Routledge Studies in Eighteenth-Century Philosophy

BEYOND AUTONOMY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH AND GERMAN AESTHETICS

Edited by
Karl Axelsson, Camilla Flodin, and
Mattias Pirholt

Beyond Autonomy in Eighteenth-Century British and German Aesthetics

This volume re-examines traditional interpretations of the rise of modern aesthetics in eighteenth-century Britain and Germany. It provides a new account that connects aesthetic experience with morality, science, and political society. In doing so, it challenges long-standing teleological narratives that emphasize disinterestedness and the separation of aesthetics from moral, cognitive, and political interests.

The chapters are divided into three thematic parts. The chapters in Part I demonstrate the heteronomy of eighteenth-century British aesthetics. They chart the evolution of aesthetic concepts and discuss the ethical and political significance of the aesthetic theories of several key figures: namely, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, David Hume, and Adam Smith. Part II explores the ways in which eighteenth-century German, and German-oriented, thinkers examine aesthetic experience and moral concerns, and relate to the work of their British counterparts. The chapters here cover the work of Kant, Moses Mendelssohn, Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, and Madame de Staël. Finally, Part III explores the interrelation of science, aesthetics, and a new model of society in the work of Goethe, Johann Wilhelm Ritter, Friedrich Hölderlin, and William Hazlitt, among others.

This volume develops unique discussions of the rise of aesthetic autonomy in the eighteenth century. In bringing together well-known scholars working on British and German eighteenth-century aesthetics, philosophy, and literature, it will appeal to scholars and advanced students in a range of disciplines who are interested in this topic.

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Contents

List of Contributors vii
Acknowledgments xi

Introduction 1
KARL AXELSSON, CAMILLA FLODIN, AND MATTIAS PIRHOLT

PART I
Aesthetic Concepts, Morality, and Society in the British Tradition 19

1 **The Evolution of Aesthetic Concepts 1700–1800** 21
PETER DE BOLLA

2 **Beauty, Nature, and Society in Shaftesbury's *The Moralists*** 47
KARL AXELSSON

3 **Force Makes Right; or, Shaftesbury's Moral-Aesthetic Dynamics** 70
NEIL SACCAMANO

4 **Civilization in Eighteenth-Century Britain: A Subject for Taste** 94
MARIA SEMI

5 **Adam Smith's Aesthetic Psychology** 112
EMILY BRADY AND NICOLE HALL

PART II
British and German Liaisons 133

6 Aesthetic Autonomy Is Not the Autonomy of Art 135
PAUL GUYER

7 From Spiritual Taste to Good Taste? Reflections on the Search for Aesthetic Theory's Pietist Roots 161
SIMON GROTE

8 Is there a Middle Way? Mendelssohn on the Faculty of Approbation 180
ANNE POLLOK

9 Germaine de Staël and the Politics of Taste 201
KAREN GREEN

PART III
Science and a New Model of Society Around 1800 215

10 Goethe's Exploratory Idealism 217
MATTIAS PIRHOLT

11 Physics as Art: Johann Wilhelm Ritter's Construction Projects 239
JOCELYN HOLLAND

12 Hölderlin's Higher Enlightenment 258
CAMILLA FLODIN

13 Rethinking Disinterestedness Through the Rise of Political Economy 277
NATALIE ROXBURGH

Index 299

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Introduction

Karl Axelsson, Camilla Flodin, and Mattias Pirholt

Scholars have traditionally claimed that the eighteenth century marks the establishment of modern aesthetic autonomy. A long-standing teleological narrative holds that such autonomy originated in British aesthetic theory, was subsequently given its seminal shape in Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, and came to full realization in the poetological and philosophical program of German Romanticism. Lately, this narrative has been reconsidered by philosophers, art historians, and literary historians. The following volume aims to contribute to this ongoing re-examination by charting the aesthetic heteronomy that distinguished the discourse in Britain and Germany by addressing the intimate and often unexpected connections between aesthetic, moral, and scientific concerns in eighteenth-century thought. While every scientific discipline needs a narrative that enables scholars to recognize its history and distinctive borders, an inherent risk with reading the history of aesthetics teleologically is that historical pluralism and aberrant ideas are sacrificed in order to establish and maintain coherence. A motivating force behind the chapters in this volume is the belief that contemporary aesthetics would benefit from engaging further with eighteenth-century ideas seemingly beyond its current naturalized borders.

The Narrative of Modern Aesthetics

The last two decades have witnessed a "long overdue re-examination of what *really* did (or did *not*) happen in the eighteenth century as to our conceptions of aesthetics and the fine arts."[1] In the middle of this debate—indeed, affecting our understanding of the "*grand narrative*" itself—is Paul Oskar Kristeller's famous thesis, in which the five arts (painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and poetry), which he claims "underlies all modern aesthetics," are believed to constitute "an area all by themselves."[2] The impact of Kristeller's "brief and quite tentative study" is extraordinary.[3] As one of his recent opponent states, Kristeller's ideas became "established orthodoxy among historians and philosophers of art and by intellectual and cultural historians, and they are now more or less legion."[4]

The ongoing debate on the legacy of Kristeller's thesis can be roughly divided into scholars insisting on a so-called *discontinuity model*, with the eighteenth century signifying a "Copernican revolution" in the concept of art, and those (especially classicists) favoring a *continuity model*, arguing for a recognition of a mimeticist tradition that connects idea(l)s from antiquity over a wider time-frame.[5] The concept of aesthetic autonomy, broadly conceived as the independence of art and aesthetic experience, especially from moral, cognitive, and religious concerns, with repercussions on our conceptions of the role of the artist and the nature of the work, plays a significant role in this protracted debate. Given that, as James I. Porter emphasizes, "Kristeller is conflating 'the modern system of the arts' with claims to aesthetic autonomy," he is also

> emphatically partial to aesthetic autonomy in its modern form, inasmuch as it stresses that the progress of the arts involved their steady 'emancipation' from their background contexts, which is to say, their becoming autonomous from religion, morality, and other strictures.[6]

In the wake of Kristeller's affirmative conflations, philosophers pursued a more clear-cut origin of aesthetic theory and autonomy in "that classical century of modern aesthetics."[7] Along with Joseph Addison's *Spectator* essays, entitled the "Pleasures of the Imagination" and published in the summer of 1712, the writings of the third Earl of Shaftesbury were, in this context, granted a more settled status than what they had received in the past.[8] However, while affirmative conflations of *modern* aesthetics with art and aesthetic experience as separated from other domains of human life was to remain an important feature of contemporary aesthetics, over the last decades, a more dialectical understanding has gained ground in the meta-aesthetic debate.[9] Thus, Porter reminds us in an Adornian manner that a "negation of relation to a given sphere (culture, religion, morals) involves a necessary entanglement in what is being refused."[10] In fact, the potential for a dialectical understanding of the relationship between autonomy and heteronomy, in which, from our contemporary standpoint, non-aesthetic concerns are continuously regarded as informing aesthetic experience, and vice versa, could be discerned in the ambivalence voiced by the architects of the teleological narrative. Any claim about Addison and Shaftesbury providing the foundation of modern aesthetic theory, as well as initiating the conceptualization of the aesthetic experience as autonomous, was destined to be shadowed by a series of reservations confusing or even contradicting such claims. Thus, while Kristeller's conflations identified Shaftesbury as "the founder of modern aesthetics," they also contained the reservation that Shaftesbury's philosophy was shaped by classical Greco-Roman thought and that he therefore "did not make a clear distinction between artistic and moral beauty."[11]

This twofoldness was to remain a common feature in accounts aiming to establish the writings of Shaftesbury (and, to some extent, Addison) as the definite source of modern aesthetic autonomy.[12] A series of influential articles by Jerome Stolnitz, published between 1961 and 1963, demonstrates in all its plainness the nature of these and future teleological accounts. While Stolnitz's theory of the existence of a specific aesthetic attitude has been a target of much criticism since the 1970s, his attribution of the modern concept of aesthetic disinterestedness (a cornerstone in his theory of aesthetic attitude) to Shaftesbury remained influential for a much longer period. Only more recently has it been systematically scrutinized and questioned.[13] The argument made by Stolnitz was that the "chief impulse in the modern period [was] to establish the autonomy of the aesthetic and that Shaftesbury [was] one of the prime movers."[14] Here, "the aesthetic" is defined in terms of perception, and disinterestedness constitutes the property of this distinctively modern "mode of perceiving," which Stolnitz situates "in the British, beginning with Lord Shaftesbury," rather than in, say, Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, who gave the discipline its name by defining aesthetics as the science of sensible cognition (*scientia cognitionis sensitivae*).[15] What "marks off modern from traditional aesthetics" is, to Stolnitz, the simple fact that disinterestedness constituted an aesthetic attitude that was firmly detached from other domains of human life.[16] Once Shaftesbury had "installed" the concept of disinterestedness "at the centre of aesthetic theory," the abyss separating modern aesthetics from its previous obsolete forms was, according to Stolnitz, destined to grow wider.[17] Here, the ruling principle of modern aesthetics is that a "work of art must be evaluated in respect of its intrinsic structure."[18] Accordingly, the modern conviction that the work of art is "autonomous" and "defies" any "extra-aesthetic criteria" was conceived as the effect of Shaftesbury's concept of disinterestedness.[19] After all, it is, according to Stolnitz, only in "relation to disinterested perception that the work is autonomous."[20]

Up to this point, the causal power of Shaftesbury's concept of disinterestedness is easy to follow. However, in order to do so, scholars had to accept the paradoxical idea that Shaftesbury "denies that there is anything peculiar to aesthetic phenomena," that he only exercised "moral and cognitive criteria of evaluation," and that he was ultimately not even "aware" of the revolutionary aesthetic ideas that he was believed to elaborate and defend.[21] Somewhat in line with Samuel H. Monk's dated belief that British "eighteenth-century aesthetic has as its unconscious goal the *Critique of Judgment*" (in which Kant is believed to "bring order out of [the] chaos" that reigned in the "confused seas of English theories"),[22] Shaftesbury's moral philosophy turned, in Stolnitz's account, into a rather defiant cog in the teleological narrative. A prerequisite for scholars seeking to establish Shaftesbury's importance in the "history of modern theory" was to "bring out what is *in* him."[23] Crudely put, what

was assumed to be hidden *in* Shaftesbury was an embryonic version of Kantian disinterested pleasure and a self-evident progression toward modern aesthetic autonomy.

Disinterestedness and Nature

If Shaftesbury's ethically and theologically imbued conception of beauty is, to some extent, a reluctant candidate as instigator of modern aesthetic autonomy, the same can be and has been said about Kant. Limiting aesthetics to reflection solely on manmade works of art is usually considered a significant step in the development of aesthetic autonomy,[24] whereas Kant found his chief examples of the experience of the beautiful, as well as that of the sublime, in nature. Thus, his focus on natural beauty, and his tendency to privilege it above artistic beauty, makes him a somewhat imperfect fit for accounts that depict *Critique of the Power of Judgment* as the high tide of the development of the autonomy of art. Kristeller himself misrepresented the first part of the third *Critique* by claiming that "[i]n his critique of aesthetic judgment, Kant discusses also the concepts of the sublime and of natural beauty, but his major emphasis is on beauty in the arts."[25] Neglecting the fact that the main examples of beauty are natural objects (flowers, birds, crustaceans), the Kristellerian narrative culminates with Kant's division of the arts in Section 51.[26]

It was Kant's outspoken aim to mediate between the realm of nature and the realm of freedom via aesthetic judgment.[27] For him, there is a deep affinity between the morally good and the ability to take a direct interest in beautiful nature, that is to say, a desire to let beautiful nature exist for itself (even if this would not be beneficial for an individual human being). Such a contemplative attitude toward nature, which permits it to exist beyond human intentions and purposes, is, for Kant, an indication of moral refinement in human beings.[28] Indeed, it is reasonable to argue that this might constitute a persisting link between Shaftesbury and Kant, rather than the former introducing, as M. H. Abrams claims, a perceiver's stance of art as "self-sufficient [and] autonomous," which eventually "developed into the full modern formulation of art-as-such in Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* [i.e. the first part of the third *Critique*]."[29]

Adherence to the teleological narrative affects the interpretation of both Kant's immediate predecessors, in particular Karl Philipp Moritz, and his successors, the post-Kantian idealists and romantics of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. While frequently overlooked in British and American accounts,[30] Moritz, whose most important works on aesthetics were published in the 1780s, is, in a German context, often considered a forerunner or even the instigator of aesthetic autonomy. His definition of the work of art as "*complete in itself*" and as determined by "inner purposiveness"[31] has prompted scholars to claim that he was

"the first aesthetician ever, who—two years prior to the publication of *Critique of the Power of Judgment*—articulated, with total theoretical clarity, the notion of autonomy of art and separated rigorously beauty from the useful."[32] Thus, scholars often emphasize Moritz's claim that beauty in the work of art lacks utility value and that the beautiful work, as an imitation of nature's perfection, constitutes an organic totality.[33] Nevertheless, for Moritz, the work of art serves external purposes as it, by means of disinterested (that is, unselfish) love, facilitates man's moral elevation toward perfection.[34]

From a teleological standpoint, Moritz supposedly paved the way, not only for Kant[35] but also for the German classicists of the 1790s, in particular Goethe and Schiller, who knew Moritz personally and admired his work. Thus, aesthetic autonomy is seen as the core of German classicist aesthetics. "[N]o other concept" is, as Wilhelm Voßkamp stresses, "perceived as more characteristic for the epoch of Weimar classicism than *aesthetic autonomy*."[36] The German classicists of the late eighteenth century are still assumed to have regarded "self-sufficiency and closure" as key features of the work of art.[37] From such a point of view, Weimar classicism, with its notion of the autonomous "public sphere of beauty" (*schöne Öffentlichkeit*), is regarded as essentially an elite culture that dissociated itself from contemporary popular culture, turning "its back to the public" as well as on the contemporary political situation, first and foremost the French Revolution and the War of the First Coalition.[38] However, the political aspects of this turn toward the aesthetic are difficult to overlook. Even Schiller's writings on aesthetics, which at first glance may appear to be the least ambiguous attempt to promote something like aesthetic autonomy, tried to reconcile, as Frederick Beiser notes, "aesthetic autonomy with moral significance," a "somewhat ironic, indeed paradoxical" endeavor since art was supposed to have "its moral force by virtue of its independence from moral ends."[39] Still, the ultimate success of this effort has been contested.[40]

If Moritz and Kant are regarded as having separated the disinterested pleasure of aesthetic judgments from moral and cognitive concerns, assertions of the interdependence of these realms by succeeding thinkers—Johann Gottfried Herder, for instance[41]—will regrettably seem antiquated.[42] Post-Kantians like Hölderlin and Schelling also insisted on the interdependence of aesthetics, morality, and cognition. Though they did not regard Kant as successful in his attempt to reconcile the spheres of human freedom and non-human nature, they argued—even as their emphasis shifted from natural beauty to the beauty of art—that aesthetics remains crucial for the possibility of such a reconciliation. In the *System of Transcendental Idealism*, Schelling claims that art discloses the common origin of mind and nature. Reminiscent of Kant's description of artistic genius as a gift of nature, enabling the creation of works of art characterized by a similar purposiveness to that of products of nature,[43] Schelling argues that works of art reconcile the unconscious

productivity of non-human nature and the conscious productivity of human mind, thus reflecting the union of the productivities in a sensuous, objective form.[44] In his "Ueber das Verhältnis der bildenden Künste zu der Natur," he reinterprets one of the oldest conceptions of art in Western aesthetics—art as the mimesis of nature—in accordance with the idea of productive nature: art is mimesis of nature, not as the copy of something "given" (this is a reductive view of nature as a mere object and resource to be exploited by human beings) but as a mimesis of nature's creative power.[45] Similarly, Hölderlin's own poetry and his theoretical writings emphasize poetry's ability to remember and express human beings' dependence on nature and its primary productivity.

