

Unconstrained Favor and the Post-Metaphysical Sublime

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Heidegger stresses that aesthetics, the offspring of the modern metaphysics of subjectivity, turns the work of art into an object of private experience. Precisely because art has now moved into the horizon of aesthetics thus circumscribed, it is destined to a decline in its essence. Yet Heidegger himself suggests that one aesthetics escapes such a characterization: Kant's in the *Critique of Judgement*. When Kant characterizes the attitude by which we receive the beautiful thing as a favor, (*Gunst*), in a sense he causes the collapse of the modern correlation of subject and object, because, such a favor stands beyond any possible conceptualization, purposefulness, or subjective complacency, and is rather the pure openness to the unconcealed as such. What state of affairs reveals itself here, when Heidegger informs us that, had Nietzsche inquired of Kant himself, Nietzsche would have "had to recognize that Kant alone grasped the essence of what Nietzsche in his own way wanted to comprehend" regarding art? Or that Schiller alone grasped the essentials of Kant's doctrine of the beautiful? That Kant's insight "make it possible for a comportment toward the beautiful to be all the more pure and more intimate"?¹ The hypothesis I put to the test here can be simply formulated as follows: that Heidegger curiously fails to pursue these threads, that he neglects Kant's third *Critique* and follows Hegel's aesthetics instead: and had Heidegger inquired of Kant himself (in the third *Critique*) he would have perhaps recognized what *he* in *his* own way wanted to comprehend. When Kant calls upon the word favor to capture the specificity of the properly aesthetic freedom, favoring the free manifestation of what it welcomes, aesthetic freedom lets the phenomenon be within itself, for its own sake, without subjecting it to our concepts or desires. The fact that Kant grants an ultimate status to freedom suggests to us that, deeper than the correlation of subject and object, freedom consists in being open to the very unconcealing of the world, an unconcealing that precedes and exceeds the theoretical and practical powers of the ego, prefiguring Heidegger's own treatment of the artwork in terms of some post-metaphysical sublime.

Kant's Aesthetics

Both Schelling and Hegel were convinced of the importance of Kant's reflections on aesthetics. Hegel even wrote that "Kant spoke the first rational words on aesthetics." Others of course have claimed that in this aesthetics Kant owes nearly everything to English writers; he merely systematized the main ideas which had been developed in England and Scotland during the first quarters of the 18th century. It is now generally accepted that Kant did indeed make a careful study of English (and German) works on aesthetics and that he did indeed borrow many ideas developed in these works. Yet Kant gave a systematic framework which was totally original on his part and which gave them a significance and meaning which they had never had before.

Kant did not turn to a critical reflection upon our judgements of taste before he had first completed his *Critique of Pure Reason*, his *Critique of Practical Reason*, and the greater part of his *metaphysica specialis*, namely the metaphysics of morals and the metaphysics of the principles of the natural sciences. In the first introduction to the *Critique of Judgment* (1790). Kant tried to explain why the methods of earlier writers on taste seemed to be unsatisfactory. He criticized the rationalist approach of Baumgarten on the ground that Baumgarten conceived of taste as a form of confused knowledge of perfection; in Kant's own opinion this approach to aesthetic phenomena had nothing to do with the basic concern of aesthetics, because confused knowledge is not intrinsically related to pleasing forms, whereas perfection too, is as such not necessarily related to what is beautiful; that a thing is beautiful either. On the other hand, the empirical approaches of Burke, Kames, and Addison equally fail in that they cannot account for the typical universality and "necessity" of our judgements of taste. Judgements of taste are aesthetic judgements of reflection which, as such, do not say how people actually do, not with what they should do, because the latter necessarily implies some principle *a priori*.

In his introduction to his *Critique of Judgment* Kant mentioned the fact that in his philosophy as a whole there is a need for some principle of connection, at least on the part of the human mind, between the world of natural necessity and the world of freedom. The gulf between the domain of the concept of nature and that the concept of freedom cannot be bridged by the theoretical use of reason. Thus there are indeed two separate worlds of which the one can have no influence on the other. Yet the world must have an influence on the world of nature, if the principles of practical reason are to be materialized in action. Thus it must be possible to think nature in such a way that it is compatible with the possibility of the attainment in nature of ends in accordance with the principal laws of

freedom. Kant sees the connecting link between theoretical and practical philosophy in a critique of judgement which is a means to unite in one whole the two parts of his philosophy.

Kant was the first to propose that in the general economy of the faculties and of the activities of the human mind, manifesting themselves, generally speaking, in a capacity for cognition on the one hand and for desire on the other, there is room for a capacity and activity irreducible to either knowings or desiring: that is the aesthetic attitude, or in Kant's words, the faculty of judging aesthetically. This faculty is exercised by each of us when in front of the thing of nature or the products of art, we stand to acknowledge their beauty, to hail them as beautiful.

The specific and irreducible traits of this attitude are brought forth in the *Critique of Judgement*. The word "critique" found in the title obviously has no negative connotation. It simply means an examination aiming at discerning the specificity of something. But from the outset perhaps we are entitled to deem it significant and meaningful that Kant inscribes his inquiry within the framework of an examination of the faculty of judgements. In what sense is this significant? The reason is that art, considered by Kant, falls within the competence of the activity of one individual who raised himself to be its judge. This means that the products of art fall under the rightful jurisdiction of a self, an ego, an individual who appreciates them and turns them into a matter for his own judgement. This approach, referring artworks to a subject who judges them, presupposes undoubtedly the emergence of the ego and its self-positing as the absolutely privileged point of reference.

For Kant, genius, is "a talent for producing that for which no definite rule can be given."² The productions of genius have this as their characterizing mark: that no amount of learning, acquired skill, or imitative talent can possibly suffice for their creation. Aesthetic perception is therefore distinguished from theoretical understandings - from the kind of knowledge that mainly preoccupied Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* - by its not conforming to the cardinal rule that every intuition be brought under an adequate or corresponding concept. It is precisely this incommensurable nature of artistic genius that sets it apart from science, theory, and the labors of enlightened (epistemological) critique. Thus 'the concept of beautiful' in art does not permit the judgements upon the beauty of a product to be derived from any rule which has a concept as its determining ground, and therefore has as its basis a concept of the way in which the product is possible."³ This is why Kant rejects any form of phenomenalist aesthetics that would treat art as possessing the power to reconcile concepts with sensuous intuitions. Such thinking fails to register what is distinctive in the nature of aesthetic experience: namely, the capacity of genius to create new forms, ideas, and images that exceed all the bounds of theoretical (or rule-governed)

understanding. The author of such works "does not himself know how he has come by his Ideas," and certainly lacks the kind of knowledge that would allow him to "devise the like at pleasure or in accordance with a plan."⁴ Whence the basic difference between art and all other forms of cognitive activity: that in art there is no question of intellectual progress, of collective advance through a shared application of the truths discovered by previous thinkers.

His great model here is Newton, a figure whose intellect indeed took his voyaging into strange seas of thought, but whose findings, once established, opened up the trade routed of received, communal knowledge. Such scientific truth-claims are warranted precisely by their power of bringing intuitions under concepts, or showing that determine rules can be given for the understanding of natural phenomena. Thus "Newton could make all his steps, from the first elements of geometry to his own great and profound discoveries, intuitively plain and definite as regards their consequence, not only to himself but to everyone else."⁵ But this is not the case with those whose genius lies in the production of beautiful artworks. Theirs is a strictly incommunicable gift which cannot be taught, reduced, to precepts, or in any way handed on. Such genius produces individual creation for which the mold is broken with each new endeavor and allows of no progressive buildings on previous achievements. Or more exactly, if artists can indeed learn from their great precursors, the lesson is more by way of general inspiration than anything pertaining to form, style, or technique. For genius, according to Kant, is "imparted to every artist immediately by the end hand of nature; and so it dies with him, until nature endows another in the same way, so that he only needs an example in order to put in operation in a similar fashion the talent of which is conscious." So art exists at the furthest possible remove from that spirit of enlightened, cooperative enterprise that for Kant belongs to both science and philosophy in its aspect of rational critique. Art may be said to "stand still" in the sense that its productions exhibit no signs of advancing toward an enlightened consensus on the "rules" of judgement or taste.

