in order. As he has already stated, knowledge of the beautiful, arising from the purely knowing subject and the known Idea, is the source of aesthetic enjoyment; the intensity of this pleasure in turn depends on the differing combinations of the constituent elements. The predominance of the one over the other is linked to the grade of the will's objectivity which the Idea represents. Matter itself cannot express Ideas; only in the forms and qualities which are exhibited in the representation of perception, the supporter of which is matter, are the Ideas revealed.

The different forms of artistic products are ranked according to the grade of the will's objectivity. At a low stage of the will's objectivity is architecture as fine art; it reveals the Ideas of gravity, cohesion, rigidity and so forth. Unlike the plastic and literary arts, architecture gives us the thing itself, and not a copy. The sister art to

³⁸WWR, §41, p.212.

architecture is the artistic arrangement of water, which reveals fluidity, formlessness, maximum mobility and transparency. The next higher grade, Schopenhauer determines, is artistic horticulture, which, although of limited effect, nevertheless portrays both the distinctness of the individual and the association and succession of the whole. Due to the capriciousness of weather, this art form finds itself better presented in landscape painting. Higher still is animal painting and animal sculpture, and with this, the objective side of aesthetic pleasure finally takes precedence over the subjective side, which until this point has been predominant. Again, the dominance of the subjective side of pleasure means that we are still conscious of ourselves, that it is not so easy to lose ourselves in the object. With the switch to the objective side of pleasure, we are increasingly capable of forgetting our subjective existence in contemplation of the object.

a. The human being as the pinnacle of beauty. Historical painting and sculpture have as their task the presentation of the Idea in which the will reaches its highest degree of objectification, where the objective side of pleasure in the beautiful is completely predominant. Unlike depictions of animals, where what is characteristic of the species is considered to be the most beautiful, "...in the manifestation of man the character of the species is separated from the character of the individual. The former is now called beauty (wholly in the objective sense), but the latter retains the name of character or expression..."³⁹ The challenge of the artist is to present both aspects in the same individual so as to capture the essence of human beauty, the highest knowable grade of the will's most complete objectification, to capture, that is, the Idea

³⁹WWR, §45, p.220.

of the human being in general expressed in a particular form. The artist must recognize the beautiful prior to experience, rather than imitating nature, for how is she to recognize the beautiful if she does not already know it?:

We all recognize human beauty when we see it, but in the genuine artist this takes place with such clearness that he shows it as he has never seen it, and in his presentation he surpasses nature. Now this is possible only because **we ourselves** are the will, whose adequate objectification at its highest grade is here to be judged and discovered. In fact, only in this way have we an anticipation of what nature...endeavours to present. In the true genius this anticipation is accompanied by a high degree of thoughtful intelligence, so that, by recognizing in the individual thing its **Idea**, he, so to speak, **understands nature's half-spoken words**. He expresses clearly what she merely stammers.⁴⁰

The anticipation is the Ideal, the Idea in so far as it can be known a priori; the work of art is that which supplements what is given a posteriori in nature.

That the genius can speak clearly for nature, and all Ideas come from nature (manufactured articles have no Idea, only a concept, but they are composed of natural materials) again underscores the kind of creativity present in Schopenhauer's genius: it is a pre-determined creativity in the sense that it is directed solely to communicating the knowledge of the Ideas: "Die Phantasie zeigt dem Genius in den Augenblicken der schöpferischen Konzeption, des Freiwerdens des Intellekts, nicht das, was die Nature wirklich gebildet, sondern das, was sie zu bilden sich bemüht hat."⁴¹ In this sense, the genius is not free, even though she has rare access to the realm above the demands of the will, the realm of freedom from the will: precisely this freedom binds her to the necessity of producing.

⁴⁰WWR, §45, p.222.

⁴¹Hübscher, "Das Genie...", p.117.

Schopenhauer continues his exegesis on the will at its highest grade of objectification by noting that, as beauty is the suitable manifestation of the will in general through its spatial phenomenon, so grace is the adequate manifestation through its temporal phenomenon, through the movement and position of each objectified act of will. The complete and united combination of beauty and grace is the most distinct phenomenon of the highest grade of the will. Finally, Schopenhauer adds that character, which is the highest manifestation of the will in general, is the third element of the principal object of historical painting.

Throughout Schopenhauer's extended discussion on examples of the different forms of art, a discussion heavily laced with his opinion on people, historical example and the world in general, one must bear in mind that: "...the object of art, the depiction of which is the aim of the artist, and the knowledge of which must consequently precede his work as its germ and source, is an *Idea* in Plato's sense, and absolutely nothing else."⁴² Although the *Idea* and the concept share the characteristic that each is a unity representing a plurality of things in the world, many of Plato's examples of *Ideas* actually are only applicable to concepts. *Ideas* are the subjects of original and primary thinking, which is always figurative; concepts are products of reason and language, of *Ideas* under the control of the principle of sufficient reason. The *Idea* is communicable conditionally, through works of art which are apprehended according to the measure of the viewer's intellectual worth: "For this reason the most excellent works of art, the noblest production of genius, must eternally remain sealed books to

⁴²WWR, §49, p.233.

the dull majority of men, and are inaccessible to them."⁴³ Another way of expressing the difference between the Idea and the concept is that the Idea is original unity which, through its spatial and temporal manifestation, has fallen into plurality. By contrast, the concept is that which by means of reason has reconstructed unity out of that plurality. As a result, the concept is useful and necessary in life and in science, but in the service of art is barren, the subject matter of imitators. Access to the Idea, which only the genius is capable of assimilating, transforming and producing, results in a genuine work of art. Only such works remain ageless and speak to all generations, but all too often, are "...received with indifference by their own age to which they disdained to conform..."⁴⁴

