

**Immanuel
Kant**

**Critique
of
Judgment**

translated by
Werner S. Pluhar

BOOK II

ANALYTIC OF THE SUBLIME

§ 23

Transition from the Power of Judging¹ the Beautiful to That of Judging the Sublime²

The beautiful and the sublime are similar in some respects. We like both for their own sake, and both presuppose that we make a judgment of reflection rather than either a judgment of sense or a logically determinative one. Hence in neither of them does our liking depend on a sensation, such as that of the agreeable, nor on a determinate concept, as does our liking for the good; yet we do refer the liking to concepts, though it is indeterminate which concepts these are. Hence the liking is connected with the mere exhibition or power of exhibition, i.e., the imagination, with the result that we regard this power, when an intuition is given us, as harmonizing with the *power of concepts*, i.e., the understanding or reason, this harmony furthering [the aims of] these. That is also why both kinds of judgment are *singular* ones that nonetheless proclaim themselves universally valid for all subjects, though what they lay claim to

¹[For my use of 'power,' rather than 'faculty,' see above, Ak. 167 br. n. 3.]

²[Cf. the *Anthropology*, § § 67-68, Ak. VII, 239-43.]

is merely the feeling of pleasure, and not any cognition of the object.

But some significant differences between the beautiful and the sublime are also readily apparent. The beautiful in nature concerns the form of the object, which consists in [the object's] being bounded. But the sublime can also be found in a formless object, insofar as we present *unboundedness*, either [as] in the object or because the object prompts us to present it, while yet we add to this unboundedness the thought of its totality. So it seems that we regard the beautiful as the exhibition of an indeterminate concept of the understanding, and the sublime as the exhibition of an indeterminate concept of reason. Hence in the case of the beautiful our liking is connected with the presentation of *quality*, but in the case of the sublime with the presentation of *quantity*. The two likings are also very different in kind. For the one liking ([that for] the beautiful) carries with it directly a feeling of life's being furthered, and hence is compatible with charms and with an imagination at play. But the other liking (the feeling of the sublime) is a pleasure that arises only indirectly: it is produced by the feeling of a momentary inhibition of the vital forces followed immediately by an outpouring of them that is all the stronger. Hence³ it is an emotion,⁴ and so it seems to be seriousness, rather than play, in the imagination's activity. Hence, too, this liking is incompatible with charms, and, since the mind is not just attracted by the object but is alternately always repelled as well, the liking for the sublime contains not so much a positive pleasure as rather admiration and respect, and so should be called a negative pleasure.⁵

245

But the intrinsic and most important distinction between the sublime and the beautiful is presumably the following. If, as is permissible, we start here by considering only the sublime in natural objects (since the sublime in art is always confined to the conditions that [art] must meet to be in harmony with nature), then the distinction in question comes to this: (Independent) natural beauty carries with it a purposiveness in its form, by which the object seems as it were pre-

³[Cf. Ak. 226.]

⁴[Cf. the *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764), Ak. II, 209: "The sublime MOVES us, the beautiful CHARMS us."]

⁵[On admiration, respect, and positive and negative pleasure, cf. the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Ak. V, 71-89.]

determined for our power of judgment, so that this beauty constitutes in itself an object of our liking. On the other hand, if something arouses in us, merely in apprehension and without any reasoning on our part, a feeling of the sublime, then it may indeed appear, in its form, contrapurposive for our power of judgment, incommensurate with our power of exhibition, and as it were violent to our imagination, and yet we judge it all the more sublime for that.

We see from this at once that we express ourselves entirely incorrectly when we call this or that *object of nature* sublime, even though we may quite correctly call a great many natural objects beautiful; for how can we call something by a term of approval if we apprehend it as in itself contrapurposive? Instead, all we are entitled to say is that the object is suitable for exhibiting a sublimity that can be found in the mind. For what is sublime, in the proper meaning of the term, cannot be contained in any sensible form but concerns only ideas of reason, which, though they cannot be exhibited adequately, are aroused and called to mind by this very inadequacy, which can be exhibited in sensibility. Thus the vast ocean heaved up by storms cannot be called sublime. The sight of it is horrible; and one must already have filled one's mind with all sorts of ideas if such an intuition is to attune it to a feeling that is itself sublime, inasmuch as the mind is induced to abandon sensibility and occupy itself with ideas containing a higher purposiveness.

246

Independent natural beauty reveals to us a technic⁶ of nature that allows us to present nature as a system in terms of laws whose principle we do not find anywhere in our understanding: the principle of a purposiveness directed to our use of judgment as regards appearances. Under this principle, appearances must be judged as belonging not merely to nature as governed by its purposeless mechanism, but also to [nature considered by] analogy with art. Hence even though this beauty does not actually expand our cognition of natural objects, it does expand our concept of nature, namely, from nature as mere mechanism to the concept of that same nature as art, and that invites us to profound investigations about [how] such a form is possible. However, in what we usually call sublime in nature there is such an utter lack of anything leading to particular objective principles and to forms of nature conforming to them, that it is rather in its chaos that nature most arouses our ideas of the sublime, or in its

⁶[See Ak. 193 br. n. 35.]

wildest and most ruleless disarray and devastation, provided it displays magnitude and might. This shows that the concept of the sublime in nature is not nearly as important and rich in implications as that of the beautiful in nature, and that this concept indicates nothing purposive whatever in nature itself but only in what *use* we can make of our intuitions of nature so that we can feel a purposiveness within ourselves entirely independent of nature. For the beautiful in nature we must seek a basis outside ourselves, but for the sublime a basis merely within ourselves and in the way of thinking that introduces sublimity into our presentation of nature. This is a crucial preliminary remark, which separates our ideas of the sublime completely from the idea of a purposiveness of *nature*, and turns the theory of the sublime into a mere appendix to our aesthetic judging of the purposiveness of nature. For through these ideas we do not present a particular form in nature, but only develop [the] purposive use that the imagination makes of the presentation of nature.

§ 24

On Dividing an Investigation of the Feeling of the Sublime

In dividing the moments that are involved when we judge objects aesthetically in relation to the feeling of the sublime, the analytic can go on under the same principle that it followed in analyzing judgments of taste. For, since judgments about the sublime are made by the aesthetic reflective power of judgment, [the analytic] must allow us to present the liking for the sublime, just as that for the beautiful, as follows: in terms of *quantity*, as universally valid; in terms of *quality*, as devoid of interest; in terms of *relation*, [as a] subjective purposiveness; and in terms of *modality*, as a necessary subjective purposiveness. So our method here will not deviate from the one used in the preceding [book], except for a [detail that is] of no account: since aesthetic judgments about the beautiful concerned the form of the object, we there started by investigating their quality, whereas

here, since what we call sublime may be formless, we shall begin with the quantity as the first moment of an aesthetic judgment about the sublime. The reason for this is evident from the preceding section.

But we do have to make one division in analyzing the sublime that the analysis of the beautiful did not require: we must divide the sublime into the *mathematically* and the *dynamically* sublime.

For while taste for the beautiful presupposes and sustains the mind in *restful* contemplation, the feeling of the sublime carries with it, as its character, a mental *agitation* connected with our judging of the object. But (since we like the sublime) this agitation is to be judged subjectively purposive, and so the imagination will refer this agitation either to the *cognitive power* or to the *power of desire*, but in both cases the purposiveness of the given presentation will be judged only with regard to these *powers* (without any purpose or interest). The first kind of agitation is a *mathematical*, the second a *dynamical*, attunement of the mind. And so we attribute both these kinds of agitation to the object, and hence present the object as sublime in these two ways.

ON THE MATHEMATICALLY SUBLIME

§ 25

Explication of the Term Sublime

We call *sublime* what is *absolutely* [*schlechthin*] *large*. To be large [*groß*] and to be a magnitude [*Größe*] are quite different concepts (*magnitudo* and *quantitas*). Also, *saying simply* [*schlechtweg*] (*simpliciter*) that something is large is quite different from saying that it is *absolutely large* (*absolute, non comparative magnum*⁷). The latter is *what is large beyond all comparison*. But what does it mean to say that something is large, or small, or medium-sized? Such a term does not stand for a pure concept of the understanding, let alone an intuition of sense. Nor does it stand for a rational concept, for it involves no cognitive principle whatsoever. Hence it must stand for a concept that belongs to the power of judgment or is derived from such a concept, and it must presuppose a subjective purposiveness of the presentation in relation to the power of judgment. That something is a magnitude (*quantum*) can be cognized from the thing itself without any comparison of it with others, namely, if a multiplicity of the homogeneous together constitutes a unity. On the other hand, [to

⁷[Large absolutely rather than by comparison.]

judge] *how large* something is we always need something else, which is also a magnitude, as its measure. But since what matters in judging magnitude is not just multiplicity (number) but also the magnitude of the unity⁸ [used as the unit] (the measure), and since [to judge] the magnitude of this unity we always need something else in turn as a measure with which we can compare it, it is plain that no determination of the magnitude of appearances can possibly yield an absolute concept of a magnitude, but at most can yield only a comparative one.

Now if I say simply that something is large, it seems that I have no comparison in mind at all, at least no comparison with an objective measure, because in saying this I do not determine at all how large [*groß*] the object is. But though my standard of comparison is merely subjective, my judgment still lays claim to universal assent. Such judgments as, This man is beautiful, and, He is large, do not confine themselves to the judging subject, but demand everyone's assent, just as theoretical judgments do.

249

But in a judgment by which we describe something as absolutely large, we do not just mean that the object has some magnitude, but we also imply that this magnitude is superior to that of many other objects of the same kind, yet without indicating this superiority determinately. Hence we do base our judgment on a standard, which we assume we can presuppose to be the same for everyone; but it is a standard that will serve not for a logical (mathematically determinate) judging of magnitude, but only for an aesthetic one, because it is only a subjective standard underlying our reflective judgment about magnitude [*Größe*]. Furthermore, the standard may be either empirical or one that is given a priori. An empirical one might be the average size [*Größe*] of the people we know, of animals of a certain kind, of trees, houses, mountains, and so on. One that is given a priori would be confined, because of the deficiencies of the judging subject, to subjective conditions of an exhibition *in concreto*; an example from the practical sphere is the magnitude [or degree] of a certain virtue, or of the civil liberty and justice in a country; from the theoretical sphere,

⁸['*Einheit*' can mean 'unity' or 'unit' Here it means both, but the concern is with the imagination's effort to perform its usual function of providing an intuition (including that of a unit, even a *basic* unit) with *unity*, by comprehending it in accordance with a concept. See § 26 (Ak. 251-57) as well as Ak. 259. Cf. also the *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 98-100.]

the magnitude [or degree] of the correctness or incorrectness of some observation or measurement that has been made, and so on.

It is noteworthy here that even if we have no interest whatsoever in the object, i.e., we are indifferent to its existence, still its mere magnitude, even if the object is regarded as formless, can yet carry with it a liking that is universally communicable and hence involves consciousness of a subjective purposiveness in the use of our cognitive powers. But—and in this it differs from [the liking for] the beautiful, where reflective judgment finds itself purposively attuned in relation to cognition in general—this liking is by no means a liking for the object (since that may be formless), but rather a liking for the expansion of the imagination itself.

If (under the above restriction⁹) we say simply of an object that it is large, then our judgment is not mathematically determinative; it is a mere judgment of reflection about our presentation of the object, a presentation that is subjectively purposive for a certain use we can make of our cognitive powers in estimating magnitude; and we then always connect with the presentation a kind of respect, as we connect a [kind of] contempt with what we simply call small. Furthermore, our judging of things as large or small [*groß oder klein*] applies to anything, even to any characteristics of things. That is why we call even beauty great or little [*groß oder klein*], because no matter what we exhibit in intuition (and hence present aesthetically) in accordance with the precept of judgment, it is always appearance, and hence also a quantum.¹⁰

250

But suppose we call something not only large, but large absolutely [*schlechthin, absolut*], in every respect (beyond all comparison), i.e., sublime. Clearly, in that case, we do not permit a standard adequate to it to be sought outside it, but only within it. It is a magnitude that is equal only to itself. It follows that the sublime must not be sought in things of nature, but must be sought solely in our ideas; but in which of these it resides [is a question that] must wait for the deduction.¹¹

The above explication can also be put as follows: *That is sublime in comparison with which everything else is small.* We can easily see

⁹[On the kind of standard we are presupposing.]

¹⁰[Cf. the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Axioms of Intuition, A 162-66 = B 202-07.]

¹¹[See below, § 30, Ak. 279-80.]

here that nothing in nature can be given, however large we may judge it, that could not, when considered in a different relation, be degraded all the way to the infinitely small, nor conversely anything so small that it could not, when compared with still smaller standards, be expanded for our imagination all the way to the magnitude of a world; telescopes have provided us with a wealth of material in support of the first point,¹² microscopes in support of the second. Hence, considered on this basis, nothing that can be an object of the senses is to be called sublime. [What happens is that] our imagination strives to progress toward infinity, while our reason demands absolute totality as a real idea, and so [the imagination,] our power of estimating the magnitude of things in the world of sense, is inadequate to that idea. Yet this inadequacy itself is the arousal in us of the feeling that we have within us a supersensible power; and what is absolutely large is not an object of sense, but is the use that judgment makes naturally of certain objects so as to [arouse] this (feeling), and in contrast with that use any other use is small. Hence what is to be called sublime is not the object, but the attunement that the intellect [gets] through a certain presentation that occupies reflective judgment.

Hence we may supplement the formulas already given to explicate the sublime by another one: *Sublime is what even to be able to think proves that the mind has a power surpassing any standard of sense.*

¹²[Cf. the *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens* (1755), Ak. I, 215-368.]

On Estimating the Magnitude of Natural Things, as We Must for the Idea of the Sublime

Estimation of magnitude by means of numerical concepts (or their signs in algebra) is mathematical; estimation of magnitudes in mere intuition (by the eye) is aesthetic. It is true that to get determinate concepts of *how large* something is we must use numbers (or, at any rate, approximations [expressed] by numerical series progressing to infinity), whose unity is [the unit we use as¹³] the measure; and to that extent all logical estimation of magnitude is mathematical. Yet the magnitude of the measure must be assumed to be known. Therefore, if we had to estimate this magnitude also mathematically, i.e., only by numbers, whose unity would have to be a different measure, then we could never have a first or basic measure, and hence also could have no determinate concept of a given magnitude. Hence our estimation of the magnitude of the basic measure must consist merely in our being able to take it in [*fassen*] directly in one intuition and to use it, by means of the imagination, for exhibiting numerical concepts. In other words, all estimation of the magnitude of objects of nature is ultimately aesthetic (i.e., determined subjectively rather than objectively).

Now even though there is no maximum [*Größtes*] for the mathematical estimation of magnitude (inasmuch as the power of numbers progresses to infinity), yet for the aesthetic estimation of magnitude there is indeed a maximum. And regarding this latter maximum I say that when it is judged as [the] absolute measure beyond which no larger is subjectively possible (i.e., possible for the judging subject), then it carries with it the idea of the sublime and gives rise to that emotion which no mathematical estimation of magnitude by means of numbers can produce (except to the extent that the basic aesthetic

¹³[Cf. Ak. 248 incl. br. n. 8.]

measure is at the same time kept alive in the imagination). For a mathematical estimation of magnitude never exhibits more than relative magnitude, by a comparison with others of the same kind, whereas an aesthetic one exhibits absolute magnitude to the extent that the mind can take it in in one intuition.

252 In order for the imagination to take in a quantum intuitively, so that we can then use it as a measure or unity in estimating magnitude by numbers, the imagination must perform two acts: *apprehension* (*apprehensio*), and *comprehension*¹⁴ (*comprehensio aethetica*). Apprehension involves no problem, for it may progress to infinity. But comprehension becomes more and more difficult the farther apprehension progresses, and it soon reaches its maximum, namely, the aesthetically largest basic measure for an estimation of magnitude. For when apprehension has reached the point where the partial presentations of sensible intuition that were first apprehended are already beginning to be extinguished in the imagination, as it proceeds to apprehend further ones, the imagination then loses as much on the one side as it gains on the other; and so there is a maximum in comprehension that it cannot exceed.

This serves to explain a comment made by *Savary* in his report on Egypt:¹⁵ that in order to get the full emotional effect from the magnitude of the pyramids one must neither get too close to them nor stay too far away. For if one stays too far away, then the apprehended parts (the stones on top of one another) are presented only obscurely, and hence their presentation has no effect on the subject's aesthetic judgment; and if one gets too close, then the eye needs some time to complete the apprehension from the base to the peak, but during that time some of the earlier parts are invariably extinguished in the imagination before it has apprehended the later ones, and hence the comprehension is never complete. Perhaps the same observation can explain the bewilderment or kind of perplexity that is said to seize the spectator who for the first time enters St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

¹⁴[*Zusammenfassung*. 'Comprehension' and 'comprehend' are used in this translation only in this sense of 'collecting together and holding together' (cf. 'comprehensive'), never in the sense of 'understanding.']

¹⁵[*Lettres sur l'Égypte (Letters on Egypt)*, 1787, by Anne Jean Marie René Savary, Duke of Rovigo, (1774-1833), French general, diplomat, and later minister of police (notorious for his severity) under Napoleon Bonaparte, but active even after the latter's banishment to St. Helena in 1815. Savary took part in Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt.]

For he has the feeling that his imagination is inadequate for exhibiting the idea of a whole, [a feeling] in which imagination reaches its maximum, and as it strives to expand that maximum, it sinks back into itself, but consequently comes to feel a liking [that amounts to an¹⁶] emotion [*rührendes Wohlgefallen*].

I shall say nothing for now regarding the basis of this liking, a liking connected with a presentation from which one would least expect it, namely, a presentation that makes us aware of its own inadequacy and hence also of its subjective unpurposiveness for the power of judgment in its estimation of magnitude. Here I shall only point out that if the aesthetic judgment in question is to be *pure* (*unmixed with any teleological* and hence rational judgment), and if we are to give an example of it that is fully appropriate for the critique of *aesthetic* judgment, then we must point to the sublime not in products of art (e.g., buildings, columns, etc.), where both the form and the magnitude are determined by a human purpose, nor in natural things *whose very concept carries with it a determinate purpose* (e.g., animals with a known determination in nature), but rather in crude nature (and even in it only insofar as it carries with it no charm, nor any emotion aroused by actual danger), that is, merely insofar as crude nature contains magnitude. For in such a presentation nature contains nothing monstrous (nor anything magnificent or horrid); it does not matter how far the apprehended magnitude has increased, just as long as our imagination can comprehend it within one whole. An object is *monstrous* if by its magnitude it nullifies the purpose that constitutes its concept. And *colossal* is what we call the mere exhibition of a concept if that concept is almost too large for any exhibition (i.e., if it borders on the relatively monstrous); for the purpose of exhibiting a concept is hampered if the intuition of the object is almost too large for our power of apprehension. A pure judgment about the sublime, on the other hand, must have no purpose whatsoever of the object as the basis determining it, if it is to be aesthetic and not mingled with some judgment of understanding or of reason.

253

Since the presentation of anything that our merely reflective power of judgment is to like without an interest must carry with it a

¹⁶[Cf. Ak. 245 and 226.]

purposiveness that is subjective and yet universally valid, but since in the sublime (unlike the beautiful) our judging is not based on a purposiveness of the *form* of the object, the following questions arise: What is this subjective purposiveness, and how does it come to be prescribed as a standard, thereby providing a basis for a universally valid liking accompanying the mere estimation of magnitude—an estimation that has been pushed to the point where the ability of our imagination is inadequate to exhibit the concept of magnitude?

254

When the imagination performs the combination [*Zusammensetzung*] that is required to present a magnitude, it encounters no obstacles and on its own progresses to infinity, while the understanding guides it by means of numerical concepts, for which the imagination must provide the schema;¹⁷ and in this procedure, which is involved in the logical estimation of magnitude, there is indeed something objectively purposive under the concept of a purpose (since any measuring is a purpose). And yet there is nothing in it that is purposive for, and liked by, the aesthetic power of judgment. Nor is there anything in this intentional purposiveness that necessitates our pushing the magnitude of the measure, and hence of the *comprehension* of the many [elements] in one intuition, to the limit of the imagination's ability, and as far as it may extend in exhibiting. For in estimating magnitudes by the understanding (arithmetic) we get equally far whether we pursue the comprehension of the unities to the number 10 (as in the decadic system) or only to 4 (as in the tetradic system): the further generation of magnitudes—in the [process of] combination or, if the quantum is given in intuition, in apprehension—is done merely progressively (rather than comprehensively), under an assumed principle of progression. This mathematical estimation of magnitude serves and satisfies the understanding equally well, whether the imagination selects as the unity a magnitude that we can take in in one glance, such as a foot or a rod, or whether it selects a German

¹⁷[A schema is what mediates, and so makes possible, the subsumption of intuitions under concepts of the understanding (and so the application of these concepts to intuitions). It does so by sharing features of both a concept and an intuition. See the *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 137–47 = B 176–87, and cf. Ak. 351–52 and the Translator's Introduction, xxxvi.]

mile,¹⁸ or even an earth diameter, which the imagination can apprehend but cannot comprehend in one intuition (by a *comprehensio aesthetica*, though it can comprehend it in a numerical concept by a *comprehensio logica*). In either case the logical estimation of magnitude progresses without hindrance to infinity.¹⁹

But the mind listens to the voice of reason within itself, which demands totality for all given magnitudes, even for those that we can never apprehend in their entirety but do (in presentation of sense) judge as given in their entirety. Hence reason demands comprehension in *one* intuition, and *exhibition* of all the members of a progressively increasing numerical series, and it exempts from this demand not even the infinite (space and past time). Rather, reason makes us unavoidably think of the infinite (in common reason's judgment) as *given in its entirety* (in its totality).

The infinite, however, is absolutely large (not merely large by comparison). Compared with it everything else (of the same kind of magnitudes²⁰) is small. But—and this is most important—to be able even to think the infinite as *a whole* indicates a mental power that surpasses any standard of sense. For [thinking the infinite as a whole while using a standard of sense] would require a comprehension yielding as a unity a standard that would have a determinate relation to the infinite, one that could be stated in numbers; and this is impossible. If the human mind is nonetheless to *be able even to think* the given infinite without contradiction, it must have within itself a power that is supersensible, whose idea of a noumenon cannot be intuited but can yet be regarded as the substrate underlying what is mere appearance, namely, our intuition of the world. For only by means of this power and its idea do we, in a pure intellectual estima-

255

¹⁸[The Prussian rod equaled 3.7662 m (meters), the Saxon 4.2951 m, whereas the English rod equals 5.5 yds. or 5.029 m. The German mile was quite long: 7500 m; the English statute mile equals only 1609.35 m. There was also a "geographic" or "Bavarian" as well as a "*Badische*" mile.]

¹⁹['*Das Unendliche*.' What this expression says *literally* is 'the infinite.' Yet here (and similarly in mathematics, where the same expression is used), the expression does not mean *something infinite* (to which the estimation of magnitude progresses), even though it does mean this in other contexts (e.g., in the next paragraph). '*Unendlichkeit*,' on the other hand, usually means 'infinity' only in the most abstract sense: 'infiniteness,' 'being infinite.']

²⁰[In this case, magnitudes that are *given* (in intuition).]

tion of magnitude, comprehend the infinite in the world of sense *entirely under* a concept, even though in a mathematical estimation of magnitude *by means of numerical concepts* we can never think it in its entirety. Even a power that enables us to think the infinite of supersensible intuition as given (in our intelligible substrate) surpasses any standard of sensibility. It is large beyond any comparison even with the power of mathematical estimation—not, it is true, for [the pursuit of] a theoretical aim on behalf of our cognitive power, but still as an expansion of the mind that feels able to cross the barriers of sensibility with a different (a practical) aim.

Hence nature is sublime in those of its appearances whose intuition carries with it the idea of their infinity. But the only way for this to occur is through the inadequacy of even the greatest effort of our imagination to estimate an object's magnitude. In the mathematical estimation of magnitude, however, the imagination is equal to the task of providing, for any object, a measure that will suffice for this estimation, because the understanding's numerical concepts can be used in a progression and so can make any measure adequate to any given magnitude. Hence it must be the *aesthetic* estimation of magnitude where we feel that effort, our imagination's effort to perform a comprehension that surpasses its ability to encompass [*begreifen*] the progressive apprehension in a whole of intuition, and where at the same time we perceive the inadequacy of the imagination—unbounded though it is as far as progressing is concerned—for taking in and using, for the estimation of magnitude, a basic measure that is suitable for this with minimal expenditure on the part of the understanding. Now the proper unchangeable basic measure of nature is the absolute whole of nature, which, in the case of nature as appearance, is infinity comprehended. This basic measure, however, is a self-contradictory concept (because an absolute totality of an endless progression is impossible). Hence that magnitude of a natural object to which the imagination fruitlessly applies its entire ability to comprehend must lead the concept of nature to a supersensible substrate (which underlies both nature and our ability to think), a substrate that is large beyond any standard of sense and hence makes us judge as *sublime* not so much the object as the mental attunement in which we find ourselves when we estimate the object.