That is why Kant rejects the idea that beauty resides in the object of aesthetic contemplation. If this were the case, then there could be no clear distinction between theoretical knowledge (that which applies concepts to the realm of sensible intuitions) and aesthetic understandings (that which allows us a privileged grasp of our own appreciative faculties at work). Kant is very firm about this need to resist any form of phenomenalist reduction. Aesthetic judgements contributed nothing to our knowledge of the objects that solicit its regard. Of course those objects must possess certain attributes, qualities that mark them out in the first place as capable of arousing such response. Otherwise art would be an empty concept and aesthetics would lack any claim to exist as a self-respecting discipline of thought. But we are equally mistaken, on Kant's

view, if we assimilate whatever is distinctive in the act of aesthetic judgement to those properties supposedly inherent in the object itself. For beauty is not determined by any concepts (or rules) that would find adequate exemplification in the features - or objective characteristics -- of this or that artwork. It should rather be sought in the manner of our responding to such features, or the way that our various faculties are engaged in the act of aesthetic understandings. And this is where the experience of art differs essentially from other forms of cognitive experience. "In order to decide whether anything is beautiful or not, we refer the representation, not by the Understanding to the object for cognition but, by the Imagination (perhaps in conjunction with the Understanding) to the Subject, and its feeling of pleasure or pain.⁷ Such is the inward or transcendental turn in Kantian aesthetics, the movement away from all forms of phenomenalist reduction. In the act of responding sympathetically to a beautiful object, the mind is thrown back (so to speak) upon its own resources, required to seek a sense of purposive relationship or harmony not between sensuous intuitions and concepts of the pure understanding (as in all forms of theoretical knowledge), but rather between those various faculties whose interplays thus define the nature of aesthetic experience. "The judgement of taste is therefore not a judgement of cognition, and is consequently not logical but aesthetical, by which we understand that whose ground can be no other than subjective."⁸

Of course Kant's point is not that this "subjective" character of aesthetic judgement amounts to a species of relativism in matters of taste. To pronounce a work beautiful is always to claim a validity for one's judgement that cannot be compared with the expression of mere personal preference in this or that regard. Thus one must be content to differ with others on the questions of what makes a good wine, for such opinions are specific to the judging individual and can lay no claim to universal validity. It would be folly according to Kant, to reprove as incorrect another's sentiments in the hope of persuading them to see reason and admit one's own superior tastes. But the principle "de gustibus, non est disputandum" cannot apply to the realm of aesthetic judgement, any more than with issues of ethical reason. Here it is a question of requiring assent to one's evaluative statements, or putting them forward as considered judgements with a claim to universal validity. So the reflective individual learns to distinguish between matters of idiosyncratic tastes and matters of absolute or principled judgement. "Many things may have for him charm and pleasantness; no one troubles himself at that; but if he gives out anything as beautiful, he supposes in other the same satisfaction - he judges not merely for himself. but for everyone, and speaks of beauty as if it were a property of things."⁹ So the argument goes by way of analogy, deriving the universal character of aesthetic judgements for our need to treat them as they related to qualities somehow objectively present in the work or natural phenomena. But what is really at

issue in such judgements is the utterer's fitness to pronounce them with authority owing to his possession of the requisite taste or appreciative powers. And this means that there is after all a realm of properly subjective judgements whose nature is nonetheless universal or prescriptive in so far as they effectively demand our assent and brook no denial on grounds of mere personal taste.

Kant attaches the highest importance to this legislative aspect of aesthetic judgement. Thus it cannot be a matter, as Hume argued, of the social interest that there are best served by our reaching some measure of agreement on questions of good taste and beauty. For his could be no more than an empirical fact about our present social arrangement, and for a source of value only as related to our short-term motives and interests. To see the limits of such thinking, Kant argues, "we have only to look to what have a reference, although only indirectly, to the judgement of taste *a priori*."10 For even if reflection does find traces of self-interest or social motivation, still we are compelled by the very nature of such judgements to accord them a validity beyond anything accountable on those terms alone. At this stage, for Kant, "taste would discover a transition of our judging faculty from sense enjoyment to moral feeling; and not only would we be the better guided in employing taste purposively, but there be thus presented a link in the chain of the human faculties *a priori*, on which all legislation must depend."11 So there exists an analogy between aesthetic judgement and practical reason (or ethics), as well that other which Kant perceives between aesthetics and the order of phenomenal cognition. Both are in the nature of "as if" arguments — designed to give universal import to aesthetic values while not confusing them either with purely theoretical knowledge, on the one hand, or with ethical judgement on the other. Thus Kant insists that one takes its place in the chain of human faculties, an indispensable link, to be sure, but one whose role in the total system — the Kantian architectonic — needs defining with considerable care and circumspection. Otherwise aesthetics will overstep the limit of its own legitimate domain, with untoward results not only for itself but for the whole enterprise of enlightened critique.

These questions are raised more acutely in the various passages of Kant's third Critique where he discusses the relationship between mind, nature, and aesthetic judgements. What these passages seek is a clear understanding of that faculty's powers and limits, with regard not only to the specialized sphere of artistic production and taste, but also in relation to epistemology on the one hand and ethical reason on the other. For it is evident throughout Kant's writings that the aesthetic cannot be simply cordoned off within a separate discussion of art and its objects. The *Critique of Pure Reason* effectively begins - starts out on its critical path, once over the merely schematic preliminaries - with a section called the "Transcendental Aesthetic." There is something paradoxical about this phrase, since the aesthetic by definition has to do with aesthesis, sensibility,

a capacity for reception from without. Transcendental judgements, on the other hand, are those that derive not from any kind of external impression but strictly from within the thinking subject, by a mode of *a priori* knowledge independent of sensory experience. Kant responds to this by distinguishing “pure” from “empirical” intuition — the latter turned wholly toward the realm of sensuous cognition, while the former is indeed given *a priori* and thus provides a hold for conceptual understanding. There is a sense in which this strategy does nothing more than push the whole argument back a stage. Kant still has to show how the forms of *a priori* knowledge can claim to legislate for experiences whose ultimate source is in the realm of empirical or intuitive sense-certainty. This claim is crucial to his whole enterprise - since epistemology can be saved from the toils of metaphysical abstraction only in so far as it has some demonstrable grounding in the way that experience actually makes sense for us, aside from all abstract determinations, Kant’s dictum, “Intuitions without concepts are blind; concepts without intuitions are empty” can belong only on the side of “inward” intelligibility if he fails to offer more cogent argumentative grounds for this intimate involvement of sensuous experience with the concepts of pure understanding. It is here that the aesthetic plays its crucial mediating role, as a source of analogies that Kant will summon up repeatedly through his three Critiques wherever there is a question of bridging the gap between these otherwise disparate orders of knowledge.

The beautiful and the sublime are the two main categories through which the critique of aesthetic judgement hopes to achieve this ultimate reconciliation. We are mistaken, according to Kant, if we seek for some determinate properties in or of the object that would constitute the beautiful as something that precede the act of reflective judgement. For then we would be confusing theoretical knowledge, that which brings sensuous intuitions under concepts in order to establish their objective validity, with the quite different realm of aesthetic understanding. What the latter involves is a “judgement of taste [which] since it is to be possible without presupposing a definite concept, can refer to nothing else than the state of mind in the free play of the Imagination and the Understanding (so far as they agree with each other, as is requisite for cognition in general).”¹² Thus the beautiful, whether in artifacts or natural phenomena, is defined in terms of the response it provokes, a response which enables the mind to enjoy a uniquely heightened sense of its own cognitive powers. Those powers are here found in a state of “free play” because there is no determinate concept that binds them to the object in question. But such judgements are nonetheless “valid for everyone” in so far as they reflect the “universal subjective validity of the satisfaction bound up by us with the representation of the object that we call beautiful.”¹³ The knowledge they provide is not therefore a knowledge of the object itself, but a grasp of the faculties that come into play

when that object is perceived under the aspect of aesthetic judgement. Only by way of this "detour" through the form-giving powers of subjective response does the artwork take on those "harmonious" or "purposive" attributes that make it an object of beauty. And this comes about through Imagination's power to conjure up experiences "as if" in accord with the way that Understanding normally works to bring intuitions under concepts.

