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Laying down the law for the historical imagination : Kant, Schiller and Nietzsche.

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**LAYING DOWN THE LAW FOR THE HISTORICAL IMAGINATION: KANT,
SCHILLER AND NIETZSCHE**

A Dissertation Presented

by

MATTHEW LOUIS BLANSHEI

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

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

September 2000

Department of Political Science

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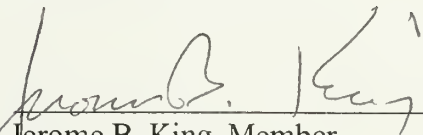
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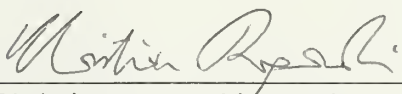
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DEDICATION

To my parents

ABSTRACT

LAYING DOWN THE LAW FOR THE HISTORICAL IMAGINATION: KANT,
SCHILLER AND NIETZSCHE

SEPTEMBER 2000

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Is there an epistemological and/or practical basis for an ethic of history at the close of the twentieth century? This dissertation focuses upon selected works within the tradition of Western metaphysics that have allowed such a question to become both recognizable and problematic today.

The problematic aspects of such a question become readily apparent. For it gives rise to the idea of a world-history--of a teleological historical process--which is all but unanimously considered to be of contemporary relevance only as a reminder of why the present defines itself as a "postmodern" age.

Furthermore, the concept of *an ethic* of history evokes the thought of the Kantian moral law which Georg Lukàcs described as early as 1914 as a depleted source of illumination that no longer serves as "the map of all possible paths."

But along with the philosophy of history as conceived by Herder, Hegel and Marx, the present has inherited a critique of that tradition whose origins lie in the Kantian system.

Chapter 1 explores how Kant presents an ethic of history that is in fact deprived of the kind of objective or empirically verifiable measure capable of providing something like a road map for human action. For Kant the task of enforcing an unwritten and unrepresentable law is therefore conferred upon the human imagination.

Chapter 2 then focuses upon how Kant's critique of reason regulates the necessary yet potentially boundless and debilitating power of the imagination by instituting a theological supplement to the moral law. The very phrase "theological supplement" indicates that an unorthodox theological concept has thereby been introduced in order to establish and valorize a limit to the capacities of the human will.

Can such a limit be represented "atheologically"? This is the question underlying chapters 3 and 4. In chapter 3 Friedrich Schiller's program for an "aesthetic education" is interpreted as a supplement to the moral law that ends up by all but displacing it. Chapter 4, in turn, argues that Friedrich Nietzsche's attempt to displace the moral law succeeds in revitalizing it.

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INTRODUCTION

By using the present tense and avoiding the genitive (*for* and not *of* the historical imagination) in its title this dissertation attempts to convey how for Kant the law in question is something that can neither be discovered through a process of empirical investigation nor enforced as though it were the expression of an already existing and legitimated form of political authority. But what these negative characterizations thereby accentuate is the need for a binding set of prescriptions and proscriptions, given how the power of the human imagination can be fomented by its ongoing and dynamic relation to a history—to a past and future that are not immediately present at hand or visible and yet seem to encroach upon the subject as a burden, a threat and a hope.

The imagination—defined by Kant as the “power of [producing] intuitions even when the object is not present”—in fact appears to be particularly well suited for assuming the impossible task of representing an experience of time that seems to press itself upon the subject as an affective absence.¹ It therefore seems that whatever takes the name of a historical law must bear the imprint of a “subjective” origin. And yet for Kant this does not mean that the stand in for an objective or universal law is constitutively arbitrary so long as it is capable of bringing the subject’s cognitive powers or faculties [Vermögen] into a certain agreement with one another if not with the phenomenal world.

However, if the cognitive powers ultimately are to cohere then a relation to that world must be established; for pure reason must become practical even though the

exigencies of historical experience are not something over which either the laws of nature or the rational concepts [Vernunftsbegriffe] can effectively legislate. The historical subject endowed with a capacity for freedom which can never be definitively fulfilled thus appears to be in need of a singular measure for action and reflection.

And the ethic of history Kant presents as both a “supplement” to the moral law and a recuperation of the “nature” of the subject today seems to meet several canonized epistemological criteria: it is not derived from a teleological process; it is not reducible to an ethic of conviction, whereby what counts in the last instance is a particular subjective intention; and it does not value success above all else as the determining variable in the evaluation of historical events, as was and is the case within certain strands of nineteenth century historicism and contemporary neo-pragmatism.²

What also resonates with ongoing poststructuralist and neo-Lacanian trends is the presupposition that philosophy, politics, ethics and history can be brought into an at least functional relationship with one another if the position held by the philosophical is sufficiently transcendental—i.e. if it is somehow able to determine how cultural phenomena are to be represented in terms of their conditions of possibility and not as things in themselves.

For what is here sought by Kant is a standpoint that would allow human history to be interpreted as something other than an aggregation of impressionistic yet ephemeral events (journalistic historiography) or a realm of appearances whose significance becomes legible only with the importation of an extrinsic and atemporal ideal. An ethic of history that is neither empirical nor transcendent is then required if the subject is to

attain a necessarily imperfect understanding of how to situate itself within the ever-shifting relationship between past and present.

In the second and third Critiques, the abyssal foundation for such an ethic is presented as the moral law, the same law whose unconditional, universal and therefore putatively outmoded character now appears to be a liability when it comes to creating a practical-theoretical space capable of accommodating a proliferating number of cultural-political identities.

Precedents for such an unfavorable judgment were in part established by Schiller and Nietzsche, both of whom represented the moral law as a debilitating product of Reason that overly constricts the human subject's form-giving capacity. But what is thereby isolated as a paradigmatic and primordial value is for Kant consigned to a strictly subordinate status within the economy of the human will on account of how it animates a form of practice or production (a *τεχνη*) that draws the imagination away from an unrepresentable ideal and toward a readily accessible idol. And in this sense the moral law seems to share an affinity with another contemporary tendency that is both opposed to and appropriated by identity politics: the longing for an experience of profane "alterity" incapable of being mastered by the self-positing subject.

"Culture should place the human being in freedom and assist him in fulfilling his whole concept. It should thus enable him to assert his will, because man is the being [Wesen] that wills."³

Presented two centuries ago as a response to the Kantian "summons of and to reason" [Aufforderung an die Vernunft], Friedrich Schiller's prescriptive conception of the human being appears today as an exemplary testament to the hubris of the tradition

of Western metaphysics.⁴ Hubris can here be ascribed to an entire tradition insofar as it connotes a “transcendental” disposition, associated not with any particular action but with the very concept of the willful subject as such.

That human action has been deprived of a universally binding rational-moral foundation is not an event that distinguishes the singularity of the present age; rather, the latter perhaps emerges as the time in which even the sense of rupture that gave rise to the “legitimation crisis” has passed—without, however, being succeeded by anything like a revolution or restoration.⁵ It is as though modernity has even become alienated from the concept of alienation, from the “radical world alienation” that Hannah Arendt described as a “situation where man, wherever he goes, encounters only himself. All the processes of the earth and the universe have revealed themselves either as man-made or as potentially man-made.”⁶ Can the human being discern even the semblance of a calling while in the throes of such a historical situation? Perhaps what awaits recognition is the sense of being summoned to issue a seemingly irrefutable yet groundless verdict against the “being that wills” which is, moreover, both unenforceable and strangely redundant. The call which can be neither traced to, nor received by, an identifiable form of authority claims as its victim the subject that appears destined to be without a destiny.

A question pervading recent poststructuralist and neo-Lancanian literature is how to respond to such an interpretation of world-history without invoking the sense of heroic-existential pathos that accompanied early twentieth-century attempts to provide the human subject with a binding and enabling ethic.⁷ By claiming that modern experience requires a form of “tragic” justification, such a historical ethic allowed the subject to

assert its will in spite, or because of, the knowledge that there is no measure on earth for its actions. But when subjected to a certain contemporary reading, this impeccably secular form of engaged resignation seems to establish one more metaphysical measure: the self-positing subject as the last bastion of unassailable value and meaning.⁸

Schiller's conception of freedom retroactively forms a precedent for such a subject insofar as it endows the will with a seemingly inherent arbitrariness which also presumably serves, however, as the indispensable precondition for a reinterpretation of culture.⁹

This is the foremost historical problem which the Dialectic of Enlightenment diagnosed during the Second World War: the freedom of the human will seems to present itself both as what led to, and what must lead the way out of, the impasse which the tradition of metaphysics reached at the beginning of the twentieth century. The capacity for freedom creates an impasse insofar as it produces a "measure" that governs human action in a way that simultaneously enables and entraps the will; that is, what has been elevated to the status of a de facto *law* is the subject's unfailing ability to posit and procure arbitrary purposes to the detriment of the human relation toward what Adorno and Horkheimer still named "nature" and toward what is now commonly referred to as "alterity" or language as such.¹⁰

Poststructuralist philosophy has (explicitly and implicitly) received the Dialectic of Enlightenment as something of a living heritage that in part guides its attempt to extricate the "experience of freedom" from the debilitating after-effects of its own historical projects.¹¹ Such a rescue operation begins with what one recent, avowedly prototypical, text announces as its central presupposition: any interpretation of the

Western tradition that lays claim to an “ethico-political” status ought to sharply distinguish its position from the “discourse of grounds, morality and good conscience.”¹²

These three cardinal principles contravene the “protocols” of a historical ethic which stipulate that “ethics and politics...are evaded when we fall back on the conceptual priority of subject, agency or identity as the grounds of our action.”¹³ If the “ethico-political” is to be introduced into a language in which measure and self-assertion have become synonyms for a violence stemming from an unreflective need for “cognitive certainty” and “security”, then the conceptual and practical displacements caused by the “Dialectic of Enlightenment” yield not simply an empty space but a fractured tradition out of which a new historical experience may nevertheless somehow arise: “the only responsibility worthy of the name comes with the removal of grounds, the withdrawal of rules or the knowledge on which we might rely to make our decisions for us.”¹⁴

In a text which adheres to the poststructuralist protocols Thomas Keenan here codifies, Michel Foucault singles out the Kantian philosophy as the “discourse” that first disclosed the autonomous subject who “must constitute [itself]...in each of [its]...actions as a universal subject by conforming to universal rules.”¹⁵

The concepts of the rule and the ground, together with the corresponding experiences of certainty and security here crystallize into the antithesis of what is still deemed capable of lending worth to human experience. What modern scientism named the irrational, the mythic or the afterglow of the theological is thus converted into the hitherto unrecognized realm of the “ethico-political.”¹⁶

However, if the Enlightenment tradition exerts a singular influence on the present

age as an unforgettable monument marking both the loss of its largely unchallenged authority and the absence of anything like an undisputed heir, then the discovery of the “ethico-political” takes place within a disquieting historical interval; for a present without a determinate identity continues to be affected by a past that can be represented as an object of knowledge only in terms of loss. Such a situation poses difficulties for Keenan and Foucault to the degree that their respective projects unduly subject the enduring sense of the past to a present’s unilateral reinterpretation.¹⁷

For instance, when Keenan and Foucault are read together, it appears that the origins of the institutionalized legitimization crisis are traceable to Kant, the principal philosophical source from which Schiller derives his conception of culture. But what if the Kantian discourse of “grounds and morality” exerts both a centrifugal and centripetal force upon the contemporary critique of the universal, moral subject? Then the “summons of reason” would seem to emanate from a past that ought to be represented not only as the origin of the current impasse afflicting the Western tradition but also as a living heritage capable of *renaming* the central task which faces a prospective ethic of history: “the only responsibility worthy of the name comes with the removal of [the] grounds...on which we might rely to make our decisions for us.”

CHAPTER I

THE VOCATION OF REASON AND THE LOGIC OF HISTORY

Excavating the “treasure” which Kant left for “posterity”—“the inventory, put in systematic order, of all the possessions that we have through *pure reason*”—unearths what at first may appear more closely to resemble a relic than any kind of much needed secret.¹⁸ But when the Critique of Judgment is opened to the beginning of the 86th section, the vocation of reason takes on the aura of a heritage emitting both of these impressions. What then becomes apparent is how the imposing “destination of reason” [Vernunftbestimmung] continues to furnish the basis for a teleological judgment rendered by an array of “post-Kantian” subjects.¹⁹

There is a judgment that even the commonest understanding [gemeinste Verstand] cannot escape when it meditates about the existence of the things in the world and of the world itself...It is the judgment that all these diverse creatures [Geschöpfe] [of the world] would exist for nothing [zu nichts da sein würden] if they did not include human beings...no matter how artfully devised these creatures may be, and how diversely, coherently and purposively interrelated...In other words it is the judgment that without man all of creation would be a mere wasteland [eine bloße Wüste], gratuitous and without a final purpose [Endzweck].
20

The judgments of the “commonest understanding” hold a central place in the trial of human reason which Kant stages in the three Critiques. For they testify to a vocation ill served as long as the realm of human experience is confined to that which is empirically verifiable. That is, they indicate a fundamental need to raise questions which a knowledge of Newtonian “physics” cannot answer.

But while the need for a system of meta-physics is inescapably necessary if the imagination deprived of empirical cognition is to retain a certain lawfulness for its otherwise potentially boundless speculations, it is also eminently dangerous and seemingly incapable of ever being fulfilled. The history of modern philosophy, in fact, attests to how the tradition of Western metaphysics which emerged in order to endow human experience with a teleological and ethical form has instead produced a “combat arena” of “endless conflict” which threatens to expand beyond the tragic-comic disputations of academe and into the world which the common understanding claims as its home.²¹ If anything like a peace is to be attained, then such a locus must be recognized as the source of both the conflicts and their possible resolution. That is, it is with the common understanding that the receptivity to “moral feeling” *and* the propensity for lawless speculation that “plunges human reason into darkness and contradictions” is to be found.²²

The realm of the imagination not guided by empirical perception must become the purview of reason, which is thus positioned in close proximity to what tradition has reserved for theology and aesthetics. The Critique of Judgment itself, however, brings both of these forms of experience before its tribunal and the very title of its 86th section—“On Ethicotheology”—indicates that the inescapable judgment of the commonest understanding is not merely directed toward a world conceived as an object of physical science. As a result, two indissociable aspects of the essentially limited yet enabling power [Vermögen] of human judgment are here brought forth.

First, the judgment in question that seems to press itself upon the human subject is a “reflective” judgment, defined by Kant as the ability to prescribe a universal principle

for a particular phenomenon in the absence of an existing law bearing objective validity. But this capacity to posit a law which in turn serves as a guide for the subject's interpretation of its relationship to the world does not thereby enable it to exchange a want of empirical knowledge for an arbitrarily imposed rule. Rather, the act of reflective judgment toward which the commonest understanding is ineluctably drawn is set in motion by the Copernican revolution.²³ That is, the subjectivity of the subject is *constrained* to view the phenomenal world in accordance with a priori spatio-temporal principles that structure human experience and are capable of being submitted to critical reflection, to "self-cognition."²⁴ So although the self-prescribed law that stands in for a given universal is "regulative, not constitutive...it holds just as necessarily for our human judgment as if it were an objective principle."²⁵

If the subjective principle that is necessary for human judgment in its interpretation of nature is not "constitutive", then it cannot subsume the phenomena of nature under concepts determined in accordance with mechanical-mathematical laws. As a result of the Copernican turn, however, even this determinate judgment of nature is governed by a priori principles valid only for understanding nature as a phenomenon, not as a thing in itself. But as an indeterminate object of sense, nature also affects the subject in ways that cannot be accounted for in terms of mechanical laws alone. When this happens, the interpretation of nature is guided by a merely "subjective" or reflective principle that nevertheless bears its own form of necessity.

By presenting the task of critical philosophy to be the delimitation of the conditions for the possibility of human representation (rather than of objects, of things in themselves), Kant sets a precedent for an interpretation of the sensible world in which

the concept of nature is severed from anything like a corresponding, preformed object of intuition. And yet the concept of nature as phenomenon also demarcates a realm of necessity that is separated from the “domain” [Gebiet] of freedom by an “immense chasm” [eine unüberschbare Kluft].²⁶ Nature thus signifies that which is not given, but also what must be represented in strict opposition to freedom.

The inescapable judgment that awaits the recognition of the common understanding thus turns out to be based upon a concept of non-natural necessity derived not from the external world as such but from the specific constitution of the human subject. Over the past two centuries, the borders Kant established in order to circumscribe an experience of necessity impinging upon the subject as a being in the world have been continually redrawn. And yet the disparate attempts which arose out of the tradition of Western philosophy to determine the conditions of possibility that enable and limit human knowledge and action have to a great extent upheld the underlying structure erected by the “critical enterprise” whose completion Kant announced in the preface to the third Critique.²⁷ For the foundation in question endures so long as the search continues for a measure or limit that would allow a subject for whom objective knowledge of the world is barred to fashion laws for itself which are capable of organizing and giving value to human experience.

But there are countervailing signs that such evidence of historical continuity does not simply suggest that there is a need to greatly expand the traditional concept of neo-Kantianism. In fact, the degree to which the transmission of tradition has spawned seemingly dramatic theoretical and practical reversals or inversions becomes

particularly evident when Kant's description of how the world becomes a wasteland is reread at the close of the twentieth century.

If an inescapable judgment for the present age is that the world has become a wasteland precisely because of the supposition that the human being represents the final purpose of nature, then how is the exposition of the "ethical-political" to be understood? For there would then be no immediately recognizable theoretical or practical space within which such an ethic could begin to get its bearings and gather the remains of humanity's "powers" or forces in the wake of the ravages caused by the triumph of the will.

A. The "Precarious and Dangerous Standpoint"

Returning to Kant therefore seems necessary in order to clarify the relationship between the subject and the concept of the "final purpose" presented in the three Critiques. By doing so it becomes evident first of all that for Kant the mere existence of human beings does not suffice to ensure that the world does not exist for no thing, for this bare fact then begs the question of *why* they exist.

On the basis of a peculiar experience that cannot be secured as an object of knowledge, Kant specifies that only a certain type of human being preempts the devaluing of the world: namely, the type capable of positing—and relating to itself as—a "final purpose". For something to be first of all considered a purpose, it must be thought of as the cause of a particular object, the "real basis of its possibility."²⁸

A final purpose is then a “purpose that requires no other purpose as a condition of its possibility.”²⁹ In the Prolegomena To Any Future Metaphysics, such a form of “special causality” is isolated as the fundamental “problem of metaphysics” whose origin lies in the “indomitable desire” [die nicht zu dämpfende Begierde] of human reason to “create for itself the idea of a spontaneity that can, on its own, start to act--without needing to be preceded by another cause by means of which it is determined to action in turn, according to the law of causal connection.”³⁰

What accentuates the “indomitable” character of such a desire is that although the object in question seems to be immanent it nevertheless “fails” to appear; for when reflecting on the natural laws it prescribes for the phenomenal world, human reason is impelled to follow the chain of cause and effect until it secures the first, or unconditioned cause as an object of knowledge. And while this not only indomitable but also “inevitable” [unvermeidlich] demand of *theoretical* reason cannot be met (without creating an antinomy, that which is seemingly contradictory), the *practical* effects of just such a cause are evinced through a form of human action that appears in nature even though it simultaneously seems to belie the very possibility that it arose *out of* nature.³¹

Now for a spontaneous power—an unconditioned cause, that is, the idea of freedom—to be ascribed to the finite, contingent and pathologically affected human will, the latter must be endowed with a form of agency that can, or should, be self-legislating. What makes it possible for a consequently “autonomous” subject to answer for its existence in such a way that its acts appear to animate the world with a final purpose is the “power of desire” [Begehrungsvermögen]--the “power [of the

subject]...to be the cause, through its representations, of the reality of the objects of these representations.”³²

While reason cannot determine the existence of a final purpose in nature as an object of theoretical knowledge, it can introduce such a purpose into nature through practical action. And it is the recognition of reason’s “practical” power as a potentially ethical-historical force that averts the disaster that would otherwise expose the world to a future which could only be a repetition of the past.

The only [thing] which can give man’s existence an absolute value [absoluten Wert], and by reference to which the existence of the world can have a final purpose, is the power of desire...But...not...that [lower] power of desire which makes man dependent on nature (through impulses of sense) [durch sinnliche Antriebe], i.e. not the one according to which the value of man’s existence depends on what he receives and enjoys.³³

An “absolute value” is established only by means of what the subject can “give himself, and that consists in what he does, how and on what principles he acts, not as a link in nature [nichts als Naturglied] but in the freedom of his power of desire...in a good will [guter Wille].³⁴”

Because it is the result of a reflective judgment, the concept of the human being as a final purpose does not for Kant amount to a “dogmatic” presentation of teleology.³⁵ That is, the “inner moral destination of human existence for a purpose [die innere moralische Zweckbestimmung seines Daseins] that makes up for the deficiency in its knowledge of nature” does not in turn establish a determinate object of historical knowledge.³⁶ Nor does it even succeed in dispelling the suspicion that the human being is incapable of attaining the regulative ideal toward which it strives. In fact, the subject is forever exposed to the danger that once the ideal of establishing a “kingdom of

purposes” is acknowledged, its inevitable juxtaposition with humanity’s profane history will give rise to a judgment that “regard[s] that striving [Bestrebung] as wholly futile in its effects.”³⁷

The common understanding seems to be confronted with another inescapable judgment: recognition of the higher power of desire will also bring with it an overwhelming sense of futility unless human history undergoes a fundamental “revolution”.³⁸ But the possibility of transforming the natural history of the finite will (the will of a phenomenal being of nature whose empirical existence is determined in time) into an ethical history is mocked by the ever expanding chronicle of human evil that continues to uphold Augustine’s judgment of world-history during the age of the Enlightenment.³⁹

Regardless of how authentic the documentation of a particular historical event may be, however, it does not offer admissible evidence to the tribunal of reason that can be used to either disprove or confirm humanity’s moral destination. Natural history would then seem to furnish the space and time within which the striving toward a final purpose is to occur without, in turn, providing a measure that sanctions its *practical* possibility. “In fact, it is by all means impossible to determine with complete certainty [mit völliger Gewißheit auszumachen] as a result of experience a single case in which the maxim [the subjective principle guiding action] of a seemingly obligatory action was based solely upon moral grounds and on the representation of duty.”⁴⁰

Furthermore, any attempt to approximate certainty here would be of absolutely no value in any case, for a historical event that serves as a testament to, and idolatrous model for, ethical action would not allow the will to maintain its autonomy. For

following what is singled out as an example of morality in an autonomous manner is a logical impossibility that carries over to experience: “worse counsel could not be given about morality than to claim it can be derived from examples...Imitation can in no way be allowed with regard to the moral.”⁴¹

Unable to dismiss summarily the accusation that the “good will” is a “mere chimera of the human imagination” by appealing to the testimony of nature, history or theology, the supposition that the human subject is destined for a final purpose must be defended from an avowedly “precarious and dangerous standpoint which should be firm despite the fact that it is based or dependent upon [gehängt] something that is neither on heaven nor earth.”⁴²

The human being is summoned to a task of neither sacred nor simply profane origin by “reason”, which thereby serves less as a mediating power than as something like a guarantor. The need for the latter arises lest the subject find itself abandoned to an inheritance in which the withdrawal of the grounds, of the moral foundation, established by that which is either closest (nature) or most distant (the divine) renders experience either wholly incomprehensible or solipsistic.

“The only responsibility worthy of the name comes with the removal of grounds.”⁴³ This contemporary declaration seems to be corroborated by the very “discourse of grounds and morality” against which it was presented. But what kind of language is the “discourse” of reason that once claimed to speak for the self-legislating subject? While it allows the subject to express a dissatisfaction with certain inadequacies endemic to its empirical existence, it also allows the imagination to take on a boundless character which is thus prone to the rise of “fanaticism [Schwärmerei], which is the delusion of

wanting to see something beyond all limits of sensibility, i.e. of dreaming according to principles, of raving with reason [nach Grundsätzen träumen...mit Vernunft rasen].”⁴⁴

Although the limits of sensibility ought to be recognized by *theoretical* reason as an impenetrable barrier rather than as a threshold, the subject is not thereby consigned to an existence responsive only to the mechanism of nature and the vagaries of “unprincipled” dreams. For the subject’s “plunge into darkness” is arrested not by the rediscovery of solid ground but by an ungraspable force that somehow justifies itself in its very incomprehensibility:

reason restlessly searches for the unconditionally necessary and sees itself compelled to accept it without any means at all of making it comprehensible to itself...And so even though we do not grasp the practically unconditioned necessity of the moral imperative, we do nevertheless grasp its incomprehensibility, which is all that can in fairness be demanded of a philosophy which strives in its principles toward the limits of human reason.⁴⁵

The irresistible force capable of puncturing an insulating delusion is attested to by the onset of a meta-psychological mood. For to be destined to a moral purpose presupposes an ability to be receptive to a certain experience whose effects are no less immediate than the feelings of pain and pleasure. And although the summons to reason’s moral vocation is only graspable through the language of reason, this peculiar movement of the human understanding does not trace a vicious circle. Rather, its “hermeneutic” character stems from the interpretation of a singular experience which indicates that because reason can know only that which it posits, it is able not only to build concepts (i.e. the categories) into the phenomenal world but also to initiate events therein through acts of freedom. This means that the *possibility* of history becoming

ethical is “guaranteed” by a form of non-natural necessity specific to the human being which is traceable to the strangest of all facts, the “fact of reason.”

However, in order to avoid misinterpretation in regarding this...[fact] as *given*, it must be noted carefully that it is not an empirical fact but the sole fact of pure reason which, by it, announces itself...[I]t forces itself upon us of itself [es sich für sich selbst uns aufdringt] and...is not based on any intuition, either pure [i.e. intellectual] or empirical.⁴⁶

Perhaps the poverty of the empirical fact becomes most evident when confronted with the “significance” of a death that provokes irreconcilable and inimitable responses. But Kant seems to suggest that the “practical reality” (i.e. the possible efficacy) of an exceptional fact that gives rise to an incommensurable mood is confirmed when the subject imagines its relation to its own death in a singular way; that is, how is it possible that the imminent threat of death does *not* become the determining motive for a given action? Or, how may an act of willful sacrifice be understood?

Ask [someone]...whether he thinks it would be possible for him to overcome his love of life, however great it may be, if his sovereign threatened him with...an immediate penalty of death [unverzögerten Todesstrafe] unless he made a false disposition against a honorable man whom the sovereign wished to destroy...Whether he would do so or not he perhaps will not dare to affirm; but that it would be possible for him, he must concede without hesitation. He judges, therefore, that he can do something because he is conscious he should, and recognizes freedom in himself, which otherwise would have remained unknown to him without the [fact of reason or the consciousness of the] moral law.⁴⁷

If the consciousness of the moral law—the fact of reason—*did* yield an object of empirical knowledge then the assumption that humanity has a final purpose would be challenged by something still more threatening than a judgment of futility. For the fact of reason offers a measure for what amounts to a typology of possible historical moods

which are then evaluated in terms of the kind of relationship to the moral law they presuppose.

For instance, if reason is allowed to dream with concepts and thereby imagine the objective reality of the law to be as readily apparent to the human understanding as the appearances of nature, then the power of judgment would have no need to posit a limiting and yet enabling reflective judgment for itself (i.e. that it is a final purpose), and the power of desire would not be “subject” to the law in the only proper sense of that word: “the will is...not merely subjected [unterworfen] to the law but so subjected that it must be regarded as legislating for itself [selbstgesetzgebend].”⁴⁸

Only an autonomous, self-legislating subject can also be subjected to the moral law. A critique of reason, an exposition and delimitation of its limits and capacities, is therefore necessary above all because the concept of morality has traditionally been represented either as an “attractive allure” [Reiz] or “coercive force” [Zwang], thereby preempting the development of a form of consciousness which recognizes the “indelible” [unauslöschliche] yet invisible character of the law.⁴⁹

The limits to human knowledge harmonize with the will’s practical capacities so long as such recognition takes place. But if the conditions for the possibility of lawful action are not understood, and the measure for an ethic of history is assumed to be of empirical origin, then a premature reconciliation between sensibility and duty arises. For because the “spur [Stachel] to action is here immediately at hand and external”, the subject is “no longer required to work its way up toward gathering its powers in order to resist the inclinations through the living representation [lebendige Vorstellung] of the dignity of the law.”⁵⁰

Lawful actions would then ostensibly take place, but insofar as they were empirically conditioned the world would still resemble a mere wasteland because they would at best be performed out of fear; such is the experience of a subject whose habitual behavior betrays a will that appears to be determined in the last instance by regulative principles which preserve and further natural inclinations. And natural history can only become ethical if the finite subject understands itself as a pathologically affected, but not pathologically determined being:

the dependence of a will which is not absolutely good on the principle of autonomy (i.e. moral necessitation [Nötigung]) is obligation [Verbindlichkeit]. This [condition] can thus not be ascribed to a holy being. The objective necessity of an action [done] out of obligation is duty.⁵¹

The idea of the holy “regulates” the self-representation of a human subject whose identity is constituted as a lack and whose will is endowed with a certain capacity that reason must *hope* is not purposeless. And the representation of the law which corresponds to such a pure incentive is “living” insofar as it is, like all concepts of reason [Vernunftsbegriffe], unrepresentable. Only in this way can it innervate an unholy will which is nevertheless distinguished by its singular capacity to confer an absolute value on actions undertaken without undue regard for their pragmatic or technical utility. For if the proper jurisdiction of the law is calculated in terms of use value, then the human experience of time would be devoid of any intimation that the “spontaneity” required for introducing the qualitatively new into history could arise:

the conduct of human beings, so long as its [finite, pathological] nature remained as it now is, would be transformed into a mere mechanism, where, as in a puppet show, everything would gesticulate well but no life would be found in the figures.⁵²

The mechanical movements associated with the puppet theater are particularly unsuitable for representing the kind of “moving force or emotion” animating the good will.⁵³ And sustaining this productive tension is necessary because such historical moods as hubris, irreverence, fanaticism and complacency are all too easily cultivated and nurtured once the subject is faced with the task of approaching the impossible as though it were in some way imperfectly and imperceptibly realizable.⁵⁴

If what appear to be the conditions for the *impossibility* of a historical experience are understandably thought of as inhibiting rather than enabling the will, then the severity of the moral law’s commands may be lessened in a manner that evokes the origins of the Lutheran Reformation. For what adds to the drama of the will Kant stages is that the “lower” power of desire also forces itself upon the subject, thereby creating the conditions of possibility for misrepresenting the law as “indulgent and thus suitable for our comfort [nachsichtlich (indulgent) und so unserer Behaglichkeit angemessen].”⁵⁵ The relation to the moral law would thus be transformed into an occasion for the rationalization and legitimization of the real—whether the latter is construed, as it will be “after Kant”, as the constitution of an existing state or as an extra-legal norm that sanctions its overthrow. In such cases an ethical-historical law is posited as a determinate object which can be possessed and mastered “merely through the use of the [subject’s] natural powers.”⁵⁶

But “duty and indebtedness [Schuldigkeit] are the only names that we must give to our relation to the moral law.”⁵⁷ This is the only way in which a non-quantifiable correspondence between rational concept (the idea of freedom) and experience—i.e. a historical mood—is to be maintained. The intimation of such imperfect symmetry

answers yet again to the insuperable demand of reason for a coherent and unified experience. And because being in the world means being subjected to the ongoing interaction between the understanding and sensibility (this is how the subject processes sense impressions), human consciousness is for Kant affected by a process which is at work before any particular moment of theoretical cognition arises. Once such an intentional act does occur, the question that immediately imposes itself upon reason is: “what sort of use can we make of our understanding...as regards experience, if we do not set purposes for ourselves?”⁵⁸

The setting of purposes ultimately requires that they cohere in a systematic way which culminates in the establishment of the “final purpose”. Now because human experience must be conceived in terms of a necessary unity that nevertheless cannot be verified by a theoretical cognition (that would require an intuition of the unconditioned, or first cause), the subject’s relation of indebtedness to the moral law takes on an aporetic character which may present reason with something more than a *seeming* contradiction. For once reason posits the subject as a final purpose in accordance with an unfailing logic, it is confronted with the existentially compelling absence of anything (be it a sign of nature, history or divinity) that would suggest the fulfillment of such a purpose is historically possible. And at this point Kant pushes the use of logic to what would appear to be its outermost limits, for it would not be logical—it would in fact violate logic’s touchstone, the law of non-contradiction—if the fact of reason turned out to be “useless” for not only pragmatic and technical but also moral ends.

In the third Critique, the principle of “purposiveness without a purpose” indicates how the subject’s sense of being in a relation as such (of being in a relation with its own

powers of representation: the understanding and the imagination) is induced by the disinterested experience specific to the judgment of beauty. Such a principle in fact forms the “subjective” basis for moral feeling by demonstrating that it is possible for a subject to represent a phenomenal object of nature independently of technical or pragmatic considerations; but this principle also appears to offer itself as a description of the finite subject bound to a law whose commands it is unable fully to carry out.

The only proper relation to the law thus appears ultimately to lead to the recognition that the subject is destined for a *final purpose to no purpose*. And this is something that poses the greatest threat to the lawfulness of the vocation of reason:

pure reason contains...principles of the *possibility of experience*, i.e. of the experience of such actions as *could* be met with in accordance with moral prescriptions in the *history* of the human being [solche Handlungen, die den sittlichen Vorschriften gemäß in der *Geschichte* des Menschen anzutreffen sein könnten]. For since pure reason commands that such actions ought to occur, they *must* also be able to occur [Kant’s emphasis].⁵⁹

It is the “peculiar fate” of the human subject to be called by reason to its own powers of reason. This summons places it before a law whose injunctions “could”, “must” and seemingly cannot be carried out. But “that which is required for the possibility of any use of reason as such [is]...that its principles and affirmations must not contradict one another.”⁶⁰

The logic of reason seems to have given to the commonest understanding an inescapable judgment whose verdict indicates that something more than guilt or innocence is at stake. For what kind of sentence is it that determines the human being as a final purpose to no purpose, as the subject of the moral law whose historicization seems both to be demanded and precluded by the a priori principles of pure reason?

And yet the Kantian subject appears in fact to be poised to assume its destiny in defiance of the logic of history. For the will stands before an indelible yet invisible law whose “categorical imperative” prescribes no particular action save for the act of prescribing *law as such*:

since...[the will] is deprived of every impulse that might arise for it from obeying any particular law, there is nothing left to serve the will as principle except the universal conformity of its actions to law as such; i.e. I should never act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim [a subjective rule for action] should become a universal law.⁶¹

Like the power of reflective judgment, prescribing lawful maxims supplies the will with a universal principle that no cognition of phenomenal nature is capable of disclosing. The idea of the moral world that is thus posited as the antithesis of nature, however, is also represented on analogy with the latter’s laws; that is, the fact of reason and the concept of freedom it presupposes present themselves to the subject as the conditions for the possibility of an experience of history which, although not actual, is nevertheless somehow necessary:

if a law is to be morally valid...as a ground of obligation, then it must carry with it absolute necessity...[For] merely the dignity of humanity as rational nature without any further purpose or advantage to be thereby gained...should yet serve as an inflexible precept of the will...[T]his very independence of the maxims from all...[natural] incentives should constitute the sublimity of maxims and the worthiness of every rational subject to be a legislative member in the kingdom of purposes [Reich der Zwecke] for otherwise he would have to be regarded as subject only to the natural law of his own needs.⁶²

The critique of reason is a form of immanent critique in the sense that it delimits the proper constitution of the “transcendental” subject for whom sensible experience, the principles of logic and reason’s a priori representations are integrated into a totality within which antinomies and insoluble contradictions are rigorously distinguished from

one another. On which side, then, does the looming judgment that the human being is destined to a final purpose for no purpose fall?

B. The Final Purpose Without A Purpose

If the subject appears to be destined to a final purpose which is incapable of being realized as human history, then the logic of non-contradiction presents the “inflexible precept” of the autonomous will with its greatest challenge; and yet the subject’s recognition of both its own capacity for freedom (through the fact of reason) and the apparent futility of its striving for the historicization of the law can produce one particular mood or feeling that reinforces rather than weakens the principle of autonomy: longing.

This mood arises if the operative principle guiding pragmatic and technical action—“whoever wills the purpose wills also the sole means for it which are in his power”—comes across something like an interdiction that exposes the willful subject to what appears to remain apart from the objects it is capable of positing.⁶³ But perhaps this potential barrier to amoral action can be removed by judging an object that defies the subject’s power of appropriation to be of no use to anything but an evidently idle, maybe dangerous and in any case purposeless imagination: “in fanciful desires [phantastischen Begehungen] we are at once conscious of the insufficiency (or even unsuitability) of our representations to be the cause of their objects.”⁶⁴ And yet because cognition is here without a discernible object and the will seems to be animated by a productive tension, these fanciful desires may have a particular bearing upon the higher power of desire. There appears in fact to be a particular use of the imagination

which attests to another way of understanding the idea of freedom as a form of “special causality.” For “fanciful desires” attest to a non-mechanical causal relation, and the “thought of...[such] *causality* is contained in every wish and is particularly noticeable when the wish is an affect, namely *longing*.”⁶⁵

One particular affect disturbs both habitual and exceptional applications of the concept of causality to experience.⁶⁶ That is, a certain affect seems to allow a practical incapacity and a theoretical determination of a condition of possibility to coexist. Longing thus appears to be the mood most suitable to the maintenance of the disposition which the moral law demands. And while it exposes the subject to the thought of a non-quantifiable experience of time, it also does not seem to offer a way of demarcating anything like the proper boundaries of the historical imagination. Was Wilhelm Dilthey then perhaps right in claiming that the Kantian system remained incomplete without a fourth critique, a “Critique of Historical Reason”?⁶⁷

“One never longs for what is foreign to one and never for what is already one’s own.”⁶⁸ Longing appears in Georg Lukács’ formulation as a mood that seems to be capable of both enervating and innervating the will, of both contracting and expanding the realm of human experience.

To what kind of relation to history does the experience of longing then give rise? It appears that the object of longing does not solicit a mood of ready expectancy, possessiveness, or undifferentiated lassitude. And the historical imagination would not seem to be activated by either compiling an inventory of what already exists or being confronted with hieroglyphs whose incomprehensibility is thoroughly “understood.” To be receptive to an event whose profane origin lies in the “special causality” ascribed to

the practical will, the subject must be attuned to how it is affected by the law which testifies against both the inviolability of what already exists and the merely chimerical character of the unrepresentable or “foreign”. Such attunement is conducive to the emergence of a state of longing that incites as well as inhibits desire. That is, if a judgment of insufficiency can be somehow converted into an impetus for moral action, then the onset of either resignation (which deprives the will of practical incentives) or a sense of premature worldly reconciliation (which remains blind to desire’s irreducible sense of lack) may be forestalled in the ongoing drama of the subject’s acculturation.

This is possible because the causal relation specific to longing is such that:

even the awareness of its insufficiency for [producing] the effect cannot prevent [the will]...from striving [Bestrebung] for the effect...[But] why our nature was given a propensity for what we are aware are empty desires [leeren Begehrungen] is an *anthropological-teleological question*. It seems that if we had to assure ourselves about the sufficiency of our powers to bring forth an object before we could be determined to apply our forces [zur Kraftanwendung bestimmt werden], then these forces would remain largely unused.⁶⁹

A longing for what the subject recognizes to be an impossible desire can reinforce rather than undermine the self-positing character of the will: “even the awareness of its insufficiency for [producing] the effect cannot prevent [the will]...from striving for the effect.” Longing may then become ethical when the subject’s relation to the moral law is based upon a feeling of *respect* [Achtung] that is attuned to the fact that its natural inclinations can be thwarted. In the case of the sacrifice such independence is demonstrated by the fact that the “law” of self-preservation is not capable of binding the subject in all cases. The infringement of this natural law is possible thanks to the subject’s relation to the

moral law. One form of necessity thus gives way to another: “respect [is] consciousness of the direct necessitation [Nötigung] of the will by the law.”⁷⁰

While the forms of natural and moral necessity are represented in antithetical terms, they are also analogous to one another insofar as they both bind the subject to the principles of non-contradiction and universality. How then is the historicization of the moral law to be understood? It ought to take place in a realm that appears to contain a precarious and ambiguous admixture of sensible and supersensible principles. And because this realm (neither wholly “natural” nor wholly “moral”) is not insulated by its own singular laws the “feeling” of respect and the “fact” of reason cannot be secured or grounded in a theoretical determination or “schematic hypotyposis.”⁷¹ The “representation” of the experience of human freedom is therefore forced to borrow concepts that are otherwise reserved for classifying the phenomena of nature. As a result, what furnishes a non-natural (i.e., moral) incentive for the ethical subject is not immediately recognizable as something that lies beyond the pleasure principle insofar as it appears to set the will in motion by an “inward effect” that acts as an “impulse to activity.”⁷² But for the subject to feel a sense of respect it must have become receptive to the way in which it can be affected by an “invisible” yet “indelible” law which allows or compels it to view the space and time of the phenomenal world as something more than a realm within which pragmatic and technical actions are performed in the service of “pathological” purposes. The subject of the law is therefore attuned to something recognizable and yet unfamiliar, to something other than sensible impulses that nevertheless both resembles and infringes upon those impulses. And out of a sense of “respect” for what discloses the capacities and limitations of its higher power of desire,

a productive tension is produced within the will that elevates an experience of longing into a form of striving.

Why the human will must assume what appears to be such a contorted form if it is also to be considered a “good will” remains for Kant an unanswerable “anthropological-teleological question.” Two centuries later the suspicion that the subject’s “nature was given a propensity for what [it is]...aware are empty desires” led to two reinterpretations of this tendency that alternatively located its origin in a repetition compulsion stemming from a primordial trauma and in a tragic-comic fate which destines the human being to be a “useless passion.”⁷³ By providing human desire with an ontological content, Psychoanalysis and Existentialism attempted to renew and redefine the anthropological-teleological question at a time when the vocation of reason appeared appropriate only for the subject of a distant age. But because Kant interpreted the demands of this calling in a way that deprived the subject of a direct presentation of the moral law (that somehow exists both apart from and within the subject), the “discourse of grounds, morality and good conscience” does not seem to offer the sovereignty of self-consciousness a measure for securing its historical experience.⁷⁴ Instead it has left it with an “empty desire” that must nevertheless serve as an incentive for a form of action that has no codified body of “rules or knowledge” to guide it.⁷⁵ Such a representation of the human will may appear unexpectedly recognizable to a contemporary subject whose desire or longing to respond to something apart from itself (that is as yet unknowable) is neither assuaged nor incited by the discovery of the Freudian unconscious or of the absurd.⁷⁶

It is in the introduction to the “Transcendental Logic” in the first Critique that Kant lays the groundwork for determining how the cognitive powers (understanding, judgment and reason) relate to the objects to which they in one way or another have “access”. As a first principle, Kant specifies that an act of empirical cognition is possible for a subject only if a given concept corresponds with a particular intuition or perception (*Anschauung*). “Thoughts without content are empty; intuitions without concepts are blind.”⁷⁷

Now the experience of longing clearly does not give rise to a cognition [*Erkenntnis*] of an empirical object present at hand. Nevertheless, the particular significance of the “empty” or “fanciful” desire that animates this mood is presented at a critical juncture in the introduction to the Critique of Judgment in order to reaffirm the central thesis of the second Critique that had since come under attack. What provoked censure was Kant’s definition of the (practical) power of desire as the “power of being the cause, through one’s representations, of the actuality of the objects of these representations.”⁷⁸ This formulation appears “idealistic” insofar as it suggests that a “mere wish”, which is also a form of desire, should be credited with a practical power that it palpably does not possess.

But what first presents itself to self-consciousness as an impossible desire may in fact be an occasion for the subject to become aware of its participation in an “unconscious” or “natural” teleological process that, rather than posing a threat to the principle of autonomy, allows it to be discovered and then exercised: “it seems that if we had to assure ourselves about the sufficiency of our powers to bring forth an object before we could be determined to apply our forces, then these forces would remain

largely unused. For usually we do not come to know what forces we have in the first place except by trying them out. Hence the deception contained in vain wishes is only the result of a beneficent arrangement in our nature.”⁷⁹

While an impossible desire could indicate that reason is “directed to...fantastic and...empty imaginary purposes” [phantastisch und...leere eingebildete Zwecke] and thus amounts to nothing more than a “vain wish”, a representation that is emptied of sensuous material content is not necessarily merely chimerical, especially if it is corroborated by certain “feelings” or moods that allow the subject’s latent “forces” to be put to a singular, exceptional test.⁸⁰ For if the subject were preoccupied solely with carrying out readily attainable pragmatic and technical purposes, then any successful practical accomplishment would attest only to the fact that a certain skill has been mastered which demonstrates “competence in the use of suitable means toward optional ends.”⁸¹ Such a subject would therefore be responsive only to what it judges to be “actual” or immanent and its historical imagination would be directed only toward empirical concepts presented to it by the understanding; it would remain unresponsive to what the summons of reason introduces as an impossible or seemingly empty desire for an object that could be either an idle wish or, in fact, a regulative—and therefore obligatory—ideal. For the subject’s relation to the moral law is such that the connection between lawful necessity and phenomenal actuality that is required for empirical cognition must be suspended; cognitive certainty thus gives way to a peculiar mood: “*the feeling that it is beyond our ability to attain to an idea that is a law for us is respect*” (original emphasis).⁸²

While empty concepts have no place in the classification of natural phenomena, empty desires can serve the pivotal role of exposing the subject to something other than its pathologically affected nature. The special causality (capacity for freedom) that is “particularly noticeable” in the experience of longing therefore establishes a fundamental sense of lack as the proper identity of the autonomous will.⁸³

What is thus “established”, however, is anything but an underlying sense of “cognitive certainty” or “security” that would allow the subject to prescribe actions for itself on the basis of existing “rules and knowledge.”⁸⁴ There is not even a determinate concept of “subject, agency, or identity” that could serve here as the “ground of...action.”⁸⁵ For while Kant cites the “nature” of the subject in a way that suggests a natural-historical teleology is somehow responsible for the fact that the will appears to be endowed with a “propensity for what [it]...is aware are empty desires”, this would-be explanation ultimately offers theoretical reason nothing more than an interrelated series of unanswerable anthropological-teleological questions. “For how a law can be of itself and immediately a determining ground of the will [wie ein Gesetz für sich und unmittelbar Bestimmungsgrund des Willens sein könne] (though this is what is essential in all morality) is for human reason an insoluble problem and identical with that of how a free will is possible.”⁸⁶

At this point—a moment described by Theodor W. Adorno as one in which “Kant’s speculation falls silent where it ought to start”—the subject appears as a being in the world whose will is constituted in such a way that it is susceptible to being determined by both the phenomenal facts of nature and the peculiar fact of reason.⁸⁷

But it is not only the origin of the latter experience that lies beyond the purview of theoretical cognition. For once the subject “recognizes freedom in himself” by conceiving its relation to death in terms that abrogate the natural law of self-preservation, what is to become of this freedom? ⁸⁸ Here Kant’s speculation does not fall silent; but it does seem to lead reason toward a recognition of what may be an insoluble contradiction: the co-existence of the vocation of reason and the logic of human history.

C. The Form of the Law and the Content of History

“All duties depend as regards the kind of obligation (not the object of their action), upon...one principle [:]...We must be able to will that a maxim of our action become a universal law; this is the canon for morally estimating any of our actions.”⁸⁹ Because it places such a typically transcendental emphasis upon the mode of obligation rather than upon the particular action in itself, Kantian morality has been commonly interpreted—for instance by Georg Lukács—as something “purely formal and lacking in content.”⁹⁰

Echoing Adorno’s critique of Kant’s evasion in the face of the question of the origin of the fact of reason, Lukács claims the latter was “thereby transformed into something merely there and could not be conceived of as having been ‘created.’”⁹¹ And it is the principle of creation—derived from Schiller’s concept of play—that interests Lukács above all in his reinterpretation of the self-positing character of the human will. Kant is here faulted for improperly inhibiting the latter by failing to provide the subject with what amounts to “cognitive certainty” and “security”:

the hiatus between appearance and essence...is itself introduced into the subject. Even the subject is split into phenomenon and noumenon, and the unresolved, insoluble and henceforth permanent conflict between freedom and necessity now invades its innermost structure...[And] in consequence of this, the resulting ethic becomes purely formal and lacking in content...The moment this ethic attempts to make itself concrete, i.e. to test its strength on concrete problems, it is forced to borrow the elements of content...from the world of phenomena.⁹²

For Lukács the limit to the Kantian system becomes evident when the natural laws that subsume particular phenomena under universal concepts become the “model” for free action insofar as the maxims—the subjective rules—of the subject are held to be moral only if they are capable of being universalized without violating the principle of non-contradiction. This analogical use of logic and natural law thus acts as an obstacle to a proper ethic of history, which has at its disposal access to a specifically historical knowledge which is, however, also “objective” and therefore also modeled upon natural scientific principles. Furthermore this connection between the natural and historical is not qualified, as it is for Kant, by being a merely analogical relation. So on the one hand Kant’s “formalism” preserves his ethic from the kind of excesses that Lukács’ historical materialism was fated to encounter (once objective historical knowledge is possible, then there must be a proper form of authority that has the power to act on the basis of that knowledge); and on the other hand Lukács’ critique indicates how Kant’s formalism is in fact laced with a particular kind of content: that is, the principles of logic and causality that are presented in the first Critique.