Accordingly, the privileging of aesthetic experience during the long eighteenth century can be read in a different light, disclosing an alternative connection between the British and the German tradition, and revealing the ethics of disinterestedness. Disinterestedness can indeed be regarded as a critical response to the increasing exploitation and mastery of nature which the scientific revolution in the seventeenth century had made possible.[46] This is one of the ways in which both Shaftesbury and Kant can be said to connect disinterestedness to a higher (non-selfish) interest: namely, the moral interest in a reconciliation with nature. How fundamental this idea is for developing an ideal society is of course much more pronounced in Shaftesbury and the post-Kantian romantics than it is in Kant's critical philosophy.

Thinkers belonging to the romantic generation also work to overcome the Kantian division between the artistic genius and the scientist, as shown in the examples of Johann Wolfgang Goethe and the German physicist Johann Wilhelm Ritter. Here, they can perhaps be said to take their lead from Kant's revealing reflection in *Critique of Practical Reason*, in which he admits that "an observer of nature" begins to like natural objects that once "offended his senses" when he discovers "the great purposiveness of their organization":

> his reason delights in contemplating them, and Leibniz spared an insect that he had carefully examined with a microscope and replaced it on its leaf because he had found himself instructed by his view of it, and had as it were, received a benefit from it.[47]

Thus, the reflective and open approach toward the natural world is relevant in scientific examination and knowledge production.[48]

The Structure of the Book

This volume is divided into three intersecting parts, the first of which addresses the relationship between aesthetic concepts, morality, and society in the British tradition. Outlining the heteronomy of the discourse

by exploring the relatedness between aesthetic concepts and ethics, Peter de Bolla's chapter, "The Evolution of Aesthetic Concepts 1700–1800," uses a novel computational method to track the evolution of aesthetic concepts across the anglophone eighteenth century. This method was developed by the Cambridge Concept Lab, and it allows scholars to inspect the alterations in conceptual structures over time from the dataset of Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO). The chapter demonstrates that the supposed distinctions between aesthetic and moral concepts in the period have often been misunderstood, and it recovers the precise lexical environments in which both moral and aesthetic concepts circulated and attained coherence.

The following two chapters by Karl Axelsson and Neil Saccamano, respectively, focus on the assumed origins of aesthetic autonomy by exploring the foundational role attributed to Shaftesbury. Axelsson's chapter, "Beauty, Nature, and Society in Shaftesbury's *The Moralists*," contributes to the ongoing re-evaluation of Shaftesbury's legacy in aesthetics by addressing two primary matters. First, it zooms in on how the Hobbesian view of nature and society impedes, from Shaftesbury's anti-voluntaristic standpoint, a recognition of the intrinsic *relatedness* that distinguishes man's productive harmony with inner human nature as well as the physical beauty of external nature. Second, in a close reading of the dialogue *The Moralists, A Philosophical Rhapsody*, this chapter focuses on how Shaftesbury explores this productive relatedness by developing an organic notion of nature and society. For Shaftesbury, society is integrated in the beauty of nature, and vice versa. This integration should grant the concept of society a noteworthy role in aesthetics, and if we wish to be faithful to the temporality of Shaftesbury's philosophy, we must, as this chapter demonstrates, accept that his concept of society is integral to the aesthetic claims he makes about the beauty of nature.

Saccamano's chapter, "Force Makes Right or Shaftesbury's Moral-Aesthetic Dynamics," examines what Ernst Cassirer called Shaftesbury's "purely dynamic standpoint" in order to make visible the irreducible difference of forces in the Earl's writing rather than singling out autotelic, autonomous force. Force functions across various registers in Shaftesbury: aesthetically (the force of the beautiful form), ethically (the force of natural affections), politically and religiously (the force of coercion), socially (the force of affective communication), and philosophically (the force of reason). The chapter shows that affective force must be immediate and involuntary to counter an equally involuntary coercive political force: for both Hobbes and Shaftesbury, force makes right. On the other hand, Shaftesbury also admits that immediate natural affection is not always normatively right from the start, and a just self-formation requires philosophical reflection. Since critical reason must also function as a mediating force, Shaftesbury's writing employs different ways of negotiating the admittedly heteronomous intervention of philosophy,

its inquisitorial force, in the supposedly autonomous formation of a self with a just moral-aesthetic taste—the therapeutic labor of aiding self-recollection or anamnesis, the enchantments of poetry and rhetoric, and the possibility of self-persuasion.

The final two chapters, by Maria Semi and by Emily Brady and Nicole Hall, focus on the middle and late part of the century, re-reading the roles of David Hume and Adam Smith, respectively. While the penultimate chapter by Semi unearths the moral significance of aesthetic experience for Hume, one of the major philosophers of British aesthetics, Brady and Hall make the opposite move: directing attention to a figure more known for his moral philosophy, they reveal an underlying aesthetic psychology in Smith's ethics.

Reading Hume's mid-eighteenth-century work *Essays Moral, Political, Literary*, Semi argues in her chapter "Civilization in Eighteenth-Century Britain: A Subject for Taste" that the concept of taste—one of the core aesthetic categories of the age—was inextricably connected with ideas about human difference and civilization, and therefore with the domains of morals, history, and politics. To consider taste merely as a capacity for disinterested contemplative pleasure risks reducing the complexity of the eighteenth-century discourse on taste.

Emily Brady and Nicole Hall's chapter, "Adam Smith's Aesthetic Psychology," explores Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* as well as his essay on "The History of Astronomy" in order to draw out four themes which suggest an "aesthetic psychology" in his work: (1) the place of aesthetic concepts in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, (2) moral and aesthetic perception, (3) sympathetic attention and imagination, and (4) aesthetic communication. Although Smith did not write extensively on the key aesthetic questions of the time, this chapter demonstrates that, when focusing on his writings on morals and science, aesthetic themes emerge which can extend our understanding of his views on the important aesthetic ideas of his day.

The second part of the volume focuses on the liaisons between British and German discourses. It opens with Paul Guyer's chapter, "Aesthetic Autonomy Is Not the Autonomy of Art," which demonstrates that the autonomy of art is a nineteenth-century idea, not an eighteenth-century one. The eighteenth-century conception of art can thus be called heteronomous, though that is anachronistic. Kant first used the term autonomy in an aesthetic context to characterize aesthetic judgment, not the status of art: for him, aesthetic autonomy means, as Guyer argues, that individual subjects must make their judgments of taste on the basis of their own experiences; it does not imply that the creation or experience of art is exempt from moral constraints. For Kant, nothing in human life is so exempt. Guyer's chapter also addresses other contemporaries of Kant, including Moses Mendelssohn and James Beattie.

Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten has long featured in the historiography of aesthetics as a progenitor of concepts, such as aesthetic autonomy, and is familiar to practitioners of the modern discipline. More recently, as this historiography has faced pressure from scholars trying to understand the British and German eighteenth-century emergence of aesthetic theory in relation to moral, political, theological, and other discourses external to the modern discipline, the ostensibly theological roots of Baumgarten's aesthetic theory have come under intense scrutiny. Simon Grote's chapter, "From Spiritual Taste to Good Taste? Reflections on the Search for Aesthetic Theory's Pietist Roots," critically examines the ongoing search for these theological roots in German Pietism. By exposing the complexity and ambiguity of the connection between Baumgarten's concept of good taste and the Pietist concept of spiritual taste, as articulated in the early 1700s by the teachers from whom Baumgarten received his theological training, the chapter reveals difficulties inherent in the search for intellectual roots *per se*.

The challenges of pursuing the development of aesthetics as a discipline from the point of view of aesthetic autonomy are further assessed in Anne Pollok's chapter, "Is there a Middle Way? Mendelssohn on the Faculty of Approbation." Pollok argues that Moses Mendelssohn's philosophy, as one influential take on aesthetics in the second half of the eighteenth century, cannot be captured adequately if understood as a mere forerunner to Kant, even though some of his thoughts invite such an interpretation. According to Pollok, this counts in particular for Mendelssohn's Shaftesburian conception of the faculty of approval (*Billigungsvermögen*), which he develops in the *Morning Hours*. Read instead in the more appropriate context of Mendelssohn's theory of aesthetic perfection, this mysterious faculty is by no means a sibling of Kant's concept of judgment, nor does it invite the same kind of disinterested pleasure. Rather, Mendelssohn's aesthetics appear as a sophisticated form of aesthetic perfectionism that strives to offer a theory of the interplay of all human faculties. This interplay presupposes a certain freedom within aesthetic appreciation, but, as Pollok argues, it does not neglect the ultimate connection of beauty to perfection or our human interest in it.

Germaine de Staël's *On Germany* introduced German philosophy not only to French but also to English audiences in the first decades of the nineteenth century and hailed Kant's philosophy as offering a new synthesis of nature and spirit, feeling and reason. Karen Green explores, in her chapter, "Germaine de Staël and the Politics of Taste," the apparent conflict between Staël's aesthetic attitudes, as developed in *On Literature*—which treats taste as an expression of a historical, national, and cultural moment—and the account of aesthetic autonomy developed in Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. The chapter examines how Staël was led to endorse views which apparently conflicted markedly

with her own and argues that she understood Kant to be offering a philosophical resolution to issues which had been troubling her in works she wrote after the failure of the French Revolution, in which she expressed her belief in cultural progress, despite their putative commitment to cultural relativity. Green concludes with the observation that in spite of Staël's explicit endorsement of Kant's views in *On Germany*, the outlook of *On Literature* implicitly undoes the imagined aesthetic autonomy of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*.

The third part of the volume addresses science and a new model of society around 1800. The life-changing experiences that Goethe made during his journey to Italy (1786–1788) had repercussions not only on his aesthetic convictions but also on his scientific conception of nature. In the 1790s, after his return to Weimar, Goethe sought to reform, by means of critical journals, art exhibitions, prize competitions, and new theatrical practices, the art and literature of his age in a neoclassical direction. At the same time, he developed new scientific theories: most notably, his morphology, a pre-Darwinist theory of the evolution of nature. As Mattias Pirholt argues in his chapter, "Goethe's Exploratory Idealism," both Goethe's aesthetic thinking and his scientific research rely on a particular form of experimentalism. The idea—be it that of a natural phenomenon or that of a work of art—is only obtainable by means of exploratory experiments. Rather than being the origin of things, the idea constitutes, as Pirholt demonstrates, the goal of the scientist's or the artist's teleological experimental process.

Jocelyn Holland's chapter, "Physics as Art: Johann Wilhelm Ritter's Construction Projects," approaches aesthetic autonomy and heteronomy through the work of physicist Johann Wilhelm Ritter, someone well versed in the empirical sciences, the speculative physics of Schelling, and eighteenth-century literature. Ritter embraced the work of diverse writers, including Herder, Winckelmann, and Novalis, as is reflected in the concept of art articulated in his fragments, their semi-fictional preface, and the essay "Physics as Art." He also adapted the concept of art to join numerous discourses: theories of chemistry, magnetism, medicine, and optics. Holland's chapter focuses on Ritter's techniques of construction, particularly how he orders bodies and constructs new ones, drawing from both scientific and aesthetic practices. It also shows how, through the formation of new characters and symbols, readers witness the emergence of monuments. The techniques of ordering and construction in Ritter's thinking—from the creation of temporal and conceptual sequences to the emergence of form from the printed page—illustrate an innovative and idiosyncratic model for aesthetic practice.

In the following chapter, "Hölderlin's Higher Enlightenment," Camilla Flodin addresses the importance of self-reflective heteronomy for both art and society. Flodin analyzes Hölderlin's emphasis on the importance of aesthetic comportment for reconceiving the relationship

between human beings and their surroundings, and for enabling what he calls a "higher enlightenment." He shares the romantic critique of the mechanistic conception of nature and life, and argues that we have to achieve a higher connection than the mechanical one between ourselves and our surroundings. In order to establish this, the bond between human beings and their environment needs, as Flodin stresses, aesthetic representation. Poetry is able to particularize and concretize that which in discursive knowledge remains abstract and removed from life. A necessary feature of a higher enlightenment is, according to Hölderlin, the salutary remembrance that human creations, such as art and society, are not completely autonomous but, in a Shaftesburian fashion, ultimately dependent on nature. As Flodin shows, an authentic poem is not a closed autonomous work of art for Hölderlin but, rather, an open unity which remembers its dependence on nature and thus can be said to reflect on its own aesthetic heteronomy.

In the final chapter of the volume, "Rethinking Disinterestedness Through the Rise of Political Economy," Natalie Roxburgh decouples the understanding of disinterestedness from the reception of the Kantian concept by focusing on British political economic and utilitarian discourses that addresses the transformation of interests into economic interests. Roxburgh reads Adam Smith, William Hazlitt, John Stuart Mill, and Oscar Wilde in order to demonstrate how individuals are conceived as having economic interests managed by a fundamentally disinterested State, something that radically transforms value at a collective level. Aesthetic value, read through this context, is, as Roxburgh shows, heteronomous rather than autonomous. Attitudes toward disinterestedness—and disinterested representation—differ, and they differ in accordance with views on the efficacy and promises of emergent liberal democracy.

Notes

1 Peter Kivy, "What *Really* Happened in the Eighteenth Century: The 'Modern System' Re-examined (Again)," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 52, no. 1 (2012): 61.