Therefore, just as the aesthetic power of judgment in judging the beautiful refers the imagination in its free play to the *understanding*

so that it will harmonize with the understanding's *concepts* in general (which concepts they are is left indeterminate), so in judging a thing sublime it refers the imagination to *reason* so that it will harmonize subjectively with reason's *ideas* (which ideas they are is indeterminate), i.e., so that it will produce a mental attunement that conforms to and is compatible with the one that an influence by determinate (practical) ideas would produce on feeling.

This also shows that true sublimity must be sought only in the mind of the judging person, not in the natural object the judging of which prompts this mental attunement. Indeed, who would want to call sublime such things as shapeless mountain masses piled on one another in wild disarray, with their pyramids of ice, or the gloomy raging sea? But the mind feels elevated in its own judgment of itself when it contemplates these without concern for their form and abandons itself to the imagination and to a reason that has come to be connected with it—though quite without a determinate purpose, and merely expanding it—and finds all the might of the imagination still inadequate to reason's ideas.

Nature offers examples of the mathematically sublime, in mere intuition, whenever our imagination is given, not so much a larger numerical concept, as a large unity for a measure (to shorten the numerical series). A tree that we estimate by a man's height will do as a standard for [estimating the height of] a mountain. If the mountain were to be about a mile high, it can serve as the unity for the number that expresses the earth's diameter, and so make that diameter intuitable. The earth's diameter can serve similarly for estimating the planetary system familiar to us, and that [in turn] for estimating the Milky Way system. And the immense multitude of such Milky Way systems, called nebulous stars, which presumably form another such system among themselves, do not lead us to expect any boundaries here.²¹ Now when we judge such an immense whole aesthetically, the sublime lies not so much in the magnitude of the number as in the fact that, the farther we progress, the larger are the unities we reach. This is partly due to the systematic division in the structure of the world edifice; for this division always presents to us whatever is large in nature as being small in turn, though what it actually presents to us is

²¹[Cf. the *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens* (1755), Ak. I, 247-58, but esp. Ak. I, 306-22.]

our imagination, in all its boundlessness, and along with its nature, as vanishing[ly small] in contrast to the ideas of reason, if the imagination is to provide an exhibition adequate to them.

§ 27

On the Quality of the Liking in Our Judging of the Sublime

The feeling that it is beyond our ability to attain to an idea *that is a law for us* is RESPECT. Now the idea of comprehending every appearance that may be given us in the intuition of a whole is an idea enjoined on us by a law of reason, which knows no other determinate measure that is valid for everyone and unchanging than the absolute whole. But our imagination, even in its greatest effort to do what is demanded of it and comprehend a given object in a whole of intuition (and hence to exhibit the idea of reason), proves its own limits and inadequacy, and yet at the same time proves its vocation to [obey] a law, namely, to make itself adequate to that idea. Hence the feeling of the sublime in nature is respect for our own vocation. But by a certain subreption²² (in which respect for the object is substituted for respect for the idea of humanity within our[selves, as] subject[s]) this respect is accorded an object of nature that, as it were, makes intuitable for us the superiority of the rational vocation of our cognitive powers over the greatest power of sensibility.²³

Hence the feeling of the sublime is a feeling of displeasure that arises from the imagination's inadequacy, in an aesthetic estimation

²²[Cf. the Inaugural Dissertation (1770), *De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principii* (On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and Intelligible World), § 24, Ak. II, 412: "... praestigia intellectus, per subornationem conceptus sensitivi, tamquam notae intellectualis, dici potest (secundum analogiam significatus recepti) vitium subreptionis." i.e., "We may call fallacy of subreption (by analogy with the accepted meaning) the intellect's trick of slipping in a concept of sense as if it were the concept of an intellectual characteristic."]

²³[I.e., the imagination "in its greatest expansion": cf. Ak. 269.]

of magnitude, for an estimation by reason, but is at the same time also a pleasure, aroused by the fact that this very judgment, namely, that even the greatest power of sensibility is inadequate, is [itself] in harmony with rational ideas, insofar as striving toward them is still a law for us. For it is a law (of reason) for us, and part of our vocation, to estimate any sense object in nature that is large for us as being small when compared with ideas of reason; and whatever arouses in us the feeling of this supersensible vocation is in harmony with that law. Now the greatest effort of the imagination in exhibiting the unity [it needs] to estimate magnitude is [itself] a reference to something *large absolutely*, and hence also a reference to reason's law to adopt only this something as the supreme measure of magnitude. Hence our inner perception that every standard of sensibility is inadequate for an estimation of magnitude by reason is [itself] a harmony with laws of reason, as well as a displeasure that arouses in us the feeling of our supersensible vocation, according to which finding that every standard of sensibility is inadequate to the ideas of reason is purposive and hence pleasurable.

258

In presenting the sublime in nature the mind feels *agitated*,²⁴ while in an aesthetic judgment about the beautiful in nature it is in *restful* contemplation. This agitation (above all at its inception) can be compared with a vibration, i.e., with a rapid alternation of repulsion from, and attraction to, one and the same object. If a [thing] is excessive for the imagination (and the imagination is driven to [such excess] as it apprehends [the thing] in intuition), then [the thing] is, as it were, an abyss in which the imagination is afraid to lose itself. Yet, at the same time, for reason's idea of the supersensible [this same thing] is not excessive but conforms to reason's law to give rise to such striving by the imagination. Hence [the thing] is now attractive to the same degree to which [formerly] it was repulsive to mere sensibility. The judgment itself, however, always remains only aesthetic here. For it is not based on a determinate concept of the object, and presents merely the subjective play of the mental powers themselves (imagination and reason) as harmonious by virtue of their contrast. For just as, when we judge the beautiful, imagination and *understanding* give rise to a subjective purposiveness of the mental powers by their *accordance*, so do imagination and *reason* here give rise to such a purposiveness

²⁴[Cf. Ak. 245 and 226.]

by their *conflict*, namely, to a feeling that we have a pure and independent reason, or a power for estimating magnitude, whose superiority cannot be made intuitable by anything other than the inadequacy of that power which in exhibiting magnitudes (of sensible objects) is itself unbounded.

259 Measuring (as [a way of] apprehending) a space is at the same time describing it, and hence it is an objective movement in the imagination and a progression. On the other hand, comprehending a multiplicity in a unity (of intuition rather than of thought),²⁵ and hence comprehending in one instant what is apprehended successively, is a regression that in turn cancels the condition of time in the imagination's progression and makes *simultaneity* intuitable.²⁶ Hence, (since temporal succession is a condition of the inner sense and of an intuition) it is a subjective movement of the imagination by which it does violence to the inner sense, and this violence must be the more significant the larger the quantum is that the imagination comprehends in one intuition. Hence the effort to take up into a single intuition a measure for magnitude requiring a significant time for apprehension is a way of presenting which subjectively considered is contrapurposive, but which objectively is needed to estimate magnitude and hence is purposive. And yet this same violence that the imagination inflicts on the subject is still judged purposive *for the whole vocation* of the mind.

The *quality* of the feeling of the sublime consists in its being a feeling, accompanying an object, of displeasure about our aesthetic power of judging, yet of a displeasure that we present at the same time as purposive. What makes this possible is that the subject's own inability uncovers in him the consciousness of an unlimited ability which is also his, and that the mind can judge this ability aesthetically only by that inability.

In the logical estimation of magnitude, the impossibility of ever arriving at absolute totality by measuring the things in the world of sense progressively, in time and space, was cognized as objective, as an impossibility of *thinking* the infinite as given, and not as merely subjective, as an inability to *take it in*. For there we are not at all

²⁵[Parentheses added.]

²⁶[Cf., for this portion of the paragraph, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 411-13 = B 438-40.]

concerned with the degree of the comprehension in one intuition, [to be used] as a measure, but everything hinges on a numerical concept. In an aesthetic estimation of magnitude, on the other hand, the numerical concept must drop out or be changed, and nothing is purposive for this estimation except the imagination's comprehension to [form] a unity [to be used as] a measure (so that the concepts of a law of the successive generation of concepts of magnitude are avoided). Now if a magnitude almost reaches the limit of our ability to comprehend [it] in one intuition, but the imagination is still called upon to perform, by means of numerical magnitudes (regarding which we are conscious of having an unbounded ability), an aesthetic comprehension in a larger unity; then we feel in our mind that we are aesthetically confined within bounds. Yet, in view of the necessary expansion of the imagination toward adequacy regarding what is unbounded in our power of reason, namely, the idea of the absolute whole, the displeasure is still presented as purposive for the rational ideas and their arousal, and hence so is the unpurposiveness of our imagination's ability. This is precisely what makes the aesthetic judgment itself subjectively purposive for reason, as the source of ideas, i.e., as the source of an intellectual comprehension [compared] to which all aesthetic comprehension is small, and the object is apprehended as sublime with a pleasure that is possible only by means of a displeasure.

B

ON THE DYNAMICALLY SUBLIME IN NATURE

§ 28

On Nature as a Might

Might is an ability that is superior to great obstacles. It is called *dominance* [*Gewalt*] if it is superior even to the resistance of something that itself possesses might. When in an aesthetic judgment we consider nature as a might that has no dominance over us, then it is *dynamically*²⁷ *sublime*.

If we are to judge nature as sublime dynamically, we must present it as arousing fear. (But the reverse does not hold: not every object that arouses fear is found sublime when we judge it aesthetically.) For when we judge [something] aesthetically (without a concept), the only way we can judge a superiority over obstacles is by the magnitude of the resistance. But whatever we strive to resist is an evil, and it is an object of fear if we find that our ability [to resist it] is no match for it. Hence nature can count as a might, and so as dynamically sublime, for aesthetic judgment only insofar as we consider it as an object of fear.

We can, however, consider an object *fearful* without being afraid of it, namely, if we judge it in such a way that we merely *think* of the

²⁷[From Greek *δύναμις* (*dýnamis*), i.e. 'might,' 'power,' etc.]

261

case where we might possibly want to put up resistance against it, and that any resistance would in that case be utterly futile. Thus a virtuous person fears God without being afraid of him. For he does not think of wanting to resist God and his commandments as a possibility that should worry *him*. But for every such case, which he thinks of as not impossible intrinsically, he recognizes God as fearful.

Just as we cannot pass judgment on the beautiful if we are seized by inclination and appetite, so we cannot pass judgment at all on the sublime in nature if we are afraid. For we flee from the sight of an object that scares us, and it is impossible to like terror that we take seriously. That is why the agreeableness that arises from the cessation of a hardship is *gladness*. But since this gladness involves our liberation from a danger, it is accompanied by our resolve never to expose ourselves to that danger again. Indeed, we do not even like to think back on that sensation, let alone actively seek out an opportunity for it.

On the other hand, consider bold, overhanging and, as it were, threatening rocks, thunderclouds piling up in the sky and moving about accompanied by lightning and thunderclaps, volcanoes with all their destructive power, hurricanes with all the devastation they leave behind, the boundless ocean heaved up, the high waterfall of a mighty river, and so on. Compared to the might of any of these, our ability to resist becomes an insignificant trifle. Yet the sight of them becomes all the more attractive the more fearful it is, provided we are in a safe place. And we like to call these objects sublime because they raise the soul's fortitude above its usual middle range and allow us to discover in ourselves an ability to resist which is of a quite different kind, and which gives us the courage [to believe] that we could be a match for nature's seeming omnipotence.

For although we found our own limitation when we considered the immensity of nature and the inadequacy of our ability to adopt a standard proportionate to estimating aesthetically the magnitude of nature's *domain*, yet we also found, in our power of reason, a different and nonsensible standard that has this infinity itself under it as a unit; and since in contrast to this standard everything in nature is small, we found in our mind a superiority over nature itself in its immensity. In the same way, though the irresistibility of nature's might makes us, considered as natural beings, recognize our physical impotence, it reveals in us at the same time an ability to judge

ourselves independent of nature, and reveals in us a superiority over nature that is the basis of a self-preservation quite different in kind from the one that can be assailed and endangered by nature outside us. This keeps the humanity in our person from being degraded, even though a human being would have to succumb to that dominance [of nature]. Hence if in judging nature aesthetically we call it sublime, we do so not because nature arouses fear, but because it calls forth our strength (which does not belong to nature [within us]), to regard as small the [objects] of our [natural] concerns: property, health, and life, and because of this we regard nature's might (to which we are indeed subjected in these [natural] concerns) as yet not having such dominance over us, as persons, that we should have to bow to it if our highest principles were at stake and we had to choose between upholding or abandoning them. Hence nature is here called sublime [*erhaben*] merely because it elevates [*erhebt*] our imagination, [making] it exhibit those cases where the mind can come to feel its own sublimity, which lies in its vocation and elevates it even above nature.

This self-estimation loses nothing from the fact that we must find ourselves safe in order to feel this exciting liking, so that (as it might seem), since the danger is not genuine, the sublimity of our intellectual ability might also not be genuine. For here the liking concerns only our ability's *vocation*, revealed in such cases, insofar as the predisposition to this ability is part of our nature, whereas it remains up to us, as our obligation, to develop and exercise this ability. And there is truth in this, no matter how conscious of his actual present impotence man may be when he extends his reflection thus far.

I admit that this principle seems farfetched and the result of some subtle reasoning, and hence high-flown [*überschwenglich*] for an aesthetic judgment. And yet our observation of man proves the opposite, and proves that even the commonest judging can be based on this principle, even though we are not always conscious of it. For what is it that is an object of the highest admiration even to the savage? It is a person who is not terrified, not afraid, and hence does not yield to danger but promptly sets to work with vigor and full deliberation. Even in a fully civilized society there remains this superior esteem for the warrior, except that we demand more of him: that he also demonstrate all the virtues of peace—gentleness, sympathy, and even appropriate care for his own person—precisely because they reveal to us that his mind cannot be subdued by danger. Hence,

263

no matter how much people may dispute, when they compare the statesman with the general, as to which one deserves the superior respect, an aesthetic judgment decides in favor of the general. Even war has something sublime about it if it is carried on in an orderly way and with respect for the sanctity of the citizens' rights. At the same time it makes the way of thinking of a people that carries it on in this way all the more sublime in proportion to the number of dangers in the face of which it courageously stood its ground. A prolonged peace, on the other hand, tends to make prevalent a mere[ly] commercial spirit,²⁸ and along with it base selfishness, cowardice, and softness, and to debase the way of thinking of that people.²⁹

This analysis of the concept of the sublime, insofar as [sublimity is] attributed to might, may seem to conflict with the fact that in certain situations—in tempests, storms, earthquakes, and so on—we usually present God as showing himself in his wrath but also in his sublimity, while yet it would be both foolish and sacrilegious to imagine that our mind is superior to the effects produced by such a might, and is superior apparently even to its intentions. It seems that here the mental attunement that befits the manifestation of such an object is not a feeling of the sublimity of our own nature, but rather submission, prostration, and a feeling of our utter impotence; and this mental attunement is in fact usually connected with the idea of this object when natural events of this sort occur. It seems that in religion in general the only fitting behavior in the presence of the deity is prostration, worship with bowed head and accompanied by contrite and timorous gestures and voice; and that is why most peoples have in fact adopted this behavior and still engage in it. But, by the same token, this mental attunement is far from being intrinsically and necessarily connected with the idea of the *sublimity* of a religion and its object. A person who is actually afraid and finds cause for this in himself because he is conscious that with his reprehensible attitude he offends against a might whose will is at once irresistible and just is not at all in the frame of mind [needed] to admire divine greatness, which requires that we be attuned to quiet contemplation and that our judgment be completely free. Only if he is conscious that his attitude is sincere and pleasing to God, will these effects of might

²⁸[Cf. *Perpetual Peace*, Ak. VIII, 368.]

²⁹[Cf. § 83, Ak. 429–34.]

serve to arouse in him the idea of God's sublimity, insofar as he recognizes in his own attitude a sublimity that conforms to God's will, and is thereby elevated above any fear of such natural effects, which he does not regard as outbursts of God's wrath.] Even humility, as a strict judging of our own defects which, when we are conscious that our own attitudes are good, could otherwise easily be cloaked with the frailty of human nature [as an excuse], is a sublime mental attunement, namely, voluntary subjection of ourselves to the pain of self-reprimand so as gradually to eradicate the cause of these defects. This alone is what intrinsically distinguishes religion from superstition. The latter establishes in the mind not a reverence for the sublime, but fear and dread of that being of superior might to whose will the terrified person finds himself subjected but without holding him in esteem; and this can obviously give rise to nothing but ingratiating and fawning, never to a religion based on good conduct.³⁰

264

Hence sublimity is contained not in any thing of nature, but only in our mind, insofar as we can become conscious of our superiority to nature within us, and thereby also to nature outside us (as far as it influences us). Whatever arouses this feeling in us, and this includes the *might* of nature that challenges our forces, is then (although improperly) called sublime. And it is only by presupposing this idea within us, and by referring to it, that we can arrive at the idea of the sublimity of that being who arouses deep respect in us, not just by his might as demonstrated in nature, but even more by the ability, with which we have been endowed, to judge nature without fear and to think of our vocation as being sublimely above nature.

³⁰[Cf. *Religion within the Bounds of Reason Alone*, Ak. VI, 51: "... [A]ll religions can be divided into two kinds: religion of *ingratiating* (mere worship), and *moral* religion, i.e., religion based on *good conduct*."]

§ 29

On the Modality of a Judgment about the Sublime in Nature

Beautiful nature contains innumerable things about which we do not hesitate to require everyone's judgment to agree with our own, and can in fact expect such agreement without being wrong very often. But we cannot with the same readiness count on others to accept our judgment about the sublime in nature. For it seems that, if we are to pass judgment on that superiority of [such] natural objects, not only must our aesthetic power of judgment be far more cultivated, but also so must the cognitive powers on which it is based.

265

In order for the mind to be attuned to the feeling of the sublime, it must be receptive to ideas. For it is precisely nature's inadequacy to the ideas—and this presupposes both that the mind is receptive to ideas and that the imagination strains to treat nature as a schema³¹ for them—that constitutes what both repels our sensibility and yet attracts us at the same time, because it is a dominance [*Gewalt*] that reason exerts over sensibility only for the sake of expanding it commensurately with reason's own domain (the practical one) and letting it look outward toward the infinite, which for sensibility is an abyss. It is a fact that what is called sublime by us, having been prepared through culture, comes across as merely repellent to a person who is uncultured and lacking in the development of moral ideas. In all the evidence of nature's destructive force [*Gewalt*], and in the large scale of its might, in contrast to which his own is nonexistent, he will see only the hardship, danger, and misery that would confront anyone forced to live in such a place. Thus (as Mr. de Saussure relates³²) the good and otherwise sensible Savoyard peasant did not hesitate to call anyone a fool who fancies glaciated mountains. He might even have had a point, if Saussure had acted merely from fancy,

³¹[See Ak. 253 br. n. 17.]

³²[Horace Bénédict de Saussure (1740-99), Swiss geologist, geographer, and botanist. He traveled extensively in the Alps (he was only the third to climb Mont Blanc, in 1787), and recorded his observations in his *Voyage dans les Alpes* (1779, 1786).]

as most travelers tend to, in exposing himself to the dangers involved in his observations, or in order that he might some day be able to describe them with pathos. In fact, however, his intention was to instruct mankind, and that excellent man got, in addition, the soul-stirring sensation and gave it into the bargain to the readers of his travels.

But the fact that a judgment about the sublime in nature requires culture (more so than a judgment about the beautiful) still in no way implies that it was initially produced by culture and then introduced to society by way of (say) mere convention. Rather, it has its foundation in human nature: in something that, along with common sense, we may require and demand of everyone, namely, the predisposition to the feeling for (practical) ideas, i.e., to moral feeling.

This is what underlies the necessity—which we include in our judgment about the sublime—of the assent of other people's judgment to our own. For just as we charge someone with a lack of *taste* if he is indifferent when he judges an object of nature that we find beautiful, so we say that someone has no *feeling* if he remains unmoved in the presence of something we judge sublime. But we demand both taste and feeling of every person, and, if he has any culture at all, we presuppose that he has them. But we do so with this difference: taste we demand unhesitatingly from everyone, because here judgment refers the imagination merely to the understanding, our power of concepts; in the case of feeling, on the other hand, judgment refers the imagination to reason, our power of ideas, and so we demand feeling only under a subjective presupposition (though we believe we are justified and permitted to require [fulfillment of] this presupposition in everyone): we presuppose moral feeling in man. And so we attribute necessity to this [kind of] aesthetic judgment as well.

266

In this modality of aesthetic judgments—their presumed necessity—lies one principal moment for a critique of judgment. For it is this necessity that reveals an a priori principle in them and lifts them out of [the reach of] empirical psychology, in which they would otherwise remain buried among the feelings of gratification and pain (accompanied only by the empty epithet of being a *more refined* feeling). Instead this necessity places them, and by means of them our power of judgment, into the class of those judgments that have a priori

principles at their basis, and hence brings them into transcendental philosophy.

General Comment on the Exposition of Aesthetic Reflective Judgments

In relation to the feeling of pleasure an object must be classed with either the *agreeable*, or the *beautiful*, or the *sublime*, or the (absolutely) *good* (*iucundum, pulchrum, sublime, honestum*).

The *agreeable*, as an incentive for desires, is always of the same kind, wherever it may come from and however different in kind may be the presentation (of sense, and of sensation regarded objectively³³). That is why what matters in judging its influence on the mind is only the number of stimuli (simultaneous and successive), and, as it were, only the mass of the agreeable sensation, so that this sensation can be made intelligible only through its *quantity*. Nor does the agreeable contribute to culture, but it belongs to mere enjoyment. The *beautiful*, on the other hand, requires that we present a certain *quality* of the object, and a quality that can be made intelligible and brought to concepts (even though in an aesthetic judgment the beautiful is not brought to concepts). It also contributes to culture, for it teaches us at the same time to be mindful of purposiveness in the feeling of pleasure. The *sublime* consists merely in a *relation*, for here we judge the sensible [element] in the presentation of nature to be suitable for a possible supersensible use. The *absolutely good* (the object of moral feeling), as judged subjectively by the feeling it inspires, is the ability of the subject's powers to be determined by the conception of a law that *obligates absolutely*. It is distinguished above all by its *modality*:

267

³³[I.e., in the meaning of the term 'sensation' where the sensation refers to an object, rather than being a *feeling* and so referring *only* to the subject, like the *agreeable sensation* about to be mentioned. Cf. § 3, Ak. 205-06. Cf. also Ak. 207 br. n. 12; Kant continues to use 'sensation' to mean 'feeling' as well.]

a necessity that rests on a priori concepts and contains not just a *claim* but also a *command* that everyone approve. Actually, the absolutely good belongs not to aesthetic but to pure intellectual judgment; by the same token, we attribute it to freedom rather than to nature, and in a determinative rather than in a merely reflective judgment. But the *determinability of the subject* by this idea—the determinability, indeed, of a subject who can sense within himself, as a *modification of his state, obstacles* in sensibility, but at the same time his superiority to sensibility in overcoming these obstacles, which determinability is moral feeling—is nevertheless akin to the aesthetic power of judgment and its *formal conditions* inasmuch as it allows us to present the lawfulness of an act done from duty as aesthetic also, i.e., as sublime or for that matter beautiful, without any loss in the feeling's purity, while such a loss would be unavoidable if we sought to bring the feeling into a natural connection with the feeling of the agreeable.

If we take the result from the exposition given so far of the two kinds of aesthetic judgments, we arrive at the following brief explications:

Beautiful is what we like when we merely judge it (and hence not through any sensation by means of sense in accordance with some concept of the understanding). From this it follows at once that we must like the beautiful without any interest.

Sublime is what, by its resistance to the interest of the senses, we like directly.

Both of these are explications of universally valid aesthetic judging and as such refer to subjective bases. In the case of the beautiful, the reference is to subjective bases of sensibility as they are purposive for the benefit of the contemplative understanding. In the case of the sublime, the reference is to subjective bases as they are purposive in relation to moral feeling, namely, against sensibility but at the same time, and within the very same subject, for the purposes of practical reason. The beautiful prepares us for loving something, even nature, without interest; the sublime, for esteeming it even against our interest (of sense).