And yet the basis of Kantian ethics seems to lie, in a fantastic way, on nothing more substantial than peculiar and precarious moods and feelings that “ought” to act against certain other feelings. But as the presentation of the willful sacrifice attests, these counter-feelings, or moral feelings, arise most prominently in a situation of life and

death. And since it is only an ethical history that forestalls both the symbolic death that reduces the sphere of human action to a wasteland and the violent death which awaits nation states if they continue to wage war in violation of the categorical imperative to treat each and every human subject as a final purpose (as an end in itself), the principle of morality must carry with it a form of non-natural necessity.⁹³ This is why the ethical subject must be a self-positing subject capable of introducing an “absolute value” into the phenomenal world. For “it is impossible to think of anything at all in the world, or indeed even beyond it, that could be considered good without limitation [ohne Einschränkung] except a good will.”⁹⁴

Because the incentives that serve the good will must not contain any pathological sources of motivation, it must be formed and maintained in such a way that it is subjected to a law that can only appear as a “law as such”. “For here mere conformity to law as such [Gesetzmäßigkeit] (without having as its ground some law determined for certain actions) is what serves the will as its principle, and must so serve it, if duty is not to be everywhere an empty delusion and chimerical concept [leerer Wahn und chimärischer Begriff].”⁹⁵

Between the experiences of “empty delusion” and “empty desire” lie an array of similar yet fundamentally distinct feelings and moods that must be arranged into a typology which is neither formed nor evaluated on the basis of empirical criteria. The “formalism” of Kantian ethics therefore emerges as a way of compensating, as it were, for the fact that the subject has an experience of being affected by the law without having a determinate representation of it.⁹⁶

Out of such a theoretical and practical gap emerges the possibility that the law's formal character can serve as a principle of critical negativity that exposes a modern age characterized by both scientism and aestheticism to what was once represented as a demand for an ethic of history. But what happens when that imperative becomes an object of contemporary interpretation? For Giorgio Agamben it invites comparison with Kafka's parable "Before the Law": "Kafka's legend presents the pure form in which law affirms itself with the greatest force precisely at the point in which it no longer prescribes anything." ⁹⁷

But while Kafka's text is read by Agamben as a critique, Kant's formalism is diagnosed as a symptom of the world-historical situation that the former allegorizes. That is, rather than acting as a guarantor of morality in times of duress, the moral law discloses the last "secularized" remnants of an ethical-theological tradition deprived of its original sources of legitimation and is therefore no longer capable of appearing—however "negatively"—as an object of either respect or longing. Or, if it does give rise to a sense of longing, it does so in a way that no longer reinforces the self-positing character of the autonomous will. The vocation of reason would therefore be impugned for having "preserved" an ossified Judeo-Christian tradition that lives on in human experience as a festering wound that remains exposed to various forms of political and "spiritual" manipulation. It should not be surprising, therefore, that the text Kant devotes to renewing and redefining this tradition bears what now appears to be an appropriately oxymoronic title: Religion Within the Bounds Of Mere Reason.⁹⁸

In an age dominated by the influence of post-structuralism, however, the oxymoronic is a term which hardly designates a form of censure—even, or especially, when it is

used to refer to concepts that attest to philosophy's irreducibly "literary" character. For to the possible detriment or benefit of a contemporary historical ethic, there is reputedly no extra-linguistic referent that would allow something called reason to present itself as a trans-individual power that discloses to the human subject its proper destiny.

But it has not escaped the attention of such poststructuralist critics as J. Hillis Miller that Kant's entire "discourse" is saturated with the very tropological figures (in the form of "symbolic representations" and in the use of narrative) that have been enlisted in the myriad attempts to present a poststructuralist historical ethic within the ever shifting boundaries of language alone.⁹⁹

Miller therefore reads the "as if" statements that Kant repeatedly uses in order to present the subject's relation to the unrepresentable moral law (e.g., "Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature") in the light of a world-historical interpretation of the relationship between aesthetics and ethics: "narrative, like analogy, is inserted into that blank place where the presumed purely conceptual language of philosophy fails or is missing."¹⁰⁰

Of course Miller ultimately finds Kant's meta-narrative to be unable to deliver what it promises: namely, the ability to isolate the "fact" of reason in a form of experience which thereby demonstrates (practically, if not theoretically) that the human imagination is not abyssal but "grounded" on something outside of itself, on its relation to the moral law.¹⁰¹ What leads Kant's narrative of ethical action astray, Miller argues, is its undue reliance upon what every oxymoron or instance of catachresis violates: logic's principle of non-contradiction. That is, the moral law commands that the subject posit maxims that appear as though they could conform to a universal law of nature. As

a result, a maxim is valid only if its application to the world does not produce a contradiction.¹⁰² These are the “formal” criteria that Kant employs to indicate what sort of “content” a historicization of the law would be capable of producing.

Where then does the rule of logic begin to falter? For Miller, it fails to settle the question of whether or not the testing of maxims for their universal applicability is based upon something external to the “performance” of the as-if experiment.¹⁰³ Instead, it merely postpones an answer by inserting a narrative into the “space” which remains impenetrable for empirical knowledge. But does this assessment do much more than restate what Kant identified as the “dangerous and precarious standpoint” of a historical ethic?¹⁰⁴ What needs to be emphasized is how the *time* of indefinite postponement that is necessitated by the law’s unrepresentability is conditioned by the rule of logic. For the latter appears to remain intact so long as it is used to reinforce the first duty the subject is commanded to uphold: namely, the injunction to recognize itself and all other human subjects as a final purpose.

But to what purpose does the subject recognize this universal capacity to be a final purpose? While the moral law in itself cannot be presented in conceptual terms, does the same productive (or inhibiting) restriction also apply to the object of longing and striving? Is it the absence of a determinate origin *and* end that is somehow expected to animate the will of the ethical subject? If so a link between Kant’s narration of how human history ought to become ethical and the identification of a “need” for a rebirth of tragedy in modernity would seem to have been forged.

After all, the central moment of the second Critique (the disclosure of the fact of reason) presents a subject that recognizes “freedom in itself”, that recognizes the

possibility of becoming ethical by willfully appropriating its relation to its own death.¹⁰⁵ But should such an attestation of singularity that sets humanity apart from the rest of the beings of nature be made into the touchstone of an ethic of history? What is decisive here is the degree to which such singularity is viewed as either a curse or as some sort of gift. And Kant's historical ethic may offer an intimation of how to interpret such singularity in a way that displaces this dualism.

Logic dictates that theoretical reason attempt to unify the phenomena the understanding represents by isolating the unconditioned cause of causality as such. This is a project toward which reason is impelled by a seemingly "pre-thetic" desire. It is not a task that is undertaken at the subject's discretion; it is not merely the result of a contingent, intentional choice.¹⁰⁶ At this point the higher power of desire (reason) and the principles of logic reinforce one another in a way that, as if by design, produces an antagonism (or antinomy) that is resolved only when reason discovers that it is constitutively *practical*—that the power of desire itself introduces the principle of the unconditioned into the phenomenal world through the potentially spontaneous and self-legislating character of the will.

The time and space of nature is thus poised to "receive" but not to produce effects which can be attributable only to actions of the "good will":

An immense chasm [eine unübersehbare Kluft] is fixed between the domain of the concept of nature, the sensible, and the domain of the concept of freedom, the supersensible, so that no transition from the sensible to the supersensible (and hence by means of the theoretical use of reason) is possible, just as if they were two different worlds, the first of which cannot have any influence on the second: and yet the second *is* to have an influence on the first, i.e., the concept of freedom is to actualize in the world of sense the purpose enjoined by its laws.¹⁰⁷

But such an actualization seems to be precluded by the fact that the realms of freedom and nature intersect, or rather collide when the subject attempts to initiate such a transition through the “mere use of [its] natural powers.”¹⁰⁸

It turns out that reason’s “indomitable” desire to reach the “utmost bounds of cognition” is by no means quelled by the discovery of the fact of reason; nor is it simply rechanneled or “sublated” into an inexorable striving for the historicization of the law. For the sense of unity that appears to be established through the discovery of the spontaneity and autonomy of the higher power of desire suffers from the same experience that befalls the satisfaction of “lower” desires: the “feeling” of satisfaction does not prove to be lasting.¹⁰⁹ And in fact time itself obtrudes here as the fundamental obstacle that prevents reason from unifying its theoretical and practical principles. If reason’s need for order is to be secured, then it seems a concept must be introduced that allows the ethical subject to represent its relation to the future in terms of a viable *historical* possibility.

In the “Postulates of Empirical Thought As Such” presented in the first Critique, Kant draws out the implications of the Copernican Revolution in metaphysics by determining not the constitution of objects in themselves but the ways in which they are represented by the human understanding through the “categories of modality”: possibility, actuality and necessity.¹¹⁰

The first of these categories designates that which “agrees (in terms of intuition and concept) with the formal conditions of experience”—above all with the conditions of time and space. So long as the concept of possibility is restricted to the realm of phenomenal nature, the rule of logic does not prove decisive in the last instance in

determining a particular object's relation to the representing subject: "that...a concept must contain no contradiction is indeed a necessary logical condition, but it is far from sufficient for [establishing that] the concept has objective reality, i.e., that the [real] possibility of...such an object is thought through the concept."¹¹¹

But when Kant attempts to isolate those effects produced in the natural world whose origin cannot be determined by the mechanical laws that otherwise guide the understanding's interpretation of nature, the concept of possibility and the function of logic both change significantly.

Since the concept of freedom—the "*keystone* [Schlußstein] of the whole structure of a system of pure reason"—corresponds with no given empirical phenomenon, the subject does not have access to a *theoretical* cognition that could establish its objective reality. It is for this reason that the concept's logical condition of possibility proves to be indispensable for conferring a sense of legitimacy and coherence upon what would otherwise present itself to the imagination as an unmistakable yet unidentifiable fact of reason—and thus perhaps no fact at all, no matter how unique and singular.

The disclosure of the fact of reason therefore allows the power of desire and the principles of logic to cohere in a way that delimits the formal character of the autonomous will. Such a will remains exposed, however, to something that necessarily threatens its autonomy: an experience of history that is neither merely natural nor imminently ethical. There is a question, therefore, that presses itself upon the moral subject as it becomes entangled in the time and space wherein the laws of freedom and nature somehow converge: is there a "category of modality" capable of determining the relation between an ethical-historical possibility (understood as an object) and the

power of desire (understood as a subject)? Of all the unanswerable anthropological-teleological questions that inescapably arise for reason, this is one that illuminates the breadth of its “peculiar fate” with an unrivalled starkness and clarity.¹¹² For the finite subject appears to be confronted with a question that must be both rigorously suspended and vigorously pursued.

By attempting to respond, the Kantian subject effectively places itself beyond the reach of the “constitution” that was established for it by the Copernican Revolution. For the type of perspectival realignment that replaces the determination of an object’s condition of possibility with a determination of the conditions of possibility for representing that object does not rectify matters when the “object” in question is the future of an autonomous will. “This is precisely the misfortune, that we are not capable of placing ourselves in...[a Copernican-like] position when it is a question of the prediction of free actions.”¹¹³

Because the free—though “unholy”—will remains mired in a natural history in a way that is accentuated by its obligation to change that world, the consequences of its actions can be derived neither from the formal principle of autonomy nor from the law of causality that the understanding prescribes to phenomenal nature.¹¹⁴ To dramatize how this situation could not be otherwise, Kant indicates how the putative ability to represent a future action must have recourse to a concept of either logical, objective or rational-regulative possibility that presupposes a capacity for either prediction, divination or prophecy.¹¹⁵

As delineated in the lectures on Anthropology From A Pragmatic Point of View, the first ability properly belongs among the postulates of empirical thought since it is

possible for the human understanding to predict occurrences in phenomenal nature (and thereby secure their logical and objective possibility) by adhering to the laws of mechanical causality.¹¹⁶ Representing an ethical-historical possibility can therefore in no way lay claim to being predictive.

At the point furthest removed from an act of empirical cognition is the art of prophecy, which is practiced as though “a secret were about to be revealed, though the human being has no sense that could receive it.”¹¹⁷ Because it invokes the specious power of intellectual intuition (a theoretical cognition of an object of the imagination as it appears in itself, apart from empirical perception) in order to determine the objective reality of an event to come, this art is also disqualified from being of practical service to the autonomous will. For while the latter *is* receptive to something other than sensible impulses, being affected by the commands of the law is not something that the subject experiences passively.

Kant’s most acerbic criticisms are often directed toward those who announce prophecies in the language of philosophy. What is threatened by such claims is nothing less than the very constitution of transcendental subjectivity that preserves and animates the capacities of the autonomous will. It is therefore not surprising that Kant views both the prophetic act itself and the image it produces as a “monstrosity” [Unding]¹¹⁸ That is, it violates the principle of non-contradiction at the very moment when the relation between logic and desire needs to be defined with the greatest possible precision in order to determine the conditions for the possibility of the historicization of the moral law. For a “true secret” is disclosed in a prophecy only if the subject in question has access to a form of “supersensible experience” whereby “the transcendent [is]

represented as immanent.”¹¹⁹ Prophecy thus earns the title of the “exact opposite of philosophy” and it thus seems that the attempt to determine how the autonomous will is to represent its relation to its future (i.e., to represent an “object” in terms of a category of modality that is not derived from natural laws) must rely upon the art of divination. For in comparison with prophecy, this art puts forth the relatively cautious yet ambiguous claim of having “foresight contrary to accepted laws of experience (contrary to nature).”¹²⁰

Given this formulation, it appears that a form of divination is *necessary* if the subject is to have any “hope” of correlating the idea of an ethic of history with some sort of temporal concept that thereby distinguishes it from an ungrounded and arbitrary projection of the imagination; otherwise a sense of human “foresight” would have to yield to a “predictive” power that would be applicable only within the realm of phenomena. Does the subject’s duty to alter its relation to the laws of natural causality then require that the task of historicizing the moral law be undertaken without a representation of non-mechanical time?

The art of divination in fact seems to allow for what the experience of longing takes as an article of faith: that it is somehow possible to (symbolically) represent something that is neither merely chimerical nor simply present at hand. But a sense of longing is in need of some sort of practical reinforcement if it is to be converted into an act of striving; it needs, in short, some sort of sign that indicates that the “immense chasm” separating the natural from the ethical not only ought but can be crossed.¹²¹

But how is it even possible for the subject to be thinking in purportedly Kantian terms about the relation between the power of desire and its ethical-historical object?

For respect for the moral law requires that all thought of possibility as such (let alone the possibility of historical success or failure) must not interfere with the practical-rational incentives determining the will: “morality needs absolutely no material determining ground of the free power of choice [Willkür]-- that is no purpose--either in order to recognize what duty is or to impel [anzutreiben] its performance...[W]hen it is a question of duty, morality can perfectly well abstract from purposes altogether and ought to do so.”¹²²

In order to carry out its duty out of a sense of duty, the moral subject is exempted from the requirement that a relationship be established between its cognitive power and an actual, possible or necessary object. But as a being in the world, the subject is also exposed to an experience of time which prevents the strict adherence to duty from being conceived as a self-contained and self-sustaining act of will. In fact it seems that the imperative to “abstract from purposes altogether” applies not only to the negation of pathological and pragmatic inclinations but also to the very compliance with duty itself. For experience seems to withhold anything like a sense of purpose from the subject who rigorously follows the commands of the moral law; in fact, being subject to the moral law begins to resemble something like a “spiritual trial” insofar as the rational incentives of the will are by no means assured of being able to give rise to correspondingly rational actions; on the contrary.¹²³

But a spiritual trial of this sort evokes precisely the sort of historical mood whose emergence Kant aims to preclude; for it bears a disquieting resemblance to a particular tradition within the history of metaphysics which the publication of “On the Miscarriage of All Philosophical Trials in Theodicy” (1791) attempted to bring to a close.¹²⁴ For

Kant such a juridical proceeding would be capable of reaching a verdict only if it were possible for reason to interpret how the phenomena of natural history relate to a divine will. The impious accusation that reason brings forward against everything that is “counterpurposive” [Zweckwidrige] in the world here provokes an ostensibly pious but no less misguided and perhaps even fanatical defense.¹²⁵ But is a “secularized” trial then not all but inevitable so long as respect for the moral law translates into a striving for its seemingly impossible historicization?

But Kant does not attempt to preserve or restore respect for the law by valorizing the type of mood that the demand to “abstract from all purposes altogether” seems to require; that is, the respect for the moral law threatened by the fact that the subject appears destined to be a final purpose to no purpose “ought” not give rise to something like a tragic ethos. In fact, it is precisely at this point that the rule of logic makes a perhaps unexpected resurgence: “if human nature is called to strive for the highest good, it must also be assumed that the measure of its cognitive powers, especially their relation to one another, is suitable to this end.”¹²⁶

Although this assumption in fact does little more than restate the problem, as articulated it is careful to separate the judgment that the subject’s cognitive powers are somehow “suitable” for a form of ethical striving from the question of whether the highest good is actually attainable. But something new is also introduced here: the concept of the “highest good”. What does this signify? What are its conditions of possibility? Is it capable of resolving what Kant acknowledges to be the appearance of a “contradiction between an inner final purpose that is set [for the subject]...as a duty,

and an external nature in which that final purpose is to be actualized but which itself has no final purpose whatever”?¹²⁷

Among the innumerable attempts to define the highest good in the history of metaphysics, Kant identifies an underlying, common concern: the attempt to elevate the subjective need of the human being for a form of sensible satisfaction into an ethical principle, whether it be called the pursuit of happiness, the maintenance of virtue or the recognition of the good life. This need is admissible for Kant only if it translates into the following proposition: “happiness distributed in exact proportion to morality...constitutes the highest good of a possible world.”¹²⁸ And of a “secular” world, it must be added. Not surprisingly, however, the latter proves incapable of giving anything more than an anomalous or “accidental assent” [zufälligen Beitritt] to such a theologically inspired demand.¹²⁹ The maxims of the Kantian subject therefore appear incapable of introducing a form of non-natural necessity into the world that furnishes “permanent rules” [beständigen Regeln] for human action.¹³⁰

The form of the law and the content of natural history ought to converge in the actualization of freedom; but at this critical juncture the “immense chasm” separating the ethical and the natural seems if anything to be widened still further. The vocation of reason summons the subject to strive for the unconditioned and for a sense of totality; when translated into “historical” terms, these two principles produce the concept of the highest good. Such a telos then confronts the subject as an impossibility that must nevertheless somehow be represented as a possibility. But how can this be done if, on the one hand, Kant represents the tragic and the ethical in antithetical terms, and if, on the other hand, the principle of morality “on its own behalf...in no way needs

religion, whether objectively, as regards willing or subjectively, as regards capability...since its laws bind through the mere form of universal lawfulness.”¹³¹

CHAPTER II

THE THEOLOGICAL SUPPLEMENT

“On its own behalf”, the Kantian principle of morality “in no way needs religion, whether objectively, as regards willing or subjectively, as regards capability.”¹³²

“Objectively, as regards willing”; this means that the subject is in need of no empirical-external support in order to comply with the commands of the moral law. “Subjectively, as regards capability”; this means that the possibility for the experience of autonomy is objectively practical, and not merely logical. The practical, in short, is logical and vice-versa: “duty commands nothing but what we can do.”¹³³

Morality thus “in no way needs religion” at the very moment when it seems to need it most. This may explain why Kant in fact qualifies this statement by saying that the “need” for theology does not arise so long as morality is considered “on its own behalf.” But perhaps such a perspective proves to be inadequate when the relation to the moral law is represented in specifically *historical* terms. And if thinking of history on *its* own behalf is not something for which the vocation of reason prepares the subject, then it is all but inevitable that the experience of being in the world will be defined in terms of a fundamental lack. It is at this point that a theology emerges from “within the bounds of mere reason” in order to “*supplement* this lack” [ergänzt nun diesen Mangel].¹³⁴

What is expressed in this yet to be determined need for a theological supplement has its roots in an anthropological-teleological question that, for Walter Benjamin, must continually be renewed: “in remembrance [Eingedenken] we have an experience that

forbids us to conceive of history as fundamentally atheological, little as it may be granted us to try to write it with immediately theological concepts.”¹³⁵

It is in response to Max Horkheimer’s statement that historical events ought to fall under the purview of empirical science that Benjamin invokes the subjective and precarious experience of “remembrance” or bearing in mind (*Eingedenken*). If Horkheimer’s secularism attempts to extirpate all remnants of myth and theology from human history, Benjamin attempts to preserve a distinction between these two realms of experience that is also integral to Kant’s historical ethic.

For both Benjamin and Kant, the representation of time as a rectilinear, quantifiable continuum conditions the “fundamentally atheological” conception of history. The inadequacy of such a representation emerges when the Kantian subject discovers that it is able to act, or to imagine acting, on the basis of a “law” that violates the rules of mechanical causation. But the insufficiency of the non-natural law in turn manifests itself when the would-be autonomous will is confronted with the finite experience of being in a world that seems to be devoid of the kind of duration without repetition that would allow the implementation of “permanent” moral “rules” to be established.¹³⁶

This is the point at which the need for the institution of something like a tradition that is sustained and developed over several generations emerges; but such continuity, in turn, seems to require the very form of culture that threatens the “progress” of reason: i.e., a culture based on theology or myth which would appear to divest the subject of its legislative autonomy.¹³⁷ But for Kant only a relation to the former makes it possible for a collectivity to be bound to a law that is “represented” as an (ethical) ideal and not as an idol.

What an ethic of history needs above all is some sort of measure that allows this distinction to be made. For Kant an idol emerges due to an error of “subreption”; that is, an insubstantial idea is mistakenly identified with a phenomenal form.¹³⁸ It therefore amounts to a projection not recognized as such, responsive only to the subject’s misapprehension of its own cognitive powers and their purported representation of an object. On the other hand, an “ideal” is also a projection, but one that is reflexive, that is, aware of the insufficiency of a representation that is somehow not arbitrary; it is as it were a solicited projection, prompted by the subject’s relation to something beyond itself—to the moral law, to that which indicates that its existence is defined in terms of a constitutive lack situated in relation to an “other.”

The form and content of historical experience is therefore evaluated by Kant on the basis of whether it takes on the form of idol or ideal. What then is the experience that for Kant forbids the subject to conceive of history as fundamentally atheological, even though he does not, on the other hand, then present it in “immediately theological” terms? It is an act of self-cognition whereby the subject recognizes how it is affected by the moral law which in turn demands (when coupled with the power of desire and the ineradicable natural need for positing purposes) a non-sensible representation that “proceeds from the concepts of reason, [which] set up an Ideal...which itself arises from the most sacred duties that are themselves independent of theology.”¹³⁹

It is therefore appropriate that for Kant the subject of the moral law is deprived of a theological revelation or form of mediation that would allow it to convert its exposure to the “supersensible” into a sensible experience. For the “fact” of freedom that is

disclosed in the experience of being toward death must not be derived from a theological (or, alternatively, empirical) source:

[the principle of morality is] formal and directs categorically, without regard to the objects of the power of desire...and hence without regard to any purpose whatever. This formal character of my acts...in which alone their intrinsic moral value consists, is wholly in my power; and I can certainly abstract from whether the purposes that this law obligates me to further are possible or unachievable (because they constitute only the extrinsic value of my acts) since that is never in my power, in order to look only to what I can do.¹⁴⁰

And yet the Kantian subject is inexorably led toward an “experience that forbids us to conceive of history as fundamentally atheological” since what is “wholly in its power” is incapable of producing effects that can be represented in terms of either a logical or objective possibility. Furthermore, the “extrinsic value” [äußere Wert] of the subject’s actions is not to be judged from a disinterested standpoint that would thereby consign them to the sphere of the aesthetic. The furtherance of duty seems to take the will beyond the realm delimited for the upholding of duty. And as the experience of natural history encroaches upon the autonomous will, it creates the need for a representation of non-mechanical time capable of giving rise to something like a sense of hope and a conception of non-natural, inter-generational continuity; in short, what the logic of history and the vocation of reason produce for the subject is the need for a particular sense of an “after-life”.

Is a “negative” theological principle presented within the limits of reason therefore alone capable of giving a “meaning” to death that confers a sense of purpose upon human history? But then how, in turn, can a tradition emerge from within those same limits of reason as though it were both a singular product of culture and an unassailable value which exists apart from the act of institution? The concept of tradition would

therefore seem to signify that which has already been lost as well as what is then to be posited as an impossible ideal.¹⁴¹ It could emerge as a historical-practical possibility only if a tradition could be represented as an object created by a subject whose willful intentionality effectively exerts a retroactive force. Considered in meta-historical terms, Christianity appears to reason as a tradition that arose in just such a manner. For being able to formulate the principles that constitute Christian doctrine is something that “resided in the human power of reason [menschlichen Vernunftsvermögens] even before that power first began to germinate; after that it only developed more and more with the advancement of the culture of reason [wird mit der fortgehenden Kultur desselben nur immer mehr entwickelt].”¹⁴²

But thought of in terms of the particular rather than transcendental subject of the moral law [i.e., the “human power of reason”], it seems that a certain representation of time is precisely what prevents the self-positing will from giving form to a tradition that appears to withdraw from the realm of practice the moment it becomes conceptualized as an object of longing. But perhaps there is another experience of history that would allow the empirical and transcendental dimensions of subjectivity to coalesce.

For instance, if a tradition cannot be formed *ex-nihilo*, then it seems unlikely it could be similarly ruptured. Furthermore, the “source” of tradition—no matter how discredited or outmoded—may exist for a “reason” that is neither arbitrary nor the product of an objective historical necessity. The very *form* of the tradition may be indicative of a certain content that can be understood only by undertaking a transcendental reflection on its conditions of possibility. Kant’s attempt to appropriate religious experience for the vocation of reason accentuates the importance of such a

reflection for the development of a historical ethic that interprets a certain form of culture (Christianity) as a symptom of an a priori anthropological-teleological “need.” For Kant the “experience” that indicates that the historical and the theological should not therefore simply be represented in antithetical terms is the limit experience that has already emerged as the touchstone for the vocation of reason: the human relation toward death.

The prominent position this relation holds in the Kantian system first became evident through the paradigmatic act of self-sacrifice that attests to how the rational idea (or concept) of freedom can take on a practical reality for the subject. What is distinctive about the Kantian subject’s sacrifice is that in its assumption of death it upholds a noumenal law that only becomes “manifest” through a particular sense of guilt that then incites the good will to act (or to consider what is at stake in laying claim to an ethical action).¹⁴³ As presented in the second Critique, the judgment of guilt is something the subject issues against its sensible nature while simultaneously retaining the power to preempt the need for expiation. Consequently, no sacrifice is rendered to an instituted, phenomenal form of power that would thereby be re-legitimated. The sacrifice is rather offered to “law as such”, to a law that must be followed without regard for “any purpose whatsoever.”¹⁴⁴ But the vocation of reason ultimately both prepares for and shirks from the demand that the subject perform a sacrifice in the name of upholding a principle of “purposiveness without a purpose.”

A. Pardonable Guilt

The autonomous will is ascribed to the subject that is no longer wholly immersed in the world of phenomena; this means that it is able, or strives to become able, to negate when necessary its desire to possess objects or to pursue pragmatic purposes that gratify sensible inclinations: “a purpose is always the object of an inclination...of an immediate desire to possess a thing by means of one’s action, just as a law (which commands practically) is the object of respect.”¹⁴⁵ The power of desire is transformed into a feeling of respect on the “condition” that this relation to the law not be understood in terms of exchange and/or coercion.

The subject of the moral law must relate to itself, however, as a final *purpose*—a purpose which is “assigned to us as such by reason alone” and therefore cannot be derived from experience.¹⁴⁶ What is sent to reason by reason through the power of desire is the indomitable demand to posit both the unconditioned and the concept of totality (vis-à-vis both objects of cognition and acts of the will). And it seems that this demand can only be met by negating the concept of the contingent, pathological purpose. But then in what sense is the *Endzweck* a purpose at all, other than perhaps as a singular manifestation of the concept of purposiveness without a purpose?

If transposed from the context in which it is presented in the third Critique (as the experience of aesthetic judgment) to the *historical* task facing the subject of the law, such a principle seems to impart a tragic ethos to Kantian morality. But could a “law” of tragedy provide the historical imagination with a measure that prevents it from gravitating toward what Kant represents as the polar extremities of human experience:

immersion in the pathological and absorption in the fanatical (i.e., the illusory experience of possessing or being possessed by the supersensible as though it were but an exceptional though nevertheless phenomenal substance)? If the limits established by the constitution of transcendental subjectivity are to be maintained, the unrepresentable character of the law must be brought into a relation with the finite subject. For the latter's pathological nature serves as the "condition" of possibility for human consciousness to be affected by the law in the first place. The "negation" of the pathological is not, therefore, the final moment of the subject's ethical conversion. What emerges here seems to be best described as a process of sublation; only in such a way can the natural need for purposes and the upholding of ethical duty co-exist within the over-determined structure of the will.¹⁴⁷ For while "morality does not need the representation of a purpose which would have to precede the determination of the will it may well be that it has a necessary relation [Beziehung] to such a purpose."¹⁴⁸

The autonomous will is autonomous only if it has negated its natural propensity to posit and procure pathological purposes. Once this is accomplished (and we can in fact never be certain that such is the case),¹⁴⁹ the subject discovers the limits of autonomy and the conditions for a "necessary relation" that only emerges with the prior act of negation.¹⁵⁰ It then turns out that a certain relation of exchange is possible after all between the law and the subject that is purified of, or rather redefines, the concept of "use value." For the autonomous will confronted with being a final purpose to no purpose (i.e. confronted with the seemingly unbridgeable chasm separating the realms of freedom and nature) appears incapable of meeting the demands for unity imposed by the higher power of desire. The failure that only becomes apparent by first abstracting

from pragmatic purposes stands in need of a form of justification that supplements and preserves that which is established (practically) by the fact of reason. What then both preempts a tragic relation to the law and recuperates a form of purposiveness for the subject as *Endzweck* is an unexpected sense of reciprocity. The principle of morality—which only exists insofar as it serves as an incentive for the human will—in fact seems to evince an unexpected form of “respect” for the phenomenal subject.

For in the absence of all reference to a purpose no determination of the will can take place in human beings at all, since no such determination can occur without an effect, and its representation, thought *not as the determining ground of the power of choice* [nicht als Bestimmungsgrund der Willkür] *nor as a purpose that comes first in intention*, must nonetheless be admissible as the consequence of that power’s determination to a purpose through the law; without this purpose a power of choice which does not add to a contemplated action the thought of either an objectively or subjectively determined object (which it has or should have)...can itself obtain no satisfaction.¹⁵¹

When something like a “natural” human need for purposiveness is brought before the law, its pathological origin is not merely negated but preserved and elevated. This is the outcome of the narrative whose central task is announced in the introduction to the second Critique: “it is...incumbent upon the Critique of Practical Reason as such to prevent empirically conditioned reason from presuming that it *alone and exclusively*, furnishes the determining ground of the will.”¹⁵²

The attempt to expose pragmatic or instrumental subjectivity to something beyond itself (or to another part of itself) begins with the disclosure of the “fact of reason”. The subject becomes aware that it is capable of initiating actions in accordance with a principle of “special” (non-natural) causality whose effects should then appear in the world because the free will can only establish a practical relation to itself within the realm of nature that appears to the subject through the categories of the understanding.

But since the effects of freedom cannot be accounted for (i.e. represented) in such terms, the special causality of the will seems capable of creating only an impasse; that is, the natural need for purposiveness, the “indomitable desire” to determine both the first cause and the unity of the world within which purposes are to be posited, and the duty to adhere to the moral law do not seem capable of forming the interrelated totality that is necessary for reason to fulfill its proper vocation. The pathological limit to morality becomes manifest when the rational concept of the final purpose is undermined by the obtrusive laws of phenomenal nature which refuse to “cooperate” with the intentions of the good will.¹⁵³

In its attempt at initiating a historicization of the law the subject is exposed to two incompatible forms of experience or two forms of causality, neither of which is capable of negating the other. As a result, the subject becomes ensnared in a dual existence that is fully accounted for (in keeping with the limits of theoretical reason) and yet incapable of establishing the sense of order that the higher power of desire requires:

all matters of fact pertain either to the [a priori] concept of nature, which proves its reality in the objects of sense...or to the concept of freedom, which sufficiently establishes its reality through the causality that reason has by being able to [produce] certain effects in the world of sense and that it irrefutably postulates in the moral law.¹⁵⁴

It is not the experience of natural necessity that entraps the ethical subject but the experience of suffering under the weight of an unrealizable capacity for freedom. The subject of the law ought to relate to itself as an end in itself, as an absolute value. But reason appears to convert the latter into a surplus value insofar as it does not provide the freedom of the will with a law of history that allows it to legislate over phenomenal nature (over either external nature or its own internal nature). For if the autonomous

will cannot redress the disparity between virtue (morality) and happiness (nature) in the world, then the concept of freedom either negates itself--since it must be conceived by reason as a spontaneous power that exerts a force independently of natural causes-- or subsists as an irreducible remainder. What is disclosed by the fact of reason would then be a human capacity that is just strong and determinate enough to measure its ultimate insufficiency or powerlessness; the task of a historical ethic then becomes how to cope with such an experience that is also cut off from the immediacy ascribed to the self-enclosed realm of phenomenal nature.

The very identification of a disjunction between moral demand and moral act may, however, preserve the possibility of forging an ethic in that it introduces a negative principle that reveals the existence of a hitherto unrecognized gap or wound in the tradition of metaphysics. For what Kant represents as the antinomic relation between freedom and nature illuminates what the pre-Christian doctrines of Epicureanism and Stoicism had covered over: "the Stoic system made consciousness of strength the sole pivot on which all moral dispositions were to turn...[T]hey represented the degree of virtue required by its pure law as fully attainable in this life."¹⁵⁵

As potentially determining causes of action, neither the sensible nor the supersensible constitute a form of necessary immediacy for the subject that is also seemingly deprived of a source of mediation that would enable the "immense chasm" separating freedom and nature to be crossed. The subject is then left with the realization that its autonomy does not translate into a form of autarky that institutes the "kingdom of purposes" or the highest good "in...this life". And while speculations as to what might befall the will in another life are of course incapable of securing a form

of knowledge, they can provide some sort of measure for action if it is recognized that any such “measure” does not have objective validity in itself but is something the subject is “compelled” to introduce into its experience if it is to retain an underlying sense of coherence or lawfulness.

If the logic of the Kantian system dictates that the concept of freedom be represented in *historical* terms as a surplus value, three responses to such a fate present themselves to a subject neither wholly determined by, nor independent of, tradition: it can determine that the capacity of freedom and/or the law itself is essentially “diabolical”; it can equate the moral with the tragic; or it can become attuned to how its relation to the law can be understood in terms of a beneficent reciprocity. While none of these possible experiences would seem to be sanctioned by Kant’s “formal” principle of morality, the first two are prepared for, while the third is not. And yet it is the latter that emerges as the only possible way for the subject to lay claim to an ethic of history.

The seeming inability of the Kantian subject to unite the higher power of desire, the natural need for purposiveness, and the concept of unconditional moral duty into an integrated experience of being in the world confronts the historical imagination as an irremediable affliction:

morality really has no need of a purpose for right conduct...[as] the law that contains the formal condition of the use of freedom in general suffices to it. Yet...it cannot possibly be a matter of indifference to reason how to answer the question, what is then the result of this right conduct of ours? Nor to what are we to direct our actions and abstentions [Tun und Lassen], even granted this is not fully in our control.¹⁵⁶

It cannot be a matter of indifference simply because reason has no choice but to be concerned with such unsolicited and a posteriori questions that cannot be definitively

answered. Since it is unthinkable that the constitution of reason has been incorrectly delimited, the natural need for purposes must be accommodated and synchronized with the higher power of desire for “otherwise it would be a hindrance to moral resolve, to think for all our actions and abstentions taken as a whole some sort of ultimate purpose which reason can justify.”¹⁵⁷

What in fact seems to hinder the resolute will that otherwise follows the letter and spirit of law as such by “abstracting from purposes altogether” is the regulative idea of the “ultimate” purpose of nature: the emergence of the human subject as a final purpose.¹⁵⁸ The time and space of an ethic of history thus appears to be reserved exclusively for a self-positing will unable to conjoin the principle of autonomy with the experience of being in the world. If anything like such a reconciliation could occur, then it would demand an interpretation beholden to what is presented in Religion Within The Bounds of Mere Reason as the constitutively contradictory concept of “diabolical evil.”¹⁵⁹ What such a concept designates for Kant is a subject that responds to the fact of reason not by conflating its pathological motivations for moral ones but by willfully choosing to contravene the law.¹⁶⁰

Evil is “diabolical” rather than “radical” if its transgression of duty is not the result of a subreption (mistaking the moral for the pathological) or an inability to overcome a dependency on pathological sources of motivation. The would-be diabolical subject acts in accordance with the principle of autonomy and negates the sensible determinations of the will for no apparent *reason or end*; the capacity for freedom thereby emerges as something that can produce a principle of purposeless autonomy.

Such a variation on the concept of freedom as a form of “special causality” brings the relationship between cause and law underlying the Kantian system to the fore. That is, the moral law emerges out of the gap in human experience that opens with the suspension (in the imagination) of the laws of natural causality. However, the moral law cannot be thought of as a cause that necessarily produces moral effects in the world; it can neither abrogate the laws of natural causality nor reproduce them in moral-practical terms. This is why it is described as a “special causality”; the effects of freedom have to be understood as though they emanated from a cause, but the spontaneous act of freedom is not something that can be understood on the basis of the table of categories (foremost of which is the law of causality). The concepts of cause and law are thus not identical, and yet they are mutually dependent upon each other; as a result, the principles of special and natural causality determining the ethical and pathological acts that constitute the totality of human experience must each in turn be secured by a form of lawfulness. And what the diabolical being offers to the imagination is a representation that undermines the entire architectonic of pure reason:

to think of oneself as a freely acting being, yet as exempted from the one law commensurate to such a being (the moral law) would amount to the thought of a cause operating without any law at all (for the determination according to natural law is abolished on account of freedom) and this is a contradiction.¹⁶¹

The contradictory concept of a “cause operating without any law at all” leads the subject by yet another route toward the “immense chasm” separating the natural and the moral. For the experience of being affected by the moral law proved to be bereft of a second order lawfulness capable of providing the subject with the means for embodying the principle of autonomy in completed and lasting ethical actions; the subject therefore

remains entangled in the laws of the phenomenal world even though, or especially because, it no longer identifies itself merely as a “link” in the order of nature. The corollary to this absence of a second order or supplementary *historical* law emerges in the thought of diabolical evil; for human experience is again bereft of a law, although rather than being confronted with a moral law seemingly incapable of producing worldly effects reason faces the prospect of a worldly cause unregulated by a law.

But the vocation of reason refuses to sanction the possibility of either a diabolical subject or what amounts to a diabolical moral law. The former is dismissed from the tribunal of reason on the grounds that the subject, as both a cause and effect of the sensible and supersensible, must always be determined in its actions by either the one or the other. What emerges here is a dimension of subjectivity that reappears in phenomenology as the ‘pre-thetic’ and in psychoanalysis as the unconscious; in Kantian terms, it is represented as an underlying condition whose effect on the will can be inferred (but not fully determined) from both intentional and unintentional actions since human experience is always formed in accordance with a law—of either sensible or supersensible origin—regardless of how the subject may interpret or understand its own sources of motivation or reflection.¹⁶² The subject always already acts on the basis of a law; the question is only whether this will be done in a way that is befitting for an autonomous self-positing subject: “the law...imposes itself on [the subject] irresistibly, because of his moral predisposition and if no other incentive were at work against it [i.e. the irreducible natural inclinations] he would also incorporate it into his supreme maxim as a sufficient determination of his power of choice.”¹⁶³

The experience of freedom, like the play of the imagination in general, ultimately is not abyssal; when the “determination according to natural law is abolished on account of freedom” the moral law presses itself upon the subject in a way that ensures that its experience will not be without a (non-sensible) measure. For it is “absolutely impossible...[that] reason could extirpate within itself the dignity of the law itself.”¹⁶⁴ That would require that reason elevate resistance to the law to the status of an incentive, and there is no law in the Kantian system that could explain such a maneuver. If the pathological is displaced as an incentive, and the subject acts as though it were “exonerated from the moral law” then reason would be at a loss as to how to account for such a lawless experience that apparently wills for the mere sake of willing and effectively abstracts from purposes altogether.

But is this not exactly what is required of the ethical subject confronted with the task of upholding a duty that is necessarily undermined by the experience of being in the world? For it is the lack of another law that seems to prevent the striving for the “highest good” from being correlated with a practical possibility; as a result the autonomous subject appears after all to be a cause bereft of another law that would allow the power of desire, the irreducible needs of the natural subject and moral duty to co-exist. Either another “law” of history or time would then have to be devised (and/or discovered) or the concept of lawfulness and the antinomic relation between contingency and morality would have to be reevaluated. And both possibilities do in fact receive something of a hearing in the third Critique when Kant directly confronts the possibility that the lack of a second order law could emerge as something like a

“law” of its own capable of being assumed in defiance of the only other apparent alternative available to the good will: having recourse to a theological supplement.

B. The Spinozan Subject

Converting a certain lawlessness into a law that acts as a subjective maxim, or subjecting oneself to a law that appears incapable of producing worldly effects evokes a tragic ethos that can be educed from Kant’s representation of the moral disposition:

it is in need neither of the idea of another being above...[the subject] in order that he recognize his duty, nor—that he observe it—of an incentive other than the law itself. At least, it is the human being’s own fault [Schuld] if such a need is found in him.¹⁶⁵

For Kant this is not a condemnable form of guilt requiring expiation; in fact it becomes so only if it is treated as such. This displacement of guilt or preemptive atonement is an act that Kant ascribes to a “righteous man,...Spinoza for example.”¹⁶⁶ This is the name Kant gives to precisely the type of subject—and to precisely the type of historical mood--that the law as such seems to demand: a subject unphased by the imperative to abstract from all purposes when upholding the law and who therefore does not “find it necessary to look around for some purpose” when its sense of duty is at stake.¹⁶⁷ The Spinozan subject recognizes that the imperatives of the moral law:

command absolutely, whatever their consequences; indeed they even require that we abstract from such consequences entirely whenever a particular action is concerned, and thereby they make of duty an object of the highest respect, without proposing to us, or assigning, a purpose (and an ultimate purpose) such as would constitute some sort of inducement for it and an incentive to the fulfillment of our duty. All human beings could sufficiently partake of this incentive too if they just adhered (as they should) to the rule of pure reason in the law. What need have they to know of the outcome of their moral actions and abstentions

that the world's course [i.e. the course of natural history which can not be determined or legislated by practical reason] will bring about? It suffices for them that they do their duty, even if everything were to end with life in this world, and in this life too happiness and worthiness [Würdigkeit] perhaps never converge.¹⁶⁸

The will animating such a subject, unlike the fantastic image of the diabolical being, is lawful; in fact it presents the paradigmatic case of a subject bound to law as such. Moreover, it does not shirk from duty when, as is inevitably the case for a representation of human experience in accordance with Kantian principles, it is confronted by the fact that though its duty exposes it to something other than non-natural time, this alterity is not capable of being appropriated in a way that would effectively displace the laws of natural causality.

Practical reason's apparent inability to harmonize virtue and happiness is accentuated by one law of nature in particular: the inevitability of the death that brings an "end...[to] life in this world". And it is the subject's own "fault" [Schuld] if its compliance with duty is undermined when it is confronted with both the fact of reason and the fact of death. For the subject is culpable for the supplementary (i.e. theological) "need" that arises from its exposure to these facts. But it is this peculiar sense of pardonable guilt which must give rise to an ethic of history since the vocation of reason would otherwise have no ready response to the untimely death that appears as the most obtrusive of the laws of nature.

It was the subject's relation to its own death that first disclosed the fact of reason and the human capacity for freedom. In that case the subject willfully assumed its own death and sacrificed its "natural" life in order to uphold law as such. But the subject is now confronted with a death scene in which its own finitude is not capable of being

appropriated by practical reason. In fact the latter's very vocation now seems to be irrevocably undermined by the very nature against which it ought and must establish independence and autonomy.

What defenses against natural death are then available to the Kantian subject? Not a Homeric striving for great deeds that would serve the purpose of externalizing a proper name into a monument that would then outlive the heroic subject. For a moral action presumably worthy of such veneration cannot for Kant even be verified, much less immortalized.¹⁶⁹

But the subject may have recourse to something else, something in fact that "has its foundation in human nature."¹⁷⁰ The a priori principle in question emerges in the "feeling of the sublime" which is aroused "merely in apprehension and without any reasoning on our part" when the subject is confronted by a phenomenon of nature that it judges in a particular way.¹⁷¹ By converting an overwhelming threat to the subject's sensible existence into an attestation of its proper vocation, a judgment of the "dynamically sublime" discloses "the ability, with which we have been endowed, to judge nature without fear and to think of our vocation as being sublimely above nature."¹⁷² Such a judgment demonstrates the subject's ability to withstand and overcome the threat to its finitude posed by the counter-purposive force exerted by the phenomena of nature; not by denying that the threat exists, but by displacing the power it can exert in determining the subject's actions: "we can...consider an object fearful without being afraid of it, if we judge it in such a way that we merely think of the case where we might possibly want to put up resistance against it, and that any resistance would in that case be utterly futile."¹⁷³

If an object of fear is converted into an aesthetic judgment then what emerges for reason is an intimation of “the basis of a self-preservation quite different in kind from the one that can be assailed and endangered by nature outside us.”¹⁷⁴ The preservation of the subject’s dignity as a final purpose outweighs the need to preserve mere life should the two dimensions of experience conflict with one another. This is what justifies the noble sacrifice that is prepared for by an aesthetic judgment which allows us to consider what can be “assailed and endangered by nature outside us” as but a subordinated part of the totality of human experience. For if the feeling of fear can be displaced by a sense of awe for the chaotic force exerted by nature (volcanic eruptions and hurricanes are among the examples Kant cites) that seems to defy the understanding’s laws of order and regularity then being in the world takes on a partly non-pathological character; that is, the worldly effects the special causality of freedom ought to produce perhaps appear less like an impossibility if a relation to nature can be posited in which both subject and object seem capable of acting in a way that is counter-purposive when measured by the standard of mathematical-mechanical causality.¹⁷⁵

With the experience of untimely death the subject’s “superiority over nature” would seem to be put to its ultimate test.¹⁷⁶ And here a distinction emerges between two representations of death, both of which lend themselves to an aesthetic judgment of the sublime. The first is the sacrificial act, the predisposition toward which is facilitated by cultivating the feeling of the sublime that “regards nature’s might...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.”¹⁷⁷

But if a sacrifice can be performed in the name of the moral law, what happens if the subject considered as a final purpose is sacrificed to sensible nature? Is an “aesthetic judgment...[that] consider[s] nature as a might that has no dominance over” the subject still possible? Only if a certain relation to the moral law is maintained and the subject imagines its relation to death in yet another way.