⁴³WWR, §49, p.234. The rest of the paragraph reveals in full detail Schopenhauer's horror at the awakening of mass society, and it is undeniable that he felt nothing but scorn and disgust for most of his fellow human beings, seeing them as having only species character and not individual character. His separation of those of value from the masses is democratic in the sense that it strikes equally the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant:

Pöbel: das ist der grosse Haufen, das **profanum volgus**, die Masse des niederen, rohen Volkes. Aber auch von geistigen Pöbel ist die Rede, vom literarischen und philosophierenden Pöbel, von Pöbelphilosophemen und vom christlichen Pöbel in seiner himmelschreienden Ruchlosigkeit gegenüber den Tieren (Hübscher, "Das Genie...", p.113).

While it is all too easy to profess outrage at Schopenhauer's unrestrained contempt towards the masses, Pöggeler soberly notes:

Schopenhauers Denken ist alles andere als eine pessimistisch-hypochondrische Grübelei aus der Zeit bürgerliche Dekadenz. Sein Denken...ist nicht untergegangen mit dem 19. Jahrhundert: es stellt auch uns vor die entscheidenden Fragen, weil es unerbittlich zur Sprache bringt, was aus der neuzeitlichen Weltauffassung folgt (386).

⁴⁴WWR, §49, p.236.

b. Poetry, in particular tragedy, as the ultimate truth. Schopenhauer discusses allegory and symbolism and their use in the plastic and pictorial arts. Finally he turns to poetry, which he concludes is the art form that best reveals the Idea which is the highest grade of the will's objectivity, namely the human being. In the presentation of the lower grades, the plastic and pictorial arts are generally more successful than poetry; because of the complex manner of human expression, however, only poetry can reveal the inner nature of humankind. Our experience is the indispensable condition for understanding both history and poetry, but where history gives us knowledge of the individual, the phenomenon, poetry gives us knowledge of the universal, the Idea. Schopenhauer concludes, with true Romantic sentiment that reminds us of Schelling's claim:

...that which is significant in itself, not in the relation, namely the real unfolding of the Idea, is found to be far more accurate and clear in poetry than in history; therefore, paradoxical as it may sound, far more real, genuine, inner truth is to be attributed to poetry than to history....he who seeks to know mankind according to its inner nature which is identical in all its phenomena and developments, and thus according to its Idea, will find that the works of the great, immortal poets present him with a much truer and clearer picture than the historians can ever give.⁴⁵

Unlike Schelling, however, Schopenhauer follows such a claim with specific examples of what he means and what he does not mean, so that we are not just left with the indefinite sentiment.

After giving numerous examples, he comes to that which represents the pinnacle of poetic art: tragedy, a view also shared by Schelling, although for different

⁴⁵WWR, §51, pp.245-6. Schopenhauer adds in a footnote: "It goes without saying that everywhere I speak exclusively of the great and genuine poet, who is so rare. I mean no one else; least of all that dull and shallow race of mediocre poets, rhymesters, and devisers of fables which flourishes so luxuriantly, especially in Germany at the present time..."

reasons. Poetry objectifies the Idea of humankind, an Idea which expresses itself most clearly in highly individual characters. In tragedy, this reaches a culmination, for it is here that the antagonism of the will with itself is completely unfolded at its highest grade of objectivity, and tears itself apart in the unendurable situation of the human beings who are its phenomena. What happens to resolve this situation is what Schopenhauer considers the highest aim of life, the paradoxical giving up the will-to-live, the achievement of utter resignation: "Thus we see in tragedy the noblest men, after a long conflict and suffering, finally renounce for ever all the pleasures of life and the aims till then pursued so keenly, or cheerfully and willingly give up life itself."⁴⁶ The realization of the futility of the endless striving of the will, and the complete resignation which follows when one renounces all egoism, is the triumph over the will which represents, for Schopenhauer, the supreme act of a human being. This topic is the subject of the fourth book.

c. The unique role of music. Before briefly turning our attention to that book, one last artistic form needs to be considered: music. It is his views on music for which Schopenhauer is best known, primarily through the effect they had on two other nineteenth century geniuses: Wagner and Nietzsche. Music holds a unique position among the arts, for it is not a copy of the Ideas "...but a **copy of the will itself**, the objectivity of which are the Ideas."⁴⁷ Consequently, the effect of music on the listener is much more powerful than the effect of other art forms, for music is the essence. The others are only shadows. Schopenhauer then explains the analogy

⁴⁶WWR, §51, p.253.

⁴⁷WWR, §52, p.257.

between music and Ideas by analyzing the composite parts of music through comparison with the different grades of objectification of the will, from inorganic nature (the ground-bass) to the intellectual life and endeavor of man (the melody). As he stresses, this is not to be understood as a literal explanation of music, for music is beyond words. But it is the closest one can come to expressing the message that is inherent in music, for music is a direct copy of the will itself: "...we could just as well call the world embodied music as embodied will."⁴⁸ Music expresses the inner being of the world through tones. Philosophy, according to Schopenhauer, "...is nothing but a complete and accurate repetition and expression of the inner nature of the world in very general concepts, for only in these is it possible to obtain a view of that entire inner nature which is everywhere adequate and applicable."⁴⁹ Consequently, if one could give a detailed and complete explanation of music, that is, of the concepts it expresses, this would wholly correspond to the true philosophy of the world. Art in general, and music in particular, expresses the elucidation of the visibility of the will, which is representation: art is "...the play within the play."⁵⁰ As long as one is a spectator, actor or producer of the play, one remains firmly in the grasp of the will. Even though contemplation of the Idea behind the spectacle provides a respite from constant suffering, which is the lot of those who are the will as it objectifies itself, it is only temporary. Only when one becomes tired of the spectacle, and wants in earnest to be free of this suffering, can one begin to overcome the will.