The sublime can be described thus: it is an object (of nature) *the presentation of which determines the mind to think of nature's inability to attain to an exhibition of ideas.*

If we speak literally and consider the matter logically, ideas cannot

be exhibited. But when in intuiting nature we expand our empirical power of presentation (mathematically or dynamically), then reason, the ability to [think] an independent and absolute totality, never fails to step in and arouse the mind to an effort, although a futile one, to make the presentation of the senses adequate to this [idea of] totality. This effort, as well as the feeling that the imagination [as it synthesizes empirical nature] is unable to attain to that idea, is itself an exhibition of the subjective purposiveness of our mind, in the use of our imagination, for the mind's supersensible vocation. And we are compelled to subjectively *think* nature itself in its totality as the exhibition of something supersensible, without our being able to bring this exhibition about *objectively*.

For we soon come to realize that nature in space and time [i.e., phenomenal nature] entirely lacks the unconditioned, and hence lacks also that absolute magnitude [i.e., totality] which, after all, even the commonest reason demands. And this is precisely what reminds us that we are dealing only with nature as appearance, which must yet be considered in turn the mere exhibition of nature in itself (of which reason has the idea). We cannot determine this idea of the supersensible any further, and hence we cannot *cognize* but can only *think* nature as an exhibition of it. But it is this idea that is aroused in us when, as we judge an object aesthetically, this judging strains the imagination to its limit, whether of expansion (mathematically) or of its might over the mind (dynamically). The judging strains the imagination because it is based on a feeling that the mind has a vocation that wholly transcends the domain of nature (namely, moral feeling), and it is with regard to this feeling that we judge the presentation of the object subjectively purposive.

It is in fact difficult to think of a feeling for the sublime in nature without connecting with it a mental attunement similar to that for moral feeling. It is true that the pleasure we take directly in the beautiful in nature also presupposes, as well as cultivates, a certain *liberality* in our way of thinking, i.e., an independence of the liking from mere enjoyment of sense; but here the freedom is still presented more as in *play* than as subject to a law-governed *task*. But the latter is what genuinely characterizes man's morality, where reason must exert its dominance over sensibility, except that in an aesthetic judgment about the sublime we present this dominance as being exerted by the imagination itself, as an instrument of reason.

By the same token, a liking for the sublime in nature is only *negative* (whereas a liking for the beautiful is *positive*):³⁴ it is a feeling that the imagination by its own action is depriving itself of its freedom, in being determined purposively according to a law different from that of its empirical use. The imagination thereby acquires an expansion and a might that surpasses the one it sacrifices; but the basis of this might is concealed from it; instead the imagination *feels* the sacrifice or deprivation and at the same time the cause to which it is being subjugated. Thus any spectator who beholds massive mountains climbing skyward, deep gorges with raging streams in them, wastelands lying in deep shadow and inviting melancholy meditation, and so on is indeed seized by *amazement* bordering on terror, by horror and a sacred thrill; but, since he knows he is safe, this is not actual fear: it is merely our attempt to incur it with our imagination, in order that we may feel that very power's might and connect the mental agitation this arouses with the mind's state of rest. In this way we [feel] our superiority to nature within ourselves, and hence also to nature outside us insofar as it can influence our feeling of well-being. For the imagination, acting in accordance with the law of association, makes our state of contentment dependent on [something] physical; but the same power, acting in accordance with principles of the schematism of judgment (and hence, to that extent, in subordination to freedom), is an instrument of reason and its ideas. As such, however, it is a might [that allows us] to assert our independence of natural influences, to degrade as small what is large according to the imagination in its first [role], and so to posit the absolutely large [or great] only in his (the subject's) own vocation. In this reflection of the aesthetic power of judgment, by which it seeks to elevate itself to the point of being adequate to reason (though without having a determinate concept from reason), we present the object itself as subjectively

³⁴[Cf. Edmund Burke (to whom Kant responds at Ak. 277-78), *Philosophical Enquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757): "[Sublimity and beauty] are indeed ideas of a very different nature, one being founded on pain, the other on pleasure . . ." (Pt. III, Sect. xxvii). The pleasure on which beauty is founded is "actual" pleasure (Pt. IV, Sect. v), because it is *positive* pleasure (Pt. I, Sect. iv); the sublime gives rise only to "delight," which is not a positive pleasure but merely a "relative" pleasure (Pt. I, Sect. iv) because it "turns on pain." (Pt. I, Sect. xviii), in the sense that it is merely the cessation or diminution of pain (Pt. I, Sect. iv). There are many more parallels between Kant's and Burke's accounts of beauty and (especially) sublimity.]

purposive, precisely because objectively the imagination, [even] in its greatest expansion, is inadequate to reason (the power of ideas).

270

We must in all of this be mindful of the injunction given above, namely, that the transcendental aesthetic of judgment must be concerned solely with pure aesthetic judgments. Hence we must not take for our examples such beautiful or sublime objects of nature as presuppose the concept of a purpose. For then the purposiveness would be either teleological, and hence not aesthetic, or else be based on mere sensations of an object (gratification or pain) and hence not merely formal. Therefore, when we call the sight of the starry sky *sublime*, we must not base our judgment upon any concepts of worlds that are inhabited by rational beings,³⁵ and then [conceive of] the bright dots that we see occupying the space above us as being these worlds' suns, moved in orbits prescribed for them with great purposiveness; but we must base our judgment regarding it merely on how we see it, as a vast vault encompassing everything, and merely under this presentation may we posit the sublimity that a pure aesthetic judgment attributes to this object. In the same way, when we judge the sight of the ocean we must not do so on the basis of how we *think* it, enriched with all sorts of knowledge which we possess (but which is not contained in the direct intuition), e.g., as a vast realm of aquatic creatures, or as the great reservoir supplying the water for the vapors that impregnate the air with clouds for the benefit of the land, or again as an element that, while separating continents from one another, yet makes possible the greatest communication among them; for all such judgments will be teleological. Instead we must be able to view the ocean as poets do, merely in terms of what manifests itself to the eye—e.g., if we observe it while it is calm, as a clear mirror of water bounded only by the sky; or, if it is turbulent, as being like an abyss threatening to engulf everything—and yet find it sublime. The same applies to the sublime and beautiful in the human figure. Here, too, we must not have in mind [*zurücksehen auf*], as bases determining our judgment, concepts of the purposes *for which* man has all his limbs, letting the limbs' harmony with these purposes *influence* our aesthetic judgment (which would then cease to be pure), even though it is certainly a necessary condition of

³⁵[Kant discusses the possibility of extraterrestrial life elaborately (and movingly) in his *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens* (1755), Ak. I, 349–68.]

aesthetic liking as well that the limbs not conflict with those purposes. Aesthetic purposiveness is the lawfulness of the power of judgment in its *freedom*. [Whether we then] like the object depends on [how] we suppose [*setzen wollen*] the imagination to relate [to it]; but [for this liking to occur] the imagination must on its own sustain the mind in a free activity. If, on the other hand, the judgment is determined by anything else, whether a sensation proper [*Sinnesempfindung*]³⁶ or a concept of the understanding, then the judgment is indeed lawful, but it is not one made by a *free* power of judgment.

271

Sometimes we speak of intellectual beauty or sublimity. But, *first*, these expressions are not quite correct. For beauty and sublimity are aesthetic ways of presenting [things], and if we were nothing but pure intelligences³⁷ (or, for that matter, if in thought we put ourselves in the place of such [beings]), we would not present [things] in this way at all. *Second*, even though these two [intellectual beauty and sublimity], as objects of an intellectual (moral) liking, are indeed compatible with an aesthetic liking inasmuch as they do not *rest* on any interest, it still remains difficult to make them compatible with it: for they are to *produce* an interest, and yet, on the assumption that the exhibition is to harmonize with the [kind of] liking involved in an aesthetic judgment, this interest would have to be an interest of sense connected with the exhibition; but that would impair the intellectual purposiveness and make it impure.

The object of a pure and unconditioned intellectual liking is the moral law in its might, the might that it exerts in us over any and all of those incentives of the mind *that precede it*. This might actually reveals itself aesthetically only through sacrifice (which is a deprivation—though one that serves our inner freedom—in return for which it reveals in us an unfathomable depth of this supersensible power, whose consequences extend beyond what we can foresee). Hence, considered from the aesthetic side (i.e., in reference to sensibility), the liking is negative, i.e., opposed to this interest, but considered from the intellectual side it is positive and connected with an interest.

³⁶As distinguished from 'sensation' as meaning feeling. Cf. Ak. 291 incl. br. n. 19. (If the aesthetic judgment [of liking, which is a feeling] were determined by sensation proper, it would be a judgment about the agreeable, [and "lawful" only empirically]. Cf. Ak. 205-06.)

³⁷[Cf. Ak. 233.]

It follows from this that if we judge aesthetically the good that is intellectual and intrinsically purposive (the moral good), we must present it not so much as beautiful but rather as sublime, so that it will arouse more a feeling of respect (which disdains charm) than one of love and familiar affection. For human nature does not of itself harmonize with that good; it [can be made to harmonize with it] only through the dominance that reason exerts over sensibility. Conversely, too, what we call sublime in nature outside us, or for that matter in nature within us (e.g., certain affects), becomes interesting only because we present it as a might of the mind to rise above *certain* obstacles of sensibility by means of moral principles.

272 Let me dwell a little on that last point. If the idea of the good is accompanied by affect [as its effect], this [affect] is called *enthusiasm*.³⁸ This mental state seems to be sublime, so much so that it is commonly alleged that nothing great can be accomplished without it. But in fact any affect³⁹ is blind, either in the selection of its purpose, or, if that were to have been given by reason, in [the manner of] achieving it. For an affect is an agitation of the mind that makes it unable to engage in free deliberation about principles with the aim of determining itself according to them. Hence there is no way it can deserve to be liked by reason. Yet enthusiasm is sublime aesthetically, because it is a straining of our forces by ideas that impart to the mind a momentum whose effects are mightier and more permanent than are those of an impulse produced by presentations of sense. But (strange though it seems) even [the state of] *being without affects* (*apatheia, phlegma in significatu bono*⁴¹) in a mind that vigorously

³⁸[On enthusiasm as an affect, cf. (and contrast) the *Anthropology*, § 75, Ak. VII, 253–54; cf. also the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Ak. VI, 408–09.]

³⁹*Affects* differ in kind from *passions*. Affects relate merely to feeling, whereas passions belong to our power of desire and are inclinations that make it difficult or impossible for us to determine our power of choice through principles. Affects are impetuous and unpremeditated, passions persistent and deliberate. Thus resentment in the form of anger is an affect, in the form of hatred (vindictiveness) it is a passion. Passion can never be called sublime, no matter what the circumstances; for while in an affect the mind's freedom is *impeded*, in passion it is abolished.⁴⁰

⁴⁰[On these distinctions, cf. the *Anthropology*, Ak. VII, 251–75 (see also *ibid.*, 235), and the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Ak. VI, 407–08.]

⁴¹[In their favorable (namely, moral) senses. Cf. the *Anthropology*, Ak. VII, 252–54, and the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Ak. VI, 408.]

pursues its immutable principles is sublime, and sublime in a far superior way, because it also has pure reason's liking on its side. Only a cast of mind of that sort is called noble—[though] the term has since come to be applied to things as well, such as a building, a garment, a literary style, a person's bearing, and so on—namely, if it arouses not so much *amazement* [*Verwunderung*] (an affect [that occurs] when we present novelty that exceeds our expectation) as *admiration* [*Bewunderung*] (an amazement that does not cease once the novelty is gone),⁴² which happens when ideas in their exhibition harmonize, unintentionally and without art, without our aesthetic liking.

Every affect of the VIGOROUS KIND (i.e., which makes us conscious that we have forces to overcome any resistance, i.e., makes us conscious of our *animus strenuus*) is *aesthetically sublime*, e.g., anger, even desperation (provided it is *indignant* rather than *despondent* desperation). But an affect of the LAGUID kind (which turns the very effort to resist into an object of displeasure, an *animus languidus*), has nothing *noble* about it, though it may be classed with the beautiful of the sensible kind. Hence emotions that can reach the strength of an affect are very diverse as well. We have *spirited* [*mutig*] emotions, and we have *tender* ones. When the latter increase to the level [i.e., strength] of an affect, they are utterly useless; and a propensity toward them is called *sentimentality*. A sympathetic grief that refuses to be consoled or that, if it concerns fictitious evils, is courted deliberately even to the point where fancy deceives us into regarding the evils as actual proves and creates a soul that is gentle but also weak and that shows a beautiful side; we can call such a soul fanciful, but not even so much as enthusiastic. None of the following are compatible with anything that could be classed with beauty, let alone sublimity, in a cast of mind: romances and maudlin plays; insipid moral precepts that dally with (falsely) so-called noble attitudes but that in fact make the heart languid and insensitive to the stern precept of duty, and that hence make the heart incapable of any respect for the dignity of the humanity in our own person and for human rights

273

⁴²[On amazement and admiration, cf. below, Ak. 365. See also the *Anthropology*, Ak. VII, 243 and 255. In one place (*ibid.*, Ak. VII, 261), Kant gives the Latin '*admirari*' for '*verwundern*' rather than '*bewundern*,' but while the Latin term can in fact stand for either of these terms, the English 'to admire' means only '*bewundern*.']

(which are something quite different from human happiness) and thus make it incapable of any firm principles in general; even a religious discourse that recommends fawning and groveling and base ingratiation and the abandonment of all reliance on our own ability to resist the evil within us, instead of recommending a vigorous resolve for testing what forces are left us despite all our frailty and for trying to overcome our inclinations; the false humility that posits self-contempt, whining hypocritical repentance, and a merely passive frame of mind as the only way we can please the supreme being.⁴³

But even impetuous agitations of the mind—whether they are connected with religious ideas and are called edification, or with ideas involving a social interest and pertain merely to culture—can by no means claim the distinction of being a *sublime* exhibition [of ideas], no matter how much they may strain the imagination, unless they leave us with a mental attunement that influences, at least indirectly, our consciousness of our fortitude and resolution concerning what carries with it pure intellectual purposiveness (namely, the supersensible). For otherwise all these emotions belong only to [inner] *motion*, which we welcome for the sake of our health. The agreeable lassitude we feel after being stirred up by the play of affects is our enjoyment of the well-being that results from the establishment of the equilibrium of our various vital forces. This enjoyment comes to no more in the end than what Oriental voluptuaries find so appealing when they have their bodies thoroughly kneaded, as it were, and have all their muscles and joints gently squeezed and bent—except that in the first case the moving principle is for the most part within us, whereas in the second it is wholly outside us. Thus many people believe they are edified by a sermon that in fact builds no edifice (no system of good maxims), or are improved by the performance of a tragedy when in fact they are merely glad at having succeeded in routing boredom. Hence the sublime must always have reference to

274

⁴³{ Apart from the word 'God,' which is a proper name, expressions referring to the deity are not capitalized in this translation. For although some of these, e.g., 'Supreme Being,' would normally be capitalized in English, many *other* expressions that Kant uses to refer to the deity would *not* (e.g., 'original basis of the universe' [Ak. 392], 'supreme understanding as cause of the world' [Ak. 395], or even 'original being' in the sense used by Spinoza [Ak. 393]). Capitalizing some but not others would have the effect of attributing to Kant distinctions that he did not make. No such problem arises in German, because there *all* nouns are capitalized.}

our way of thinking, i.e., to maxims directed to providing the intellectual [side in us] and our rational ideas with supremacy over sensibility.

We need not worry that the feeling of the sublime will lose [something] if it is exhibited in such an abstract way as this, which is wholly negative as regards the sensible. For though the imagination finds nothing beyond the sensible that could support it, this very removal of its barriers also makes it feel unbounded, so that its separation [from the sensible] is an exhibition of the infinite; and though an exhibition of the infinite can as such never be more than merely negative, it still expands the soul. Perhaps the most sublime passage in the Jewish Law is the commandment: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven or on earth, or under the earth, etc. This commandment alone can explain the enthusiasm that the Jewish people in its civilized era felt for its religion when it compared itself with other peoples, or can explain the pride that Islam inspires. The same holds also for our presentation of the moral law, and for the predisposition within us for morality. It is indeed a mistake to worry that depriving this presentation of whatever could commend it to the senses will result in its carrying with it no more than a cold and lifeless approval without any moving force or emotion. It is exactly the other way round. For once the senses no longer see anything before them, while yet the unmistakable and indelible idea of morality remains, one would sooner need to temper the momentum of an unbounded imagination so as to keep it from rising to the level of enthusiasm, than to seek to support these ideas with images and childish devices for fear that they would otherwise be powerless. That is also why governments have gladly permitted religion to be amply furnished with such accessories: they were trying to relieve every subject of the trouble, yet also of the ability, to expand his soul's forces beyond the barriers that one can choose to set for him so as to reduce him to mere passivity and so make him more pliable.

275

On the other hand, this pure, elevating, and merely negative exhibition of morality involves no danger of *fanaticism*, which is the *delusion* [*Wahn*] of wanting to SEE something beyond all bounds of sensibility, i.e., of dreaming according to principles (raving with reason). The exhibition avoids fanaticism precisely because it is merely negative. For *the idea of freedom is inscrutable* and thereby precludes all positive exhibition whatever; but the moral law in itself can sufficiently

and originally determine us, so that it does not even permit us to cast about for some additional determining basis. If enthusiasm is comparable to *madness* [*Wahnsinn*], fanaticism is comparable to *mania* [*Wahnwitz*].⁴⁴ Of these the latter is least of all compatible with the sublime, because it is ridiculous in a somber [*grüblerisch*] way[; for⁴⁵ in enthusiasm, an affect, the imagination is unbridled, but in fanaticism, a deep-seated and brooding passion, it is ruleless. Madness is a passing accident that presumably strikes even the soundest understanding on occasion; mania is a disease that deranges it.

Simplicity (artless purposiveness) is, as it were, nature's style in the sublime. Hence it is also the style of morality, which is a second (namely, a supersensible) nature, of which we know only the laws, without being able to reach, by means of intuition, the supersensible ability within ourselves that contains the basis of this legislation.

A further comment is needed. It is true that our liking both for the beautiful and for the sublime not only differs recognizably from other aesthetic judgments by being universally *communicable*, but by having this property it also acquires an interest in relation to society (where such communication may take place). Yet we also regard *isolation from all society* as something sublime, if it rests on ideas that look beyond all sensible interest. To be sufficient to oneself and hence have no need of society, yet without being unsociable, i.e., without shunning society, is something approaching the sublime, as is any case of setting aside our needs. On the other hand, to shun people either from *misanthropy* because we are hostile toward them or from *anthropophobia* (fear of people) because we are afraid they might be our enemies is partly odious and partly contemptible. There is, however, a different (very improperly so-called) misanthropy, the predisposition to which tends to appear in the minds of many well-meaning people as they grow older. This latter misanthropy is philanthropic enough as regards *benevolence* [*Wohlwollen*], but as the result of a

276

⁴⁴[Cf. (and contrast) the *Anthropology*, Ak. VII, 215 (also 202).]

⁴⁵[The insertion replaces a mere period, and its point is to bring out the continuity between the preceding sentence that brings in madness and mania, and the following one, where the demonstrative adjectives in the original text can refer only to madness and mania again, not to enthusiasm and fanaticism.]

long and sad experience it has veered far away from a *liking* [*Wohlgefallen*] for people. We find evidence of this in a person's propensity toward reclusiveness, in his fanciful wish that he could spend the rest of his life on a remote country estate, or for that matter (in the case of young people) in their dream of happily spending their lives with a small family, on some island unknown to the rest of the world—all of which novelists and writers of Robinsonades use so cleverly. Falseness, ingratitude, injustice, whatever is childish in the purposes that we ourselves consider important and great and in the pursuit of which people inflict all conceivable evils on one another, these so contradict the idea of what people could be if they wanted to, and so conflict with our fervent wish to see them improved, that, given that we cannot love them, it seems but a slight sacrifice to forgo all social joys so as to avoid hating them. This sadness, which does not concern the evils that fate imposes on other people (in which case it would be caused by sympathy), but those that they inflict on themselves (a sadness that rests on an antipathy involving principles), is sublime, because it rests on ideas, whereas the sadness caused by sympathy can at most count as beautiful. *Saussure*,⁴⁶ as intelligent as he was thorough, in describing his Alpine travels says of *Bonhomme*, one of the Savoy mountains, "A certain *insipid sadness* reigns there." Thus clearly he also knew an *interesting* sadness, such as is inspired by a wasteland to which people would gladly transfer themselves so as to hear or find out no more about the world, which shows that such wastelands cannot, after all, be quite so inhospitable as to offer no more to human beings than a most troublesome abode. This comment is intended only as a reminder that even grief (but not a dejected kind of sadness) may be included among the *vigorous* affects, if it has its basis in moral ideas. If, on the other hand, it is based on sympathy, then it may indeed be lovable, but belongs merely to the *languid* affects. My point is to draw attention to the fact that only in the first case is the mental attunement *sublime*.

We can now also compare the transcendental exposition of aesthetic judgments we have just completed with the physiological

⁴⁶[See Ak. 265.]

one, regarding which work has been done by someone like *Burke*⁴⁷ and many acute men among us, so that we may see where a merely empirical exposition of the sublime and of the beautiful may lead. *Burke*,⁴⁸ who deserves to be mentioned as the foremost author in this way of treating the subject,⁴⁹ discovers along this route (p. 223 of [the German translation of] his work) "that the feeling of the sublime is based on the impulse toward self-preservation and on *fear*, i.e., on a pain, a pain that, since it does not go so far as actually to disarrange the parts of the body, gives rise to agitations. And since these agitations clear the vessels, small or large, of dangerous and troublesome obstructions, they are able to arouse agreeable sensations. These do not indeed amount to a pleasure, but they still amount to a kind of pleasant thrill, a certain tranquility mingled with terror."⁵⁰ He attributes the beautiful, which he bases on love (while insisting that desire be kept apart from this love) "to the relaxing, slackening, and enervating of the body's fibres, and hence to a softening, dissolution,

⁴⁷[Edmund Burke (1729-97), British statesman and political thinker. His *Philosophical Enquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) gained him a reputation in Britain. Abroad it was read with interest not only by Kant but, among others, by Lessing, Mendelssohn, Schiller, and Diderot.]

⁴⁸According to the German translation [by Christian Garve (1742-98), German moralist] of his work entitled *A Philosophical Enquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* ([the translation:] Riga: Hartknoch, 1773).

⁴⁹[Kant's own *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764) (Ak. II, 205-56) had been mainly empirical. Cf. Donald W. Crawford, *Kant's Aesthetic Theory* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), pp. 8-11, 60. The same applies of course to Kant's own *Remarks on the Observations*, Ak. XX, 1-192.]

⁵⁰[*Burke, Enquiry*, Pt. IV, Sect. vii. " [I]f the pain and terror are so modified as not to be actually noxious; if the pain is not carried to violence, and the terror is not conversant about the present destruction of the person, as these emotions clear the parts, whether fine or gross, of a dangerous and troublesome encumbrance, they are capable of producing delight; not pleasure, but a sort of delightful horror, a sort of tranquility tinged with terror; which, as it belongs to self-preservation, is one of the strongest of all the passions. Its object is the sublime." Cf. also above, Ak. 269 br. n. 34.]

exhaustion, a fainting, a dying and melting away with delight” (pp. 251–52 [of the translation].)⁵¹ To confirm this kind of explanation he points not only to those cases where the feeling of the beautiful and of the sublime may be aroused in us by the imagination in connection with the understanding, but even to those where it is aroused by the imagination in connection with sensation.⁵² As psychological observations these analyses of the phenomena involved in our mind are exceedingly fine and provide rich material for the favorite investigations of empirical anthropology. Nor can it be denied that all presentations in us, no matter whether their object is merely sensible or instead wholly intellectual, can in the subject still be connected with gratification or pain, however unnoticeable these may be (because all of them affect the feeling of life, and none of them can be indifferent insofar as it is a modification of the subject). It cannot even be denied that, as Epicurus maintained, *gratification* and *pain* are ultimately always of the body,⁵³ whether they come from imagination or even from presentations of the understanding. He maintained this on the ground that, in the absence of [some] feeling of the bodily organ, life is merely consciousness of our existence, and not a feeling of being well or unwell, i.e., of the furtherance or inhibition of the vital forces; for the mind taken by itself is wholly life (the very principle of life), whereas any obstacles or furtherance must be sought outside it and yet still within man himself, and hence in the [mind’s] connection with his body.

278

But if we suppose that our liking for the object consists entirely in the object’s gratifying us through charm or emotion, then we also must not require anyone *else* to assent to an aesthetic judgment that *we* make; for about that sort of liking each person rightly consults only his private sense. But, if that is so, then all censure of taste will

⁵¹[*Ibid.*, Pt. IV, Sect. xix: “. . . [A] beautiful object presented to the sense, by causing a relaxation of the body, produces the passion of love in the mind. . . .” And a little earlier: “. . . [B]eauty acts by relaxing the solids of the whole system. There are all the appearances of such a relaxation; and a relaxation somewhat below the natural tone seems to me to be the cause of all positive pleasure. Who is a stranger to that manner of expression so common in all times and in all countries, of being softened, relaxed, enervated, dissolved, melted away by pleasure?”]