What could it possibly mean”, Paul de Man asks in his interpretation of the Kantian sublime, “that the imagination sacrifices itself, like Antigone or Iphigenia...for the sake of reason?”¹⁷⁸ For de Man this can only indicate how the writing of the Critique of Judgment—like the writing of any philosophical text-- was “determined by linguistic structures that are not within the author’s control.”¹⁷⁹

A mysterious cause acting without any recognizable law would appear to be at work here, a “movement” that by definition would have to be consigned along with the abortive concepts of diabolical evil and “blind chance” to the realm inhabited by the products of the imagination incapable of being either represented by the understanding or thought by reason without contradiction.¹⁸⁰ By isolating such a threat to the autonomous subject, de Man invites reconsideration of something intimated in Kant’s oft-repeated claim that the origin of the subject’s decision to freely adopt this or that maxim remains inscrutable to speculative reason.¹⁸¹ For the process of linguistic determinism de Man invokes shares an apparent affinity with both modern structuralism and a concept that emerged most clearly with Freud after passing through disparate “stages” in the work of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Eduard von Hartmann: the “law” of the unconscious which is situated *outside of time*. But because for de Man the Freudian unconscious connotes too much in the way of autonomous agency or

integrated if fractured subjectivity the unacknowledged cause that imbues Kantian ethics with the “pathos of sacrifice” is said to function in accordance with the “laws of figurative language.”¹⁸²

If a law of language somehow conditions the transmission of continuity and discontinuity within tradition, then how should Kant’s relationship to a tradition based on what de Man calls an “economy of sacrifice and recuperation” be understood apart from the incidental and dismissive reference in the Critique of Judgment to tragedy (not further specified) as an art form containing no intrinsic ethical value?¹⁸³

1. A “Stirring and Shining Example”

On the one hand, the sacrificial scenes Kant stages in order to present the fact of reason and the feeling of the sublime tend to displace the type of romantic-heroic pathos cited by de Man. For the sacrifice of the imagination—of its power to intuit the phenomena of nature—allows the subject to receive everything in return: i.e., the recognition of its proper supersensible identity.¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, the subject ought not be confronted, in principle, with competing ethical values in seemingly irreconcilable opposition to one another, for such moral ambiguity would deprive maxims of their necessary “determination and stability”.¹⁸⁵ In fact it is precisely in this context that Kant valorizes a certain “peculiarity of Christian morality”:

The figurative representation of heaven and hell...serves to prevent us from thinking of good and evil, the realm of light and the realm of darkness, as bordering on each other and losing themselves into one another by gradual steps; [it]...rather represents good and evil as though separated by an immeasurable chasm. The total dissimilarity of the basic principles by which one can be subject to either one or the other of these two realms, and also the danger associated with the illusion of a close

relationship between the characteristics that qualify somebody for one or the other, justify this form of representation which, though containing an element of horror, is nonetheless sublime.¹⁸⁶

On the other hand, something analogous to what have been represented as the world-historical conditions of possibility for Attic tragedy reemerges in Kant's supposition that there is a need for a Copernican Revolution in the tradition of Western metaphysics. For just as Greek tragedy is said to have illumined the decline of a tradition "under the impulse of a new moral world that was being born" the critique of reason lays the groundwork for a metaphysics of morals amidst the ruins of doctrinal theology.¹⁸⁷ Such a foundation, however, appears to deliver the Kantian subject over to a destiny which is both inescapable and incapable of being successfully appropriated insofar as the origin of the law and the capacity for freedom that it presupposes remain inscrutable, and the telos or purpose of such freedom eludes the grasp of human knowledge.

But is such a "peculiar fate" tragic as well? This is what de Man suggests by associating the pathos of sacrifice in the judgment of the sublime with two archetypal figures of Greek tragedy. What lends itself to such an assessment is Kant's determination of how the feeling of sublimity attests to the way in which the subject is capable of making a distinction between natural death and symbolic death. By basing its proper identity upon a form of self-preservation "different in kind" from the type of life that is maintained in a merely natural or biological sense the subject becomes receptive to the possible need for an ethically sanctioned act of self-sacrifice.¹⁸⁸ But there are certain limits as to how the relationship between the singular "facts" of death and reason ought and can be understood. For the former is both elevated and devalued

by the latter. The tension that emerges in this relation stems from Kant's conversion of the Aristotelian-Christian principle of the first cause into the unrepresentable power of the autonomous subject; however, the inscrutable basis of this power is something the subject can neither simply appropriate nor ethically negate. The subject therefore appears destined by the vocation of reason to assume the role of agent and guardian. For if freedom can be "deduced" as a rational and practical concept through the feeling of respect, then it appears to be somehow "situated."

The inverted commas introduce the unanswerable anthropological-teleological question that emerges at this critical juncture for reason: how is it that an underlying capacity or "pre-determinism can co-exist with freedom, when according to predeterminism freely chosen actions, as occurrences, have their determining grounds in *antecedent time* [Kant's emphasis]...whereas according to freedom the action...must be in the control of the subject at the moment of its happening." ¹⁸⁹

It is the traditional dualism of freedom/necessity (of temporal contingency/moral permanence) that creates the following aporia: there must and cannot be some "basis" for human freedom that simultaneously requires and suspends the phenomenal movement from potentiality to actuality. This supposition must appear as a contradiction so long as time is represented in terms of a quantitative, rectilinear continuum conceived in diametric opposition to the special causality of freedom. Not only then does the absence of a concept of non-mechanical time suspend the question of freedom's origin; it also seems to prevent the *finite* subject from positing purposes whose consequences correspond with the underlying intention to give form to the idea of moral necessity. Thrown into a seemingly paradoxical state of situated freedom that

brings with it both an absence of theoretical knowledge and an evidently necessary sense of failure vis-à-vis practical action, the subject thus appears poised to accept its “peculiar fate” as a tragic fate.

Or does the subject’s identity as both agent and guardian but not author of the moral law preclude the devolution of the peculiar into the tragic? An indication arises in Kant’s censure of an act of suicide that seeks “death in order to promote a worthy purpose through a stirring and shining example [durch ein Aufsehen erregendes glänzendes Beispiel]...for one may indeed dare something at the risk of losing one’s life, or even endure death at the hand of another, when one cannot avoid it without betraying an irremissible duty. But one cannot dispose of oneself and one’s life as a means, whatever the purpose, and thus be the author of one’s death.”¹⁹⁰

While the fact of natural death appears to limit the subject’s ability to relate to itself as an *Endzweck*, the act of suicide offers a singular counterintuitive example of how it is within the power of the human will to strictly uphold the categorical imperative. For the antinomic relation between natural death and the *Endzweck* is negated and resolved through a granting of pardonable guilt, of innocent guilt, upon the subject; and the prohibition on suicide demonstrates how there ought not to be any ambiguity surrounding a sacrificial act. In both cases the ultimate absence of contradiction in the relationship between the ethical and fate makes it seem as though the delimitation of these two concepts was designed to prevent the subject from converting respect for the moral law into a recognition of an unconditional necessity requiring it to assume a tragic destiny—to assume an Oedipal form of guilty innocence.

The immoral character of suicide stems for Kant from the way in which it makes a decision about life and death on the basis of criteria extrinsic to the subject's autonomy; that is, the act substitutes a contingent, pathological purpose (such as the attempt to avoid pain to oneself and/or to cause pain in others) for the subject's properly final purpose of relating to its "*Person*" as an end in itself.¹⁹¹ Because the vocation of reason "calls" for a particular self relation of the will which gives to the subject its dual moral identity of custodian and agent, what Lukács and Benjamin will later call "mere life" can be sacrificed in the name of duty but never vice-versa.¹⁹² For it is not life as such that is violated by the suicide; in fact it is unduly privileged in a way that reverses the proper hierarchical relationship Kant establishes between the ethical and the aesthetic. This relation becomes evident to the subject through a peculiar feeling induced by a judgment of the sublime that forcibly transforms the imagination from an auxiliary of the understanding into an "instrument of reason."¹⁹³

Such a subordination of the aesthetic to the ethical becomes evident in Kant's concept of the "aesthetic idea" which conveys a symbolic representation of an otherwise indemonstrable rational concept that can thereby serve as a heuristic device in the acculturation of the moral subject. "And by aesthetic idea I mean a presentation of the imagination which prompts much thought but to which no determinant thought whatsoever, i.e. no determinant concept, can be adequate, so that no language can express it completely and allow us to grasp it."¹⁹⁴ The descriptive force of language has been sacrificed to the newfound power of the aesthetic idea which will become transformed into the basis for a historical ethic in the work of Schiller and Nietzsche.

But it is the comparatively restrictive delimitation of the power of the aesthetic idea that is transgressed by the advent of the “stirring and shining example” which ostensibly depicts how moral action can appear in the form of a suicidal act carried out in order to hasten the realization of a particular purpose. Rather than attesting to an invisible yet indelible moral law, the spectacle of heroism fetishizes a subjective intention, thereby setting up an idol to be revered and imitated. And a cause whose galvanizing power is dependent upon such a graspable, determinate phenomenalization preempts what it was presumably attempting to further: the historicization of the moral law. For even if a heroic subject endures death *without* betraying an “irremissible duty”, such an act is ultimately devoid of ethical-historical value precisely because of its misplaced attachment to aesthetic form:

to teach only *admiration* for virtuous actions, however great a sacrifice these may have cost, falls short of the right spirit that ought to support the apprentice’s disposition for the moral good. For, however virtuous someone is, all the good that he can ever perform still is merely duty; to do one’s duty, however, is no more than to do what lies in the common moral order and is not, therefore deserving of wonder. This admiration is on the contrary a dulling of our feeling for duty, as if to give obedience to it were something extraordinary and meritorious.¹⁹⁵

The threat to duty properly understood therefore seems to arise both from a certain impoverishment and overstimulation of the imagination. Once again the subject’s relationship to the moral law appears to be sustained by a precarious balance of forces; for although a “being without affects” earns a title of nobility from pure reason, the subject’s sensible nature, in turn, receives a form of compensation that removes the need for the unconditional ethic of renunciation which the task of upholding duty as such seems to require.¹⁹⁶

The subject of the moral law thus appears to be confronted with two ways of incurring guilt once it is exposed to the “immense chasm” separating the realms of nature and freedom, only one of which is pardonable. For the form of heroism which is evoked for Kant by the Stoa, “Spinoza” and the “stirring” act of suicide is guilty of prematurely demarcating the limits of the historically (im)possible.¹⁹⁷

The suicide Kant censures exemplifies the distinction in question in that no matter how heroic it may appear, it attests to how the principle of autonomy can be undermined by its very condition of possibility: the freedom of the will which becomes most markedly pronounced in the subject’s ability to anticipate its own death in a non-pathological manner. Properly conceived as neither a curse nor a gift, this is the capacity that leads to a recognition of finitude which can then be conducive either to the upholding or betraying of an “irremissible duty” toward law as such. There is yet another death scene, however, that threatens to overturn the finely wrought structure of the autonomous will that mediates the Kantian subject’s relationship to both the vocation of reason and the logic of history.

2. The Monstrous Limit

The fact of natural death may be seen as the quintessence of the sort of “natural” might which, thanks to the feeling of the sublime, can be displaced to the point where it “has no dominance over us.”¹⁹⁸ But could there be an instance in which the force of nature appears insuperable even to a mind attuned to the sublime?¹⁹⁹ What if nature, whose “purposiveness” is conceived by reason on analogy with *τεχνη*, could be

represented as a form of agency that demands reason sacrifice nothing less than its proper vocation?²⁰⁰ In that case the subject would die twice: “naturally” and in a manner that would precipitate the collapse of the Kantian symbolic order.

Kant in fact addresses this very possibility, and in a way that is not as peremptorily dismissive as his treatment of such concepts as diabolical evil and the Epicurean-like rule of “blind chance” in nature.²⁰¹ For because neither is subsumable under either the categories of the understanding or the ideas of reason, they can only take on the impossible or self-negating (or self-contradictory) form of a “cause acting without any law at all.” But elevating the mere fact of death into a natural law whose relation to the subject is unaffected by a judgment of the sublime is an act of the imagination which would seem to resonate with the same “commonest understanding” Kant invoked in order to accentuate the inescapability of the thought that “without man all of creation would be a mere wasteland, gratuitous and without a final purpose.”²⁰²

Once more, the fact of reason (which attests to the subject’s receptivity to the moral law and its consequent recognition of its duty to relate to itself as a final purpose) and the fact of natural death (the foremost obstacle that stands in the way of successfully executing such a duty) appear to exist in a necessarily antinomic relation to one another once the question of the historicization of the law is raised.²⁰³ This is the fundamental problem that reemerges when Kant introduces a form of guilt that demands expiation only if the need for a pardon remains unrecognized or is directly challenged.

The operative concept of justice at work here is evinced with the help of a certain relationship that can best be described as a strange sort of affinity. To borrow the language of symbolic analogy: just as in a judgment of beauty the subject is allowed—

in the absence of a determinate concept—to regard it as a “favor of nature” that its acculturation is furthered by the disinterested contemplation of its manifold shapes, there is a teleological judgment which enables it to discern a fortunate and by no means arbitrary parallelism between the vocation of reason and Christian doctrine.²⁰⁴

An intimation of a concept of non-mechanical time thereby becomes discernible when the atemporal character of the moral law is presented as necessarily prior to the rise of the Christian tradition to which it ought in fact give thanks for putting at its disposal a language rich enough to retroactively disclose the concepts of reason in a form comprehensible to the human imagination.

The experience which suggests that an ethic of history cannot be conceived of in fundamentally atheological terms emerges at the very moment when Kant reiterates how the validity of the moral law is in no way derived from or dependent upon theological doctrine. For the indispensable yet derivative theological supplement preserves the principle of morality only if it is presupposed that the “absolute spontaneity” of the power of freedom, the equating of justice with the ideal of a strictly proportional relationship between virtue and happiness, and the experience of a will whose capacity for choice is always already corrupted and yet capable of reform are not “secularizations” but rather rational concepts which are then made intelligible through the sublimity of such ideas as God, the afterlife and redemption.²⁰⁵

Such ideas of reason introduce a new category of modality by directing the subject toward the future as an “object” capable of giving rise to a historical mood that has been traditionally defined as “hope”. As might be expected, a Kantian hope does not emerge

in direct opposition to a law of tragedy. Not Kafka's "hope for the hopeless" but rather the need for hope, but not too much, would be an appropriate aphorism.

The theoretical and practical possibility of relating to oneself as an end in itself bearing "absolute value" is corroborated by the subject's consciousness of being affected by the moral law.²⁰⁶ But because this being destined to reason is also situated in a history whose phenomena appear to be governed by the laws of mechanical regularity and "natural" contingency, the possibility of positing something of absolute value devolves in the face of actuality into an ineffectual capacity. However, the vocation of reason is able to displace the so-called logic of natural history by enforcing the law of non-contradiction. For it would be a contradiction for the subject to be bound to what seems to be a palpably contradictory ethic of history and only an experience of time animated by a principle of hope allows the latter to be redefined as an antinomy of reason.

By rigorously adhering to the commands of the moral law, the subject is drawn toward the need for a faith that preserves its capacity for upholding a law which regulates its rational projections in the absence of determinate knowledge (of either the sensible or supersensible). For once the influence exerted by pathological incentives upon the will has been weakened, the relation to the moral law can be sustained by a sense of reciprocity that sublates the ineradicable natural desire for possession, for a sense of purposiveness:

faith is a confidence in the promise [Verheißung] of the moral law; but the moral law does not contain this promise: it is I who put it there, and on a morally sufficient basis. For no law of reason can command [us to pursue] a final purpose unless reason also promises [versprechen], even if not with certainty, that this final purpose is achievable, and hence also

justifies us in assenting to the conditions under which alone our reason can conceive of that achievability.²⁰⁷

Such are the conditions which ensure that the limitations preventing the subject from creating an absolute value through the power of desire do not also transform the latter into a surplus value. And since speculative reason cannot conceive of the possibility of harmonizing duty with happiness on the basis of natural causes (i.e. in terms either of the subject's "own physical ability" or an implausible "cooperation of nature"), the principle of hope arises only with the assumption that there is one form of special causality (attributed by analogy to the rational concept of God) that furnishes a measure that allows reason to distinguish a regulative ideal from a "baseless and idle—even if well-meant expectation."²⁰⁸

As to the question of how the law of non-contradiction ultimately preserves the autonomy of morality by enlisting the services of a theological supplement, Kant responds by introducing something like a singular historical event that seems to give the vocation of reason what it would otherwise have to accept as a constitutive lack: a relation to a certain tradition that is neither arbitrary nor simply handed down through an ongoing process of seamless continuity. For Kant the "affinity" between Christian doctrine and the vocation of reason serves as but a preparatory stage for the possible development of a "universal religion" capable of innervating the subject's striving toward the realization of the highest good.²⁰⁹ By orienting the subject toward a regulative ideal rather than an idol, the representation of human history takes on a certain structure of expectation that endures only if the "promise" of the moral law binds the subject not to a self-sustaining projection but rather to an imposition solicited, as it were, by a particular form of alterity.

The name Kant gives to such alterity is historically conditioned, although the ensuing act of identification is not historically determined; it is not necessary, strictly speaking, and it does not yield an object of empirical knowledge. It does however enable the subject to appropriate its relation to a past in a way that allows the present to be opened to a future which can be imagined as something other than a mere extension of itself. The Kantian system thus becomes exposed to two intimations of non-mechanical time. And while the time of faith may well be represented as but the obverse of rectilinear, mathematical time, the “space” created for it by the Copernican Revolution suggests there may be another experience of history whose conditions of possibility are not, however, further developed or perhaps even recognized. What is addressed by Kant is the likely objection to be raised against reason’s “appropriation” of theology:

it must seem dubious how this term [Fides] and this special idea [God] have made their way into moral philosophy. For they were first introduced with Christianity, and it might seem as if their acceptance [by moral philosophy] is perhaps only a fawning imitation [schmeichlerische Nachahmung] of the language of Christianity. But this is not the only case where this wondrous religion has in the greatest simplicity of its expression [Vortrages] enriched [bereichert] philosophy with far more determinate and pure concepts of morality than philosophy had until then been able to furnish [liefern], but which, once they are there, reason sanctions freely [frei gebilligt] and accepts as concepts that it surely could and should have come upon and introduced.²¹⁰

This is an excusable omission directly related to the sense of pardonable guilt conferred upon the subject. In the former case, reason receives a gift as it were; in the latter it bestows one. Either way, the language of Christianity is retrieved in order to shore up a new moral foundation for human action that must retain the central tenets of the tradition it is nonetheless displacing; furthermore, such a retention could not

effectively take place if the language in question was simply preserved or thought of in symbolic rather than allegorical terms.²¹¹

Now the representation of this peculiar historical movement may appear as but a clumsy if elaborate device employed to preserve and secularize the remnants of doctrinal theology in the “age of critique”.²¹² And as if in anticipation of the objection that it rather succeeds only in deconstructing the Enlightenment concepts of the theological *and* the secular, Kant attempts to convert this source of theoretical-practical instability into a productive tension which must be sustained as the only viable *ethical* response to the crisis of metaphysics in modernity. What is then put forth is something like a secular theodicy which defends the moral law against the accusation that the favors it extends to the finite subject (granting a pardon and permitting it to add to its unconditional commands the promise of a promise) betray an underlying weakness or imperfection of reason which in turn calls for both a more unequivocal redefinition of the relationship between history and theology and a renaming of the subject’s destiny: as no longer a peculiar, but rather a tragic fate.

The theological “supplement” to a concept of morality based above all upon the principles of autonomy and unconditional necessity begs the question that Kant directly confronts in the concluding sections of the third Critique. In the last instance “is it as necessary to assume that God exists, as it is to acknowledge that the moral law is valid, so that anyone who cannot convince himself that God exists may judge himself released from the obligations that the moral law imposes?”²¹³

The importance of this question lies for Kant not in the likely conclusion to be drawn by those susceptible to “radical evil” but in the kind of challenge or counter-move it

provokes in the “case of the righteous man...Spinoza, for example.”²¹⁴ And Kant’s interest in the Spinozan subject, as it were, is in turn of interest here in two interrelated respects: it dramatizes in a concise and striking fashion how the commands of the moral law direct the will inexorably toward, and then suddenly away from, the time and space of tragedy; and it precipitates the staging of the one death scene presided over by reason which threatens to dismantle Kant’s entire “critical enterprise.”²¹⁵

How does Kant construct the Spinozan response to the “fact” of the subject’s pardonable guilt which gives rise to the need for a theological supplement that in turn clarifies its originary destination to reason? Prior to the introduction of Spinoza, the Kantian subject appeared to be confronted with one of two ways of incurring guilt: pardonable is the need for a form of compensation for being situated in natural history; punishable is the confounding of the pathological and the moral when determining the basis of subjective maxims. (And the form of guilt that would befall diabolical evil was shown to be directed at a purely imaginary object which could not act a practical-historical cause).

So how is the emergence of Spinozan righteousness accounted for in this seemingly airtight moral system? The Spinozist subject in effect attempts to intensify its respect for the moral law by declining the favor the latter extends, thereby preempting the need for a pardon. Such a maneuver would presumably be construed as an act of transgression only if theology had sunk “into the depths of a demonology”, only if the idea of law as such had been transmogrified into a Homeric god offended by a show of ingratitude.²¹⁶ For the Spinozan subject “actively reveres the moral law [but]...remains firmly persuaded that there is no God and...also no future life: [so] how will he judge

his own inner destination to a purpose [imposed] by the moral law [innere Zweckbestimmung durch das moralische Gesetz]?”²¹⁷

This is a somewhat disingenuous question in that it presupposes that the proper acculturation of the subject necessarily passes through the following four stages: humiliation of the pathological through a feeling of respect for the moral law; the recognition that the law’s commands not only ought to be executed but must, logically, be executable: “duty commands nothing but what we can do”; the awareness, nevertheless, of a profound disparity between theoretical and practical possibility at precisely this critical juncture; the determination that adopting the theological supplement is the only way for the subject to “think consistently in morality”—a consistency that is only maintained by conspicuously suspending the question of God’s existence.²¹⁸ The narrative thus culminates in the “step to religion” [Schritt zur Religion] that simultaneously takes the subject out of what amounts to pre-history:

The moral argument is not meant to prove to the skeptic that there is a God, but that he must adopt the assumption of this proposition as one of the maxims of his practical reason if he wants to think consistently in morality. Nor is the argument meant to say that it is necessary for morality [Sittlichkeit] to assume that the happiness of all rational beings in the world is [to be] proportionate [gemäß] to their morality [Moralität], but rather that morality makes it necessary for us to make this assumption [es ist durch sie notwendig].²¹⁹

The logical outcome to the collision between the “logic” of history and the vocation of reason’s fundamental law of non-contradiction is that there is a logic to the collapse of logic insofar as it thereby creates a practical-historical space for faith which allows the subject’s fate to be represented as “peculiar” rather than tragic. But the Spinozan figure appears poised to assume the latter as its proper destiny in that it severs the singular relationship Kant establishes between theology and morality. Or rather he is

pointed in that direction by dutifully following the imperatives prescribed by law as such: “he does not require that complying with the law should bring him an advantage, either in this world or another; rather he is unselfish and wants only to bring about the good to which that sacred [heilige] law directs all his forces.”²²⁰

The law is sacred or holy insofar as it is unrepresentable and yet capable of inducing the feeling of respect. At this point law as such relates to the ethical subject as such, who has no more need to inquire as to how it is he is bound by the law than to know the origin of geometry.²²¹ Yet just as the latter’s figures are nowhere perfectly duplicated among the phenomena of nature, the moral law affects a being in the world enjoined to direct its will to “those other things [of the world] regarded either as purposes or as objects for which [the subject] is the final purpose.”²²²

It is at this point that the finite subject is confronted with the inescapable judgment that as a being of nature bearing a form of inner lawfulness its rational destination to a purpose is a seemingly purposeless one; for it is impossible for it to successfully “apply its forces” toward the realization of the highest good prescribed by the moral law if the causality of nature is the only causality “that can be connected with human freedom.”²²³ And of course it is also impossible that this is impossible in the last instance.

It is clear, therefore, that the Spinozist subject attempting to preempt the need for atonement has the deck stacked against him. His selfless commitment to the task of historicizing the law incapable of being historicized is presented by Kant as an “effort [that] encounters limits.”²²⁴ For it is not as though he reluctantly accepts its subjection to the law but foregoes striving for the highest good.²²⁵ Rather he recognizes the irreducibly “historical” character of the atemporal moral law (i.e., the demand for the

law's historicization).²²⁶ Thus "he wants only to bring about the good to which that sacred law directs all his forces."²²⁷ The limits he then encounters in fact isolate the limitations of the Kantian ethic of history which only seems to become more pronounced, however, when the attempt is made (e.g. by Schiller and Nietzsche) to move beyond them.

On the one hand, the phenomena of nature cannot be directly subjected to moral legislation; nor is the alterity of nature something that can be appropriated as but an unrecognized property of the subject. The relationship between the free will and nature rather requires a form of "mediation" that postpones indefinitely the moment of synthesis.

On the other hand, as a regulative ideal, such a synthesis leaves a certain subject-object relationship fundamentally intact insofar as phenomenal nature is represented alternatively as a mechanism constructed by the laws of the understanding and as a series of effects whose cause is thought of on analogy with a particular form of agency: *τεχνη*.

This dual representation of nature is then coupled with a theologically inspired conception of the special causality of human freedom that acts as a spontaneous, autonomous and unconditional power. The stark opposition between the natural and the moral is designed to prevent any intermediate, contingent and therefore inadequate historical ethic from arising; yet it also creates a dualism that preempts anything but such a failed attempt at historicizing the law from occurring. These are the conditions of possibility for the assumption of a rational faith that allows for the idea of a harmonization of nature and morality, "foreign to each of them of itself" to be thought

without contradiction.²²⁸ All the interrelated limits ready to arrest the heroic striving of the Spinozist subject are now *almost* in place.

For while he can expect that nature will now and then assent fortuitously [zufälligen Beitritt] with the purpose of his that he feels so obligated and impelled to achieve, he can never expect nature to harmonize with it in a way governed by laws and permanent rules [beständigen Regeln] (such as his inner maxims are and must be). Deceit, violence and envy will always be rife around him, even though he himself is honest, peaceful and benevolent.²²⁹

These are the same ineradicable limits to the being that wills that failed to impress themselves upon the similarly constituted Stoic consciousness which held the “mere use of its powers” to be the sole “pivot on which all moral dispositions were to turn.”²³⁰ Like the Spinozist, it supposedly succeeds in “exposing...[itself] indeed to the ills of life without subjecting...[itself] to them.”²³¹ But does not such a conception of virtue represented by Kant as a “certain heroism of the sage” bear a striking resemblance to the experience of the sublime which “is in fact difficult to think of...without connecting with it a mental attunement similar to that for moral feeling”?²³²

The difference between the experience of the sublime and Spinozist-Stoic heroism in this context lies in how Kant presents the imagination’s relationship to reason in both cases; in the former it is elevated and limited by an exposure to “alterity”; in the latter it is devalued and limited by its failure to recognize what remains apart from the “territory” traversed by the power of desire—albeit as something that emanates from an unrepresentable source.²³³

The sacrifice of the imagination in the judgment of the sublime is a “deprivation...that serves our inner freedom” insofar as it sustains the condition of the will (i.e. that of striving or “incessant laboring”) necessary for a morally autonomous

but ultimately not autarkic subject; for its task of endless progress—or “progressing without end” [ins Unendliche gehenden Progressus]—must not be arrested by a premature judgment of either completeness or failure since the value of the subject’s actions ought to be measured against a “nonsensible standard that has...infinity itself under it as a unit.”²³⁴ The judgment of the sublime leads to the discovery of the “nonsensible standard” which must then co-exist, however, with a temporal measure. That is, the subject’s sense of “superiority over nature” ought somehow to cohere with an awareness of its constitutive inability to master inner and external nature in the manner prescribed to the so-called *Endzweck*. And while the Stoic consciousness may vacillate between a sense of hubris and resignation, the essentially conditional autonomy of the Kantian subject is confronted with the “choice” of orienting itself toward a law of tragedy or a principle of hope. The latter enables it to imagine that if it “acts as well as is within...[its] power, then what is not within [its] power will come to...[its] aid from another source, whether or not...[it] know[s] in what way.”²³⁵

This is the either/or presented to the Spinozist who in Kant’s narrative originally wanted to assume neither position. But what is then introduced as the deciding factor brings with it an experience of time that poses the greatest threat yet to the vocation of reason. For not only does the Spinozist’s failure indicate how the self-positing subject remains mired in an inhospitable and seemingly unalterable natural history. The imagination is further impelled to represent this time as something other than an infinitely repeatable extension of the present; that is, there is still one singular event that will momentarily irrupt in the midst of such disarming continuity: “as concerns the other righteous people he meets: no matter how worthy of happiness they may be,

nature, which pays no attention to that, will still subject them to all the evils of deprivation, disease, and untimely death, just like all the other animals of the earth.”²³⁶

If the need for an ethic of tragedy seems to thereby increase, then perhaps a measure can be found in the act of self-sacrifice—the possibility for which seems to confer an incomparable quality upon the human subject that sets it apart from “all the other animals of the earth.” Or rather the sacrificial act itself stands in need of a measure, for the relation to death that emerges in this context is still less capable than the act of suicide from giving rise to a universal law for ethical action. Furthermore, nature is no longer represented as something that is offered—or as something that offers itself—as a sacrifice to reason; it is in fact not clear *to what* such an act is rendered, although it is certain that, in marked contrast to what can transpire in the judgment of the sublime, the “violence that the imagination inflicts on the subject [will not]...still be judged purposive *for the whole vocation* of the mind.”²³⁷

It is with this judgment of purposiveness that the success or failure of a historical ethic based upon the principle that “fulfillment of duty consists in the form of the earnest will, not in the intermediate causes [responsible] for success” rests.²³⁸ What leads up to Kant’s presentation of a sublated or second order form of success in the third Critique is the representation of nature on analogy with human *τεχνη*; as a result, the phenomena produced, as it were, by the former are no longer subsumable under the categories of the understanding. The appearances of nature—including the pathological human being—thus take on a non-mechanical, “purposive” quality that becomes the foremost object of reflective judgment.

As a finite and pathological being, the subject is exposed both to the necessarily obligatory character of the law and to the impossibility of its historicization. Included among the ways in which Kant presents this dualism as but an antinomy is the provisional suggestion in the third Critique that a degree of complicity exists between the realms of the natural and the moral. An intimation of such complicity also appeared in the sublation of natural inclination that led to the “promise” of the moral law. And another *Aufhebung* occurs when the subject’s sensible nature—rift as it is by “deceit, violence and envy”—is recuperated for reason by being converted through a reflective teleological judgment into the pre-condition for the establishment of the *Reiche der Zwecke*. The very time of natural history is then represented as a form of repetition that is somehow *purposive*; for it prepares, as it were, the subject “for what he himself must do in order to be a final purpose” by allowing his pathological inclinations to grow, or rather accumulate, until a state of critical mass is reached. Having produced something like a Hobbesian state of nature that Kant represents as a condition of “shining misery” [glänzende Elend], the “lower” desire for sustaining mere life proves to be serviceable for the vocation of reason insofar as it becomes possible to preserve it only through the institution of a form of civil society which makes the process of moral acculturation at least thinkable.²³⁹

Nature is thereby represented as “achiev[ing]...its own purpose, even if that purpose is not ours.”²⁴⁰ Moreover, this singular purpose, the “ultimate purpose” [letzte Zweck] of nature, manifests itself in yet another act of sacrifice which becomes the culminating moment in the repetitive “development” of the pathological inclinations.²⁴¹ That is, the subject’s subjection to inner and outer nature produces the very conditions necessary for

it to establish itself as “independent of nature, self-sufficient, and a final purpose.”²⁴²

The telos of nature is attained with the abdication of nature; this is the outcome of a natural-historical process that is neither merely mechanical nor necessarily progressive.

While neither “prescribing a law to nature, nor learning one from it by observation” the concept of a natural purposiveness in this context nevertheless allows the subject to bring a sense of coherence to “historical” experience by projecting a form of lawfulness upon phenomena incapable of being wholly subsumed under the mathematical categories of the understanding.²⁴³

As a result of the “character and limits of our cognitive powers”, we judge (reflectively) nature to be not merely a mechanism but something “other” which seems to beckon the subject to perform the act—the positing of the final purpose—which it cannot accomplish on its own.²⁴⁴

While phenomenal nature therefore seems to prepare the way for what must nevertheless be an unconditional act of freedom, it also continues to exert a negative influence upon the historicization of the law by furnishing a set of incentives that threaten the will with an ever imminent relapse into dependency or heteronomy. The “relation” to nature in question was introduced primarily in order for it to be ruptured. Nature receives nothing in return for the sacrifice it performs in order to fulfill its “ultimate purpose”.

Now certain appearances of nature seem neither mechanical nor susceptible to being judged by a principle of purposiveness, namely, scenes of chaos, in which it manifests “its wildest and most ruleless disarray and devastation.”²⁴⁵ This threat is in turn appropriated, as it were, in the judgment of the sublime which

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...Through the...idea...[of the sublime] we do not represent a particular form in nature, but only develop the purposive use that the imagination makes of the representation of nature.²⁴⁶

Nature either invites the subject to complete what it cannot accomplish on its own or provides an occasion for the “self-cognition” of reason’s supersensible vocation. Since natural chaos seems to defy the laws of the understanding, and since it cannot be dismissed as a fantastic projection of the imagination, it can only be accounted for by being represented as something that attests to how the subject can sustain the collapse of the symbolic-phenomenal order; for it is only with such a collapse that the conditions for the possibility of freedom can emerge. This is why for Kant natural chaos in itself is not a sublime object; the explanation for how it is somehow a necessary moment in the reproduction of the purposive system of nature can be postponed: “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.”²⁴⁷

But just when it seems as though everything is in place for the endless task of transforming natural history into an ethical history, the anonymous agency which reason projects upon the former reemerges as a force that seems to demand a sacrifice that reverses the hierarchical relationships Kant establishes between the sensible and supersensible. For something more than natural death presses itself upon the Spinozan subject’s unduly rigorous devotion to the letter and spirit of the moral law. And if the imagination can still serve as an instrument of reason even in the face of an *everlasting yet profane* death, then it remains unclear what would stand in for the subject’s

“nonsensible standard” as the counterweight to the violence inflicted upon sensibility in the judgment of the sublime.²⁴⁸ But perhaps such a judgment could not take place at all if an untoward movement of the imagination precipitates a breakdown among the “mental powers” [Vermögen des Gemüts] that destroys the balance of forces required for upholding the constitution of transcendental subjectivity; that is, what happens if sensibility exerts a symbolic violence over reason which thereby expands the former to the point where it can represent the infinite that for reason itself suddenly becomes an abyss?²⁴⁹

What then is the “image”—properly considered neither as a concept of the understanding nor as an idea of reason—that could deprive the subject of its ability to judge nature without fear and to “admit without hesitation” that it would be possible for it to sacrifice its life in order to uphold its duty to the moral law?²⁵⁰ While the figurative representation of good and evil as heaven and hell contains an “element of horror [while being nevertheless] sublime”, the eradication of this cardinal distinction gives rise to perhaps the only case in the three Critiques where a representation sensibilizes a rational concept (eternity) and transforms the foremost fact of nature (death) into a sublime object that lies beyond the boundaries of experience.²⁵¹ What provokes such a representation is the thought of an experience of being toward death that greets the so-called final purpose of nature as though it were all but indissociable from all “the other animals of the earth.” No consolation is to be found in this qualification, however, unless receiving the gift of self-consciousness is recognized as an occasion for putting the demand to “abstract from purposes altogether” to its greatest test:

For while the subject can expect that nature will now and then by chance accede [hin und wieder einen zufälligen Beitritt] to the purpose of his that he feels so obligated and impelled to achieve, he can never expect nature to harmonize with it in a way governed by laws and permanent rules (such as his inner maxims are and must be). Deceit, violence, and envy will always be rife around him, even though he himself is honest, peaceable, and benevolent. Moreover, as concerns the other righteous people he meets: no matter how worthy of happiness they may be, nature, which pays no attention to that, will still subject them all to the evils of deprivation, disease, and untimely death, just like all the other animals on the earth. And they will stay subjected to these evils, always until one vast tomb [Grab] engulfs them one and all (honest or not, that makes no difference here) and hurls them, who managed to believe they were the final purpose of creation back into the abyss of the purposeless chaos of matter from which they were taken [in den Schlund des zwecklosen Chaos der Materie...aus dem sie gezogen waren].²⁵²

This is what an aesthetic idea looks like when the power of the imagination becomes unhinged from the regulative principles provided by the rational concepts; the transcendent (eternity) is thus represented as immanent and reason produces a “monstrosity.”²⁵³ For the non-empirical no longer designates a realm circumscribed by the interrelated concepts of the supersensible.

And if the Spinozist subject therefore shows what happens when the idea of freedom stands alone, it is not then credited with having introduced a law or ethic of tragedy, despite the fact that he refuses to degrade the Kantian concept of duty by basing it on “incentives of fear and hope.”²⁵⁴

But why cannot this death scene be valued in the same way as the act of self-sacrifice Kant sanctions in the second Critique?²⁵⁵ For Kant no such question in fact explicitly arises; for rather than attesting in an unparalleled fashion to his respect for the law and his unswerving adherence to the “call of his inner moral vocation” the “well-meaning...[Spinozist] would indeed have to give up as impossible the purpose that the

moral law obligated him to have before his eyes and that in compliance with it he did have before his eyes.”²⁵⁶

The subject would thus become morally culpable for having attempted to preempt the need for accepting its pardonable guilt. Animated by a misplaced and impossible desire to extirpate the desire for happiness, it blinds itself to that which is “irresistible and put into human beings [as]...their nature (as finite beings).”²⁵⁷ For natural inclination is not evil per se; it only becomes associated with “radical evil” when the subject confounds it with a moral incentive.²⁵⁸

The judgment against an “evil” nature redounds upon the willful subject in that its resultant attempts at purification “strains the moral capacity of the human being...far beyond all the limits of his nature.”²⁵⁹ Under the guise of sacrificing a natural need (and furthermore by demonizing the victim), the subject refuses the pardon that alone allows it to understand how a historical ethic can be based upon a particular relationship between nature and the freedom of the human will. For once nature is judged to be purposive, reason’s demand for totality ensures that this purposiveness must be represented as a system of effects which of course must necessarily have a cause. And given the specificity of the transcendental constitution of subjectivity that allows the subject to experience anything at all, this cause must be represented in terms that prevent history from being conceived as fundamentally atheological.²⁶⁰

There is an inescapable logic to the emergence of the theological supplement to morality. And to not recognize, or to refuse—with the “Spinozist”—to recognize such a process is an avoidable, contingent and therefore non-tragic decision. The need for a measure that furnishes a criterion for distinguishing sublimity from monstrosity, the

peculiarity of innocent guilt from the tragedy of guilty innocence, and the ideal from the idol foregrounds the central problem confronting an ethic of history in the wake of the Copernican Revolution. It receives a particularly clear expression in Georg Lukács' "Tactics and Ethics" (1919), the author's first avowedly "Marxist" work which clearly evinces both an indebtedness to, and radical departure from Kant:

it is not the task of ethics to invent prescriptions for correct action...Ethical self-awareness makes it quite clear that there are...tragic situations in which it is impossible to act without burdening oneself with guilt. But at the same time it teaches us that, even faced with the choice of two ways of incurring guilt, we should still find that there is a standard attaching to correct and incorrect action. *This standard we call sacrifice.*²⁶¹

Perhaps nothing else becomes more apparent when revisiting the death scenes Kant stages in the second and third Critiques than the degree to which such a standard is in turn in need of a standard. For Lukács the axiomatic character of an ethic of sacrifice emerges as a seemingly necessary law once the logic of natural history has been converted into a pre-history and the vocation of reason has been substantialized into a world-historical phenomenon (i.e. class consciousness) that can be fully cognized and given a practical and objective reality. The proscription of an ethic that "invents prescriptions for correct action" thus both preserves and negates the Kantian critique of pragmatism by transforming the transcendental subject of the moral law into the subject of history.

For Kant the historicization of the moral law must "fail", and yet history is kept open so long as this failure is recognized as the condition of possibility for sustaining a structure of expectation designed to preempt a collective experience of resignation, fanaticism or hubris.

Perhaps the most sublime passage in 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... The same holds also for our representation of the moral law, and for the predisposition within us for morality. It is indeed a mistake to worry that depriving this representation 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 [*bewegende Kraft oder Rührung*]. It is exactly the other way around. 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... than to seek to support these ideas with images and childish devices for fear they would otherwise be powerless... On the other hand this... involves no danger of fanaticism... for the idea of freedom is inscrutable and thereby precludes all positive exhibition [*Darstellung*] 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.²⁶²

Only a religion presented within the boundaries of mere reason, a “universal religion” purified of any doctrinal particularity, allows for this precarious balance of forces to be sustained.²⁶³ Not unlike what happens to the imagination in a judgment of the “natural” sublime, therefore, the theological supplement serves essentially as an instrument of reason, for “the Christian principle of morality itself is not theological.”²⁶⁴ For that which “supplements” the “lack” that appears to the ethical subject as its constitutive experience of history is not properly understood as something that puts reason into a condition of heteronomy. The Kantian measure deployed in order to differentiate ideal and idol therefore all but amounts to a criterion used for distinguishing the useful from the harmful illusion, the captivating myth from the heuristic fiction and, ultimately, the word from the thing.

Just as Lukács’ standard of sacrifice stood in want of another standard, such transcendental utility solicits a reexamination of the Kantian system’s underlying presuppositions, beginning with the value and significance it accords to the concept of

time.²⁶⁵ When the representations of mechanical causation and infinite progress are conjoined, they create an integrated if less than harmonious totality within which the power of desire, natural inclination and the subject's inner moral lawfulness cohere. Such a unity is presented as the outcome of a peculiarly *secular theodicy* that, while claiming to suspend the question of the existence of God, nevertheless offers a defense of the law which sanctions striving for its impossible historicization as though it were somehow possible.

As a result, a hope for hope is offered to the Spinozan subject which allows it to imagine that the monstrosity of nature he discovered was posited in a dream from which he can awaken. For otherwise he could doubtless expect his "respect for the moral law, by which this law directly inspires him to obey it, to be weakened, as would result from the nullification [Nichtigkeit] of the one ideal final purpose that is adequate [angemessenen] to this respect's high demand."²⁶⁶ Such is the unmistakably *pragmatic* character of the appeal for a conversion that would enable the Spinozist to "form a concept of the possibility of [achieving] the final purpose that is morally prescribed to him...from a practical point of view...by assuming the existence of a moral author of the world, i.e., the existence of God."²⁶⁷

And in the last instance, or as a last line of defense against lawless skepticism, such an assumption is sanctioned by reason on the seductively firm grounds that "it is *at least* not in itself contradictory [es an sich wenigstens nicht widersprechend ist]."²⁶⁸

Post-Kantian presentations of the conditions of possibility for a historical ethic that evince a certain dissatisfaction with such a defense of the moral law have been organized with varying degrees of explicitness around the following four questions:

how can the “aesthetic idea” be dissociated from the form of lawfulness prescribed for it by the rational concept; how should the feeling of the sublime be understood apart from an attestation of the subject’s moral vocation; is there a way of “representing” material yet non-empirical alterity in a way that is fundamentally anthropological; can nature be conceptualized as something other than a form of necessity inimical to the development of human freedom?

CHAPTER III

A PROFANE RECONCILIATION

Exiled from the presence of nature and severed, as a finite being, from the immediacy of freedom, the Kantian subject is confronted by the need for a form of mediation that allows the “humanity in [its]...person [to be thought of] as holy. For he [the moral person] is the subject of the moral law and so of that which is holy in itself...For this moral law is based on the autonomy of his will, as a free will which, in accordance with its universal laws, must necessarily *be able* at the same time *to agree* [einstimmen können] to that which it is to subject itself.”²⁶⁹

Rather than signifying a relation of logical correspondence, “to agree” in this context connotes a form of consent whereby an act of voluntary submission is distinguished from the use of coercive force. Further, *einstimmen können* draws attention to the particular type of experience that makes such self-determination possible; that is, it conveys how the subject must be attuned to, or be put in the mood for, a relationship to the law in which the concept of duty and the enabling yet limited principle of autonomy harmonize with one another.²⁷⁰ Harmony is achieved not by bringing the realm of phenomena under the jurisdiction of the moral law but by opening a theoretical-practical “space” (and time) for faith within which nature “promises” to take on a noumenal quality that appears capable of receiving the effects of freedom produced by a special form of causality whose origin and end remain inaccessible to the laws of the understanding.²⁷¹ And because the concept of freedom is not an arbitrary product of the imagination but the result of a peculiar deduction (presented as the fact of reason), the

negative (or rational) concept of the holy, purified of all anthropomorphic predications, can alone provide a basis for positing a relation between inner experience and external nature that can be thought without contradiction. "The moral laws enable us to attribute to the author of nature, and the final purpose enables us to attribute to man, the properties that are the necessary conditions for the possibility of carrying out [the commands of] the law".²⁷²

Pure reason's ahistorical vocation calls upon the subject to become historical even though the only means at its disposal are a mechanical concept of time and the idea of holiness (eternity). This is the fate of a historical ethic whose completion in the third Critique now appears something like a self-enclosed and internally cohesive culture that regulates itself in accordance with its own particular spatio-temporal laws.²⁷³ But because it is thereby exposed to a history that is distinguished by the conspicuous absence of a seamlessly progressive or static tradition, the Kantian philosophy solicits the type of interpretation to be found in Adorno's Negative Dialectics.

The agreement of the subject with the moral law is there presented as a damaging precedent which arises as an inevitable consequence from the supposition that the realm of freedom must be posited by reason on analogy with, and yet in opposition to, the concept of natural necessity. What is determined by Kant as the constitutive limit of transcendental subjectivity would then seem to require another transcendental reflection insofar as it unduly constricts the way in which the phenomenon and noumenon (Adorno does not abandon the Kantian referents) are interpreted. In short, "nature" stands in need of a concept which would represent it as something other than a mechanism against which reason establishes its identity. And to the degree that the

concept of freedom *must* be further determined in terms of spontaneity and production, “the constitution of [special] causality by reason...is [thus] already subject to causality.” That is, “freedom is so compromised beforehand that hardly any place for it remains outside a consciousness complaisant toward the law.”²⁷⁴ It seems that the moral law inflicts violence on something more than a so-called pathological nature when it mandates that the good will must be a self-positing will and that “freedom exists...only in identification with the law.”²⁷⁵

However, such an act of “identification” already offers an intimation of a form of experience that expands the domain of the Kantian law beyond the narrow confines within which it is circumscribed by Adorno’s reading. For the “holiness” of the profane will furnishes a form of identity based on a constitutive sense of lack that isolates what appears today as a dual legacy. On the one hand, a Lacanian understanding of acculturation views the concept of identification as a never completed process that prevents the experience of being in the world from being mastered by an indivisible subject.²⁷⁶ On the other hand, the very lack of a determinate concept of identity predisposes the subject to commit acts of “subreption” in which a functional, instrumental form of agency is confounded with the noumenal self.

The fact that Kant did not invest the vocation of reason with such a determinate form of subjectivity furnished the tradition of Western metaphysics with a source of critical negativity. But Adorno would not consider it to be a corroboration of “negative dialectics”. In fact the dual legacy in question is subjected to a very non-dialectical reading that identifies the first Critique as the “theoretical source” of a world-historical

“false reconciliation” that culminates in the work of Friedrich Engels, for whom the idea of freedom

does not lie in dreams about independence of the laws of nature; it lies in the knowledge of these laws and in the ability conferred by that knowledge to make the laws work according to plan and to definite ends...Freedom thus consists in our control based upon our knowledge of the natural necessities of ourselves and of external nature; it is thus necessarily a product of historical evolution.²⁷⁷

What aspects of the Kantian heritage must be both accentuated and minimized in order to establish such a relation of continuity between the vocation of reason and Engels' Marxism? What is stressed is how the antinomy of nature and freedom that confronts practical reason is surmounted through the introduction of the principles of aesthetic and teleological purposiveness in the third Critique. What is de-emphasized is how such a link is forged with the use of conceptual distinctions that rigorously dissociate reflective and determinate judgment, practical and theoretical knowledge, from one another. Adorno's terse genealogy thus renews the question of how and if a relationship between the freedom of the will and the subject's interpretation of nature should be represented.

The Kantian response to what emerged in the age of the Enlightenment as the “secular” aspects of this problem brought forth the singular concept of purposiveness [Zweckmäßigkeit].

The purposiveness of nature is a special a priori concept that has its origin solely in reflective judgment. For we...can only use this concept in order to reflect on nature as regards that connection among nature's appearances which is given to us in terms of empirical laws...Through this concept we represent nature as if an understanding contained the basis of the unity of what is diverse in nature's empirical laws...*This concept is quite distinct from practical purposiveness (in human art or in morality), though we do think it by analogy with practical purposiveness.*²⁷⁸

The subject first becomes attuned to the concept of natural purposiveness through a judgment of beauty, whereby it is affected by a phenomenal form in a way that is irreducible to a feeling of either “agreeableness” [Annehmlichkeit] or respect.²⁷⁹ On the “basis” of nothing more determinate than the finite subject’s receptivity to what—when counterpoised with the law of natural causality—constitutes a source of alterity, Kant constructs a historical ethic by forging a path that leads from natural beauty to “ethico-theology” without imputing a determinate “property” to either nature as such or the realm of the supersensible.²⁸⁰ The task confronting post-Kantian variations on such an ethic becomes—for Schiiller and Nietzsche—one of reassessing the transcendental and empirical dimensions of what are nevertheless preserved as the two definitive forms of human experience.