The beautiful thus stands in a strictly analogical relation to that process of combined and intuitive grasp by which we obtain true knowledge of the world. It is the special gift of genius to raise this analogy to a point where it surpasses all previous manifestations of the kind. In Kant's word, "the thought, undesigned subjective purposiveness in the free accordance of the Imagination with the legality of the Understanding presupposes such a proportion and disposition of these faculties as no following of rules..... can bring about, but which only the nature of the subject can produce."14. In the case of beauty, therefore, this legislates in questions of epistemological import. With the Sublime, it points in a different direction, since here the mind is brought up against the limits of phenomenal cognition by its encounter with strange, overwhelming, or mysterious kind of experience for which no adequate object can possibly be found. If the beautiful is that which evokes a state of harmonious balance the faculties, the Sublime on the contrary forces us to acknowledge the limits placed upon Understanding by its need to represent experience in the form of intelligible concepts. Thus Kant paradoxically describes the Sublime as "an object (nature) the representation of which determines consciousness to think the unattainability of nature as a sensory representation."15

Such moments are typically experienced, as so often in Romantic poetry, with a sense of the mind's abjection in the presence of natural forces or phenomena that quite overwhelm its powers of recuperative grasp. But there is also, for Kant as indeed for the poets, a redeeming aspect to this experience, a way in which it points beyond the limitations of natural or phenomenal cognition to a realm of knowledge that exists for us only as rational, reflective subjects. As the mind fails in its striving to discover some objective correlative, some adequate means of representing such moments by recourse to the natural world, so it is driven to reflect on its own "supersensible" nature, that which cannot be determined according to empirical laws of any kind. The Sublime is therefore distinguished from the beautiful by the fact that it surpasses everything expressible in terms borrowed from the realm of sensuous intuition. It relates not to Understanding but to Reason, the source of all ideas that lead beyond knowledge in its cognitive, epistemological mode to knowledge of man's authentically inward (moral) nature.

So the Sublime, even more than the Beautiful, serves Kant as a kind of categorical touchstone for determining the powers and the limits of aesthetic

judgement. In one sense it marks the suppression of epistemological concerns by informing us of that which lies beyond the grasp of any knowledge grounded in the union of concepts with sensuous intuitions. To this extent it indicates a convergence between aesthetics and ethics (or Practical Reason), a convergence at the limit-point where thought finds nothing in the outside world that could match or objectify its own "supersensible" nature. But insofar as the Sublime is still treated as in some sense an aesthetic category, it cannot be wholly divorced from the order of phenomenal cognition. The aesthetic is once again in danger of overstepping its limits, this time by a move that would seek to accord it all the dignity of Practical Reason by invoking the Sublime as a passage beyond mere sensuous experience. But there can really be no such passage beyond so long as we remain, with Kant, in the sphere of an aesthetic understanding whose terms are ultimately borrowed from precisely that phenomenalist realm. If the Sublime appears to break with such ideas — if it seems to force reflection to the point of acknowledging the inadequacy of all phenomenalist models the stakes are proportionally higher since the Sublime, unlike the Beautiful, lays claim to insights of a transcendental order close to those of Practical Reason.

Since it is by virtue of aesthetic form that the imagination brings sensation into accord with the understanding, such accord is not possible with regard to the sublime, the principle of which is formlessness and a concomitant limitlessness. The limitlessness presented by the imagination in the perception of something as sublime is constant with (so the Analytic of the Sublime tells us) the unconditionality of reason. The sublime is in fact an imaginative analogue of how reason attempts, for example, to think the sum of all causal chains in infinite time. Because the sublime as such has no form, something sublime cannot be recapitulated by the imagination in the way that something beautiful can. The imagination of a quality, first, for Kant, requires the successful perception of each unit in that quantum. Then it must combine all units perceived into a single larger unity, which can be present all at once in an immediate awareness. In the perception of something sublime, the units are either too many or too great for the imagination to combine in a single intuition, or they are themselves incommensurate with one another. The whole is too large to be made the present; such presence is however, the demand of reason. In attempting to meet the demand, the imagination fails; it can present only its own inadequacy. The feeling of inadequacy with regard to a given demand can, however, have a positive effect, for it can instill respect for the unity which poses that demand. The great example of this is respect for the moral law in the second Critique. In the Critique of Judgement, the respect is for reason itself, which is revealed to be of sufficient sense the only sublime thing. The mind gains consciousness of its independence of nature. The experience of the sublime can result in no positive rule or concept. Transcending both sensibility and the understanding,

as well as imagination, the experience of the sublime confronts them with an abyss in which all empirical rules and concepts lose standing and count for nothing.

The abyss is reason itself. Reason is not present to itself in an experience of the sublime; it is rather the mind's feeling itself set into unending motion by the effort to imagine the sublime. And the ability to experience the sublime requires cultivation. The cultivation required is the development of the moral ideas which inhabit reason. Without this, the individual experiences the sublime merely as terrifying. The articulation of the sublime would then be a mode in which all concepts and generalizations are undermined in favor of an indeterminate abyss-in-unending-motion. Such interaction achieves no harmonization of the faculties, but disrupts harmonies achieved elsewhere. The imagination is revealed as unable to conform to the demand of a higher faculty, and the awareness of this is pain. But it is a pain which brings forth the higher pleasure felt in respect. Thus, awareness of the sublime does not depend on the object but on how we take it. It is not to be found in works of art, but such works if in their scope they transcend the comparative power of the imagination, can excite the feeling of the sublime.¹⁶

Heidegger's Aesthetics

The labyrinth of Heidegger's thought reveals an enduring mission to appropriate Kant's transcendental philosophy. For a time, a distinctive attempt at a retrieval of imagination was at the heart of this appropriation.¹⁷ The imagination distinguishes a more radical occurrence of temporality which went some way toward overcoming the western tradition's understanding of being as presence. In citing Kant's recoil from the abyss opened up by imagination, Heidegger himself makes a peripheral remark about the parenthetical character of Kant's analysis of imagination in the third Critique.

We cannot discuss here the sense in which the pure power of imagination recurs in the Critique of Judgement and above all whether it still recurs in express relationships to the laying of the ground of metaphysics as such which was pointed out earlier.¹⁸

The implication is that Kant succeeds to a certain extent in detaching imagination from its subservient role in the application of concepts (in both its theoretical and practical forms). But at the same time, Heidegger maintains that in considering aesthetic experience, Kant never brings the true spontaneity of imagination to the fore any more than is already suggested in imagination's recovering its role in forming the temporal horizon of transcended. By attending to Heidegger's most extensive thinking on art, his address entitled "Origin of the Work of Art," we will see how far-reaching is Heidegger's intended

transformation of the architectonic of reason through the imagination's disruptive play. Heidegger will seemingly call forth some deepened employment of imagination as reveling in its own play in a way which goes beyond the limited terrain of aesthetics which Kant outlined. Gadamer recognized this movement beyond while pointing to a deeper appreciation of the role of art in the Greek sense of *poiesis*.¹⁹ Indeed, if Heidegger's retrieval of imagination is to prove successful, it must solicit a form of discourse that remains in concert with the self-revelation of things as occurring, for instance, in the advent of *poiesis* as embodied in the work of art. This will be seen further in the complete abandonment of any tie to subjectivity and the direction of Heidegger's thought toward the Greek experience of *poiesis*.

For Heidegger in "Origin", we cannot analyze the work of art starting from the categories of "thing" or "equipment", since both these categories become accessible only in and through the work of art itself. Works of art can only be explained once their thing-like nature has been fully understood, and for Heidegger this involves wresting thought from traditional non-technological conceptions of the things. Art is in this sense emancipatory, in that it does just this. In the essay Heidegger speaks of the "riddle of art," and of not solving the riddle but seeing it. His theory of art is not directed toward the formulation of thesis which might provide answers to traditional philosophical problems, but rather toward an investigation of the conceptual crises which surround the definitions of these problems and accepts them as genuine. Traditional aesthetic approaches to art are in crises: Heidegger proposes that the inquiry standpoint in aesthetics will need to be overcome if the work of art is to be permitted to show itself. Aesthetics has come to an inquiry standpoint and a network of concepts which have led to the definition of the work of art as an object, the access to which is by way of a special sensuous apprehension or experience. The metaphysical and epistemological presuppositions that have informed the history of aesthetics have conspired to conceal art in its "work-character." His treatment of aesthetics is basically of the same cloth as was his "destruction" of the history of western metaphysics. Art has become a riddle and we want to understand the riddle as a riddle, not solve the riddle. To understand the riddle will provide insights into how various solutions that have been sought are the products of certain prejudgements in one's setting of the question. Heidegger thus throws us back into interrogating our inquiry standpoint, questioning our questioning about art.²⁰

The problem is not only that works of art are pre-judged as things, but that the thing-ness of things is concealed. As such, neither the presence of things nor the presence of the work of art comes to the fore. Previous conceptions of the thing are lacking. The substance-attribute distinction, in which a thing is defined as a subsisting entity to which a variety of attributes finds its mirror

image in the combination of subject and predicate in the simple propositional statement. That conception which specified the thing as the unity of a manifold given to the senses, or that which proposes that a thing be viewed as a synthesis of matter and form, are lacking. The shift in the "inquiry-standpoint involves addressing ourselves to the "work-being" with its thingly character be disclosed in the proper perspective. The notion of equipment in Being and Time misses something in regard to art. The present-at-hand presented entities thematically; the ready-to-hand presents the context in which that entity is significant; the art-work sets up that context - it is self-sufficient - [*eigenwuchsigkeit*].