⁵²[*Ibid.*; for example, smoothness (Part IV, Sect. xx) and sweetness (Part IV, Sect. xxii).]

⁵³[See the Letter to Herodotus, V, “The Soul.”]

also cease, unless the example that other people give through the contingent harmony among their judgments were turned into a *command* that we [too] approve. At such a principle, however, we would presumably balk, appealing to our natural right to subject to our own sense, not to that of others, any judgment that rests on the direct feeling of our own well-being.

It seems, then, that we must not regard a judgment of taste as *egoistic*; rather, we must regard it necessarily as *pluralistic* by its inner nature, i.e., on account of itself rather than the examples that others give of their taste; we must acknowledge it to be a judgment that is entitled to claim that everyone else ought also to agree with it. But if that is so, then it must be based on some a priori principle (whether objective or subjective), and we can never arrive at such a principle by scouting about for empirical laws about mental changes. For these reveal only how we do judge; they do not give us a command as to how we ought to judge, let alone an *unconditioned* one. And yet judgments of taste presuppose such a command, because they insist that our liking be connected *directly* with a presentation. Hence, though we may certainly begin with an empirical exposition of aesthetic judgments, so as to provide the material for a higher investigation, still a transcendental discussion of taste is possible, and belongs essentially to a critique of this ability. For if taste did not have a priori principles, it could not possibly pronounce on the judgments of others and pass verdicts approving or repudiating them with even the slightest semblance of having the right to do so.

The remainder of the analytic of aesthetic judgment contains first of all the deduction of pure aesthetic judgments, to which we now turn.

DEDUCTION¹ OF PURE AESTHETIC JUDGMENTS

279

§ 30

The Deduction of Aesthetic Judgments about Objects of Nature Must Be Directed Not to What We Call Sublime in Nature but Only to the Beautiful

Since an aesthetic judgment lays claim to universal validity for every subject and hence must be based on some a priori principle or other, it requires a deduction (i.e., a legitimation of its pretension). Such a deduction is needed, in addition to an exposition of the judgment, if the judgment concerns a liking or disliking for the *form of the object*.

¹[*Deduktion*. The term means 'justification' or 'legitimation.' Cf. the *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 84-92 = B 116-24. (What we call 'deduction' in formal logic is called by Kant *Ableitung*, 'derivation.' Cf. Ak. 412.) This justification of judgments of taste is needed in addition to their *exposition* (which has just been completed), i.e., their explication or examination (cf. *ibid*, as well as the *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 23 = B 38 and A 729-30 = B 757-58).]

Judgments of taste about the beautiful in nature are of this sort. For in their case the purposiveness does have its basis in the object and its shape, even though it does not indicate that we are referring the object to other objects according to concepts (so as to give rise to a cognitive judgment), but merely concerns the apprehension as such of this form, insofar as that form manifests itself in the mind as conforming to the *power* of concepts [the understanding] and the power of their exhibition (which is the same as the power of apprehension [the imagination]). This is also why, concerning the beautiful in nature, we can raise all sorts of questions about what causes this purposiveness in nature's forms, e.g.: How are we to explain why nature has so extravagantly spread beauty everywhere, even at the bottom of the ocean, where the human eye (for which, after all, this beauty is alone purposive) rarely penetrates?—and so on.

But then consider the sublime in nature, when our judgment about it is purely aesthetic, unmixed with any concepts of perfection, i.e., of objective purposiveness, in which case it would be a teleological judgment. The sublime in nature can be regarded as entirely formless or unshapely and yet as the object of a pure liking, manifesting a subjective purposiveness in the given presentation. Hence the question arises whether this kind of aesthetic judgment also requires a deduction of its claim to some (subjective) a priori principle or other, in addition to an exposition of what we think in [making] the judgment.

280

We can answer this question adequately as follows. When we speak of the sublime in nature we speak improperly; properly speaking, sublimity can be attributed merely to our way of thinking, or, rather, to the foundation this has in human nature. What happens is merely that the apprehension of an otherwise formless and unpurposive object prompts us to become conscious of that foundation, so that what is subjectively purposive is the *use* we make of the object, and it is not the object *itself* that is judged to be purposive on account of its form. ([That is, what is subjectively purposive is,] as it were, *species finalis accepta, non data*.²) That is why the exposition we gave of judgments about the sublime in nature was also their deduction. For when we analyzed these judgments in order to see what reflection by the power of judgment they contain, we found that they contain a purposive relation of the cognitive powers, which we must lay a priori

²[Purposive appearance as received, not as given.]

at the basis of the power of purposes (the will) and which is therefore itself a priori purposive; and that already provides the deduction, i.e., the justification of the claim of these judgments to universally necessary validity.

Hence the only deduction we shall have to attempt is that of judgments of taste, i.e., judgments about the beauty in natural things; that will suffice for a complete solution of the problem for the whole aesthetic power of judgment.

§ 31

On the Method of the Deduction of Judgments of Taste

The obligation to provide a deduction for judgments of a [certain] kind, i.e., a guarantee of their legitimacy, arises only if the judgment lays claim to necessity; this it does even if the universality it demands is subjective universality, i.e., if it demands everyone's assent, even though it is not a cognitive judgment but only a judgment about the pleasure or displeasure we take in a given object, i.e., [a judgment] claiming [*Anmaßung*] a subjective purposiveness that is valid for everyone, without exception [*durchgängig*], but that is not to be based on any concepts of the thing, since the judgment is one of taste.

Therefore, in the case of a judgment that demands subjective universality, we are not dealing with a cognitive judgment, neither a theoretical one based on the concept of a *nature* as such, as given by the understanding, nor a (pure) practical one based on the idea of *freedom*, as given a priori by reason. Hence what we must justify as a priori valid is neither a judgment presenting what a [certain] thing is, nor a judgment which says that I ought to carry something out so as to produce a [certain] thing. So what we shall have to establish is merely the *universal validity*, for the power of judgment as such, of a *singular* judgment that expresses the subjective purposiveness of an empirical

presentation of the form of an object; establishing such validity will serve to explain how it is possible for us to like something when we merely judge it (without [the liking being determined by] sensation proper [*Sinnesempfindung*]³ or [by] concept), and how it is possible for everyone to be entitled to proclaim his liking as a rule for everyone else, just as our judging of an object for the sake of *cognition* always [*überhaupt*] has universal rules.

[Therefore,] since a judgment of taste is in fact of this sort, its universal validity is not to be established by gathering votes and asking other people what kind of sensation they are having; but it must rest, as it were, on an autonomy of the subject who is making a judgment about the feeling of pleasure (in the given presentation), i.e., it must rest on his own taste; and yet it is also not to be derived from concepts. Hence a judgment of taste has the following twofold peculiarity, which is moreover a logical one: *First*, it has a priori universal validity, which yet is not a logical universal validity governed by concepts, but the universality of a singular judgment; *second*, it has a necessity (which must always rest on a priori bases), and yet a necessity that does not depend on any a priori bases of proof by the presentation of which we could compel [people to give] the assent that a judgment of taste requires of everyone.

If we resolve these logical peculiarities, which distinguish a judgment of taste from all cognitive judgments, we shall have done all that is needed in order to deduce this strange ability we have, provided that at the outset we abstract from all content of the judgment, i.e., from the feeling of pleasure, and merely compare the aesthetic form with the form of objective judgments as prescribed by logic. Let us begin, then, by presenting these characteristic properties of taste, using examples to elucidate them.

³{As distinguished from 'sensation' as meaning feeling, which is involved here. Cf. Ak. 291 incl. br. n. 19. (If the [feeling of] liking were determined by sensation proper, it would be a liking for the agreeable. Cf. Ak. 205-06.)}

§ 32

First Peculiarity of a Judgment of Taste

A judgment of taste determines its object in respect of our liking (beauty) [but] makes a claim to *everyone's* assent, as if it were an objective judgment.

To say, This flower is beautiful, is tantamount to a mere repetition of the flower's own claim to everyone's liking. The agreeableness of its smell, on the other hand, gives it no claim whatever: its smell delights [*ergötzen*] one person, it makes another dizzy. In view of this [difference], must we not suppose that beauty has to be considered a property of the flower itself, which does not adapt itself to differences in people's heads and all their senses, but to which they must adapt themselves if they wish to pass judgment on it? Yet beauty is not a property of the flower itself. For a judgment of taste consists precisely in this, that it calls a thing beautiful only by virtue of that characteristic in which it adapts itself to the way we apprehend it.

Moreover, whenever a subject offers a judgment as proof of his taste [concerning some object], we demand that he judge for himself: he should not have to grope about among other people's judgments by means of experience, to gain instruction in advance from whether they like or dislike that object; so we demand that he pronounce his judgment a priori, that he not make it [by way of] imitation, (say) on the ground that a thing is actually liked universally. One would think, however, that an a priori judgment must contain a concept of the object, this concept containing the principle for cognizing the object. But a judgment of taste is not based on concepts at all, and is not at all a cognition but only an aesthetic judgment.

That is why a young poet cannot be brought to abandon his persuasion that his poem is beautiful, neither by the judgment of his audience nor by that of his friends; and if he listens to them, it is not because he now judges the poem differently, but because, even if (at least with regard to him) the whole audience were to have wrong taste, his desire for approval still causes him to accommodate himself (even against his judgment) to the common delusion. Only later on,

when his power of judgment has been sharpened by practice, will he voluntarily depart from his earlier judgment, just as he does with those of his judgments which rest wholly on reason. Taste lays claim merely to autonomy; but to make other people's judgments the basis determining one's own would be heteronomy.

283

It is true that we extol, and rightly so, the works of the ancients as models, and call their authors classical, as if they form a certain noble class among writers which gives laws to people by the precedent it sets. This seems to point to a posteriori sources of taste and to refute the autonomy of every subject's taste. But we might just as well say: the fact that the ancient mathematicians are to this day considered to be virtually indispensable models of supreme thoroughness and elegance in the synthetic method⁴ proves that our reason [only] imitates and is unable on its own to produce rigorous and highly intuitive proofs by constructing concepts.⁵ The same holds for all uses, no matter how free, of our powers, including even reason (which must draw all its judgments from the common a priori source): if each subject always had to start from nothing but the crude predisposition given him by nature, [many] of his attempts would fail, if other people before him had not failed in theirs; they did not make these attempts in order to turn their successors into mere imitators, but so that, by their procedure, they might put others on a track whereby they could search for the principles within themselves and so adopt their own and often better course. In religion, everyone must surely find the rule for his conduct within himself, since he is also the one who remains responsible for his conduct and cannot put the blame for his offenses on others on the ground that they were his teachers and predecessors; yet even here an example of virtue and holiness will always accomplish more than any universal precepts we have received from priests or philosophers, or for that matter found within ourselves. Such an example, set for us in history, does not make dispensable the autonomy of virtue that arises from our own and original (a priori) idea of morality, nor does it transform this idea into a mechanism of imitation. *Following* by reference to a precedent, rather than imitating,

⁴[The synthetic method proceeds from principles to their consequences, the analytic method the other way. Cf. the *Logic*, Ak. IX, 149, and the *Prolegomena*, Ak. IV, 263, 275, 276n, 279, and 365.]

⁵[Cf. Ak. 232 br. n. 51.]

is the right term for any influence that products of an exemplary author may have on others; and this means no more than drawing on the same sources from which the predecessor himself drew, and learning from him only how to go about doing so. Among all our abilities and talents, taste is precisely what stands most in need of examples regarding what has enjoyed the longest-lasting approval in the course of cultural progress, in order that it will not become uncouth again and relapse into the crudeness of its first attempts; and taste needs this because its judgment cannot be determined by concepts and precepts.

§ 33

284

Second Peculiarity of a Judgment of Taste

A judgment of taste, just as if it were merely *subjective*, cannot be determined by bases of proof.

If someone does not find a building, a view, or a poem beautiful, then, *first*, he will refuse to let even a hundred voices, all praising it highly, prod him into approving of it inwardly. He may of course act as if he liked it too, so that people will not think that he lacks taste. He may even begin to doubt whether he has in fact done enough to mold his taste, by familiarizing himself with a sufficient number of objects of a certain kind (just as someone who thinks he recognizes a forest in some distant object that everyone else regards as a town will doubt the judgment of his own eyes). And yet he realizes clearly that other people's approval in no way provides him with a valid proof by which to judge beauty; even though others may perhaps see and observe for him, and even though what many have seen the same way may serve him, who believes he saw it differently, as a sufficient basis of proof for a theoretical and hence logical judgment, yet the fact that others have liked something can never serve him as a basis for an aesthetic judgment. If others make a judgment that is unfavorable to us, this may rightly make us wonder about our own judgment, but it

can never convince us that ours is incorrect. Hence there is no empirical *basis of proof* that could compel anyone to make [some] judgment of taste.

Second, still less can a judgment about beauty be determined by an a priori proof, in accordance with determinate rules. If someone reads me his poem, or takes me to a play that in the end I simply cannot find to my taste, then let him adduce *Batteux* or *Lessing*⁶ to prove that his poem is beautiful, or [bring in] still older and more famous critics of taste with all the rules they have laid down; moreover, let certain passages that I happen to dislike conform quite well to rules of beauty (as laid down by these critics and universally recognized): I shall stop my ears, shall refuse to listen to reasons and arguments, and shall sooner assume that those rules of the critics are false, or at least do not apply in the present case, than allow my judgment to be determined by a priori bases of proof; for it is meant to be a judgment of taste, and not one of the understanding or of reason.

285

It seems that this is one of the main reasons why this aesthetic power of judging was given that very name: taste. For even if someone lists all the ingredients of a dish, pointing out that I have always found each of them agreeable, and goes on to praise this food—and rightly so—as wholesome, I shall be deaf to all these reasons: I shall try the dish on *my* tongue and palate, and thereby (and not by universal principles) make my judgment.

It is a fact that any judgment of taste we make is always a singular judgment about the object. The understanding can, by comparing the object with other people's judgment about their liking of it, make a universal judgment, e.g.: All tulips are beautiful. But such a judgment is then not a judgment of taste; it is a logical judgment, which turns an object's reference to taste into a predicate of things of a certain general kind. Only a judgment by which I find a singular given tulip beautiful, i.e., in which I find that my liking for the tulip is universally valid, is a judgment of taste. Its peculiarity, however, consists in the fact that, even though it has merely subjective validity, it yet extends its claim to *all* subjects, just as it always could if it were an objective

⁶[Charles Batteux (1713–80), French philosopher and, in particular, aesthetician, and author of several works; Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–81), German dramatist and aesthetician.]

judgment that rested on cognitive bases and that [we] could be compelled [to make] by a proof.

§ 34

An Objective Principle of Taste Is Impossible

By a principle of taste would be meant a principle under which, as condition, we could subsume the concept of an object and then infer that the object is beautiful. That, however, is absolutely impossible. For I must feel the pleasure directly in my presentation of the object, and I cannot be talked into that pleasure by means of any bases of proof. Hence, although, as *Hume* says, critics can reason more plausibly than cooks,⁷ they still share the same fate. They cannot expect the determining basis of their judgment [to come] from the force of the bases of proof, but only from the subject's reflection on his own state (of pleasure or displeasure), all precepts and rules being rejected.

286

There is, however, something about which critics nonetheless can and should reason, since doing so may serve to correct and broaden our judgments of taste. I do not mean that they should set forth the determining basis of this kind of aesthetic judgments in a universal formula that we could [then] use. What they should do is investigate

⁷[*Essays, Moral and Political* (1741–42), Essay VIII, “The Sceptic”: “There is something approaching to principles in mental taste, and critics can reason and dispute more plausibly than cooks or perfumers. We may observe, however, that this uniformity among human kind hinders not, but that there is a considerable diversity in the sentiments of beauty and worth, and that education, custom, prejudice, caprice, and humour frequently vary our taste of this kind. You will never convince a man who is not accustomed to Italian music and has not an ear to follow its intricacies that a Scots tune is not preferable. You have not even any single argument beyond your own taste which you can employ in your behalf; and to your antagonist his particular taste will always appear a more convincing argument to the contrary. If you be wise, each of you will allow that the other may be in the right, and, having many other instances of this diversity of taste, you will both confess that beauty and worth are merely of a relative nature and consist in an agreeable sentiment, produced by an object in a particular mind, according to the peculiar structure and constitution of that mind.”]

our cognitive powers and what task these powers perform in these judgments, and they should clarify by examples the reciprocal subjective purposiveness about which it was shown above that its form in a given presentation is the beauty of the object of this presentation. Hence the critique of taste is itself only subjective as regards the presentation by which an object is given us: it is the art, or science, of finding rules for the reciprocal relation that understanding and imagination have in the given presentation (without reference to prior sensation or concept), and hence for their accordance or discordance, and of determining them as regards their conditions. The critique of taste is an *art* if it shows this only through examples; it is a *science* if it derives the possibility of such judging from the nature of these powers as cognitive powers as such. It is with the latter alone, with a transcendental critique, that we are here concerned throughout. Its aim is to set forth and justify the subjective principle of taste as an a priori principle of the power of judgment. The critique that is an art merely takes the physiological (in this case psychological) and hence empirical rules by which taste actually proceeds, and (without thinking about [how] they are possible) seeks to apply them to our judging of objects of taste; and it criticizes the products of fine art, just as the *transcendental* critique criticizes our very ability to judge them.

§ 35

The Principle of Taste Is the Subjective Principle of the Power of Judgment as Such

A judgment of taste differs from a logical one in that a logical judgment subsumes a presentation under concepts of the object, whereas a judgment of taste does not subsume it under any concept at all, since otherwise the necessary universal approval could be [obtained] by compelling [people to give it]. But a judgment of taste does

resemble a logical judgment inasmuch as it alleges a universality and necessity, though a universality and necessity that is not governed by concepts of the object and hence is merely subjective. Now since the concepts in a judgment constitute its content (what belongs to the cognition of the object), while a judgment of taste cannot be determined by concepts, its basis is only the subjective formal condition of a judgment as such. The subjective condition of all judgments is our very ability to judge, i.e., the power of judgment. When we use this power of judgment in regard to a presentation by which an object is given, then it requires that there be a harmony between two presentational powers, imagination (for the intuition and the combination of its manifold) and understanding (for the concept that is the presentation of the unity of this combination). Now since a judgment of taste is not based on a concept of the object (in the case of a presentation by which an object is given), it can consist only in the subsumption of the very imagination under the condition [which must be met] for the understanding to proceed in general from intuition to concepts. In other words, since the imagination's freedom consists precisely in its schematizing⁸ without a concept, a judgment of taste must rest upon a mere sensation,⁹ namely, our sensation of both the imagination in its *freedom* and the understanding with its *lawfulness*, as they reciprocally quicken each other; i.e., it must rest on a feeling that allows us to judge the object by the purposiveness that the presentation (by which an object is given) has insofar as it furthers the cognitive powers in their free play. Hence taste, as a subjective power of judgment, contains a principle of subsumption; however, this subsumption is not one of intuitions under *concepts*, but, rather, one of the *power* of intuitions or exhibitions (the imagination) under the *power* of concepts (the understanding), insofar as the imagination *in its freedom* harmonizes with the understanding *in its lawfulness*.

In attempting to discover this legitimating basis by means of a deduction of judgments of taste, we can use as our guide only the

⁸[I.e., creating a schema; cf. Ak. 253 br. n. 17. Kant is about to say that in a judgment of taste the imagination as such is subsumed under the *understanding* as such. Strictly speaking, however, the imagination is subsumed under the (indeterminate) *schema* of the understanding as such; and this indeterminate schema is the "condition" which Kant has just mentioned.]

⁹[In the sense of *feeling*, in this case.]

formal peculiarities of this kind of judgments, i.e., we must consider merely their logical form.

§ 36

On the Problem of a Deduction of Judgments of Taste

288

With the perception of an object we can directly connect the concept of an object as such, [for] which it contains the empirical predicates, in order to give rise to a cognitive judgment. This is how an empirical judgment is produced.¹⁰ Now this judgment is based on a priori concepts of the systematic unity of the manifold of intuition; hence we can think this manifold as the determination of an object. These concepts (the categories) require a deduction, and this was indeed provided in the *Critique of Pure Reason*,¹¹ which thus made it possible to solve the problem: How are synthetic cognitive judgments possible a priori? That problem, then, concerned the pure understanding's a priori principles and theoretical judgments.

But we can also directly connect with a perception a feeling of pleasure (or displeasure) and a liking that accompanies the object's presentation and serves it in the place of a predicate. This is how an aesthetic judgment arises, which is not a cognitive judgment. Now if an aesthetic judgment is not a mere judgment of sensation, but a formal judgment of reflection that requires this liking from everyone

¹⁰["As far as *empirical judgments have universal validity* they are JUDGMENTS OF EXPERIENCE; but those *that are valid only subjectively* I call mere JUDGMENTS OF PERCEPTION. The latter require no pure concept of the understanding, but only the logical connection of the perceptions in a thinking subject. Judgments of experience, on the other hand, require, in addition to the presentations of sensible intuition, special concepts produced originally in the understanding, and it is these concepts that make the judgment of experience *valid objectively*": *Prolegomena*, Ak. IV, 298. Cf. the *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 120, A 374, B 422n.]

¹¹[The *metaphysical* deduction (for this name, see B 159), A 65-83 = B 90-116, is to show what categories there are (in the understanding); the *transcendental* deduction, A 84-130 and B 116-69, is to prove that these categories are objectively valid.]

as necessary, then it must be based on something as its a priori principle. This principle may well be merely subjective (in case an objective one were to be impossible for judgments of this kind), but even then it requires a deduction, in order that we may grasp how an aesthetic judgment can lay claim to necessity. And that is the basis of the problem with which we are now dealing: How are judgments of taste possible? So this problem concerns the a priori principles that the pure power of judgment [uses when it makes] *aesthetic* judgments, i.e., judgments where it does not (as it does in theoretical judgments) merely have to subsume under objective concepts of the understanding, [so that] it is subject to a law,¹² but where it is, subjectively, object to itself as well as law to itself.

We can also think of this problem as follows: How is a judgment possible in which the subject, merely on the basis of his *own* feeling of pleasure in an object, independently of the object's concept, judges this pleasure as one attaching to the presentation of that same object *in all other subjects*, and does so a priori, i.e., without being allowed to wait for other people's assent?

We can readily see that judgments of taste are synthetic; for they go beyond the concept of the object, and even beyond the intuition of the object, and add as a predicate to this intuition something that is not even cognition: namely [a] feeling of pleasure (or displeasure). And yet, that these judgments are, or want to be considered, a priori judgments as regards the demand that *everyone* assent, a demand they make despite the fact that their predicate (of one's *own* pleasure [as] connected with the presentation) is empirical, is also already implicit in the expressions used to make that claim. Hence this problem of the critique of judgment is part of the general problem of transcendental philosophy: How are synthetic judgments possible a priori?¹³

289

¹²[Cf. the *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 137-47 = B 176-87, and below, Ak. 351-52.]

¹³[Cf. the *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 19. 'A priori' has here been construed adverbially, as modifying 'possible.' It can also be read as an adjective modifying 'judgments,' so that Kant's question reads, 'How are synthetic a priori judgments possible?' Either reading can be supported by quotes in which the ambiguity does not arise, since Kant switches frequently between these two ways of talking. See, e.g., the passage immediately following the question Kant just quoted, B 20.]

§ 37

What Is Actually Asserted A Priori about an Object in a Judgment of Taste?

That the presentation of an object is directly connected with a pleasure can only be perceived inwardly, and if we wished to indicate no more than this, the result would be a merely empirical judgment. For I cannot connect a priori a definite feeling (of pleasure or displeasure) with any presentation, except in the case where an underlying a priori principle in reason determines the will; but in that case the pleasure (in moral feeling) is the consequence of that principle, and that is precisely why it is not at all comparable to the pleasure in taste: for it requires a determinate concept of a law, whereas the pleasure in taste is to be connected directly with our mere judging, prior to any concept. That is also why all judgments of taste are singular judgments, because they do not connect their predicate, the liking, with a concept but connect it with a singular empirical presentation that is given.

Hence it is not the pleasure, but *the universal validity of this pleasure*, perceived as connected in the mind with our mere judging of an object, that we present a priori as [a] universal rule for the power of judgment, valid for everyone. That I am perceiving and judging an object with pleasure is an empirical judgment. But that I find the object beautiful, i.e., that I am entitled to require that liking from everyone as necessary, is an a priori judgment.