Such reinterpretations, however, leave scant traces of the “space” for faith opened in the third Critique by Kant’s presentation of natural beauty. Like the disclosure of the fact of reason, it bears a proto-phenomenological value insofar as it arises out of the self-relation of the will situated in a world that impinges upon the subject in ways that cannot be understood solely on the basis of mechanical laws. For in a judgment of natural beauty, the subject becomes attuned to “that cipher [Chifferschrift] through which nature speaks to us figuratively in its beautiful forms.”²⁸¹

The subject’s disinterested fascination with what it calls natural beauty can and then ought to give way to what is subsequently felt to be a violence inflicted upon sensibility from unknown quarters.²⁸² The playful harmony that exists between the imagination and the understanding is thus superceded by a second-order harmony in which the inability of the imagination to furnish intuitions adequate to the ideas of reason

facilitates the recognition of a higher purposiveness; there is, in short, a “reason” for the sacrifice of the imagination which is first prepared for by a judgment of beauty. That is, as a result of the latter, “nature” seems to offer a “trace or give a hint that it contains some basis or other for us to assume in its productions a lawful harmony with that [aesthetic] liking of ours which is independent of all interest.”²⁸³

But the allure of beauty appears to draw the subject toward phenomenal nature in such a way only in order to then confront it with something (i.e., with itself, with its own rational identity) that at first creates a sense of violent disruption among the cognitive powers. Thought of in narrative terms, the beauty of nature attracts the subject to what ultimately becomes excessively fascinating, to what consequently interrupts the feeling of disinterested pleasure and induces the sense of higher pleasure associated with the feeling of the sublime.

The progression from a feeling for natural beauty to the assent to a “wholly moral faith” required for an “ethico-theology” is a “movement” that can be followed if with Kant we “consider...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.”²⁸⁴ Natural beauty thus prompts another judgment, one no longer aesthetic but teleological that, in keeping with reason’s demand for unity, cannot let the concept of “purposiveness without a purpose” alone determine the subject’s relation to nature. Consequently, “since we do not find this [missing] purpose anywhere outside of us, we naturally look for it in ourselves, namely in what constitutes the ultimate purpose of our existence: our moral vocation.”²⁸⁵

If the source of the “false reconciliation” in modernity has been identified as the Kantian system on account of how it both represents nature as a means of securing the subject’s identity as an end in itself and posits human freedom in terms “borrowed” from the laws of mechanical causation, then how is the experience of theology to be incorporated into such a historical “constellation”? For the Kantian “identification” of the unrepresentable law and the unfathomable basis of human freedom seems to postpone indefinitely the realization of the sort of telos that Engels describes as a product of historical evolution. But the form of the postponement demanded by the idea of the highest good creates an underlying tension within the structure of the “autonomous” will that collapses once the necessary and internally consistent need for a form of rational faith becomes transformed into a malleable object of historical interpretation.

A. Toward A Law of Aesthetic Freedom

The precarious balance of forces arrayed by Kant in order to allow the being that wills to strive for the impossible as if it were possible gives way at the very moment Schiller attempts to preserve and elevate tradition through “the further development of some Kantian ideas.” The plural in this subtitle to “On the Sublime” foregrounds the ambiguities surrounding any such “development” that utilizes only one of the three “pure ideas of reason”—freedom--in the construction of a historical ethic.²⁸⁶

The development of the ideas that effectively dismantles the structure of the autonomous yet situated will while refashioning the remnants of the architectonic of

theoretical and practical reason into a program of aesthetic *Erziehung* (education) will appear to be a more appropriate candidate for Adorno's search for the origins of the "false reconciliation" in modernity. And yet Schiller's *aestheticization of the conditions of possibility for a historical ethic* begins from a premise surprisingly similar to the one that served as the impetus for Adorno's critique of Kant; that is, the need to include nature among the "objects" affecting the will that demand a form of respect is coupled with an attempt to locate a proper place for freedom apart from its putative identification with the law.²⁸⁷

While the law is still presumed to be in force for Schiller, the realm of the aesthetic now contains a "law" of its own that purportedly renders the need for the theological supplement unnecessary without thereby lowering the threshold of moral experience to a pre-Kantian level.

"I shall not attempt to hide from you²⁸⁸ that it is for the most part [größtenteils] Kantian principles [Grundsätze] on which these following theses will be based."²⁸⁹ Soon after Schiller begins to retrace the steps Kant took in establishing an ethical relation between natural beauty and theology, however, he takes a detour that changes both the destination and the philosophical-aesthetic significance of the starting point. What precipitates such a reorientation is the introduction of what Schiller presents as the "play drive" [Spieltrieb].

Now neither term of this compound is on its own unrecognizable to the Kantian subject, for when pure reason becomes practical, the will is determined in its actions by the power of the moral *Triebfeder* [mainspring, motive, incentive].²⁹⁰ Furthermore, the principle of "play" emerges as a pivotal part of the Kantian system insofar as it isolates

the movement that transpires among the cognitive powers in an act of aesthetic judgment.²⁹¹ Taken together, however, the terms produce a new character in the drama of the autonomous yet situated human will Schiller stages.

The structure of the will is now determined by the ongoing relation between two forms of intentionality defined by Schiller as the “sense drive” and the “form drive”. With such a renaming of what had been represented as the pathological and moral incentives comes a change of emphasis that gives to the drives an inflection of anonymous subjectivity expressed in explicitly temporal terms: “the sense drive [der sinnliche Trieb] desires [will] that there be change and that time have a content; the form drive [Formtrieb] desires that time be sublated [aufgehoben] and that there will be no change...The sense drives desires to be determined, wants to take in [empfangen] its object; the form drive desires to itself determine, to bring forth its object.”²⁹²

As a being in the world whose will is afflicted with such competing tendencies, the Schillerian subject finds itself drawn to a now familiar impasse: “since the sense drive constrains physically [while] the form drive constrains morally, the former will leave our formal state, the second our material state [in a state] of contingency...That is to say, it [becomes a matter of] contingency whether our happiness harmonizes [übereinstimmen] with our perfection [Vollkommenheit] or our perfection with our happiness.”²⁹³

The antinomic relation between the pathological and the moral shows its first sign of resolution in the interplay of the cognitive powers which Schiller transposes from the sphere of aesthetic judgment to an aestheticized realm of human practice.²⁹⁴ Now Kant did present the principle of natural purposiveness on analogy with the type of practical

purposiveness indissociable from both human art and moral action; the rational concept of freedom thus not only shares an affinity with a theological understanding of the first cause but also with the artwork.²⁹⁵ The reason why Kant inters the “mechanical” as well as fine arts in a realm set apart from the ethical, however, is that their productions can only be understood as having arisen from an instrumental or unconscious form of subjectivity. For the art of the craftsman “represents only competence in the use of the suitable means toward optional ends.”²⁹⁶ And since “fine art cannot itself devise the rule by which it is to bring about its product [while]...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.”²⁹⁷

What renders the work of “genius” an unsuitable object for the Kantian subject’s ethico-historical consideration—its dependence on something like an unconscious “purpose” of nature---becomes for that *very reason* the starting point for Schiller’s project.

For the conditions of possibility for an ethic of history rests upon the production of beauty which takes place in accordance with a special rule or “law” that thereby redefines the relationship between the subject’s interpretation of nature and the freedom of the will. If the immense chasm separating freedom and nature is to be crossed without having recourse to a theological supplement, then the moral law will have to be both historicized and “aestheticized” in a way that allows the subject to “act rationally within the limits of matter, and materially under the laws of reason.”²⁹⁸ This means that an aesthetic principle, rather than the Kantian “pardon”, will bring about an

“agreement” between the “pathological” and moral determinations of the will, the consequences of which will “become manifest in the realm of time...[wherein] matter will be given a voice [die Materie...zu bestimmen haben], not merely as something subordinate to form but also side by side with it and [even] independently of it.”²⁹⁹ What is brought to language and therefore “temporalized” is the emergence of a “natural power” that was evidently not accounted for when Kant censured the ethical doctrine of the Stoa.

It seems then that a rewriting of the constitution of transcendental subjectivity delimited in the three Critiques is required if the program for an aesthetic education is to be instituted. Kant’s characterization of the tradition of metaphysics as a “combat arena” of “endless conflict” thus becomes a fitting description for both the inception and execution of Schiller’s project.³⁰⁰ For the recognition of the play drive as an agent of reconciliation is presented as a response to the putative sense of closure which emerges now that

reason accomplished all that it could accomplish when it discovered and set up the law; *to put it into effect* [vollstrecken] there must be a courageous will and living [lebendige] feeling. If truth is to obtain victory in its struggle with forces [im Streit mit Kräften] it must first itself become a force and set up a drive to be its delegate [Sachführer] in the realm of phenomena because drives are the only moving [bewegenden] forces in the sensible world. If truth has hitherto shown so little of its conquering force, [the cause for this] lay not with the understanding, which did not know how to unveil it, but with the heart, which closed itself to truth and to the drive which did not take action for it.³⁰¹

“Truth” is for Schiller synonymous with reason and historicizing the law thus appears as a “secular” task enjoined upon a reconstituted subject: “the human being only plays when he is in the fullest sense of the word a human being and he is only fully

a human being when he plays.”³⁰² The “paradoxical sound” of such a post-Cartesian formulation stems from an unfamiliarity with the structure of the play drive.³⁰³ Once introduced, it will furnish the necessary supplement which alone is capable of meeting reason’s insuperable demand for a unified experience otherwise thwarted by the “primordial and radical opposition” between the sense-drive and the form drive.³⁰⁴

The supplement is not exactly a “new” drive per se, but rather an as yet undisclosed form of subjectivity that allows the subject to become attuned to the way in which a relation of reciprocity can be established between sensibility and the moral law. Ultimately possible for Kant only by juxtaposing the time of natural history with the time of eternity, such harmonization occurs for Schiller when the will is “directed toward annulling time within time [die Zeit in der Zeit aufzuheben] and reconciling becoming with absolute being, change with identity.”³⁰⁵ This synthesis is attained when the subject animated by the power of the play drive “strives to receive as if it had itself brought forth, and to bring forth as sensibility aspires to receive.”³⁰⁶

The play of the cognitive powers underlying a judgment of natural beauty also takes on a *productive* character in Kant’s provisional representation of the origin of the “aesthetic idea” in the act of “genius” whereby the “imagination as a productive power...creates, as it were, another nature out of the material that actual nature gives it.”³⁰⁷ Like the play drive, such an act appears to arise out of a certain interrelationship between receptivity and spontaneity that Kant first introduces in the opening to the introduction of the first Critique:

there can be no doubt that all our cognition begins with experience. For what else might rouse our cognitive power to its operation if objects stirring our senses did not do so? In part these objects by themselves bring about representations. In part they set in motion our

understanding's activity, by which it compares these representations, connects or separates them, and thus processes the raw material of sense impressions into a cognition of objects that is called experience. *In terms of time* [Kant's emphasis], therefore, no cognition in us precedes experience, and all our cognition begins with experience.³⁰⁸

Now what Kant is describing here is the genesis of a posteriori knowledge. And while the productions of genius arise on analogy with such a process, the formative power of the understanding has been ceded to the imagination, which is why the resulting product—the aesthetic idea—corroborates what Kant adds as an essential corollary to the above exposition: “even though all our cognition starts with experience, that does not mean that all of it arises from experience.”³⁰⁹

While the subject's *receptivity* to the aesthetic idea (an intuition deprived of a determinate concept) is represented as a universal human capacity, the act of genius that produces it is traceable to a necessarily contingent experience whose conditions of possibility lie within a completely indeterminate “realm” of nature. The latter is not encountered when the path leading from natural beauty to ethico-theology is traversed. This is because unlike the interest taken in the beauty of nature, “an interest in the beautiful in art...provides no proof whatever that [one's] way of thinking is attached to the morally good, or even inclined toward it.”³¹⁰ As a result the “aesthetic ideas” are strictly subordinated to reason, which sanctions them only insofar as they provide a potentially heuristic “semblance of objective reality” to the rational concepts.³¹¹ For “unless we connect the fine arts...with moral ideas”, they offer nothing in the way of a propaedeutic; the “superiority of natural beauty over that of art” thus stems from the fact that the former affects the subject in a way which solicits a reflective judgment of natural purposiveness while the origin of the latter is traceable to a form of *practical*

purposiveness that, when isolated as a capacity of the will, in itself suggests nothing about humanity's moral vocation.³¹²

In the "force" exerted by the play drive, however, Schiller locates nothing less than an exemplary form of action that alone is capable of historicizing the law, of "put[ting] it into effect."³¹³ The play drive would therefore seem to introduce another form of special causality into the phenomenal world, the effects of which become manifest in an "object" of beauty. What kind of product is this that arises out of the union of the form and sense drives—a union that apparently takes place, as it were, in a newly demarcated "realm of time", where "time annuls time within time"?³¹⁴

The production of the beautiful as a "living form" presupposes that a certain exchange between states of receptivity and intentionality takes place that transforms the subject's experience of both nature and freedom.³¹⁵ The effect of the play drive on human experience appears analogous to an act of literary-philosophical translation insofar as the language of nature is carried over to that of morality in a manner that no longer remains bound to the laws of either realm while simultaneously remaining faithful to that which is peculiar to each. As a result, freedom and nature take on hitherto unrecognizable dimensions by being brought into a reciprocally amplifying relation with one another:

The play drive...[will therefore] bring form into matter [Materie] and reality [Realität] into form. To the degree that it takes from sensations [Empfindungen] and affects their dynamic power [Einfluß] it will harmonize them with the ideas of reason and to the degree that it deprives the laws of reason of their moral compulsion it will reconcile them with the interests of the senses.³¹⁶

The proper object of the play drive not only reverses the hierarchical relationship Kant establishes between natural and artistic beauty. For what had been defined as a

rule for judgment is elevated by Schiller to the rank of “pure rational concept”—a concept which for Kant is distinguished above all by the fact that it cannot be connected with a corresponding phenomenal intuition.³¹⁷

Because aesthetic beauty thereby becomes the indispensable precondition for initiating a reconciliation between the natural and the moral in an evidently non-mechanical and non-theological “realm of time,”³¹⁸ its “deduction” must be presented on transcendental grounds which furnish a “firm basis of knowledge that nothing will shake.”³¹⁹ Such a justification can no longer, therefore, legitimate a merely “practical” form of knowledge if Schiller is to establish the objective reality of what is somehow both an empirical and a rational concept:

beauty is indeed form, because we contemplate [betrachten] it, but it is at the same time life, because we feel it...[Thus]...in the enjoyment of beauty or aesthetic unity, an actual unity and interchange [Auswechslung] between form and matter, passivity and activity, takes place [and] so the reconcilability of both natures, the practicability [Ausführbarkeit] of the infinite in the finite, therefore the possibility of the most sublime humanity, is proven.³²⁰

The evidence Schiller brings before what is still described as the “tribunal of pure reason” testifies above all, however, to how the transcendental referents of human experience have been put into question. For in the attempt to “further develop” the Kantian ideas by introducing a third law into the phenomenal world Schiller detaches freedom from the rational concepts of god and immortality and aligns it with the “ideal” of beauty.³²¹

The presentation of the “fact of reason” introduced a measure for determining nothing less than the practical reality of the principle of morality. While not a determinate object of theoretical knowledge, the latter is nevertheless attested to in the

experience of being toward death which “proves” (for practical reason) that the subject’s consciousness of the moral law is not a merely subjective, contingent and arbitrary projection of the imagination. Out of the throes of a death scene exposing the imagination to the thought of self-sacrifice a refutation of moral skepticism emerges in the tradition of Western metaphysics that is then appropriated by Schiller essentially as a fait accompli: “reason accomplished all that it could accomplish when it discovered and set up the law.” Consequently, “put[ting] it into effect” without having recourse to a theological supplement becomes the task of an aesthetic education.³²²

Alternatively described as an “ideal”, a “pure rational concept” and a peculiar “fact”, beauty is therefore just as indispensable for Schiller as the fact of reason is for Kant. Unlike the latter, however, its deduction is singularly devoid of pathos. It is in fact presented in ontogenetic and phylogenetic terms as a “gift of nature” which upon being received causes a magical breach in the subject’s animal-like existence: “the favor of fortune alone can loosen the chains of the physical condition and lead the savage toward beauty.”³²³

The aesthetic “mood” or disposition corresponding with the play drive then develops in a manner that redefines the will’s relation to nature; ultimately “it seeks objects not because they give him something which he passively endures but because they give him something which he can act upon [er sucht diese Gegenstände nicht, weil sie ihm etwas zu erleiden, sondern weil sie ihm zu handeln geben]. They please him not because they meet a need but because they give satisfaction to a law which as yet speaks softly.”³²⁴

Wilkinson and Willoughby translate the first sentence of the passage just cited as: “he seeks these objects not because they give him something *to enjoy passively*, but

because they provide an *incentive to respond actively*.”³²⁵ Juxtaposing to “act upon” with “to respond actively” accentuates the ambiguity surrounding the production of beauty through the play drive. To what degree is it conditioned by a relation of reciprocity? How is it distinguished from simply a self-positing act of will? Because the stated aim of “On the Aesthetic Education of the Human Being” is to prove that it is only “through beauty that man moves toward freedom”, the activity of the play drive which sets this process in motion must be presented as a *lawful* activity whose sphere of operation is irreducible to the realm of moral freedom.³²⁶

The “law which as yet speaks softly” as soon as the play drive “begins to stir” rescues the subject from an experience that, judged in strictly Kantian terms, would appear to be formed on the basis of neither moral nor natural laws. And because the prospect of an experience shaped by a “cause acting without any law at all” is unfathomable to the Kantian subject the disparity between the physical and moral possibility of historicizing the law can be reconciled only by an act of faith.

While the works of “genius” seem to offer an instance of law-making that can only be accounted for by a wholly undetermined “reference” to nature, Kant quarantines the aesthetic process for precisely this reason in an amoral realm of experience:

idea properly means a rational concept, and ideal the representation of an individual being as adequate to an idea...Even if one were not to grant objective reality...[to the latter], they are not therefore to be regarded as chimeras. They provide us...with an indispensable standard of reason...The situation is quite different with the creatures of the imagination concerning which no one can offer an explication and give an understandable concept: the monograms, as it were...are not determined according to any rule that one can indicate...[and thus] amount to a design that hovers, as it were, at the mean of various experiences...such as painters and physiognomists claim to have in their minds and as are supposed to be an incommunicable shadow-image [Schattenbild] of these people’s products...or judgments.³²⁷

The “Letters on Aesthetic Education are concerned with virtually nothing other than a refutation” of what for Schiller is the erroneous supposition that the “creatures of the imagination” [Geschöpfen der Einbildungskraft] arise as phenomena that should be subsumed by reason under the “concept of the arbitrary”.³²⁸ For while the subject in the “aesthetic condition is to the highest degree free and free from all coercion [Zwang] it is in no way free from laws, and such aesthetic freedom is to be distinguished from logical necessity...and moral necessity...only by the fact that the laws in accordance with which the subject acts *are not represented or put forward [nicht vorgestellt werden]* (Schiller’s emphasis).”³²⁹

B. Schiller’s “Complete Anthropological Evaluation”

Such a formulation indicates how Schiller’s indebtedness to Kant manifests itself in a language that is both unthinkable without, and irreconcilable with the three Critiques. For of course the moral law itself is also unrepresentable and incapable of being converted into an object of determinate knowledge. And the purpose of “annulling” [aufhebt] the latter “in order to make room for faith” is unambiguously “practical.”³³⁰ That is, if the fact of reason is not to be judged as both non-empirical and irrational, then the capacity for moral freedom it discloses must not seem to be ineffectual or unrealizable. This is why the rational concepts of “god and immortality...are the conditions under which alone, given the character of our (human) reason, we can

conceive of the possibility of [achieving] the effect [the final purpose] of the lawful use of our freedom.”³³¹

Everything hinges, as far as morality is concerned, upon the experience of a certain mood, the comprehensibility of which is aided by the fact that there are only two sources of determination for the human will: the pathological and the moral. And as a way of suspending the influence of the former while creating the conditions of receptivity for the latter, a judgment of natural beauty induces a certain feeling of pleasure and a sense of “purposiveness without a purpose” which brings the cognitive powers into a relation of “free play”:

a judgment of taste [i.e., an aesthetic judgment of the beautiful] must rest upon a mere sensation, 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 representation (by which an object is given) has insofar as it furthers the cognitive powers in their free play.³³²

With an experience resting “upon a mere sensation” it is not difficult to offer variations on the way in which it affects the subject. This is in fact what happens when Schiller reverses the terms of the hierarchical relationship Kant establishes between the moment of disinterested receptivity (taste) and inexplicable productivity (genius). While the former serves as a basis for teleological judgment, the act of aesthetic production is explicitly dissociated from a “lawful use of...freedom”; for Kant’s conception of beauty is not presented in order to disclose a capacity of the human will—especially if the latter is conceived as a substitute for the *ethical-historical* concepts of God and immortality.

For Schiller the “fact of beauty”, corroborated by a “mere sensation”, exposes the determinability of the will to an unrepresentable aesthetic law which provides the indispensable precondition for resolving what is referred to as the “problem of politics” (i.e. the problem of historicizing the moral law): “it is only through beauty that the human being makes its way to freedom.”³³³ Nevertheless, it becomes evident from Schiller’s presentations of this fact/idea/ideal that it usurps the regulative authority of the goal for which it was to serve as the necessary means. For the telos of historicization first requires a seemingly definitive reconciliation of the finite and the infinite that was prompted by what amounted to the inadequacy of the moral law as a phenomenal “force.” Beauty is then “brought forth by the reciprocal action of two opposed drives and by the uniting of two opposed principles.”³³⁴

Such a unification is justified on “transcendental grounds” that appear to give rise to something closer to a tautology than to a deduction since the pure rational concepts used in the construction of the Kantian historical ethic have been displaced or seemingly rendered inoperative. For it was only by presenting reason’s capacity for a hermeneutic self-cognition and not for a cognition of the external world as such that Kant could aver the suspicion that the lawfulness of the vocation of reason was but another manifestation of the law-making violence endemic to the “combat arena” of metaphysics.

Kantian lawfulness takes on the character of a seeming lawfulness, however, once the underlying rational ideas are further determined by Schiller as the source of an aesthetic reconciliation that claims to answer the now more clearly understood “summons of reason” (and “summons to reason”):

reason lays down on transcendental ground the demand: there should be a communion [Gemeinschaft] between the form drive and the material drive [Stofftrieb—i.e. the sense drive], that is, there should be a play drive, because only the union of reality with form, contingency with necessity, passivity [Leidens] with freedom completes the concept of the human being. Reason must lay down this demand because it is its nature [Wesen] to insistently press [dringen] toward completion and the removal of all limits.³³⁵

On the one hand this amendment to the moral law bears the sign of an unlicensed imposition that retroactively betrays the precarious character of Kant's transcendental deductions—above all the “practical” deduction of the fact of reason. Such fragility was offset in part by the rigorous formalism and negativity that accompanied all of Kant's “representations” of the a priori principle of morality, above all in the form of the regulative ideal which has a

practical power (as regulative principle) and underlies the possibility of the perfection of certain actions...[The regulative ideal thus provides a measure] with which we can compare, judge, and thereby improve ourselves even though we can never attain it. Even if one were not to grant objective reality...to these ideals...they are not therefore to be regarded as chimeras. They provide us...with an indispensable standard of reason. But trying to realize the ideal in an example, i.e., in an appearance is unfeasible and has something absurd [Widersinnisches] and not very edifying about it. For in such an attempt the natural limits that continually impair the completeness in the idea make any illusion impossible, and the good itself that lies in the idea is thereby made suspect and similar to a mere invention.³³⁶

To continue to use the language of the transcendental and of reason's drive toward unity and the unconditioned while simultaneously offering beauty as a way of redeeming phenomenal appearances by integrating them into “the complete concept of the human being” is bound to arouse just such a suspicion.

On the other hand, by carrying over Kantian principles to the newly demarcated aesthetic realm, Schiller suggests a way in which the concept of the “mere invention” can be reevaluated so that the illusory image takes on a value in its own right. For Kant any attempt at surmounting the antinomic relation between the historical example and the moral principle can only lead to the de-formation, as it were, of the regulative ideal. “Any illusion” that the ideal and the real somehow coincide is dispelled not only by the very laws of nature which reason is incapable of suspending for the being in the world but by the fact that the “idea of freedom is inscrutable and thereby precludes all positive presentation whatever”.³³⁷ Although the passage in question inadvertently suggests otherwise, a proper “illusion” would not for Kant be desirable in any case. For the “aesthetic idea” can serve as a heuristic instrument of reason only insofar as it presents as symbol what is constitutively incapable of becoming an object of determinate knowledge. “An aesthetic idea cannot become cognition because it is an intuition of the imagination for which an adequate concept can never be found...It is [therefore] easy to see that it is the counterpart (pendant) of a rational idea, which is, conversely, a concept to which no intuition can be adequate.”³³⁸

If beauty is conceived as a “rational concept” that corresponds with an “actual interchange of form and matter” then in Kantian terms it offers a paradigmatic example of the “fallacy of subreption” in a two-fold sense: it confounds what is merely sensible for a concept of the understanding and it attributes to an object as such what is merely imparted to it by the subject: “the illusions of the understanding, produced by the covert misuse of a sensitive concept...can be called...a fallacy of subreption.”³³⁹

Amidst such confusion Schiller discovers a way of recuperating the mere semblance of a concept for reason's moral use; that is, the production of beauty in accordance with a third law is valued precisely for its *seeming* lawfulness, for its treatment of appearance as appearance, apart from, and in contradistinction to its significance for the understanding. For the appearance of beauty takes on an ethico-historical character only insofar as it is "distinguished from, and not confused with actuality and truth"; unlike "logical semblance...aesthetic semblance" [Schein] is loved because it is semblance".³⁴⁰

The play drive's sphere of operation thus appears to constitute something like a supplementary transcendental aesthetic wherein the lawful production of beauty (of "semblance") takes place. And as if in grateful acknowledgement for the "gift of nature" responsible for the subject's capacity for producing and judging beauty a revaluation of the material object emerges within what Schiller refers to as a newfound "realm of time." For this capacity can only be realized if the relation between reason and sensibility is presented in terms that offer a means of expression to subaltern nature: "matter will be given a voice not merely as something subordinate to form but also side by side with it and [even] independently of it."

Once the play drive is considered in terms of the effects it produces rather than its conditions of possibility, however, it undergoes a significant change that casts the interpretive value afforded by representing it on analogy with the art of translation in a different light. Now referred to as the "mimetic form-giving drive" [der nachahmende Bildungstrieb] it isolates an experience in which the subject "can meet with [erleiden] no impression without at once striving for a living expression" [lebendigen

Ausdruck].³⁴¹ However, the first moment is effectively displaced by, or redirected toward, the fashioning of a second nature more suitable for the purposes of the being that wills: “in every beautiful or magnificent form of nature the *Bildungstrieb* catches sight of a challenge which demands it struggle [ringen] with that form.”³⁴²

The need to let nature speak has given way to the demand for a violent struggle that attempts to reduce the natural phenomenon into a pliant material that amplifies the subject’s form-giving capacities. And because the *Bildungstrieb* is directed toward “semblance and not actuality” the second nature that emerges as a product of art “has all the advantages of nature [its beautiful shapes] without sharing its chains.”³⁴³

The beautiful product of the play drive or the mimetic-form drive arises out of the interaction between sensibility and imagination specific to an aesthetic process whose purportedly “transcendental grounds” lay the foundation for the “state of beautiful semblance” [Staat des schönen Scheins].³⁴⁴ Does this then mean that the newly demarcated realm of time proper to the play drive creates nothing more than an insulated, self-contained experience that displaces rather than solves the problem of the historicization of the moral law? It seems the task of finding a transition from nature to freedom has been diverted to the point where the way has become the goal, and the signs for such a detour appear to be clearly marked by the representation of the play drive as that which makes possible the “union of reality with form...[that] completes the human being.”³⁴⁵

The need for such a union arises when a “complete anthropological valuation” [Schätzung] of being in the world takes the place of what now appears as Kant’s “one-sided moral valuation” of that condition.³⁴⁶ Setting the “further development” of the

“Kantian Ideas” into motion is a three-fold transcendental reflection that delimits the conditions of possibility for the awakening of the play drive, establishes the proper realm for its sphere of operation, and prepares the subject for the reception of its beautiful product. The first moment introduces an element of reciprocity to the relationship between sense and understanding, the rudiments of which can be traced back to Kant’s exposition of the transcendental aesthetic. And while the play drive is presented as something meant to redefine the subject’s relation to both sensibility and the moral law, what Kant would call the “domain” of the play drive is relegated to the hitherto ethically inconsequential experience of artistic production. What emerges out of the aesthetic process is then received as the beautiful object, a singular fact, idea and ideal which seems simultaneously to lie outside of, challenge, appeal to and rely upon the power of jurisdiction wielded by the tribunal of pure reason. Nothing brings these contradictions to the fore clearer than Schiller’s presentation of the idea of beauty as regulative ideal. What for Kant could be invested with such a status only through the “fallacy of subreption” is then given precisely the type of historical significance that had been reserved for the regulative idea of the highest good: “the highest ideal of beauty is...to be sought in the most perfect possible union and equilibrium of reality and form. This equilibrium, however, remains no more than an idea, which can never be fully realized in actuality.”³⁴⁷

Notwithstanding a newfound respect for nature, the discovery of a non-mechanical “realm of time” within which a synthesis of the finite and the infinite occurs and a certain world-historical narrative that charts the progress of the play drive from its Greek origins to its modern telos, the Schillerian subject still finds itself mired in the

time of infinite progress.³⁴⁸ How can such an outcome be reconciled with the program for an aesthetic education oriented above all toward the historicization of the moral law no longer held back by the failure to recognize the proper identity of the “being that wills”?

On the one hand, Schiller’s representation of the moral law brings with it the same aura associated with the Christian Fall that pervades the three Critiques: “the setting up of a moral state must rely upon the moral law as an effective force and the freedom of the will is thereby drawn into the realm of causality where everything is joined together with strict necessity and constancy. But we know that the determinability of the human will always remains contingent, and that only with absolute Being does physical necessity correspond with moral necessity.”³⁴⁹ Rather than then conferring a sense of pardonable guilt upon the subject’s recalcitrant, sensible need for happiness, however, Schiller offers a form of respect that seems to expand the boundaries of the historically possible: “although reason is satisfied only if its law holds unconditionally” a “complete anthropological valuation” of the finite subject recognizes how “content counts along with form and that “living sensible feeling” also has a voice [*lebendige Empfindung zugleich eine Stimme hat*].”³⁵⁰ What is thereby capable of being expressed is “nature’s demand for diversity” which “lays a claim upon the human being” no less lawful than reason’s desire for unity.³⁵¹

That such a “complete anthropological valuation” is capable of corresponding with an actual historical experience is suggested by the emergence of a referent prominently absent in Kant’s works which allows the source of the regulative ideal to be relocated from the pure rational concept of God to the exemplary “art and feeling of the Greeks.”

While such an “example” is in fact inimitable, this “fact” does not present itself as an aporia in Schiller’s narrative; rather it provides an occasion for a modern culture to actualize what appears retroactively to have been a Hellenic aestheticization. For “the Greeks transferred to Olympus what was meant to be realized on earth.”³⁵²

What is “meant to be realized on earth” is also presented as that which “cannot be fully realized in actuality.” How is the persistence of the time of infinite progress bereft of the theological supplement to morality therefore to be understood? Why is the “profane” reconciliation made possible by the disclosure of the play drive unattainable? Such questions point toward the Marxist reading of Schiller’s “reconciliation” as but a simulacrum projected for and by the subject attuned to the “state of beautiful semblance.”³⁵³ For what kind of state other than an aesthetic state would provide the appropriate spatio-temporal conditions for representing illusion as illusion? Only such a state makes possible a reconciliation that, rather than harmonizing the realms of freedom and nature, reinforces and accentuates their relation of mutual opposition. The outcome of an aesthetic education thus seems to cause a modification in the structure of expectation accompanying the Kantian subject’s infinite progress. Instead of being guided by a principle of hope, the recognition of the ideal of beauty would offer a form of consolation. If the former is represented as the only way to keep history “open”, the latter dispenses with, or rather exposes at least one illusion.

A form of compensation is thus offered to the subject since morality or “truth is the prize of renunciation alone”; “only beauty makes the world happy and each being forgets its limitations so long as it experiences its spell.”³⁵⁴

But would not the spell be broken as soon as appearance is perceived as mere appearance? Or is such a mode of perception or “beautiful representation” [schöne Vorstellung] precisely the goal of an aesthetic education: to prepare the subject for a reconciliation with the *semblance* of the real.³⁵⁵

The this-worldly ideal incapable of realization, the respect for a nature that seems motivated primarily by the need to appropriate it for the will’s purposes, the at once rational-empirical character of beauty and the simultaneous development and displacement of the Kantian system appear as the contradictions endemic to a historical ethic based upon two ruling metaphors of uncertain epistemological specification: the self-positing subject and the human artwork. The first principle was presented at the beginning of this work in the following passage cited from Schiller’s “On the Sublime”: “Culture should place the human being in freedom and assist him in fulfilling his whole concept. It should thus enable him to assert his will, because man is the being that wills.”³⁵⁶

Basing his project “for the most part” on Kantian principles, Schiller leads the “being that wills” to the very limit confronting and disarming the Spinozist subject. Only now the subjectivity of the latter bears what Lukács describes as Schiller’s historical-philosophical imprint: the play drive. The identity of the subject as “only fully human when he plays” furnishes Lukács’ narrative of the emergence of Marxism out of the tradition of Western metaphysics with an irreversible, fateful turning point. For because “the aesthetic principle [*nach* Schiller] has been extended far beyond the confines of aesthetics...the question of the meaning of human existence in society” presses itself upon any prospective ethic of history that is thereby left with the following

either/or: “either the world must be aestheticized...[which amounts to]...an evasion of the real problem...[and establishes] another way in which to make the subject purely contemplative...or the aesthetic principle must be elevated into the principle by which objective reality is shaped.” In short “with the discovery of art it becomes possible either to provide yet another domain for the fragmented subject or to tackle the problem of ‘creation’ from the side of the subject.”³⁵⁷

Lukács’ formulation effectively casts the contradictions of Schiller’s “Aesthetic Education” into sharper relief. For the unrealizable ideal of beauty borrows the language Kant uses to represent the subject’s relation to the highest good while divesting it of the (theological) conditions of possibility which make a historical reconciliation constitutively impossible. The ethic of history lies in the way to the goal for Kant, and his “negativity theology” seems better able to sustain and limit the structure of the self-positing will (presupposing of course, that reason recognizes the need for faith as a rational-natural need) than the aesthetic state. But while the “spell” cast by the ideal of beauty seems to provide the subject with what Lukács describes as a new site of passive contemplation, there is no intrinsic reason—on Schiller’s terms—why an aesthetic education cannot “bring into being a third character [the play drive] that...might prepare the way for a transition from the rule of mere forces to the rule of law and that...might serve as a sensible pledge [Pfand] of an invisible morality.”³⁵⁸

What the post-Schillerian subject has inherited is the promise or “pledge” of the moral vouchsafed by the aesthetic. While the aestheticization of the world appears as the logical outcome of the discovery of the play drive, such a process can also be sublated insofar as it allows the “problem of creation” to be “tackle[d]...from the side

of the subject.” This is the metaphysical problem for Lukács, the same problem represented in the work of Kant and Schiller by the image of immense chasm lying between freedom and nature, moral necessity and physical necessity, virtue and happiness. And it is Lukács’ own Hegelian-Marxist standpoint that invests the “aesthetic education” with the retroactive distinction of having presaged a reconciliation with a reality determinable at last not as an unknowable X but as “the *product of a creating subject*.”³⁵⁹

But once Lukács’ philosophy of history is dissociated from history as such, the affinity between the discovery of the as yet “pre-historical” play drive and the subsequent moment of the “creative” subject’s self-recognition loses its univocal significance. Based upon the supposition that the being that wills constitutes the sole form of ethical subjectivity and animated by a valorization of the artwork as a paradigmatic form of human experience, the movement from Schiller to Lukács brings forth the idea of a reconciliation which rivals Engels’ identification of freedom and law in terms of the distance separating it from the critical negativity indissociable from Kantian morality.

The contradictions that arise when Schiller attempts to articulate the conditions of possibility for the aesthetic state in historical terms stem from the way in which it serves less as an agent of reconciliation than as a means for further widening the “immense chasm” separating freedom and nature. If annulling knowledge to create a space for faith no longer suffices as a source of mediation, annulling existence to create a space for aesthetic semblance displaces the concept of mediation altogether.

For only in a self-enclosed realm of "aesthetic" experience can the autonomy of the will be maintained. In fact the formal, material and efficient causes of the production of beauty seem designed to bring forth the capacities of the being that wills in an unparalleled manner that is reinforced by the absence of what Kant describes as "a concept that mediates between the concepts of nature and the concept of freedom."³⁶⁰ For that place of mediation was occupied by the concept of a "purposiveness of nature" derived from a judgment of natural beauty which offered an intimation of a certain affinity between the freedom of the will and the subject's relation to phenomenal nature. The absence of this concept in Schiller's project is a necessary consequence of his transformation of the judgment and production of beauty into an occasion for the subject to re-assert its independence from nature and to *create* a second nature. And securing the borders of the aesthetic state seems designed above all to preserve the autonomy of the being that wills-- albeit "in the incorporeal realm of the imagination" [in dem wesenlosen Reich der Einbildungskraft]:

Since all actual existence [wirkliche Dasein] derives from nature as an alien might, while all semblance originates from the human being as representing subject, he is only availing himself of his absolute right of ownership [Eigentumsrechts] when he takes back semblance from essence [wenn er den Schein von dem Wesen zurücknimmt] and disposes of it in accordance with his own laws... Nothing need be holy [heilig] here to him other than his own law, so long as he respects the boundary which separates his realm from the existence of things—i.e., from the realm of nature. This sovereign human right he exercises in the art of semblance, and... the more carefully he separates form from substance [Wesen] and the more autonomy [Selbstständigkeit] he gives to the former then the more he will not merely extend [erweitern] the realm of beauty but also preserve the borders of truth;... but it is in the world of semblance alone that he possesses this sovereign right, in the incorporeal realm of the imagination; and he possesses it there only so long as he scrupulously refrains from expressing its existence in theory and renounces giving it existence in practice. You see from this that the poet steps beyond his limits both when he attributes existence to his ideal and

when he aims at [creating] a determinate existence by means of it. For he can bring about neither condition without...catching hold of the realm of experience with his ideal and thus claiming [to be able] to determine actual existence by means of the merely possible or...by allowing experience to catch hold of the realm of the ideal and thereby restricting the possible to the conditions of actuality...[For] only insofar as semblance...expressly renounces all claim to reality and only insofar as it is autonomous (dispenses with all support of reality) is semblance aesthetic.³⁶¹

In the aftermath of the Copernican Revolution, the “representing subject” is enjoined to “take back” semblance or the phenomenal form that had been lawfully projected onto the noumenal X by the understanding. And what Kant describes as the imagination’s lawless ability to “create, as it were, another nature out of the material that actual nature gives it”, is appropriated by a self-positing, autonomous subject that has at last discovered a medium of expression and spatial-temporal experience appropriate for the being who wills.³⁶²

The work of art produced by the *Bildungstrieb* provides a measure that allows the imagination to position the autonomous subject along the outermost limits of the historically possible. For Schiller the foremost failure of modernity at the close of the eighteenth century lies in the fact that it has not “sufficiently distinguished existence from appearance, and thereby made the frontiers of each secure forever.”³⁶³ Once these borders are established, the historically possible is demoted to the rank of the “merely possible” to the precise extent that it is threatened with actualization—or mistaken for something that could be actualized. The impasse in question is created by Schiller’s acceptance, on the one hand, of the antinomic relation Kant establishes between the moral and physical capacities of the self-positing subject: “we know that the

determinability of the human will always remains contingent and that only with an absolute being do physical and moral necessity coincide with one another.”³⁶⁴

Schiller then leaves this constitutive limit to a historical ethic intact while simultaneously reevaluating both terms of the opposition in a way that suggests the aesthetic serves as the *foundation* of the moral rather than as its atheological supplement. An indication that this may be the case emerges in the Letters on Aesthetic Education at the very moment when Schiller is “seeking a way out [Ausgang] of the material world and a passageway to the world of spirit [einen Übergang in die Geisterwelt].”

At such a critical juncture, the “material world” no longer seems to emit any sign of being on the verge of speech. If anything, its value now lies in the fact that it has been reduced to silence, as it were, for the discovery of the “passageway” is presented as nothing less than the origin of freedom:

from being a slave of nature, which he remains as long as he merely feels it, man becomes its lawgiver from the moment he begins to think it. That which hitherto merely ruled him as a power, now stands as an object before his directed gaze. What is object to him, exerts no force upon him, for in order to be an object, it must be experienced as [something subjected to] his power [Gewalt]. To the extent that he gives form to matter, and so long as he does so, he is immune [unverletzlich] to its effects; for a [human] spirit demonstrates its freedom by giving form to the formless and...the human being is superior to every terror of nature so long as he knows how to give it form and transform it into his object.³⁶⁵

Schiller concludes this disclosure of the “passageway” leading from the natural to the moral by confessing that the very imagination endowed with a legislative and autonomous power in the aesthetic state has momentarily usurped the authority of the author: “while I was merely seeking a way out of the material world and a passageway

into the world of spirit, my imagination has run free and put us in the latter. Beauty, which is what we seek, lies already behind us, and we have leaped over it while passing from mere life directly to pure form and to the pure object.”³⁶⁶

If there is evidence that the theme of the letters on “Aesthetic Education”—the refutation of the claim that aesthetic freedom is synonymous with lawless freedom—has hit upon a fruitful topic for further research, then it lies in this untoward movement of the imagination.³⁶⁷ For rather than being passed over, the condition of possibility for the production of beauty has been identified as the form-matter dualism that serves, moreover, as the unacknowledged basis of constitutively moral action.

The peculiarity of such an aestheticization of morality is accentuated by the fact that Schiller’s allusion to the Kantian sublime (“superior to every terror of nature”) is coupled with yet another valorization of self-positing subjectivity. After all the former was presented in the third Critique as a limit to, and not a reinforcement of, the capacity of the will to create and comprehend form. In fact it seems that Schiller’s realm of aesthetic semblance corresponds more closely with a judgment of the sublime than the beautiful insofar as Kant explicitly dissociates the former from the “idea of a purposiveness of nature” which is markedly absent in Schiller’s work. “Through the ideas of the sublime...we do not present a particular form in nature, but only develop the purposive use that the imagination makes of the representation of nature.”³⁶⁸ These ideas appear to be eminently suited for being “further developed” by an ethic which prescribes a law for the imagination in a realm of aesthetic semblance designed to give the being that wills the time and space necessary for it to become (or seem) autonomous. And what appears as an effacement of the theoretical distinction between

practical possibility and semblance in this context stems from Schiller's supposition that "the human being should value matter only insofar as it is capable of receiving form and extending [verbreiten] the realm of ideas."³⁶⁹

The repercussions of such an extension of the Kantian ideas which already bear a faint resemblance to their original form thanks to the introduction of the "pure concept of beauty" manifest themselves most fully in Schiller's essay "On the Sublime", where the suspicion that something remained incomplete about the program for "Aesthetic Education" that lay the groundwork for a profane yet unrealizable reconciliation is confirmed. Having already lost sight of the passageway in the face of the destination, "On the Sublime" in turn implicitly redresses the imbalance caused by the transformation of a means into an end.

The boundaries of the historically possible seem at first to expand immeasurably with the discovery of the play drive; when directed toward the production of beauty, it appears as a power that "might prepare the way for a transition from the rule of mere forces to the rule of law and [thus]...serve as a sensible pledge of an invisible morality."³⁷⁰

Just as the disclosure of the fact of reason could only affect a finite, sensible being, the "fact of beauty" also attests to the "situated" character of a subject endowed with a "special" causality which allows the imagination to think of it as something potentially other than a "mere link in nature." As in Kant, however, such a power ascribed to the human will is unable to produce actions that appear as independent of natural determination as their origin (in freedom) is held to be. What Kant then presented as a limit to self-positing subjectivity is converted by Schiller into an occasion for disclosing

the lawfulness of *aesthetic* freedom. For the problem with moral freedom is that, in effect, it limits the putatively “moral” (but actually aesthetic) powers of the subject. That is why the play drive “takes from the laws of reason their moral compulsion.”³⁷¹ Anticipating, in part, Adorno’s critique of Kant, Schiller regards the compulsory, imperative quality of the moral law to be a constitutively contradictory principle that negates the distinguishing characteristic of human subjectivity.

Included among the “objects” procured by the *Bildungstrieb* within the borders of the aesthetic state is the sublime. There were, strictly speaking, no sublime objects as such for Kant; the term rather indicates how the thought of the supersensible underlying inner and external nature may arise when the subject is exposed to something that defies the laws of the understanding. This “something” was a natural phenomenon that proved to be incomprehensible so long as it was represented merely as a natural phenomenon. The sublime “object” therefore emerged only in a judgment of nature and not in an artwork.

In “On the Sublime”, however, the concept takes on its greatest value precisely when it is produced by the *Bildungstrieb*. And here the productive-mimetic principle animating the latter gives a definitive expression to the relation between the human will and nature that serves as the basis of Schiller’s historical ethic: “all of nature acts rationally; the human prerogative is simply to act rationally with consciousness and volition. All other things must; the human being is the beings that wills.”³⁷²

Given the expansive quality of the play drive and the unsuitably coercive manner in which the moral law affects human consciousness, it is only with the experience of aesthetic freedom that human action takes on an adequate degree of self-conscious

volition. Such an experience arises within the borders circumscribed by the aesthetic state which does not, Schiller maintains, pose a threat to truth; and yet if "truth" or reason is to become "victorious in its conflict with [natural] forces" it must appoint the play drive to be its "delegate" in the phenomenal world.³⁷³ Truth would, however, thereby encroach upon the sphere of aesthetic semblance. "And to the question 'to what degree should semblance exist in the moral world' the answer is...to the degree that it is aesthetic semblance; i.e. semblance that neither aims to represent reality nor needs to be represented by it."³⁷⁴

But the unifying tendencies integral to Schiller's work do not merely leave the aesthetic and the moral in such an antinomic relation to one another. For ultimately the only way that "aesthetic semblance can never be a threat to the truth of morals" is if it acknowledges the singular instance in which *it* is threatened by the latter.

C. "Death as a Sublime Object"

Up till now, the primary consequence of instituting the aesthetic state as a regulative ideal whose conditions of possibility lie within the power of the human will has been to displace or rather reestablish this "primordial opposition" of freedom and necessity on new grounds: the aesthetic state is preserved so long as the dualism remains intact. And like the theological supplement, the aesthetic supplement emerges in accordance with an inexorable, and not merely natural need: "reason, on transcendental ground, makes the following demand:...let there be a play drive."³⁷⁵ However, without a principle of hope and a theological referent (however "negative") the consolation offered by the

aesthetic state appears inherently contradictory: if semblance is recognized as such, then what emerges seems to be something like a need for a rational myth or rational illusion. But perhaps this only appears “contradictory” from the standpoint of a Kantian reason that judges a law of tragedy (but not a “wholly rational faith”) to be inimical to the moral law.

A tragic ethos in fact emerges in Schiller’s representation of world-history as a singular “object”: “the world as historical object is at bottom nothing other than the conflict of natural forces with one another and with the freedom of the human being.”³⁷⁶ Such a world thereby de-humanizes the “being that wills”, depriving it of its inviolable “prerogative”. This is why the aesthetic state alone creates a time and space for the subject to act “rationally and consciously” apart from the realm within which physical and moral necessity converge to the unconditional detriment of the latter: i.e. the realm of the historical.