In order to fully understand equipment the best we can do is let a painting depicting a concrete example of equipment tell us what is essential for equipmental being. The van Gogh provides the essential features of equipment - reliability and unthematicity. From this Heidegger argues that precisely because art is the basis of our understanding of equipment (of thinghood), equipment cannot be used in an explication of art. Indeed the face we could read the truth about equipment from the painting reveals the truth-opening character of art. The art-work is self-sufficient - it sets up a universal medium of meaning - it founds a history - it sets it up like an object domain in science. Inquiry involves displacing preconceptions about the meaning of "origin." Aesthetics has variously sought the origin of the work of art in the artist, in the spectator, in the matter of the art object, in a realm of aesthetic values which stands above and beyond the object, in the social structure and conditions in which the artist lived, or in a kind of unified theory of all of these.

For Heidegger the origin of art is not to be found in a source external to art itself. The origin of the work of art is just art. Also, in the work of art, the happening of truth is at work. This is not to be taken as that conception of truth as certainty which located the essence of truth in the conformity of mind with its object. It is not to be taken as related to that conception of truth which Heidegger takes above to become normative for western metaphysics in its preoccupation with the nature, types, and relations of beings and their conformity to the mind. As is spelled out in Being and Time, On the Essence of Truth, and Plato's Doctrine of Truth, the development of truth as *aletheia* and the primal question of being have fallen into oblivion, requiring a dismantling of the history of metaphysics. What Heidegger means in his enigmatic phrase that "Art is truth setting itself to work" is truth as openness and unconcealment, an opening up so as to make visible. Truth is a happening or an event, it is not a property which attaches to the work of art nor is it the contribution of an apprehending and appreciating aesthetic consciousness. It is resident within the work itself. The work of art provides its own self-disclosure. If one asks what then is being disclosed, or what is it that is brought out into openness and unconcealed one needs to be wary of the sirens that lurk in the language of traditional metaphysics.

If our asking about the “what” of disclosure is an unwitting inquiry into a possible essence, or set of properties, or realm of value over and above the art work, then they still remain within the fruitless inquiry standpoint of aesthetics.

It is the primal reality or “work-being” of the work that is disclosed, but this is never a “whatness” of a definable essence as distinguished from the “thatness” of the work's existence. It is of a performative-character, having to do with the performance within the work of art itself, not some value or aesthetic property mysteriously positioned above the object-being of the work, nor it is an activity on the part of the artist or the viewer.

If the questions “What is being performed?” or “What is at work in the work of art?” are to be answered at all, one depends upon Heidegger's notions of earth and world. It is the setting up of a world and the setting forth of the earth that is at work of art. World and earth are brought into the open by the performative activity of the work of art. For Heidegger the primary meaning of *techne* was art, the capacity for disclosing something, for bringing it forth, for letting it be seen. Hence both *techne* in the form of poetry and *techne* in the form of modern technology are both modes of disclosure. Heidegger wanted to show how “genuine” *techne* involved a disclosing that preserves and guards them, instead of exploiting and dominating them. According to Heidegger *techne* for the Greeks meant both the event of bringing something into the open and the know-how required for accomplishing that disclosure. Authentic producing was something like childbirth, involving disclosing something appropriately, letting it come forth in its own, bringing it not an arena of accessibility. To produce means to lead it into its own, so that it can linger in presence in its own way [again, *eigenwuchsigkeit* in the art-essay]. Authentic producing is not a matter of an agent using force to push material together into a specific form, but a disclosure of entities for their own sake. In making things, the Greek artisan knew he was letting it be; modern *Dasein* lost touch with the awesome gift and responsibility of this ontologically disclosive capacity and instead understands it as the nonstop industrial production of objects.

Aesthetics inquired into the relation between the perceiving subject and the material art object; but for Heidegger what the authentic work of art enabled *Dasein* to apprehend was nothing perceivable - the work of art revealed the being of entities. Art for Heidegger, taken not as a subject working on something causing it to be, but as a process of enabling things to disclose themselves in accord with their own possibilities, could provide insight into the mode of producing that might replace the producing evident in modernity. Art is not so much the activity of giving shape but the drawing out of what is already there. Here art is defined ontologically, as the event of truth, not as *mimesis*. It does not reproduce what is visible; instead, it makes visible. The great artist did not impose his subjective will upon entities, but instead was claimed by beings as

the site through which works of art could be produced in order to let entities show themselves anew. The artist sought to curb the presencing of entities in such a way that they could manifest themselves in their own ways. Great art was the disclosing of entities as a whole; it brought forth the overpowering presencing of entities. It was a preserving, a measuring, a shaping of entities as a whole. The artist does not give shape to things — the delineation of things by the work of art is achieved primarily by the things themselves. The artist existed as the clearing in which the self-limiting, self-defining disclosure of entities occurred. In this way there is achieved the phenomenological completion of the revealing of things in their essence.

We have thus seen for Heidegger how the origin of the work of art is to be found in art, and, on the other hand, art is actually at work in the work of art. We have seen that works of art unquestionably have a thingly character, but the attempt to explain the thingly character of the work with the help of the common thing conceptions fails. This is because, by asking for the thingly substructure we prejudge the work's genuine, ontological status, and bar for ourselves access to its own work-being. But is the work then ever in itself accessible to us?

For Heidegger, the "work-being" of the work of art consists in the unity-in-opposition of world and earth. The work of art sets up a world. "World" clearly should not be understood here as a collection of objectifiable entities amenable to enumeration and review. World for Heidegger is never an object that stands before us and can be seen, but is the ever-non-objective. To conceive of the world as a totality of numerable entities, as in technological thinking, is to remove the world from the work-being of art and reduce it to a kind of cosmic container to entities or the summation of these entities. One approaches the meaning of world more closely when one takes the lead from the Hegelian notion of spirit. World has to do with the "simple and essential decisions in the destiny of an historical people." World is the historical drama of decision, hope, aspiration, misfortune, and death. World is spirit in its historical becoming.

Likewise, "earth" in Heidegger's use and meaning of it never makes its appearance as an object or some collection of objects. It is to be confused neither with the astronomical idea of a planet and the laws of planetary motion nor with the agronomical idea of soil. It is that upon which man "grounds his dwelling." It is that which is Heidegger's analysis of the work-being of a Greek temple "emerges as native ground." This notion of earth, Heidegger reminds us, is reminiscent of the Greek concept of *physis*, as the self-emerging of that which is. But the Greek concept of *physis* became distorted in its translation into the Roman concept of *natura*. Again, it is the technological-metaphysical tradition which is the culprit. Such thinking transforms earth into "nature" — which carries the double meaning of brute matter or stuff and the form of this which determines the essence of material objects. It is this approach to earth as

nature which needs to be overcome, if earth again is to be permitted to emerge as native ground.

For Heidegger, the temple portrays nothing. It just stays there in the middle of the valley that is filled with rocks. The temple enshrines the statue of the god Poseidon. While concealing the god, the temple nevertheless lets the statue also stand out in the holy domain through the open portico. The god comes-to-presence in the temple by means of the temple, and his coming-to-presence is at the same time both an extension and the delimitation of the open domain surrounding the temple as a holy precinct. The temple does not extend indefinitely — rather, it first orders and gathers around itself the unity of all paths and relations of a particular people. The all-governing range of this open set of relations constitutes the world of this historical people, namely the Greeks who founded Poseidonia. Thus the concrete historical world of the Greek colonists is gathered by and through the temple insofar as the temple lets the god become manifest.

With the temple example Heidegger thus tries to show that a work of art makes present a world as well as the earth; furthermore, he tries to show that in each world a dimension can be distinguished to which he refers with the help of expressions such as the god, and the human, but also with the help of all the events that may occur in the life of a historical people that has this world. World is not a collection of all things that just happen to be here. But neither is it merely an imagined framework which our imagination just adds to the sum of such given things. The world “worlds,” it does what it as world is supposed to do, it governs and holds sway, and as such it is more fully in being than the realm of tangible things in which we believe ourselves to be at home. A rock has no world, nor do plants and animals. But humans have a world because they dwell in the openings of beings. It is the world that “determines” in what way things will be things. The work of art opens up such a world and in so doing it makes space, for and liberated the open and establishes it in its structure. The work holds open the open of the world.