2 Regarding the *grand narrative*, see Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Art Rethought: The Social Practices of Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), esp. 5–54. For quotation from Kristeller, see Paul Oskar Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics (I)," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 12, no. 4 (1951): 497 and 498.

3 Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics (I)," 498.

4 James I. Porter, "Is Art Modern? Kristeller's 'Modern System of the Arts' Reconsidered," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 49, no. 1 (2009): 1.

5 On continuity and discontinuity, see Larry Shiner, "Continuity and Discontinuity in the Concept of Art," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 49, no. 2 (2009): esp. 166–169. For an outline of the discontinuity model and the continuity model, see Karl Axelsson, *Political Aesthetics: Addison and Shaftesbury on*

Taste, Morals and Society (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), esp. 10–18. On the "Copernican revolution" in art, see M. H. Abrams, "Art-as-Such: The Sociology of Modern Aesthetics," in *Doing Things with Texts: Essays in Criticism and Critical Theory* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989), 140.

6 Porter, "Is Art Modern? Kristeller's 'Modern System of the Arts' Reconsidered," 18 and 19.

7 Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics (I)," 496.

8 For Addison's papers on "The Pleasures of the Imagination," published between June 21 and July 3, 1712, see *The Spectator*, Vol. 3 [no. 411–421], ed. Donald F. Bond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 535–582. Peter Kivy encapsulates the general view about Addison's papers in current aesthetics: "Most philosophers who worry about such things [i.e. why begin with Addison] seem to agree that the discipline of aesthetics, as practiced by professional philosophers today, came into being in Britain early in the eighteenth century and that Addison's *Spectator* papers *On the Pleasures of the Imagination* is the inaugural work, if any single work is." See Peter Kivy, "Recent Scholarship and the British Tradition: A Logic of Taste—The First Fifty Years," in *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology*, 2nd ed., ed. George Dickie, Richard Sclafani, and Ronald Roblin (New York: St Martin's Press, 1989), 255.

9 For an informative account of the recent meta-aesthetic debate over the alleged autonomy or heteronomy of aesthetics, see Casey Haskins, "The Myth of the Autonomy Fault Line in Aesthetics," in *Aesthetic and Artistic Autonomy*, ed. Owen Hulatt (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 113–145.

10 Porter, "Is Art Modern? Kristeller's 'Modern System of the Arts' Reconsidered," 17.

11 Paul Oskar Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics (II)," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 13, no. 1 (1952): 27.

12 About this twofoldness in regard to Addison's periodical essays, see e.g. Karl Axelsson, "Joseph Addison and General Education: Moral Didactics in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain," *Estetika: The Central European Journal of Aesthetics* 46, no. 2 (2009): 144–166.

13 For an early critique of Stolnitz's account, see Jorge V. Arregui and Pablo Arnau, "Shaftesbury: Father or Critic of Modern Aesthetics?" *British Journal of Aesthetics* 34, no. 4 (1994): 350–362. For more recent criticism, see Miles Rind, "The Concept of Disinterestedness in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40, no. 1 (2002): 67–87; and Axelsson, *Political Aesthetics*, esp. 177–199.

14 Jerome Stolnitz, "On the Significance of Lord Shaftesbury in Modern Aesthetic Theory," *Philosophical Quarterly* 11, no. 43 (1961): 100.

15 Stolnitz, "On the Significance of Lord Shaftesbury in Modern Aesthetic Theory," 98; Stolnitz, "A Third Note on Eighteenth-Century 'Disinterestedness,'" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 22, no. 1 (1963): 69; Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Ästhetik*, Vol. 1, ed. and trans. Dagmar Mirbach (Hamburg: Meiner, 2007), 10/11 (§1).

16 Stolnitz, "On the Significance of Lord Shaftesbury in Modern Aesthetic Theory," 98.

17 Stolnitz, "On the Significance of Lord Shaftesbury in Modern Aesthetic Theory," 99.

18 Stolnitz, "On the Significance of Lord Shaftesbury in Modern Aesthetic Theory," 99.

19 Stolnitz, "On the Significance of Lord Shaftesbury in Modern Aesthetic Theory," 99.

20 Stolnitz, "On the Significance of Lord Shaftesbury in Modern Aesthetic Theory," 99.
21 Stolnitz, "On the Significance of Lord Shaftesbury in Modern Aesthetic Theory," 100.
22 Samuel H. Monk, *The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1935), 5–6.
23 Stolnitz, "On the Significance of Lord Shaftesbury in Modern Aesthetic Theory," 100. Emphasis added.
24 See e.g. Casey Haskins, "Autonomy: Overview," in *The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, ed. Michael Kelly (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 247–252.
25 Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics (II)," 43.
26 See also Porter, "Is Art Modern? Kristeller's 'Modern System of the Arts' Reconsidered," 17–18.
27 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 63 [AA 5:175]. The purposefulness of nature—in other words, the human ability (through reflective judgment) to regard nature as meaningful—is the main theme of the third *Critique*. Beauty is, for Kant, the fundamental way in which nature appears meaningful for us; thus, the aesthetic power of judgment has priority over the teleological power of judgment discussed in the book's second part. See *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 79 [AA 5:193].
28 Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 178–179 [AA 5:299–300].
29 Abrams, "Art-as-Such," 139. For a critique of the teleological narrative similar to the one presented in this introduction, see Andrew Ashfield and Peter de Bolla, "Introduction," in *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), esp. 2–3. Ashfield and de Bolla stress that "in the British tradition there is a consistent refusal to relinquish the interconnections between aesthetic judgments and ethical conduct."
30 Two exceptions are Paul Guyer, *The History of Modern Aesthetics*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 410–418, and Kai Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 29 and 75.
31 Karl Philipp Moritz, "An Attempt to Unify All the Fine Arts and Sciences under the Concept of 'That Which Is Complete in Itself,'" trans. Elliott Schreiber, *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 127 (2012): 97 and 99.
32 Dieter Borchmeyer, *Weimarer Klassik: Portrait einer Epoche*, 2nd ed. (Weinheim: Beltz Athenäum, 1998), 141.
33 See, e.g., Christa Bürger, *Der Ursprung der bürgerlichen Institution Kunst: Litteratursoziologische Untersuchungen zum klassischen Goethe* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 119–130; Alessandro Costazza, *Schönheit und Nützlichkeit: Karl Philipp Moritz und die Ästhetik des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1996).
34 Mattias Pirholt, "Disinterested Love: Ethics and Aesthetics in Karl Philipp Moritz's 'Versuch einer Vereinigung aller schönen Künste und Wissenschaften unter dem Begriff des in sich selbst Vollendeten,'" *Goethe Yearbook* 27 (2020): 63–81.
35 Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Experience of Freedom: Essays on Aesthetics and Morality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 90–92; Martha

Woodmansee, *Author, Art and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 12; Jonathan Hess, *Reconstituting the Body Politic: Enlightenment, Public Culture and the Invention of Aesthetic Autonomy* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), 157.

36 Wilhelm Voßkamp, "Klassik als Epoche: Zur Typologie und Funktion der Weimarer Klassik," in *Epochenschwelle und Epochenbewußtsein*, ed. Reinhart Herzog and Reinhart Koselleck (Munich: Fink, 1987), 496. See also Gerhard Sauder, "Ästhetische Autonomie als Norm der Weimarer Klassik," in *Normen und Werte*, ed. Friedrich Hiller (Heidelberg: Winter, 1982), 130–150.

37 Simon Richter, "Introduction," in *The Literature of Weimar Classicism*, ed. Simon Richter (Rochester: Camden House, 2005), 12.

38 Klaus L. Berghahn, "Mit dem Rücken zum Publikum: Autonomie der Kunst und literarische Öffentlichkeit in der Weimarer Klassik," in *Revolution und Autonomie: Deutsche Autonomieästhetik im Zeitalter der Französischen Revolution*, ed. Wolfgang Wittkowski (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1990), 229; Dieter Borchmeyer, "Ästhetische und politische Autonomie: Schillers 'Ästhetische Briefe' im Gegenlicht der Französischen Revolution," in *Revolution und Autonomie: Deutsche Autonomieästhetik im Zeitalter der Französischen Revolution*, ed. Wolfgang Wittkowski (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1990), 277–290.

39 Frederick Beiser, *Schiller as Philosopher: A Re-Examination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 212. See also Peter Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), 60–63; Guyer, *Kant and the Experience of Freedom*, 116–130; Hess, *Reconstituting the Body Politic*, 78–81; Sauder, "Ästhetische Autonomie als Norm der Weimarer Klassik," 137–142.

40 Rolf-Peter Janz argues that aesthetic and political autonomy are essentially unreconcilable since "the freedom of beautiful morality is merely a substitute for political freedom." Rolf-Peter Janz, *Autonomie und soziale Funktion: Studien zur Ästhetik von Schiller und Novalis* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1973), 66.

41 Herder's last two books, *Metakritik* (1799) and *Kalligone* (1800), are full-fledged attacks on Kant's critical philosophy. Particularly the latter of the two, a reading of *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, has been habitually ignored by Herder scholars.

42 For an illuminating description of the legacy of the third *Critique* focusing on its dual effect—claimed as either establishing the successful and desired division of separate value spheres (and thus as inaugurating modern aesthetic autonomy and indeed modernity as such) *or* as "the radical undoing of the categorial divisions between knowledge, morality and aesthetics" (thus leading to "a critique of enlightened modernity"), see J. M. Bernstein, *The Fate of Art: Aesthetic Alienation from Kant to Derrida and Adorno* (Cambridge: Polity, 1997 [1992]), 1–16 (quotes from page 7).

43 Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 186 (§46) [AA 5:307] (on genius) and 185–186 (§45) [AA 5:306–307] (on the purposiveness of works of art).

44 F. W. J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, trans. Peter Heath (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), 225; *System des transzendentalen Idealismus*, in *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. K. F. A. Schelling, Vol. I/3 (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1858), 619.

45 F. W. J. Schelling, "Ueber das Verhältnis der bildenden Künste zu der Natur," in *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. K. F. A. Schelling, Vol. I/7 (Stuttgart: Cotta 1860), 293.

46 Andrew Bowie also frames the development of aesthetics as a response to the increasing exploitation and domination of nature. See Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche*, 2nd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), esp. 3–8.
47 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, in Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 268 [AA 5:160].
48 For further discussion, see Dalia Nassar, "Analogical Reflection as a Source for the Science of Life: Kant and the Possibility of the Biological Sciences," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 58 (2016): 57–66. doi:10.1016/j.shpsa.2016.03.008.

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Part I

Aesthetic Concepts, Morality, and Society in the British Tradition

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1 The Evolution of Aesthetic Concepts 1700–1800

Peter de Bolla

It has long been held that the term "aesthetics" in its modern sense first came into widespread use during the eighteenth century.[1] Sometimes, a more problematic claim is also made: namely, that the concept of the aesthetic was invented during this century. Caveats are often entered here as to the natural language context in which such an invention is taken to have occurred or the distinctions between, say, classical understanding of beauty and its connections (or misconnections) to the Enlightenment, but I shall leave the question of origin or precursors to one side in the following chapter.[2] I shall also park to one side the question regarding the use of the word "concept" and simply assume that readers of this contribution will find no problem with the proposition that there are "aesthetic concepts," and the terms we often find in eighteenth-century treatises that deal with what is taken to be "aesthetics," such as "beauty"; "harmony"; and, for the purposes of the following, most significantly, "sublime," are indeed the labels for some of these concepts.[3] The aim of this chapter is to explore the ways in which the affordances of digital scholarship may help us understand the changes in use and conceptual structure that occurred over the course of the English-language eighteenth century to aesthetic concepts.

The restriction to the English language is based on the fact that the digital resource I will interrogate extensively is Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO). Comprising some 180,000 titles, 200,000 volumes, and more than 33 million pages of text, ECCO is well-known as the world's largest digital archive of books from the eighteenth century, containing "every significant English-language and foreign-language title printed in the United Kingdom between the years 1701 and 1800."[4] Unsurprisingly, the number of non-English language texts in this dataset is too small to accurately reflect lexical behavior in, say, French or German during the period; for this reason, inter-lingual comparisons cannot be constructed using this resource. The tools I will utilize for the following have been developed specifically for the purpose of ascertaining the structure of conceptual forms from the distribution of lexis in massive datasets of language use, and they are available in the Cambridge University Library. This form of analysis is called "distributional concept analysis," and its protocols and methods have been set out in a paper

already published.[5] For the present purposes, it is enough to register that the scope and reach of this kind of analysis enables us to discern what, heretofore and without the computational tools developed by the Cambridge Concept Lab, has been impossible to grasp: the precise changing lexical environments in which terms operated over time.

Within work on the history of concepts, these environments are sometimes called "semantic fields" since they comprise the most strongly associated lexis with any search query (say, the term "sublime"), thereby enabling us to capture the immediate contexts (determined by variable widths or windows of proximate terms) in which words operate.[6] The following account, however, is less interested in local semantic drift since it exploits the graphical interface designed by the Cambridge Concept Lab in order to plot the moving elements and structures within these environments. These structures might be thought of as the underlying architecture of a conceptual constellation, which is to note that the following enquiry seeks to expose and explore the constellations of lexis within which aesthetic terms operated and their alterations over time. One can think of them as snapshots of linked or associated lexis which provide us with transverse sections of the larger semantic field (one might model this analogously to the sectioning of organic matter, say, a very thin slice through the complex tissue of the human brain). In the following, I will direct attention to the shapes and structures of these sections as well as to the semantic indices that populate them. It is these alterations in what below are called "network plots," and, within them, communities of associated concepts that, for the first time, trace the evolution of aesthetic concepts across the anglophone eighteenth century by reading the total archive computationally.

Developing Data from Raw Frequency

I shall begin very simply by tracking some elementary data on the frequency of specific terms. Starting here is useful because it highlights the fact that the more complex statistical operations which feed into the graphical interpretation of the data developed within the Concept Lab tools are based upon the identification of patterns and frequencies of lexical use. The following graph, then, captures quite simply the raw frequency of the term "sublime" during the eighteenth century (Figure 1.1).

The first most notable aspect of this trend, the sharp decline in usage from 1780 to 1790, cannot be explained by something as simple as an overall fall in the number of printed texts since the total number of texts in the ECCO dataset for the decade 1770–1780 is 26,637, compared to the 31,621 for the following decade. For the moment, I will leave this hanging. This raw frequency of usage can be compared with some other related terms (Figure 1.2).