§ 38

Deduction of Judgments of Taste¹⁴

If it is granted that in a pure judgment of taste our liking for the object is connected with our mere judging of the form of the object, then this liking is nothing but [our consciousness of] the form's subjective purposiveness for the power of judgment, which we feel as connected in the mind with the presentation of the object. Now, as far as the formal rules of judging [as such] are concerned, apart from any matter (whether sensation or concept), the power of judgment can be directed only to the subjective conditions for our employment of the power of judgment as such (where it is confined neither to the particular kind of sense involved nor to a[ny] particular concept of the understanding), and hence can be directed only to that subjective [condition] which we may presuppose in all people (as required for possible cognition as such). It follows that we must be entitled to assume a priori that a presentation's harmony with these conditions of the power of judgment is valid for everyone. In other words, it seems that when, in judging an object of sense in general, we feel this pleasure, or subjective purposiveness of the presentation for the relation between our cognitive powers, then we must be entitled to require this pleasure from everyone.¹⁵

290

¹⁴[On the problem as to where the deduction *ends* (specifically, the problem as to whether the link of beauty to *morality* is still part of the deduction), see the Translator's Introduction, *Lxi-Lxvi*.]

¹⁵To be justified in laying claim to universal assent to a judgment of the aesthetic power of judgment, which rests merely on subjective bases, one need grant only the following: (1) that in all people the subjective conditions of this power are the same as concerns the relation required for cognition as such between the cognitive powers that are activated in the power of judgment; and this must be true, for otherwise people could not communicate their presentations to one another, indeed they could not even communicate cognition; (2) that the judgment has taken into consideration merely this relation (and hence the *formal condition* of the power of judgment) and is pure, i.e., mingled neither with concepts of the object nor with sensations as the judgment's determining bases. But even if a mistake be made on the latter point,¹⁶ this amounts to nothing but an incorrect application, in a particular case, of an authority given to us by a law, and in no way annuls the authority [itself].

¹⁶[Cf. Ak. 216 incl. br. n. 30, as well as the Comment Kant is about to make, but esp. § 39, Ak. 293, and § 40, Ak. 293-94.]

Comment

291

What makes this deduction so easy is that it does not need to justify the objective reality of a concept; for beauty is not a concept of an object, and a judgment of taste is not a cognitive judgment. All it asserts is that we are justified in presupposing universally in all people the same subjective conditions of the power of judgment that we find in ourselves; apart from this it asserts only that we have subsumed the given object correctly under these conditions.¹⁷ It is true that this latter assertion involves unavoidable difficulties that do not attach to the logical power of judgment (since there we subsume under concepts, whereas in the aesthetic power of judgment we subsume under a relation of imagination and understanding, as they harmonize with each other in the presented form of an object, that can only be sensed, so that the subsumption may easily be illusory [*trügen*]). But this does not in any way detract from the legitimacy of the power of judgment's claim in counting on universal assent, a claim that amounts to no more than this: that the principle of judging validly for everyone from subjective bases is correct. For as far as the difficulty and doubt concerning the correctness of the subsumption under that principle is concerned, no more doubt is cast on the legitimacy of the claim that aesthetic judgments as such have this validity (and hence is cast on the principle itself), than is cast on the principle of the logical power of judgment (a principle that is objective) by the fact that [sometimes] (though not so often and so easily) this power's subsumption under its principle is faulty as well. But if the question were, How is it possible to assume a priori that nature is a sum [*Inbegriff*] of objects of taste? that problem would have to do with teleology. For if nature offered forms that are purposive for our power of judgment, then this would have to be regarded as a purpose of nature belonging essentially to its concept. But whether this assumption is correct is as yet very doubtful, while the actuality of natural beauties is patent to experience.

¹⁷[Cf. just above, n. 15 and br. n. 16.]

§ 39

On the Communicability of a Sensation

Sensation, [construed] as what is real [i.e., material rather than formal]¹⁸ in perception and [hence as] referred to cognition, is called sensation proper.¹⁹ The only way for it to be conceivable that what is specific in the quality of such a sensation should be universally [*durchgängig*] communicable in a uniform way is on the assumption that everyone's sense is like our own. This, however, we simply

¹⁸[Cf. Ak. 189.]

¹⁹[*Sinnesempfindung*, i.e., *Empfindung* (sensation) as involving a (genuine) *Sinn* (sense) and hence having to do with perception, rather than as meaning *feeling*. This is the very same distinction that Kant has made before, though he did not then use the term '*Sinnesempfindung*' to make it: see § 3, Ak. 205-06, and cf. Ak. 203-04 and 266 incl. br. n. 33. Now although the literal meaning of this term is 'sensation of sense,' rendering it that way would make it perplexing, since the component terms are cognate in English. 'Sensation proper' avoids this difficulty and still captures Kant's meaning: feeling is *not* sensation proper, precisely because it does not have its own *sense*. It is true that Kant sometimes uses even 'sense' in talking about feeling, especially in talking about our "shared" or "common sense" (§ § 20-22, Ak. 237-40, and § 40, Ak. 293-96), which he calls "not an outer" sense (Ak. 238), thus *suggesting* that it is the inner sense. But in fact Kant does not consider it a (genuine) sense at all. Though he uses the term, he uses it *much* more rarely in the context of feeling than he does the term 'sensation,' and he uses it very reluctantly: see § 40, Ak. 293 and esp. 295, and cf. the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Ak. VI, 400. Moreover, in the *Anthropology* (Ak. VII, 153) he says expressly that, though we *might* (emphasis added) call feeling an interior sense, this is not to be equated with the inner sense (the sense through which we perceive and cognize, rather than merely feel ourselves). And this view is consistent with the fact that Kant also says that feeling is a receptivity that "belongs to" or "is based on" inner sense (*Critique of Practical Reason*, Ak. V, respectively 58 and 80. Section VIII of the First Introduction to the *Critique of Judgment* can be interpreted similarly: see esp. Ak. 226', just before the Comment) and in so far can be called "sensible" (cf. Ak. 335 br. n. 76) or a feeling "of" inner sense (as at Ak. 228): inner sense, and through it even the outer senses, *besides* engaging in sensation proper, are *also* to some extent involved in feeling. Cf. § 3, Ak. 205. The alternative of rendering '*Sinnesempfindung*' by some expression referring to an "organ" has the difficulty that *inner sense* does not, strictly speaking, *have* an organ (so that '*Sinnesempfindung*' would wrongly exclude inner sense, and the contrast with feeling would be lost): see Ak. 234 br. n. 55.]

cannot presuppose about such a sensation. Thus to a person who lacks the sense of smell we cannot communicate this kind of sensation; and even if he does not lack the sense, we still cannot be certain whether he is getting the very same sensation from a flower that we are getting. Yet people must be considered even more divergent concerning the *agreeableness* or *disagreeableness* [they feel] when sensing one and the same object of sense, and we simply cannot demand that everyone acknowledge [taking] in such objects the pleasure [that we take in them]. This kind of pleasure, since it enters the mind through sense, so that we are passive, may be called pleasure of *enjoyment*.

On the other hand, when we like an act for its moral character, this liking is not a pleasure of enjoyment, but one that arises from our spontaneous activity and its conformity with the idea of our vocation. But this feeling, called moral feeling, requires concepts and is the exhibition of a law-governed, rather than a free, purposiveness. By the same token, the only way it can be communicated universally is by means of reason, and, if the pleasure is to be of the same kind in everyone, it must be communicated through quite determinate practical concepts of reason.

It is true that the pleasure we take in the sublime in nature, since it is a pleasure involved in reasoning contemplation, also lays claim to universal participation; and yet the feeling it presupposes is already different again: it is a feeling of our supersensible vocation, a feeling which, however obscure it may be, has a moral foundation. But I have no justification for simply presupposing that other people will take account of this feeling of mine and feel a liking when they contemplate the crude magnitude of nature. (We certainly cannot attribute this liking to nature's aspect itself, since that is closer to being terrifying.) Nonetheless, inasmuch as we should on every suitable occasion take those moral predispositions into account, I may require that liking too from everyone, but only by means of the moral law, which is in turn based on concepts of reason.

On the other hand, the pleasure we take in the beautiful is a pleasure neither of enjoyment, nor of a law-governed activity, nor yet of a reasoning contemplation governed by ideas, but is a pleasure of mere reflection. Without being guided by any purpose or principle whatever, this pleasure accompanies our ordinary apprehension of an

object by means of the imagination, our power of intuition, in relation to the understanding, our power of concepts. This apprehension occurs by means of a procedure that judgment has to carry out to give rise to even the most ordinary experience. The only difference is that in the case of ordinary experience the imagination has to engage in this procedure in order [for us] to [obtain] an empirical objective concept, whereas in the present case (in aesthetic judging) it has to do so merely in order to perceive that the presentation is adequate for [giving rise to a] harmonious (subjectively purposive) activity of the two cognitive powers in their freedom, i.e., in order [for us] to feel the presentational state with pleasure. This pleasure must of necessity rest on the same conditions in everyone, because they are subjective conditions for the possibility of cognition as such, and because the proportion between these cognitive powers that is required for taste is also required for the sound and common understanding that we may presuppose in everyone. That is precisely why someone who judges with taste (provided he is not mistaken in this consciousness and does not mistake the matter for the form, i.e., charm for beauty) is entitled to require the subjective purposiveness, i.e., his liking for the object, from everyone else as well, and is entitled to assume that his feeling is universally communicable, and this without any mediation by concepts.

293

§ 40

On Taste as a Kind of *Sensus Communis*²⁰

We often call the power of judgment a sense, when what we notice is not so much its reflection as merely its result. We then speak of a sense of truth, a sense of decency, of justice, etc. We do this even though we know, or at least properly ought to know, that a sense cannot contain these concepts, let alone have the slightest capacity to

²⁰[Cf. §§ 20–22, Ak. 237–40.]

pronounce universal rules, but that a conception of truth, propriety, beauty, or justice could never enter our thoughts if we were not able to rise above the senses to higher cognitive powers. [This] *common human understanding*, which is merely man's sound ([but] not yet cultivated) understanding, is regarded as the very least that we are entitled to expect from anyone who lays claim to the name of human being; and this is also why it enjoys the unfortunate honor of being called common sense (*sensus communis*), and this, indeed, in such a way that the word common (not merely in our language, where it is actually ambiguous, but in various others as well) means the same as *vulgar*—i.e., something found everywhere, the possession of which involves no merit or superiority whatever.

Instead, we must [here] take *sensus communis* to mean the idea of a sense *shared* [by all of us], i.e., a power to judge that in reflecting takes account (a priori), in our thought, of everyone else's way of presenting [something], in order *as it were* to compare our own judgment with human reason in general and thus escape the illusion that arises from the ease of mistaking subjective and private conditions for objective ones, an illusion that would have a prejudicial influence on the judgment. Now we do this as follows: we compare our judgment not so much with the actual as rather with the merely possible judgments of others, and [thus] put ourselves in the position of everyone else, merely by abstracting from the limitations that [may] happen to attach to our own judging; and this in turn we accomplish by leaving out as much as possible whatever is matter, i.e., sensation, in the presentational state, and by paying attention solely to the formal features of our presentation or of our presentational state. Now perhaps this operation of reflection will seem rather too artful to be attributed to the ability we call *common sense*. But in fact it only looks this way when expressed in abstract formulas. Intrinsically nothing is more natural than abstracting from charm and emotion when we seek a judgment that is to serve as a universal rule.

[Let us compare with this *sensus communis*] the common human understanding, even though the latter is not being included here as a part of the critique of taste. The following maxims may serve to elucidate its principles: (1) to think for oneself; (2) to think from the standpoint of everyone else; and (3) to think always consistently. The first is the maxim of an *unprejudiced*, the second of a *broadened*, the

third of a *consistent* way of thinking.²¹ The first is the maxim of a reason that is never *passive*. A propensity to a passive reason, and hence to a heteronomy of reason, is called *prejudice*; and the greatest prejudice of all is *superstition*, which consists in thinking of nature as not subject to rules which the understanding through its own essential law lays down as the basis of nature. Liberation from superstition is called *enlightenment*;²² for although liberation from prejudices generally may also be called enlightenment, still superstition deserves to be called a prejudice preeminently (*in sensu eminenti*)²³, since the blindness that superstition creates in a person, which indeed it even seems to demand as an obligation, reveals especially well the person's need to be guided by others, and hence his state of a passive reason. As for the second maxim concerning [a person's] way of thinking, it seems that we usually [use a negative term and] call someone limited (of a *narrow* mind as opposed to a *broad* mind) if his talents are insufficient for a use of any magnitude (above all for intensive use). But we are talking here not about the power of cognition, but about the *way of thinking* [that involves] putting this power to a purposive use; and this, no matter how slight may be the range and the degree of a person's natural endowments, still indicates a man with a *broadened way of thinking* if he overrides the private subjective conditions of his judgment, into which so many others are locked, as it were, and reflects on his own judgment from a *universal standpoint* (which he can determine only by transferring himself to the standpoint of others). The third maxim, the one concerning a *consistent* way of thinking, is hardest to attain and can in fact be attained only after repeated

295

²¹[Cf. the *Logic*, Ak. IX, 57, and the *Anthropology*, Ak. VII, 200, where these maxims are said to be contained in the precept for attaining wisdom; see also *ibid.*, Ak. VII, 228–29.]

²²We can readily see that, although enlightenment is easy as a thesis [*in thesi*], as a proposal [*in hypothesi*] it is a difficult matter that can only be carried out slowly. For although to be always self-legislative, rather than passive, in the use of one's reason, is a very easy matter for someone who wants only to measure up to his essential purpose and does not demand to know anything that is beyond his understanding; yet, since it is hard to avoid striving for such knowledge, and since there will never be a shortage of others who promise us with much assurance that they can satisfy our desire for it, it must be very difficult to preserve or instil in [someone's] way of thinking (especially in the public's) that merely negative [element] which constitutes enlightenment proper.

²³[In the eminent sense of the term.]

compliance with a combination of the first two has become a skill. We may say that the first of these maxims is the maxim of the understanding, the second that of judgment, the third that of reason.

Resuming now the thread from which I just digressed, I maintain that taste can be called a *sensus communis* more legitimately than can sound understanding, and that the aesthetic power of judgment deserves to be called a shared sense²⁴ more than does the intellectual one, if indeed we wish to use the word *sense*²⁵ to stand for an effect that mere reflection has on the mind, even though we then mean by sense the feeling of pleasure. We could even define taste as the ability to judge something that makes our feeling in a given presentation *universally communicable* without mediation by a concept.

The aptitude that human beings have for communicating their thoughts to one another also requires that imagination and understanding be related in such a way that concepts can be provided with accompanying intuitions, and intuitions in turn with accompanying concepts, these intuitions and concepts joining to [form] cognition. But here the harmony of the two mental powers is *law-governed*, under the constraint of determinate concepts. Only where the imagination is free when it arouses the understanding, and the understanding, without using concepts, puts the imagination into a play that is regular [i.e., manifests regularity], does the presentation communicate itself not as a thought but as the inner feeling of a purposive state of mind.

Hence taste is our ability to judge a priori the communicability of the feelings that (without mediation by a concept) are connected with a given presentation.

If we could assume that the mere universal communicability as such of our feeling must already carry with it an interest for us (something we are, however, not justified in inferring from the character of a merely reflective power of judgment), then we could explain how it is that we require from everyone as a duty, as it were, the feeling [contained] in a judgment of taste.

²⁴Taste could be called a *sensus communis aestheticus*, and common understanding a *sensus communis logicus*.

²⁵[Emphasis added.]

§ 41

On Empirical Interest in the Beautiful

That a judgment of taste by which we declare something to be beautiful must not have an interest *as its determining basis* has been established sufficiently above.²⁶ But it does not follow from this that, after the judgment has been made as a pure aesthetic one, an interest cannot be connected with it. This connection, however, must always be only indirect. In other words, we must think of taste as first of all connected with something else, so that with the liking of mere reflection on an object there can [then] be connected, in addition, a pleasure *in the existence* of the object (and all interest consists in pleasure in the existence of an object). For what we say in [the case of] cognitive judgments (about things in general) also holds for aesthetic judgments: *a posse ad esse non valet consequentia*.²⁷ This something else may be something empirical, viz., an inclination inherent in human nature, or something intellectual, viz., the will's property of being determinable a priori by reason. Both of these involve a liking for the existence of an object and hence can lay the foundation for an interest in something that we have already come to like on its own account and without regard to any interest whatever.

Only in *society* is the beautiful of empirical interest.²⁸ And if we grant that the urge to society is natural to man but that his fitness and propensity for it, i.e., *sociability*, is a requirement of man as a creature with a vocation for society and hence is a property pertaining to his *humanity*, then we must also inevitably regard taste as an ability to judge whatever allows us to communicate even our *feeling* to everyone else, and hence regard taste as a means of furthering something that everyone's natural inclination demands.

Someone abandoned on some desolate island would not, just for himself, adorn either his hut or himself; nor would he look for

²⁶[See esp. the First Moment, Ak. 203-11.]

²⁷[An inference from possible to actual is invalid.]

²⁸[Cf. Ak. 205 n. 10.]

flowers, let alone grow them, to adorn himself with them. Only in society does it occur to him to be, not merely a human being, but one who is also refined in his own way (this is the beginning of civilization²⁹). For we judge someone refined if he has the inclination and the skill to communicate his pleasure to others, and if he is not satisfied with an object unless he can feel his liking for it in community with others. Moreover, a concern for universal communication is something that everyone expects and demands from everyone else, on the basis, as it were, of an original contract dictated by [our] very humanity. Initially, it is true, only charms thus become important in society and become connected with great interest, e.g., the dyes people use to paint themselves (roucou among the Caribs and cinna-bar among the Iroquois), or the flowers, sea shells, beautifully colored feathers, but eventually also beautiful forms (as in canoes, clothes, etc.) that involve no gratification whatsoever, i.e., no liking of enjoyment. But in the end, when civilization has reached its peak, it makes this communication almost the principal activity of refined inclination, and sensations are valued only to the extent that they are universally communicable. At that point, even if the pleasure that each person has in such an object is inconsiderable and of no significant interest of its own, still its value is increased almost infinitely by the idea of its universal communicability.

This interest, which we indirectly attach to the beautiful through our inclination to society and which is therefore empirical, is, however, of no importance for us here, since we must concern ourselves only with what may have reference a priori, even if only indirectly, to a judgment of taste. For if even in this [pure] form [of a judgment of taste] an interest were to reveal itself [as] connected with it, then taste would reveal [how] our ability to judge [provides] a transition from sense enjoyment to moral feeling. Moreover, not only would we then have better guidance in using taste purposively, but we would also be showing [that judgment is] a mediating link in the chain of man's a priori powers,³⁰ the powers on which all legislation must depend. This much we can surely say about empirical interest in objects of taste and in taste itself: in such an interest taste caters to inclination, and no matter how refined this inclination may be, still the interest

²⁹[Cf. the *Anthropology*, § § 69-70, Ak. VII, 244-45.]

³⁰[Cf. Ak. 177 and 196.]

will also easily fuse with all the [other] inclinations and passions that reach their greatest variety and highest degree in society; and if our interest in the beautiful is based on these, then it can provide only a very ambiguous transition from the agreeable to the good. But whether taste, if taken in its purity, may not still be able to further this transition—this we have cause to investigate.

§ 42

On Intellectual Interest in the Beautiful

There are those who would like to regard every activity of man to which his inner natural predisposition impels him as being directed to the ultimate purpose of humanity, the morally good. These people have, with the best intention, regarded it as a sign of a good moral character to take an interest in the beautiful generally. But others have, not without grounds, contradicted them by appealing to the [fact of] experience that virtuosi of taste, who not just occasionally but apparently as a rule are vain, obstinate, and given to ruinous passions, can perhaps even less than other people claim the distinction of being attached to moral principles. And hence it seems, not only that the feeling for the beautiful is distinct in kind from moral feeling (as indeed it actually is), but also that it is difficult to reconcile the interest which can be connected with the beautiful with the moral interest, and that it is impossible to do this by an [alleged] intrinsic affinity between the two.

Now I am indeed quite willing to concede that an interest in the *beautiful in art* (in which I include the artistic use of natural beauties for our adornment, and hence for vanity's sake) provides no proof whatever that [someone's] way of thinking is attached to the morally good, or even inclined toward it. On the other hand, I do maintain that to take a *direct interest* in the beauty of *nature* (not merely to have the taste needed to judge it) is always a mark of a good soul; and that, if this interest is habitual, if it readily associates itself with the

contemplation of nature, this [fact] indicates at least a mental attunement favorable to moral feeling. But we must carefully bear in mind that what I mean here is actually the beautiful *forms* of nature, while I continue to set aside the *charms* that nature tends to connect so plentifully with them; for an interest in these, though also direct, is yet empirical.

Consider someone who is all by himself (and has no intention of communicating his observations to others) and who contemplates the beautiful shape of a wild flower, a bird, an insect, etc., out of admiration and love for them, and would not want nature to be entirely without them even if they provided him no prospect of benefit but instead perhaps even some harm. Such a person is taking a direct interest in the beauty of nature, and this interest is intellectual. That is, not only does he like nature's product for its form, but he also likes its existence, even though no charm of sense is involved; and he also does not connect that existence with any purpose whatever.

One thing is worthy of note here, however. Suppose we had secretly played a trick on this lover of the beautiful, sticking in the ground artificial flowers (which can be manufactured to look very much like natural ones) or perching artfully carved birds on the branches of trees, and suppose he then discovered the deceit. The direct interest he previously took in these things would promptly vanish, though perhaps it would be replaced by a different interest, an interest of vanity, to use these things to decorate his room for the eyes of others. [What this example shows is that] the thought that the beauty in question was produced by nature must accompany the intuition and the reflection, and the direct interest we take in that beauty is based on that thought alone. Otherwise we are left either with a mere judgment of taste without all interest, or with one connected with only an indirect interest, viz., an interest which refers to society and which provides no safe indication of a morally good way of thinking.

This superiority of natural beauty over that of art, namely, that—even if art were to excel nature in form—it is the only beauty that arouses a direct interest, agrees with the refined and solid [*gründlich*] way of thinking of all people who have cultivated their moral feeling. A man who has taste enough to judge the products of fine art with the greatest correctness and refinement may still be glad to leave a room in which he finds those beauties that minister to vanity and perhaps to social joys, and to turn instead to the beautiful in nature, in order to

find there, as it were, a voluptuousness for the mind in a train of thought that he can never fully unravel. If that is how he chooses, we shall ourselves regard this choice of his with esteem and assume that he has a beautiful soul, such as no connoisseur and lover of art can claim to have because of the interest he takes in his objects [of art]. What, then, is the distinction [that prompts] so different an estimation of two kinds of objects [the beautiful in nature and in art], even though in the judgment of mere taste neither would vie for superiority over the other?

We have a merely aesthetic power of judgment, an ability to judge forms without using concepts and to feel in the mere judging of these forms a liking that we also make a rule for everyone, though our judgment is not based on an interest and also gives rise to none. On the other hand, we also have an intellectual power of judgment, i.e., an ability for determining a priori with regard to mere forms of practical maxims (insofar as such maxims qualify of themselves for giving universal law) a liking that we make a law for everyone; this judgment [too] is not based on any interest, *yet it gives rise to one*. The pleasure or displeasure in the first judgment is called that of taste; [in] the latter, that of moral feeling.