Heidegger’s conception of the coming to pass of truth in the work of art is that the traditional view of attributing truth exclusively to statements as the sole and essential place of the truth really has no ground. Truth does not originally reside in statements, but is to be found somewhere prior to them. And what makes this possible is the open character of *Dasein*’s comportment which is the inner condition of the possibility of correctness (truth) is grounded in freedom. The essence of truth is freedom.

In the past freedom was defined as freedom for what is manifest; freedom itself was there thus exhibited as man’s openness. The manifest to which the statement is to correspond is the being as it manifests itself in and through the open comportment of *Dasein*. Standing in the realm of the open, *Dasein* is able to subject itself to what is manifest and shows itself, and to commit itself to it.

Thus freedom lets beings in each case *Dasein* in indifferent with respect to beings, but rather that it lets in on them. To let beings be as the beings that they are is to concern oneself with the open region, the domain of what is unconcealed.

What makes it possible for *Dasein* to let itself in on beings is the fact that by its very constitution *Dasein* itself lets itself in on the open and its openness, within which all beings abide and comport themselves. This process by which *Dasein* lets itself in on the open is *ek-static* by its very essence so that it is by this process that *Dasein* stands outside itself in the direction of the open. This is what is meant by *Dasein*'s *ek-sistence*, its transcendence by means of which it goes beyond the beings that are open, to the open itself, to the world, to Being. In its essential freedom *Dasein* is on the one hand committed to attain the open only in and through beings; on the other hand, however, *Dasein* transcends these beings to the open itself.

Nietzsche in the *Birth of Tragedy* held that the role of tragedy is to garb the horror of mortality in the "healing balm" of moving and beautiful language that somehow reconciles us to our dreadful destiny. The Greeks for Nietzsche spoke as if human life was not an end in itself but was justified only insofar as it provided a pleasing aesthetic display for the gods. Heidegger developed in his own way the theme that humanity is a participant in a drama or play that is not of human origin. The position Heidegger struggles to is that human existence was a clearing through which entities could display themselves. Rather than humans being active subjects who gaze upon and understand entities, Heidegger maintained that they look at themselves, so to speak, through the ontological openness which was appropriated humanity. Humanity is the clearing, the showplace, the theatre, as it were, through which things bring themselves into view. Rightly understood, human existence is in effect "grasped" by the beings of entities so that they may show themselves and thus be. We do not encounter things so much as they encounter us. In effect, then, humanity has been unwittingly playing the role of the clearing by virtue of which the being of entities may display itself. Of course the phrase "the being of entities may display itself" is awkward and must be employed with care, for "being" means names no entity at all and can never itself appear. So it might be better to say that human existence is the clearing through which exists not for any human end, but is ultimately purposeless, the cosmicontological version of the work of art.

Having become blind to its supporting role in this event of ontological disclosedness, humanity has arrogantly presumed itself the lead, actor, author, producer, director and beneficiary of the drama, and races toward the ever-receding goal of controlling even more of it: rewriting the script and recreating the world according to its measure. For Heidegger human *Dasein* need to awaken to the ultimate purposelessness of history, and come to see that people are players in a game which transcends human ends. This change in humanity to the subject

was not really a human decision, but instead occurred because being concealed itself from humanity. Heidegger came to see history as a series of crystallizations of beings in the mode of beingness: *eidos, energeia, actualitas, actus purus, res cognitans, Wille zur Macht*. The historical formulations of beingness stamped things rather than let them be, or provided the measure or form according to which all things and all human behaviour could show themselves. Thus the history of beings was in effect a history of world forming, artistic disclosures, and in apprehending these various events, these disclosive forms of beingness, one could catch somehow a glimpse of that which could never appear: being as such. Self-concealing being was that which was most sublime and terrible, and the artist or thinker were the clearing through which the being or entities could manifest itself in its various stages.

Heidegger's struggle to express the withering away of *Dasein* into his clearing will become exacerbated with his gradual transition to language as the event of clearing. But one thing that can be said again of the art-essay is that it is no mere romanticism. By maintaining the art involves ontological disclosure, he rejects not only the mimetic definition of art as representing something to a subject, but any view of art being an expression of the soul as well. Nineteenth century romanticism was a late version of Cartesian subjective, reducing art to a matter of private "taste." The great artist did not impose his subjective will upon entities, but rather was claimed by beings as the clearing through which works of art could be produced in order to let entities show themselves anew. The artist sought to curb and limit the pesencing of entities in such a way that the entities could manifest themselves in their own determinate ways. The romantic notion of genius is rejected in favor of being itself "letting beings be." Through this investigation into a non-subjectivist, non-representational art, Heidegger conceives that artist as the disclosive event that transcends human aims and interests. *Dasein* has thus vanished in its becoming the breach into which the power of being bursts in its appearing, in order that this breach itself should shatter.

Heidegger for a time thought Holderlin's poetry made possible the elementary emergence of human existence and its world, even analyzing the inferiority of other poets in relation of Holderlin. Heidegger's later thinking on language signals a movements away from the privileger of Holderlin, or even poets generally, in this regard. Just as Heidegger contrasted Holderlin with Nistzche, in that Nietzsche remained rooted in modern metaphysics whereas Holderlin presaged the overcoming of all metaphysics, and in preparation for the new beginning at the end of philosophy as metaphysics Heidegger turned away from the language of metaphysics to the language of Holderlin's poetry, so Heidegger moves on from the language of Holderlin's poetry to how an everyday thing "worlds world." The essays in the 1950s explore the possibility for a

non-subjectivistic, non-anthropocentric encounter with things. He argued that the abstract "space" of the subject must give way in favor of the concrete "place" of things. The later Heidegger maintained that virtually anything can play the role of opening up the place on which things can encounter each other. A footbridge is not set into a pre-existing place, but rather helps to gather into a shared place the constituents of the fourfold: earth and sky, god and mortals. "Dwelling" describes the mode of existing involved in the mutual play in which everything is allowed to show itself appropriately.

The work of art for Heidegger appears as a "setting-into-work of the truth" insofar as truth is the opening of the historical horizon in which every verification of a proposition becomes possible, prior to or more fundamentally than the correspondence of the proposition to the thing. That is to say, it is the act by which a certain historical and cultural world is instituted, in which a specific historical "humanity" sees the characteristic traits of its own experience defined in an ordinary way. For Heidegger, the work is an exhibition of a world and a "production" of the earth. He emphasizes the notion of exhibition in the same terms we might use for "putting on" an "exhibition as a measure or gallery, for instance; for it implies that the work of art has the function of founding and constituting the outlines which define an historical world. A society or social group - in short, an historical world - recognizes the constituent traits of its own experience of the world [for instance, the implicit criteria for distinguishing good from evil, truth from error, and so forth] in a work of art. This ideal affirms the inaugural nature of the work; in the work of art, the truth of any historical epoch is revealed. The essential element here is not so much the inaugurality of the work, or a "truth" which could be opposed to error, as the constitution of the fundamental outlines of a given historical experience.

Heidegger, Kant and the Post-Metaphysical Sublime

Heidegger's laudatory comments on Kant's Third *Critique* are in his *Nietzsche* lectures in the section "Kant's Doctrine of the Beautiful and its Misinterpretation by Schopenhauer and Nietzsche," the only text in which Heidegger directly discusses the *Critique of Judgement*. He observes that most people have misunderstood the third Critique. This is true particularly of Schopenhauer who in *World as Will and Representation* seems to affiliate himself with Kant, in order then to severely criticize the position of Hegel. Yet Schopenhauer thoroughly misunderstood Kant and his misunderstanding later in turn influenced a great number of others, including Nietzsche. The basic misunderstanding of Kant's aesthetics involves his claims about the beautiful. In the *Critique of Judgement* Kant states that the beautiful is what purely and simply pleases; it is the object of sheer delight. Pure delight, in which the

beautiful shows itself to us as beautiful is for Kant “disinterested.” Our aesthetic behaviour which is our comportment toward the beautiful, is thus “a delight devoid of all interest”. Schopenhauer interpreted this to mean that the aesthetic state is one in which the will is put out of action, one in which all striving is brought to a standstill; it is pure rest, a state of simply wanting nothing more, sheer apathetic drift. Nietzsche followed suit in this interpretation. Taking his clue from the first moment of the “Analytic to the Beautiful” Heidegger shows that the notion of the absence of interest is introduced by Kant only as a preparatory step in the effort to delineate the encountered in light of something other than this comportment: in terms of a definition, a purpose, or a pleasure. But instead of settling with the notion of this absence of interest in Nietzsche, (not to mention the Neo-Kantians), Heidegger argues that this “absence of interest” is a negative prelude, or counterpart, to a *real and positive relation to the thing*. This “freedom” consists, says Heidegger, in contemplating the thing for its own sake in its pure appearing. For Heidegger it is such an appearing that is worthy of being favored, since it constitutes the essence of the beautiful, in the Kantian sense. In these conditions the pleasure of reflection does not mean the internal harmony of self-consciousness, but the *thrill that comes of being in our world*.