But in one specific case it is this experience, not truth as such, that forces the aesthetic state to open its borders. Once this happens, the *Endzweck* is confronted by what for Kant amounts to the fact of nature that establishes the a priori validity of the rational concepts of god and immortality: “if a claim...to absolute liberation from everything [in nature] that is violent...is found in a being which does not maintain the highest rank in the realm of forces, then what results is an ill-fated [unglücklicher] contradiction between drive and capacity [Trieb und...Vermögen].”³⁷⁷

For Schiller the image of a free will ensnared in natural history is an arresting spectacle in its own right, and “looked upon from this standpoint...world-history is a sublime object.”³⁷⁸ And if the sublime “object” is dissociated from nature and the idea

of god and conceived as something that is produced by the subject's form-giving power, then the "limit" encountered by the Spinozist is surpassed when physical necessity is appropriated as moral necessity by the *Bildungstrieb*. This crowning act accomplished by the being that wills emerges as the logical outcome of the confrontation between the logic of history and the vocation of reason which had been merely postponed by the "promise" of the moral law. For the subject "can no longer be the being that wills, if there is even a single case where he absolutely must do what he does not will."³⁷⁹

It turns out that the prospect of death—of becoming a means for an end the subject does not posit—stands out as the "singular terrifying instance" the program for an aesthetic education is designed above all else to preempt.³⁸⁰ That is, the experience of being toward death is something that can be transformed into a product of the *Bildungstrieb* so that, properly aestheticized, it can at last provide an *actual* transition to the "world of spirit."³⁸¹ For because the ideal of beauty can only preserve the subject's semblance of autonomy up to a certain point, "the capacity to feel the sublime...deserves to be developed to its highest point of completion." And "because it is our calling to be directed in the midst of all sensible limitation to the lawbook of pure spirit, the sublime must be added to [hinzukommen] the beautiful in order to make the aesthetic education a complete whole."³⁸²

Exposed, even in the aesthetic state, to the fact of natural death, there is no other recourse for the being that wills than to "destroy with a concept a force which he in fact must endure. But destroying a force with a concept [Einc Gewalt dem Begriffe nach vernichten] means nothing other than submitting to it voluntarily."³⁸³ The goal of aesthetic education is then achieved when such a rational and conscious submission is

attained through an exemplary act of sublimation. Directed toward world history as such or the artwork—specifically the tragic artwork representing “imagined and artificial misfortune” [eingebildeten und künstlichen Unglück]—rather than toward nature, the concept of the sublime is utilized by Schiller in order to indicate how the subject can convert reality into semblance and then recognize *Schein* as the sublation of the real.³⁸⁴ For “human nature soars to its greatest height...[when] it resolves actual suffering into a sublime emotion [Rührung].”³⁸⁵

The aesthetic-practical act that historicizes the moral law by “preserving” and elevating the subject’s autonomy to its “greatest height” through a singular act of negation either accentuates or eliminates the ambiguity surrounding the translation of *Aufhebung*—the question is resolvable only by an ethico-historical “value” judgment: “if [the subject]...has learned to endure what it cannot change and to surrender with dignity what he cannot save” then it is poised for those “cases where fate scales all the bulwarks [Außenwerke] on which he based his security and there is nothing left for him to do and...no other means of withstanding the might of nature than accommodating it and through a voluntary *sublation* [Aufhebung] of all sensible interest take its own life morally before it is done by a physical power [ehe noch eine physische Macht es tut, sich moralisch zu entleiben].”³⁸⁶

While for Kant the antithetical relation between morality and tragedy is not named as such, it nevertheless becomes evident in the representation of the “limit” that confronts and disables the Spinozan subject. The “tragic emotion” that remains extrinsic to the typology of historical moods sketched in the second and third Critiques is classified in Schiller’s works as a moral feeling which animates the singular act in which the law of

nature (as in human finitude), the moral law (which prescribes the principle of autonomy to the being that wills), and the law of aesthetic semblance (which converts the logic of history into a sublime spectacle) converge to produce yet one more law. But the simultaneous absence of, and rational need for, an experience of history solely determined neither by natural nor moral necessity that gave rise to the Kantian principle of hope and the institution of the aesthetic state isolates an antinomy ultimately “resolved” by reintroducing the very power against which the subject as *Endzweck* was to establish its rational, moral and somehow finite identity.³⁸⁷

Thus away with the false, understanding indulgence and with the slack, pampered taste that throws a veil over the stern face [Angesicht] of necessity and in order to put itself in favor with the senses, lies about a harmony between well-being and good behavior [Wohlverhalten] of which there is no indication in the real world...Fate [Verhängnis] shows us...the terrifying and magnificent [herrliche] spectacle of change destroying everything, recreating it and then destroying it again...and the art of tragedy brings [it] again before our eyes.³⁸⁸

The subject constitutes its proper moral identity out of its very failure to historicize the law—a failure that is elevated into a virtue if it leads to the one form of action in which human freedom coalesces with the recognition of the “stern law of necessity”.³⁸⁹ The “ultimate purpose of art” is then attained when the exemplary act of “voluntary submission” that closes the gap separating the subject’s moral and physical capacity for freedom is presented before the eyes of the captivated spectator.³⁹⁰

The outermost limits of the historically possible therefore seem to have been established by a “secular” ethic that attempts to remain faithful to the spirit (or is it the letter?) of the moral law by singling out the only form of experience capable of preserving the autonomy of the being that wills. Deciding whether this occurs through

a sublation or negation of the experience of being in the world depends on how such a transcendental claim is assessed.

Whereas Lukács would hold that the “real” (“necessity”) is thereby hypostatized, Nietzsche would aver that the purity of aesthetic semblance and the experience of tragedy have been contaminated by the remnants of certain “rational concepts.” For the “further development of Kantian ideas” undertaken by Schiller places his work in a certain historical interval created by the displacement of the pure rational concepts of God and immortality. No longer corroborated by anything external to itself that would indicate it is capable of changing the course of world history, the idea of freedom nevertheless manifests itself through isolable acts of self-sacrifice which provide the proper subject matter for the art of tragedy: “obstinate, mute pain grips us far more strongly where we find no help from nature but rather must take refuge in something of ours that lies beyond all that is natural; and the pathos and force of tragedy lie precisely in this *reference to what transcends the senses* [in dieser *Hinweisung auf das Übersinnliche*].”³⁹¹

The “something” in question is precisely the capacity for freedom actualized in the act of suicide whose “purposefulness” no longer explicitly services a “final purpose” determinable (from a practical point of view) through an act of rational faith. That there can be a form of human experience which does not simply amount to an immediate gratification of a “pathological” or instrumental interest is something neither Schiller nor Nietzsche would deny. That such alterity makes “sense” only with the supposition that human consciousness is capable of being affected by what reason must define as a source of non-natural, moral necessity is something which becomes more difficult to

maintain without having recourse to theological concepts. For the concept of freedom provides a measure for the being that wills that is also a being toward death which allows it to dissociate acts of voluntary and involuntary submission from one another. But this distinction in turn stands in need of a further reflection because while the freedom of the will and the *Bildungstrieb* are treated as essentially synonymous concepts in Schiller's works, neither necessarily corresponds with a moral action.

Nevertheless, "there can no longer be any question of how to pass from beauty to truth since the power of the latter already lies in the former."³⁹² Indeed the capacity for form-giving associated with aesthetic freedom which serves as the foundation and model for the experience of moral autonomy manifests itself in the production of beautiful *Schein*: "plastic art [bildende Kunst]...detaches all contingent limitations from its [chosen] object...[by] imitating only the appearance and not the actuality."³⁹³ The power of the *nachahmende Bildungstrieb* then reaches its greatest height when the "object" in question is the subject's finitude. Here alone are appearance and actuality, the symbolic and the natural, united by the aesthetic-moral experience in which "death becomes an action of the will [Tod wird eine Willenshandlung]."³⁹⁴

The principle of autonomy seems then to have been reincorporated into the "Stoic system" which Kant censures for having "made consciousness of strength of soul the pivot on which all moral dispositions were to turn."³⁹⁵ This is the point at which Stoicism no longer renders a service to the vocation of reason which otherwise benefits from its valorization of "simplicity, prudence, wisdom and holiness."³⁹⁶ For the value of these "moral ideas" lie not in their legitimation of Stoic or Christian doctrine as such but rather in how they allow reason to develop the kind of sensibility necessary for the

recognition of its own a priori moral identity. Where Stoicism falls short in this regard is in its determination that “the mere use of [the subject’s] natural powers [are] sufficient for [attaining] the moral ideas. Christian morals, because it frames its precepts so purely and inflexibly...deprives the human being of confidence that he can be fully adequate to them [the “moral ideas”], at least in this life, but again sets them up by enabling us to hope that if we act as well as is within our power, then what is not within our power will come to our aid from another source, whether or not we know in what way.”³⁹⁷

Renunciation in the “face of necessity” emerges in Schiller’s works as an experience of tragedy analogous to what had confronted the Spinozan subject as an insuperable barrier that prevented an ethic of history from being conceived in atheological terms. But since Christianity had been demoted—with great tact and circumspection—by the vocation of reason to an essentially instrumental-heuristic status, a theoretic-practical space opened within tradition that allowed Schiller to separate the theological from the moral.

The peculiar fate of the subject threatened to become a tragic fate when the autonomous will proved constitutively incapable of converting the fact of reason into a historical experience. For Schiller the rational concepts of God and immortality toward which reason is led displace rather than overcome the problems natural history imposes upon morality. Beauty is then introduced as another rational concept in order to illuminate the intrinsic “aesthetic tendencies” (i.e. the capacity for form-giving) of the subject which culminate in the feeling of the sublime.³⁹⁸ And nothing could be less conducive to the cultivation of the latter—“*Nichts weniger!*”—than the supposition that

the “representation of death, if combined with sublimity, preserves this sublimity through the idea of immortality...[which in fact] is a ground of pacifying comfort for our drive toward continued existence [ein Beruhigungsgrund für unsern Trieb nach Fortdauer]...and thus is not able to contribute anything whatsoever to the representation of death as a sublime object.”³⁹⁹

Cut off from the benefits of religion and based to an unrecognized degree on the aesthetic, the principle of morality must nonetheless furnish the name for a specific form of experience in which the subject “regards its physical condition, which can be determined by nature, as something foreign and alien that has no influence on its moral person.”⁴⁰⁰

The act of suicide essentially serves as the condition of possibility for moral experience; but deprived of the two rational concepts which allowed the Kantian subject to posit the “highest good” as a regulative ideal and telos, Schiller is faced with the task of distinguishing an aesthetic and moral sacrifice from one another on the basis of “examples” whose value appears to be dependent upon the judgments rendered by contingent and particular traditions. Thus the “self-sacrifice of Leonidas at Thermopylae” as recorded by Herodotus is both aesthetic and moral while the “self-immolation of Peregrinus Protheus at Olympia” as narrated (with no pretension of impartiality) by Lucian is judged to be merely aesthetic.⁴⁰¹

But describing the latter as the “merely” aesthetic fails to convey how the limited amoral value it was allotted in the third Critique has since increased immeasurably—a transformation evidenced by the type of object Schiller has brought under the jurisdiction of aesthetic judgment. To adjudicate between the ethical claims put forth

by disparate events (and their scientific or poetic representations) is for Kant a fundamentally ill-conceived task since it would allow the principle of morality to be determined on the basis of merely historical evaluations. For the “sublimity” of morality lies for Kant in its unrepresentable character. This is why “perhaps the most sublime passage in the Jewish Law is the commandment: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.”⁴⁰² Nothing is said thereby about the morality of Judaic law as such; what is of interest to reason is how it facilitates a self-recognition of its own moral sublimity.

The ban on idolatry is even extended to Kant’s understanding of the work of genius, which becomes a living heritage to the degree that it provokes further works whose singularity defies the laws of natural causation. And the element of provocation here is conceded to be ambiguous:

Because 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...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*]. 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 these ideas to posterity.⁴⁰³

Such a “historical” process of production and reception has nothing moral about it and such qualified recognition of the value of the phenomenal example is both left wholly indeterminate and carefully restricted to the realm of fine art. For Schiller this process provides a particularly suitable basis for moral judgment precisely because of its aesthetic character. That is why an aesthetic judgment of the sublime is now focused

upon the will's capacity for freedom (e.g. the representation of Peregrinus) while the moral judgment of the sublime is directed toward its realization (e.g. the representation of Leonidas)—a moment that Kant locates only in the symbolic representation of a holy will.⁴⁰⁴

The death scene in which Kant discloses the fact of reason thus becomes an object of aesthetic judgment whose “purity” stems from the subject's ability to regard the will as such, as an autonomous power set in motion by a form of special causality: “in an aesthetic evaluation I forget about the individual [and] abstract from the relation of its will to the law of the will and [thus] think of the human will in general, as a capacity of the species in relation to the power of nature [Naturgewalt] as a whole.”⁴⁰⁵

The “purity” Kant isolates in an aesthetic judgment in order to expose the subject to that which remains apart from the objects capable of being posited by an autonomous subjectivity is now appropriated in order to establish the conditions of possibility for the expanded powers of “aesthetic representation”.⁴⁰⁶ It is therefore not surprising that Schiller's distinction between aesthetic and moral judgment is presented in terms of the Aristotelian movement from possibility to actuality: “it makes all the difference whether we direct our judgment to the moral capacity in general and to the possibility of an absolute freedom of the will or to the use of this capacity and to the actualization of this absolute freedom.”⁴⁰⁷

The movement from aesthetic to moral judgment corresponds with the movement from aesthetic to moral action which is understood—*aesthetically*—as the actualization of possibility, as an act whereby form is imparted to a matter more or less receptive to being shaped for a determinant purpose.⁴⁰⁸ Moral experience thereby becomes a

possible object produced by human *τεχνη*, and such an accomplishment of self-positing subjectivity would seem to have been prepared for by the Kantian representation of the subject as an *Endzweck*. For the latter emerges as the “final” and “formal” cause of human action, while the material cause is determinable as the capacity for freedom.⁴⁰⁹ However, the application of Aristotle’s fourfold typology of human causality to the autonomous will only becomes complete when it illuminates how Kant removes the “efficient cause” responsible for actually bringing a moral action into existence from the form-giving, “production” process. A failure to do so results in the “moral capacity of the human being” being “strained...far beyond all the limits of his nature.”⁴¹⁰ As a result, the “value” of Christianity lies for reason above all in how it suggests the moral is something the human being bears along with it for the duration of its finite existence without ever being able to either fully appropriate or even identify it as the efficient cause of this or that action; its unrepresentable “presence” affects the subject by inducing a sense of guilt (of constraint and humiliation) whose origin cannot be traced to any identifiable phenomenal form. This is what makes the “incomprehensibility” of the “original moral disposition” sublime for Kant. And this is what ought to prevent any representation of human action—including an “introspective” self-representation—from being mistaken for a sublime “object” (especially since the very positing of any such object—whether aesthetic or moral—amounts for Kant to an act of “subreption”). The structure of the ethical-historical will is therefore maintained only by an experience of “incessant laboring and becoming” animated by a principle of hope.⁴¹¹ And the latter emerges as a special category of modality irreducible to the will’s power of actualizing the possible.

The point of departure for Schiller's ethic of history seems to have been: progress consists in seeing how progress is arrested by such a hope. In transposing the moral to the realm of experience capable of being produced by the being that wills, the boundaries of the historically possible were expanded to include a qualitative element of temporal differentiation that interrupts the movement of "endless progress" impelling the Kantian subject. These boundaries were then greatly contracted to the point where the only time and space left for an ethic of history was the act of suicide in which the distinction between symbolic and natural death serves as an incentive only to then be negated. Progressing beyond the principle of Kantian hope while retaining the Kantian antinomy of nature and freedom then leads inexorably to "Resignation":

World History is the World Court of Justice
 You lived with Hope: now you are rewarded
 Your Faith was your Measure of Happiness
 But you could have asked the Sages
 About how the Minutes given up
 Give back no Eternity.⁴¹²

D. A Fate Both Tragic and Peculiar

Without the beautiful there would be an endless struggle between our natural destination and our rational destination. In the striving to fulfill our spiritual vocation [Geisterberuf], we would neglect our humanity and, prepared at any moment for the departure from the world of the senses, we would constantly remain strangers in this sphere of acting assigned to us. Without the sublime beauty would make us forget our dignity. Through the debility of an uninterrupted pleasure we would lose the strength of character and, tied to this contingent form of existence by indissoluble bonds, we would lose sight of our permanent destination... Only if the sublime is coupled with the beautiful and our sensitivity to both has been shaped in equal measure [in gleichem Maß ausgebildet] are we complete citizens of nature, without on that account being its slaves, and without squandering our citizenship in the intelligible world."⁴¹³

It is the act of self-sacrifice alone that attests to the possibility of both “spiritual” action (i.e. freedom) and the persistence of beauty (i.e. through the appropriation of a death that is both sublime and beautiful) in the absence of world-historical hope. Is this therefore the defining experience of tragedy? After all nothing could be further removed from the sublimity of the subject’s “rational destination” (“Nichts weniger!”) than an idea of immortality that would “actualize” the possibility of reconciling sensibility and reason which properly emerges only within the sphere of aesthetic semblance. And yet the “idea of immortality” judged to be antithetical to moral sublimity is not at such a great distance from truth after all; or, so long as it does not arise for the subject as a “ruling idea”, it can somehow continue to subsist, or “stand, as it were, as a backdrop [Hintergrunde] in order to come to the help of sensibility if it feels exposed—defenseless and without consolation—to all the horrors of absolute annihilation [Zernichtung]...If this idea of immortality becomes the ruling idea in the mind, however, death loses its fearfulness and the sublime disappears.”⁴¹⁴

But how can such an idea be anything other than a “ruling” one? What kind of depth perception is required in order to make sense of events presented against such a backdrop on the tragic stage?

The central tension animating Schiller’s historical ethic stems from how he *educes* a tragic ethos out of Kant’s representation of the subject as a final purpose to no purpose.⁴¹⁵ But perhaps such an ethos is brought to, rather than brought out of, the sacrificial scene presented in the second Critique as the disclosure of the fact of reason. For the latter is introduced not as an object of moral emulation (itself a contradictory concept if thought in strictly Kantian terms) or aesthetic representation but rather as a

condition of possibility for the imagination to recognize a limit or borderline that manifests itself negatively as an existential feeling of guilt.

For Schiller art can transform such an inner drama into an “aesthetically significant object” for its “ultimate purpose...is the presentation of that which transcends the senses and the art of tragedy in particular brings this about by symbolizing [versinnlichen] to us the independence of morality from natural laws in a condition of emotional disturbance [Affekt].”⁴¹⁶

Schiller thereby inaugurates what was to become a dominant tradition in Western metaphysics over the following two centuries: the privileging of the “aesthetic” realm as a medium of expression which allows a particular human experience to take on form against the backdrop of another tradition whose disappearance is somehow preserved through the idea of the sublime.⁴¹⁷ The concept of the “tragic” therefore becomes irreducibly historical, at once serving as a regulative ideal, an interpretation of tradition and a diagnosis of a modern condition.

It has for its proper object the freedom of the form-giving subject which alone provides the model for a constitutively human experience that is, however, incapable of reshaping history into an artwork. As a result the newfound idea of beauty takes on the strange temporal character of an unrealizable, profane, and redemptive ideal. Is this then where tragedy reemerges as a paradigmatic form of experience, at the moment in the Western tradition where the boundaries of the historically possible seem to both contract and expand once the “problem of creation is tackled from the side of the subject?”⁴¹⁸ This dualism becomes apparent in the relationship Schiller presents between the modern drama and Attic tragedy.

What seems to place the latter at an infinite remove from the former are the testaments of the Greek chorus, which for Schiller evoke the sense of an a-historical “nature” lying “under the veil of phenomena” that retrospectively appears to symbolize just the sort of material alterity seemingly inaccessible to modern experience. But what is not found can be created: “the modern poet no longer finds the chorus in nature. He has to create it poetically...in order to put the [modern] drama back into that childlike time [kindliche Zeit] and into that simple form.”⁴¹⁹ But, as indicated by the “presence” of the backdrop to the tragic stage Schiller erects, there is something besides an inimitable experience of naiveté that prevents such a recreation from being equated with a restoration. For the intimation of a certain telos emerges in the modern drama that seems either to negate that which is specifically “tragic” or to redefine it in terms of what is as yet unnamable: “do we modern really have to renounce [the attempt] to restore Greek art ever again because the philosophical genius of the age and modern culture in general is not favorable to poetry?”⁴²⁰ The answer is no because what the Greeks did not or could not recognize was that tragic art “rests primarily upon the moral [and therefore] perhaps here alone our culture can make good the theft to tragic art which it perpetrated on art in general.”⁴²¹

The damage done to “nature”, to the experience of naiveté extrapolated from Hellenic art, can be sublated in a way that satisfies reason’s demand for the unconditioned or a final purpose. The countenance of the “stern face of necessity” which was read as a law of history can nevertheless somehow also appear to reason as a transfiguring mirror in which it recognizes its moral and aesthetic identity.

This is why the best pieces of the Greek stage leave something to be desired, for in all these pieces there is ultimately an appeal made to

necessity and our reason which demands reason [unsre vernunftfordernde Vernunft] is always left with an unresolved knot. However [now] even this dissolves...when a dissatisfaction with fate loses itself...in the presentiment or rather in a distinct consciousness of a teleological connection among things...[that] resolves the isolated dissonance within the grand harmony. Greek art never elevated itself to this pure height of tragic emotion...[and] it is left for modern art to fulfill this highest demand and thus to unfold the complete moral dignity of art.⁴²²

What is it that comes to distinct consciousness and allows the tragic and the rational to be reconciled with one another? An indication can be found in Schiller's 1789 inaugural lecture at the University of Jena: "What is Universal History and to what End is it Studied?"⁴²³ It is studied, in short, so that it can be converted into a certain structure that then serves as a beautiful pendant to the sublime object of "world history." The ongoing failure to historicize the law is sublime insofar as it represents a capacity for freedom striving for realization. But such a "failure" can also appear beautiful if it is elevated to the status of a purpose that survives the act as a particular moment of a "universal" history. For it is the collision between the "philosophical spirit" and the appropriately described "matter" of world history that provokes Schiller's universal historian to reshape the products of chance and amoral necessity into an artwork: "one phenomenon after another is [thereby] removed from [the realm of] lawless freedom and joined together [again] as links in a harmonious totality that to be sure is at hand only in his representation [...nur in seiner Vorstellung vorhanden ist]."⁴²⁴

This totality is patently a created totality that arises as a demand of reason which is then "transplanted into the order of things" otherwise recognizable only as an "aggregate of fragments."⁴²⁵ And as to the question of whether this "harmonious

totality" bears any resemblance to an objective totality, deference to necessity is once again required: "so long as fate holds back the final disclosure [letzten Aufschluß] of so many events the universal historian declares this question open."⁴²⁶

Irrespective of the intention of the universal historian, the object of his "study" leads toward a revaluation of the origin of the Kantian ideas (reason), the concept of tragedy and above all the measure that determines whether human history is, was, or will become closed or "open." As a result of such a reassessment, will the "historical" signify something other than an insuperable barrier to the moral autonomy of the will that can only be "preserved" by being diverted, as it were, into an experience of theology or semblance regulated by reason?

CHAPTER IV

RESHAPING HISTORY INTO AN ARTWORK

“By extending the aesthetic principle far beyond the confines of aesthetics,” Schiller offers the tradition of Western metaphysics the possibility of either aestheticizing the world and thus making the subject “purely contemplative” or mythologizing reality into something that can be created through the aesthetic process.⁴²⁷ Lukács’ identification of such a critical historical juncture effectively illuminates the scope of the either/or which is explicitly refused by what have become the two most conspicuous attempts to appropriate the Schillerian heritage: the Marxism of History and Class Consciousness and the so-called cultural politics put forward in Nietzsche’s works dating from the early to mid 1870’s. What is common to such seemingly antithetical philosophies of history is a certain understanding of the relationship between metaphysics and tragedy and a valorization of an autonomous, self-positing, “artistic” subject. And if the backdrop to the Schillerian stage is removed in Nietzsche’s early works, many of the other stage properties are left in place, including the representation of the chorus as a “living wall that tragedy constructs around itself” as a defense against the contagious poverty of empirical nature.⁴²⁸ The concept of “nature” is not, however, thereby extinguished, and what emerges within this particular and encompassing time and space is something other than the supersensible substrate posited by Kantian reason. Nevertheless, what Nietzsche introduces under the sign of an “other” nature evinces an indebtedness to both Kant and Schiller—to the former’s allusive reference to that

strange, indeterminate origin of the artwork that furnishes an amoral, non-empirical “rule” to the spirit of genius and to the latter’s evocation of an “idea of the spirit” existing “beneath the veil of phenomena”.⁴²⁹

What Nietzsche derives from these sources is a “basis” for a particular form of aesthetic judgment directed toward something Kant deemed unfathomable but which received a preliminary typological determination in Schiller’s On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry: the specifically historical (neither natural nor moral) conditions of possibility for the production of the artwork.⁴³⁰ The absence of an experience of time neither mechanistic nor “infinite” thus becomes the construction site for a production process whose sphere of operation had initially been confined within the borders of Schiller’s aesthetic state. The proper vocation of the being that wills, whose actions no longer appear to be determined or arrested by the logic of history, must accordingly be renamed.

“The realm of metaphysics,” Nietzsche declares in a letter written in 1868 to Paul Deussen, “and with it the province of ‘absolute’ truth has been unquestionably shifted to the ranks of poetry and religion...Metaphysics henceforth belongs to human beings in the realm of spiritual need [and amounts] essentially to edification; on the other hand it is [thus] art, namely poetic concept-production [Begriffsdichtung]; but to cling to metaphysics as neither religion nor art is to have something to do with so-called ‘truth in itself or being’”.⁴³¹

Considered as a historical object, metaphysics has become at best an edifying artwork that can in turn inspire a work of “poetic concept production” that augments and supplements (but does not serve as a substitute for) the work of art. The latter thus

becomes the focal point for an understanding of history as something that is appropriately “made” by the human subject. But, as Marx specified in a different but fundamentally interrelated context, “not under circumstances they themselves have chosen but under the given and inherited circumstances with which they are directly confronted.”⁴³²

For both Nietzsche and Marx the “historical” appears as an object that can be constructed, although the conditions of possibility for production and reception can best be represented as the same but otherwise. For the “given and inherited circumstances” which confront the Nietzschean will as an enabling limit are not further determinable as an empirico-historical reality and still less as the alienated, objectified form of a self-positing subjectivity poised to overcome its Schillerian fragmentation through an appropriation of its proper, unified identity.⁴³³ And yet what is to be “made” is not thereby relegated to what Schiller presented as the “insubstantial realm of the imagination.”⁴³⁴

Do Lukács’ prescriptions and proscriptions vis-à-vis a post-Schillerian ethic of history here encounter an unassimilable moment in that tradition? For the very distinction between history represented alternatively as science and mythic fiction is called into question by a “production process” that expands the territory of the aesthetic state while simultaneously re-establishing it on different “grounds.” While it may thus still be considered in terms of what Schiller described as a “middle sphere”, the Nietzschean aesthetic is no longer situated between the endpoints delimited by the moral and the natural. The after-images of both still appear, however, insofar as the causality specific to the production of the artwork functions for Nietzsche in a manner

that is at the least analogous to what Kant posited as the action of a will determined by its consciousness of the moral law. For like the latter the artistic will is subject but not author of a non-empirical yet affective law that seems to solicit responsive projections. And (un)like the moral law, this aesthetic law is something that, since it can affect the subject, must be capable of producing effects in the world. But that which is to be historicized in this instance is not the vocation of reason (the subject destined to a final purpose). Moreover, the task of historicization is not primarily preempted by what appears to confront the will as an inexorable natural law of inscrutable origin.

The production of the aesthetic phenomenon by a *τεχνη* neither arbitrary, instrumental nor subservient to rational concepts is isolated by Kant as an aporia external to the ethico-historical determination of the autonomous will. It reappears in Adorno's Aesthetic Theory as "art's paradoxical sleight of hand", which consists in the fact that it has not been "copied or repeated; it is free yet at the same time bears the feeling of necessity."⁴³⁵

If history is represented as if it were an artwork, or in fact as the "product of a creating subject" then such ambiguity is resolvable for Lukács by the recognition of a teleological process that furnishes the ever-renewed "circumstances" under which the qualitatively new event may be produced. If such a version of dialectical materialism marks the apex of aestheticization under the guise of science, then what Nietzsche offers as a reflexive "aesthetic science" [ästhetische Wissenschaft] may be better suited to address what has been considered a "paradox" by a Western tradition that extends from Plato to Adorno.⁴³⁶

The basis for doing so had in fact already been laid by Schiller's representation of the play drive as a form of essentially anonymous agency in which states of receptivity and intentionality cohere in a way that dissolves the distinction between education and production. If this distinction nevertheless re-asserts itself in the "Aesthetic Education" due to the constricted manner in which the matter of nature and the freedom of the will could possibly be construed to be in a "reciprocal" relation with one another, it also provides a clear indication of how an element of "receptivity" *could* be further determined.⁴³⁷ For the seeming lawfulness associated with the artwork stems from its relation to a tradition that is kept in motion as it were by heirs who define their present in terms of an ongoing relation with a past; such an experience of history offers indications but not examples of how the qualitatively new can be produced in a manner that appears to take on a form of retroactive necessity. If such a necessarily indeterminate conception of subjectivity, history and lawfulness may serve as a heuristic device for the interpretation of the production and reception of art within the traditions of modern music, painting and literature in particular, can it also be elevated to the rank of a regulative principle orienting a form of practice that treats history as though it were an artwork? The answer seems to be yes if with Nietzsche the question of whether history should be thought of as an art or a science is thought of essentially in terms of life and death: "only if history bears being reshaped into an artwork, into a pure aesthetic structure, can it perhaps sustain or even awaken instincts."⁴³⁸

A. "Teleology since Kant"

It is with Nietzsche's conception of monumental history that the situated freedom associated with the creation of the artwork emerges as a paradigmatic form of human practice. Perhaps then the "apex" of aestheticization was identified prematurely, for unlike Marx and Lukács, Nietzsche dissociates the relationship between historical event and historical representation from the realm of epistemological knowledge.

Furthermore, by preserving a version of the Kantian thing in itself Nietzsche becomes "receptive" to tradition in a way that allows the rule nature prescribes to the spirit of genius in the third Critique to be redefined as an indeterminate and unrepresentable "ground" of action which provides an enabling limit for the transformation of history into an artwork (if not for the construction of history as such).

For both Lukács and Nietzsche the form-giving capacity of the Schillerian subject is identified as the means of expressing the proper identity of the human subject as a being in the world. To evaluate these two appropriations on the basis of something other than aesthetic criteria renews a Kantian question: what is the basis for making a distinction between idol and ideal? Expressed in still more "transcendental" terms: what are the conditions of possibility for the determination that the need for such a distinction constitutes the founding moment of a historical ethic? Does an aestheticized form of praxis become "ethical" in terms of its production and reception if it is aware of its constituted character that is otherwise indistinguishable in form from an unreflexive mythology?

“What sort of treasure is this,” Kant asks in the preface to the second edition of the Critique of Pure Reason, “that we mean to bequeath to posterity, in leaving them a metaphysics that has been purified by critique, though thereby also made durable?”⁴³⁹ What is inherited is a measure that restricts the use of speculative reason within the boundaries of experience and expands the use of practical reason beyond those boundaries; and if the latter correlates—as it must for Kant—with the former, then the will is directed to regulative ideals that, while impossible to attain, nevertheless serve the negative function of exposing the speciousness of the claim that a form of action has been or ought to be based upon a positive theoretical determination.

Receiving this treasure primarily by way of the neo-Kantian doctrines of Schopenhauer and Friedrich Albert Lange, Nietzsche converted it into the precursor of the art of *Begriffsdichtung* introduced in the letter to Deussen cited above.⁴⁴⁰ Viewed in such a distorting or at least transfiguring light, the Copernican Revolution devolves into the following three theses presented in Lange’s The History of Materialism, which Nietzsche cites approvingly as early as 1866:

1. The world of the senses is the product of our organization.
2. Our visible (physical) organs are, like all other parts of the phenomenal world, only images of an unknown object.
3. Our real organization is therefore as much unknown to us as real external things are. We continually have before us nothing but the product of both.⁴⁴¹

A metaphysics purified by critique is thus represented to the subject “certain” of nothing more than its defining capacity for *production* as an aesthetic object that may or may not serve as a source of edification. Such a revaluation of tradition appears to require the type of judgment that will be deployed in the practice of monumental and

critical history presented in the "Utility and Liability of History for Life." And it is in an 1868 prospectus for a never completed dissertation appropriately entitled "Teleology Since Kant" that the foundation for these representations of historical experience is, if not established, recognized as a certain need.⁴⁴²

The "since" in Nietzsche's title seems to take its cue from the division of Lange's work, which takes the Kantian system as a world-historical turning point in the development of modern "materialism." Identified by Lange as the origin of *Begriffsdichtung*, the *als ob* structure of the Kantian regulative ideal serves as the basis, or rather as the instrument of a tradition in the same way that Christian doctrine did in the third Critique. That is, it allows the subject to represent the experience of being in the world in transcendental-practical rather than merely empirical terms. The Kantian philosophy therefore becomes for Nietzsche an edifying doctrine that discloses a certain human capacity that is fully realized when "reason" is no longer represented as the unitary source of the subject's identity and destiny but rather as "merely" another aesthetic construction. The constitution of transcendental subjectivity thereby endures as if upholding a state without a sovereign whose regulation then becomes the task of a historical ethic based upon the supposition that "there is no question which necessarily can be solved only through the acceptance of an intelligible world...[for] the necessity of which Kant speaks no longer exists in our time."⁴⁴³

What has been superseded in the narrative that culminates with the art of *Begriffsdichtung* is the necessity of thinking that the conditions for the possibility of an ethical experience of history are determinable only by the rational concept of a creative understanding underlying phenomenal nature which thereby confers practical-logical

validity to the demands of the moral law. The concept of freedom which the latter presupposes emerges indirectly in "Teleology since Kant" as the form of non-natural causality capable of producing the tradition of Western metaphysics as an amalgamation of errors which nevertheless continue to be valued as "aesthetic product[s]:... [T]eleology is [thus] assessed in terms of its value for the world of human ideas."⁴⁴⁴

And of what value is such a world for the producing subject who can comprehend only the mathematical completely[?]. . . In all else [it]. . . stands before the unknown. In order to overcome this he invents concepts, which only gather together a sum of appearing characteristics, which however, do not get a hold of the thing. Therein belong force, matter, individual, law, organism, atom, final cause.⁴⁴⁵

The sense of declaring here I stand and cannot do otherwise becomes: "what we see of life is form; how we see them, as individuals, what lies behind that is unknowable."⁴⁴⁶

Except that the "I" in question now signifies a phenomenal form whose inscrutable "noumenal" origin no longer attests to a moral destination. Nor is it displaced by Schiller's determination that "there is in man no other power than [the human] will... (power being the ground of all reality)."⁴⁴⁷ If this two-fold deprivation does not immediately translate into a new "ideal" or measure for aesthetic edification it does direct the "subject" to the immense chasm separating itself as form from what for Nietzsche can be designated only by a fractured equation: "Life-force [Lebenskraft] =..."⁴⁴⁸

In an unpublished work contemporaneous with "Teleology Since Kant" Nietzsche indicates that the unknowable X is not simply to be appropriated by the producing subject as something it cannot help but posit, as its "purest" form of self-positing; it

rather stands in for the abyssal foundation upon which an art of *Begriffsdichtung* is to arise.

Schopenhauer's system accordingly becomes edifying to the degree that it demonstrates how this X is not to be represented: i.e. as a "foundationless, knowledgeless will", the very idea of which is derived parasitically from the world of representation it otherwise illuminates as the constricting time and space endemic to the "principle of individuation".⁴⁴⁹ Nietzsche attributes Schopenhauer's "failure" to perceive how such flagrant anthropomorphism controverts and thereby undermines his entire system to the fact that "he did not want to feel what was obscure and contradictory in the region where individuality gives out."⁴⁵⁰

The Kantian heritage is thus properly upheld so long as the formula "life force=" is not converted into a "calculation yielding the result that it = X, which means that [the X sought above all by Schopenhauer] has not been found."⁴⁵¹ Such a critique implies that "it" is something that could still be found once a suitable mode of discovery is discovered. And there are precedents—or there is one precedent—for the representation of a finite subject somehow becoming exposed to something that affects the will as a certain modulation of feeling like no other "pathological" feeling and that corresponds with no given intuition of the imagination or law of the understanding.

But since "there is no question which necessarily can be solved only through the acceptance of an intelligible world", only the "form" of being affected by the consciousness of the moral law through a feeling of respect or sublimity provides a source of edification for the producing subject. That is, what remains of the Kantian system is an aestheticized existential experience whose radicalism vis-à-vis the

skeptical claims of empiricism is no longer camouflaged by an elaborate structure assembled out of the vestiges of Christian doctrine. Charting the development of "Teleology since Kant" therefore seems to give rise to a corresponding need for a non-pathological form of self-affection that can be correlated with something other than moral feeling. And precisely why did the disclosure of the fact of reason through the existential experience of being toward death present an aporia for Kant that could be resolved only by an "acceptance of an intelligible world?" Because only by having recourse to a theological supplement could the spatio-temporal distance separating the possibility of historicizing the moral law from its actualization appear as anything other than an "immense chasm."

How is such a distance to be measured after the bridge constructed out of the concepts of natural beauty, the natural purpose, the purposes of nature and the human subject as final purpose collapses in "Teleology Since Kant"? For "in truth only one thing is certain, that we only know the mechanical."⁴⁵² But in fact such a limitation no longer has debilitating consequences for the producing subject since what lies opposite the hither side of the chasm—intelligible freedom—now appears as but an aesthetic product. There is, accordingly, no longer either a chasm or a realm of freedom confronting the subject as insuperable barrier and unconditional duty respectively.⁴⁵³ The concept of the natural purpose, along with the idea of moral duty are now diagnosed as but the symptoms of a common "subreption": "the [problem] of the freedom of the human will [lay] in how a solution was searched for in the realm of the intelligible because the [realm] of coordinated possibility [i.e., the interaction between mechanism and chance] was overlooked."⁴⁵⁴

The implications for the producing being are then clear: the so-called rational concept of freedom has “evolved” to the point that it can be understood in Lange’s terms as a “world of poiesis.”⁴⁵⁵ The movement leading from the displacement of the moral in the “Aesthetic Education” to its seeming effacement in the works of Lange and Nietzsche is therefore not difficult to traverse.

But if the experience of being in the world is not situated in terms of the antinomic relation between physical and moral necessity then how should history be conceived if “we understand only a mechanism?”⁴⁵⁶ What established the constricting conditions of possibility for the experience and representation of historical time in the three Critiques appears in “Teleology Since Kant” as the limiting principle that determines the subject’s relation to a certain X: “the eternally becoming [ewig Werdende] is life; [but]...our intellect is too insensible to become aware of persisting change: what is discernible to it is called form.”⁴⁵⁷

The chasm that opens between form and indeterminate substratum deprives the latter of any epistemological significance apart from what the subject imparts to it in an act that is for Lange “ethical” to the degree that its materialist yet nonobjective character is recognized as such. As a result the transcendental act of synthesis which Kant attributes to the imagination’s power of apprehending, modifying and reproducing the manifold of sense into objects of knowledge is isolated by Lange as the basis for the production of certain types of form distinguishable from one another only by the degree of “freedom” they afford to the self-positing subject:

from the lowest stages of synthesis, in which the individual still appears completely bound by the characteristics of the species, up to its creative dominance in poetry, the essence of this act is always directed to the production of unity, of harmony, of perfect form. The same principle

which rules absolutely in the sphere of the beautiful, in art and poetry, appears in the sphere of conduct as the true ethical norm which underlies all the other principles of morality and in the sphere of knowledge as the shaping, form-giving factor in our picture of the world.⁴⁵⁸

The subject of such an aesthetic law of form-giving augurs what Hannah Arendt describes as the fate of a human being imprisoned in a form of its own making whose contours are no longer visible: "the modern age, with its growing world-alienation, has led to a situation where man, wherever he goes, encounters only himself. All the processes of the earth and the universe have revealed themselves either as man-made or as potentially man-made."⁴⁵⁹

And yet the experience of being in the world also confronts the will with "evidences of something else, of a power that now compels us and now is dominated by us."⁴⁶⁰ That which remains apart from the subject, however, amounts to nothing more than a formal or logical limit that does nothing to alter the underlying method of synthesis which "leads...to the knowledge and to the mastery of nature" as well as to the production of beauty: "even in the notion of [something]...that stand[s] out as a unity from the infinite coherence of existence, there lies that subjective factor which...only helps to fill up, on the analogy of our reality, the gap for that which is absolutely inconceivable but which must at the same time be assumed."⁴⁶¹ As long as it functions as such a place-holder, the historical significance of the "X" is reduced to a vanishing point that has no bearing on the construction of an "ideal world" seemingly in need of nothing further in the way of a transcendental reflection.⁴⁶² The "immense chasm" appears to have been closed. And yet the realms of mechanical nature and aesthetic

freedom are “reconciled” through a relation of opposition in which both terms are distinguished from one another as if by degree and not by kind.

How then is the subject represented in “Teleology since Kant” as but one of the phenomenal forms “created” by a life-force able to recast such forms if it is no longer bound to a rational vocation that destines it to be both a part and independent of nature? In other words, what are the conditions of possibility for the appropriation of the means and relations of “production” by a subject described in the The Birth of Tragedy as “completely wrapped up in...and composed of...the illusion...[of] a perpetual becoming in time, space, and causality—in other words...empirical reality.”⁴⁶³ These are the questions that appear to draw Nietzsche toward that “obscure...region where individuality gives out” and away from both Schopenhauer’s doctrine of the Will as the thing in itself and Lange’s determination that the “standpoint of the ideal” is based upon the synthesizing capacities of a self-positing subject that ultimately displaces the X as the limiting principle for the experience of being in the world:

If the principle is once conceded that we should create for ourselves in imagination a fairer and more perfect world than the world of reality, then we shall be compelled to allow validity to myth as myth. But it is still more important that we shall rise to the recognition that it is the same necessity, the same transcendental root of our human nature, which supplies us through the senses with the idea of the world of reality, and which leads us in the highest function of nature and creative synthesis to fashion a world of the ideal in which to take refuge from the limitation of the senses.⁴⁶⁴

Such a transcendental principle is for Nietzsche in need of another transcendental reflection. For how can the perception of “myth as myth” be distinguished from a mythic experience not identified as such unless the acts of the producing being are somehow conditioned by—or at least situated in a relation toward--what Lange’s

“materialism” only allows him to refer to as the “something else?”⁴⁶⁵ The origins of an aporia toward which much twentieth century structuralist and post-structuralist theory converges emerge at this critical juncture in the history of neo-Kantianism. That is, Lange’s work appears retroactively to have set a precedent for the development of value-philosophy, which in turn influenced a form of structuralism that was systematized in Foucault’s The Archaeology of Knowledge. These works constitute something like a particular philosophical tradition insofar as they all attempt to transform the “static” categories of Kant’s transcendental aesthetic into the a priori conditions of possibility for the production of cultural forms. However, by delimiting an organized system of signification (what Foucault calls an “episteme”) for a self-positing subjectivity that claims to be neither arbitrary nor attributable to the development of an objective teleological process, these projects ultimately restate and intensify the insolubility of their founding question: how is historical experience to be represented? How is the movement from one “episteme” to another to be understood if each establishes as the “social a priori” for a particular epoch a threshold beyond which all other forms of “historicized” perception, knowledge and bases for action remain unfathomable?⁴⁶⁶

In a turn that becomes evident in “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History”, Foucault ultimately valorizes a form of “practice” (the self-fashioning of identity) based upon a model of aesthetic form-giving deemed capable of reconstructing the social a priori. A tradition is thereby established which can be named “from Lange to Foucault” insofar as the conditions of possibility for this aestheticized form of practice that is able to convert the subject produced by culture into a producer of culture are not identifiable.

Furthermore, there is no criterion that would determine how the newly established social forms would be evaluated apart from the fact that they would presumably reflect back their constituted character.

Nietzsche's relation to this tradition would appear to be ambiguous, notwithstanding Foucault's appropriation of his work in the essay cited above. For although the transformation of the subject as product into subject as producer is a task prepared for by "Teleology since Kant", an attempt to find the type of measure that is absent in Foucault's work is signaled both in the dissertation prospectus and in "On Schopenhauer."

"The obscure...region where individuality gives out." "Life-force=...." On the basis of these two seemingly meager fragments, Nietzsche's works of the 1870's introduce the "Dionysian Worldview" that emerges as a historical sign, which indicates the being that wills may have been, and may still be, destined to something other than a condition of "radical world alienation."

B. Opening the Borders of the Aesthetic State

The puppet theater appeared at the conclusion of the second Critique in order to dramatize how the subject can assume qualitatively different relationships to the unrepresentable moral law. What was at stake was the viability of the distinction between upholding the spirit or the letter of the law. While this question remained unanswerable so long as it was addressed by judging different historical events, it nevertheless served as a regulative ideal whose lawfulness was "established" by the

practical deduction of the concept of freedom through the fact of reason. For here the subject was confronted with something that the understanding could not appropriate with its spatio-temporal categories. And because this instance of alterity was then given a "positive" determination—albeit as a strictly symbolic representation conceived on analogy with, but *not identical to*, the schematic representations of empirical phenomena—it provoked a secular critique of Kantian morality that deprived the rational-"theological" concepts of their necessary and "intelligible" character. While the autonomy and spontaneity of pure reason appear as the linguistic and conceptual signs that indicate the ordering of the hierarchical relationship between the moral and the theological is in fact not an operation fully under Kant's control, this historical limit does not obviate the a-empirical significance of the experience of being toward death which for Lange gives the doctrine of freedom an unavoidably "mystical character."⁴⁶⁷ The fact of reason does not establish the freedom of the will as a substance whose singular character emerges in a moment of externalizing immediacy. There is no sense of an objectification of human freedom here that would then provide the Schillerian or Arendtian poet-historian with the material for an act of remembrance and representation.⁴⁶⁸ And that which is not brought to presence is also not hypostatized as the kind of pure possibility that Carl Schmitt tellingly ascribes to the "romantics who could not play the role of the ego who creates the world. They preferred the state of eternal becoming and possibilities that are never consummated to the confines of concrete reality...In the moment of realization, all of the other infinite possibilities are precluded. A world is destroyed for a narrow-minded reality. The 'fullness of the idea'

is sacrificed to a wretched specificity. In consequence...[c]very foundation is false; for with the foundation, a limit is always given as well.”⁴⁶⁹

If it were an occasion for either idolatry (Arendt describes the act of freedom as the advent of a “miracle”) or resignation (for Lange Kant transfers morality “entirely into the intellectual world in which alone freedom is conceivable”), the experience of freedom would no longer be associated with a singular force capable of suspending the laws of natural causality. The particularity of the Kantian regulative ideal, however, does not allow for such an exposure to non-mechanical time to be conceptualized in terms other than those of an infinite progress to a theologically derived “secular” telos (the highest good). Nevertheless, there would appear to be more of a possibility for representing an open future within the terms of such a historical ethic than in what is afforded by Lange’s presentation of a subject recognizing and producing empirical and beautiful forms against the backdrop of “something else” that appears at most to be a vaporized form of fate.⁴⁷⁰ Since the idea of freedom has been reduced to but one of the aesthetic ideas that inexplicably arises from what can only be represented as a mechanical-natural origin the only remaining measure for an evaluation of action lies in the perception of myth as myth. And yet this very distinction succeeds only in allowing the problem of judgment to be restated in a way that accentuates the limits of a transcendental reflection whose point of terminus is the producing subject:

The whole difference between an automaton and a morally acting being is undoubtedly a difference between two phenomena. In the phenomenal world those notions of value have their root, by which we find here mere mechanicalness and there exalted earnestness. We conceive the one and the other with our senses and ideas, and establish a distinction which is not in the least impaired by the circumstance that we find in both the common feature of necessity.⁴⁷¹

Kant would acknowledge that there is a relation here between two *phenomena*, for “even the causality of freedom...is the causality of...the subject, regarded as a human being and hence as an appearance.”⁴⁷² But this does not mean that the “whole difference” between these two forms of experience has been established since that which cannot be conceptualized is not *merely* dissolved into the empty medium within which actions arise out of an undifferentiated substratum of “necessity”. Rather, to be put in a state of extremity inducing a sense of either exaltation or humiliation indicates the subject has become exposed to something that cannot simply be judged or reproduced as an empirical or beautiful form. Both of these moods receive their highest degree of intensity when they merge without negating one another in the feeling of respect brought about when the principle of individuation (of the self-representation of the phenomenal, pathological being) collapses as an abiding intuition of the imagination and axiomatic concept of the understanding. What prevents the suspension of the laws of natural causality from then devolving into an experience of sheer indeterminacy is the recognition of the “intelligible” moral vocation whose “necessity” and therefore very existence was received by Nietzsche as a contingent and outmoded cultural valuation. But in the spirit of Schiller’s dictum that “truth lives on in the illusion of art,” the conditions of possibility for the subject’s experience of itself as another (of alterity) outlive their Kantian specification. The aestheticization of the “intelligible” consequently leaves as an indivisible remainder the remnants of an unnamable experience perhaps incapable of servicing an instrumental reason.