But reason also has an interest in the objective reality of the ideas (for which, in moral feeling, it brings about a direct interest), i.e., an interest that nature should at least show a trace or give a hint that it contains some basis or other for us to assume in its products a lawful harmony with that liking of ours which is independent of all interest (a liking we recognize a priori as a law for everyone, though we cannot base this law on proofs). Hence reason must take an interest in any manifestation in nature of a harmony that resembles the mentioned [kind of] harmony, and hence the mind cannot meditate about the beauty of *nature* without at the same time finding its interest aroused. But in terms of its kinship this interest is moral, and whoever takes such an interest in the beautiful in nature can do so only to the extent that he has beforehand already solidly established an interest in the morally good. Hence if someone is directly interested in the beauty of nature, we have cause to suppose that he has at least a predisposition to a good moral attitude.³¹

It will be said that this construal of aesthetic judgments in terms of

³¹[Cf. the *Anthropology*, § 69, Ak. VII, 244.]

a kinship with moral feeling looks rather too studied to be considered as the true interpretation of that cipher through which nature speaks to us figuratively in its beautiful forms. But, first of all, this direct interest in the beautiful in nature is actually not common, but is peculiar to those whose way of thinking is either already trained to the good or exceptionally receptive to this training. But in view of the analogy between a pure judgment of taste, which depends on no interest whatever and [yet] makes us feel a liking that it also presents a priori as proper for mankind generally, on the one hand, and a moral judgment, which does the same from concepts, on the other hand, someone with that way of thinking does not need to engage in distinct, subtle, and deliberate meditation in order to be led by this analogy to an interest in the object of the pure judgment of taste which is just as strong and direct as his interest in the object of the moral judgment; the only difference is that the first interest is free while the second is based on objective laws. Consider, in addition, how we admire nature, which in its beautiful products displays itself as art, [i.e., as acting] not merely by chance but, as it were, intentionally, in terms of a lawful arrangement and as a purposiveness without a purpose; and since we do not find this purpose anywhere outside us, we naturally look for it in ourselves, namely, in what constitutes the ultimate purpose of our existence: our moral vocation. (The inquiry into the basis that makes such a natural purposiveness possible will, however, first come up in the teleology.)³²

The fact that our liking for beautiful art in a pure judgment of taste is not connected with a direct interest, as the liking for beautiful nature is so connected, is also easily explained. For either art imitates nature to the point of deception, in which case it achieves its effect by being (regarded as) natural beauty. Or it is an art in which we can see that it intentionally aimed at our liking; but in that case, though our liking for the product would arise directly through taste, it would arouse only an indirect interest in the underlying cause, namely, an interest in an art that can interest us only by its purpose and never in itself. Perhaps it will be said that this is also the case if an object of nature interests us by its beauty only insofar as we link it to an accompanying moral idea. However, it is not this link that interests us

³²{As to what this basis is, see the Translator's Introduction, xciii-cii.}

directly, but rather the beauty's own characteristic of qualifying for such a link, which therefore belongs to it intrinsically.

The charms in beautiful nature, which we so often find fused, as it were, with beautiful form, belong either to the modifications of light (in coloring) or of sound (in tones). For these are the only sensations that allow not merely for a feeling of sense, but also for reflection on the form of these modifications of the senses, so that they contain, as it were, a language in which nature speaks to us and which seems to have a higher meaning. Thus a lily's white color seems to attune the mind to ideas of innocence, and the seven colors [of the spectrum], from red to violet, [similarly seem to attune it, respectively, to the ideas of] (1) sublimity, (2) courage, (3) candor, (4) friendliness, (5) modesty, (6) constancy, and (7) tenderness.³³ A bird's song proclaims his joyfulness and contentment with his existence. At least that is how we interpret nature, whether or not it has such an intention. But in order for us to take this interest in beauty, this beauty must always be that of nature: our interest vanishes completely as soon as we notice that we have been deceived, that only art was involved; it vanishes so completely that at that point even taste can no longer find anything beautiful, nor sight anything charming. What do poets praise more highly than the nightingale's enchantingly beautiful song in a secluded thicket on a quiet summer evening by the soft light of the moon? And yet we have cases where some jovial innkeeper, unable to find such a songster, played a trick—received with greatest satisfaction [initially]—on the guests staying at his inn to enjoy the country air, by hiding in a bush some roguish youngster who (with a reed or rush in his mouth) knew how to copy that song in a way very similar to nature's. But as soon as one realizes that it was all deception, no one will long endure listening to this song that before he had considered so charming; and that is how it is with the song of any other bird. In order for us to be able to take a direct *interest* in the beautiful as such, it must be nature, or we must consider it so. This holds especially, however, if we can even require others to take a direct interest in it. And we do in fact require this; for we consider someone's way of thinking to be coarse and ignoble if he has no *feeling* for beautiful nature (which is

³³Newton showed that the white color of sunlight can not only be broken up into, but also recomposed from, "seven" spectral components: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet: *Opticks*, Bk. I, Pt. II.]

what we call the receptivity for an interest in contemplating nature) and sticks to the enjoyments of mere sense that he gets from meals or the bottle.

§ 43

On Art in General

(1) *Art* is distinguished from *nature* as doing (*facere*) is from acting or operating in general (*agere*); and the product or result of art is distinguished from that of nature, the first being a work (*opus*), the second an effect (*effectus*).

By right we should not call anything art except a production through freedom, i.e., through a power of choice that bases its acts on reason. For though we like to call the product that bees make (the regularly constructed honeycombs) a work of art, we do so only by virtue of an analogy with art; for as soon as we recall that their labor is not based on any rational deliberation on their part, we say at once that the product is a product of their nature (namely, of instinct), and it is only to their creator that we ascribe it as art.

[It is true that] if, as sometimes happens when we search through a bog, we come across a piece of hewn wood, we say that it is a product of art, rather than of nature, i.e., that the cause which produced it was thinking of a purpose to which this object owes its form. Elsewhere too, I suppose, we see art in everything that is of such a character that before it became actual its cause must have had a presentation of it (as even in the case of bees), yet precisely without the cause's having [in fact] *thought* of that effect. But if we simply call something a work of art in order to distinguish it from a natural effect, then we always mean by that a work of man.

(2) *Art*, as human skill, is also distinguished from *science* ([i.e., we distinguish] *can* from *know*), as practical from theoretical ability, as technic from theory (e.g., the art of surveying from geometry). That is exactly why we refrain from calling anything art that we *can* do the moment we *know* what is to be done, i.e., the moment we are

sufficiently acquainted with what the desired effect is. Only if something [is such that] even the most thorough acquaintance with it does not immediately provide us with the skill to make it, then to that extent it belongs to art. *Camper*³⁴ describes with great precision what the best shoe would have to be like, yet he was certainly unable to make one.³⁵

(3) *Art* is likewise distinguished from *craft*. The first is also called *free art*, the second could also be called *mercenary art*. We regard free art [as an art] that could only turn out purposive (i.e., succeed) if it is play, in other words, an occupation that is agreeable on its own account; mercenary art we regard as labor, i.e., as an occupation that on its own account is disagreeable (burdensome) and that attracts us only through its effect (e.g., pay), so that people can be coerced into it. To judge whether, in a ranking of the guilds, watchmakers should be counted as artists but smiths as craftsmen, we would have to take a viewpoint different from the one adopted here: we would have to compare [*Proportion*] the talents that each of these occupations presupposes. Whether even among the so-called seven free arts a few may not have been included that should be numbered with the sciences, as well as some that are comparable to crafts, I do not here wish to discuss. It is advisable, however, to remind ourselves that in all the free arts there is yet a need for something in the order of a constraint, or, as it is called, a *mechanism*. (In poetry, for example, it is correctness and richness of language, as well as prosody and meter.) Without this the *spirit*,³⁶ which in art must be *free* and which alone animates the work, would have no body at all and would evaporate completely. This reminder is needed because some of the more recent educators believe that they promote a free art best if they remove all constraint from it and convert it from labor into mere play.

³⁴[Peter Camper (1722-89), Dutch anatomist and naturalist. He is the author of numerous works, the most important of which are on comparative anatomy.]

³⁵In my part of the country, if you confront the common man with a problem like that of Columbus and his egg, he will say: *That is not an art, it is only a science*. That is, if you know it *then you can do it*; and he says just the same about all the alleged arts of the conjurer. That of the tightrope dancer, on the other hand, he will not at all decline to call art.

³⁶[*Geist*; cf. § 49, Ak. 313.]

§ 44

On Fine Art

305

There is no science of the beautiful [*das Schöne*], but only critique; and there is no fine [*schön*] science,³⁷ but only fine art. For in a science of the beautiful, whether or not something should be considered beautiful would have to be decided scientifically, i.e., through bases of proof, so that if a judgment about beauty belonged to science then it would not be a judgment of taste. As for a fine science: a science that as a science is to be fine is an absurdity; for if, [treating it] as a science, we asked for reasons and proofs, we would be put off with tasteful phrases (*bons mots*). What has given rise to the familiar expression, *fine sciences*, is doubtless nothing more than the realization, which is quite correct, that fine art in its full perfection requires much science: e.g., we must know ancient languages, we must have read the authors considered classical, we must know history and be familiar with the antiquities, etc.; and this is why these historical sciences have, through a confusion of words, themselves come to be called fine sciences, because they constitute the foundation and preparation needed for fine art, and in part also because they have come to include even a familiarity with the products of fine art (as in oratory or poetry).

If art merely performs the acts that are required to make a possible object actual, adequately to our *cognition* of that object, then it is *mechanical art*; but if what it intends directly is [to arouse] the feeling of pleasure, then it is called *aesthetic art*. The latter is either *agreeable* or *fine art*. It is agreeable art if its purpose is that the pleasure should accompany presentations that are mere *sensations*; it is fine art if its purpose is that the pleasure should accompany presentations that are *ways of cognizing*.

Agreeable arts are those whose purpose is merely enjoyment. They include [the art of providing] all those charms that can gratify a party at table, such as telling stories entertainingly, animating the group to open and lively conversation, or using jest and laughter to induce a

³⁷[Or "beautiful" science: Kant is responding, above all, to Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten and Georg Friedrich Meier. Cf. the Translator's Introduction, *l-ii*.]

certain cheerful tone among them³⁸—a tone such that, as is said, there may be a lot of loose talk over the feast, and no one wants to be held responsible for what he says, because the whole point is the entertainment of the moment, not any material for future meditation or quotation. (Such arts also include the art of furnishing a table so that people will enjoy themselves, or include, at large banquets, presumably even the table-music—a strange thing which is meant to be only an agreeable noise serving to keep the minds in a cheerful mood, and which fosters the free flow of conversation between each person and his neighbor, without anyone's paying the slightest attention to the music's composition.) Also included in these arts are any games that involve no further interest than that of making time go by unnoticed.

306

Fine art, on the other hand, is a way of presenting that is purposive on its own and that furthers, even though without a purpose, the culture of our mental powers to [facilitate] social communication.

The very concept of the universal communicability of a pleasure carries with it [the requirement] that this pleasure must be a pleasure of reflection rather than one of enjoyment arising from mere sensation. Hence aesthetic art that is also fine art is one whose standard is the reflective power of judgment, rather than sensation proper.³⁹

§ 45

Fine Art Is an Art Insofar as It Seems at the Same Time to Be Nature

In [dealing with] a product of fine art we must become conscious that it is art rather than nature, and yet the purposiveness in its form must seem as free from all constraint of chosen rules as if it were a product of mere nature. It is this feeling of freedom in the play of our

³⁸[Cf. the *Anthropology*, Ak. VII, 280.]

³⁹[*Sinnesempfindung*, see § 39, Ak. 291 incl. br. n. 19.]

cognitive powers, a play that yet must also be purposive, which underlies that pleasure which alone is universally communicable although not based on concepts. Nature, we say, is beautiful [*schön*] if it also looks like art; and art can be called fine [*schön*] art only if we are conscious that it is art while yet it looks to us like nature.

For we may say universally, whether it concerns beauty in nature or in art: *beautiful is what we like in merely judging it* (rather than either in sensation proper or through a concept). Now art always has a determinate intention to produce something. But if this something were mere sensation (something merely subjective), to be accompanied by pleasure, then we would [indeed] like this product in judging it, [but] only by means of the feeling of sense. If the intention were directed at producing a determinate object and were achieved by the art, then we would like the object only through concepts. In neither case, then, would we like the art in *merely judging it*, i.e., we would like it not as fine but only as mechanical art.

307 Therefore, even though the purposiveness in a product of fine art is intentional, it must still not seem intentional; i.e., fine art must have the *look* of nature even though we are conscious of it as art. And a product of art appears like nature if, though we find it to agree quite *punctiliously* with the rules that have to be followed for the product to become what it is intended to be, it does not do so *painstakingly*. In other words, the academic form must not show; there must be no hint that the rule was hovering before the artist's eyes and putting fetters on his mental powers.

§ 46

Fine Art Is the Art of Genius

Genius is the talent (natural endowment) that gives the rule to art. Since talent is an innate productive ability of the artist and as such belongs itself to nature, we could also put it this way: *Genius* is the innate mental predisposition (*ingenium*) through which nature gives the rule to art.

Whatever the status of this definition may be, and whether or not it is merely arbitrary, or rather adequate to the concept that we usually connect with the word *genius* (these questions will be discussed in the following section), still we can prove even now that, in terms of the meaning of the word *genius* adopted here, fine arts must necessarily be considered arts of *genius*.

For every art presupposes rules, which serve as the foundation on which a product, if it is to be called artistic, is thought of as possible in the first place. On the other hand, the concept of fine art does not permit a judgment about the beauty of its product to be derived from any rule whatsoever that has a *concept* as its determining basis, i.e., the judgment must not be based on a concept of the way in which the product is possible. Hence fine art cannot itself devise the rule by which it is to bring about its product. Since, however, a product can never be called art unless it is preceded by a rule, it must be nature in the subject (and through the attunement of his powers) that gives the rule to art; in other words, fine art is possible only as the product of *genius*.

What this shows is the following: (1) Genius is a *talent* for producing something for which no determinate rule can be given, not a predisposition consisting of a skill for something that can be learned by following some rule or other; hence the foremost property of genius must be *originality*. (2) Since nonsense too can be original, the products of genius must also be models, i.e., they must be *exemplary*; hence, though they do not themselves arise through imitation, still they must serve others for this, i.e., as a standard or rule by which to judge. (3) Genius itself cannot describe or indicate scientifically how it brings about its products, and it is rather as *nature* that it gives the rule. That is why, if an author owes a product to his genius, he himself does not know how he came by the ideas for it; nor is it in his power [*Gewalt*] to devise such products at his pleasure, or by following a plan, and to communicate [his procedure] to others in precepts that would enable them to bring about like products. (Indeed, that is presumably why the word *genius* is derived from [Latin] *genius*, [which means] the guardian and guiding spirit that each person is given as his own at birth,⁴⁰ and to whose inspiration [*Eingebung*] those original ideas are due.) (4) Nature, through genius, prescribes

⁴⁰[Cf. the *Anthropology*, Ak. VII, 225.]

the rule not to science but to art, and this also only insofar as the art is to be fine art.

§ 47

Elucidation and Confirmation of the Above Explication of Genius

On this point everyone agrees: that genius must be considered the very opposite of a *spirit of imitation*. Now since learning is nothing but imitation, even the greatest competence, [i.e.,] teachability (capacity) *qua* teachability, can still not count as genius. But even if someone does not just take in what others have thought but thinks and writes on his own, or even makes all sorts of discoveries in art and science, still, even that is not yet the right basis for calling such a *mind* (in contrast to one who is called a *simpleton*, because he can never do more than just learn and imitate) a *genius* (great though such a mind often is). For all of this *could* in fact have been done through learning as well, and hence lies in the natural path of an investigation and meditation by rules and does not differ in kind from what a diligent person can acquire by means of imitation. Thus one can indeed learn everything that *Newton* has set forth in his immortal work on the principles of natural philosophy, however great a mind was needed to make such discoveries; but one cannot learn to write inspired⁴¹ poetry, however elaborate all the precepts of this art may be, and however superb its models. The reason for this is that *Newton* could show how he took every one of the steps he had to take in order to get from the first elements of geometry to his great and profound discoveries; he could show this not only to himself but to everyone else as well, in an intuitive[ly clear] way, allowing others to follow. But

309

⁴¹[*Geistreich*: 'rich in spirit,' literally.]

no *Homer* or *Wieland*⁴² can show how his ideas, rich in fancy and yet also in thought, arise and meet in his mind; the reason is that he himself does not know, and hence also cannot teach it to anyone else. In scientific matters, therefore, the greatest discoverer differs from the most arduous imitator and apprentice only in degree, whereas he differs in kind from someone whom nature has endowed for fine art. But saying this does not disparage those great men, to whom the human race owes so much, in contrast to those whom nature has favored with a talent for fine art. For the scientists' talent lies in continuing to increase the perfection of our cognitions and of all the benefits that depend on [these], as well as in imparting that same knowledge to others; and in these respects they are far superior to those who merit the honor of being called geniuses. For the latter's art stops at some point, because a boundary is set for it beyond which it cannot go and which probably has long since been reached and cannot be extended further. Moreover, the artist's skill cannot be communicated but must be conferred directly on each person by the hand of nature. And so it dies with him, until some day nature again endows someone else in the same way, someone who needs nothing but an example in order to put the talent of which he is conscious to work in a similar way.

Since, then, [the artist's] natural endowment must give the rule to (fine) art, what kind of rule is this? It cannot be couched in a formula and serve as a precept, for then a judgment about the beautiful could be determined according to concepts. Rather, the rule must be abstracted from what the artist has done, i.e., from the product, which others may use to test their own talent, letting it serve them as their model, not to be *copied* [*Nachmachung*] but to be *imitated* [*Nachahmung*].⁴³ How that is possible is difficult to explain. The artist's ideas arouse similar ideas in his apprentice if nature has provided the latter with a similar proportion in his mental powers. That is why the models of fine art are the only means of transmitting

310

⁴²[Christoph Martin Wieland (1733–1813), German poet and man of letters.]

⁴³[Karl Vorländer, editor of the *Critique of Judgment* in the *Philosophische Bibliothek* edition, notes (v. 39a, 163, n. b) that Kant's manuscript read '*Nachahmung* . . . *Nachahmung*' ('[not to be] imitated [but to be] imitated'), which was then "corrected" to the reading found here, but that Kant presumably meant to write '*Nachahmung* . . . *Nachfolge*' ('[not to be] imitated [but to be] followed'), in line with what he says elsewhere: see esp. Ak. 318 and 283.]

these ideas to posterity. Mere descriptions could not accomplish this (especially not in the area of the arts of speech), and even in these arts only those models can become classical which are written in the ancient, dead languages, now preserved only as scholarly languages.⁴⁴

Even though mechanical and fine art are very different from each other, since the first is based merely on diligence and learning but the second on genius, yet there is no fine art that does not have as its essential condition something mechanical, which can be encompassed by rules and complied with, and hence has an element of *academic correctness*. For something must be thought, as purpose, since otherwise the product cannot be ascribed to any art at all, but would be a mere product of chance. But directing the work to a purpose requires determinate rules that one is not permitted to renounce. Now since originality of talent is one essential component (though not the only one) of the character of genius, shallow minds believe that the best way to show that they are geniuses in first bloom is by renouncing all rules of academic constraint, believing that they will cut a better figure on the back of an ill-tempered than of a training-horse. Genius can only provide rich *material* for products of fine art; processing this material and giving it *form* requires a talent that is academically trained, so that it may be used in a way that can stand the test of the power of judgment. But it is utterly ridiculous for someone to speak and decide like a genius even in matters that require the most careful rational investigation. One does not quite know whether to laugh harder at the charlatan who spreads all this haze, in which we can judge nothing distinctly but can imagine all the more, or rather laugh at the audience, which naively imagines that the reason why it cannot distinctly recognize and grasp this masterpiece of insight is that large masses of new truths are being hurled at it, whereas it regards the detail (which is based on carefully weighed explications and academically correct examination of the principles) as only the work of a bungler.

⁴⁴[Cf. Ak. 232 n. 49.]

On the Relation of Genius to Taste

Judging beautiful objects to be such requires *taste*; but fine art itself, i.e., *production* of such objects, requires *genius*.

If we consider genius as the talent for fine art (and the proper meaning of the word implies this) and from this point of view wish to analyze it into the powers that must be combined in order to constitute such a talent, then we must begin by determining precisely how natural beauty, the judging of which requires only taste, differs from artistic beauty, whose possibility (which we must also bear in mind when we judge an object of this sort) requires genius.

A natural beauty is a *beautiful thing*; artistic beauty is a *beautiful presentation* of a thing.

In order to judge a natural beauty to be that, I need not have a prior concept of what kind of thing the object is [meant] to be; i.e., I do not have to know its material purposiveness (its purpose). Rather, I like the mere form of the object when I judge it, on its own account and without knowing the purpose. But if the object is given as a product of art, and as such is to be declared beautiful, then we must first base it on a concept of what the thing is [meant] to be, since art always presupposes a purpose in the cause (and its causality). And since the harmony of a thing's manifold with an intrinsic determination of the thing, i.e., with its purpose, is the thing's perfection, it follows that when we judge artistic beauty we shall have to assess the thing's perfection as well, whereas perfection is not at all at issue when we judge natural beauty (to be that). It is true that when we judge certain objects of nature, above all animate ones, such as a human being or a horse, we do commonly also take into account their objective purposiveness in order to judge their beauty. But then, by the same token, the judgment is no longer purely aesthetic, no longer a mere judgment of taste. We then judge nature no longer as it appears as art, but insofar as it actually *is* art (though superhuman art), and [so we make a] teleological judgment that serves the aesthetic one as a foundation and condition that it must take into

account. Thus if we say, e.g., That is a beautiful woman, we do in fact think nothing other than that nature offers us in the woman's figure a beautiful presentation of the purposes [inherent] in the female build. For in order to think the object in this way, through a logically conditioned aesthetic judgment, we have to look beyond the mere form and toward a concept.

Fine art shows its superiority precisely in this, that it describes things beautifully that in nature we would dislike or find ugly.⁴⁵ The Furies, diseases, devastations of war, and so on are all harmful; and yet they can be described, or even presented in a painting, very beautifully. There is only one kind of ugliness that cannot be presented in conformity with nature without obliterating all aesthetic liking and hence artistic beauty: that ugliness which arouses *disgust*. For in that strange sensation, which rests on nothing but imagination, the object is presented as if it insisted, as it were, on our enjoying it even though that is just what we are forcefully resisting; and hence the artistic presentation of the object is no longer distinguished in our sensation from the nature of this object itself, so that it cannot possibly be considered beautiful. The art of sculpture, too, has excluded from its creations any direct presentation of ugly objects, since in its products art is almost confused with nature. Instead it has permitted [ugly objects] to be presented by an allegory—e.g., death ([by] a beautiful genius) or a warlike spirit ([by] Mars)—or by attributes that come across as likable, and hence has permitted them only to be presented indirectly and by means of an interpretation of reason rather than presented for a merely aesthetic power of judgment.

Let this suffice for the beautiful presentation of an object, which is actually only the form of a concept's exhibition, the form by which this concept is universally communicated. Now, giving this form to a product of fine art requires merely taste. The artist, having practiced and corrected his taste by a variety of examples from art or nature, holds his work up to it, and, after many and often laborious attempts to satisfy his taste, finds that form which is adequate to it. Hence this form is not, as it were, a matter of inspiration or of a free momentum of the mental powers; the artist is, instead, slowly and rather painstakingly touching the form up in an attempt to make it adequate to his

⁴⁵[Cf. Aristotle, the *Poetics*, ch. iv, 1448b, and Edmund Burke, *Enquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Pt. I, Section xvi.]

thought while yet keeping it from interfering with the freedom in the play of these powers.

But taste is merely an ability to judge, not to produce; and if something conforms to it, that [fact] does not yet make the thing a work of fine art: it may belong to useful and mechanical art, or even to science, as a product made according to determinate rules that can be learned and that must be complied with precisely. If this product has been given a likable form, then this form is only the vehicle of communication, and, as it were, a manner [adopted] in displaying the product, so that one still retains a certain measure of freedom in this display even though it is otherwise tied to a determinate purpose. Thus we demand that tableware, or, for that matter, a moral treatise, or even a sermon should have this form of fine art, yet without its seeming *studied*, but we do not on that account call these things works of fine art. In fine art we include, rather, a poem, a piece of music, a gallery of pictures, and so on; and here we often find a would-be work of fine art that manifests genius without taste, or another that manifests taste without genius.

§ 49

On the Powers of the Mind Which Constitute Genius

Of certain products that are expected to reveal themselves at least in part to be fine art, we say that they have no *spirit*, even though we find nothing to censure in them as far as taste is concerned. A poem may be quite nice and elegant and yet have no spirit. A story may be precise and orderly and yet have no spirit. An oration may be both thorough and graceful and yet have no spirit. Many conversations are entertaining, but they have no spirit. Even about some woman we will say that she is pretty, communicative, and polite, but that she has no spirit. Well, what do we mean here by spirit?

Spirit [*Geist*] in an aesthetic sense is the animating principle in the

mind.⁴⁶ But what this principle uses to animate [or quicken] the soul, the material it employs for this, is what imparts to the mental powers a purposive momentum, i.e., imparts to them a play which is such that it sustains itself on its own and even strengthens the powers for such play.

314

Now I maintain that this principle is nothing but the ability to exhibit *aesthetic ideas*; and by an aesthetic idea I mean a presentation of the imagination which prompts much thought, but to which no determinate thought whatsoever, i.e., no [determinate] *concept*, can be adequate, so that no language can express it completely and allow us to grasp it.⁴⁷ It is easy to see that an aesthetic idea is the counterpart (pendant) of a *rational idea*, which is, conversely, a concept to which no *intuition* (presentation of the imagination) can be adequate.