“Kant analyses the essence of the “pleasure of reflection” as the basic comportment toward the beautiful, In the *Critique of Judgement* Sections 57 and 59 . . . This interpretation propels us toward a basic state of human beings in which man for the first time arrives at the well-grounded fullness of his essence.²¹

The debate Heidegger conducts elsewhere with Kant reveals, in his meditation on the essence of man, an approach to finite transcendence and freedom as the origin reciprocity of spontaneity and receptivity. The “unknown unity” evoked by Kant in the *Dialectic of the Aesthetic Judgement* (sections 57 and 59) is conceived as the root of finitude, whereas Schelling and Hegel conceived of it as absolute identity. Neither Nietzsche nor Schopenhauer realized that for Kant “interest” means that which is important to humanity in light of something else. Thus the beautiful for Kant is that which never can be considered in function of something else (at least as long as it is taken as the beautiful). Our comportment toward the beautiful is for Kant unconstrained favouring. Such favoring is not at all the pouring out of action of the will, but rather the supreme effort of our essence, and the liberation of our true selves for the release of that which has proper worth in itself. Thus the interpretation of Kant, promulgated by Schopenhauer, is wrong on two counts. Schopenhauer takes Kant’s remark about disinterestedness, which Kant made in passing in a still preparatory reflection, to be the only and definitive statement about the beautiful. Secondly, the definition of the beautiful itself is misunderstood and not thought in terms

of the content that remains in each aesthetic behaviour when "interest" in the object falls away. The misinterpretation of the term "interest" suggests erroneously that with the exclusion of all interest every essential relation to the object is also suppressed, but for Kant just the opposite is the case. By suppressing all interests which place the beautiful object in function of something else, one can bring into play the essential relation to the object itself. When all such interest is suppressed, the object comes to the fore as pure object. Such coming forth into appearances is the beautiful. The German word *Schon* means appearing in the radiance of such coming to the fore, and is related to *scheinen*, meaning to shine.²²

In continental philosophy, there has long been the notion of a totalization that can be countered only by a fragmenting. In Heidegger's 1949 "Conversations on a Country Path," he points out that the project of *Being and Time*, to examine the meaning of Being, the *expression* beings, is subject to this same dichotomy. For Heidegger, this dichotomy is revealed to be a function of language. The meaning of the word beings, which was to have been found in the willful representing of an object as standing opposed to man within the transcendental horizon, cannot be found there.²³ This is not, however, due to the inability of the faculty of imagination to present an object adequate to the concept of the faculty of conception. In fact, it is precisely by thinking in these terms that our thought has been misled.

In the first place, Heidegger notes that even when we do try to represent, "What we have designated by a word never has that word hanging on it like a nameplate," for either designation is an arbitrary act with regard to what has been nameless, or more radically, what is named is never the result of designation, because in the region of the word, the word is answerable to itself alone."²⁴

In the second place, the meaning of Being cannot be found in willful representation or in it because "a word does not and can never represent anything." What a word does is signify and by this Heidegger means not that it relates the word to a general concept, but that it "shows something as abiding into the range of expressibility"; it abides in language as meaning, so that, in thinking, we may move freely in the realm of words and not be pinned down to categorial signification by the act of designation and referral.²⁵

In the third place, the word does not represent in the sense of presenting an object as standing opposed to the subject, since "it doesn't matter in this if there is a first retelling or who does it; all the more since one doesn't know whose tale he retells." There is no authorship, ownership, or origination. There is no designation, no representation, no expression or categorial signification, only something (the word) as abiding into the range of its expressibility.²⁶

How are we to make sense of these claims regarding the "region" of the word where "everything" is in the best order only if it has been no one's doing"

within a text that begins to address the “regioning of that which regions” where human beings are appropriated to that-which-regions so that insofar as they think meditatively, they are released from a transcendental relation to the horizon and released into the openness of that-which-regions? Heidegger situated his view of language by positioning thought not between judgements of taste and sublime (the inability to make such judgements), not between the subject's faculty of presentation and the subject's faculty of conception, thus not between the totalized image and the sublime fragmentation. Rather, he positions his thought in relation to the object that pleases, the object of “sheer delight,” devoid of all interest — the beautiful. For by Heidegger's account, Kant's insistence that in our encounter with the beautiful our thought must be disinterested, means that we let what is beautiful come before us in its own stature and worth, that is, we must freely grant it its way to be.²⁷ Kant's disinterest in the beautiful, again, must not be thought of as indifference. What is beautiful appears in the radiance of such coming forward, and this is what Kant means by the “pleasure of reflection.” Heidegger follows Nietzsche by calling this as interest of the highest kind, “the thrill of being in our world now, of getting rid of our anxiety in the face of things foreign.” And as the beautiful is disclosed in sheer delight, in “rapture,” in what sense does the beautiful correspond to “what one demands of oneself?”

Given Heidegger's criticism of the transcendental-horizontal structure of *Being and Time*, he would not want to account for beauty in terms of rapture since that would be to have fallen back within the metaphysical circle of totalization, the beautiful as sounding the development of taste. Nor would he accept the alternative insofar as dismantling totalization would force him into characterizing disinterest negatively, as merely the exclusion of all interest, the exclusion of all ideology and the detachment of the beautiful from any meaning. What the notion of rapture demands is, instead, a self-fulfilling characterization of beauty. Rapture, according to Heidegger, is a state that explodes the subjectivity of the subject. Beauty “Breaks through the object that has been confined at a distance,” So that the beautiful is no longer an object standing opposed to a subject. “The aesthetic state is neither subjective nor objective.”²⁹ Rapture and beauty designate this aesthetic state, what is opened in it and what pervades it.

For Nietzsche, what is opened and pervades the aesthetic state is guided by what each type of evaluation finds beautiful, that is, honorable and worthy, what we trust we are essentially capable of. As such, it is a question of strength and, in rapture, a question of ascending beyond ourselves. The state that explodes subjectivity and objectivity is that of the grand style or the “Classical” which embodies a taste not for the beautiful but for complexity and uncertainty, and whose ideology is founded upon the notion of the “protective mastery of the supreme plenitude of life,” as well as “reaching back to the most original states

of embodying life," in order, as Nietzsche wrote, to become master of the chaos one is. Thus, for Nietzsche, (in spite of Heidegger's claims otherwise) beauty is the *result* of an evaluation arising out of a mode of existence rather than a phenomenon creating a mode of existence.³⁰ But for Heidegger the aesthetic state is neither subjective nor objective, leads to a recognition of the event of language. In "rapture" there is a release from the confinement of a subjectivity confronted by an objectivity, release from representational thinking, subjective expressiveness and categorical significations. To think of rapture as releasement into the event of appropriation means to think not in terms of metaphysics and the metaphysical qualities of substances with their accidents; of the object manifested in designation, representation and reference; of cause and effect manifested in subjective expression: of signification manifested by subsuming the object under categories. For Heidegger, we can think appropriation as the belonging together of man and Being only because in thinking the event of appropriation takes place. So we might say, according to Heidegger's own formulation of the question, that appropriation as language is the regioning of that which regions, wherein a word may show something as abiding into the range of its expressibility but not as an actually existing object, a subjective expression or a categorical signification. The region of the event of appropriation is the region of the word in relation to other words and not in relation to things. It is thus the region of expressibility, but not the subject's expression; it is the region of meaning, that is textual meaning. The coming together of man and Being in appropriation is an event of language and not an effect of metaphysics. Beauty is not the quality belonging to a mythical or poetic object, nor is it an aesthetic attitude. For Heidegger it is in the pleasure or reflection, the beautiful appears in the radiance of coming-forward, and beauty breaks through the object that has been confined at a distance so there is neither subjectivity nor objectivity. The poetical as *poiesis* is not works of art, the artistic or aesthetic experience; it is every revealing of coming to presence into the beautiful, the rapturous event of appropriation which takes its place in the region of words, in language.