Here, one can see that the aberrant decline in frequency of the term "sublime" over the decade 1780–1790 is confirmed, and one can note

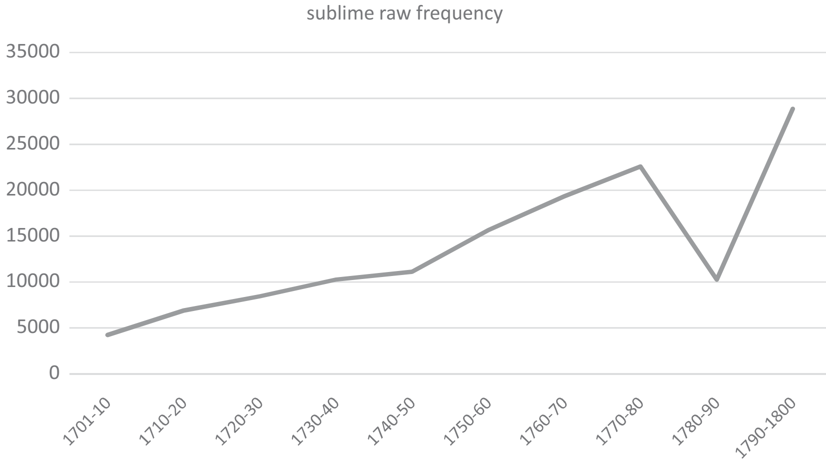

Figure 1.1 Sublime raw frequency.

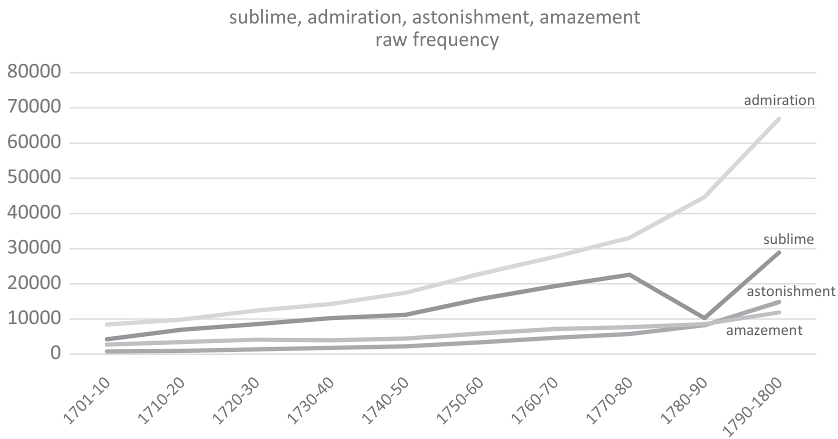

Figure 1.2 Sublime, admiration, astonishment, amazement raw frequency.

that “admiration” was used much more frequently than “sublime” by the end of the century. The relevance of the selection of this comparison will become clear below.

One of the measures developed by the Concept Lab assesses the extent to which co-associated terms “stick” to the search query as a window of proximity lengthens. In the following analyses, the width of the window moves from five words away to one hundred words away, both before and after the query (a so-called “donut” plot). The “stickiness” of a particular term gives us an indication of the closed or open behavior of a term: where the lexis is preserved as the proximity window increases,

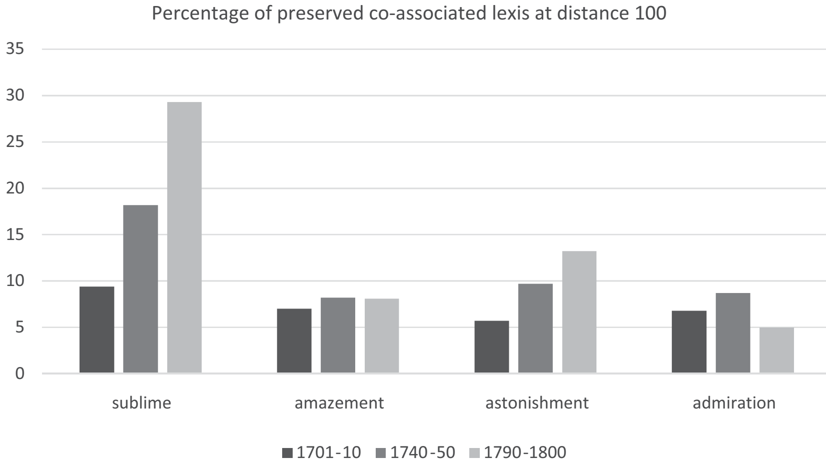

Figure 1.3 Percentage of preserved co-associated lexis at distance 100.

such "stickiness" indicates that a term operates in a very stable lexical environment, essentially keeping company with the same co-associates as the window widens. The purpose in gathering data on co-association by moving from close up (five words away) to far away (one hundred words away) is to dampen the strong binding that we expect to find in close proximity on account of grammar or syntax. The aim, then, is to capture data that might help us build a picture of a conceptual architecture that wears the word-concept imbrication lightly.[7] This measure of "stickiness" can also be inspected diachronically, as shown in the above bar chart (Figure 1.3), comparing the same terms as earlier.

Here is the first evidence of a distinctive shape to the concept of the sublime over the course of the century: its "stickiness" significantly increases through the last decade of the century, to a considerably larger extent than these comparator concepts. It can also be noted that over the course of the century, the stickiness of "admiration" declines—the only one of these four to do so. Comparing these stickiness profiles indicates that over the course of the century, the concept of the sublime "hardens"; put differently, it develops a very pronounced coherence as, over time, it becomes less likely to find company with new and different lexis. The opposite is true of "admiration": as the window increases out to one hundred words away, we find it keeping company with a random collection of terms from the natural language English.

This "stickiness" data can be obtained for a number of other aesthetic terms in order to begin to determine how unusual this shape or structure might be. The chart in Figure 1.4 presents a comparative set.

As can be seen, these concepts do not all have the same shape of evolution: "grandeur," for example, a key term in the discourse on the

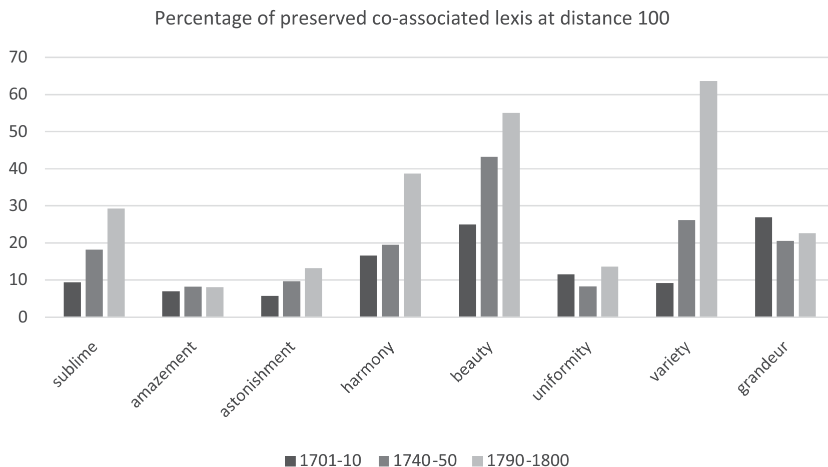

Figure 1.4 Percentage of preserved co-associated lexis at distance 100.

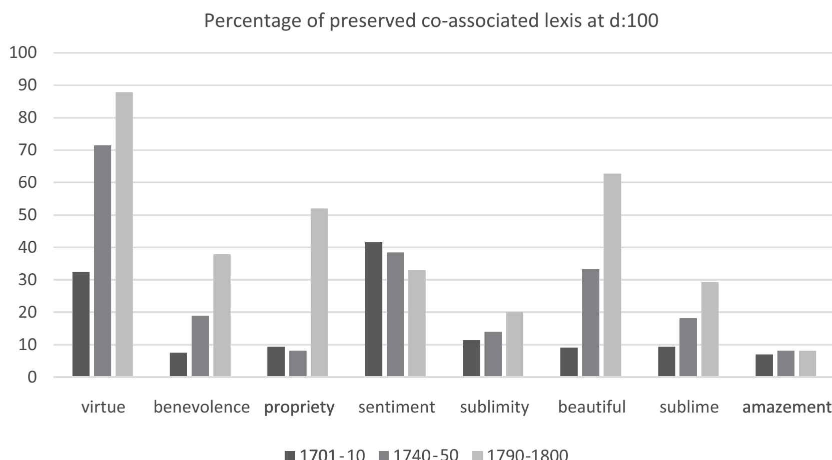

Figure 1.5 Percentage of preserved co-associated lexis at d:100.

sublime, decreases in stickiness over time.[8] "Variety" has a stickiness of over 60% in the final decade of the century, twice that of "sublime." In the next bar chart (Figure 1.5), the relative "hardness" of exemplary aesthetic concepts in comparison to moral (the reasoning behind the selection of these terms will become clear below) is plotted.

Here, one can note the significant stickiness of the concept "virtue": by the last decade of the century, it operates in a remarkably stable and consistent lexical environment. In contrast, "amazement" has very weak stickiness as its co-associations come from a very wide range of lexis,

and one can see that this profile hardly alters over the century. In the first decade of the century, the stickiness for "sublimity," "sublime," and "beautiful" is almost identical, but by the century's end, "beautiful" has around twice the stickiness of "sublime" and over three times that of "sublimity." The data is similar if we compare the nouns "sublimity" and "beauty": "beauty" has a value of 25% of preserved lexis in the first decade, which rises to 55% in the last. These profiles begin to provide shape and structure for these exemplary concepts; they allow inspection of the diachronic features of conceptual formation and the beginnings of a comparison between aesthetic and moral concepts over the course of the eighteenth century.

Using Statistical Measures to Create Lexical Environment

The tools developed by the Concept Lab enable us to calculate the relative likelihood of one term co-associating with any other in the dataset at varying distances from the search query, having taken into account the raw frequency of all terms (in other words, discounting the fact that very frequent terms are proportionately more likely to appear in the neighboring lexical environment). These calculations are expressed as scores, a measure of the likelihood of one term being bound to another, and they are ranked in descending order. Here is an example for the term "beauty" in the decade 1720–1730; the window size is five words away (note that only the top six terms have been presented in Table 1.1).

The Lab calls this numerical measure the "distributional probability factor" or *dpf*. By using this tool, one can inspect the immediate environs for the term "sublime," that is, the most prevalent lexical constellation in this example within five words, and then take slices through the century. Thus, taking the time slice of 1700–1710 and keeping the window set to five, the following ten terms are statistically most likely to be within this constellation, here presented in descending order of *dpf*: attitudes, untouched, tragic, speculations, fronts, contemplations, Longinus, allusions, operated, rhyme. Taking another time slice, in this case, the decade 1790–1800, immediately creates a striking comparison: Longinus, rhyme, imagery, pathetic, clime, sublime, elevate, Burke, fronts, whirlwind. Between these bookends of the century, a very clear evolution in the constitution

Table 1.1 Terms co-associated with "beauty" 1720–1730

beauty D-5	
Deformity	5,416
Bloom	5,189
Charms	4,731
Enamoured	4,190
Symmetry	4,078
Captivated	4,067

of the proximate constellation of bound lexis is apparent; this might be characterized as a shift toward externalization. Thus, the early decade of the century finds the sublime operating within a lexical network attached to mental operations—contemplations, speculations—whereas the later decade finds the sublime in the company of terms referring to the natural world—clime, whirlwind. This turn toward nature is reinforced by the *dpf* score for whirlwind, 3,583, which compares with 2,507 for "rhyme," the tenth ranked term in the list for the earlier time slice. This turn toward nature will be remarked upon below. It is also noticeable that the proper name "Longinus" is strongly bound to "sublime" throughout the century, which might give one pause in relation to the standard account of the development of aesthetics within the period. That account identifies an early "Longinian sublime," which is replaced by the so-called "Burkean sublime" later in the century, an evolution that is often supposed to mark the diminishing importance of rhetoric for aesthetic theory as a putative psychology became more apparent.[9] Here, it seems, this long-held view needs to be revisited: the persistence of the Longinian inflection to understanding the sublime has been greatly underestimated.[10]

Another way of tracking the evolution of my candidate aesthetic concept, the sublime, over the course of the century is to extract those co-associated terms that are common to different time slices. The following list indicates the common set in descending order of *dpf* from each of the five decades in the first half of the century—on this occasion, at the slightly wider window of ten words from the search query so as to capture terms that might be operational in slightly larger syntactic units:

> Longinus, sublime, sublimity, metaphors, climb, rhyme, clime, masterly, eloquence, sublimate, vultus, lofty, style, harmonious, contemplations, style, elevate, heroic, elevated, genius, inimitable, compositions, theology, Virgil, elevation, imagination, tragedy, contemplation, beautiful.

As noted above, we have already discerned that the stickiness of the concept increases over time, so one should expect the list of the common terms from each of the five decades in the second half of the century to be very similar, as indeed they are:

> Longinus, sublimity, sublime, rhyme, clime, climb, metaphors, pathetic, descriptive, fogs, doubling, vultus, elevate, majestic, lofty, ineffable, heroic, grandeur, genius, eloquence, poetry, radiance, Raphael, sublimate, Demosthenes, style, Boileau, orators, critic, harmonious, Virgil, epic, allegory, conceptions, elevated, stile, energy, Homer, comprehension, Milton, rhine, sisera, excellence, imagination, muse, Racine, elegance, elevation, contemplations, exalted, exalt, inimitable, sentiment, animates, raises, theology, admiration, profound, compositions, language, vulgar, poem, philosophers, skies, divine.

These, for sure, are very broad-brush comparisons—one half of the century against the other—but even at this resolution, one can begin to glimpse some characteristics of change over time. Homer and Milton, for example, only appear in the second half of the century (the number of times in which "sublime" and either Homer or Milton co-occur in the first decade of the century is precisely one), and Longinus is the top-ranked companion term across the century, thereby reinforcing the point made above.[11] But perhaps the most striking aspect of this durability is the presence of "imagination" and "contemplation" in both lists. The narratives of evolution that scholars of eighteenth-century aesthetics have long assumed to capture the drifts or alterations in emphasis or the "style" of conceptualizing the sublime—from, say, internal sense theories through theories based on an understanding of the role of the imagination to, by century's end, theories built upon the doctrine of association—do not easily fit with the data that have been developed through the inspection of the total archive of eighteenth-century printed text.[12] This doubtless exposes the differences between reading within well-established traditions—the canons created by scholarship—and computationally assisted reading at what is called "distance."