In the place of the X upon which Lange conferred a significance essentially interchangeable with what Schiller allotted to the matter at the disposal of the being that

wills there emerges in the “pre-thetic” language of dream, gesture and tone an indication of how it is possible for the subject to recognize itself both as a “product” and as something other than a product. Although the endpoints of the immense chasm that lacerates the experience of being in the world are now identified as life force and form rather than freedom and nature, a non-mechanical quality bearing a certain mediating value continues to be imputed to the latter in Nietzsche’s sketch of “The Dionysian Worldview.” That is, “nature” here appears as a sign whose legibility (if not its significance) stems from Schiller’s supposition that the advent of aesthetic freedom emerges as a gift of nature which the being that wills cannot help but accept with a peculiar sense of indebtedness:

it is nature herself that raises man from reality to semblance, by furnishing him with two senses that lead him to knowledge of the real world through semblance alone. In the case of the eye and ear, she herself has turned away pressing matter [andringende Materie] from the senses and moved that object away from us which has direct contact with our animal-like sensibility [tierischen Sinnen]. *What we see with the eye is something different from what we feel* [empfinden]... The object of touch [Takts] is a force to which we are subjected [erleiden]; the object of eye and ear a form that we produce [Schiller’s emphasis].⁴⁷³

Perhaps it is the representation of such a simultaneous devaluation and elevation of “reality” to the level of semblance that allowed Lange to presuppose the laws of mechanical nature and the unrepresentable law of aesthetic freedom can not only co-exist but mutually reinforce one another. The component parts of the receptivity-intentionality synthesis conditioning the operation of the play drive here appear to be isolated from one another in order to accentuate the dualism of form and matter which is further determined as the opposition between vision and sensible perception integral to Schiller’s ideal of beauty. As a genealogy of the producing being (that displaces the

Kantian question of the emergence of the free will out of the realm of phenomenal nature), however, this narrative remains fundamentally incomplete when read in the light of the "Dionysian Worldview." Its historico-philosophical insufficiency appears to be two-fold: the origin of the form that the eye produces does not account for the producing being's recognition of itself as just such a form; what Schiller emphasizes as the ontological-aesthetic difference between visual perception and sensible feeling is presented as a reconcilable or functional opposition in which neither term is brought into any sort of determinate relation with the other.

If such a relation can be established, then the genesis of the production process could be reconstructed in terms that indicate how it is that the subject could be considered as something other than form or as something that "becomes" form. The significance of sensibility and vision would also undergo a change that was prefigured in the Kantian presentation of how the feelings of respect and sublimity affect the phenomenal subject as though it had come into contact with an indelible yet invisible force in relation to which it appears as neither author nor "animal-like" object.

On the basis of a "substratum" of nature neither empirical nor "supersensible", Nietzsche suggests there is a connection to be established between the "life-force" emanating from the "region" impenetrable to self-positing subjectivity and a will "wholly wrapped up in illusion."⁴⁷⁴ Just as the "pathological" character of the subject serves for Kant as the condition of possibility for moral experience, it serves as the point of access for the crossing of the chasm between subject as form and "subject" as something other than form.

The “materialist” basis for such a link emerges through the experiences of “dream” and “intoxication” which Nietzsche singles out as privileged sites indicative of how the subject can appear to itself as both enfolded in and released from the phenomenal world. In both cases the subject’s sovereignty appears to be displaced onto a “medium” through which its own form is both produced and taken apart “as a continuously manifested representation of the primal unity.”⁴⁷⁵

What Schiller took to be the powers of the *Spieltrieb* here take on an altered significance insofar as they are assigned the duty of incorporating such experiences into a reconfigured aesthetic (and historical) process: “plastic art (in its widest sense) is play with the dream...[T]he creation of the dionysian artist is play with intoxication.”⁴⁷⁶ Art is distinguishable as “dionysian” art to the degree that it originates out of a “tragic” recognition of “nature”, the “life-force” or the “primal unity” [Ur-Eine] as the purposeless “substratum” of “so-called world-history”.⁴⁷⁷

The monstrous image confronting the Spinozan subject as a historical being is here represented as a source of procreation, as it were, apparently devoid of any sort of determinable agency. The Kantian principle of purposiveness without a purpose underlying the reception of natural beauty is thus now ascribed to the process of meta-sociological acculturation through which the subject takes on a “form” independently of any particular, self-positing act. For all such acts already presuppose that the will has been formed in a manner that, for Nietzsche, in itself bears no intrinsic historical significance.

If the phenomenal subject is thereby recognized as the contingent yet seemingly necessary outcome of such a formative process then the sense of pre-established identity

necessary for the sustenance of pathological, instrumental or moral subjectivity gives way to the “knowledge” of the abyssal *Ur-Eine*. But only with such knowledge can the relations and means of production be appropriated in an ethico-historical act whose sublimity lies in its simultaneous negation and elevation of the being that wills: “for to our humiliation and exaltation...it is only as an aesthetic phenomenon that existence and the world are eternally justified.”⁴⁷⁸

The producing being can become capable of reshaping itself and thus of transforming an anonymous “aesthetic” process into an intentional one by recognizing the relation of necessary interdependence between the perception of the beautiful image and its amoral “substratum”, between the forms it perceives or creates and the life force to which it is subjected. The conditions of possibility for a certain historical experience thus become synonymous with those for the production of a particular type of artwork that expands the borders of the aesthetic state while simultaneously furnishing it with a new abyssal “foundation”:

The subject, the willing individual that furthers his own egoistic ends, can be conceived of only as the antagonist, not as the origin of art. Insofar as the subject is the artist, however, he has already been released from his individual will, and has become, as it were, the medium through which the one truly existent subject celebrates his release in appearance. For...only insofar as the genius in the act of artistic creation coalesces [verschmilzt] with this primordial artist of the world, does he know anything of the eternal essence of art.⁴⁷⁹

The “rule” nature prescribed to the Kantian genius now directs the being that wills toward an art that constitutes “the highest task and the properly metaphysical activity of ...life” since the “province” once governed by reason has been “unquestionably shifted to the ranks of poetry and religion.”⁴⁸⁰ But how to account for the evidently lawful or in some way determinable character of that which is “release[d]” [erlöst] into this life?

How could the “life-force” introduced in “Teleology since Kant” on the basis of a “rigorously human standpoint” assume the form of a “primordial artist” [Urkünstler] which bears a strong resemblance to the Schopenhauerian Will that Nietzsche had identified as but a misplaced anthropomorphic projection?⁴⁸¹ The answer seems to be: as long as it is understood as a heuristic or functional illusion that offers a “symbolic” representation of the workings of the ontological-aesthetic production process.

Furthermore, such “symbolism” is corroborated by a certain “fact” of nonreason that is encountered in a material yet non-empirical experience in which the subject’s Kantian-like recognition of the limits to its “egoistic ends” is coupled with an aesthetic moment reserved in the third Critique for the spirit of genius. As a result, the human artwork takes the place of the moral law as that which affects the subject (who as spectator reenacts the experience ascribed to the “genius”) as something that seems to bring out or educe its form-giving capacities.⁴⁸²

As it stands Nietzsche’s attempt to provide a second order reflection for what Lange presents as the “transcendental root” for the production of illusion would ultimately not introduce a measure for judging such beautiful formations were it not for the significance conferred upon a specifically “symbolic” form of representation.

Neither a “symbol of morality” nor an idea prescribed by reason in order to unify the sense and form drives under the aegis of the self-positing subject, the object of beauty is presented in the “Dionysian Worldview” as the appearance of something other than illusion recognized as illusion or—in Lange’s formulation—“myth as myth.” For “the idea of the tragic” allows the beautiful to be interpreted as a sign which is indicative of an experience of being in a “middle world between beauty and truth.”⁴⁸³ Such a world

arises out of the reception of a particular type of artwork which constitutes a potentially foundational or “monumental” cultural moment capable of inaugurating a collective experience of living myth that thereby preserves a kind of subterranean tradition in a way analogous to what Kant describes as the transmissibility of the “spirit” of genius.⁴⁸⁴

What is described in the third Critique as the “imitation” [Nachahmung] rather than the “copying” [Nachmachung] of artistic models reemerges in Nietzsche’s “Utility and Liability of History for Life” as a paradigmatic historical experience in which the capacity for form-giving is derived from a “judgment” of a cultural artifact that appears to have been an effect of freedom—or rather of the subject’s “shaping power”.⁴⁸⁵ “So-called world history” thereby takes on a certain value in spite of itself in the sense that it “preserves the memory of the great fighters against history, that is, against the blind power of the real.”⁴⁸⁶ The capacity of the subject to refashion itself as a self-producing product is set apart from what Nietzsche characterizes as the “Hegelian” tendency to justify a particular form of socio-cultural identity as the “necessary result of the world [historical] process.”⁴⁸⁷

Such a capacity may be inferred from cultural forms whose value lies not in their contingent content but in the way they reveal and awaken a certain force or power which Nietzsche fetishizes as the highest possible expression of an amoral, non-instrumental experience and which Kant refers to in passing as the inexplicable “skill” or “talent” of the artist.⁴⁸⁸ In a manner similar to the “exemplar” theory of history (practiced from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries in Europe), events and works thus take on value to the degree that they attest to ahistorical virtues; the time of history itself is implicitly represented as but an empty medium through which everything that

appears apart from such examples amounts to nothing more than what Kant describes as yet another “barren addition to our historical cognition.”⁴⁸⁹

To the degree that a historical cognition could establish determinate knowledge at all it becomes for Nietzsche a “liability”—not because it is thereby incapable of servicing the principle of morality of course but because it fails to arouse the shaping power of the producing being. And because such a power or “drive” stands in for the Kantian idea of freedom as that which ought and must produce effects in the world, its “natural” means of expression—the creation of the work of art—is identified as a prototypical form of human experience which serves as the origin, ideal and guarantor of an ethic of history: “the shaping power [plastische Kraft] of a human being, a people, or a culture is...that power to develop its own singular character out of itself, to shape and assimilate what is past and alien, to heal wounds, to replace what has been lost, to recreate broken forms out of itself alone.”⁴⁹⁰

The “fundamental human drive...toward the formation of metaphors” [Metaphernbildung] is all that remains of the spontaneity and autonomy of reason once the “supersensible substrate of nature” has been converted into the locus of the *Ur-Eine*.⁴⁹¹ No longer bound by the rational concepts or confined within what Schiller presented as the “incorporeal realm of the imagination”, the “artistically creating subject” emerges as the being in the world capable of fashioning an aesthetic-practical law for itself as compensation for its constitutive lack of determinate historical knowledge.⁴⁹² The “given and inherited” circumstances underlying a particular historical experience thus furnish the material out of which the self-positing subject ought and must accomplish its aesthetic destination. The language of ideal, necessity

and morality are here appropriated and condensed into an imperative which gives a renewed significance to the critique of Kantian "formalism":

ask yourself why you, as an individual, exist; and if no one can tell you, then just try to justify the meaning of your existence a posteriori, as it were, by setting yourself a purpose, a goal, a 'reason why'...I know of no better purpose in life than perishing in the attempt to accomplish something great and impossible, *animae magnae prodigus* [prodigal of a great soul].⁴⁹³

A value can be imparted to the purposeless character of the "historical process" only through the imposition of an irrational "reason" for existence upon the otherwise contingent yet palpable experience the subject passively receives as its inherited nature. For only to the degree that "what comes later" ("a posteriori") has been formed through the "reflexive" *τεχνη* of the producing being is a historical experience "justified" as an aesthetic phenomenon.

The impetus for creating a "second nature" lies in the judgment of a monumental event based upon a certain rule Nietzsche's exemplary historian prescribes for himself in the absence of an objective law.⁴⁹⁴ As a result, the practice of "monumental history" will have no need for...absolute veracity: it will continue to approach, generalize, and ultimately identify nonidentical things, it will continue to diminish the difference between motive and causes in order to present, to the detriment of the *causae*, the *effectus* as monumental—that is, as exemplary and worthy of emulation."⁴⁹⁵

While such a rule is not, of course, sanctioned by reason, the unavoidable violence it inflicts upon the matter of history is not constitutively arbitrary. It is not arbitrary if the judgment of the past is rendered by a self-positing subject destined to give itself a destiny by constructing a new "*physis*" out of the amalgamation of cultural-historical matter that passes for its pre-formed identity or "first nature": "the judgment of the past

is always an oracular judgment; only if you are an architect of the future and are familiar with the present will you understand it.”⁴⁹⁶

Being familiar with the present first requires a recognition of how the Kantian *Vernunftsbegriffe* were at bottom harbingers of the art of *Begriffsdichtung*. What encumbered the former was an unrequited faith in the lawful character of the “symbolic representations” that in an incomprehensible manner brought the self-positing will into a relation with something other than its own particularity. Once the consciousness of being affected by the moral law is taken to be but a misdiagnosis of the peculiar “feeling” induced by a judgment of the sublime, the antinomic relation between the autonomy of the will and the anonymous “life-force” underlying “so-called world history” is resolved through an experience not of hope (of a “wholly rational faith”), but of “metaphysical consolation” [Trosts].⁴⁹⁷

The basis for such consolation lies in the tragic knowledge that the ephemeral and morally unjustifiable form the subject fashions for itself as a “new *physis*” or “second nature”—“everything that comes into being is worthy of perishing”—nevertheless attests to a transcendental form-giving capacity, the ethico-historical necessity for which is evinced in the experience of being toward death, of being exposed to the *Ur-Eine*.⁴⁹⁸ For the collapse of signification in an experience of the sublime brings with it a positive moment indicative of how the subject’s “shaping power” can bring a form into the world irradiated by the after-image of its abyssal origin. Such an act has as its unmistakably Kantian condition of possibility the recognition of the unconditional duty or “Apollonian imperative” to produce illusion not merely as illusion but as symbol of tragic “knowledge.”⁴⁹⁹ Only in such a manner can the subject or for that matter a

“people or a culture” be rescued from a condition of heteronomy which is here understood as the perpetuation of a nominally historical experience “produced” through an aesthetically disquieting synthesis of chance and mute necessity.⁵⁰⁰

“We moderns have nothing that we have drawn from ourselves alone.”⁵⁰¹ For this to happen, the Nietzschean subject would have to be formed on analogy with the product of Kantian genius that originates as an affective response to a similarly fashioned artwork. Out of such an aesthetic experience the spirit of genius emerges as both rightful heir and “architect of the future.”⁵⁰² An ethic of history is thereby forged by viewing past events as sublime artworks which in turn were inspired by the recognition that the “life-force” underlying “so-called world history” precludes the possibility of establishing a rational and determinate foundation for human action. Compensation for such a lack of knowledge is then afforded by the aesthetic experience of form-giving that preserves historical objects “worthy of emulation.”⁵⁰³

Fulfilling the task of self-formation therefore requires an aestheticization of both human practice and historical interpretation on analogy with what Schiller presented as the law of aesthetic freedom and the task of the universal historian respectively.⁵⁰⁴ In both cases the amorphous matter inhering in the pre-historical object receives its value only from what the *Bildungstrieb* or the universal historian’s imagination imposes upon it.⁵⁰⁵ Except that for Nietzsche the latter is no longer under the supervision of reason and the historicization of the aesthetic law is no longer presented as but a logical possibility whose actualization is preempted by the constitutive gap separating physical and “moral” necessity. If a concept of justification, the principle of autonomy, and the measure of the transcendental continue to serve as the means for presenting ethical

prescriptions, then the possibility for a redemptive world-historical event seems to rest upon Nietzsche's valorization of what he calls the experience of the sublime. It accrues to the subject exposed to a particular artwork that was itself composed in the midst of just such a moment.⁵⁰⁶ But who is to say whether its unfathomable origin is in fact attributable to such an experience? Is this a judgment imposed on, or read into past forms? Are we faced here with sheer indeterminacy and "undecideability"? Ulrich Wilamowitz, for instance, seemed to think so.⁵⁰⁷

The introduction of the sublime as an incommensurable measure that withdraws once it is approached as an object of knowledge renews the question of how the claim to be in a relation with material alterity can be assessed. Why was the sublime of such importance to Kant that its "foundation" was discovered in "human nature"?⁵⁰⁸ Because the principle of morality had been disclosed through the medium of mere feeling on the condition that such a derivation thereby required a revaluation of human affectivity in order to account for non-"pathological" emotions indicative of a force (the special causality of freedom) whose practical reality was not belied by its theoretical indeterminacy. Without a revaluation of this sort, the affects would be associated only with the sort of physiological experience induced, for instance, by a certain aesthetic experience: "the art of music [Tonkunst] speaks through nothing but sensations without concepts, so that unlike poetry it leaves us with nothing to meditate about."⁵⁰⁹ This is why the "continuous agitation" and "quickenings of the mind" associated with listening to music amounts to nothing more than a "playing with sensations." Accordingly, music "has the lowest place among the fine arts" if the latter are judged in terms of their

ability to “expand” the mind “in order for [the] cognition [of rationally sanctioned aesthetic ideas] to arise.”⁵¹⁰

The visual arts are accordingly valued by reason to the degree that they “bring about a product that serves the concepts of the understanding as an enduring vehicle.”⁵¹¹ If measured by the proto-moral criteria of duration, order and purposefulness, musical “appreciation” amounts to an experience scarcely distinguishable from a form of “mere enjoyment” bearing no intrinsic cultural—let alone moral—significance.⁵¹² For “music proceeds from sensations to indeterminate ideas; the visual arts from determinant ideas to sensations. The latter produce a lasting impression, the former only a transitory one.”⁵¹³

This hierarchical value judgment reemerges in Schiller’s juxtaposition of the visual form that is produced with the material sensation that is passively received. It is reversed, however, in Nietzsche’s identification of the elusive criterion that not only allows illusion as illusion to be distinguished from pathological delusion but also from illusion as “symbol”.⁵¹⁴ “What conquers the power of illusion” while at the same time “absorbing” it so that “illusion is no longer enjoyed *as illusion* as such, but as symbol, as a sign of truth”? “It is music.”⁵¹⁵

This is just the sort of distinction that is required if an intimation of the relation between the “artistically creating subject” (the producer of illusion not necessarily captivated by illusion) and the “life force” (as symbol of truth) is to be at all communicable. For the necessarily “indeterminate idea” of the *Ur-Eine* illuminates the poverty of the concept while accentuating the need for bringing singular sensations to

expression through a medium particularly suited for this very purpose: what Kant describes as the “art of music” or the “language of affects.”⁵¹⁶

While the moral law animates the subject with a “moving force or emotion” only insofar as its representation is deprived of “whatever could commend it to the senses” the indeterminate idea of the life force exposes the subject to the collapse of phenomenal signification only if it is symbolized through a phenomenal form.⁵¹⁷ In both cases the realm of “feeling” provides the only available medium through which a non-conceptual language (or a language whose signs do not link intuitions with determinate concepts) can exert a singular effect upon the human imagination. The distinction between upholding the spirit or the letter of the moral law on the one hand and producing illusion as illusion or as symbol on the other is in both cases enabled by the recognition of an a priori transcendental principle. While both the moral and the “dionysian” can only “appear” negatively, the former does so as a sense of guilt (which binds and expands the imagination by exposing it to the supersensible idea of freedom), while the latter does so as an aesthetic form.

Ultimately the fact of reason must base its claim of universality upon an interpretation of a feeling which cannot be determined as anything more than a singular experience without presupposing—as of course Kant does—that the a priori character of morality is educed and not produced in such a reading.

Nietzsche’s privileging of music fares no better against the tireless accusations of subjectivism that emerge out of the tradition of Western metaphysics despite or because of its putative disavowal of the language of reason. The latter’s imperative tone reverberates throughout Nietzsche’s works of the early 1870’s and becomes most

pronounced at those moments when the claims of an ethic of history capable of dissociating ideal from idol are put forth. For Nietzsche such a distinction is possible thanks to the power of music, and the “symbol of truth” it is capable of producing appears indebted to a concept of Kantian origin:

in symbolic hypotyposis there is a concept which only reason can think and to which no sensible intuition can be adequate...Symbolic exhibition [thus] uses an analogy...in which judgment performs a double function: it applies the concept to the object of a sensible intuition; and then it applies the mere rule by which it reflects on that intuition to an entirely different object, of which the former object is only the symbol.⁵¹⁸

In “The Dionsysian Worldview” it becomes apparent that the presentation of the “unitary nature of the will” underlying the phenomenal world—referred to in the Birth of Tragedy as the “primordial artist”—is derived from an analogical inference rather than an intuition of the thing in itself (i.e., the Schopenhauerian “Will”).⁵¹⁹ Of course for Nietzsche what is “symbolized” here is not a rational concept but the collapse of the law of natural causality. And the loss of signification that is then recuperated when it is accompanied by the feeling of sublimity no longer satisfies the demands of reason for unity and the unconditioned. Yet these demands and needs that impress themselves upon the subject continue to arise in response to the “art drives” [Kunsttriebe] no less primordial in origin or unremitting in their propulsive force than the Kantian “power of desire.”⁵²⁰

The aestheticization of the subject’s destination to reason culminates in the “Apollonian” demand for unity and order which is coupled with the Dionysian intimation of the *Ur-Eine* that stands in for “truth”, totality or the unconditioned. The subject of such an experience is confronted by the foremost command of what

Nietzsche presents as the tragic law: phenomenal forms must be produced in a way that symbolizes their abyssal origin, otherwise nothing will be produced *of ethico-historical value*. For how could a work that either “naturalistically” imitates an illusion not recognized as such (the empirical world) or creates yet another illusion *qua* illusion within an undifferentiated realm of “mere appearance” (analogous to a dream world) adequately bring forth the “shaping powers” of an autonomous, self-positing, spontaneous and singular subject?⁵²¹ Just as pure reason ought and must be *practical*, the form-giving being ought and must institute a “higher form of praxis” no longer quarantined by reason within the borders of the Schillerian aesthetic state: “its commandment reads: Whatever was once capable of extending the concept of ‘the human being’ and of giving it a more beautiful substance must be eternally present in order for it perpetually to have this effect.”⁵²²

The regulative ideal animating such an experience of history evokes the Kantian definition of the beautiful as that which is “cognized without a concept as an object of a necessary liking.”⁵²³ For while the monumental historian’s “oracular judgment” of a culture and/or artwork is deprived of a determinate objective principle that would provide a basis for the valorization of the tragic myth, it nevertheless puts forth what Kant would describe as a claim of “subjective universality.”⁵²⁴ After all the ethos of liberal pluralism is hardly appropriate when it comes to upholding the validity of either the moral or aesthetic law against the claim that cultural forms can only be evaluated in terms of what each subject happens to find “agreeable.”⁵²⁵ Consequently, Nietzsche’s ethic of history stands in need of a meta-psychological measure on analogy with the Kantian “*sensus communis*” if the experience of tragedy is to be universally

communicable through certain feelings rather than concepts. Such a measure manifests itself not in a judgment of natural beauty but in the recognition of the illusion as symbol—an experience induced by a certain “power”:

the Apollonian projection...is thus illuminated from inside by music...The brightest clarity of the image [thus] no longer suffices, for this seemed to wish just as much to reveal something as to conceal something...Those who have never had the experience of having to see at the same time that they also longed to transcend all seeing will scarcely be able to imagine how definitely and clearly these two processes co-exist and are felt at the same time as one contemplates the tragic myth.⁵²⁶

The unification of the beautiful and the sublime does not emerge as a demand of reason in the third Critique since neither experience is treated as an end in itself. It is in Schiller’s “Aesthetic Education” that such a synthesis is presented as a hitherto unrecognized rational need. But because it affects a subject whose aesthetic powers remain bound, in practical terms, by what remains of the vocation of reason, it is only through the act of self-sacrifice that this idea of unity corresponds with a historical-practical experience. Does the “coupling” of Apollonian beauty and Dionysian sublimity then both expand the time and space reserved for human action and elevate it to a “higher form of praxis” by severing the tragic myth from the moral law?⁵²⁷

C. Conclusion: Idol and Ideal

The terms of the above question point back to Lukács’ formulation of the either/or confronting a historical ethic once Schiller’s conception of the constitutively aesthetic subject is taken as its grounding principle—as in fact happens in the work of both

Lukács and Nietzsche. Either another way is found to “make the subject purely contemplative” by aestheticizing the world or “the aesthetic...must be elevated into the principle by which objective reality is shaped.”⁵²⁸ For Lukács an adherence to the latter alternative remains mired in myth so long as it does not recognize that the “underlying order and connections between things were to be found [in] history...[as] the product of a creating subject.”⁵²⁹

The “*Ur-Eine*” would seem to offer an exemplary image of what such mythologization would look like when seen from the perspective of historical materialism. But if the latter in turn is considered mythic precisely because it doesn’t recognize itself as such, then the Kantian-Schillerian heritage lends itself to another act of appropriation. That is, only by producing beauty as a symbol of truth after having “looked...into the [abyssal] essence of things” is it possible for the being that wills to become properly “historical.”⁵³⁰

The dualism of myth and history which is indispensable for Lukács no longer holds if the “ground” of the latter is symbolized by the *Ur-Eine* and the former emerges as an expression of the lived experience of a producing being no longer bound by law to the vocation of reason. In fact myth is represented in The Birth of Tragedy as an a priori condition of experience on analogy with the transcendental aesthetic; or so it appears if it is induced from an exemplary past: “the Greeks had felt involuntarily impelled to relate all their experiences immediately to their myths, indeed to understand them only in this relation.”⁵³¹ However what Kant presents as the “pure forms of sensible intuition” (space and time) are here subject to a process of historical fluctuation. For the experience imputed to Hellenic culture is presented in the past tense in order to

accentuate how the "demise of [tragic] myth" can be inferred, or read off cultural forms no longer bearing the sign of a "dionysian" origin.

It is "when a people begins to comprehend itself historically" that this origin becomes forgotten. What Hegelian Marxism, Historicism and the "Prussian School" of historiography each presented in their own particular way as the singular historical-philosophical accomplishment of the nineteenth century is thus reinterpreted as the by-product of a debilitating secularizing tendency set in motion by the "unshakeable faith that thought, using the thread of causality, can penetrate the deepest abysses of being and that thought is capable not only of knowing being but even of correcting it."⁵³²

For a collective experience of history to be possible, it requires an "ahistorical" mythic foundation.⁵³³ Converting history into an object of scientific knowledge therefore amounts to a "bad mythology."⁵³⁴ But once the process of secularization deprives a culture of the sort of "unconscious metaphysics" necessary for its organic maturation, how could that which serves as an indispensable precondition for the formation of a culture become something the will posits as a conscious goal? Only if such a seeming contradiction is resolved by the recognition of a tragic law. For there remains no other basis for an ethic of history once the striving for the "highest good" or the patient expectation for a beneficent outcome to emerge out of the teleological "world process" are diagnosed as but symptoms of an "unshakeable" and dogmatic faith that blinds itself to the "Apollonian projection...illuminated from inside by music."⁵³⁵

The sense of alterity and sublimity induced by the power of music which displaces the need for self-preservation as a ruling principle is implicitly defined in opposition to Kant's presentation of the subject who refuses to bear false witness once it is affected

by a feeling of guilt that takes it outside of itself (in an experience of “ek-stasis”). “If you would explain the tragic myth, the first requirement is to seek the pleasure that is peculiar to it in the purely aesthetic sphere, without transgressing into the region of pity, fear, or the morally sublime.”⁵³⁶ This second order feeling of pleasure is aroused when the beautiful is recognized as a symbol of truth that presents the subject with neither a moral “command [n]or [a moral] reproach.”⁵³⁷ Such an ideal releases the subject from the necessity of rendering impossibly unequivocal moral judgments and exposes it to certain images indicative of the life-force “at the bottom of things, despite all the changes of appearances, indestructibly powerful and pleasurable.”⁵³⁸

But the subject remains mired in the world of judgment, for how else is it to distinguish which cultural forms from the past and present are “illuminated from inside by music” and which are not? How else it to make the distinction that for Nietzsche is necessary if an experience of history is to be “justified as an aesthetic phenomenon”?

The need for an aesthetic law emerged in Schiller’s work once the rationally sanctioned yet not rationally determined play drive had been identified as the only force capable of “fulfilling the whole concept” of the human being.⁵³⁹ For what it produced had to take on an ideal character that could not be understood on the basis of a lawless or naturalistic aesthetic: “arbitrary lining up of fantastic pictures one after another is not penetrating into the ideal, and imitative reproduction of actuality is not portrayal of nature.”⁵⁴⁰ A measure was then found in the form-giving capacity of a proto-moral subject capable of aestheticizing the experience of being in the world in accordance with the principle of autonomy. In the Birth of Tragedy the power of music stands in for the power of desire as the transcendental condition of possibility for the production of

an “artistic truth” whose historicization is no longer preempted by the impossibility of imposing the moral law unto phenomenal nature.

Even assuming the forms amplified by the power of music that appear on a transfigured operatic stage could be judged on the basis of a historical-philosophical rule, the distinction between good and bad mythology remains insufficiently “transcendental” insofar as it obscures the fundamentally similar structure shared by both. For the “shaping power” animated by the spirit of music is a narrowly conceived form of causality whose means of externalization is based upon a certain *τεχνη* evinced in the art of classical sculpture. The form-matter dualism necessary for the latter is then transposed to the sphere of practice within which “a human being, a people or a culture” becomes capable of justifying its existence only if it produces itself in an analogous manner.⁵⁴¹ The inspiration for such an act of self-formation arises from an exposure to a monumental past reconstituted by the “creative artist” in whose hands “history becomes malleable clay.”⁵⁴² It is the “sovereign privilege” of the latter to recognize that the task of historical “representation” calls for a “compositional moment of the highest order.”⁵⁴³

Precisely this moment is the most powerful and most spontaneous creative moment in the inner being of the artist [or]...the dramatist...[who thereby] thinks of all things as interrelated, [and]...weave[s] isolated events into a whole—always with the presupposition that a unity of plan must be inserted into the things when it is not in them. This is how the human being spins his web over the past and subdues [bändigt] it, this is how the artistic drive [*Kunsttrieb*] expresses itself.⁵⁴⁴

While the *Kunsttrieb* is counterpoised with the “drive for justice” [*Gerechtigkeitstrieb*], the relationship between the Kantian moral subject and the “artistically creating subject” is not reducible to the opposition Nietzsche constructs. In

fact the moral law from which the producing subject is putatively severed remains very much in force in a manner that can be accounted for within the terms of Nietzsche's own exposition of "critical history." For the possibility that an experience of history lives on or endures apart from how it is conceptualized is suggested by both the critique of historicism and the supposition that a subject produced by a tradition is not wholly identical with that "product."

"A historical phenomenon, when purely and completely understood and reduced to an intellectual phenomenon, is dead for anyone who understands it."⁵⁴⁵ The subject undergoes a symbolic death when it understands itself as just such a "historical phenomenon." But its after-life—the not yet fully acculturated remainder that Nietzsche refers to as "life"—remains receptive to another experience of history.

The evolution of the "life force" into the concept of "life" corresponds with the shift in emphasis that occurs when the interpretation of nature in "Teleology since Kant" is supplemented by the cultural prescriptions presented in The Birth of Tragedy and "The Utility and Liability of History for Life." Such a concept provides the subject with an identity, a purposiveness and a goal; that is, it performs the same service that had been rendered by the Kantian power of desire: "reason is impelled by a propensity of its nature to go beyond its use in experience" toward the recognition of its practical destination to a final purpose.⁵⁴⁶ What remains of the self-positing will after Nietzsche's aestheticization of reason is the principle of life as that "dark, driving, insatiable power that lusts after itself."⁵⁴⁷

The "being" of the subject is thus represented less as a substance than as a process that presupposes and is conditioned by a *mechanical concept of time*: "existence itself is

nothing but an uninterrupted having been, something that lives by negating, consuming and contradicting itself.”⁵⁴⁸

The same principle that constricted the Kantian representation of historical time reemerges as the limit experience of a subject who in the absence of an “unconscious metaphysics” remains bound to a force that perpetually comes to presence and negates itself in a punctual instant. Such a process is properly understood to be *aesthetic* when the subject both arrests and “coalesces” with the flow of time by recreating itself, by appropriating the power of the life force. “The goal of culture is nothing other than to promote the emergence of true human beings.” Accordingly it is “very necessary that a conscious intention finally take the place of that ‘dark drive’...so that it will no longer be possible to enlist that instinct that is uncertain about its goal—the celebrated dark drive—for other aims.”⁵⁴⁹

The proper goal of an ethic of history is to prepare for the “production of genius” that ought to arise as a monumental artwork capable of serving as a mythic foundation for a culture; the latter is thus provided with a spatio-temporal prism as it were through which it can selectively view and reinterpret past events in accordance with a present “need” that emerges as an indispensable residue not wholly absorbed by a dominant cultural formation (by a first nature). This “residue” or remainder can become apparent when an inherited tradition puts a present in a relation with a past in a manner that creates the possibility for something like an alienation effect to occur.⁵⁵⁰ Like the experience of the Kantian sublime or the consciousness of being affected by the moral law such an effect is accompanied by the recognition of an a priori capacity: i.e. the exercise of the “shaping power” poised to construct a second nature. But what if this

production is compromised and constricted beforehand by the residue of a “situated” but not determined life that it in turn will fail to master when it “seizes or forcibly appropriates” [aneignen oder anzwngen] a past?⁵⁵¹ “Life” in this case would not be reducible to the mechanical flow of time; it would express itself as that which silently endures and reemerges unnoticed as a force that conditions what the shaping power creates.

There are then two representations of time to be found in Nietzsche’s “untimely meditation” on history: the rectilinear and destructive flow of the life force that fosters the need for illusion and the duration of an a-conceptual tradition that persists apart from that which is explicitly handed down.⁵⁵² Nietzsche isolates the latter not as the a priori principle of morality but as the inviolable condition of possibility for the production of beauty that is “transmitted” above all through the power of music. But it also emerges as a constraining force that prevents the formation of a second nature from precipitating an unequivocal rupture with the past. The non-mechanical representation of time thus serves the dual function of enabling and limiting the production of culture. “For since we are...the products [Resultate] of earlier generations, we are also the products of their aberrations...[I]t is impossible to free ourselves completely from this chain. If we condemn these aberrations and regard ourselves as free of them, this does not alter the fact that we are descended from them.”⁵⁵³

By considering the Kantian “intelligible” to be just such an “aberration” [Verirrung] whose preservation would only inhibit or misdirect [verirren] the artistic subject’s shaping power, Nietzsche provides an exemplary occasion for his own suggestion that a present is unable to dictate the terms of its relation to a heritage in a unilateral manner

to be corroborated. For Nietzsche's entire project for a "cultural politics" rests upon an aestheticization of reason that does not recognize the conditions of impossibility for its act of de facto appropriation. If anything the critical negativity of the Kantian system is revitalized as a historical force by the emergence of a project whose aesthetic valorizations remain thoroughly dependent upon moral criteria.⁵⁵⁴

A "new and improved *physis*" can only arise as the product of a unitary, autonomous and self-positing culture whose relation to an aestheticized moral law accordingly manifests itself through actions attesting to a "harmony of life, thought, appearance and will."⁵⁵⁵ By contrast, the Kantian distinction between upholding the spirit and letter of the moral law is derived from the feeling of respect that cannot be further determined as a historical judgment of a particular event. It serves as a measure only insofar as it exposes the subject to a non-empirical fact, a non-pathological desire and an occasion for assuming responsibility that never culminates in a self-justifying accomplishment. But even if an unequivocally moral intention could be isolated, the self-positing character of the Kantian will would still be confronted with the limit experience of being in a world that prevents an ethical action from being imposed onto history as though a form were being imparted to senseless matter. It is therefore not so much a question of discovering how much history can tolerate, suffer or "bear" [erträgt]; it refuses "to be reshaped" into either a moral order or a "pure aesthetic structure."⁵⁵⁶

This is a ban on idolatry that strikes the imagination as a law it cannot represent. It also confronts the being that wills with the "form" of a law it cannot produce. If the imagination is then drawn toward the memory of what the will *has* produced, it will likely "discover the experience that forbids us to conceive of history as fundamentally

atheological.” The same experience may await the contemporary reader of Schiller and Nietzsche.

EPILOGUE

The recent works of Ernesto Laclau are based primarily upon the 1989 text he co-authored with Chantal Mouffe (Hegemony and Socialist Strategy) that Slavoj Žižek has described as the source of “perhaps the most radical breakthrough in modern social theory.”⁵⁵⁷ For Žižek the value of such an innovation lies in the Lacanian- inspired recognition that an objective social totality and an essentialist subject do not (and cannot) exist. Furthermore, substitutes for both outmoded concepts are now poised to emerge through a process of political contestation whose exigencies are incapable of being met by following the protocols of liberal pluralism. For the newfound “ontology of the social” delineates the transcendental-historical limits of human experience in terms of the psychoanalytic categories of the lack and repetition rather than the utilitarian calculus of pain and pleasure that directs the will of the unified and rational subject.⁵⁵⁸

The impossibility of a free, substantial subject, of a consciousness identical to itself which is *causa sui*, does not eliminate its need, but just relocates the chooser in the aporetic situation of having to act as if he were a subject, without being endowed with any of the means of a fully fledged subjectivity...It is not possible to do away with the category of ‘subject’: what it points to is part of the structure of experience. What is possible is to deconstruct it...to enlarge the field of the language games that it is possible to play with it.”⁵⁵⁹

What raises the stakes of the Wittgensteinian “language game,” is the supposition that “nothing ethical can be derived from the general structure of experience...[for]

there are...no ethical principles or norms whose validity is independent of all communitarian spaces.”⁵⁶⁰ But something “ethical” *can* therefore be inferred from the “structure of experience” so long as it is not presented in the form of a determinate concept. The same underlying principles that for Žižek constitute a theoretical-practical breakthrough may then also be read as the unmistakable symptoms of a singular tendency permeating contemporary socio-political theory: the valorization of a *constructed* form of identity that can be expressed only in opposition to a reputedly superseded historical-philosophical conception of the “substantial” subject which is then hypostatized as a certain theoretical and practical limit.

But the relationship between Lacanian post-Marxism and the tradition of Western metaphysics evinces something other than a sense of irrevocable rupture when Laclau’s negative ontology is translated into the language of a practical imperative: “to take a decision is like impersonating God. It is like asserting that one does not have the means of being God, and one has, however, to proceed *as if* one were Him.”⁵⁶¹

This appropriation of both the *als ob* trope and the conception of finitude⁵⁶² integral to the second Critique is then coupled with the determination that the subject of the moral law belongs first and foremost among a particular class of unduly constricting modern concepts; respect for something like the movement of tradition is then maintained by erecting monuments that serve the function of providing the present age with a palpable object against which it can define itself:

the act of identification cannot have a source of justification external to itself, since the order with which we [then] identify is accepted, not because it is considered valuable in terms of the criteria of goodness or rationality which operate at its bases, but because it brings about the possibility of an order [that is constructed and not simply recognized or discovered. For]...one approves of the Law because it is Law, not

because it is rational... There is a need [today] for an order, and its actual contents become a secondary consideration.⁵⁶³

The Kantian signs of “goodness” and “rationality” are here used to invoke a usefully obsolete operation that cannot, however, be carried out in strictly Kantian terms. For the rational-moral Law serves as a measure for practical action only insofar as it is dissociated from anything that could be identified as the actual ground or governing principle of a social order.

Laclau’s reference to a non-rational yet unmistakably “formal” Law thereby accentuates the way in which the Kantian system continues to be upheld at the very moment that it is subjected to critique. What Laclau introduces as the catalyst “effecting a [Heideggerian] ‘de-struction’ of the history of Marxism” can therefore also be described as the most recent bearer of a living “neo-Kantian” legacy that now solicits a critical genealogical reconstruction.⁵⁶⁴ The origins of such a subterranean tradition have been traced in this work to two particular historical-philosophical moments: Schiller’s attempt to supplement and/or “put...into effect” the moral law without having recourse to theological concepts and the intensification of this aestheticizing turn in Nietzsche’s transformation of the vocation of reason into the art of *Begriffsdichtung*.⁵⁶⁵ The tradition in question is then transmitted by way of the works of Lukàcs and Adorno to contemporary projects oriented toward poststructuralist and neo-Lacanian principles.

The recurring sense of duality that arises when a law for the historical imagination is posited by way of a critique of Kant which then amounts both to a self-definition and a misrepresentation becomes particularly evident in Lukàcs’ characterization of the moral law as a depleted source of illumination no longer capable of providing the subject with “the map of all possible paths.”⁵⁶⁶

For what this dissertation has emphasized above all is the degree to which the Kantian conception of the moral law ought to be severed from the image of a reassuring road map that indicates how to negotiate what Derrida refers to as the “simple relation between the categorical imperative and a determinable subject.”⁵⁶⁷ In fact such a relation can only be sustained if it gives rise to a never to be completed task undertaken by a subject whose conceptual “determinability” has been destabilized by an unrepresentable force (the principle of morality) that is incapable of being appropriated by the self-positing will.⁵⁶⁸ Being affected by something non-empirical yet material would then seem to correspond with just the sort of experience that Laclau defines as an “absent fullness” or “original lack” were it not for the reigning historical judgment which counterpoises the enabling indeterminacy of the ethico-political to the repressive determinacy—and dated simplicity—of the rational-moral.⁵⁶⁹

For Kant the lack underlying human experience affects the would-be morally autonomous subject as a sense of guilt that preempts the assumption of responsibility from being equated with the definitive accomplishment of an ethically justified action. The obverse or even necessary consequence of the lack does not therefore result in the construction or apprehension of an aesthetic form—whether it be what Nietzsche presents as the sublime object or what Laclau describes as the “visibility of the acts of [political] identification...[that] are actually postulated and fought for in the historical arena.”⁵⁷⁰

Such a struggle began with Nietzsche’s determination in the early to mid 1870’s that historical experience can be justified only if a collective subject posits a “second nature” for itself as if it were producing an artwork. For both Nietzsche and Laclau the

need for an impossible yet unavoidable act of political-cultural identification emerges as a response to a historical summons that aestheticizes the moral law in a two-fold sense: first, substantive, determinate or positive characteristics are imputed to the Kantian formulation of the law; secondly, the ensuing construction which is presented in the guise of a critique is then disassembled in order to create the theoretical-practical space within which the a priori lack can serve as a particular ethico-political incentive.

This lack is then conceived in terms of an *Abgrund* that innervates rather than limits a self-positing will condemned to produce aesthetic forms whose idolatrous character is mitigated if not negated only when they are recognized as such. As a result, for Laclau the “highest form of rationality that society can reach is that of a regulated madness.”⁵⁷¹ And this is all that can be demanded of an ethic of history once the origin of the “Dionysian” artwork or the Lacanian act of identification has been transformed into the object of a transcendental reflection which establishes the outermost historical limits of socio-political possibility.

Ultimately, the law for the historical imagination which arises out of a hitherto unrecognized tradition that extends from Schiller to Lacanian post-Marxism is founded upon the following determination: to be without either a pre-formed sense of identity or an objective historical law are but two expressions of the same political and ethical problem that lends itself to a fundamentally *aesthetic* solution.

NOTES

¹ Immanuel Kant, Anthropology From A Pragmatic Point of View. Mary J. Gregor trans. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), p. 44.

² For an example of the ethic of success valorized by the "Prussian School", see the following citation of Heinrich von Treitschke's interpretation of the 18th of Brumaire in George Iggers., The German Conception of History. (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1968), p. 96: [The event amounted to a] poorly prepared coup d'etat executed...with an inexcusable amount of brutality and lies. That is nevertheless succeeded is the surest proof for its historic necessity and greatness."

For a recent example of neo-pragmatism see Richard Rorty's contribution to Deconstruction and Pragmatism (Chantal Mouffe, ed. {New York: Routledge, 1966}, pp. 13-18.): "Remarks on Deconstruction and Pragmatism." (Hereafter this volume will be referred to as "Deconstruction and Pragmatism").

³ Friedrich Schiller, "On the Sublime" in Friedrich Schiller: Essays ed. Walter Hinderer and Daniel O. Dahlstrom, (New York: Continuum, 1993).//Sämtliche Werke: Band V, (München: Winkler-Verlag, 1968), p. 216.

⁴ Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, Werner S. Pluhar trans. (Cambridge: Hackett, 1996) p.8 // Immanuel Kants Werke: Band III (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1914), p. 7. (Hereafter referred to as CPR) It was Kant's critical philosophy that instituted the tribunal of reason in order to answer three questions the human being cannot help but to ask: what can I know, what ought I to do, and what may I hope? The answers to all three interrelated questions presuppose that the subject is destined for a certain vocation, and an awareness of this vocation becomes possible despite the fact that it is not capable of being verified as an object of theoretical knowledge. "It is a summons to reason to take on once again the most difficult of all its tasks--viz., that of self-cognition [Selbsterkenntnis]--and to set up a tribunal [Gerichtshof] that will make reason secure in its rightful claims and will dismiss all baseless pretensions, not by fiat but in accordance with reason's eternal and immutable laws. This tribunal is none other than the critique of reason itself: the critique of pure reason."

⁵ On the crisis of legitimation as a historical phenomenon peculiar to modernity see Hans Blumenberg, The Legitimacy of the Modern Age, Robert M. Wallace trans. (Cambridge: MIT, 1983.) Jürgen Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, Thomas McCarthy trans. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975) For a critique of the latter, cf. David Wellbery in Nietzsche in Italy Thomas Harrison ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988)

⁶ Hannah Arendt, "The Concept of History" in Between Past and Future (New York: Viking, 1968) p. 84.

⁷ Examples of recent poststructuralist literature oriented toward this question include Thomas Keenan, Fables of Responsibility, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 3 (for whom even the concept of “response” is tainted by inhibiting anthropomorphic assumptions: “the nonresponse, the right not to respond, runs counter to the general determination of the subject as calculable, accountable...”), J..F. Lyotard, The Inhuman: Reflections on Time trans. Geoffrey Bennignton and Rachel Bowlby. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), and Slavoj Žižek, The Abyss of Freedom (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997). For Keenan the “nonresponse” should be juxtaposed with “the decisionist celebration of the pathos of pure resolution, of having to decide once and for all, without reason but with firmness and conviction.”

⁸ Cf. Jacques Derrida, “Ends of Man” in The Margins of Philosophy, Alan Bass trans. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982) and the series of essays collected under the title Who Comes After the Subject, ed. Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, Jean-Luc Nancy. (New York: Routledge, 1991)

⁹ Cf. Geoffrey Hartmann, The Fateful Question of Culture (New York: Columbia, 1997)

¹⁰ Cf. Keenan. “Exposure to the singularity of a text...[is] something that cannot be organized in advance...[it is] what happens when we cannot apply the rules.” p .3. Theodore W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment, John Cumming trans. (New York: Continuum, 1972). p. xvi.

¹¹ For an example of an explicit appropriation of the work of Adorno, see Jean-Luc Nancy, The Experience of Freedom Bridget McDonald trans. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993)

¹² Keenan, p. 193

¹³ Ibid, p. 3.

¹⁴ ibid, p.1.

¹⁵ Michel Foucault, “On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of a Work in Progress” in The Foucault Reader, ed. Paul Rabinow. (New York: Pantheon, 1984), p. 372.

¹⁶ Cf. Giorgio Agamben, Homo Sacer...Daniel Heller-Roazen trans. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). George Bataille, On Nietzsche. Bruce Boone trans. (New York: Paragon House, 1992)

¹⁷ For a discussion of how such unilateral reinterpretations are endemic to a certain modernist tendency, cf. Paul de Man, Blindness and Insight, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983) and volume four of Martin Heidegger’s Nietzsche, Frank Capuzzi trans. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987).

¹⁸ Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, Werner S. Pluhar trans. (Cambridge: Hackett, 1996), p. 13. (Hereafter referred to as CPR).

¹⁹ Immanuel Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, Mary Gregor trans. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 90.//Immanuel Kants Werke: Band V (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1914), p. 118. (Hereafter referred to as CPrR)[When the translation has been modified, the German text will be cited after the reference to the English edition].

²⁰ Immanuel Kant, The Critique of Judgment. Werner S. Pluhar trans. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), p. 331.// Immanuel Kants Werke: Band V. (Berlin: Bruno Caassirer, 1914), p. 523 (Hereafter referred to as CJ).

²¹ CPR, p. 6. The “modern” here indicates the canonized three-fold division of political philosophy into ancient, medieval, and modern periods. Cf. e.g. George Sabine, A History of Political Theory (New York: Holt, 1950).