For the imagination ([in its role] as a productive cognitive power) is very mighty when it creates,⁴⁸ as it were, another nature out of the material that actual nature gives it. We use it to entertain ourselves when experience strikes us as overly routine. We may even restructure experience; and though in doing so we continue to follow analogical laws, yet we also follow principles which reside higher up, namely, in reason (and which are just as natural to us as those which the understanding follows in apprehending empirical nature). In this process we feel our freedom from the law of association (which attaches to the empirical use of the imagination); for although it is under that law that nature lends us material, yet we can process that material into something quite different, namely, into something that surpasses nature.

Such presentations of the imagination we may call *ideas*. One reason for this is that they do at least strive toward something that lies beyond the bounds of experience, and hence try to approach an exhibition of rational concepts (intellectual ideas), and thus [these concepts] are given a semblance of objective reality. Another reason, indeed the main reason, for calling those presentations ideas is that they are inner intuitions to which no concept can be completely

⁴⁶[Cf. the *Anthropology*, Ak. VII, 225 and 246. Cf. also above, § 46, Ak. 308.]

⁴⁷[Cf. § 57, Comment I, Ak. 341-44.]

⁴⁸[On the "productive" imagination, see Ak. 240 br. n. 66; and cf. Ak. 243 br. n. 73, where Kant tells us in what sense the imagination *is not* creative.]

adequate. A poet ventures to give sensible expression to rational ideas of invisible beings, the realm of the blessed, the realm of hell, eternity, creation, and so on. Or, again, he takes [things] that are indeed exemplified in experience, such as death, envy, and all the other vices, as well as love, fame, and so on; but then, by means of an imagination that emulates the example of reason in reaching [for] a maximum, he ventures to give these sensible expression in a way that goes beyond the limits of experience, namely, with a completeness for which no example can be found in nature. And it is actually in the art of poetry that the power [i.e., faculty] of aesthetic ideas can manifest itself to full extent. Considered by itself, however, this power is actually only a talent (of the imagination).

Now if a concept is provided with [*unterlegen*] a presentation of the imagination such that, even though this presentation belongs to the exhibition of the concept, yet it prompts, even by itself, so much thought as can never be comprehended within a determinate concept and thereby the presentation aesthetically expands the concept itself in an unlimited way, then the imagination is creative in [all of] this and sets the power of intellectual ideas (i.e., reason) in motion: it makes reason think more, when prompted by a [certain] presentation, than what can be apprehended and made distinct in the presentation (though the thought does pertain to the concept of the object [presented]).

315

If forms do not constitute the exhibition of a given concept itself, but are only supplementary [*Neben-*] presentations of the imagination, expressing the concept's implications and its kinship with other concepts, then they are called (aesthetic) *attributes* of an object, of an object whose concept is a rational idea and hence cannot be exhibited adequately. Thus Jupiter's eagle with the lightning in its claws is an attribute of the mighty king of heaven, and the peacock is an attribute of heaven's stately queen. [Through] these attributes, unlike [through] *logical attributes*, [we] do not present the content of our concepts of the sublimity and majesty of creation, but present something different, something that prompts the imagination to spread over a multitude of kindred presentations that arouse more thought than can be expressed in a concept determined by words. These aesthetic attributes yield an *aesthetic idea*, which serves the mentioned rational idea as a substitute for a logical exhibition, but its proper function is to quicken [*beleben*] the mind by opening up for it a view

into an immense realm of kindred presentations. Fine art does this not only in painting or sculpture (where we usually speak of attributes); but poetry and oratory also take the spirit that animates [*beleben*] their works solely from the aesthetic attributes of the objects, attributes that accompany the logical ones and that give the imagination a momentum which makes it think more in response to these objects [*dabei*], though in an undeveloped way, than can be comprehended within one concept and hence in one determinate linguistic expression. Here are some examples, though for the sake of brevity I must confine myself to only a few.

The great king, in one of his poems, expresses himself thus:

Let us part from life without grumbling or regrets,
 Leaving the world behind filled with our good deeds.
 Thus the sun, his daily course completed,
 Spreads one more soft light over the sky;
 And the last rays that he sends through the air
 Are the last sighs he gives the world for its well-being.⁴⁹

316

The king is here animating his rational idea of a cosmopolitan attitude, even at the end of life, by means of an attribute which the imagination (in remembering all the pleasures of a completed beautiful summer day, which a serene evening calls to mind) conjoins with that presentation, and which arouses a multitude of sensations and supplementary presentations for which no expression can be found. On the other hand, even an intellectual concept may serve, conversely, as an attribute of a presentation of sense and thus animate that presentation by the idea of the supersensible; but [we] may use for this only the aesthetic [element] that attaches subjectively to our consciousness of the supersensible. Thus, for example, a certain poet, in describing a beautiful morning, says: "The sun flowed forth, as seren-

⁴⁹[Kant is giving a German translation (probably his own) of the following lines written in French by Frederick the Great (*Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, 1846 ff., x, 203):

*Oui, finissons sans trouble, et mourons sans regrets,
 En laissant l'Univers comblé de nos bienfaits.
 Ainsi l'Astre du jour, au bout de sa carrière,
 Répand sur l'horizon une douce lumière,
 Et les derniers rayons qu'il darde dans les airs
 Sont ses derniers soupirs qu'il donne à l'Univers.]*

ity flows from virtue.”⁵⁰ The consciousness of virtue, even if we only think of ourselves as in the position of a virtuous person, spreads in the mind a multitude of sublime and calming feelings and a boundless outlook toward a joyful future, such as no expression commensurate with a determinate concept completely attains.⁵¹

In a word, an aesthetic idea is a presentation of the imagination which is conjoined with a given concept and is connected, when we use imagination in its freedom, with such a multiplicity of partial presentations that no expression that stands for a determinate concept can be found for it. Hence it is a presentation that makes us add to a concept the thoughts of much that is ineffable, but the feeling of which quickens our cognitive powers and connects language, which otherwise would be mere letters, with spirit.

So the mental powers whose combination (in a certain relation) constitutes *genius* are imagination and understanding. One qualification is needed, however. When the imagination is used for cognition, then it is under the constraint of the understanding and is subject to the restriction of adequacy to the understanding's concept. But when the aim is aesthetic, then the imagination is free, so that, over and above that harmony with the concept, it may supply, in an unstudied way, a wealth of undeveloped material for the understanding which the latter disregarded in its concept. But the understanding employs this material not so much objectively, for cognition, as subjectively, namely, to quicken the cognitive powers, though indirectly this does serve cognition too. Hence genius actually consists in the happy relation—one that no science can teach and that cannot be learned by any diligence—allowing us, first, to discover ideas for a given

317

⁵⁰From *Akademische Gedichte* (*Academic Poems*) (1782), vol. i, p. 70, by J. Ph. L. Withof (1725–89), professor of morals, oratory, and medicine at Duisburg, Germany. The original poem had ‘goodness’ instead of ‘virtue.’]

⁵¹Perhaps nothing more sublime has ever been said, or a thought ever been expressed more sublimely, than in that inscription above the temple of *Isis* (Mother Nature): “I am all that is, that was, and that will be, and no mortal has lifted my veil.” *Segner*⁵² made use of this idea in an ingenious vignette prefixed to his *Naturlehre* [*Natural Science*], so as first to imbue the pupil, whom he was about to lead into this temple, with the sacred thrill that is meant to attune the mind to solemn attentiveness.

⁵²[Johann Andreas von Segner (1704–77), German physicist and mathematician at Jena, Göttingen, and Halle. He is the author of several significant scientific works. He introduced the concept of the surface tension of liquids.]

concept, and, second, to hit upon a way of *expressing* these ideas that enables us to communicate to others, as accompanying a concept, the mental attunement that those ideas produce. The second talent is properly the one we call spirit. For in order to express what is ineffable in the mental state accompanying a certain presentation and to make it universally communicable—whether the expression consists in language or painting or plastic art—we need an ability [*viz.*, spirit] to apprehend the imagination's rapidly passing play and to unite it in a concept that can be communicated without the constraint of rules (a concept that on that very account is original, while at the same time it reveals a new rule that could not have been inferred from any earlier principles or examples).

If, after this analysis, we look back to the above explication of what we call *genius*, we find: *First*, genius is a talent for art, not for science, where we must start from distinctly known rules that determine the procedure we must use in it. *Second*, since it is an artistic talent, it presupposes a determinate concept of the product, namely, its purpose; hence genius presupposes understanding, but also a presentation (though an indeterminate one) of the material, *i.e.*, of the intuition, needed to exhibit this concept, and hence presupposes a relation of imagination to understanding. *Third*, it manifests itself not so much in the fact that the proposed purpose is achieved in exhibiting a determinate concept, as, rather, in the way *aesthetic ideas*, which contain a wealth of material [suitable] for that intention, are offered or expressed; and hence it presents the imagination in its freedom from any instruction by rules, but still as purposive for exhibiting the given concept. Finally, *fourth*, the unstudied, unintentional subjective purposiveness in the imagination's free harmony with the understanding's lawfulness presupposes such a proportion and attunement of these powers as cannot be brought about by any compliance with rules, whether of science or of mechanical imitation, but can be brought about only by the subject's nature.

318

These presuppositions being given, genius is the exemplary originality of a subject's natural endowment in the *free* use of his cognitive powers. Accordingly, the product of a genius (as regards what is attributable to genius in it rather than to possible learning or academic instruction) is an example that is meant not to be imitated, but

to be followed by another genius. (For in mere imitation the element of genius in the work—what constitutes its spirit—would be lost.) The other genius, who follows the example, is aroused by it to a feeling of his own originality, which allows him to exercise in art his freedom from the constraint of rules, and to do so in such a way that art itself acquires a new rule by this, thus showing that the talent is exemplary. But since a genius is nature's favorite and so must be regarded as a rare phenomenon, his example gives rise to a school for other good minds, i.e., a methodical instruction by means of whatever rules could be extracted from those products of spirit and their peculiarity; and for these [followers] fine art is to that extent imitation, for which nature, through a genius, gave the rule.

But this imitation becomes *aping* if the pupil *copies* everything, including even the deformities that the genius had to permit only because it would have been difficult to eliminate them without diminishing the force of the idea. This courage [to retain deformities] has merit only in a genius. A certain *boldness* of expression, and in general some deviation from the common rule, is entirely fitting for a genius; it is however not at all worthy of imitation, but in itself always remains a defect that [any]one must try to eliminate, though the genius has, as it were, a privilege to allow the defect to remain [anyway], because the inimitable [element] in the momentum of his spirit would be impaired by timorous caution. *Mannerism* is a different kind of aping; it consists in aping mere *peculiarity* (originality) as such, so as to distance oneself as far as at all possible from imitators, yet without possessing the talent needed to be *exemplary* as well. It is true that we use the term *manner*⁵³ in another way as well: Whenever we convey our thoughts, there are two ways (*modi*) of arranging them, and one of these is called *manner* (*modus aestheticus*), the other *method* (*modus logicus*);⁵⁴ the difference between these two is that the first has no standard other than the *feeling* that there is unity in the exhibition [of the thoughts], whereas the second follows in [all of] this determinate *principles*; hence only the first applies to fine art. But in art a product is called *mannered* only if the way the artist conveys his idea *aims* at singularity and is not adequate to the idea. Whatever is ostentatious (precious), stilted, and affected, with the

⁵³{Emphasis added.}

⁵⁴{Cf. Ak. 355 br. n. 41.}

sole aim of differing from the ordinary (but without spirit), resembles the behavior of those who, as we say, listen to themselves talking, or who stand and walk as if they were on a stage so as to be gaped at, behavior that always betrays a bungler.

§ 50

On the Combination of Taste with Genius in Products of Fine Art

If we ask which is more important in objects [*Sachen*] of fine art, whether they show genius or taste, then this is equivalent to asking whether in fine art imagination is more important than judgment. Now insofar as art shows genius it does indeed deserve to be called *inspired* [*geistreich*], but it deserves to be called *fine* art only insofar as it shows taste. Hence what we must look to above all, when we judge art as fine art, is taste, at least as an indispensable condition (*conditio sine qua non*). In order [for a work] to be beautiful, it is not strictly necessary that [it] be rich and original in ideas, but it is necessary that the imagination in its freedom be commensurate with the lawfulness of the understanding. For if the imagination is left in lawless freedom, all its riches [in ideas] produce nothing but nonsense, and it is judgment that adapts the imagination to the understanding.

Taste, like the power of judgment in general, consists in disciplining (or training) genius. It severely clips its wings, and makes it civilized, or polished; but at the same time it gives it guidance as to how far and over what it may spread while still remaining purposive. It introduces clarity and order into a wealth of thought, and hence makes the ideas durable, fit for approval that is both lasting and universal, and [hence] fit for being followed by others and fit for an ever advancing culture. Therefore, if there is a conflict between these two properties in a product, and something has to be sacrificed, then it should rather be on the side of genius; and

judgment, which in matters [*Sachen*] of fine art bases its pronouncements on principles of its own, will sooner permit the imagination's freedom and wealth to be impaired than that the understanding be impaired.

Hence fine art would seem to require *imagination, understanding, spirit, and taste*.⁵⁵

§ 51

On the Division of the Fine Arts

We may in general call beauty (whether natural or artistic) the *expression* of aesthetic ideas; the difference is that in the case of beautiful [*schön*] art the aesthetic idea must be prompted by a concept of the object, whereas in the case of beautiful nature, mere reflection on a given intuition, without a concept of what the object is [meant] to be, is sufficient for arousing and communicating the idea of which that object is regarded as the *expression*.

Accordingly, if we wish to divide the fine [*schön*] arts, we can choose for this, at least tentatively, no more convenient principle than the analogy between the arts and the way people express themselves in speech so as to communicate with one another as perfectly as possible, namely, not merely as regards their concepts but also as

⁵⁵The first three abilities are first *united* by the fourth. *Hume*, in his history⁵⁶ informs the English that, although they are in their works second to no other people in the world as regards evidence of the first three properties considered *separately*, in the property that unifies them they yet must yield to their neighbors, the French.⁵⁷

⁵⁶[*History of England* (1754–62).]

⁵⁷In the *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764), Kant says: "Among the peoples of this continent I think it is the *Italians* and the *French* who distinguish themselves from the rest by their feeling of the *beautiful*, but the *Germans, English, and Spanish* who do so by their feeling for the *sublime*." (Ak. II, 243).]

regards their sensations.⁵⁸ Such expression consists in *word*, *gesture*, and *tone* (articulation, gesticulation, and modulation). Only when these three ways of expressing himself are combined does the speaker communicate completely. For in this way thought, intuition, and sensation are conveyed to others simultaneously and in unison.

321 Hence there are only three kinds of fine arts: the art of *speech*, *visual art*, and the art of *the play of sensations* (as outer sense impressions). This division could also be arranged as a dichotomy: we could divide fine art into the art of expressing thoughts and that of expressing intuitions, and then divide the latter according to whether it deals merely with form, or with matter (sensation). But in that case the division would look too abstract, and less in keeping with ordinary concepts.

(1) The arts OF SPEECH are *oratory* and *poetry*. *Oratory* is the art of engaging in a task of the understanding as [if it were] a free play of the imagination; *poetry* is the art of conducting a free play of the imagination as [if it were] a task of the understanding.

Thus the *orator* announces a task and, so as to entertain his audience, carries it out as if it were merely a *play* with ideas. The *poet* announces merely an entertaining *play* with ideas, and yet the understanding gets as much out of this as if he had intended merely to engage in its [own] task. Now although the two cognitive powers, sensibility and understanding, are indispensable to each other, still it is difficult to combine them without [using] constraint and without their impairing each other; and yet their combination and harmony must appear unintentional and spontaneous if the art is to be *fine art*. Hence anything studied and painstaking must be avoided in art. For fine art must be free art in a double sense: it must be free in the sense of not being a mercenary occupation and hence a kind of labor, whose magnitude can be judged, exacted, or paid for according to a determinate standard; but fine art must also be free in the sense that, though the mind is occupying itself, yet it feels satisfied and aroused (independently of any pay) without looking to some other purpose.

⁵⁸The reader must not judge this sketch of a possible division of the fine arts as if it were intended as a theory. It is only one of a variety of attempts that can and should still be made.

So while the orator provides something that he does not promise, namely, an entertaining play of the imagination, yet he also takes something away from what he promises and what is after all his announced task, namely, that of occupying the understanding purposively. The poet, on the other hand, promises little and announces a mere play with ideas; but he accomplishes something worthy of [being called] a task, for in playing he provides food for the understanding and gives life to its concepts by means of his imagination. Hence basically the orator accomplishes less than he promises, the poet more.

(2) The VISUAL arts, i.e., the arts of expressing ideas in *sensible intuition* (not by presentations of mere imagination that are aroused by words), are those of *sensible truth* and those of *sensible illusion*. The first kind is called *plastic art*, the second *painting*. Both express ideas by making figures in space; plastic art offers figures to two senses, sight and touch (though it offers them to touch without regard to beauty), painting offers them only to sight. The aesthetic idea (the archetype, or original image) underlies both of these arts, in the imagination. But the figure that constitutes its expression (the ectype, or derivative image) is given [differently in the two arts]: either with corporeal extension (as the object itself exists), or as that extension is pictured in the eye (i.e., as it appears in a plane). Differently put: whatever the archetype is, [it] is referred—and this reference is made a condition for reflection—either to an actual purpose or only [to] the semblance of such a purpose.

322

To *plastic art*, the first kind of visual fine art, belong *sculpture* and *architecture*. *Sculpture* is the art that exhibits concepts of things corporeally, as they *might exist in nature* (though, as a fine art, it does so with a concern for aesthetic purposiveness). *Architecture* is the art of exhibiting concepts of things that are possible *only through art*, things whose form does not have nature as its determining basis but instead has a chosen purpose, and of doing so in order to carry out that aim and yet also with aesthetic purposiveness. In architecture the main concern is what *use* is to be made of the artistic object, and this use is a condition to which the aesthetic ideas are confined. In sculpture the main aim is the mere *expression* of aesthetic ideas. Thus statues of human beings, gods, animals, and so on belong to sculpture; on the other hand, temples, magnificent buildings for

public gatherings, or again residences, triumphal arches, columns, cenotaphs, and so on, erected as honorary memorials, belong to architecture; we may even add to this all household furnishings (such as the work of the cabinet maker and other such things that are meant to be used). For what is essential in a *work of architecture* is the product's adequacy for a certain use. On the other hand, a mere *piece of sculpture*, made solely to be looked at, is meant to be liked on its own account; though [in] such a work [sculpture] exhibits [its idea] corporeally, yet the work is a mere imitation of nature—even though one that involves a concern for aesthetic ideas—and so the *sensible truth* in it must not be carried to the point where the work ceases to look like art and a product of choice.

323

Painting, the second kind of visual art, exhibits *sensible illusion* artistically connected with ideas. I would divide it into *painting proper*, which *renders nature* beautifully, and *landscape gardening*, which *arranges nature's products* beautifully. For painting proper provides only the illusion of corporeal extension; landscape gardening, while providing corporeal extension truthfully, provides only the illusion of the use and utility [the garden has] for purposes other than the mere play of the imagination in the contemplation of its forms.⁵⁹ Landscape gardening consists in nothing but decorating the ground with the same diversity [of things] (grasses, flowers, shrubs, and trees, even bodies of water, hills, and dales) with which nature exhibits it to our view, only arranged differently and commensurately with certain ideas. But, like painting, this beautiful arrangement of corporeal things is given only to the eye, because the sense of touch cannot

⁵⁹It seems strange that landscape gardening could be regarded as a kind of painting despite the fact that it exhibits its forms corporeally. It does, however, actually take its forms from nature (at least at the very outset: the trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowers from forest and field), and to this extent it is not art—whereas (say) plastic art is, [though it also exhibits its forms corporeally]—and the arrangement it makes has as its condition no concept of the object and its purpose (unlike the case of, say, architecture), but merely the free play of the imagination in its contemplation. Hence to that extent it does agree with merely aesthetic painting, which has no determinate topic (but by means of light and shade makes an entertaining arrangement of air, land, and water). All of this the reader should judge only as an attempt to combine the fine arts under one principle—in this case the principle of the expression of aesthetic ideas (by analogy with a language)—rather than regard it as a decisive derivation.

provide a presentation of intuition of such a form. In painting in the broad sense I would also include the decoration of rooms with tapestries, bric-à-brac, and all beautiful furnishings whose sole function is to be *looked at*, as well as the art of dressing tastefully (with rings, snuff-boxes, etc.). For a *parterre* with all sorts of flowers, a room with all sorts of ornaments (including even ladies' attire) make a kind of painting at some luxurious party, which, like paintings properly so called (those that are not intended to *teach* us, e.g., history or natural science) are there merely to be looked at, using ideas to entertain the imagination in free play, and occupying the aesthetic power of judgment without a determinate purpose. No matter how much the workmanship in all this decoration may vary mechanically, requiring quite different artists, still any judgment of taste about what is beautiful in this art is determined in the same way to this extent: it judges only the forms (without regard for any purpose) as they offer themselves to the eye, singly or in their arrangement, according to the effect they have on the imagination. But how can we (by analogy) include visual art under gesture in speech? What justifies this is [the fact] that through these figures the artist's spirit gives corporeal expression to what and how he has thought, and makes the thing itself speak, as it were, by mime. This is a very common play of our fancy, whereby to lifeless things is attributed a spirit that corresponds to their form and speaks through them.

324

(3) The art of the BEAUTIFUL PLAY OF SENSATIONS (which are produced externally, while yet the play must be universally communicable) can be concerned only with the ratio in the varying degrees of attunement (tension) of the sense to which the sensations belong, i.e., with the sense's tone. And [given] this broad sense of the word [tone], we may divide this art into the artistic play of the sensations of hearing and of sight,⁶⁰ and hence into *music* and the *art of color*. It is worthy of note that these two senses, besides having whatever receptivity for impressions they require in order [for us] to obtain concepts of external objects by means of these [senses], are also capable of [having] a special sensation connected with that receptivity, a sensation about which it is difficult to decide whether it is based on

⁶⁰[On hearing (including a reference to music) and sight, cf. the *Anthropology*, §§ 18-19, Ak. VII, 155-57.]

325

sense or on reflection; and yet the ability to be affected in this way may at times be lacking, even though the sense is not at all otherwise deficient concerning its use for cognizing objects, or is perhaps even exceptionally keen. In other words, we cannot say with certainty whether a color or a tone (sound) is merely an agreeable sensation or whether it is of itself already a beautiful play of [component] sensations and as such carries with it, as we judge it aesthetically, a liking for its form. Just consider the rapidity of the vibrations of light or, in the case of tones, of the air,⁶¹ which probably far exceeds all our ability to judge directly in perception the ratio in the temporal division [produced] by these vibrations. This fact might well lead us to believe that we sense only the *effect* of these vibrations on the elastic parts of our body, but that the *temporal division* [produced] by them goes unnoticed and does not enter into our judging, so that we connect only agreeableness with colors and tones, not beauty in the composition of the colors and tones. We must consider two points here, however. *First*, there is the mathematical one that can be made about the ratio of these vibrations in music, and about our judging of this ratio; and it is plausible to judge color contrast by analogy with music. *Second*, we can consult the examples, rare though they are, of people who, with the best sight in the world, have been unable to distinguish colors, or who, with the keenest hearing, have been unable to distinguish tones. Moreover, for those people who do have this ability, there is a definite [limit regarding their ability] to perceive a qualitative change (rather than merely a change in the degree of the sensation) in the varying intensities along the scale of colors or tones, and there is a similar limit on the number of these varying intensities that can be distinguished *intelligibly*. If we consider all of this, we may feel compelled to regard sensation of color and tone not as mere sense impressions, but as the effect of our judging of the form we find in the play of many sensations. However, the difference that the one or the other opinion would make to our judging of the basis of music would affect the definition only in this: we would declare music either, as we did above, to be the *beautiful* [*schön*] play of sensations (of hearing), or [to be the play] of *agreeable* sensations. Only under the first kind of explication will music be presented wholly as fine

⁶¹[Cf. Ak. 224 incl. br. n. 40.]

[*schön*] art, while under the second it would be presented (at least in part⁶²) as *agreeable* art.