⁴⁸WWR, §52, pp. 263-4.

⁴⁹WWR, §52, p.264.

⁵⁰WWR, §52, p.267.

4. The goal of self denial of the will

This journey is the subject of the fourth book, which provides the second aspect of the world as will: "With the Attainment of Self-Knowledge, Affirmation and Denial of the Will to Live." Schopenhauer devotes nearly half again as much space to this topic as to any of the other three books, and it is here that his personal view of the world constantly breaks through. Since my specific interest is Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory, I spend little time on this last book. The relationship between representation and will has already been made clear; now we learn how to overcome our will to live, thereby triumphing over the power of the will and the eternal striving and suffering which is the world. Schopenhauer uses this book to present his ethical theory, and raises the age-old question of the relation between freedom and fate; this deserves a cursory glance.

Because the will is the thing-in-itself, the content of all phenomena, it is free while the phenomena is subordinate to the principle of sufficient reason. To be free means not to be determined by a reason or a consequent; freedom is therefore a negative concept: we know what freedom is not, but cannot so easily say what it is. Schopenhauer is proud of the fact that, as far as he knows, he is the first person in recent times who has adequately explained this relationship between freedom and necessity: "Everything as phenomenon, as object, is absolutely necessary; **in itself** it is will, and this is perfectly free to all eternity."⁵¹ The one important exception to this

⁵¹WWR, §55, p.287. That Schopenhauer feels that he is the first philosopher since Plato genuinely to understand the nature and interaction of a wide variety of things--he admits Kant's greatness but loses no opportunity to show where he erred--is hard to overlook, but that he here thinks his explanation of freedom and necessity is the only clear one is to me surprising. Clear perhaps, if one is convinced that the world is only representation and will, but no clearer in itself than the explanations given by Kant, Schelling or Hegel.

absolute determinism is the work of art, and, by extension, the creating artist. In the human being, will can attain full self-consciousness, which is to say, an exhaustive knowledge of its own inner nature as reflected in the world. Art results from this knowledge (as does the elimination and self-denial of the will, the subject of the present book). In the work of art:

...the freedom which in other respects, as belonging to the thing-in-itself, can never show itself in the phenomenon, in such a case appears in this phenomenon; and by abolishing the essential nature at the root of the phenomenon, whilst the phenomenon itself still continues to exist in time, it brings about a contradiction of the phenomenon with itself...all this indicates only in a general way how man is distinguished from all the other phenomena of the will by the fact that freedom, i.e., independence of the principle of sufficient reason, which belongs only to the will as thing-in-itself and contradicts the phenomenon, may yet in his case possibly appear even in the phenomenon, where it is then, however, necessarily exhibited as a contradiction of the phenomenon with itself. In this sense not only the will in itself, but even man can certainly be called free, and can thus be distinguished from all other beings.⁵²

This freedom is attained only in the artist and in the absolute ascetic. These individuals are exceptional people; in almost all cases the human being is simply the determined phenomenon of the will's free willing.

Despite the a priori feeling of freedom one might have, reflection on experience shows that one's conduct follows with absolute necessity the dictates of one's character, combined with motives. The will can be affected by motives from without, but these never change the will itself, and "[u]ltimately we become acquainted with ourselves as quite different from what a priori we considered ourselves to be; and then we are often alarmed at ourselves."⁵³ We like to excuse this by attributing what happens to fate, but fate is nothing other than the endless concatenation of causes

⁵²WWR, §55, p.288.

⁵³WWR, §55, p.296.

which marks the phenomenal world; the deeds we commit are the manifestation of our intelligible character, and cannot be attributed to circumstances beyond our control. Only the genius can rise above the veil of Maya, the net cast by the principle of sufficient reason, and express the pure Idea, the absolute truth of who or what we ideally are but never actually attain.

Schopenhauer's pessimism, which is perhaps better referred to as resignation, becomes ever clearer in the course of the fourth book. It is here that he repeatedly claims that all life is suffering, and that the basis of all willing is need, lack and pain. Take away the pain and one is left with boredom: "...life swings like a pendulum to and fro between pain and boredom, and these two are in fact its ultimate constituents."⁵⁴ The finest part of life is the pure knowledge which remains foreign to all willing, and which is attainable through the work of art or through the renunciation of the will to live.⁵⁵ This by no means is suicide, for suicide, the doing

⁵⁴WWR, §57, p.212.

⁵⁵One of the most useful investigations into this area is Julian Young's "A Schopenhauerian Solution to Schopenhauerian Pessimism," Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch 68 (1987) 53-69. Young introduces his article with the following explanation:

In this essay I want to argue two things. Firstly that, properly understood, the Schopenhauerian case for pessimism is extremely formidable. Secondly, however, I shall suggest that the quest for **Erlösung**, escape from life, is not a mandatory response to it since there exists a **Lösung**, a life-accepting solution to the problem of pessimism the main ingredients of which are, strangely, suggested by Schopenhauer himself (53).