Tracking the Migration of Aesthetic Concepts Across Discursive Fields

All the texts in the ECCO dataset are categorized according to the following eight labels: "fine arts," "reference," "history and geography," "law," "language and literature," "religion and philosophy," "science, medicine and technology," and "social science." These categories are somewhat porous, and many texts assigned to a specific category are likely to be contentious. Notwithstanding this caveat, these meta-data labels can be used as a means for inspecting the distribution of a term across these categories. Thus, one can find out whether the concept of freedom, for example, is more likely to be found in texts categorized as "law" than it is in those categorized as "religion and philosophy." When these distributions are plotted diachronically, one can map the migration of concepts across discursive fields over the course of the century.

The comparative tables in Figure 1.6 track the distribution of the indicated concepts across the eight categories in two thirty-year time slices, 1720–1750 and 1770–1800. The data indicates that "sublime" is predominantly found in texts categorized as "language and literature" at the start of the century, with "reference" coming second, but by the century's end, the distribution has significantly widened across the categories, and the term is found almost as frequently in texts of "fine arts," "history and geography," and "religion and philosophy." This widening of discursive locale provides evidence for the relative decreasing siting of the sublime within literary discourse. The sublime of the poets or poetry, then, was increasingly leavened with its religious, speculative,

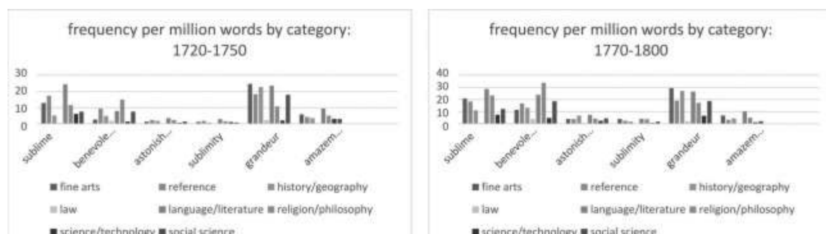

Figure 1.6 Frequency per million words by category 1720–1750/1770–1800.

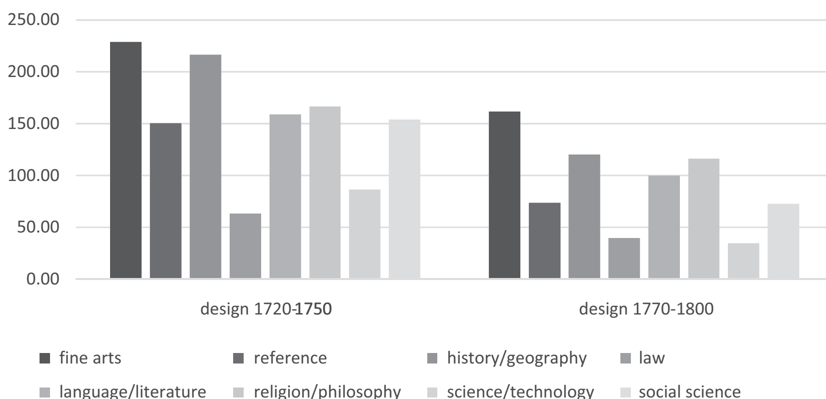

Figure 1.7 Frequency per million words by category: 1720–1750/1770–1800.

and artistic uses.[13] It can also be noted that this term finds no home at all within the discourse of law. If one compares this profile with that for "benevolence," one can note that although the distribution for this term is broadly similar across the time slices, by the end of the century, there is a pronounced increase in presence in texts categorized as "religion and philosophy" and "language and literature." This confirms a well-rehearsed observation about the period's use of literary forms and formats for exploring moral concepts and arguments.[14]

The following chart (Figure 1.7) indicates something quite unusual, a falling distribution over time. The term "design," of course, has more than one semantic attachment: Edmund Burke, for example, uses the term predominantly to mean "intention," as in "it was my design to note. . .," whereas Alexander Gerard, in his *Essay on Taste* (1759), uses it in an aesthetic sense to mean "shape" or "intended structure."[15] Notwithstanding this potential noise in the data, we can see that, over the course of the century, the term falls off in use in all categories. Here, a different question needs to be considered: how are concepts

employed or purposed in more or less restricted ways over time? In this case, "design" was increasingly used over the course of the century in the sense of "scheme" or "plot"—its ethical inflection—an observation that will become very germane in the last section of this chapter.

Exporting Data into a Network Plot

Using the search and query tools developed by the Concept Lab allows one to create vectors —a *dpf*—that can be exported into a network plot. These representations can help in the discernment of the patterns of co-associated lexis that form around specific search queries, thereby providing insight into the underlying architecture of connection or association. One can think of these plots as slices through a multi-layered discursive or semantic terrain which can be taken at different resolutions (using differing window sizes and cut off points for descending order ranked *dpf*), effectively rendering the underlying vectors more inspectable.[16] The software used to make these plots employs a community detection algorithm in order to link "nodes"—the labelled dots or circles in the plots—through "edges," the lines that link one node to another. The thickness of the line making such connections indicates the strength of the connection, and each shade represents a common community. The following plots are all taken with a resolution of window size 100 in order to capture the wider terrain of lexical operation, thereby dampening syntactic or grammatical binding. In the following plots, the query is "sublime," and in the first instance, one can immediately see that, over the course of the eighteenth century, the population size of the network changes. In the first decade of the century, the plot is as shown in Figure 1.8.

The software has overwritten "notions" with "philosophy," but one can see almost immediately that, at this resolution, the network is relatively simple, and the strongest connection is indicated by the thickest line between "sublime" and "climb." This co-association and its persistence across the century bears witness to the deep embedding of the terminology around "height"—say, elevation, lofty—within aesthetic discourse. This was doubtless determined by the period's continuing attempts to understand the Greek term "hupsos" (*ὕψος*) in Longinus; I shall have

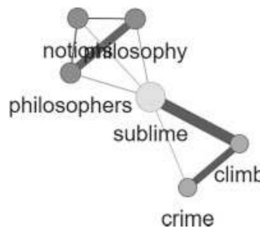

Figure 1.8 Network plot for "sublime," distance 100, 1701–1710.

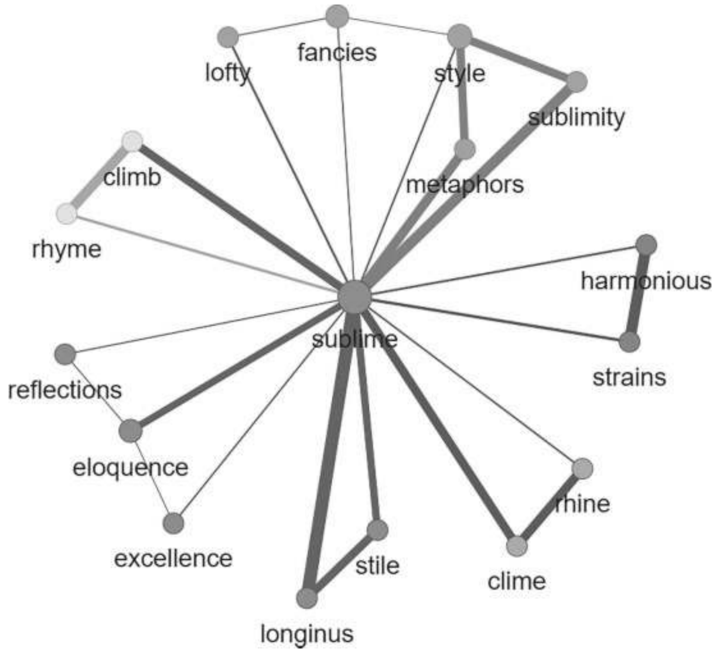

Figure 1.9 Network plot for "sublime," distance 100, 1730–1740.

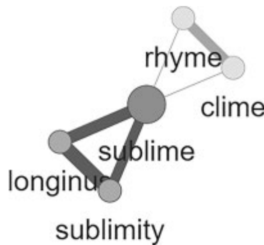

Figure 1.10 Network plot for "sublime," distance 100, 1760–1770.

more to say about this persistence below.[17] Moving ahead to the decade of the 1730s, it is immediately apparent that there is a substantial increase in the complexity of the network, and the nodes are linked in a very different configuration, essentially a "spoke" structure with the query term "sublime" at the center (Figure 1.9).

Now the strongest link in the network is "sublime–Longinus," and the immediate community in which it operates is also the largest. The same spoke structure persists for the next two decades (albeit by the 1750s, the number of spokes noticeably decreases), then something very noteworthy occurs—in the 1760s, it returns to the much less populated fulcrum triangular structure we found in the first decades of the century (Figure 1.10).

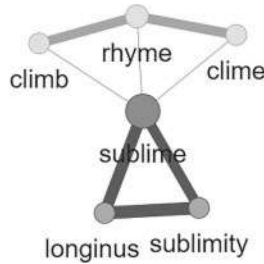

Figure 1.11 Network plot for "sublime," distance 100, 1770–1780.

It is important to register that the variables for both initial data extraction and the visualization of this underlying data remain constant here; in other words, like is being compared with like. It is not immediately apparent why this contraction occurred, but it clearly indicates a return to or pulling back into the Longinian account. Inspection of the next decade, the 1770s, indicates that this shrinkage was not a short-lived phenomenon (Figure 1.11).

In fact, the "spoke" structure noted above between 1730 and 1760 is highly distinctive with respect to the entire century: over these thirty years, the concept of the sublime provided a stable core to the constellated terms that were beginning to provide the foundations for aesthetic theory, and, as can be seen, the data on co-association that underpins these network visualizations provides clear evidence for the dominance of what is commonly referred to as the "rhetorical sublime" in this thirty-year period—note the terms "stile," "eloquence," and "metaphor."[18]

Although the single most common co-associate for "sublime" in the century was "Longinus," it should not be assumed that this implies an invariant structure to the network within which both terms operated. One can open this up for inspection using a feature of the visualization tool used here which allows one to enter multiple search queries. In this way, the software discerns between search terms operating in distinct communities and those operating in overlapping ones. The following plot has been generated by entering both terms, "Longinus" and "sublime," and if the algorithm that constructs the plot finds evidence for the co-association of any of the terms, it will draw a line—a so-called "edge"—between the nodes representing them. Below is the network plot for the first decade of the century; it can be seen here that there is no connection between the lexical terrain in which "sublime" and "Longinus" operated (Figure 1.12).

During the following decade, 1710–1720, a link is made through the spoke structure already noted above, but note that, in this time slice, "Longinus" has only one connection, its edge with "sublime."

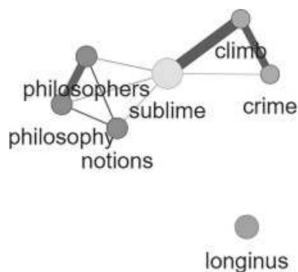

Figure 1.12 Network plot for "sublime" and "Longinus," distance 100, 1701–1710.

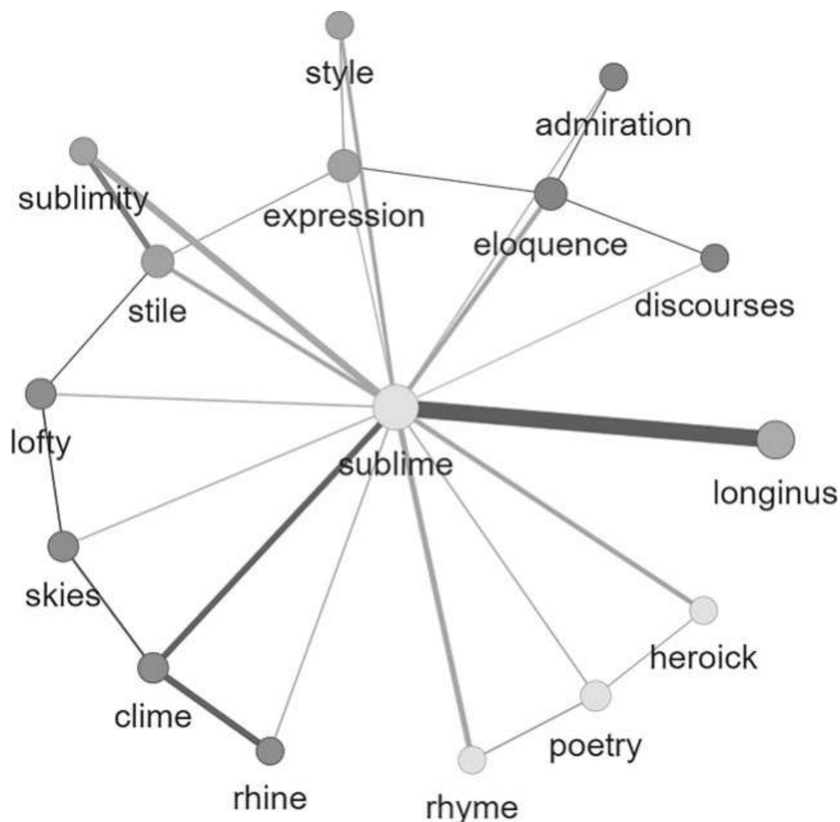

Figure 1.13 Network plot for "sublime" and "Longinus," distance 100, 1710–1720.

That connection, however, is the strongest in the entire network, as indicated by the thickest line in the plot in Figure 1.13.

Moving into the 1750s, the strength of connection between the two terms continues, but the structure of the network alters (Figure 1.14).

It has already been noted in Figure 1.10 that the immediate community network within which "sublime" operated after mid-century

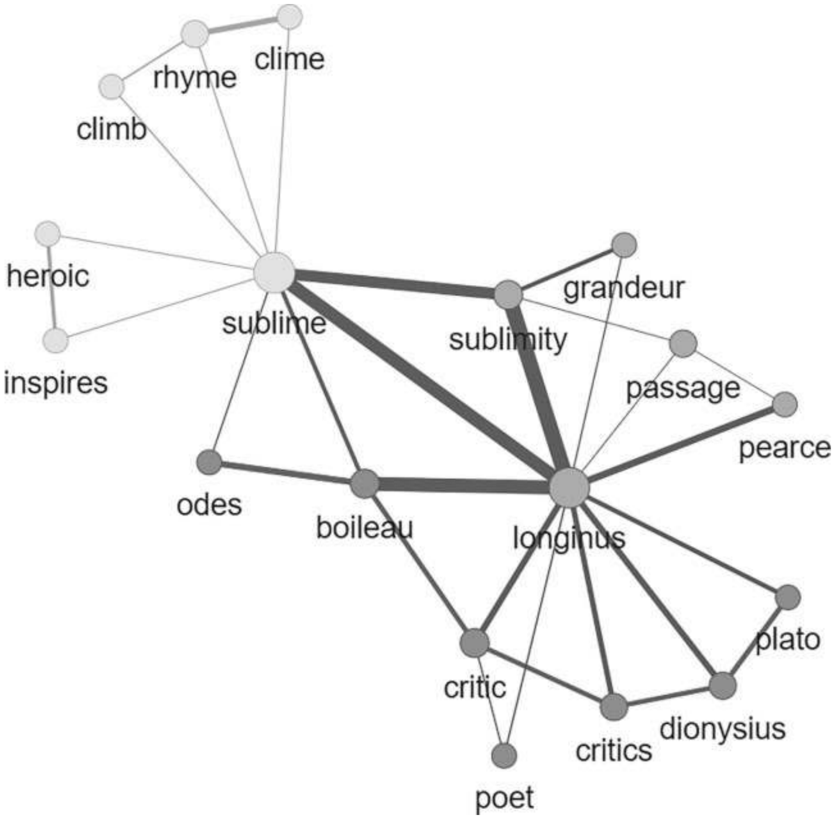

Figure 1.14 Network plot for "sublime" and "Longinus," distance 100, 1750–1760.

became significantly less complex, but this observation needs to be tempered with a wider perspective that inspects the larger constellations within which the concept operated. The Lab tool allows one to capture these larger constellations by entering more search terms into the query list. Thus, when one includes the terms "sublimity" and "Longinus," the algorithm builds a larger and more complex shape, and we find in the plot above a type of double fulcrum around the nodes "sublime" and "Longinus." It is notable that this structure, the double fulcrum, persists into the last decade of the century, albeit with an increased population of terms in the immediate community network around "Longinus." This community is characterized by terms found in the literary critical domain that was first established in the 1750s (Figure 1.15).