What happens when we let what is beautiful come before us in its own stature and worth and freely grant it its way to be? For example, when faced with a detached work of art (a painting by van Gogh) Heidegger claims that the work does not represent, but that whenever art happens there is a beginning, a thrust out of nothing, something is brought out of the source of its nature in a founding leap.³¹ As a founding leap, the work of art is a pictorial representation "useful" in the discovery of the world of the peasant woman. As such, Heidegger instrumentalizes the work of art so that one forgets the work as art and sees only the world of the peasant world. A similar happens in the case of beauty. Certainly for Kant, the beautiful is the object of sheer delight devoid of all interest, but for Kant this means only that it is without finality, without an end. And taste is

the capacity to judge such an object apart from any interest or sensation or cognition. This is why all judgements of taste, although they include a demand for universal agreement, are none the less singular and refer immediately to feelings of pleasure or displeasure and not to cognition. The state of mind producing these feelings must be one in which no definite concept provides a rule of cognition for the manifold of intuitions gathered by imagination.

This is because although taste must be an "original faculty" and so not determined according to some empirical model, *it is a priori*. Taste can be trained, but only those who have got "all they want" can tell who has taste. Presumably they are the ones with the means to go and look at reputedly beautiful things with their own eyes, and they are the same ones who can train others whose taste is yet untrained though not barbaric. Taste cannot simply be learned then; it is not cognitive, and surely not everyone will have the ordinary faculty that can be trained.³²

Since additionally any determining interest deprives the judgement of freedom, Kant wants to distinguish himself from Rousseau and from any empiricist aesthetic by claiming that aesthetic taste is totally distinct from social and cultural and political values. Taste is concerned with objects of delight and plays with them without devoting itself to any sincerity. It puts them on a pedestal, so as to receive the strongest sensible impact from them "just as if our delight depended on sensation." In fact, sensation is important for Kant, because we become conscious of the universal nature of a judgement through sensation in the harmonious "quickenings" of imagination and understanding. This facile play of mental powers, the pure sensation whose uniformity is broken by anything foreign, the regular play of impressions added to sense, corresponds to what Heidegger calls rapture. But what produces a pure judgement of taste is the signifying play of forms and lines external but necessary to the representation of the object.³³ It is, then, the paragonal structure of the intuition. The beautiful in nature must be the simple mode of sensation, what is most exactly, definitely and completely intuitable, because it is no object of a judgement of taste, only the pure intuitable form.

Heidegger has sought to carry Kant across the threshold toward a renewal of transcendental philosophy. Kant's thought describes the narrowing of the openness in which a thing is predetermined for manifestation. Even before considering the more extended sense of nature as *physis* which Heidegger endorses, there is an immediate occasion to address the animating feature of the natural order within transcendental philosophy, notable the experience of the sublime. The sublime points to an emergence of nature more qualitatively than quantitatively, as a "size" which resists numerical calculation. The experience of the sublime is not bound by the chain of Newtonian causality within the

sensible order, but instead reveals the same characteristics of spontaneity and inventiveness which distinguish the holistic dimension of human freedom. In other words, there is an even deeper dimension of finitude whereby what is most intimately related to *Dasein*, its capacity to be its own "there," turns out to be that "power" which is least at its disposal. That is, freedom is to be coordinated with the openness *Dasein* already is, and as such escapes any configuration of actions or intentions that the self may have.

Kant's recognition that the sublime cannot be truly captured by the predicates of transcendental logic proves particularly telling. The aesthetic experience corresponding to the sublime unfolds according to a different act of judging having prepredicative roots, a reflective as opposed to a determinate judgement exercised in theoretical science, Kant's innovation for Heidegger lies in uncovering the prepredicative level of experience, in deploying the possibility of our relation to things according to objective determinations of the categories from *anunthematic* openness. It still remains questionable whether in the third *Critique* Kant arrives at a sufficiently original attunement to *physis* which can offset his earlier subjectivity and consideration of nature as an object present-at-hand and exhibit its affinity with the dimensions of *poiesis and techne*. The ability to make a link with the third *Critique* in order to mark a certain overlap of concerns lost in the cracks between the first and second *Critique* governs Heidegger's thinking with Kant. Heidegger is calling fourth a deeper level of manifestness stemming from *physis* which otherwise is hidden within the theoretical determination of nature for objective science. He is seeking the weightiness of things in terms of their affinity with *physis* as self-emerging presence. Kant never reaches this more radical level of interpretation or is even in position to appropriate the Greek understanding of being.

For the Greeks, *physis* entails a more expansive way of revealing which is more attentive to the uniqueness of things than what occurs with the overtly constrictive view of beings as one-dimensional objects of scientific investigation. Insofar as man's nature is reintegrated back into the broader purview of *physis*, the dynamic emergence of nature elicits the "there" prior to any distinction between subject and object. In this work Kant in relation to Freedom, Heidegger overturns the division between freedom and nature in showing an alternative path to resolving the third antinomy. The second *Critique* should no longer be read as providing a haven for a supersensible source of volition divorced from nature. Rather, freedom must be recovered in its essential unity with nature in marking the expansion of human concern within the greater compass of *physis*. Heidegger's work on freedom defines and reopens once again the concern for

experiencing nature primordially through its relation to art and *techne* as documented in the third *Critique*.

As with the Kantian sublime, so the Heideggerian earth is something undisclosed and unexplained, something which unfolds itself in an inexhaustible variety of forms and shatters every attempt to open it up to full presence. Like Kant, it is something dynamic; the work of art contains an "inner concentration of motion," and with motion drives beyond itself to its unfathomable source. It as well transports us from the fixed and regulated certitudes of our current life. But the difference lies in the terminal point of the transfer. For Kant, our experience of the sublime puts us into a motion which culminates in a feeling for our own true nature, for the infinite abyss of reason itself. For Heidegger the terminus is something other, since there is no infinite, monumental realm - not even in thought - to which the experience of the sublime could bring us. The Heideggerian dynamic is a withdrawal, not from all fixed determinacy, but from the concrete set of determinacies that constitutes an individual world; and it is just as much the setting up of a new world. As such, the Heideggerian art work sounds more like the Kantian aesthetic idea than the Kantian sublime; just as the aesthetic idea was itself unconceptualizable but provoked an infinite variety of new rules, formulations, and concepts, so for Heidegger does art. Heidegger cannot distinguish, however, the aesthetic idea, understanding was unable to come up with a single formula which would capture everything in it; but imagination was able to recapitulate the sensory givens into a coherent fully present whole, and the aesthetic ideal was thus grounded in the full and harmonious presence of a sensory object. Heidegger's view absorbs the Kantian aesthetic ideal into the Kantian sublime; without a postulate of a unified source, he cannot allow such functioning to the imagination or indeed to the spectator at all. Thus the Heideggerian art work and the Kantian sublime operate through the very inability of the art object to be made fully present. For Heidegger this abyss is never left behind but continues to yawn open every apprehension of the work of art as such.

This yawning open today perhaps takes the form of the invention of conceptions which are unpresentable, not yet been blessed by the solace of good forms, marked by the continual state of what is being born. In the terms of the Kantian sublime, it is the inability of the subject's faculty of presentation to be adequate to the subject's faculty of conception forcing thought into a position where it dangles between the alternatives of image and fragmentation. The opening between totalizing and fragmentation for the later Heidegger is revealed to be a function of language. The meaning of the word "being" which was to have been in the

willful representing of an object as standing opposed to man within the transcendental horizon cannot be found there. This is not due to the inability of the faculty of imagination to present an object adequate to the concept of the faculty of conception.