Young builds a convincing argument on both counts. For the person who happily links Schopenhauer with pessimism, and either dismisses or embraces him, Young provides a useful guide to what pessimism is **not**. Since most commentators approach Schopenhauer from the direction of Nietzsche, instead of considering him in his own right, one often finds a very distorted image of what Schopenhauer actually said. To begin with, because Schopenhauer's goal is the achievement of salvation, he is not an **absolute** pessimist. With this in mind, there are three main areas of misconception: 1) Schopenhauer's pessimism is not an "invasion of his philosophy by personal neurosis" (53) but rather serves as a useful antidote to despair; 2) It is not an articulation of misanthropy; 3) The world is not a place of unalleviated misery but on balance

away of the individual phenomena, affirms the power of the will; the person who commits suicide wills life, and is dissatisfied with the conditions in which she has received it. Suicide differs completely from the denial of the will-to-live, "...which is the only act of freedom to appear in the phenomenon, and hence...the transcendental change."⁵⁶ By phenomenon Schopenhauer here means the individual herself, in contrast to the crystallized moment represented by the work of art. Only through knowledge can the will be mastered, whether fleetingly, as in the work of art, or permanently, in the denial of the will-to-live. The only path to salvation is to let the will appear freely so that it, the will, can recognize, and learn to know, its own inner nature in the phenomenon. Once the will has attained knowledge of itself, it can overcome and abolish itself, thereby ending the suffering inherent in itself as phenomenon.

5. Philosophy and art

For Schopenhauer, "[n]ot merely philosophy but also the fine arts work at bottom towards the solution of the problem of existence,"⁵⁷ the essential meaning of life. The question needs to be raised whether Schopenhauer, by setting the same goal for both philosophy and art, has not reduced the one to the other. The clear answer is no, he has not. He explains:

...all the arts speak only the naïve and childlike language of **perception**, not the abstract and serious language of **reflection**; their answer is thus a fleeting image, not a permanent universal knowledge....Thus all the other arts together

contains more evil than good.

⁵⁶WWR, §69, p.398.

⁵⁷WWRII, 34, p.406.

hold before the questioner an image or picture of perception and say: "Look here; this is life!" However correct their answer may be, it will yet always afford only a temporary, not a complete and final satisfaction. For they always give only a fragment, an example instead of the rule, not the whole which can be given only in the universality of the **concept**. Therefore it is the task of philosophy to give for the concept, and hence for reflection and in the abstract, a reply to that question, which on that very account is permanent and satisfactory for all time.⁵⁸

Art can only present the universal truth in the concrete and particular, whereas philosophy presents it abstractly and in isolation; the wisdom of art is implicit, whereas that of philosophy is explicit. Schopenhauer explains this metaphorically: "...philosophy is related to these arts as wine is to grapes."⁵⁹ It thus appears that philosophy has access to a higher-level, or more permanent, truth of existence, but this is belied by Schopenhauer's further investigations into the nature of philosophy.

Admittedly, art requires its audience to interact in a way that philosophy does not, for the spectator must use her own imagination: "...the very best in art is too spiritual to be given directly to the senses; it must be begotten by the work of art."⁶⁰ At the same time, Schopenhauer hints that this, too, is needed for philosophy; it cannot be completely explicit, for the most deadly mistake a philosopher can make is to try to explain everything. In fact, and here we return to the question of just where the difference between art and philosophy lies, the force which propels the artist is perhaps the same as that which guides the philosopher:

What is properly denoted by the name genius is the predominant capacity for the kind of knowledge described in the two previous chapters ["On Knowledge of the Ideas" and "On the Pure Subject of Knowing"], from which all genuine works of the arts, of poetry, and even of philosophy, spring. Accordingly, as

⁵⁸WWRII, 34, pp.406-7.

⁵⁹WWRII, 34, p.407.

⁶⁰WWRII, 34, p.408.

this has for its object the (Platonic) Ideas, these being apprehended, however, not in the abstract but only **in perception**, the true nature of genius must lie in the completeness and energy of the knowledge of perception.⁶¹

This leads to the conclusion that there is no clear-cut distinction between the aesthetic and the intellectual view of the world; there is only the standpoint of the genius and that of all the others. The difference between the artist, the philosopher, even the natural scientist, is how the vision, the perception of Ideas, is presented.

The artist remains rooted in the language of perception, whereas the philosopher is bound by the more explicit, and therefore less able to express non-rational truth, language of concepts; the subject matter is the same. But if this is so, this raises an essential question about the task of philosophy. In addition, we are faced with the uncertainty as to how we must understand art:

Woher nehmen wir überhaupt den Massstab, die gute von der schlechten, die wahre von der unwahren Kunst zu unterscheiden? Wie können wir davon wissen, ob ein Künstler wirklich die Idee schaut oder nicht? Wie muss die Idee überhaupt ihrem Wesen nach bestimmt werden? Ist sie wirklich platonische, zeitlos mit sich identische Idee, oder ist sie das durchaus nicht, jedenfalls nicht immer? Ist schliesslich Schopenhauers Philosophie nicht gerade das, was sie nicht sein will, nämlich Metaphysik? Ist die Metaphysik also gar nicht so tot, wie Schopenhauer es behauptet?⁶²

Despite all claims to the contrary, it is hard to deny that Schopenhauer has indeed re-introduced metaphysics into philosophy, although, similar to Schelling, it is a metaphysics **from within**, a metaphysics of phenomenology and of the unconscious, rather than one from without, one directed towards a divine creator.

Schopenhauer's interpretation of the world and of the human being is diametrically opposite to that of Kant's. The human mind is, for Kant, an order-

⁶¹WWRII, 31, p.376.