Here, one can see that the larger community is organized around "Longinus," even in the last decade of the century, once again providing evidence for the persistence of the Longinian inflection to thinking about the sublime.

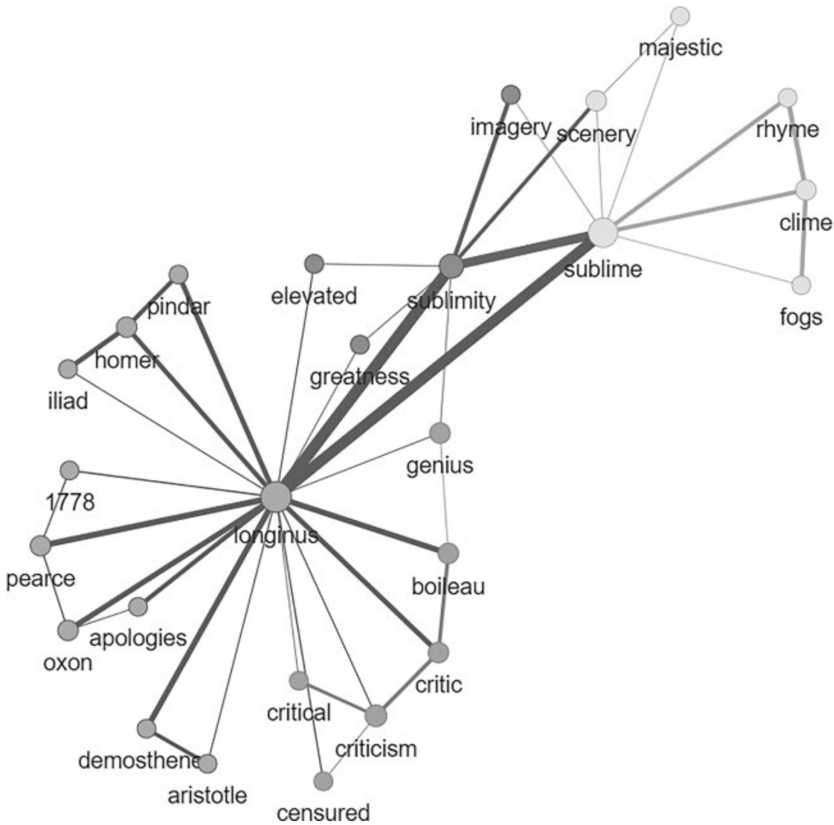

Figure 1.15 Network plot for "sublime" and "Longinus," distance 100, 1790–1800.

Tracking the Evolution of Aesthetic Concepts

Using the same methodology—developing the vector of *dpf*, then using these vectors to plot a network graph of co-associated lexis—I now want to track the slow tectonics of aesthetic conceptual organization over the course of the eighteenth century. In the following analysis, I have increased the number of search terms to the following five, which, once again, I shall assume are uncontestably aesthetic concepts: sublime, amazement, wonder, awe, and astonishment. The last four terms in this list have been selected because they appear to be the only aesthetic terms that are linked in a string in this first decade of the century. The following plots, therefore, chart the evolution of the network as it reconfigures over time, and this enables me to determine if and when the sublime becomes connected to it. Here, one can see that this first plot generates two

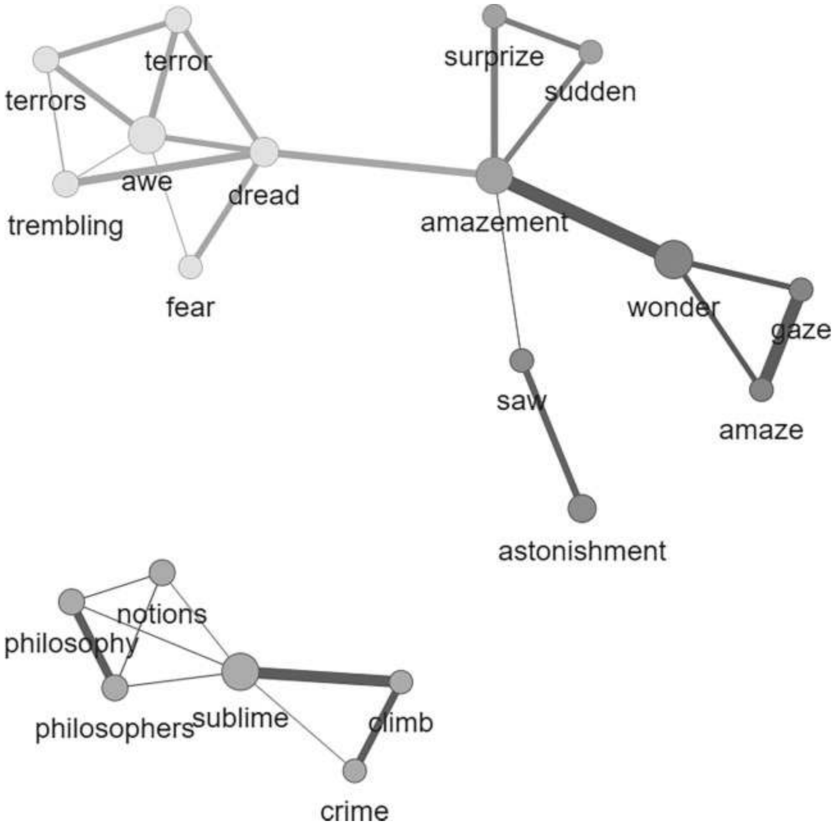

Figure 1.16 Network plot for sublime, amazement, wonder, awe, astonishment at distance 10, 1710–1720.

unconnected networks, one in which "sublime" operates and a second in which all the other terms share the same network (Figure 1.16).

It has already been shown in Figure 1.12 that "sublime" operates within its own quite sparse terrain; this is confirmed in the plot above. The other four terms, however, are linked in a branch network whose central node, "amazement," provides the connecting junction for the other terms. It is, of course, the case that entering more search terms into the tool captures more of the semantic or conceptual constellations operative at any one time, thereby allowing a more granular inspection of diachronic change, and one should expect to find that the resulting plots are populated with more terms. But it is not the larger number of nodes that I want to draw attention to; it is the routes or maps—their shapes and configuration—that I shall be examining. In the 1730s, for example, "astonishment" inhabits a singleton community at this resolution, and

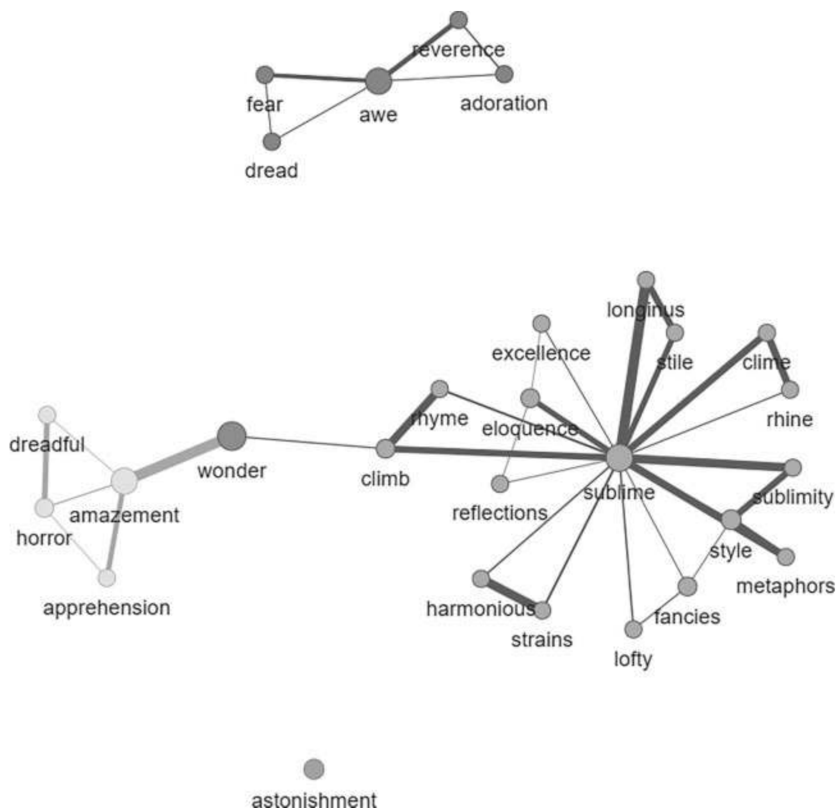

Figure 1.17 Network plot for sublime, amazement, wonder, awe, astonishment at distance 10, 1730–1740.

both it and "awe" have become separated from the larger network of the 1710s. This indicates that the concepts in view—key terms in the developing discourse of aesthetics in the period—were changing their structures and immediate community configurations over these first decades of the century. One can also see that the concept of the sublime begins to strengthen and solidify its community, which has become organized as a "spoke" structure (Figure 1.17).

Upon a first examination, one might hypothesize that the two unconnected communities of "awe" and the singleton "astonishment" provide evidence for the ways in which the "affective" account of the sublime—that which is commonly associated with the work of Alexander Gerard and Archibald Alison, for example—has yet to be fully embedded in the culture-wide understanding of aesthetics.[19] One might note here that Gerard's *Essay on Taste* was first published in 1759. But this is a little premature as one can see that there is evidence of an incipient "affective"

account in the linkage of the terms "wonder" and "amazement" with the sublime. In the following decade, the evidence becomes even stronger as we encounter a "string" structure that connects all five terms (Figure 1.18).

These network visualizations enable one to track the routes which connect one concept to another and, at the same time, provide maps of the larger terrain which constituted the discourse of aesthetics in the selected time slice of the century. In this plot, it can be seen that in order to make a connection between "sublime" and "awe," it is necessary to route through the community within which "amazement" and "wonder" are held in tension with each other. It can also be seen that the link term "climb" enables the connection from the community around "sublime" and the other two communities in the string. Moreover, the distance between "sublime" and "awe" in the string network provides a clue as to the relation between them. Thus, if we inspect the underlying text from which the data is extracted, we find that "awe" is associated with the sublime on account of its religious connotation: the text comes

Figure 1.18 Network plot for sublime, amazement, wonder, awe, astonishment at distance 10, 1740–1750.

from Mark Akenside's poem *The Pleasures of the Imagination* (1744), in which the "shade sublime" of the mountains is deemed to generate "religious awe."[20] Now the argument proposing an "affective" turn in eighteenth-century aesthetics begins to look slightly less compelling, at least in so far as the terms for heightened emotion and experience were strongly connected to the primary aesthetic category of the sublime. This becomes even more evident when we inspect the plot for the same terms in the decade of the 1780s: the string structure identified above has disintegrated into three separate clusters, and this separation of communities persists into the final decade of the century. A further notable evolution has also occurred: in the first decade of the century, "astonishment" was a singleton community, but by the century's end, it had become fully connected to the largest network of our candidate aesthetic terms, held in tension with the concepts of amazement and wonder (Figure 1.19).

One should recall that these diachronic slices through the century are intended to shine a light on the fortunes of the central aesthetic term

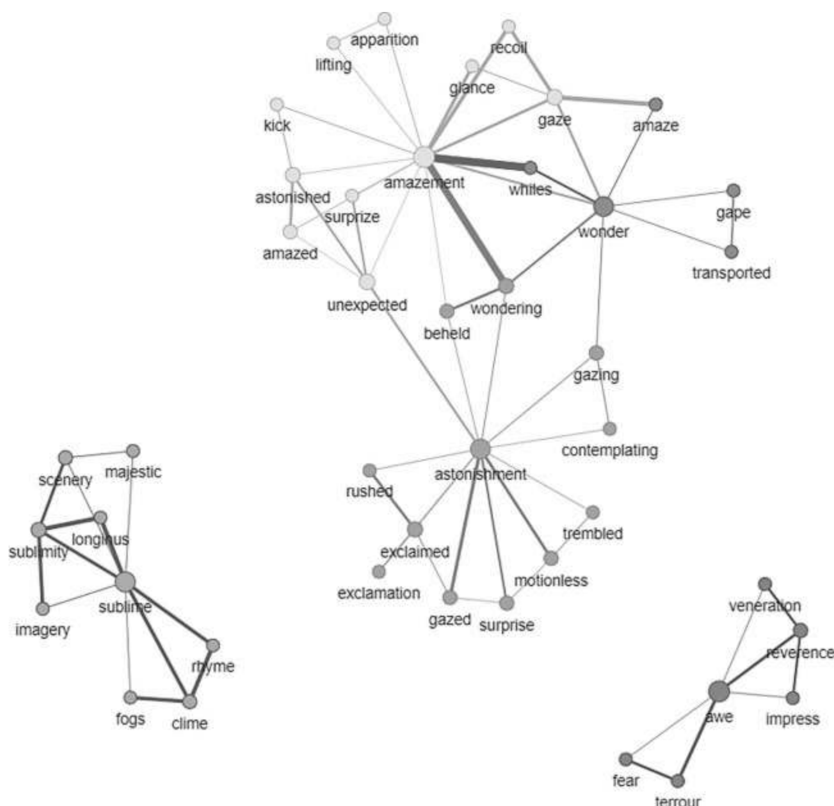

Figure 1.19 Network plot for sublime, amazement, wonder, awe, astonishment at distance 10, 1790–1800.

under investigation in this chapter: the "sublime." Here, in the last decade of the century, the poetic and visual terms associated with sublimity keep the community distinct from the larger and more psychologically inflected network of terms that orbit around the three nodes of "amazement," "wonder," and "astonishment." As can be seen at this level of observation—the co-association window of ten words apart—there is a clear lack of connection between the conceptual constellation within which "sublime" operates and that which includes these psychological concepts. The argument, made by prolific men of letters, such as Henry Home (Lord Kames), Alison, and Dugald Stewart, that sublimity can only be understood as an affective human response to experience—the wonder and amazement we find linked in the largest network above—seems to have had weak penetration in the culture at large by the end of the century.[21] Rather, there is evidence of the development of a discourse around affect and psychological states *independent* of the discourse around sublimity: the establishment of the distinctiveness of psychology from aesthetics, not its concatenation.