In recalling the guiding thread of Heidegger's exchange with transcendental philosophy, a clue is given as to the significance which an examination of the sublime has for adjudicating the larger crisis to metaphysics. Specifically the rapture points to where reason's own self-developed enclave breaks down the receding focus to totality which eludes reason's search for the unconditioned; this gulf has its proper corollary in the continual withdrawal of what beforehand provides an orientation toward the whole, namely the world. Due to its own power to recede in wake of what can be directly apprehended, world marks that slippage whereby the dimensions of our own concern which have been rendered superfluous, even to the point of beings marginalized, can be recovered through alternative avenue of disclosure. The retrieval that is suggested is one which rather subtly arises through Kant's account of the sublime. For the experience of sublimity points to the expansion of human concern whose margins escape those offered by a rational determination of nature *qua* present-at-hand, that is, according to synthetic *a priori* principles; the sublime points to a niche of experience otherwise excluded from the mathematical disclosure of nature, since its occurrence indicates a more immediate, direct revelation of the whole within which various types of manifestness become possible. Seen from Heidegger's perspective, there can be a comportment proper to the sublime, just like the beautiful, because a disposition toward wholeness can intrude upon our everyday experience in varying degrees, marking a certain rearrangement of our concern which opens up multiple dimensions of human existence. What then appears as uncanny does so from the standpoint of the fixity of everyday interpretive modes. One is struck by something so great which, even while seeming to rest on a numerical comparison, in fact points to the creation of a totally new standard that renders all comparison meaningless. The boundlessness defining the experience of the sublime indicates a faculty of mind which surpasses every standard of sense. Indeed, for the later Heidegger the unconstrained favouring turns into the general economy of the gift, a receding origin, the absent presence which precedes every relation of property, every "present" of an accountable exchange. The sublime favoring is a given which displaces the opposition between giving and withholding, in which the "own" becomes disposed.³⁴

The sublime opens a crack in which the underside of reason can appear; it does so, however, only to the extent that a wide, alternative space may be created

which allows that experience to become meaningful beyond the scope of rationality. The possibility rests in the prior advent of world which unobtrusively emerges as the spacing whereby new alternatives for manifestness can unfold within the confines of the everyday, the familiar. The counterthrust to the familiar consists of the silent play of the world. This play supplies its own law in a way analogous to the way that the free play of the cognitive faculties in a "reflective" judgement produces a lawfulness which occurs without applying separate rational principles, or categories. Accordingly, such play prefigures the kinds of aesthetic experience that Kant outlines in the third *Critique*, including the beautiful *vis-s-vis* the free play of imagination in harmony with the understanding and the sublime through the disruptive interaction between imagination and reason. As Heidegger describes in the "Origin" essay, the view of art which arises from attending to this play entails a totally new appreciation of *techne*, *poiesis*, and *physis*. Even while not explicitly broaching the third *Critique*, he nevertheless has opened an avenue extending from Greek thought, from which the parallel concern for beauty can be raised, in the light of the deeper advent of *poiesis*. This subsequent development points to a stage which seems to retrace much of the ground already cleared in the exchange with Kant, only to embark in a new direction of the expansion of the openness that Heidegger has already identified.

The new direction is one in which Heidegger seems to take only Hegel as his guide. Could one not argue that with Kant, in strict conformity with the doctrine of favor, there is the analysis of art not understood in terms of Hegelian progress or decline but as a domain of origination, of an enigmatic irruption of nature that does not cease to be renewed in the interplay with the tradition that inspired it? Is there not an approximation in Kant's third *Critique* which sees the past of art as not dead, something merely handing down the tattered remnants of bygone ages; but as pregnant with futures, a new opening to the enigma of unconcealment itself, a waiting beyond receiving or expecting, an unconstrained favoring which has released itself into openness? Is not Heidegger's more radical demand to address what is unthought in transcendental philosophy in response to Kant's thinking equally in terms of its omissions as what is embryonically prefigured in it, a post-metaphysical sublime ?

Notes and References

- 1 Heidegger, *Nietzsche. Volume 1: Will to Power as Art*. Translated by Davis Krell. [New York: Harper and Row, 1979], p. 111, 108,113.
- 2 Kant, *Selections*, ed. Theodore M. Green. [New York: Scribners, 1975]
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 418.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 419.

- 5 Ibid., p. 420.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid., p.375.
- 8 Ibid., p.376.
- 9 Ibid., p. 384.
- 10 Ibid., p. 381.
- 11 Ibid., p. 381 - 82.
- 12 Ibid., p. 390.
- 13 Ibid., p. 390.
- 14 Ibid., p. 430.
- 15 Ibid., p. 411.
- 16 The best example in the *Critique of Judgment* might be that of Saint Peter's basilica in Rome, which is simply too large to be taken in by the mind.
- 17 No Heidegger scholar has pointed this out better than Frank Schalow in his work *The Renewal of the Heidegger-Kant Dialogue: Action. Thought. Responsibility*. New York: SUNY Press, 1992.
- 18 Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. 4th edition. Translated by Richard Taft. [Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1990.], p.110.
- 19 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*. Translated by Garrett Barden. [London: Sheed and Ward, 1975], pp.29ff.
- 20 Heidegger, "Origin of the Work of Art", in *Poetry, Thought*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. [New York: Harper and Row, 1971, pp. 17-87.
- 21 Heidegger, *Nietzsche. Volume 1 : Will to Power as Art*. Translated by David Krell. [New York: Harper and Row, 1979], p. 112, 113.
- 22 This is why (as Taminioux has, to my mind conclusively pointed out in *Poetics, Speculation, and Judgment*. New York: SUNY Press, 1993) Heidegger suggests that Schiller alone grasped the essential of Kant's Doctrine of the Beautiful. Schiller was without doubt that the first Korner, (known under the title " *Kalliasbriefe*" because in these letters Schiller discusses the project of a treatise on the beautiful, a project he subsequently abandoned), bears witness to a very close meditation on Kant's work. This meditation continued to sustain his later major philosophical essays, in particular his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*. Schiller approached Kant from the perspective of an itinerary that had already opened up its own vistas. Because of this original thinking itinerary, a central problem emerged that was bound to prescribe what kind of spirit would preside over Schiller's reception of third *Critique*. One might formulate the terms of the problem as follows: on the one hand Schiller takes the celebration of what he calls the "One-and-all", the omnipresent ontological power of unification and reconciliation, as the leading theme of his poetic saying. One finds evidence of this in the first poems of the *Gedankenlyric*. in their celebration of the gods of Greece, of joy, and of artists. Such celebration comes to the fore with a specific conception of freedom and nature - a conception very different from what one might expect after Kant's first two *Critiques*. This freedom is not what it is for Kant, man's self-positing enacted in his negating of immediacy. It is conceived by Schiller as the movement by which man subscribes to the affirmative force of the One-and-all and welcomes what comes to be manifested in its midst. Nature is not what it is for Kant, the causal system objectified by the pure concepts of the understanding, or the antithesis of a properly human activity. It is conceived as a sort of favor granted to man, a gift calling for his approval and which he feels a deeply rooted kinship. To this conception of freedom and nature, a conception of beauty is linked. Beauty is nothing but the very radiance of omnipresence, understood as the deeply rooted concordance of man and nature. Schiller endorses Kant's criticisms of the empirical and the rationalist approaches exposed in the analytic of the third *Critique*: the beautiful cannot be located in the mere capacity to be affected by the sensations, any more than in a perfection whose essence is logical in origin. The reason is that Schiller wants to unite sensibility with spirit. It is within the same synthetic

- perspective that Schiller entirely subscribes to the notion of "favor" as devoid of interest and unconstrained satisfaction. "Let it be as it so wills to be", he appeals in defence of the beautiful object in a letter that we are justified in considering as a sort of commentary on the "First Moment of the Analytic of the Beautiful"; then he adds, "As soon as we judge [the beautiful object] aesthetically, we only want to know whether it is what it is by virtue of itself alone." [see Schiller, *On the Aesthetically Education of Man*. Translation by E. Wilkinson and L. Willoughby. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967, letter 3.] No wonder Heidegger suggested that Schiller alone grasped the essentials of Kant's thought.
- 23 Heidegger, "Conversations on a Country Path," in *Discourse on Thinking*. Translation by John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund. New York: Harper and Row, 1966], p/ 74.
- 24 *Ibid.*, p. 71.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 69.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p. 72.
- 27 Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*. Translation by David Farrell Krell. [New York: Harper and Row, 1979], p. 109.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 112-113.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 123.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 112,126.
- 31 Heidegger, "Origin of the Work of Art," op. cit, p.83.
- 32 The reference to "original faculty is from *Critique of Judgment*, Sect. 17; that "taste can be trained" is from Sect. 14; that only those who have got "all they want" is from Sect. 5; those "untrained though not barbaric" is from Sect. 13.
- 33 See Derrida, *La verite en peinture*. [Paris: Flammarion, 1978], p. 111.
- 34 I am thinking here of the famous "Es Gibt" of Being in Heidegger's *On Time and Being*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.

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