⁶²Pöggeler, p.379.

creating organ. Human beings view the world as an organized place; the processes of the mind can be identified, as CPR demonstrates. Although one cannot know anything about the noumenal realm, Kant clearly believes that it imposes the order on how we think and act. The work of art, the beautiful object, frees the precision of the cognitive process, but because all minds work in the same way, or at least should, one enjoys a subjective, yet universal, feeling of disinterested pleasure. The response to the beautiful object is based on a rational foundation, even if this response cannot be completely rationally explained.

Schopenhauer, by contrast, interprets the world as inherently irrational, completely under the dominion of the capricious and rapacious will. Unlike Kant's thing-in-itself, the will is not order-producing, but instead assumes an infinite variety of disguises and phenomenal forms in its restless search for unattainable satisfaction. The work of art enables one to rise above this ceaseless, irrational motion, to contemplate the pure Idea, which is to be found in the calm, tranquil, one might almost say rational, world of pure form.

Whereas the Kantian work of art produces a universal feeling of disinterested pleasure in all people, Schopenhauer finds the function of art to be quite different. Only by becoming absorbed in the artwork, by losing one's individuality, can the individual momentarily escape the ceaseless longings of the world as represented will. The point is not to recognize the positive unity one shares with all people, but rather to discern the common trap one is in, and rise above it. One then realizes that absolute truth is unattainable in the world. Only in the calm contemplation of absolute form, when the turmoil of particularity and needs is left behind, can one find truth, for truth is nothing but freedom from the will.

Schopenhauer's outlook on the world is not positive, although many positive things can and do happen. One must fight a losing battle against the will, against who one is; this is the meaning of human existence. Through the work of art, we catch a glimpse of what we could be, as a pure, subject-less being, removed from the chaos of the world. Presumably, these brief interludes of calm can teach us how to be better people by teaching us compassion. Since it is only the rare individual who turns to the ascetic life of the saint, most of us must cope with our lot. We can do this well or badly. Complete abandonment to self-interest is an example of the latter approach. Awareness of our mutual situation, where we are dominated by the vagaries of the will, leads us both to greater self-understanding and to empathy for our fellow human beings. It is this which we can learn from a work of art.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The end of this study brings me back to the questions which I posed at the beginning about the nature of the self. I have presented what I hope is a relatively clear exposition of some extremely dense theoretical arguments, in particular the sections on Kant and Schelling. I have shown how the aesthetic theories of all three thinkers arise from each one's theory of mind combined with their respective beliefs about the nature of human beings. The unanswered and essential question which remains is why these three philosophers, as well as a great number of their contemporaries and successors, turn to aesthetics as the vehicle by means of which a satisfactory explanation of the nature of the human self can be found.

Why do all three choose the work of art, or the sensibility which intuits what it means, as the grail, the path to a level of insight which can be found through no other means? To say that it was fashionable at the time does not sufficiently answer the question, for it fails to explain why the genius and her product, the work of art, were placed in such an exalted position. I propose a dual reason for the fascination with genius and art, and the concomitant glorification of genius. The decreasing influence of traditional religious beliefs leaves a void in the meaning structure of the individual, affecting in particular those who were considered intellectuals. The genius and her products help fill this vacuum by providing a link with the mysteries of the world. In addition, and in contrast to the present time, in which most artists respond to some aspect of their particular society, or illuminate what it means to live in that society, the

idea of the social was not yet quite the common currency it is today. The work of art was considered to reflect the very nature of what it means to be a human being, as a universal standard. Only within the framework of such a belief, augmented by an essentially religious outlook but lacking a traditional framework through which to account for the feeling, could the grand systems and the idealism of Kant, Schelling and Schopenhauer (and Hegel) fully flower.

The work of art holds such fascination precisely because it occupies the border territory between what we can see and hear, and what we cannot. It tells us something about ourselves and our world which we can learn in no other fashion. The work of art holds a key to the explanation of who we are, of what it means to be a human being, and this is why Kant, Schelling and Schopenhauer all turn to the realm of aesthetics to seek an explanation of the nature of being. The essence of the nature of the self is abstract and practically inaccessible to precise formulation. All attempts to analyze it prove elusive. The artwork, however, is a concrete object which in a mysterious fashion expresses this hidden truth. Given proof is that everyone agrees that certain works of art are great, which is to say that their message is both timeless and universal. If only one could untangle the enigmatic center of the work of art, a monumental step forward in the introspective preoccupation of self-analysis would be achieved. Consequently, the fascinating puzzle of the meaning of life could be solved were one to discover the mechanism of the strange power exuded by the product of genius, the work of art.

What, however, is the function of art, or rather, what does art mean? This is a topic I have intentionally refrained from discussing, because it requires volumes in its own right. Bearing that in mind, several features are important to consider. First,

none of the three philosophers I have considered are engaged in art criticism, in deciding whether a work of art is 'good' or 'bad,' 'significant' or 'mere kitsch.' They are purely discussing whatever it is that is a 'great work of art,' something to which human beings appear to respond universally with awe and respect, not because they should but because they do. Second, the subject matter of art has changed. In terms of the plastic arts and painting, the main subject matter from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment either refers to Christian religious motifs or reinterprets classical, primarily Greek, themes. The change to painting landscapes, portraits and scenes from everyday life inevitably raises a different set of questions that focus the attention not on another world, but on the world in which one lives. The change from a primarily mimetic mode to an expressive one, which places the Romantic genius at the center of creative activity, acknowledges that art has received a new function. In literature as well, there is a shift from concentrating on Christian theology and didactic works of proper behavior to exploring the individual and the society. The character of this response, combined with the more personal nature of the subject matter, leads to a secular sense of awe towards the creative human being, for it has become clear that the secret of being lies within the individual. If only one digs deep enough, or gains sufficient clarity of sight, the mystery can be revealed.