Clustering Aesthetic and Moral Categories

I have been arguing that the shapes of these network plots help in the understanding of the intricate, multi-dimensional constellations of lexis within which concepts are operationalized. In my final section, I present a set of visualizations intended to reveal the complex linked structures which tied aesthetic to moral categories over the course of the anglophone eighteenth century.

In the following plots, the search queries are sublime, virtue, benevolence, sublimity, beautiful, sentiment, and propriety. These terms were selected after scores of trial combinations of moral and aesthetic terms were tested with respect to the size of the linked network produced by the software. As shall be seen in the 1780s, they come to be configured in a remarkable constellation of aesthetic and moral categories, and in the following, I have tracked its emergence over the century. Thus, in its first decade, the following set of distinct communities can be found (Figure 1.20).

The plot indicates that in this time slice, both "sublimity" and "benevolence" are outliers—both are community singletons. In the second decade of the century, this alters (Figure 1.21).

In this second decade, while "propriety" remains a singleton, "benevolence" has begun to operate in a small cluster, including "wise" and "husband," and "sublimity" has become attached to the community around "sublime." By the 1730s, all seven terms are plotted in a single, string-like connective circuit (Figure 1.22).

As can be seen, in getting from "beautiful" to "benevolence," the route passes through "sublime" and "excellence," then on into the

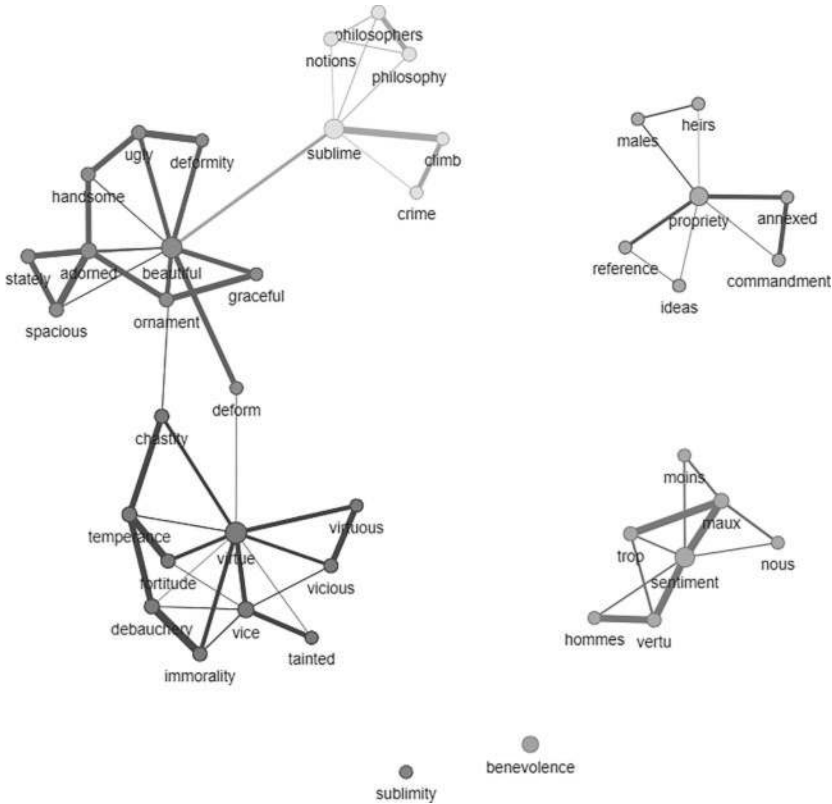

Figure 1.20 Network plot of "sublime, virtue, benevolence, sublimity, beautiful, sentiment, propriety" at distance 10, 1701–1710.

cluster around "virtue," and finally from there into the immediate cluster for "benevolence." It is also noteworthy that the connection of the communities around "sublime" and "beautiful" to those around "virtue" and "benevolence" only becomes established through the node of "excellence." This pattern persists until the 1780s, when something remarkable happens—all the concepts are connected within a closed loop network (Figure 1.23).

Now, five nodes—"sentiment," "sublimity," "beautiful," "virtue," and "benevolence"—connect to each other in a sequence that creates an enclosed territory of five sides; this might be characterized as the bounded space within which the ethico-aesthetic operated. Within that space in the form of a pentagram, one can note that two of the terms—"sublime" and "propriety"—are placed within its outline. These five points of the pentagram, the nodes which are linked in this very

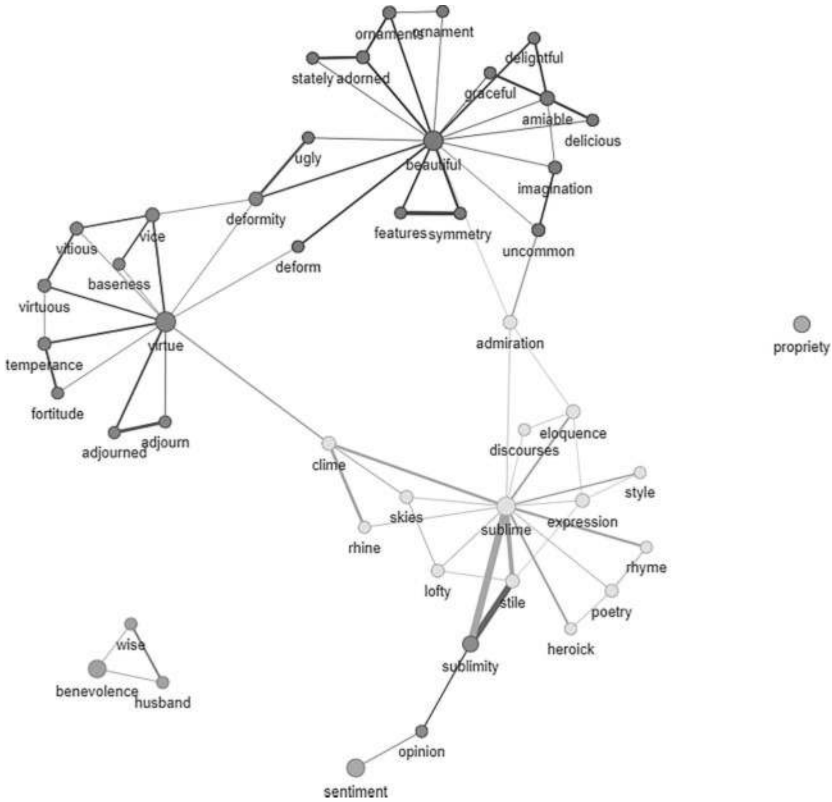

Figure 1.21 Network plot of "sublime, virtue, benevolence, sublimity, beautiful, sentiment, propriety" at distance 10, 1710–1720.

unusual network structure, set the terrain for the full realization of the ethico-aesthetic. One of the text sources underlying the visualization is Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, in which he writes of a "class of Sublime objects . . . called the moral."[22] Indeed, the stamp of Blair's unmistakable moral account of taste surely sits at the core of this plot. A "man of correct Taste," Blair states, "is one who is never imposed on by counterfeit beauties." He "carries always in his mind that standard of good sense which he employs in judging of everything."[23] The text continues:

> He estimates with propriety the comparative merit of the several beauties which he meets with in any work of genius; refers them to their proper classes; assigns the principles, as far as they can be

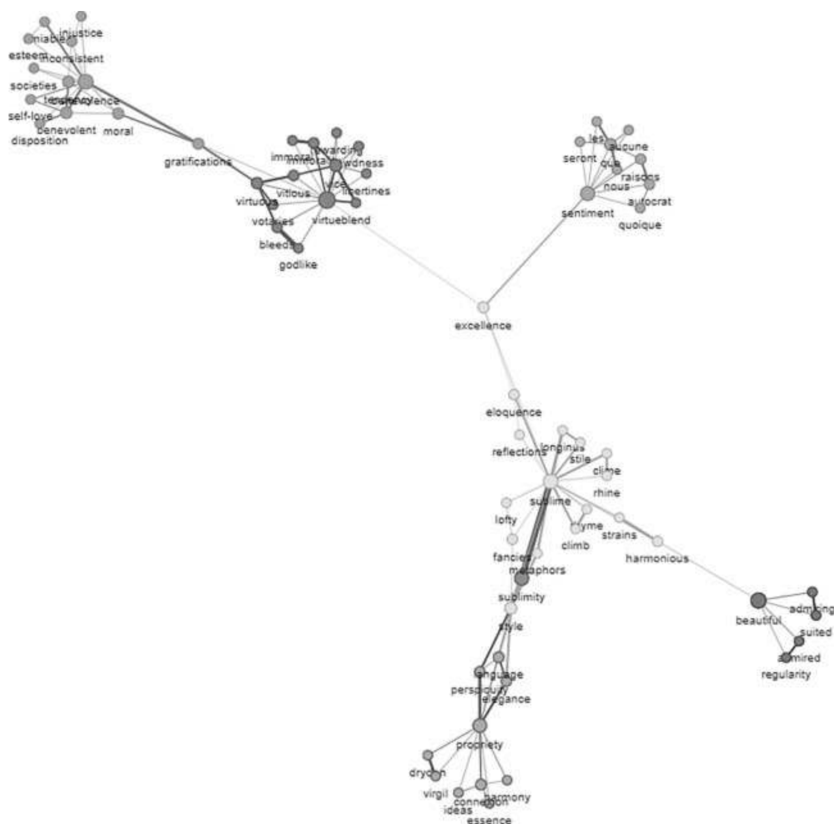

Figure 1.22 Network plot of "sublime, virtue, benevolence, sublimity, beautiful, sentiment, propriety" at distance 10, 1730–1740.

traced, whence their power of pleasing us flows; and is pleased himself precisely in that degree in which he ought, and no more.

Here, the vocabulary of moral thought—propriety, proper, principles, ought—infiltrates the conceptualization of taste, culminating an eighty-year project to cement and augment the interlacing of virtue with beauty, ethics, and aesthetics that we found in the first decade of the century in Figure 1.20 (1701–1710 plot). What began as a relatively simple lattice structure linking "virtue," "beautiful," and "sublime," by the 1780s, evolved into a massively powerful conceptual architecture that locked the aesthetic within the embrace of ethics.

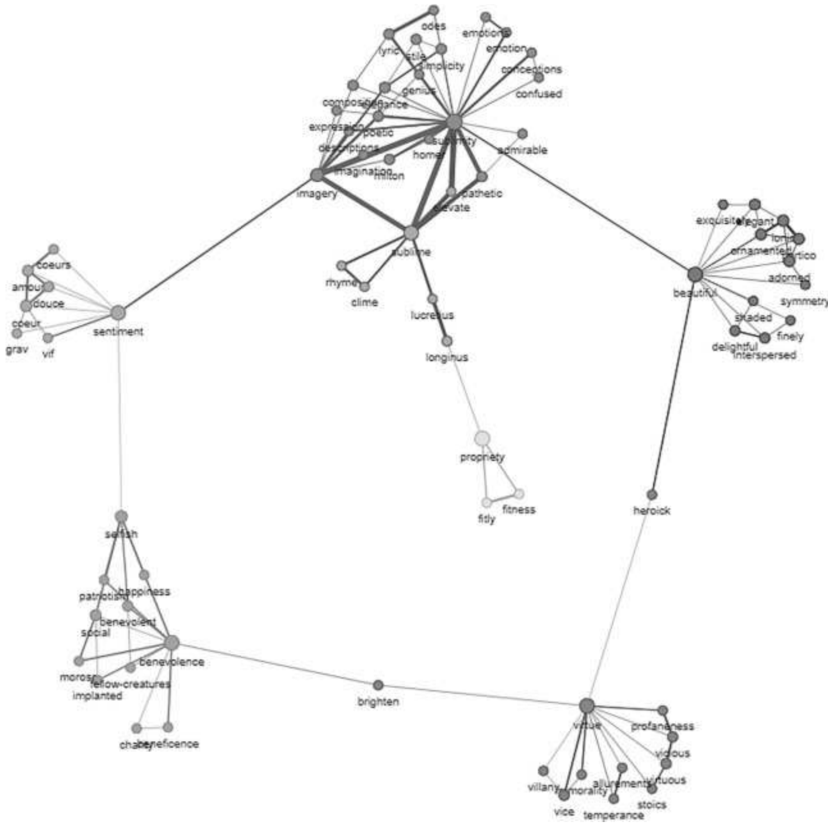

Figure 1.23 Network plot of "sublime, virtue, benevolence, sublimity, beautiful, sentiment, propriety" at distance 10, 1780–1790.

Notes

1 See Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990); for the problems this view creates, see Robert Dixon, *The Baumgarten Corruption: From Sense to Nonsense in Art and Philosophy* (London: Pluto Press, 1995), and, most recently, Timothy M. Costelloe, *The British Aesthetic Tradition: From Shaftesbury to Wittgenstein* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1: "its origins [the discipline of Aesthetics] can be traced unequivocally to eighteenth-century British philosophers working predominantly, though not exclusively, in England and Scotland."

2 See Jean-Luc Nancy, "L'Offrande Sublime," and, for the German context, Jean-François Courtine, "Tragédie et Sublimité," in *Du Sublime*, ed. Jean-François Courtine, Michel Deguy, Eliane Escoubas, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Louis Marin, Jean-Luc Nancy, and Jacob Rogozinski (Paris: Editions Belin, 1988), 37–75; 211–236.

3 This may seem too punctilious, but, as I have written at length elsewhere on the problems created by making this assumption, it would be perverse to remain silent. For that longer treatment, see my *The Architecture of Concepts:*

The Historical Formation of Human Rights (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013).