²² CPR, p. 6//5.

²³ Cf. CPR, pp. 21-2. The Copernican revolution overthrows the presupposition that knowledge is possible only “if our intuition...conform(s) to the character of its objects” and institutes the fundamental principle of the transcendental aesthetic: the relationship between human knowledge and experience is based upon the a prior principle that the “object (as object of the senses) conforms to the character of our power of intuition.”

²⁴ CPR, p. 8//7.

²⁵ CJ, p.288//483 The regulative, not constitutive principle “für unsere menschliche Urteilskraft ebenso notwendig gilt, also ob er ein objektives Prinzip wäre.”

²⁶ CJ, 14//244.

²⁷ CJ, 238//7 “With this [work] I conclude my entire critical enterprise.” (“Hiermit endige ich also mein ganzes kritisches Geschäft.”).

²⁸ CJ, pp. 64-5.

²⁹ CJ, 84//322.

³⁰ Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics, Paul Carus and James W. Ellington trans. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1977), p. 84. CPR, pp. 728//670; 536//489 (Hereafter referred to as “PTM”).

³¹ CJ, p. 332//523.

³² CPrR, p. 114//8.

³³ CJ, p. 332//523. Such repetition establishes the rhythm specific to something like a domain of “natural history”, wherein the recurring experiences of pleasure and pain associated with the habitual pursuit of pathological purposes occurs. “[T]he will, as the power of desire, is one of the many natural causes in the world, namely, the one that acts in accordance with concepts.” If it is the “lower” power of desire that initiates a given action, then this practical possibility is “technical”, or pragmatic, which means that the operative principle of the will is not autonomy; rather, the act is carried out in order to achieve some particular, contingent end. This conception of the will gives rise to the phenomenon of a “natural history”—a history in which nature is represented as neither mechanical nor moral; it is within this borderland that human history has hitherto largely subsisted, set apart both from an ethic of history and the realm of “physical causality.” (CJ, p. 10).

³⁴ CJ, p. 332//523.

³⁵ Cf. CJ, pp. 220-7 for Kant’s critique of “dogmatic” teleology.

³⁶ CJ, p. 336//527.

³⁷ Ibid. On the “kingdom of purposes”[Reich der Zwecke] cf. Grounding For The Metaphysics Of Morals, James W. Ellington trans. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1981), p. 39 (Hereafter referred to as GW).

³⁸ Immanuel Kant, “Religion Within the Bounds of Mere Reason” George di Giovanni trans. In Religion and Rational Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 92. (The former work will hereafter be referred to as RBR; the latter edition as RRT).

³⁹ CJ, 342//533. Cf. St. Augustine: The Political Writings, Henry Paolucci ed. (Chicago: Gateway, 1962), pp.2-3.

⁴⁰ GW, p. 19//Kritik der praktischen Vernunft/Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten: Werkausgabe Band VII (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1956), p. 34. “In der Tat ist es schlechterdings unmöglich, durch Erfahrung einen einzigen Fall mit völliger Gewißheit auszumachen, da die Maxime einer sonst pflichtmässigen Handlung lediglich auf moralischen Gründen und auf der Vorstellung seiner Pflicht beruhet habe.”

⁴¹ GW, p. 36//20-1. The question of idolatry in this context will be renewed in chapter 4 vis-à-vis Nietzsche’s “aesthetic” justification of a historical phenomenon. In her

Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy (Ronald Beiner ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), Hannah Arendt offers what amounts to a revision of this Kantian principle. Transposing Kant's discussion of determinate judgments in the first Critique to the realm of history, she presents a concept of "exemplary validity" that rehabilitates the "example"; whether the signified be a "table" or the heroism of Achilles, "the exemplar is and remains a particular that in its very particularity reveals the generality that otherwise could not be defined." (77) Even when Kant describes the example as the "go-cart of judgment" in the first Critique, however, it is both restricted to the realm of logic and also presented in terms of a duality that disappears in Arendt's revision: "the fact that examples sharpen one's power of judgment is their single and great benefit...[but] examples often weaken the understanding's effort to gain insight into rules, as to their adequacy, in a universal way and independently of the particular circumstances of experience; hence they ultimately accustom us to use rules more as formulas than as principles. The example is thus merely the go cart [Gängelwagen] of judgment." (CPR, pp. 207-8). The impetus for Arendt's valorization of "exemplary validity" as an indispensable concept for the historical imagination can be found in the following passage from "The Concept of History": "The scene [in Homer's *Odyssey*] where Ulysses listens to the story of his own life is paradigmatic for both history and poetry; the 'reconciliation with reality, the catharsis which, according to Aristotle, was the essence of tragedy, and according to Hegel, was the ultimate purpose of history, came about through the tears of remembrance. The deepest human motive for history and poetry appears here in unparalleled purity: since listener, actor, and sufferer are the same person.." In Between Past and Future (New York: Penguin, 1968), p. 45. The historical imagination is thus aided by the example and the recollection—two phenomena which can only undermine the Kantian subject's relation to the moral law.

⁴² Cf. CPR, p. 8. "Our age is properly the age of critique, and to critique everything must submit. *Religion*...commonly seek[s] to exempt...[itself] from critique...through its sanctity...But in doing so...[it] arouse[s] well-deserved suspicion and cannot lay claim to unfeigned respect; such respect is accorded by reason only to what has been able to withstand reason's free and open examination."

GW, pp. 19//34; 34//57. "Hier wird nun die Philosophie in der Tat auf einen mißlichen Standpunkt gestellt, der fest sein soll, unerachtet er weder im Himmel, noch auf der Erde, an etwas gehängt, oder woran gestützt wird."

⁴³ Keenan, p. 1.

⁴⁴ CJ, p. 135//347.

⁴⁵ GW, p. 62//101-2.

⁴⁶ CPrR, p. 28//36.

⁴⁷ *ibid*, p. 27//34-5. While reason cannot “understand how the concept of cause might be determined for cognition” in a way that explains how freedom is actually possible, “it must of course cognize in a determinate way causality with respect to the actions of the will in the sensible world, since otherwise practical reason could not actually produce any deed. But as for the concept which it makes of its own causality as noumenon, it need not determine it theoretically with a view to cognition of its supersensible existence.” (CPrR, p. 44).

⁴⁸ GW, p. 38//64.

⁴⁹ CPrR, p. 39. “When we look back upon all previous attempts that have been made to discover the principle of morality...it was not seen that man is subject only to his own, yet universal legislation and that he is bound only to act in accordance with his own will.”

⁵⁰ CPrR, p. 122//159. “der Stachel der Tätigkeit hier aber sogleich bei Hand, und äußerlich ist...nicht allererst empor arbeiten darf, um Kraft zum Widerstande gegen Neigungen durch lebendige Vorstellung der Würde des Gesetzes zu sammeln.”

⁵¹ GW, p. 44//74.

⁵² CPrR, p. 122//159.

⁵³ On the novel interpretation of the puppet theater put forth by Kant’s contemporary, Heinrich von Kleist, cf. An Abyss Deep Enough: Letters of Heinrich von Kleist, With a Selection of Essays and Anecdotes, Phillip B. Miller trans. (New York: Dutton, 1982). For a relatively recent reading cf. Paul de Man, The Rhetoric of Romanticism (New York: Columbia, 1984).

⁵⁴ GW, p. 44//74. Although the “ideal of holiness” that evokes an experience of freedom in which the will would no longer be exposed to the temptation to transgress the moral law is “not attainable by any creature” it nevertheless functions in the Kantian system as an “archetype [Urbild] which the subject should “strive to approach and resemble in an uninterrupted but endless progress.” CPrR, p. 71//92.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 102//133.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 107//139.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 91//70.

⁵⁸ CPR, p. 744.

⁵⁹ CPR, 737//542.

⁶⁰ CPrR, p. 100.

⁶¹ GW, p. 14.

⁶² GW, pp. 2, 43-4//73-4. That the subject is a “legislative” member of this kingdom indicates that it is subject to, but not author of, the moral law: the will’s relation to the law thus enables it to assume the status of moral “subject”, not “sovereign.” The “kingdom of purposes” is a “regulative ideal” that posits an experience of history wherein recognition and compliance with the spirit, not merely the letter, of the moral law is achieved. What Walter Benjamin thus describes as the categorical imperative’s “doubtless incontestable minimal program” [i.e. the command to treat the humanity in one’s own or anyone else’s person as an end in itself—a final purpose—and never merely as a means] would therefore provide the foundation for the positing of moral, rather than merely pragmatic or technical, ends. Cf. Walter Benjamin, “Critique of Violence” in Selected Writings: Volume 1, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 241. (Hereafter referred to as “Selected Writings”) For contrasting interpretations of whether greater emphasis should be placed on the secular or theological character of the kingdom of purposes, cf. Rudolf Makkreel, Imagination and Interpretation in Kant (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1990), p. 140, Yirmiah Yovel, Kant and the Philosophy of History, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 70-2; William Connolly, Why I Am Not A Secularist (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1999), pp. 169-171.

⁶³ CJ, p. 12.

⁶⁴ CJ, p. 17//246.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ The habitual application refers to the concept of causality as a category of the understanding which is used to represent phenomenal objects of nature; the exceptional application denotes the concept of causality as an idea of reason which becomes practical through an act of freedom.

⁶⁷ Cf. Rudolf Makkreel, Dilthey: Philosopher of the Human Studies, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 322.

⁶⁸ Georg Lukács, Soul and Form, trans. Anna Bostock (Cambridge: MIT, 1974) [hereafter referred to as Soul and Form]//“Über Sehnsucht und Form” Die Neue Rundschau (Berlin: S. Fischer; 1911), p. 193.

⁶⁹ CJ, p. 17//246.

⁷⁰ CPrR, p. 98//246. "Achtung ...ist, als Bewußtsein der unmittelbaren Nötigung des Willens durch Gesetz." While "Nötigung" may be more accurately translated as "compulsion", "necessitation" has become the term of choice in the tradition of Kantian interpretation in that it allows the moral dimension of necessity to be expressed through a concept that does not simply denote the use of coercive force or suggest the given action is set in motion by natural-mechanical forces.

⁷¹ On the distinction between schematic and symbolic hypotyposis cf. CJ, p. 226. "All hypotyposis consists in making [a concept] sensible, and is either schematic or symbolic. In schematic hypotyposis there is a concept that the understanding has formed, and the intuition corresponding to it is given a priori. In symbolic hypotyposis there is a concept which only reason can think and to which no sensible intuition can be adequate, and this concept is supplied with an intuition that judgment treats in a way merely analogous to the procedure it follows in schematizing; i.e., the treatment agrees with this procedure merely in the rule followed rather than in terms of the intuition itself and hence merely in terms of the form of the reflection rather than its content."

⁷² Ibid. Kant presents the moral and pathological feelings in the second Critique in a way that allows a pathologically-affected but not (necessarily) pathologically determined subject to discover a rule for action that neither follows the pleasure principle nor negates it. Such a negation, as prescribed for example by the Stoic system, places impossible demands upon a subject that can undermine respect for the law. The Kantian ethic offers something like a "sublation" of the subject's experience of pain and pleasure. "The moral disposition is necessarily connected with consciousness of the determination of the will directly by the law...[thus a] determination of the power of desire [which] is always the ground of a satisfaction [Wohlgefallens] in the action produced by it; but this pleasure...is not the determining ground of the action [rather the determination]...of the will directly by reason alone is the ground of the feeling of pleasure...Now since this determination has exactly the same inward effect, that of an impulse to activity, as a feeling of the agreeableness expected from the desired action would have produced...[it can appear that we act] merely passively...and take the moral incentive for a sensible impulse...But one must be on guard against degrading and disfiguring [abzusetzen und zu verunstalten] the real and genuine incentive, the law itself...by such spurious praise of the moral determining ground as incentive as would base it on feelings of particular joys...Respect as consciousness of the direct necessitation of the will by the law is hardly an analogue of the feelings of pleasure, although in relation to the power of desire it does the same things but *from different sources*" (CPrR, p. 98//127-8; emphasis added).

⁷³ cf. Jean Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness...Hazel E. Barnes trans. (New York: Washington Square, 1956), p. 784.

⁷⁴ Keenan, p. 193.

⁷⁵ Kcenan, p. 1.

While the Kantian subject is able to “understand” the experience of freedom in terms that are analogous to the laws it prescribes to phenomenal nature, the analogy is undermined as soon as these laws are treated as an established body of “rules and knowledge” that could provide the subject’s relation to the moral law (or the moral law itself) with a foundation that is empirically verifiable. For a discussion of how Kant’s “practical” deduction of human freedom suspends the “epistemic” question of the theoretical determination of human freedom see Henry E. Allison, Idealism and Freedom: Essays on Kant’s Theoretical and Practical Philosophy, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 141.

⁷⁶ A seminal text that provides one of the principal sources for Sartrean existentialism is Alexandre Kojève’s Introduction to the Reading of Hegel. Kojève’s lectures on Hegel illuminate an important aspect of the Kantian legacy insofar as they echo the interpretation of an “empty” yet productive desire that is ascribed to a self-positing subject whose identity is defined in terms of a fundamental lack. On the other hand, Kojève’s “Hegelian” subject establishes a relation to the world that is inimical to the development of a Kantian historical ethic. The subject-object relation that emerges here exposes a fault line in the tradition of Western metaphysics; what becomes fractured is the structure of the free will. Is it appropriating and instrumental or “responsive”? But as the Kantian principle of autonomy indicates, there is no one ethical-philosophical position that perfectly corresponds with either side of this dualism. This is why the Kantian subject appears today to offer both a critique and a foundation for what Heidegger interprets as the “will to will.” Its critical capacities are evinced when juxtaposed with Kojève’s “appropriation” of Hegel’s conception of subjectivity: “Desire is what transforms Being...into an ‘object’ revealed to a ‘subject’ different from the object and ‘opposed’ to it. It is in and by—or better still, as—‘his’ Desire that man is formed and is revealed—to himself and to others—as an I, as the I that is essentially different from, and radically opposed to, the non-I. The (human) I is the I of a Desire or of Desire...In contrast to the knowledge that keeps man in a passive quietude, Desire disquiets him and moves him to action. Born of Desire, action tends to satisfy it, and can do so only by the ‘negation’, the destruction, or at least the transformation, of the desired object: to satisfy hunger, for example, the food must be destroyed or, in any case, transformed. Thus, all action is ‘negating’.” (Kojève, James H. Nichols, Jr. trans. [Ithaca: Cornell, 1969], pp. 3-4.

⁷⁷ CPR, p. 107. And cf: “neither concepts without an intuition corresponding to them in some way or another nor intuition without concepts can yield cognition.” (106).

⁷⁸ CJ, p. 16.

⁷⁹ CJ, p. 17.

⁸⁰ CPrR, p. 95//124.

⁸¹ “On the Miscarriage of all Philosophical Trials in Theodicy”, George di Giovanni trans. in RRT. (The former text henceforth will be referred to as “Theodicy”).

⁸² CJ, p. 114. Cf. CPrR, p. 71.

⁸³ CJ, p. 17.

⁸⁴ Cf. Keenan, p. 3.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*

⁸⁶ CPrR, p. 62/80.

⁸⁷ Theodor W. Adorno, Negative Dialectics, E.B. Ashton trans. (New York: Continuum, 1973), p. 289. (Hereafter referred to as “Negative Dialectics”).

⁸⁸ CPrR, p. 28.

⁸⁹ GW, p. 32.

⁹⁰ Georg Lukács, History and Class Consciousness, Rodney Livingston trans. (Cambridge: MIT, 1968), p. 124. For a more recent discussion of the question of Kantian “formalism” see J.B. Schneewind, “The Use of Autonomy in Ethical Theory” in Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought, ed. Thomas C Heller, Morton Sosna and David E. Wellbery. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), p. 75. Arguing against the “consequentialist” assumption that “the autonomist...cannot give a satisfactory account of the deepest roots of action and of personal character, because the theory requires us to view all of our projects and our ties to people and to groups as only contingently part of the self”, Schneewind draws attention to what such a critique implies: i.e., “that some socially determined constitutive aspect of our identity is to be accepted as carrying moral weight and as not open to moral question. [And]...[h]ow such a view could be plausible in societies as morally erratic as ours I cannot see.”

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ For Kant’s discussion of the how the principle of morality addresses the question of war see, for the section from The Conflict of the Faculties entitled “An Old Question Raised Again: Is the Human Race Constantly Progressing?” Mary J. Gregor and Robert Anchor trans. in “RRT” p. 302. (The former essay hereafter will be referred to as “An Old Question”).

⁹⁴ GW, p. 49//18.

⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 57//28.

⁹⁶ The subject is without a determinate representation of the origin of the law, of the law itself, of what allows it to recognize its commands, and of what sort of purposeful action the law prescribes. This is why the logic of nature is used, in the absence of anything else, as an analogy that allows the subject to understand how ethical action must take on the form of universality and necessity and how it must “contain a determining ground of that causality in accordance with laws of nature which is itself free from all laws of nature.” (CPrR, p. 96) The analogical use of “nature” in this context gives rise to what Kant describes as the “type of pure practical judgment”—a type of judgment in which the imagination is thoroughly subordinate to the understanding: “the rule of judgment under laws of pure practical reason is this: ask yourself whether, if the action you propose were to take place by a law of the nature of which you were yourself a part, you could indeed regard it as possible through your will...If the maxim of the action is not so constituted that it can stand the test as to the form of a law of nature in general, then it is morally impossible...In cases where causality from freedom is to be appraised it makes that law of nature merely the type of a law of freedom, because without having at hand something which it could make an example in a case of experience, it could not provide use in application for the law of a pure practical reason.” (CPrR, p. 60).

⁹⁷ Giorgio Agamben, Homo Sacer, Daniel Heller-Roazen trans. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 49.

⁹⁸ Immanuel Kant, “Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason” in “RRT”, George di Giovanni trans. (The former text will hereafter be referred to as “RBR”).

⁹⁹ J.H. Miller, The Ethics of Reading (New York: Columbia, 1987). [Hereafter referred to as “Miller”]. Apart from Miller’s work, cf.: Slavoj Žižek, “Identity and Its Vicissitudes: Hegel’s ‘Logic of Essence’ as a Theory of Ideology” in Ernest Laclau, ed. The Making of Political Identities (London: Verso, 1994), pp. 61-4. Jean Francois Lyotard, “The Sign of History” in Poststructuralism and the Question of History ed. Derek Attridge, Geoff Bennington and Robert Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 162-180, Peter Fenves, A Peculiar Fate, (Ithaca: Cornell, 1991).

¹⁰⁰ Miller, p. 25. GW, p. 30. For a neo-Kantian interpretation of how the “as if” structures permeating Kant’s texts provide the foundation for an ontological reading of the human subject cf. Hans Vaihinger, The Philosophy of As If, C.K. Ogden trans. (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1949).

¹⁰¹ “But why did Kant shrink back from the transcendental power of the imagination?” This is the question Heidegger asks in the above context in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics, Richard Taft trans. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 113.

¹⁰² Cf. GW, p. 30,32. “Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law...this is the canon for morally estimating any of our actions. Some actions are so constituted that their maxims cannot without contradiction even be thought as a universal law of nature, much less be willed as what should become one.” To illustrate the latter principle, Kant cites the example of suicide. The maxim governing such an act, if it claimed to be ethical, would be the following: “from self-love I make as my principle to shorten my life when its continued duration threatens more evil than it promises satisfaction. There only remains the question as to whether this principle of self-love can become a universal law of nature. One sees at once a contradiction in a system of nature whose law would destroy life by means of the very same feeling that acts so as to stimulate the furtherance of life, and hence there could be no existence as a system of nature.”

¹⁰³ Miller, p. 32.

¹⁰⁴ GW, p. 57//34.

¹⁰⁵ CPrR, p.28.

¹⁰⁶ On the phenomenological concept of the “pre-thetic” form of consciousness that serves as an ontological foundation for an experience of subjectivity that is thereby rescued from arbitrariness, cf. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “The Philosopher and his Shadow” in Signs Richard C. McCleary trans. (Evanston: Northwestern, 1964), p. 172.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. CJ, pp. 14-5//244.

¹⁰⁸ CPrR, p. 107.

¹⁰⁹ Kant offers a concise encapsulation of how the higher power of desire acts a self-cause that provides a means for reason to bring closure to the law of natural causality (that otherwise represents the phenomenal world in terms of a never-ending series of causes and effects) in paragraph 54 of the Prolegomena: “the power of starting...events...spontaneously, i.e., without the causality of the cause itself needing to begin and hence needing no other ground to determine its beginning...must not stand under time-determinations...[for] only its effects would be appearances.” PTM, pp. 84-5.

¹¹⁰ CPR, p. 283. “What connects [zusammenhängen] with the material conditions of experience (with sensation) is *actual*...That whose connection with the actual is determined according to universal conditions of experience is *necessary*.” For an

idiosyncratic application of the categories of modality to the philosophy of history cf. the section in Kierkegaard's *Philosophical Fragments* entitled, "Is the Past More Necessary than the Future? Or Has the Possible, by Having Become Actual, Become More Necessary than it Was?" trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 72.

¹¹¹ CPR, p. 284.

¹¹² "Human reason has a peculiar fate in one kind of its cognitions [i.e., the non-empirical cognition]: it is troubled by questions that it cannot dismiss, because they are posed to it by the nature of reason itself, but that it also cannot answer, because they surpass human reason's every ability." (CPR, p. 5).

¹¹³ "An Old Question", p. 300.

¹¹⁴ Transforming natural history into an ethical history is not an act or process that can be simply imposed upon the world, especially when the "content" of that ethical history is derived from a theologically inspired principle of justice. The central problem facing Kant's ethic of history is that justice (which would mean that virtue and happiness exist in direct proportion to one another) is something that cannot be expected or anticipated from either the natural world or from the subject's attempt to alter that world: the latter always remained bound in part to natural laws and therefore a reconciliation with the real does not mark the telos of Kant's historical ethic. But it does serve as a regulative ideal that raises the question of how theology is understood in relation to reason or "within the bounds of mere reason."

To anticipate how the emergence of this particular "need" is a "logical" outcome of Kant's presentations of the formal character of the will vis-à-vis the natural and the moral respectively cf. the following passage from the first Critique ("On the Ideal of the Highest Good, As a Determining Basis of the Ultimate Purpose of Pure Reason") that further amplifies how it is that the will remains mired in a natural history in a way that is accentuated rather than lessened by its obligation to change that world: "how the consequences of ...[moral] actions will relate to happiness is determined neither by the nature of the things of the world, nor by the causality of the actions themselves [i.e. free causality], and their relation to morality. And thus the...necessary connection of one's hope for happiness with the unceasing endeavor to make oneself worthy of happiness cannot be cognized through reason if mere nature is laid at the basis." (CPR, p. 739)

This is a situation that illuminates the sense of the "misfortune" that befalls the subject's experience of time. And because the latter does not correspond with a specific representation in the Kantian system, theology comes to the fore at precisely this juncture in order furnish a sense of hope and memory.

¹¹⁵ The theological supplement to morality is justified by Kant first of all on logical grounds. Cf. CJ, p. 364: "Since...those ideas [of reason] whose object lies beyond nature can be thought without contradiction, it [i.e., speculative reason] will in a moral

respect, i.e., for its own practical law and the task this law enjoins on us, have to acknowledge those ideas as real, so as not to fall into contradiction with itself."

¹¹⁶ Immanuel Kant, Anthropology From A Pragmatic Point of View, trans. Mary J. Gregor (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), p.3. "A systematic treatise comprising our knowledge of man (anthropology) can adopt either a *physiological* or a *pragmatic* point of view. Physiological knowledge of man investigates what *nature* makes of him: pragmatic, what *man* as a free agent makes, or can and should make, of himself." (Hereafter referred to as "Anthropology").

¹¹⁷ Ibid, p. 61.

¹¹⁸ "Preface to Reinhold Bernhard Jachman's 'Testing of Kantian Religious Philosophy'" in Raising the Tone of Philosophy trans and ed. Peter Fennes. (Johns Hopkins, Baltimore: 1993), p. 108 (The latter will hereafter be referred to as "RTTP").

¹¹⁹ Ibid. Cf. "On a Newly Arisen Superior Tone in Philosophy", in "RTTP", p. 51. "If there were knowledge of the supersensible (from a theoretical point of view), *this alone is a true secret.*"

¹²⁰ "Anthropology", p. 61.

¹²¹ Cf. Kant's tentative introduction of the "historical sign" in "An Old Question" pp. 301-2. Appropriately enough, the sign in question is not associated with a "momentous event" per se, but with a certain mood of "wishful participation" that arose among spectators "not actually engaged in the game [i.e., the French Revolution] themselves."

¹²² "RBR" p. 57. // Immanuel Kants Werke: Band VI (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1914), pp. 141-2.

¹²³ For unlike the positing of pragmatic or technical acts, the purportedly moral action is not something that can simply be imposed upon the world, especially—or because—it must take on a form of non-natural necessity. The actualization of freedom takes place in a natural history that is suffused with the non-moral acts of other wills over which the autonomous subject has no control; ultimately the subject's very finitude poses a seemingly ineradicable threat to the subject's ability to act as final purpose and to invest the world with an "absolute value."

¹²⁴ "Theodicy", pp. 24-37.

¹²⁵ "Theodicy", p. 24.

¹²⁶ CPrR, p. 121.

¹²⁷ CJ, p. 350.

¹²⁸ Ibid, p. 92.

¹²⁹ CJ, p. 342//533.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ RBR, p. 57.

¹³² RBR, p. 57.

¹³³ Ibid, p. 93.

¹³⁴ CPrR, p. 107//139.

¹³⁵ Walter Benjamin, The Arcades Project, Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin trans. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 471. "On the question of the incompleteness of history, Horkheimer's letter...: 'The determination of incompleteness is idealistic if completeness is not comprised within it. Past injustice has occurred and is completed. The slain are really slain...If one takes the lack of closure entirely seriously, one must believe in the Last Judgment...'...The corrective to this line of thinking may be found in the consideration that history is not simply a science but also and not least a form of remembrance...[W]hat science has 'determined', remembrance can modify. Such mindfulness can make the incomplete (happiness) into something complete, and the complete (suffering) into something incomplete."

¹³⁶ Cf. CJ, p. 342//533. While the ethical subject can "expect that nature will now and then by chance accede [hin und wieder einen zufälligen Beitritt] to the purpose he feels so obligated and impelled to achieve, he can never expect nature to harmonize with it in a way governed by laws and permanent rules (such as his inner maxims are and must be). Deceit, violence, and envy will always be rife around him, even though he himself is honest, peaceable, and benevolent."

¹³⁷ CJ, p. 349.

¹³⁸ CJ, p. 114.

¹³⁹ "On a Newly Arisen Superior Tone in Philosophy", in RTTP, p. 67.

¹⁴⁰ CJ, p. 364//553.

¹⁴¹ In two respects, however, Kant converts this lack of a tradition into a virtue. For the subject becomes ethical only if it recognizes that attaining such a condition is a never to

be completed process that is in fact arrested as soon as it is identified with an external, phenomenal form (e.g. a state, religious idol, a people)--with something endowed with an ethical substance that merely needs to be preserved. Secondly, the principle of morality itself is something that emerges as an a priori fact in an act of self-cognition that will never transpire if it is searched for in the sensible world. But the precarious character of the ethical requires some sort of content that ought never to be mistaken for something that has objective existence; the content must be derived from an act of the imagination that fortunately is always already oriented toward certain laws (i.e. the laws of the understanding) which allow it to give form to the rational concepts (which the subject has no choice but to think thanks to the higher power of desire) on analogy with nature. Cf. CPR, "The Antinomy of Pure Reason: System of Cosmological Ideas": "In the first place we must recognize that pure and transcendental concepts [the rational concepts] can issue only from the understanding. Reason does not really generate any concept. The most it can do is to free a concept of understanding from the unavoidable limitations of possible experience, and so to endeavor to extend it beyond the limits of the empirical."

The concept of first cause is freed from the limits of the empirical, and the traditional concept of God then emerges as an auxiliary representation that gives a non-phenomenal "form" to a transcendental concept. Christianity thus appears for Kant as an ethical doctrine that the "culture of reason" produces in order to bring a sense of coherence to its a priori vocation.

¹⁴² CJ, p. 349//539.

¹⁴³ Cf. Joan Copjec, "Evil in the Time of the Finite World", in Radical Evil Joan Copjec, ed. (London: Verso, 1996), p. xv: "guilt, our sure sense that we have transgressed the law, is the only phenomenal form in which the law makes itself known to us." Also see Slavoj Žižek, The Plague of Fantasies, (London: Verso, 1997), p. 230.: "It is only my failure to act ethically which guarantees that I remain an ethical subject." In the second Critique Kant cites Juvenal after disclosing the fact of reason: "Be a good soldier, a good guardian, and an incorruptible judge; if summoned to bear witness in some dubious and uncertain cause, though Phalaris himself should dictate that you perjure yourself...count it the greatest of all iniquities to prefer life to honor and to lose, for the sake of living, all that makes life worth living." CPR, p. 131.

¹⁴⁴ While the arbitrary decree of a sovereign seems to bear a formal similarity to such a sacrifice (that is, he commands that something be done because he says so, irrespective of any purpose), it is in fact antithetical to Kantian ethics because it utilizes a "formal" principle in order to further the law-making and law-preserving functions of the state. It is in this context that Žižek attempts to separate Kantian ethics from the invocation of Kant that emerged during the trial of Eichmann (where the accused defended himself on the "Kantian" principle that he was simply following orders for the sake of duty as such; the problem here, as Žižek presents it, is that duty as such had been enlisted for the *purpose* of achieving a particular end. For National Socialism "relied on a precise

notion of the Good...[i.e., the Volk] with regard to which all formal ethical injunctions were instrumentalized and relativized.” The Plague of Fantasies, p. 231.

¹⁴⁵ RBR, p. 59.

¹⁴⁶ CJ, p. 345.

¹⁴⁷ Susan Meld Shell offers a concise definition of Kantian happiness that underscores the historical need for the “sublation” which she does not address: “Happiness is an ideal not of reason but of imagination. It does not systematically guide the will, but merely randomly incites it. The aspect of our ideal of happiness which incites us to action is not its so-called form, but rather the innumerable particular, and unforeseeable desires whose satisfaction constitutes its ‘matter’.” Susan Meld Shell, The Rights of Reason (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), p. 77.

¹⁴⁸ RBR, p. 58//Immanuel Kants Werke: Schriften Von 1790-1796. Band: VI. (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1914), p. 142.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. RBR, p. 70: “We cannot observe maxims, we cannot do so unproblematically even within ourselves.” This sense of uncertainty is perfectly consistent with the “fact” that the moral law only exists in the subject’s relation to it. And yet whether or not the proper relation is being maintained is something that cannot be gauged from the results of particular actions. For there is no external objective measure by which the subject can judge its acts, a lack that reinforces the limits imposed upon subjectivity. But if this limit is to be a productive limit that enables a sense of striving there is ultimately a need for a “supplement to morality.”

¹⁵⁰ The following passage from the second Critique encapsulates the process of “sublation” that culminates in the presentation of a theological supplement to morality and thus to human history: “when morals (which merely imposes duties and does not provide rules for selfish wishes) has been set forth completely, then—after the moral wish, based on a law, to promote the highest good...has been awakened, which could not previously have arisen in any selfish soul, and for the sake of this wish the step to religion has been taken—then for the first time can this ethical doctrine [Christianity] also be called a doctrine of happiness, because it is only with religion that the hope of happiness first arises.” (CPrR, pp. 108-9//141.).

¹⁵¹ RBR, p. 58//142.

¹⁵² CPrR, p. 12 (Emphasis added).

¹⁵³ CJ, p. 342.

¹⁵⁴ CJ, p. 369.

¹⁵⁵ CPrR, p. 106.

¹⁵⁶ RBR, p. 58/143.

Theoretical reason's indomitable desire for securing the unconditioned and the concept of totality is reenacted in the sphere of practice, where the concept of freedom receives a determination that could not emerge as the result of a theoretical cognition. Nevertheless, the latter prepares the subject in part for being able to comprehend the necessity of the fact of reason (freedom): "as practical, reason likewise seeks the unconditioned for the practically conditioned (which rests on inclinations and natural needs), not indeed as the determining ground of the will, but even when this is given (in the moral law), it seeks the unconditioned totality of the object of pure practical reason, under the name of the highest good." (CPrR, pp. 90-1).

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ CJ, pp. 318. "If we regard nature as a teleological system, then it is man's vocation to be the ultimate purpose of nature, but always subject to a condition: he must have the understanding and will to give both nature and himself reference to a purpose that can be independent of nature, self-sufficient, and a final purpose."

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, p. 235. "the problem with diabolical evil is that it meets all the criteria of the transcendental definition of a morally good act...Kant's rejection of 'diabolical Evil' is a theoretically incoherent disavowal of the necessary consequence of his own thought: the inherent logic of his thought effectively compelled him to posit [it]...as the paradox of an evil prompted by no pathological motivations."

¹⁶⁰ Such a conflation explains for Kant the phenomenon of "radical evil", whereby the subject imports the incentives of his sensuous nature into his maxims "as of themselves sufficient for the determination of his power of choice...[G]enuine evil [thus] consists in our will not to resist the inclinations when they invite transgression." RBR, pp. 83,102. The will not to resist amounts to a surrender to the principle of heteronomy, to the demands of the lower power of desire which—in an act of self-deception—are elevated to the status of moral principles.

¹⁶¹ RBR, p. 82.

¹⁶² Cf., Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Philosopher and His Shadow" in *Signs* Richard C. McCleary trans. (Evanston: Northwestern, 1964), p. 172.

¹⁶³ RBR, p. 82.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 57//141.

¹⁶⁶ CJ, p. 341.

¹⁶⁷ RBR, p. 58.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 60//145.

¹⁶⁹ Cf., e.g., RBR, p. 70.

¹⁷⁰ CJ, p. 125. Despite having such a determinate origin, this a priori principle has been the subject of much interpretation of late, thereby indicating the common coordinates that can be used to map the borders of both the vocation of reason and postmodernism/poststructuralism: the poverty of positivism, the eclipse of doctrinal theology, the dangerous arbitrariness of the being that wills and the privileging of an experience of both facticity (materiality) and alterity have all contributed to the revival of interest in the Kantian sublime—in something that is neither empirical, a necessary sign of the theological, nor a feeling that corresponds with instrumental reason; at the same time it takes the subject's relation to nature as an occasion for disclosing to the subject a non-pathological experience. For a recent overview of contemporary interpretations of the Kantian sublime cf. Peter Fenves, "Taking Stock of the Kantian Sublime", *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 28, no. 1 (1994), pp. 65-82.

¹⁷¹ CJ, p. 99. "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."

¹⁷² CJ, p. 123.

¹⁷³ Ibid, pp. 119-120.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 121.

¹⁷⁵ Kant is careful to emphasize how the sublimity of nature does not translate into some sort of hitherto undiscovered law of nature; as usual, the subject can know only that which it posits, and in this case what it knows is how it can judge nature in accordance with its own rational ideas; nature as appearance then provides a point of orientation that directs the subject beyond phenomenal nature and toward its supersensible vocation: "the feeling of the sublime in nature is respect for our own vocation. But by a certain subreption (in which respect for the object is substituted for respect for the idea of humanity within ourselves as subject) 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." CJ, p. 114.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 119.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 121. With regard to the “cultivation” of the feeling of the sublime cf. the following: “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...lacking in the development of moral ideas...But the fact that a judgment about the sublime in nature requires culture...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.” (pp. 124-5).

¹⁷⁸ Paul de Man, “Phenomenality and Materiality in Kant” in Aesthetic Ideology, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 87.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ For Kant’s dismissal of “blind chance” as an explanation for the apparent purposiveness discernible in phenomenal nature—a “manifestly absurd” position he attributes to Democritus and Epicurus—cf. CJ, pp. 272,274.

¹⁸¹ Cf. e.g. RBR, p. 78.

¹⁸² de Man, p. 87.

¹⁸³ CJ, p. 134; de Man, p. 87.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. CJ, p. 128. Judging an object sublime “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).”

¹⁸⁵ RBR, p. 72.

¹⁸⁶ RBR, p. 103//200.

¹⁸⁷ Giorgio Agamben, The Man Without Content, Georgia Albert trans. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

¹⁸⁸ CJ, p. 120.

¹⁸⁹ RBR, p. 94 (Kant’s emphasis).

¹⁹⁰ RBR, p. 120//224. For an elaboration of how such an aesthetic manifestation of heroism (the “stirring and shining example”) has the principal effect of dulling the

moral disposition, cf., e.g., RBR, p. 93: “to do one’s duty...is no more than to do what lies in the common moral order and is not, therefore, deserving of wonder...[Thus] admiration [serves as]...a dulling of our feeling of duty, as if to give obedience to it were something extraordinary and meritorious.” The heroic-tragic act that has been traditionally interpreted as giving rise to certain aesthetic, pathological affects thus appears here as inimical to the preservation of a proper ethical order.

¹⁹¹ Cf. GW, p. 81; CJ, p. 121//333.

¹⁹² Cf. Benjamin, “Critique of Violence” in Selected Writings, p. 251; Lukács, “Metaphysics and Tragedy”, in Soul and Form, p. 153. For Kant’s terse references to life as such in the third Critique, cf.:pp. 223, 260. For a discussion of Kant’s suggestive remarks in relation to life-philosophy cf. R. Makkreel, Imagination and Interpretation in Kant (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 91-2, 105-6.

¹⁹³ CJ, pp. 124, 128.

¹⁹⁴ CJ, p. 182.

¹⁹⁵ RBR, p. 93. “Admiration” is italicized by Kant in this passage because it is a feeling he distinguishes from “amazement” in a way that accentuates the nuances involved in demarcating the borderland separating the ethical from the aesthetic. For while something can be “sublime aesthetically”, this does not necessarily ensure that the relation between the sublime and the ethical has been properly maintained. Thus “amazement” [Verwunderung] is defined as an affect that occurs when “we present novelty that exceeds our expectation”, while “admiration” [Bewunderung] is a form of “amazement that does not cease once the novelty is gone, which happens when ideas in their exhibition harmonize, unintentionally” (CJ, p. 133). Only “admiration” carries with it ethical potential, although in the very passage cited above Kant shows how such potentiality is carefully circumscribed by the need to preserve morality’s law of autonomy.

¹⁹⁶ CJ, p. 132-3. “If the idea of the good is accompanied by affect [as its effect], this [affect] is called enthusiasm. This mental state seems to be sublime, so much so that it is commonly alleged that nothing great can be accomplished without it. But...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 representations of sense. But, strange though it seems, even [the state of] being without affects...in a mind that vigorously pursues its immutable principles is sublime, and...in a far superior way, because it also has pure reason’s liking on its side.”

What this passage indicates is that the feeling of the sublime is not necessarily synonymous with moral feeling despite the fact that they may in certain cases be viewed as formally “similar” [verwandt]. For an act done from duty can also be presented as aesthetically sublime in terms of its cause and effects but not in a way that isolates the aesthetic moment as such, as something to be valued in itself. For the feeling of pleasure it induces can also devolve into an enjoyment of the “agreeable”. Cf. CJ, p. 127/339.

¹⁹⁷ On the ethics of the Stoa cf. CPrR, p. 106.

¹⁹⁸ CJ, p. 119.

¹⁹⁹ CJ, p. 121. The elevating “self-estimation” that takes place in the judgment of the sublime “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.”

²⁰⁰ On Kant’s use of “τεχνη” viz. nature and human art cf. CJ, pp. 99, 237.

²⁰¹ CJ, pp. 272, 272.

²⁰² CJ, p. 331.

²⁰³ Cf. CJ, p. 127.

²⁰⁴ CJ, pp. 52, 260.

²⁰⁵ RBR, p. 95. And cf. CPrR, p. 107: “the moral law of itself still does not promise any happiness... The Christian doctrine of morals now supplements this lack... by representing the world in which rational beings devote themselves with their whole soul to the moral law as a kingdom of god, in which nature and morals come into a harmony, foreign to each of them of itself, through a holy author who makes the derived highest good possible.”

²⁰⁶ Cf. CJ, p. 368. “Among the three pure ideas of reason, God, freedom, and immortality, that of freedom is the only concept of the supersensible which (by means of the causality that we think in it) proves in nature that it has objective reality, by the effects it can produce in it.”

²⁰⁷ CJ, p. 365//554

²⁰⁸ CJ, p. 365.

²⁰⁹ RBR, p. 177.

²¹⁰ CJ, p. 366//554.

²¹¹ Or in Kant's terms: the distinction in question lies between the schematic and symbolic, rather than the symbolic and allegorical (cf. endnote "58"). Of related importance is Kant's distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge insofar as all questions of theology and religion (the latter construed as something that puts the former into "practice") are restricted to the latter realm. This is what "keeps theology from soaring to the heights of a theosophy (in which transcendent concepts confuse reason), and from sinking to the depths of a demonology (which is an anthropomorphic way of conceiving the supreme being); and it keeps religion from lapsing either into theurgy (a fanatical delusion that we can receive a feeling from and in turn influence, other supersensible beings) or idolatry (superstitious delusion that we can make ourselves pleasing to the supreme being by means other than a moral attitude." CJ, p. 351.

²¹² CPR, p. 7.

²¹³ CJ, p. 340.

²¹⁴ CJ, p. 341.

²¹⁵ CJ, p. 7.

²¹⁶ CJ, p. 351.

²¹⁷ CJ, p. 342//533.

²¹⁸ RBR, p. 92. CJ, 340.

²¹⁹ CJ, p. 340//531.

²²⁰ CJ, p. 342//533.

²²¹ CJ, p. 337. "Our relation to a purpose, and with it to the law that governs it, can be determined a priori within ourselves, and hence can be cognized as necessary; hence for this [relation to a purpose] moral teleology does not require an intelligent cause outside us [to account] for that inner lawfulness, just as the purposiveness we find in the geometric properties of figures...does not entitle us to look beyond them to a supreme understanding that imparts it to them."

²²² CJ, p. 337.

²²³ CJ, p. 340.

²²⁴ CJ, p. 342.

²²⁵ Cf. CJ, p. 274. Kant explicitly discusses Spinoza's conception of an "original being" in the context of demonstrating why reason must think of natural purposiveness on analogy with art or human practical purposiveness—that is as the effect of a form of causality based upon a principle of "understanding" (in the case of nature this would amount for Kant to a form of non-human, i.e. "divine" understanding that of course can only be thought of as an "object" of reflective judgment). Thus "Spinozism does not accomplish what it tries to accomplish. It tries to offer a basis that will explain why things of nature are connected in terms of purposes (which it does not deny), but all it points to is the unity of the subject in which they all inhere [as accidents]. But even if Spinozism be granted [the claim] that the beings of the world exist in this way, this does not yet make the [resulting] ontological unity the *unity of a purpose* [Kant's emphasis], and certainly does not allow us to grasp the latter unity."

²²⁶ That this is an indissociable relationship that seems to lack any sort of rigorous deduction is the central problem addressed in Yovel's *Kant and the Philosophy of History*. For Yovel, "Kant fails to account for the alleged necessity" of the striving for the highest good as the corollary, as it were, to the categorical imperative. It is at this juncture, where the historicization of the moral law emerges as the central task of Kantian ethics that Kant has recourse to "obscure images and metaphors" and "extraneous moralistic considerations are brought in...[like] a vague feeling of justice...not rooted in Kant's basic ethics." (pp. 61-3)

The entire third Critique, however, is based upon the concept of analogy (the principle of judgment itself is thought of as a cognitive power *on analogy* with reason and understanding: (CJ, p. 160) and the recognition that reason has no choice but to deploy "images and metaphors" if it is to cross the immense chasm separating practical freedom from mechanical nature given the absence of a determinate concept corresponding to either realm (considered as noumenon). As for the "extraneous moralistic considerations" that Kant brings to his presentation of a historical ethic: it has been argued that theological concepts lie at the origin of the Kantian system and the entire architectonic of reason that is constructed in the three Critiques can be seen as a way of justifying these principles in a redefined and "purified" way; Kant announces in the preface to the first Critique, after all, that he is delimiting the proper boundaries of reason to open a space for faith—albeit an unprecedented form of religious faith.

In the concluding sections of the third Critique, Kant presents the relationship between the theological and the moral as something that necessarily arises out of the "immense chasm" that underlies, as it were, the text that completes his system. The subject whose finite nature directs it toward an indeterminate idea of happiness is also bound by law as such; since the former enjoins the will to struggle against but not

negate the former (if it could execute such a negation, or if it always already had done so, the will would be a holy will that would not even be affected by the moral law in the first place which is felt as a violation of sensibility), the natural and the moral must be brought into a harmonious relation with one another; this is the impossible but necessary imperative prescribed to the subject: “one of the requirements of the final purpose as pure reason prescribes it to the being of the world is a purpose that is irresistible and is put into these beings by their nature as finite beings [i.e. the insatiable, “lower” desire for happiness]...[but] all that reason insists upon concerning this purpose is that [our achieving] it be subject to the moral law as its inviolable condition, or that its [attainment] be made universal only in accordance with that law, so that what reason makes the final purpose is the furtherance of happiness in harmony with morality.” (CJ, p. 341).

²²⁷ CJ, p. 342.

²²⁸ CPrR, p. 107.

²²⁹ CJ, p. 342//533.

²³⁰ CPrR, p. 106.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² CJ, p. 128.

²³³ CJ, p.13. “Our cognitive power as a whole has two domains, that of the concepts of nature and that of the concept of freedom, because it legislates a priori by means of both kinds of concept. Now philosophy too divides, according to these legislations, into theoretical and practical. And yet the *territory* on which its domain is set up and on which it *exercises* [Kant’s emphasis] its legislation is still always confined to the sum total of the objects of all possible experience.”

²³⁴ CJ, p. 120. CPrR, p. 134//103.

²³⁵ CPrR, p. 107.

²³⁶ CJ, p. 342.

²³⁷ CJ, p. 116 (Kant’s emphasis).

²³⁸ CJ, p. 341.

²³⁹ CJ, p. 320//512.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ CJ, p. 317//509.

²⁴² CJ, pp. 318-9. "If we regard nature as a teleological system, then it is man's vocation to be the ultimate purpose of nature, but always subject to a condition: he must have the understanding and the will to give both nature and himself reference to a purpose than can be independent of nature, self-sufficient, and a final purpose. The final purpose, however, we must not seek within nature at all...[W]e must [then] find out what nature can accomplish in order to prepare man for what he himself must do in order to be a final purpose."

²⁴³ CJ, p. 25.

²⁴⁴ CJ, pp. 22-3.

²⁴⁵ CJ, p. 100.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ CJ, p. 113.

²⁴⁸ CJ, p. 120.

²⁴⁹ CJ, pp. 38//266. The three mental powers are the cognitive power [Erkenntnisvermögen], the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, and the power of desire. The reversal in question is counterpoised with the relation among the mental powers which ought to take place in a judgment of the sublime, a relation which manifests itself in a process whereby "reason exerts a violence 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". (p. 124) And for reason, the "abyss" is represented as but the negative manifestation of its own supersensible vocation. But in the idea of the reversal that is here being introduced, the latter would itself appear abyssal to reason—the very moment which the three Critiques are designed to preempt.

²⁵⁰ CPrR, p. 27.

²⁵¹ RBR, p. 103.

²⁵² CJ, p. 342//533.

²⁵³ "On a Newly Arisen Superior Tone in Philosophy", RTTP, p. 51.

²⁵⁴ CPrR, p. 108.

²⁵⁵ This is the sacrifice that arises out of the disclosure of the fact of reason. To augment the presentation of the ethic underlying such an act Kant quotes Juvenal: "Be a good soldier, a good guardian, and an incorruptible judge; if summoned to bear witness in some dubious and uncertain cause, though Phalaris himself should dictate that you perjure yourself and bring his bull to move you, count it the greatest of all iniquities to prefer life to honor and to lose, for the sake of living, all that makes life worth living." CPrR, p. 131.

²⁵⁶ CJ. p. 342.

²⁵⁷ CJ, p. 341.

²⁵⁸ Cf. RBR, p. 83. "The difference [between] whether the human being is good or evil, must not lie in the difference between the incentives that he incorporates into his maxim (not in the material of the maxim) but in their *subordination* (in the form of the maxim): *which of the two he makes the condition of the other*. It follows that the human being (even the best) is evil only because he reverses the moral order of his incentives in incorporating them into his maxims."

²⁵⁹ CPrR, p. 106.