The shift in the response of how one reacts to a work of art, which is seen in the three different interpretations given by Kant, Schelling and Schopenhauer, illuminates a changing self-understanding. Although all three acknowledge that something inexpressible takes place in the presence of a great work of art, the way in which this experience is framed reveals a paradigmatic shift in the interpretation of the nature of the self. The self is transformed from a rational, calculable model, a child of

the Enlightenment, to the visible representation of a collective unconscious or an irrational, desiring will. Schelling and Schopenhauer differ widely on many points, as I have shown, but they share a basic view of the self as irrational, whereas Kant steadfastly interprets the ideal self as rational.

Schelling's self, a conscious product of the unconscious intelligence which is the world, is a positive creation. The self-examining self is a rational creature, but in the search for its ultimate origin comes to realize that it can never logically explain itself, for it is itself the creator of logic. Only by going outside that system can it explore the deeper, unconscious source of its being. By contrast, Schopenhauer's self is a negative creation, a manifestation of the will as the will struggles and tries to overcome itself. Whereas Schelling's self digs ever deeper into its mind to discover who or what it is, Schopenhauer's self tries to escape from itself and rise above itself. It seeks, in the contemplation of pure Forms, an antidote to the boredom and suffering of everyday life .

For both Schelling and Schopenhauer, the work of art eases the nature of their respective search by providing a non-intellectual vehicle from which to probe the unknown. It is a black box, in which some kind of transference takes place that cannot be explained, but which enables one to attain a moment of absolute truth. The work of art is the product of genius, and the genius is exceptionally attuned to the true nature of the world. Neither Schelling nor Schopenhauer make a serious attempt to follow Kant's method of trying to explain the precise mechanism of the mind that leads to this response to the work of art. That Kant made a grand effort to analyze the response is certainly commendable, but the elucidation of the mechanics of the response is not half so interesting as what one learns by responding. This is the grey

area which Kant did not wish to enter, for one lands, inevitably, in some sort of noumenal realm. One is responding to something non-rational, and learning something which can never be considered cognitive knowledge.

This is not to suggest that Kant did not know this. He certainly did, and spends most of "Critique of Aesthetic Judgement" trying to explain how one can have knowledge that is not cognitive. But what this knowledge is, or what one learns about oneself from it, he does not discuss. Schelling and Schopenhauer, by contrast, consider both how one can have such knowledge and what one can learn from it about oneself. What their views reflect is the growing interest in the nature of the self, not as a purely theoretical being, for Kant is the duly acknowledged master of this approach, but as a living object, rooted in the world. They are fascinated by the underside of the self, by that which does not seem rationally explicable.

In a microcosm, this reflects the split that philosophy itself undergoes. One side of philosophy concentrates on those aspects of the human being which appear explicable, capable of sustaining clear and distinct analysis. The other side delves into the mystery of being, whatever that might be, and seeks to explain something which can barely be put into words. At times, the two sides of this rough division hardly seem to be speaking the same language. That Schelling and Schopenhauer both locate the art work as the source of an expression of deep insight is hardly surprising, given the focus of their respective interests. The relation between art and philosophy is a central topic with which both of them struggle, for they each want to use the precise language of philosophy to capture the veiled truth of art, as did Kant. By doing this, they run the risk of sounding utterly incomprehensible, but the potential reward is the invention of an entirely new dialect of philosophical language.

Schelling makes the boldest move of all, by placing the artwork at the base or pinnacle, depending on one's outlook, of all knowledge, and grounding philosophy in it. The flash of insight which one gains through aesthetic intuition answers the nature of being. It is this flash which philosophy then tries to explain, by means of intellectual intuition. Only the work of art, in particular poetry and even more specifically tragedy, reveals the true nature of the human being by revealing the true nature of being, from which the human has been sundered. The language sounds opaque because the topic is almost impenetrable.

Schopenhauer's claim is not so radical, and his vision is darker, but the range which he reserves for the work of art is as wide as that found in Schelling's treatment. He also regards tragedy as the most perfect form of art (leaving music aside), for the tragic hero or heroine overcomes the will by freely relinquishing that which was dearest, even life itself, because he or she has suddenly understood a truth that is not of this world. While Schopenhauer first assigns art and philosophy to separate spheres, and regards art as speaking the naive language of perception, whereas philosophy is expressed in the mature language of reflection, he nevertheless hints that the true philosopher, like the true artist, must be inspired by genius. Without a vision, all one can do is imitate and over-explain.

Philosophy is a powerful tool for both Schelling and Schopenhauer, but it cannot explain the deepest mystery of the human subject. It comes closest to deciphering this enigma by turning its attention to the work of art and its creator, the genius, and for this reason both Schelling and Schopenhauer focus on this topic. They each see the work of art as presenting a moment of insight into truth, but both are almost incapable of providing an example of such an artwork, or of naming someone

they consider a genius, even though it is hard to believe that this is for lack of prototypes. This is a serious weak point of many aesthetic theorists, for how is one to recognize a great work of art? Is it great for everyone? Is it a purely personal experience? How do we, for example, resolve Kant's claim, that a judgment of taste is a subjective yet universal response, with his awful taste in poetry and music? What does all this aesthetic theorizing say about the concrete work of art? The unavoidable answer is that it says very little, but the reason has to do with the fact that aesthetic theory is not the same as art criticism. The theory tries to establish the criteria by which to judge the artworks, but the judgment of them is the domain of art criticism.