§ 52

On the Combination of the Fine Arts in One and the Same Product

Oratory may be combined with a pictorial exhibition of its subjects and objects in a *drama*; poetry may be combined with music in *song*, and song at the same time with a pictorial (theatrical) exhibition in an *opera*; the play of sensations in a piece of music may be combined with the play of figures, [viz.,] in *dance*; etc. Moreover, the exhibition of the sublime may, insofar as it belongs to fine art, be combined with beauty in a *tragedy in verse*, in a *didactic poem*, or in an *oratorio*; and in these combinations fine [*schön*] art is even more artistic. But whether it is also more beautiful [*schön*] (given how great a variety of different kinds of liking cross one another) may in some of these cases be doubted. But what is essential in all fine art is the form that is purposive for our observation and judging, rather than the matter of sensation (i.e., charm or emotion). For the pleasure we take in purposive form is also culture, and it attunes the spirit to ideas, and so makes it receptive to more such pleasure and entertainment; in the case of the matter of

326

⁶²[The point of this qualification (similarly for the word 'wholly,' earlier in the same sentence) seems to be this: If we could not directly perceive and "notice" the form that an *individual* tone or color has in the play of its (component) sensations (as discussed in the *first* half of the paragraph), then the form in a composition from "many" such tones or colors could be (fine art and) beautiful, rather than just agreeable, only "in part": namely, to the extent that this form consists of relations *other* than the ratios *between* the (not directly perceived) numbers of vibrations in the individual tones or colors. On the other hand, this leaves us with the difficulty that (in the *second* half of the paragraph, *up to* the last sentence) Kant seems to be saying that if we do not notice the form of an individual tone or color then we could not notice *any* form in a composition from many such tones or colors and hence could connect with this composition "only" agreeableness, "not beauty."]

sensation, however, the aim is merely enjoyment, which leaves nothing behind as an idea and makes the spirit dull, the object gradually disgusting, and the mind dissatisfied with itself and moody because it is conscious that in reason's judgment its attunement is contrapurposive.

Unless we connect the fine arts, closely or remotely, with moral ideas, which alone carry with them an independent liking, the second of the two alternatives just mentioned is their ultimate fate. They serve in that case only for our diversion, which we need all the more in proportion as we use it to dispel the mind's dissatisfaction with itself, with the result that we increase still further our uselessness and dissatisfaction with ourselves. For the first of the two alternatives [culture, and the spirit's attunement to ideas], it is generally the beauties of nature that are most beneficial, if we are habituated early to observe, judge, and admire them.

§ 53

Comparison of the Aesthetic Value of the Various Fine Arts

Among all the arts *poetry* holds the highest rank. (It owes its origin almost entirely to genius and is least open to guidance by precept or examples.) It expands the mind: for it sets the imagination free, and offers us, from among the unlimited variety of possible forms that harmonize with a given concept, though within that concept's limits, that form which links the exhibition of the concept with a wealth of thought to which no linguistic expression is completely adequate, and so poetry rises aesthetically to ideas. Poetry fortifies the mind: for it lets the mind feel its ability—free, spontaneous, and independent of natural determination—to contemplate and judge phenomenal nature as having [*nach*] aspects that nature does not on its own offer in experience either to sense or to the understanding, and hence poetry

lets the mind feel its ability to use nature on behalf of and, as it were, as a schema of the supersensible. Poetry plays with illusion, which it produces at will, and yet without using illusion to deceive us, for poetry tells us itself that its pursuit is mere play, though this play can still be used purposively by the understanding for its business. Oratory [on the other hand], insofar as this is taken to mean the art of persuasion (*ars oratoria*), i.e., of deceiving by means of a beautiful illusion, rather than mere excellence of speech (eloquence and style), is a dialectic that borrows from poetry only as much as the speaker needs in order to win over people's minds for his own advantage before they judge for themselves, and so make their judgment unfree. Hence it cannot be recommended either for the bar or for the pulpit. For when civil laws or the rights of individual persons are at issue, or the enduring instruction and determination of minds to a correct knowledge and a conscientious observance of their duty are at issue, then it is beneath the dignity of so important a task to display even a trace of extravagant wit and imagination, let alone any trace of the art of persuading people and of biasing them for the advantage of someone or other. For although this art can at times be employed for aims that are legitimate and laudable intrinsically, it is still made reprehensible by the fact that [by dealing with those issues] in this way [it] corrupts the maxims and attitudes of the subjects, even if objectively the action [they are persuaded to perform] is lawful; for it is not enough that we do what is right, but we must also perform it solely on the ground that it is right. Moreover, the mere distinct concept of these kinds of human affairs has, even on its own, sufficient influence on human minds to obviate the need to bring in and apply the machinery of persuasion as well—it is enough if the concept is exhibited vividly in examples and if there is no offense against the rules of euphony of speech or the rules of propriety in the expression of ideas of reason (these two together constitute excellence of speech). Indeed, since the machinery of persuasion can be used equally well to palliate and cloak vice and error, it cannot quite eliminate our lurking suspicion that we are being artfully hoodwinked. In poetry [on the other hand] everything proceeds with honesty and sincerity. It informs us that it wishes to engage in mere entertaining play with the imagination, namely, one that harmonizes in form with the laws of the understanding; it does not seek

to sneak up on the understanding and ensnare it by a sensible exhibition.⁶³

328

After poetry, *if our concern is with charm and mental agitation*,⁶⁵ I would place the art which is closer to it than any other art of speech, and which can also be combined with it very naturally: the *art of music*. For though it speaks through nothing but sensations without concepts, so that unlike poetry it leaves us with nothing to meditate about, it nevertheless does agitate the mind more diversely and intensely, even if merely temporarily. However, it is admittedly more a matter of enjoyment than of culture (the play of thought that it arouses incidentally is merely the effect of an association that is mechanical, as it were), and in reason's judgment it has less value than any other of the fine arts. That is why, like any enjoyment, it needs to be changed fairly often and cannot bear several repetitions without making us weary. Its charm, so generally [*allgemein*] communicable, seems to rest on this: Every linguistic expression has in its context a tone appropriate to its meaning. This tone indicates, more or less, an affect⁶⁶ of the speaker and in turn induces the same affect in the listener too, where it then conversely arouses the idea which in language we express in that tone [*Ton*]. And just as modulation is, as

328

⁶³I must confess that a beautiful poem has always given me pure delight [*Vergnügen*], whereas reading the best speech of a Roman public orator, or of a contemporary parliamentary speaker or preacher, has always been mingled with the disagreeable feeling of disapproval of an insidious art, an art that knows how, in important matters, to move people like machines to a judgment that must lose all its weight with them when they meditate about it calmly. Rhetorical power and excellence of speech (which together constitute rhetoric) belong to fine art; but oratory (*ars oratoria*), the art of using people's weaknesses for one's own aims (no matter how good these may be in intention or even in fact), is unworthy of any *respect* whatsoever. Moreover, both in Athens and in Rome, it came to its peak only at a time when the state was hastening to its ruin, and any true patriotic way of thinking was extinct. Someone who sees the issues clearly and has a command of language in its richness and purity, as well as a fertile imagination proficient in exhibiting his ideas and a heart vividly involved in the true good, is the *vir bonus dicendi peritus* [the excellent man and expert speaker], the orator who speaks without art but with great force, as *Cicero* would have him,⁶⁴ even though he himself did not always remain faithful to this ideal.

⁶⁴[Wilhelm Windelband notes (Ak. V, 529) that it was not Cicero who said this, but (Marcus Porcius) Cato (the Elder, "the Censor," 234-149 B.C.).]

⁶⁵[Mental agitation (see Ak. 258, 334) is what emotion involves; cf. Ak. 245 and 226.]

⁶⁶[Cf. Ak. 272 n. 39.]

it were, a universal [*allgemein*] language of sensations that every human being can understand, so the art of music [*Tonkunst*] employs this language all by itself in its full force, namely, as a language of affects; in this way it communicates to everyone [*allgemein*], according to the law of association, the aesthetic ideas that we naturally connect with such affects. But since these aesthetic ideas are not concepts, not determinate thoughts, the form of the arrangement of these sensations (harmony and melody), which takes the place of the form of a language, only serves to express, by means of [the] proportioned attunement of the sensations, the aesthetic idea of a coherent whole of an unspeakable wealth of thought, and to express it in conformity with a certain theme that is the prevalent affect in the piece. (Since in the case of tones this attunement rests on the numerical relation of air vibrations that occur in uniform intervals of time—inasmuch as the tones are combined simultaneously or successively [in harmony and melody, respectively]—it can be brought under certain rules mathematically.) Although we do not present this mathematical form through determinate concepts, to such form alone is attached the liking that, when we merely reflect on such a multitude of concomitant or consecutive sensations, is connected with their play, as a condition, valid for everyone, of this play's beauty; and it is with regard to this form alone that taste can claim the right to pronounce in advance upon the judgment of everyone.

329

But mathematics certainly does not play the slightest part in the charm and mental agitation that music produces. Rather, it is only the indispensable condition (*conditio sine qua non*) of that ratio of the impressions, in their combination as well as change, which enables us to comprehend⁶⁷ them; and thus they are kept from destroying one another, so that they harmonize in such a way as to produce, by means of affects consonant with [this ratio], a continuous agitation and quickening of the mind, and thus they produce an appealing self-enjoyment.

If, on the other hand, we assess the value of the fine arts by the culture [or cultivation] they provide for the mind, taking as our standard the expansion of those powers that have to come together in the power of judgment in order for cognition to arise, then music, since it merely plays with sensations, has the lowest place among the fine arts (just as it may have the highest among those [whose value]

⁶⁷[*Zusammenfassen*; cf. Ak. 252 br. n. 14.]

330

we assess by their agreeableness as well). So in this regard the visual arts are far ahead of it; for by putting the imagination into a free play that yet is also commensurate with the understanding, they carry on a task at the same time: they bring about a product that serves the concepts of the understanding as an enduring vehicle, a vehicle that commends itself to these very concepts, for furthering their union with sensibility and thereby the urbanity, as it were, of the higher cognitive powers. The two kinds of art pursue quite different courses: music proceeds from sensations to indeterminate ideas; the visual arts from determinate ideas to sensations. The latter [arts] produce a *lasting* impression, the former only a *transitory* one. The imagination can recall the lasting [impressions] and agreeably entertain itself with them; but the transitory ones either are extinguished entirely or, if the imagination involuntarily repeats them, they are more likely to be irksome to us than agreeable. Moreover, music has a certain lack of urbanity about it. For, depending mainly on the character of its instruments, it extends its influence (on the neighborhood) farther than people wish, and so, as it were, imposes itself on others and hence impairs the freedom of those outside of the musical party. The arts that address themselves to the eye do not do this; for if we wish to keep out their impressions, we need merely turn our eyes away. The situation here is almost the same as with the enjoyment [*Ergötzung*] produced by an odor that spreads far. Someone who pulls his perfumed handkerchief from his pocket gives all those next to and around him a treat whether they want it or not, and compels them, if they want to breathe, to enjoy [*genießen*] at the same time,⁶⁸ which is also why this habit has gone out of fashion.⁶⁹ Among the visual

⁶⁸[Cf. the *Anthropology*, Ak. VII, 158.]

⁶⁹Those who have recommended that the singing of hymns be included at family prayer have failed to consider that by such a *noisy* (and precisely because of this usually pharisaical) worship they impose great hardship on the public, since they compel their neighbors to either join in the singing or put aside whatever they were thinking about.⁷⁰

⁷⁰[Cf. William Wallace, *Kant* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, n.d.), p. 42: "Kant, whose house stood not far from the castle, was disturbed in his studies at one period by the noisy devotional exercises of the prisoners in the adjoining jail. In a letter to Hippel [Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel, 1741-96, German writer and head mayor of Königsberg], accordingly, he suggested the advantage of closing the windows during the hymn-singsings, and added that the warders of the prison might probably be directed to accept less than sonorous and neighbor-annoying chants as evidence of the penitent spirit of their captives."]

arts I would give priority to *painting*, partly because it is the art of design and as such underlies all the remaining visual arts, partly because it can penetrate much further into the region of ideas, and in conformity with them can also expand the realm of intuition more than the other visual arts can do.

§ 54

Comment

As we have frequently shown, there is an essential difference between *what we like when we merely judge it*, and what *gratifies* us (i.e., what we like in sensation). The second is something that, unlike the first, we cannot require of everyone. Gratification (even if its cause happens to lie in ideas) seems always to consist in a feeling that a person's life is being furthered generally [*gesamt*], and [this feeling] thus includes furtherance of his bodily well-being, i.e., his health.⁷¹ To this extent, then, when *Epicurus* claimed that all gratification is basically bodily sensation,⁷² he was perhaps not mistaken but only misunderstood himself in including intellectual and even practical liking among the gratifications. If we bear this latter distinction in mind, we can explain how a gratification can be disliked by the very person who feels it (for example the joy felt by a needy but upright person at being made the heir of his loving but stingy father), or how profound grief may yet be liked by the person suffering it (as a widow's sadness over the death of her worthy husband⁷³), or how a

331

⁷¹[Health matters are discussed extensively in the *Anthropology*, Ak. VII; they are also discussed in the *Streit der Fakultäten* (*Dispute among the [University's] Schools [Fakultäten]*), Ak. VII, 95–116, and in Kant's speech, *De medicina corporis, quae philosophorum est* (*On Medicine of the Body, as far as This [Discipline] Belongs to Philosophy*) (1788), Ak. XV, 939–53.]

⁷²[Cf. Ak. 266, end of br. n. 33.]

⁷³[Cf. the *Anthropology*, Ak. VII, 262: "... [A] widow who, as we say, will not let anyone console her, i.e., stop the flow of her tears, is fostering her health, even though she does not know this and actually does not want to know it." Cf. also *ibid.*, Ak. VII, 237.]

gratification may be liked in addition (as our gratification in the sciences we pursue), or how a pain (such as hatred, envy, or a thirst for revenge) may be disliked in addition. The liking or disliking in these cases is based on reason and is the same as *approval* or *disapproval*. Gratification and pain, on the other hand, can rest only on the feeling of *being well* or *unwell* (whatever the cause), or on the prospect of possibly being so.

Any changing free play of sensations (that are not based on an intention) gratifies us, because it furthers our feeling of health, and it does not matter whether in our rational judgment we like the object of this play, or like this gratification itself. Moreover, this gratification can increase to the level of an affect even though we are not taking an interest in the object itself, at least not one proportionate to the affect's degree. We may divide such play into the *play [or game] of chance*, the *play of tones* [in music], and the *play of thought [or of wit]*. The *first* of these requires an *interest*, whether in vanity or in our own profit, but one far less strong than the interest we take in the manner according to which we pursue it. The play of *tones* requires merely a change of *sensations*, each of which relates to affect, but without having the strength [*Grad*] of an affect, and arouses aesthetic ideas. The play of *thought* arises merely from the change of presentations in judgment; although it produces no thought that carries any interest with it, it does quicken the mind.

332

How gratifying such play must be, without our having to assume an underlying interested intention, is shown by all our evening parties; for without play almost none of them could keep itself entertained. But many affects are at play there—hope, fear, joy, anger, and scorn, alternating constantly—and are so lively that they amount to an inner motion that seems to further all the vital processes in the body, as is proved by how sprightly the mind becomes as a result, even though nothing has been won or learned. But since the play of chance is not beautiful play, we shall here set it aside. But music and something to laugh about are two kinds of play with aesthetic ideas, or for that matter with presentations of the understanding, by which in the end nothing is thought; it is merely the change they involve that still enables them to gratify us in a lively way. This shows rather clearly that in both of them the quickening is merely bodily, even though it is aroused by ideas of the mind, and shows that all the gratification [we find] at a lively party, extolled as being so refined and inspired, consists [merely] in the feeling of health that is produced by an

intestinal agitation corresponding to such play. It is not our judging of the harmony we find in tones or in flashes of wit—this harmony, with its beauty, merely serves as a necessary vehicle—but the furtherance of the vital processes in the body, the affect that agitates the intestines and the diaphragm, in a word the feeling of health (which we cannot feel without such prompting), which constitutes the gratification we find in the fact that we can reach the body through the soul as well, and use the soul as the physician of the body.

In music this play proceeds from bodily sensation to aesthetic ideas (of the objects of affects), and from these back again [to the body], but with the force exerted on the body concentrated [*vereinigt*]. In jest⁷⁴ (which, just as much as music, deserves to be considered more an agreeable than a fine art) the play starts from thoughts, all of which, as far as they seek sensible expression, engage the body also. In the exhibition involved in jest, the understanding, failing to find what it expected, suddenly relaxes, so that we feel the effect of this slackening in the body by the vibration of our organs, which helps restore their equilibrium and has a beneficial influence on our health.

Whatever is to arouse lively, convulsive laughter must contain something absurd (hence something that the understanding cannot like for its own sake). *Laughter is an affect that arises if a tense expectation is transformed into nothing.* This same transformation certainly does not gladden the understanding, but indirectly it still gladdens us in a very lively way for a moment. So the cause of this must consist both in the influence that the presentation has on the body and in the body's reciprocal effect on the mind—but not because the presentation is objectively an object of our gratification (for how could an expectation that turned out to be false gratify us?), but solely because it is a mere play of presentations which produces in the body an equilibrium of the vital forces.

Suppose someone tells us this story: An Indian at an Englishman's table in Surat saw a bottle of ale being opened, and all the beer, turned to froth, rushing out. The Indian, by repeated exclamations, showed his great amazement.—Well, what's so amazing in that? asked the Englishman.—Oh, but I'm not amazed at its coming out, replied the Indian, but at how you managed to get it all in.—This makes us laugh, and it gives us hearty pleasure. This is not because, say, we think we are smarter than this ignorant man, nor are we laughing at

⁷⁴[Cf. the *Anthropology*, § 79, Ak. VII, 261–65.]

anything else here that is to our liking and that we noticed through our understanding. It is rather that we had a tense expectation that suddenly vanished, [transformed] into nothing. Or suppose that the heir of a rich relative wants to arrange for him a very solemn funeral service, but complains that things are not quite working out: For (he says), the more money I give my mourners to look grieved, the more cheerful they look.—This evokes ringing laughter in us, and the reason is that we have an expectation that is suddenly transformed into nothing. We must be careful to note that it must be transformed into nothing, not into the positive opposite of an expected object, for that is always something and may frequently grieve us. For if someone tells us a story that arouses great expectation in us, but at the close we see immediately that it is untrue, this arouses our dislike. An example of this is the story about people whose hair is said to have turned grey overnight from great grief. Suppose, on the other hand, that in response to a story like this some rogue gives us a longwinded account of the grief of some merchant who, during his return trip from India to Europe, with all his fortune in merchandise, was forced by a heavy storm to throw everything overboard, and whose grief was such that it made his wig turn grey that very night.—This will make us laugh; and it gratifies us because we treat our own mistake in reaching for some object that is otherwise indifferent to us, or rather the idea we had been pursuing, as we might a ball: we continue to knock it back and forth for a while, even though all we mean to do is seize [it] and hold on to [it]. What arouses our gratification here is not that we are dismissing someone as a liar or a fool. For even on its own account the latter story, told with an assumed seriousness, would make a party roar with laughter, whereas dismissing someone as a liar or a fool would not ordinarily merit attention.

334

It is noteworthy that in all such cases the joke must contain something that can deceive us for a moment. That is why, when the illusion vanishes, [transformed] into nothing, the mind looks at the illusion once more in order to give it another try, and so by a rapid succession of tension and relaxation the mind is bounced back and forth and made to sway; and such swaying, since whatever was stretching the string, as it were, snapped suddenly (rather than by a gradual slackening), must cause a mental agitation and an inner bodily agitation in harmony with it, which continues involuntarily, and which gives rise to fatigue while yet also cheering us up (these are the effects of a[n inner] motion conducive to our health).

For if we assume that all our thoughts are, in addition, in a harmonious connection with some agitation in the body's organs, then we can pretty well grasp how, as the mind suddenly shifts alternately from one position to another in order to contemplate its object, there might be a corresponding alternating tension and relaxation of the elastic parts of our intestines that is communicated to the diaphragm (such as ticklish people feel). The lungs, meanwhile, rapidly and intermittently expel air, and so give rise to an agitation that is conducive to our health. It is this agitation alone, and not what goes on in the mind, that is the actual cause of our gratification in a thought [by] which [we] basically present nothing. Voltaire said that heaven has given us two things to counterbalance the many hardships in life: *hope* and *sleep*.⁷⁵ He might have added *laughter*, if only the means for arousing it in reasonable people were as easy to come by, and if the wit or whimsical originality needed for it were not just as rare, as the talent is common for people to write, as mystical ponderers do, things that *break your head*, or to write, as geniuses do, things that *break your neck*, or to write, as sentimental novelists do (also, I suppose, sentimental moralists), things that *break your heart*.

It seems to me, therefore, that Epicurus may certainly be granted that all gratification, even if it is prompted by concepts that arouse aesthetic ideas, is *animal* (i.e., bodily) sensation. For granting this does not in the least impair the *intellectual*⁷⁶ feeling of respect for moral

335

⁷⁵[*Henriade*, chant 7.]

⁷⁶[*Geistig*. The *Geist* here is obviously not the "spirit in an aesthetic sense," the "animating principle in the mind," our "ability to exhibit *aesthetic ideas*" (§ 49, Ak. 313). Since the qualification, 'in an aesthetic sense,' is not repeated anywhere as Kant goes on to discuss *that* kind of *Geist*, it would be misleading if 'spirit' were used again to render '*Geist*' in a *non* aesthetic sense (except where the context clarifies what is meant, as it does, e.g., at Ak. 466 and 467). 'Intellect' seems closest to what Kant has in mind here, in the broad sense in which Kant has been using the term '*intellektuell*' all along in this work. As for the present case of intellectual *feeling*, it is true that in one place (*Critique of Practical Reason*, Ak. V, 117) Kant says that 'intellectual [*intellektuell*] feeling' would be a contradiction; for "all feeling is sensible" (*ibid.*, Ak. V, 75). Yet elsewhere he does talk about intellectual feeling; he speaks of "intellectual [*intellektuell*] pleasure" (*Anthropology*, Ak. VII, 230), and of "intellectual [*intellektuell*] liking" (above, Ak. 271 and 230, and below, Ak. 366). This seeming inconsistency can be resolved as follows. In calling a feeling (the feeling of respect) intellectual, a qualification must be taken as understood: this feeling too, *qua* feeling, is sensible, a receptivity, though one that does not have its own sense (see the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Ak. VI, 400, and cf. above, Ak. 291 br. n. 19); but we may still call it intellectual insofar as *the basis that gives rise to it is* (rational and as such) intellectual rather than sensible (*Critique of Practical Reason*, Ak. V, 73).]

ideas, which is not gratification but self-esteem (of the humanity within us) elevating us above the need for gratification—and indeed does not impair even the less noble feeling of *taste*.

Something composed of both of these [the bodily and the intellectual feeling] is found in *naïveté*, which is the eruption of the sincerity that originally was natural to humanity and which is opposed to the art of dissimulation that has become our second nature. We laugh at such simplicity as does not yet know how to dissemble, and yet we also rejoice in the natural simplicity here thwarting that art of dissimulation. We were expecting the usual custom, the artificial utterance carefully aimed at creating a beautiful illusion—and lo! there is uncorrupted, innocent nature, which we did not at all expect to find, and which is displayed by someone who also had no intention of doing so. Here the beautiful but false illusion, which usually has great significance in our judgment, is suddenly transformed into nothing, so that, as it were, the rogue within ourselves is exposed; and this is what agitates the mind alternately in two opposite directions, and is what also gives the body a wholesome shaking. But [the fact] that something infinitely better than all accepted custom, viz., integrity and character [*Lauterkeit der Denkungsart*] (or at least the predisposition to it), is after all not wholly extinct in human nature does mingle seriousness and esteem with this play of the power of judgment. But since this phenomenon manifests itself only for a little while, and since the art of dissimulation soon draws its veil over it again, regret is mingled in at the same time. This regret is an emotion of tenderness which, since it is play, can readily be combined with this sort of goodnatured laughter, and usually is in fact so combined with it. At the same time, the person who provides the food for this laughter is usually compensated for his embarrassment at not yet being shrewd in the [usual] human fashion by means of the tenderness involved. An art of being *naïve* is therefore a contradiction; but there is certainly the possibility of presenting *naïveté* in a fictional character, and then it is fine, though also rare, art. We must not confuse *naïveté* with homely simplicity, which refrains from covering nature over with artificiality only because it does not understand the art of social relations very well.

The *whimsical* manner may also be included with whatever is cheerful and closely akin to the gratification derived from laughter, and which belongs to originality of intellect, but which certainly does not belong to the talent for fine art. For *whimsicality*, in its favorable

sense, means the talent enabling us to put ourselves at will into a certain mental disposition, in which everything is judged in a way quite different from the usual one (even vice versa), but yet is judged in conformity with certain principles of reason [present] in such a mental attunement. A person who is subject to such changes involuntarily is *moody* [*launisch*]. But someone who can adopt them at will and purposively (so as to enliven his description of something by means of a contrast arousing laughter) is called *whimsical* [*launig*],⁷⁷ as is also the way he conveys [his thoughts]. However, this manner belongs more to agreeable than to fine art, because the object of fine art must always show itself as having some dignity; and so an exhibition of it requires a certain seriousness, just as taste does when it judges the object.

⁷⁷[On moodiness vs. whimsicality, cf. the *Anthropology*, § 62, Ak. VII, 235.]