²⁶⁰ Cf. CJ. 337-8. "If we assume that the existence of certain things (or even only of certain forms of things) [as they appear to the understanding] is contingent [(i.e. inexplicably purposive and therefore not simply mechanical)] and hence possible only through something else as its cause, then we can seek the supreme basis of this causality, and hence the unconditioned basis for what is conditioned [(as we are impelled to do by the power of desire)] either in the physical [(i.e. mechanical)] or teleological order...In the second question [(which is the one we must ask)] we are of course presupposing that this cause is capable of forming a representation of purposes, and hence that it is an intelligent being, or at least that we much conceive of it as acting according to the laws of such a being."

²⁶¹ Georg Lukács, *Tactics and Ethics*, Rodney Livingstone trans. (New York: Harper & Row, 1972) p. 10. (Emphasis added).

²⁶² CJ, p. 135//347.

²⁶³ RBR, p. 177.

²⁶⁴ CPrR, p. 107.

²⁶⁵ Deleuze describes the Kantian representation of time in the following terms: “time ceases to be curved by a God who makes it depend on movement. It ceases to be cardinal and becomes ordinal, the order of an empty time. In time there is no longer anything either originary or derived that depends on movement. The labyrinth takes on a new look—neither a circle nor a spiral, but a thread, a pure straight line, all the more mysterious in that it is simple, inexorable, terrible...” (As opposed to such rectilinear time, Deleuze elsewhere counterpoises the qualitative “originary” dimension of ‘striated’ time: cf. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* Brian Massumi trans. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp. 474-500). The ethical-historical consequences of such a conception of time are then presented in the light of a “law” of tragedy whose philosophical-historical origins lie in Kafka’s *The Trial*: “an acquittal can only be hoped for, which makes up for the impotence of speculative reason, no longer at a give moment, but from the viewpoint of a progress that continues to infinity in its ever increasing conformity with the law (sanctification as the consciousness of perseverance in moral progress). This path, which exceeds the limits of our life and requires the soul’s immortality, follows the straight line of time, inexorable, and incessant, upon which we remain in constant contact with the law. But this indefinite prolongation, rather than leading us to a paradise above, already installs us in a hell here below.” [Giles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical* Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco trans. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 28, 33].

²⁶⁶ CJ, p. 342//534.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid (emphasis added).

²⁶⁹ CPR, p. 246//143.

²⁷⁰ The “Stimme” of *einstimmen* evokes the voice in the sense of a vote that further implies both agreement and consent. And the word’s derivation from “Stimmung” (tuning, mood, disposition) connotes a state of attunement. Furthermore, on analogy with musical instruments, *aufeinander einstimmen* signifies two persons who become attuned to one another. As has become evident, for Kant, the cognitive powers themselves (understanding, judgment, reason) take on the quality of persons.

²⁷¹ Nature may “facilitate” the emergence of freedom in the sense that it prepares the subject to exert its independence from nature. The rupture is conditioned, as it were, or it seems so only because when Kant “talks about nature putting obstacles in the way of the causality governed by laws of freedom...or about nature furthering it” he is referring to how a “resistance or furtherance” takes place “not between nature and freedom [in themselves] but between nature as appearance and the effects of freedom as appearances in the world of sense...It is [the special] causality’s determination whose

basis is contained, in a way not otherwise explicable, in the intelligible that is thought of when we think freedom.” (CJ, p. 36).

²⁷² CJ, pp. 367-8.

²⁷³ For a synoptic presentation of how a moral faith necessarily arises out of the Kantian system in a way that compels the latter to extend itself beyond its delimitation of the boundaries of human knowledge cf. CJ: “the highest final purpose which we are to achieve, that which alone can make us worthy of being, ourselves, the final purpose of creation, is an idea that has objective reality for in a practical respect... But since we cannot provide this concept with reality from a theoretical point of view, this final purpose is a mere matter of faith [for] pure reason; but along with it so are God and immortality, which are the conditions under which alone, given the character of our human reason, we can conceive of the possibility of [achieving] the effect [the final purpose] of the lawful use of our freedom. But assent in matters of faith is an assent from a pure practical point of view, i.e., it is a moral faith that proves nothing for theoretical pure rational cognition... [Nevertheless it is based upon the idea of freedom which] is the only concept of the supersensible which (by means of the causality that we think in it) proves in nature that it has objective reality by the effects it can produce in it. It is this that makes it possible to connect the other two ideas with nature, and to connect all three with one another to form a religion. Therefore, we have in us a principle that can determine the idea of the supersensible within us, and through this also the idea of the supersensible outside us” (pp. 363, 368).

²⁷⁴ Adorno, Negative Dialectics, p. 248.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Jacques Lacan, “The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience” in Écrits, Alan Sheridan trans. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1977).

²⁷⁷ Adorno, p. 248.

²⁷⁸ CJ, p. 20 (emphasis added).

²⁷⁹ CJ, p. 52//278. “The agreeable, the beautiful and the good designate three different relations that representations have to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, the feeling by reference to which we distinguish between objects or between ways of representing them... We call agreeable what gratifies us, beautiful what we just like, good what we esteem.”

²⁸⁰ Cf. CJ, pp. 33-4, 260. The concept of purposiveness contains four ascending moments in the third Critique. First, it indicates nothing more than an internal

purposiveness as it were that occurs between the understanding and the imagination; the occasion for this experience, which brings pleasure to the subject, is apprehension of a phenomenal form that is neither treated as a pathological object by the lower power of desire nor subsumed under the categories by the understanding. This form, because it prompts a certain experience in the subject, is then judged to be beautiful. "Beauty in nature" therefore connotes not an object as such but "nature" harmonizing with the free play of our cognitive powers as we apprehend and judge its appearance" without the use of an empirical or rational concept. (260). The second moment occurs "after the...transcendental principle [of the formal purposiveness of nature] has already prepared the understanding to apply the concept of a purpose (at least in terms of form) to nature." (33-4). That is, confronted with the "immense diversity" of empirical phenomena that cannot all simply be subsumed under the categories, the understanding supplements the law of natural causality with its newfound principle of purposiveness that emerged out of the contemplation of natural beauty. The latter now facilitates a third moment, one in which natural beauty is further determined (through a reflective judgment) as the "natural purpose" [Naturzweck]. The purposiveness of nature now manifests itself in forms that can only be understood by reason as though they were produced, as though they were "created" by a *τεχνη* of nature. The subject can then "attribute to nature, on the analogy of a purpose, a concern, as it were, for our cognitive powers." (33-4). While natural beauty was at first something that allowed the subject to regard nature with "favor" since it allowed it to discover a source of harmony within itself, it then provides a transition point for the recognition of the natural purpose which then leads reason inexorably to the fourth moment: in keeping with its demand for unity, a natural purpose is unthinkable outside of what then appears to be its proper context. That is, with one natural purpose there must be more; in fact they must all be joined together into a "system of purposes." But such a unified system of purposes would be incomplete unless it contained a foundation that must be represented as the purpose of the purposes, as the unconditional or final purpose. And this can only be the human subject. But for the subject to consistently represent itself in this way it must, since it is a being of sense, understand such a final purpose in terms that harmonize the causes and effects of that special causality called freedom. And as was discussed above, such harmonization occurs only with the legitimation and justification of the non-contradictory character of the rational concept of freedom, which in turn requires that it be conjoined with the rational concepts of God and immortality. Only in this way can the historicization of the law, the reconciliation of virtue and happiness, occur.

²⁸¹ CJ, p. 168//375.

²⁸² CJ, pp. 29-30: "When pleasure is connected with mere apprehension of the form of an object of intuition...[it] cannot express anything other than the object's being commensurate with the cognitive powers that are...brought into play when we judge reflectively, and hence [expresses] merely a subjective formal purposiveness of the object."

²⁸³ CJ, p. 167.

²⁸⁴ CJ, p. 365, 168.

²⁸⁵ CJ, p. 168.

²⁸⁶ CJ, pp. 366-7, 368. "God, freedom, and immortality of the soul are the problems at whose solution all the apparatus of metaphysics aims as its ultimate and sole purpose." What then remains of this apparatus after Kant's three critiques is a foundation that is to be thought of as precarious only if reason fails to translate its self-cognition into a certain historical cognition of the a-historical vocation of reason disclosed by the Copernican Revolution. The difficulty of such a "historical" interpretation is given special emphasis by Kant: "reason cannot help being pained as it tries to part with...[old metaphysical] hopes and to sever its old attachment." (219). But since the latter was based upon a correctible case of mistaken identity, this peculiar fate is not tragic and is made endurable by the principle of moral faith.

²⁸⁷ In the third Critique the relation between the subject and nature was explicated in terms of a three fold classification that delimited the proper feelings that corresponded with certain representations; this was cited above as Kant's presentation of "the agreeable, the beautiful, and the good" as designations of the "three different relations that representations have to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure." The first is an occasion for the gratification of inclination, the second for a disinterested liking, and the third for a renunciation of mere pleasure in the attitude of respect, which is accompanied by an "intellectual liking". (52ff). Schiller is not simply rearranging the terms mapped out in such a conceptual grid in his valorization of "natural feeling" and beautiful virtue; the concept of freedom and the "representability" of lawfulness themselves undergo a fundamental reevaluation.

²⁸⁸ The "you" refers not only to the general reader but also to Prince Friedrich Christian, Duke of Schleswig-Holstein-Augustenburg. For a history of the composition and publication of the Letters on Aesthetic Education, see Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby's extensive introduction to their translation (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967). This translation is reprinted without the introduction and footnotes in Friedrich Schiller: Essays, Walter Hinderer and Daniel O. Dahlstrom ed. (Continuum: New York, 1993). The latter edition will be cited below along with Friedrich Schiller, Sämtliche Werke: Band V. Philosophische Schriften, (München: Winkler-Verlag, 1968) as "Essays" and "Werke" respectively. (Hereafter references to this text will be cited as: "LAE").

²⁸⁹ LAE, p. 87//310.

²⁹⁰ CPrR, p. 80.

²⁹¹ Cf. CJ, pp. 29-30//259. "When pleasure is connected with mere apprehension of the form of an object of intuition...the pleasure cannot express anything other than the object's being commensurate with the cognitive powers that are...brought into *play* [im Spiel] when we judge reflectively" pp. 29-39//259.

²⁹² LAE, p. 126//353.. This shift of emphasis is overstated by Sychrava. "The Education reworks Kant's two realms of necessity and freedom as two different psychological drives: the sense-drive and the form-drive. Schiller thus relocates Kant's system in the individual psyche." [Juliet Sychrava, Schiller to Derrida: Idealism in Aesthetics, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 28]. After all, it was shown above that in the judgment of the sublime the imagination is "sacrificed" so that it can become an "instrument" of reason, which culminates in the movement from nature to freedom in the third Critique (nature had to be approached, with a feeling for beauty, in order for the subject to recognize its own sublimity and independence from nature). Furthermore, as indicated above, reason—the power of desire—sets the first Critique in motion by its "insuperable demands" for unity and the unconditioned, thus acting as a form of pre-thetic or unconscious (i.e. psychological, or meta-psychological) agency. Paul de Man acknowledges this similarity between Kant and Schiller only in order to posit a rigid dualism that surpasses those he censures in Schiller's works. With the regard to the sacrifice of the imagination, for instance, he argues: "Kant was dealing with a strictly philosophical concern...which he chose to state for reason of his own in interpersonal terms, thus telling dramatically and interpersonally something which was purely epistemological and which had nothing to do with the pragmata of the relationship between human beings...In Schiller's case, the explanation is entirely empirical, psychological, without any concern for epistemological implications." Furthermore, "the idealism of Schiller contrasts with the transcendental-critical language of Kant." In short, "Schiller appears as the ideology of Kant's critical philosophy." Paul de Man, "Kant and Schiller" in Aesthetic Ideology, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 143,147.

What's overlooked in de Man's reading is how the philosophical and the psychological converge upon one another in the very articulation of the historical ethic attempted by both Kant and Schiller. Kant recognizes that this will require a modification of the system (i.e. the subject—as an irreducibly pathological being--promises something to itself as though such an act were made by the moral law) that, however, is itself dictated by the terms of the system. The agency of reason thus perseveres in the third Critique when its demands necessitate the theological supplement to morality. The "psychologism" of Schiller noted by Sychrava and de Man is one aspect of his "further development Kantian ideas" that attempts to re-work, and not abandon, the relationship between the transcendental and the empirical through the introduction of what at first appears to be the non-mechanical, non-theological time of the "play drive". It is this accent on temporality that serves as the primary impetus behind Schiller's personification of the Kantian incentives which are explicitly presented in the language of Kant's transcendental aesthetic; the interaction of the form-drive and sense-drive creates the conditions of possibility for an ethic of history out of

an experience that is prior to any thetic act that could be attributed to the “individual psyche”; it is thus laced, contrary to what de Man states, with “epistemological implications”.

²⁹³ LAE, p. 127//353.

²⁹⁴ CJ, p. 92.

²⁹⁵ CJ, p. 20.

²⁹⁶ “On the miscarriage of all philosophical trials in theodicy”, in RRT, p. 25. The ambiguities surrounding the interrelationship between the theological, the aesthetic, the secularly moral and the natural then recur just after the cited passage: “yet when art proves itself adequate to ideas the possibility of which surpasses every insight of human reason (e.g. when means and ends reciprocally produce one another, as in organic bodies) [we can think of such purposes as the product of]...a divine art.”

²⁹⁷ CJ, pp. 174-5. “Genius itself cannot describe or indicate scientifically how it brings about its products, and it is rather as *nature* [Kant’s emphasis] 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.” The capacity for producing artworks deserving the “judgment” of genius is to be understood neither in a morally autonomous nor merely heteronomous sense. Or, the latter is, within the strict confines within which Kant delimits fine art, reevaluated so that what seems to emerge as a result of a self-positing act in the work of genius can be understood in an “extra-moral” and not merely pathological way; “genius” thus signifies the “ability 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.” (186). And cf. pp. 181-2: “Spirit [Geist] in an aesthetic sense is the animating principle in the mind. But what this principle uses to animate 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. This principle is nothing but the ability to present aesthetic ideas: and by an aesthetic idea I mean a representation 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...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.”

²⁹⁸ LAE, p. 144//371.

²⁹⁹ Ibid, pp. 121-2//348.

³⁰⁰ CPR, p. 6.

³⁰¹ LAE, p. 106//331.

³⁰² Ibid, p. 131.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 121//347.

³⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 126//353. CJ, p. 135.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ CJ, p. 182.

³⁰⁸ CPR, pp. 43-4.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ CJ, p. 165.

³¹¹ CJ, p. 182.

³¹² The feeling of purposiveness without a purpose underlying a judgment of natural beauty prepares the subject for its self-recognition as an Endzweck; the play of its cognitive powers prompted by its exposure to nature draws it toward the latter, which then appears to take on a non-mechanical quality that provides a "hint" as to how the subject's capacity for freedom can be corroborated (and thought to be not without practical purpose) by "something" [which becomes coherent for reason only if it is represented symbolically as a non-human understanding] that seems to be connected with both an internal (attested to by the fact of reason) and external (attested to by natural beauty and the "purpose of nature") *second (or supersensible) nature*: "and because the subject has this possibility [of judging natural beauty] within him, while outside [him] there is also the possibility that nature will harmonize with it, judgment finds itself referred to *something* that is both in the subject himself and outside him, something that is neither nature nor freedom and yet is linked with the basis of freedom, the supersensible, in which the theoretical and the practical power are in an unknown manner combined and joined into a unity." (CJ, p. 229).

³¹³ LAE, p. 106//331.

³¹⁴ LAE, p. 121.

³¹⁵ LAE, p. 128.

³¹⁶ LAE, p. 127//334.

³¹⁷ LAE, p. 114//340.

³¹⁸ Cf. CJ, pp. 12-3 on Kant's distinction between a conceptual realm, territory and domain.

³¹⁹ LAE, p. 115. The need for such a deduction is further determined by the impossibility of basing a justification of the concept on any kind of historical precedent given that "wherever we turn our eyes in past history we find taste and freedom shunning each other, and beauty founding her sway solely upon the decline and fall of heroic virtues." (114).

³²⁰ LAE, p. 165//394.

³²¹ LAE, p. 132.

³²² LAE, p. 107//351.

³²³ LAE, p. 165//394.

³²⁴ Ibid. p. 174//404.

³²⁵ On the Aesthetic Education of Man, Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby trans. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 211.

³²⁶ Ibid. p. 90//314.

³²⁷ CPR, p562-3//514.

³²⁸ LAE, p. 146//374.

³²⁹ Ibid, p. 146//374.

³³⁰ CPR, p. 30.

³³¹ CJ, p. 363. "Assent in matters of faith is an assent from a pure practical point of view, i.e., it is a moral faith that proves nothing for theoretical pure rational cognition, but only for pure practical cognition that aims at [our] complying with [our] duties."

³³² CJ, p. 151.

³³³ LAE, p. 90. Schiller interprets the French Revolution as just such an abortive attempt at historicization. It initially appeared as a sign that “a physical possibility of setting law upon the throne, of honoring man at last as an end in himself [i.e. as a final purpose], and making true freedom the basis of political associations.” But its “failure” is attributed to the fact that the “moral possibility is lacking, and a moment so prodigal of opportunity finds a generation unprepared to receive it.” (96) Kant reads the same Revolution as a historical sign whose significance lies, as might be expected, not in the results of particular actions but in the way they were received by disinterested “spectators”.

³³⁴ LAE, p. 132//359.

³³⁵ LAE, p. 128//355.

³³⁶ CPR, p. 562//396.

³³⁷ CJ, p. 135.

³³⁸ CJ, pp. 215, 182.

³³⁹ CJ, p. 114 and “Inaugural Dissertation”, in *Theoretical Philosophy: 1755-1770* ed. and trans. David Walford, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 407-8.

³⁴⁰ LAE, p. 167//396.

³⁴¹ “Concerning the Sublime”, Daniel O. Dahlstrom trans in *Essays*, p. 84.//“Über das Erhabene” in *Werke*, p. 229. (Hereafter referred to as “CTS”).

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ *ibid*, p. 85//230.

³⁴⁴ LAE, p. 178//408.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 128//355.

³⁴⁶ LAE, p. 93//318.

³⁴⁷ LAE, p. 132//359.

³⁴⁸ LAE, p. 126.

³⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 92//317.

³⁵⁰ Ibid, 93//318.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Ibid, p. 131.

³⁵³ See Terry Eagleton, The Ideology of the Aesthetic, (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1990), pp. 108-9.

³⁵⁴ LAE, p. 177//407. Cf. p. 170.

³⁵⁵ LAE, p. 176//406.

³⁵⁶ CTS, p. 71//216.

³⁵⁷ Georg Lukács, History and Class Consciousness, Rodney Livingstone trans. (Cambridge: MIT, 1971), pp. 139-40. (Hereafter cited as HCC).

³⁵⁸ LAE, p. 92//317.

³⁵⁹ HCC, pp.,140, 143: "History is an insuperable barrier to a rationalist theory of knowledge...[Once discovered] it succeeded in identifying the substance, now appearing for the first time, in which philosophically the underlying order and the connections between things were to be found, namely history."

³⁶⁰ CJ, pp. 36-7.

³⁶¹ LAE, p. 168//397-8.

³⁶² CJ, p. 182. Cf. LAE, p. 171. The defining fault of the present age is that it has not "attained to the level of pure semblance...[it has not] sufficiently distinguished existence from appearance, and thereby made the frontiers of each secure forever. We shall deserve this reproach as long as we...still refuse imagination any absolute legislative rights of her own."

³⁶³ LAE, p. 171.

³⁶⁴ LAE, p. 92//317.

³⁶⁵ LAE, pp. 162-3//391-2.

- ³⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 163//192.
- ³⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 146.
- ³⁶⁸ CJ, p. 100.
- ³⁶⁹ LAE, p. 170//400.
- ³⁷⁰ LAE, p. 92//317.
- ³⁷¹ Ibid, cf. p. 127//354.
- ³⁷² CTS, p. 71//215.
- ³⁷³ LAE, pp. 169-70//399.
- ³⁷⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁷⁵ LAE, p. 128.
- ³⁷⁶ CTS, p. 8//226.
- ³⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 70//215.
- ³⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 81//226.
- ³⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 71//215.
- ³⁸⁰ Ibid.
- ³⁸¹ Ibid, p. 163//192.
- ³⁸² CTS, pp. 83-4/229. "...weil es einmal unsre Bestimmung ist, auch bei allen sinnlichen Schranken uns nach dem Gesetzbuch reiner Geister zu richten..." Cf. LAE, p. 128.
- ³⁸³ Ibid, pp. 71-2/216. "...eine Gewalt, die er der Tat nach erleiden muß, dem Begriff nach zu vernichten, heißt aber nichts anderes, als sich derselben freiwillig unterwerfen."
- ³⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 83//228. "History erects ample pictures [Gemälde] of humanity wrestling with fate and the tragic art brings imitations of these images before our eyes."
- ³⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 83//228. "...der höchste Schwung der Menschennatur."

- ³⁸⁶ *ibid*, p. 82//227. This culminating moment of the “aesthetic education” belies the reading of Schiller put forth by Dieter Heinrich, who views the ethical-aesthetic relation between Kant and Schiller exclusively in the light of the beautiful: “Schiller sets up a ideal of morality on which the concrete self need not persist in insoluble conflict with the Kantian law of reason. The truly moral character becomes a unity of duty and inclination; it does not do its duty only under compulsion, but with a noble affect, and it enjoys that harmony with itself which puts the seal on the perfection of human nature.” Dieter Heinrich, “Beauty and Freedom: Schiller’s *Streit* with Kant’s Aesthetics”, in *Essays in Kant’s Aesthetics*, ed. Ted Cohen and Paul Guyer, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 252.
- ³⁸⁷ “On the Art of Tragedy”, in *Essays*, Daniel O. Dahlstrom trans, pp. 9-10.// “Über die tragische Kunst” in *Werke*, pp.152-3 (Hereafter referred to as “AOT”).
- ³⁸⁸ CTS, p. 83//228.
- ³⁸⁹ CTS, p. 83//228. “On the Pathetic” in *Essays*, Daniel O. Dahlstrom trans. p. 45. // “Über das Pathetische”, in *Werke*, p. 190 (Hereafter referred to as “OTP”).
- ³⁹⁰ CTS, p. 72//216.
- ³⁹¹ OTP, p. 53//199.
- ³⁹² LAE, p. 165//394.
- ³⁹³ CTS, p. 85//230.
- ³⁹⁴ OTP, p. 59//204.
- ³⁹⁵ CPrR, p. 106.
- ³⁹⁶ *Ibid*.
- ³⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 107.
- ³⁹⁸ CTS, p. 72//217.
- ³⁹⁹ “On the Sublime” in “*Essays*”, Daniel O. Dahlstrom trans. p. 32.// “Vom Erhabenen” in *Werke*, p.176 (Hereafter referred to as “OTS”).
- ⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p. 34//179.
- ⁴⁰¹ OTP, pp. 61,63.

⁴⁰² CJ, p. 135.

⁴⁰³ CJ, pp. 177-8.

⁴⁰⁴ CJ, p. 229.

⁴⁰⁵ OTP, p. 64//208. The aestheticization of the capacity for freedom takes Schiller to a point which Kant identifies and then dismisses as a practical-theoretical impossibility: the advent of the diabolical will. "The very measure of power required for good can quite often, for that reason, be demanded in something evil. When we make aesthetic judgments, we focus far more on power than on its orientation, and far more on freedom than on lawfulness...A man of vice begins to interest us as soon as he is forced to risk happiness and life in order to carry out his pernicious will...Revenge, for example, is indisputably an ignoble and even base emotion. Nevertheless, revenge becomes aesthetic as soon as it exacts a painful sacrifice from those who carry it out...The aesthetic judgment contains in these cases more truth than one usually believes. Vices that testify to strength of will clearly proclaim a greater potential for truly moral freedom than do virtues that draw on inclinations for support. For it costs the inveterate villain only a single victory over himself, a single reversal of maxims, to turn all that constancy and firmness of will he expends on evil into something good." (pp. 67-8).

⁴⁰⁶ LAE, p. 176//406. Cf. CJ, p. 15 "it must be possible to think of nature as being such that the lawfulness in its form will harmonize with at least the possibility of [achieving] the purposes that we are to achieve in nature according to laws of freedom."

⁴⁰⁷ OTP, p 61//205-6.

⁴⁰⁸ This movement is a "progression" insofar as it leads the subject to its moral destiny; however Schiller's valorization of the aesthetic makes it more of a delimitation of two spheres, each of which contains its own particular value. But this value is assessed on the basis of whether or not it accentuates the self-positing power of the will: "in aesthetic judgments we are interested, not in morality of itself, but simply in freedom, and morality can please our imagination only insofar as it makes that freedom visible. It is thus an obvious confounding of boundaries, for people to demand moral purposefulness in aesthetic things and to want to drive imagination from its rightful domain as a means to expanding reason's realm." (OTP, p. 68).

⁴⁰⁹ Cf. Aristotle, *The Physics*, Phillip H. Wicksteed and Francis M. Cornford trans. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 131-3.

⁴¹⁰ CPrR, p. 106.

⁴¹¹ RBR, p. 92.

⁴¹² Friedrich Schiller, "Resignation" in Sämtliche Werke: Erster Band III), p. 115. "Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht/ Du hast gehofft, dein Lohn ist abgetragen/ Dein Glaube war dein zugewognes Glück/Du konntest deine Weisen fragen/ Was man von der Minute ausgeschlagen/Gibt keine Ewigkeit zurück." *Weltgericht* also signifies the last judgment—a last judgment that in this case would be "secularized."

⁴¹³ CTS, p. 84//229.

⁴¹⁴ OTS, p. 32//176.

⁴¹⁵ Such an ethos appears to arise out of a strange amalgamation of Christian doctrine and Hellenic culture. This becomes most evident in "The Bride of Messina"; in the essay originally published as a theoretical preface to the text of the drama—"On the use of the Chorus in Tragedy"(hereafter referred to as "CT")-- Schiller concedes such a synthesis is "hard to justify." But not if it is recognized that it is the "privilege of poetry to treat the various religions as a collective whole for the powers of the imagination, in which whole everything that bears a unique character or expresses a unique way of feeling, has its place." Poetic truth thus utilizes religion in a manner not unlike Kantian reason, although the relation between the aesthetic and the theological is not then represented by Schiller in explicitly historical terms. Cf. Friedrich von Schiller, The Bride of Messina, Charles E. Passage trans. (New York: Ungar, 1962), pp. 11-2.

⁴¹⁶ OTP, p. 45//190; 61//208.

⁴¹⁷ Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, Robert-Hullot-Kentor trans. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 266. "Kant's doctrine of the sublime falls short only in that it established the counterpart to this nullity as a positive infinity and situates it in the intelligible subject." Adorno's judgment would seem to apply to Schiller's work as well, even though the status of such "positivity"—the referent of the "spiritual vocation"—is cast into doubt by Schiller's particular valorization of the art of tragedy.

⁴¹⁸ Cf Lukács, HCC, p. 140.

⁴¹⁹ CT, p. 8//249.

⁴²⁰ AOT, pp. 9-10//153.

⁴²¹ Ibid.

⁴²² AOT, pp. 9-10//152-3.

⁴²³ “Was heißt und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte?” in “Werke“ (Band IV). Nicholas Martin has recently argued that this essay marks an earlier, “optimistic” conception of history that Schiller later abandoned. But he does not address how the reference to “fate” and the constitutively aesthetic character of historical representation in this essay are compatible with “Enlightenment” progress: “Schiller’s view of history ...undergo[es]...a considerable transformation since that inaugural lecture at Jena in 1789. In response to the disillusioning course of the French Revolution, he has abandoned his Enlightenment conception of history as more or less unbroken progress.” Nicholas Martin, Nietzsche and Schiller: Untimely Aesthetics, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 69.

⁴²⁴ Ibid, pp. 717-8.

⁴²⁵ Ibid, pp. 717-8.

⁴²⁶ Ibid, p. 718.

⁴²⁷ Lukács, HCC, p. 139.

⁴²⁸ CT, p. 7. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy, Walter Kaufmann trans. (New York: Vintage, 1967), p. 58. {hereafter referred to as “BT”} // Kritische Studienausgabe: Band 1, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), p. 54. (Hereafter referred to as “KSA”, followed by volume number and page reference).

⁴²⁹ CGT, p. 6.

⁴³⁰ Cf. “On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry” in “Essays”, Daniel O. Dahlstrom trans. “The opposite of the naïve feeling, namely the reflecting intellect and the sentimental mood, is the result of striving, even under the conditions of reflection, to restore the naïve feeling in terms of the content...It is part of the essence of sentimental poetry that nature is set off against art and the ideal against the actual. If this is not explicitly done by the poet and he places before our eyes a portrait of nature unspoiled or the ideal fulfilled...that contrast is still in his heart and will betray itself, even without his willing it, in every stroke of the pen. Indeed were this not the case, then the very language he must use will bring to mind the actual world with its limitations...For the language bears the spirit of the time in itself.” (pp. 233, 212).

⁴³¹ Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Nietzsche Briefwechsel: Band III, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975), p. 269.

⁴³² Karl Marx, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte” in Surveys from Exile: Volume 2 Ben Fowkes trans. (Penguin: New Left Review, 1992), p. 146.

⁴³³ Cf. LAE, p. 99ff.

⁴³⁴ Ibid, p. 168.

⁴³⁵ Theodor W. Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, Robert-Hullot-Kentor trans. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 171.

⁴³⁶ BT, p. 33//25.

⁴³⁷ Cf. LAE, p. 178. "In the aesthetic state everything—even the tool that serves—is a free citizen, having equal rights with the noblest; and the mind, which would force the patient mass beneath the yoke of its purposes, must here first obtain its assent."

⁴³⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Utility and Liability of History for Life" in The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche: Unfashionable Observations, Richard T. Gray trans. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 132. (The former text will hereafter be referred to as "History"; the latter volume as "Works").//KSA (Vol 1); p. 296. "nur wenn die Historie es erträgt, zum Kunstwerk umgebildet, also reines Kunstgebilde zu werden, kann sie vielleicht Instincte erhalten oder sogar wecken."

⁴³⁹ CPR, p. 27.

⁴⁴⁰ What is of interest to Nietzsche here is primarily the Schopenhauerian will underlying the phenomenal world and forever manifesting itself (imperfectly) therein as "representation" and Lange's supposition that the Kantian thing in itself is but the most rarefied product of the self-positing subject.

⁴⁴¹ Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche, Christopher Middleton ed. and trans. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1969), p. 18. Frederick Albert Lange, The History of Materialism, Ernest Chester Thomas trans. (New York: Humanities Press, 1950), p. 342. (Hereafter referred to as "Lange"). On the relationship between Lange and Nietzsche cf. above all George J. Stack, Lange and Nietzsche, (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1983). For two relatively recent interpretations of the latter cf. John T. Wilcox, "The Birth of Nietzsche Out of the Spirit of Lange" (pp. 81-9) and Daniel Breazeale, "Lange, Nietzsche and Stack" (pp. 91-103) in International Studies in Philosophy, (Volume 21: 11, 1989). The terms of this debate have been set by Stack's decision to direct the question of the possible influence Lange exerted upon Nietzsche to the latter's works of the 1880's; as a result the early works of Nietzsche under consideration here have not been included in what has emerged as yet another sub-category of Nietzsche interpretation.

⁴⁴² Friedrich Nietzsche, "Die Teleologie seit Kant" in Gesammelte Werke: Musarionausgabe, Erster Band (Munich: Musarion Verlag, 1922). (The latter volume will hereafter be referred to as "Musarion"; the text as "TSK").

⁴⁴³ TSK, p. 408.

⁴⁴⁴ TSK, p. 410.

⁴⁴⁵ TSK, p. 417.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 425.

⁴⁴⁷ LAE, p. 142.

⁴⁴⁸ "Die Teleologie seit Kant," Claudia Crawford trans. Appendix to Claudia Crawford, *The Beginnings of Nietzsche's Theory of Language*, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1987), p. 252. (The "Musalem" edition does not include the last paragraph of Nietzsche's prospectus from which this citation is taken).

⁴⁴⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche "On Schopenhauer" Christopher Janaway trans. In *Willing and Nothingness: Schopenhauer as Nietzsche's Educator*, Christopher Janaway ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 259. (Hereafter referred to as "On Schopenhauer").

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid. cf. p. 262: "Schopenhauer requires that something which can never be an object should nevertheless be thought of objectively. But on this route we can reach only an apparent objectivity, given that a totally obscure, inconceivable X is being decked out, as if in brightly colored clothes, with predicates drawn from a world alien to it, the world of appearance."

⁴⁵¹ Ibid, p. 264. "Thus the Schopenhauerian thing in itself would be the *principium individuationis* and at the same time ground of necessitation—in other words, just the ordinary world that is present to hand. Schopenhauer wanted to find the X in an equation; his calculation yields the result that = X, which means that he has not found it."

⁴⁵² TSK, p. 417.

⁴⁵³ Cf "Lange", p.228: "The conception of duty which calls to us, 'thou shalt' cannot possibly continue clear and strong, if it is not combined with the conception of the possibility of carrying out this command. For this reason, therefore, we must, with regard to the morality of our conduct, transfer ourselves entirely into the intellectual world in which alone freedom is conceivable."

⁴⁵⁴ TSK, p. 408.

⁴⁵⁵ Lange, pp. 231-2. "Kant would not understand, what Plato before him would not understand, that the 'intelligible world' is a world of poesis, and that precisely upon this fact rests its worth and nobleness. For poesis...cannot be regarded as a capricious

plaything of talent and fancy with empty imaginations for amusement, but is a necessary offspring of the soul, arising from the deepest life-roots of the race.”

⁴⁵⁶ TSK, p. 412.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 422.

⁴⁵⁸ Lange, p. 337.

⁴⁵⁹ Arendt, “The Concept of History“, p. 89.

⁴⁶⁰ Lange, pp. 339-40. “In our commerce with this power we are exclusively dependent upon experience and upon reality and no speculation has ever found the means of penetrating by the magic of pure thought into the world of things.”

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² Ibid.

⁴⁶³ BT, p. 45.

⁴⁶⁴ Lange, pp. 364-5.

⁴⁶⁵ What was cited above as an intimation of “something else, of a power that now compels us and now is dominated by us” does not introduce anything like a qualitative, historical relation. It rather suggests that a fateful play of forces is at work in the structurally unvarying experience of being in the world. (Lange, pp. 339-340).

⁴⁶⁶ See Michel Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, A.M. Sheridan Smith trans. (New York: Pantheon, 1972), p. 130. “It is not possible for us to describe our own archive, since it is from within these rules that we speak, since it is that which gives to what we can say—and to itself, the object of our discourse—its modes of appearance, its forms of existence and coexistence, its system of accumulation, historicity, and disappearance.”

⁴⁶⁷ Lange, p. 229.

⁴⁶⁸ Cf. Hannah Arendt, “The Concept of History”, p. 44: “What goes on between mortals directly, the spoken word and all the actions and deeds [associated with freedom] can never outlast the moment of their realization and would never leave any trace without the help of remembrance.”

⁴⁶⁹ Carl Schmitt, Political Romanticism, Guy Oakes trans. (Cambridge: MIT, 1986), p. 66.

⁴⁷⁰ Cf Lange, p. 355.

⁴⁷¹ Lange, p. 231.

⁴⁷² CJ, p. 36.

⁴⁷³ LAE, p. 167//396-7.

⁴⁷⁴ BT, p. 45.

⁴⁷⁵ BT, p. 45.

⁴⁷⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, "Die dionysische Weltanschauung" in "KSA" (Vol. 1), p. 554. (Hereafter referred to as "DDW").

⁴⁷⁷ BT, p. 59.

⁴⁷⁸ BT, p. 52.

⁴⁷⁹ BT, p. 52//48.

⁴⁸⁰ BT, pp. 31-2//24; Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Nietzsche Briefwechsel: Band II, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975), p. 269.

⁴⁸¹ TSK, p. 407.

⁴⁸² The subject's ability to reenact the experience ascribed to the "genius" is presented by Nietzsche in "The Dionysian Worldview" as a universal capacity: "real art ability to create images [Erschaffenkönnen von Bildern] no matter whether this is fore-creation or after-creation [Vor-schaffen oder Nach-schaffen]. On this characteristic—common to all humans—rests the cultural meaning of art. The artist...[is] the one who forces others through his artistic means to art." (TDW, p. 564).

⁴⁸³ TDW, p. 567.

⁴⁸⁴ CJ, p. 181.

⁴⁸⁵ History, p. 89.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 145.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 143.

⁴⁸⁸ CJ, p. 177.

⁴⁸⁹ On the “exemplar” theory of history see George H. Nadel, “The Philosophy of History before Historicism”, History and Theory, 3(1964), pp. 219-35: RBR, p. 89.

⁴⁹⁰ History, p. 89//251.

⁴⁹¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, “Über Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne”, in KSA (vol. 1), p. 887.

⁴⁹² Ibid, p. 883.

⁴⁹³ History, p. 153.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 108.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 99. As early as 1867, in an unpublished fragment entitled “Notes on History and Historical Science,” Nietzsche offers a “Kantian” critique of the Hegelian and Historicist conceptions of history as an object of science which prepares the way for an aestheticization of the past faced with the task of accounting for its own conditions of possibility: “the medium through which the historian sees [phenomena] consists of his own representations (also those of his age) and those of his sources. [Ferdinand Christian] Baur, on the other hand, believes that the process which is thought to develop behind history can be intuited; he does not only want to tear the two skins of the representations of the [present] age and of the sources apart, but also to lacerate the thick and impenetrable skin that envelopes the things themselves.” Friedrich Nietzsche, “Aufzeichnungen über Geschichte und historische Wissenschaft”, in “Musaion” (vol. 1), p. 281.

Peter Berkowitz has recently interpreted Nietzsche’s concept of monumental history as an unsuccessful revival of classicism that falters on account of an “unresolved antagonism” between the imposition of value on a senseless world and a “superhistorical ethical order.” What Berkowitz does not discuss is how Nietzsche attempts to overcome this antinomy by introducing the distinction between illusion as illusion and illusion as symbol. Peter Berkowitz, Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist, (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 26,28.

⁴⁹⁶ History, p. 107; 130//294. “Der Spruch der Vergangenheit ist immer ein Orakelspruch; nur also Baumeister der Zukunft, als Wissende der Gegenwart werdet ihr ihn verstehen.”

⁴⁹⁷ BT, p. 113//119.

⁴⁹⁸ History, p. 107.

- ⁴⁹⁹ Ibid, 166.
- ⁵⁰⁰ History, p. 127.
- ⁵⁰¹ Ibid, p. 110.
- ⁵⁰² Ibid, p.130.
- ⁵⁰³ Ibid, p. 99.
- ⁵⁰⁴ Nietzsche in fact quotes from Schiller's essay on "Universal History" in this context: cf. "History", p. 127.
- ⁵⁰⁵ Cf. LAE, pp. 170-1. "Man is meant to value matter only to the extent that it is capable of taking on form and extending the realm of ideas."
- ⁵⁰⁶ History, pp.125-6, 116.
- ⁵⁰⁷ For an accounts of the Nietzsche-Wilamowitz relation cf. M.S. Silk and J.P. Stern, Nietzsche on Tragedy, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 95-109.
- ⁵⁰⁸ CJ, p. 125.
- ⁵⁰⁹ ibid, 198.
- ⁵¹⁰ CJ, pp. 199-200.
- ⁵¹¹ CJ, p. 200.
- ⁵¹² Ibid, 196. On why the cultural and the moral are not identical, see pp. 319-20.
- ⁵¹³ Ibid, p. 200.
- ⁵¹⁴ BT, p. 35.
- ⁵¹⁵ TDW, p. 571.
- ⁵¹⁶ CJ, p. 200.
- ⁵¹⁷ CJ, 135//347.
- ⁵¹⁸ CJ, pp. 226-7.

⁵¹⁹ Cf. TDW, p.570. "The highest point of this worldview [is reached when]...all that is real dissolves itself in appearance, and beyond it the unity nature of the will manifests itself...The illusion, the delusion [Wahn] is at its height." Among the many recent texts devoted to discrediting Walter Kaufmann's contention that Nietzsche remains uncritically dependent upon Schopenhauer's philosophy in *The Birth of Tragedy*, cf. Henry Staten, *Nietzsche's Voice*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 205ff; Wayne Klein, *Nietzsche and the Promise of Philosophy*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), pp. 133-7; Tracy Colony, "Exquisite Stimulations: Will and Illusion in *The Birth of Tragedy*", in *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 3 (1999), pp. 50-61.

⁵²⁰ BT, p. 38//30.

⁵²¹ Ibid, p. 34.

⁵²² History, pp. 101. "That the great moments in the struggles of individuals form links in one single chain; that they combine to form a mountain range of humankind through the millennia; that for me the highest point of such a long-since past moment is still alive, bright, and great—this is the fundamental thought in the belief in humanity that expresses itself in the demand for a monumental history." (p. 97).

⁵²³ CJ, p. 90.

⁵²⁴ CJ, p. 57.

⁵²⁵ cf. CJ, p. 47.

⁵²⁶ BT, pp. 139-40. While the "*sensus communis*" was associated with the beautiful and the experience of tragedy is allied with the sublime (insofar as the imagination is no longer able to comprehend the significance of the image), Nietzsche asserts in "The Dionysian Worldview" that the latter is something "common to all humans." And while Kant reserved the principle of "common sense" for the judgment of the beautiful, the capacity for experiencing the sublime has its roots in "human nature." It just does not have the same degree of immediate accessibility as the contemplation of the beautiful, which is why the latter was singled out in order to isolate the foundation for teleological judgment (as required by the vocation of reason) in the experience of "purposiveness without a purpose." A judgment of the sublime presupposes the development of a certain degree of culture, but it is not produced by culture. (cf. CJ, p. 125.).

⁵²⁷ BT, pp. 33,141.

⁵²⁸ HCC, p. 140.

⁵²⁹ Ibid, p. 143.

⁵³⁰ BT, p. 60.

⁵³¹ Ibid, p. 137.

⁵³² BT, p. 95. The Kantian philosophy was unable to arrest this secularizing tendency, which is traced back to Socrates, “the one turning point and vortex of so-called world history.” (96). In fact, Kant’s system plays a pivotal role in this narrative, for its task of “annulling” knowledge is read as a sign that a birth of tragedy in modernity has to a certain extent been prepared for by “German” philosophy. For one of the rare works in English that focuses upon the “Prussian School” of historiography, cf. Georg G. Iggers, The German Conception of History, (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1968), p. 96ff.

⁵³³ History, p. 91. “We will therefore have to consider the capacity to live to a certain degree ahistorically to be more significant and more originary, insofar as it lays the foundation upon which something just, healthy and great, something that is truly human, is able to grow at all. The ahistorical is like an enveloping atmosphere in which alone life is engendered, and it disappears again with the destruction of this atmosphere.”

⁵³⁴ History, p. 126. Such continuity in Nietzsche’s early works is not acknowledged by Joan Stambaugh who reads “Historie” as an epistemological advance vis-à-vis The Birth of Tragedy: “Nietzsche abandons the ground of the mythical [in “History”] and...his inquiry shifts into the realm of the historical.” Joan Stambaugh, The Problem of Time in Nietzsche, (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1987), p. 41.

⁵³⁵ Ibid, p. 139.

⁵³⁶ BT, p. 141.

⁵³⁷ Ibid, p. 4.

⁵³⁸ Ibid, p. 59.

⁵³⁹ CTS, p. 71.

⁵⁴⁰ CGT, p.6.

⁵⁴¹ History, p. 89.

⁵⁴² Friedrich Nietzsche, “Richard Wagner in Bayreuth” in CW (vol. 1), p. 270.

⁵⁴³ History, p. 126.

⁵⁴⁴ History, p. 126//290.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid, p.95.

⁵⁴⁶ CPR, p. 731.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid, p.106.

⁵⁴⁸ History, p. 88.

⁵⁴⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, "Schopenhauer as Educator" in CW, p. 218.

⁵⁵⁰ The "historical process" takes on a more positive character when the aesthetic-ethical demand for a "new and improved *physis*" is confronted with a heritage that includes the tradition of classical philology and the Kantian philosophy. When the latter's critique of positivism and empiricism is brought to bear on the methodology of the former, then a "space" opens within which Hellenic culture can be approached in a way that produces an "alienating effect...For ultimately, what we have before us is nothing but printed pages, not the reality of that tragedy. We must supply the Greek character to [the latter]...But if we are able to do that, to recreate the Greek in our thoughts, then we have also almost created ancient tragedy anew out of ourselves...Only analogous phenomena of our world, phenomena that almost deserve to be called Greek, can be of assistance to us now." Friedrich Nietzsche, Unpublished Writings from the period of Unfashionable Observations, Richard T. Gray trans. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 139.

⁵⁵¹ History, p. 90//250.

⁵⁵² While Mark Warren attempts to undermine the assumption that "there is...[an] ontological 'chronophobia' for Nietzsche", he maintains that a mechanical representation of time is counterpoised in "History" only by the valorization of the self-positing subject's ability to appropriate its own history; for Warren "chronophobia" thus arises only "from an inability to act in such a way that the possibilities of the past are transformed into the future. What causes 'chronophobia' is a lack of power organized as subjectivity." Mark Warren, Nietzsche and Political Thought, (Cambridge: MIT, 1988), pp. 81-2. For a statement of the "ontological" position Warren is opposing cf. Keith Ansell-Pearson, Nietzsche contra Rousseau: A Study of Nietzsche's Moral and Political Thought, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 14-5; Paul de Man, "Literary History and Literary Modernity" in Blindness and Insight, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1983), p. 150.

⁵⁵³ Ibid, p. 107//270. Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe has argued that "beneath the ethical pathos [of Nietzsche's "History"]", it is really an aesthetic thematic that comes to light,

and we recognize in the categories that Nietzsche manipulates the traditional lexicon of the theory or philosophy of art.” This “lexicon” alludes to a tradition of German classicism afflicted with the impossible desire “to imitate the Greeks without imitating them.” What Lacoue-Labarthe does not consider in this diagnosis of aestheticism is how the “ethical pathos” in question can be illuminated by an interpretation of the relationship between Kant and Nietzsche. Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe, “History and Mimesis” in Looking After Nietzsche, ed. Laurence A. Rickels, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), pp. 217, 224.

⁵⁵⁴ BT, p. 141.

⁵⁵⁵ History, p. 167, cf. p. 111: “the unity of artistic style that manifest itself throughout all the vital self-expressions of a people.”

⁵⁵⁶ History, p. 132//296.

⁵⁵⁷ Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. (London: Verso, 1985). Slavoj Žižek, “Beyond Discourse-Analysis,” in Ernesto Laclau, ed. New Reflections on The Revolution of Our Time. (London: Verso, 1990), p. 249. (Hereafter referred to as “New Reflections”).

⁵⁵⁸ Ernesto Laclau, “The Impossibility of Society” in “New Reflections”, p. 92.

⁵⁵⁹ Ernesto Laclau, “Deconstruction, Pragmatism, Hegemony” in “Deconstruction and Pragmatism”, pp. 56-7. (Hereafter referred to as “Laclau, ‘D, P, H’”).

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 58. In this way the relationship between the ethical (or the ideal) and the ideological (or the idol) is, Laclau claims, inverted: “the ideological would not consist of the misrecognition of a positive essence, but exactly the opposite: it would consist of the non-recognition of the precarious character of any positivity, of the impossibility of any ultimate suture.” (Laclau, “The Impossibility of Society”, in New Reflections, p. 92).

⁵⁶¹ Laclau, “D, P, H”, p. 55.

⁵⁶² The Kantian conception of “finitude” here refers to the representation of the subject whose inability to actualize its capacity for freedom is measured against the rational ideal of a “holy” will.

⁵⁶³ Ernesto Laclau, “Introduction” to The Making of Political Identities, Ernesto Laclau, ed. (New York: Verso, 1994), p. 3. (Hereafter referred to as “Laclau, ‘Introduction’”).

⁵⁶⁴ Laclau, “Psychoanalysis and Marxism”, in New Reflections, p. 93).

⁵⁶⁵ LAE, p. 106//331.

⁵⁶⁶ Georg Lukàcs, The Theory of the Novel, Anna Bostock trans. (Cambridge: MIT, 1971), p. 29.

⁵⁶⁷ Jacques Derrida, "Remarks on Deconstruction and Pragmatism" in "Deconstruction and Pragmatism", p. 84.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁹ Laclau, "D,P, H", p. 56.

⁵⁷⁰ Laclau, "Introduction", p. 4. Cf. BT, p. 45. Although the *Ur-Eine* symbolizes a truth that cannot be mimetically reproduced, "it also needs the rapturous vision, the pleasurable illusion, for its continuous redemption."

⁵⁷¹ Laclau, "D,P.H", p. 58.

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