Schopenhauer and Schelling are primarily engaged in what could be called a 'phenomenology of art,' which is another way of defining what I have at times referred to as a metaphysics from within. By analyzing, insofar as this is possible, one's reaction to the work of art in terms of the mute moment of truth which one experiences, one gains an insight into oneself as an individual and as a member of the human species, and a concomitant insight into the nature of being. These insights, in turn, enable the philosopher to attempt to explain, in as precise a manner as possible, the nature of the world and the self, and the relation between the two.

The field of aesthetics has gone through great changes in the twenty eight years between Kant's work in 1790, and that of Schopenhauer's, in 1818, but it still retains the basic form established by Kant. Schelling and Schopenhauer share with Kant the same elementary belief that there is an ideal realm, distinct from the one of everyday life, which can best be reached through the aesthetic experience. But what that realm signifies, and how one can attain knowledge or awareness of it, points to

the great differences between each one's fundamental beliefs both about the world and about what it means to be a human being.

As Kant carefully explains, aesthetic judgment is a subjective judgment. Kant's primary interest is to account for the fact that aesthetic judgments of taste, of what is beautiful, appear to be universal. He proposes a theory of mind which allows a judgment to be both subjective and universal, but this inevitably leads him to imply that all minds are basically alike, for each is but an empirical example of the transcendental self. In the presence of a beautiful object, one comes closest to attaining a state of pre-cognitive awareness, because the primary functions of thinking are released from the absolute determination which rules their actions. In this state, one feels completely disinterested pleasure.

Kant does not appear to be interested in the nature of the feeling of pleasure, for he never specifically defines 'pleasure,' assuming everyone knows what it is. It is clear that he is only willing to countenance a pleasure that is cool, removed, distant: a rational, non-emotional pleasure. One responds to a beautiful object in a purely intellectual way. It is as if that is how one knows that the object is truly beautiful. Kant's concept of beauty invokes the idea of an end in itself. What one learns from the experience is the beauty of the moral law, for Kant consistently lets his belief in this law be the guiding light of his philosophical thought. As I have shown, Kant is incapable of deciding whether pure beauty is absolutely neutral, or moral; his theory points him towards the former, but his underlying beliefs bring him to the latter. As a result, he appears to be at cross purposes with himself. He imposes a precise pattern on a feeling that will not necessarily let itself be bent into this shape. The outcome is impressive, but not entirely convincing.

Schelling and Schopenhauer both take the Kantian model as their starting point. Their method and basic *Weltanschauung*, are, however, completely different from Kant's as well as from each other. Despite their differences, there are remarkable points of similarity in their conclusions, reflecting both their view that the world in which they live is fragmented and alienating, and a longing for wholeness, a truth that the ancient Greeks had, which has been lost. Schelling presents the more radical view in the sense that it is more dynamic. One can produce oneself, whereas for Schopenhauer, one can at best escape from oneself.

The self is, for Schelling, a dialectical construct. It has somehow been separated from the ground of being and has lost its original wholeness. The self pays for its individuality by being in perpetual opposition with itself as it tries to unite its divided parts. The struggle in which the self is engaged mirrors the life force which is in all phenomenal objects. The advantage that the self has is that, when properly trained, it can try to think its way back to the original unity. However, reflecting the egalitarian times of the French Revolution, even those who have not been so trained might also reach this insight by way of aesthetic intuition. In the presence of a great work of art, everyone has the capability of recognizing for a moment the original wholeness from which one has been irrevocably sundered.

Despite Schelling's own later admission that the work of art cannot be the true organon of philosophy, as he had so optimistically stated in his youthful work, his attempt to uncover the mystery of the human subject, without resorting to theological reasons, is insightful. Schelling maintains that by exploring one's unconscious, by pushing back the barriers of what one knows, so as to reach that moment of original separation, one learns certain truths, not only about oneself but also about the world.

Schelling enthusiastically carries out this task, showing us how it can be done. His belief in human beings, and his optimism in the face of the unknown, is great. That he locates the mystery of the entire world inside every human mind shows the change in the belief structure which marks European thought in the 19th century. From Descartes through Kant, the human being has been regarded as providing in some way the filter through which the external world is determined: there is no objective world as such. Schelling views the human being not so much as the filter but as the source; the very structure of cognition has become self-referential.¹

Schelling envisions the ground of being as inert intelligence, the basic stuff of the universe. Only the human mind is capable of returning to an understanding of what this intelligence is, and the mind does this through either intellectual or aesthetic intuition. Schopenhauer has a similar equation. He postulates the will as the basic stuff of the universe, and regards the human mind as the only organ capable not only of understanding, but also, and more importantly, of transcending this primordial substance.

Schopenhauer's view of the world is more grim than that of either Kant's or Schelling's. This might just be due to a quirk of temperament, but undoubtedly family circumstances played a formative role, as Royce has suggested. In addition, the political effects of the expansion of Prussia and the world-changing actions of Napoleon affected Schopenhauer, as they affected all Europeans between Paris and Moscow. Psychological and geo-political explanations offer an easy dismissal of this pessimistic outlook, but Schopenhauer's vision of the will, ceaselessly wanting,

¹I do not mean to suggest that absolute idealism is more wide-spread than it was, but the influence of Schelling, and especially Hegel, on European philosophers in the latter 19th and 20th centuries is undeniably far-reaching.

incapable of satisfaction, pure desire without a final goal, reveals a completely new image of the human being. It is not a flattering picture, and the initial reception of it was a cold lack of interest. Only as the great social upheavals of the nineteenth century began did it appear that it might provide an accurate, or at least instructive, explanation for the way things were. Later, Wagner's and Nietzsche's interest in Schopenhauer also served to focus attention on this darker view of the world.

Schopenhauer maintains that the one consolation an individual has is that she is capable, if only fleetingly, of escaping this world of eternal desire and attaining a moment of peace. She can achieve this through letting go of herself as a subject and losing herself in contemplation of the pure Form, expressed in a work of art. The Schopenhauerian will is both positive and negative. In its non-phenomenal role, what Schopenhauer refers to as pure objectivity, which is what there is when there is no subject around, it is the truth of the universe, because there is nothing besides it. Once it differentiates itself into subject and object, which occurs when it manifests itself in a phenomenal form, it turns into a rapacious beast, devouring itself as it seeks to control itself. Everything in the world, with the rare exception of the saint, is caught in this raging torrent of will. Only by transcending the phenomenal form of the will, and attaining the realm of Ideas, can one understand the true nature of both phenomenal being and of the other side of the will.

Kant, Schelling and Schopenhauer are all idealists, and share the belief that there is a dual structure to the world: the empirical world, and the world behind the appearances in which the true meaning of the empirical world resides, if only we could attain it. All three view the artwork as connecting these two worlds. Their opinions

diverge over how the artwork bridges the gap, and what can be found in the ideal world.

Kant is the strictest, or perhaps most systematic, of these philosophers. Although he clearly has some ideas about the structure of the ideal world, his life's work has been devoted to banishing metaphysical speculation from philosophy. That of which we can have no concrete knowledge cannot be a subject for rational discourse. If we cannot rationally consider something, then it is not a proper subject for philosophy. This is Kant's basic premise, but he makes two conspicuous exceptions to its universality: his moral theory and his aesthetic theory. He cannot do otherwise, for without recourse to a universal by which to prescribe the rules of proper human behavior, or the appropriate way to feel, he trivializes these responses, for they would then be merely subjective beliefs. As Kant breaks this rule, he states that he is not, that these are legitimate exceptions. We can grant him this, but only in so far as it is understood that this reflects Kant's basic belief about the nature of the human being and of the world, and is not the absolute standard that he implies.

Kant's thought represents the fork in the road. Schelling, Schopenhauer and most continental philosophers go down one side; most Anglo-American philosophers go down the other. Kant is torn between the two. Schelling and Schopenhauer candidly admit that one cannot understand human behavior without recourse to another level, and they propose answers for what this level could be. From their point of view, Kant has essentially done the same, all the while saying he has not. In essence, their response to Kant's difficulties is that it would be hypocritical to propose a rationale for the way the world is without bringing in one's basic beliefs, for it is this underlying belief structure on which the rationale is built.

For Kant, the universal applicability of the moral law structures his works which do not deal explicitly with the mind. Even his analysis of the cognitive process is so constituted as to allow for a transcendental or noumenal realm, so that he can later postulate a universal moral standard. Schelling's foundation turns out to rest on his belief that there is a dynamic opposition in all things, which has been caused by the loss of the wholeness of the original ground of being. The ceaseless attempt to overcome this opposition becomes the basis for the mythic explanation of what can be called a collective unconscious. Schopenhauer's philosophy reflects the view that we are all physical manifestations of the will, which is all that there is in the world. The will's endless desiring, and the human being's rare attempts to transcend the will, accounts for the life-force, evil and good. From the point of view of each of these philosophers, without the respective explanations of the moral, the unconscious and the will, one cannot justify either the material world or the nature of the human being.

In these concluding pages, I have explained why it is that the work of art, and aesthetic theory in general, gained such a place of prominence in the thought of German philosophers around the turn into the 19th century. It is not coincidental that the examination of the subject-object relationship, which characterizes most philosophical thought of the Enlightenment, undergoes a decisive shift in its focus. The attempt to formulate a clearly defined explanation of the nature of the self in relation to the world gives way to a search for a hidden, inarticulate, unconscious moment of truth which can illuminate the mystery of the human self.

Through an examination of the aesthetic theory of Kant, Schelling and Schopenhauer, I have shown the radical change in the perception of the nature of the

self which has taken place between 1790 and 1818. The self begins as a child of the Enlightenment, becomes a repository of Romantic hopes, and ends as the fully formed precursor of the theories of will and the unconscious, to be developed by Nietzsche and Freud. The special relationship which exists between the self and a work of art reveals both this change and the underlying beliefs about the world held by the three philosophers I have considered.

The era which defines the subject of this work is one of the richest in European thought. It is a time of changing worlds, and is a tremendously fertile period for writers and poets, particularly in Germany. Schelling and Schopenhauer are steeped in this literary environment, which clearly plays a role in their fascination with artworks. Unfortunately, I have not had the time or space to examine the artistic movement or the concomitant political and social changes, and instead, have had to isolate philosophy from its larger context. Nevertheless, I hope that by concentrating on aesthetics, I have been able to present an overview of the changing attitudes towards the nature and aims of the philosophic enterprise and to show, by a comparison of Kant, Schelling and Schopenhauer, how the changes in their belief structures surfaces in their respective interpretations of the self and world, as reflected in their treatment of aesthetic theory.

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