4 GALE, "Gale: Eighteenth Century Collections Online," *Gale Cengage Corporate Website*, 2018, https://www.gale.com/primary-sources/eighteenth-century-collections-online, accessed July 6, 2018.

5 See Peter de Bolla, Ewan Jones, Gabriel Recchia, John Regan, and Paul Nulty, "Distributional Concept Analysis: A Computational Model for History of Concepts," *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 14, no. 1 (2019): 66–92.

6 See Philipp Sarasin, "Is a 'History of Basic Concepts of the Twentieth Century' Possible? A Polemic," *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 7, no. 2 (2012): 101–110.

7 For a fuller account of this method, see de Bolla et al., "Distributional Concept Analysis."

8 Hugh Blair, for example, opined, "I consider grandeur and sublimity as terms synonymous, or nearly so." Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, Vol. 1 (London: Whitestone et al., 1783), 46.

9 See Robert Doran, *The Theory of the Sublime from Longinus to Kant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

10 But not by Karl Axelsson in his *The Sublime: Precursors and British Eighteenth-Century Conceptions* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007).

11 The classic account of the Miltonic sublime remains Steven Knapp, *Personification and the Sublime: Milton to Coleridge* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).

12 See, among others, George Dickie, *The Century of Taste* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Costelloe, *The British Aesthetic Tradition*.

13 This provides a rather more supple picture to that found in David B. Morris, *The Religious Sublime: Christian Poetry and Critical Tradition in Eighteenth-Century England* (Lexington, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1972), written at a time, of course, when inspection of the total printed text archive of the period was not possible.

14 Perhaps first given the imprimatur of a professional philosopher in 1999 by Gilbert Ryle in his "Jane Austen and the Moralists," *The Linacre Journal* no. 3 (1999): 85–99.

15 See Edmund Burke, *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents* (London: J Dodsley, 1784), 6; Alexander Gerard, *An Essay on Taste* (London: A Millar, 1759), 40. Blair argued that "we cannot look upon any work whatever, without being led, by a natural association of ideas, to think of its end and design …" Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, Vol. 1, 105.

16 The cutoff for inclusion in all of the plots presented here is the top twenty terms in the ranked *dpf* list.

17 The most accurate account of the substantial presence of Longinus within the British tradition is Axelsson, *The Sublime*, esp. Part II: 55–127.

18 See Doran, *The Theory of the Sublime*, 9.

19 See, among others, George Dickie, *Introduction to Aesthetics: An Analytic Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Pres, 1997), 18–20.

20 See Mark Akenside, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: A Poem in Three Books* (London, 1744), Book 3, 81.

21 See Rachel Zuckert, "The Associative Sublime: Gerard, Kames, Alison, and Stewart," in *The Sublime from Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Timothy M. Costelloe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 64–76.

22 Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, Vol. 1, 62.

23 Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, Vol. 1, 29.

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2 Beauty, Nature, and Society in Shaftesbury's *The Moralists*

Karl Axelsson

Introduction

The last decades have witnessed a re-evaluation of Shaftesbury's role as originator of a modern aesthetic disinterestedness detached from immediate moral, religious, and political values.[1] The overall aim of the following chapter is to contribute to this ongoing re-evaluation by addressing two matters in aesthetics that are still largely neglected. First, I wish to zoom in on how Thomas Hobbes's view of nature and society impedes, from Shaftesbury's anti-voluntaristic standpoint, a recognition of the intrinsic relatedness that distinguishes man's productive harmony with inner human nature as well as with the physical beauty of external nature. Second, through a close reading of the dialogue *The Moralists, A Philosophical Rhapsody* (1709), I want to show how Shaftesbury explores this productive relatedness by developing an organic notion of nature. Society is, for Shaftesbury, integrated in the beauty of nature, and vice versa. There is no autonomous position from which we can (re)create society since "*Society*" is, as Shaftesbury argues, always "*natural*" to us, and "out of Society and Community" we "never *did*, or ever *can* subsist" (*Moralists* 210 [319]; references to Shaftesbury's writings in this chapter are to *The Standard Edition*. Arabic numerals in square brackets refer to page numbers in the 1714/15 edition of *Characteristicks*). This integration should grant the concept of society a noteworthy role in aesthetics, and if we wish to be faithful to the temporality of Shaftesbury's philosophy, we must accept that his concept of society is crucial to the aesthetic claims he makes about the beauty of nature.

Hobbes on Nature

Hobbes is, in *Leviathan* (1651), the first to admit the offensiveness of his own idea "that Nature should . . . dissociate, and render men apt to invade, and destroy one another."[2] Nevertheless, a psychological egoism reigns in the apolitical condition of nature, wherein our self-interests tend to reproduce a disposition to conflicts.[3] A solution presents itself in

our consenting to a sovereign, by which we give up a part of our right to determine what we need for self-preservation as well as our subjective claim to decide the necessary means to maintain this.[4] By assigning power to the authority of the sovereign, we replace fear with the civil laws of the State.[5] Thus, we move, or so Hobbes argues, from potential conflicts of interest in nature to predictability and normative standards upheld by the authority of the sovereign in political society.

These remarks by Hobbes, where the ground rule about the perfection of *status naturae* is forcefully contested, are well-known.[6] Anticipating the opening of *Leviathan* in *De Cive* (first Latin edition published in 1642; English edition published in 1651), there is nothing beautiful or moral about the volatile state of nature. Hobbes perceives the classical Aristotelian "Axiom," that man is by nature a political animal and thus "born fit for Society," as "False."[7] Man does not "by nature seek Society for its own sake"; he does so because of his strong desire to "Profit from it."[8] Society has "to be made, and, once made, kept going, by suppressing what is anti-social in human beings."[9] Hence, while previous natural law tradition generally recognized a natural human sociability, Hobbes "departed radically from this tradition in his explication of human nature."[10]

Hobbes's conception of nature is a result of his materialist understanding of sensations, desires, and the imagination.[11] To him, there are two kinds of motion: vital and voluntary/animal motion. While the first is a physiological, involuntary motion, such as blood circulation, the second relates to conscious volitional actions, such as "to *go*, to *speak*, to *move* any of our limbes, in such manner as is first fancied in our minds."[12] Sense is motions in the organs, and "Fancy is but the Reliques of the same Motion." Thus, the imagination (*decaying sense*) is the "first internall beginning of all Voluntary Motion." What is required before the internal motions assume a shape of "visible actions" is a certain *endeavor*. Passions, such as appetite and desire, are, to Hobbes, endeavors "toward something," while aversion is an endeavor "fromward something." When addressing these basic principles regarding causal relations of objects, a feature emerges that lingers at the center of Shaftesbury's critique: due to the fact that "mans Body, is in continuall mutation," it is, according to Hobbes, "impossible that all the same things should alwayes cause in him the same Appetites, and Aversions."[13] As far as attraction goes, it is simply unthinkable that we can agree about our desires for objects. Hence, Hobbes is approaching moral questions about *good* (the object of appetite or desire) and *evil* (the object of hate and aversion), and aesthetic questions about *pleasure* and *delight* (the appearances of the motion of appetite), not only in subjective terms but, as it seems, also by relativizing value: these evaluative words are, according to him, merely understood "with relation to the person that useth them" since there is absolutely nothing "to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves; but from the Person of the man."[14] Good and

evil, as well as pleasure and delight, are thus relative to subjective desires, and there are apparently no objective moral and aesthetic properties in the material objects themselves.[15] While Hobbes thus believes the good or beauty of a thing to be relative to the selfish desires of the agent in the state of nature, established rules enable men to come to a mutual understanding of how to engage with such things (though the rules are of course "relative to a *decision* by a ruler, judge, or arbitrator").[16]

Carolyn Korsmeyer emphasizes the fact that Hobbes addresses pleasure by arguing that "all action is motivated by desire or aversion, and that human beings, having both a selfish nature and insatiable appetites, always act in ways calculated to maximize their self-interest."[17] Accordingly, pleasures involved in aesthetic experiences become signs of a selfishly calculated benefit that the agent might gain from the object (an idea combated by Shaftesbury's champion Francis Hutcheson).[18] While we should indeed recognize that a "social contract is justified by the self-interest of each Hobbesian agent,"[19] we might also ponder if it is accurate to claim that self-interest and power are, to Hobbes, the *sole* motivators of man's endeavors. Does man have desire only for random objects that agree with a strong self-interest and aversions only for objects that clash with it? To claim a definite answer here would be to neglect the complexity of human motivations. While Hobbes indeed argues that whenever man "Transferreth" his *jus naturale*, he does so because he expects to gain either a right or "some other good" and that, even though such an act is voluntary, "the object" nevertheless must be "some *Good to himselfe*,"[20] I will in the following limit myself to the focus maintained by Shaftesbury.

Love and Admiration for Its Own Sake

The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century debate on human motivation and political society could not fail to deal with the moral implications of the voluntaristic view that divine will "determines truth and goodness."[21] One of the fundamental questions asked of such theological voluntarism was precisely "[w]hat does *authority* consist in?"[22] A critique of the voluntarism which Hobbes was claimed to uphold was essential to the Cambridge Platonists—a group of seventeenth-century philosophers and theologians with a great influence on Shaftesbury—to whom morality could not merely be a consequence of, or dependent on, divine legislation (the will of God).[23] Anyone who believed that there was a God and that God was "*just* and *good*" must, according to Shaftesbury, also firmly trust that there was "independently such a thing as *Justice* and *Injustice*, *Truth* and *Falshood*, *Right* and *Wrong*; according to which he pronounces that *God is just*, *righteous*, and *true*" (*Inquiry* 100 [49–50]). To rely on the law of God to "constitute *Right* and *Wrong*" would simply give such moral terms "no significancy at all" (*Inquiry* 100 [50]).[24]

Hobbes did, argues Shaftesbury in *Sensus Communis, An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour* (1709), "his utmost to shew us, that both in Religion and Morals we were impos'd on by our Governors" and "that there was nothing which by Nature inclin'd us either way; nothing which naturally drew us to the Love of what was without, or beyond *our-selves*" (*Sensus Communis* 56 [90]). In *The Moralists*, Shaftesbury condemns both Hobbes and theological voluntarists as "*nominal Moralists*" since they proceed "by making Virtue nothing in it-self, a Creature of Will only, or a mere Name of Fashion" (*Moralists* 126 [257]). Shaftesbury favors a moral and aesthetic realism in the sense that "distinctively moral properties are inherent in the things of which the properties are predicated."[25] In *Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author* (1710), Shaftesbury puts his realism in the following way:

> For HARMONY is Harmony *by Nature*, let Men judg ever so ridiculously of Musick. So is *Symmetry* and *Proportion* founded still *in Nature*, let Mens Fancy prove ever so barbarous, or (their Fashions ever so) *Gothick*, in their Architecture, Sculpture, or whatever other designing Art.
>
> (*Soliloquy* 286 [353])

Shaftesbury's attack on Hobbes leads us back to the question about human motivation: does man act morally because it is God's will or because he rationally senses that it is the right thing to do? Given that theological voluntarism casts God's rewards and punishments as motivation for human action, it seems to be in one's own relative self-interest to obey the "natural rule of God."[26] To Shaftesbury, this view is no better than "to be brib'd only or terrify'd into an honest Practice," which, of course, "bespeaks little of real Honesty or Worth" (*Sensus Communis* 66 [97]).[27] If God is, as Shaftesbury remarks in *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit* (1711), "belov'd only as the Cause of private Good," God is just like "any other Instrument or Means of Pleasure by any vicious Creature" (*Inquiry* 114 [59]). Hence, it is important to recognize that Shaftesbury's critique primarily concerns the fact that a divine legislation of morality might *itself* undermine religious faith since an increase in "violent Affection towards *private Good*" (or "selfish passion") is proportionable to a decrease of "*Goodness it-self* or any good and deserving Object, worthy of Love and Admiration for its own sake" (*Inquiry* 114/116 [59–60].[28]

Thus, the obligation to act morally cannot revolve around a self-interest to conform with arbitrary legislation, ecclesiastical authority, or contracts. The problem ascribed to Hobbes's perception is that morality is neither "really estimable in it-self" (*Sensus Communis* 66 [97]) nor a fundamental property of nature, "but because God's will has chosen to define them as such, and so in this sense, the rules of

morality are arbitrary, being based entirely on God's infinite power."[29] To Shaftesbury, neither virtue nor beauty originates in arbitrary commands. Instead, they have an objective existence belonging to the eternal and rational order of nature. Here, it is important to recognize Shaftesbury's Stoic perception of natural a priori anticipations.[30] Shaftesbury introduces Epictetus's notion of *prolēpseis* (*προλήψεις*) in his private notebooks *Ἀσκήματα* (*Askêmata* 391) by referring to innate anticipation.[31] Elsewhere, Shaftesbury refers to very similar concepts to defend "implanted notions" (*ἐμφύτους ἐννοίας*).[32] He says it is man's nature to have a rational disposition within himself to acknowledge the absolute nature and beauty of moral truth (a disposition, however, that can only be realized by exhaustive introspection). Since there is, then, in the words of Shaftesbury, "implanted in the Heart a real Sense of Right and Wrong, a real good Affection towards the Species or Society" (*Inquiry* 116 [60]), an agreement to merely trust invented principles articulated by a common power (God or a sovereign) becomes irrational. At times, Shaftesbury is very explicit about this. For instance, when Theocles (one of the interlocutors in the dialogue *The Moralists*) attempts to defend the realism advocated by Shaftesbury in *An Inquiry*, Theocles states that the aim (of Shaftesbury) was to show that virtue was "not constituted from without, or dependent on *Custom*, *Fancy*, or *Will*; not even on the *Supreme Will* it-self" (*Moralists* 140 [267]). Thus, a blind submission to God's commands does not have anything to do with true virtue, beyond obstructing its realization.

Theological voluntarism and Hobbes's take on the state of nature bring, as we can see, questions about human motivation and authority to the fore. If values, like good and evil or beauty and ugliness, are relative to each man's subjective desire, an "interpersonal clash of substantive conceptions" is awaiting in the state of nature.[33] The Hobbesian institution of political society is expected to address these challenges by making man follow a "common axiological standard" established by the sovereign.[34] Thus, an artificial normativity can be established.

Today, Shaftesbury is often read in tandem with his Whig compatriot Joseph Addison, whose *Spectator* essays, entitled the "Pleasures of the Imagination" and published between June 21 and July 3, 1712, are, along with the Earl's *Moralists*, routinely assumed to denote "the beginning of modern aesthetic theory."[35] However, the differences between the two men's understandings of political society and nature are at times vast. Addison, who praises Hobbes's view of nature, advances a straightforward instrumentalism in which "Men who profess a State of Neutrality," failing to spot their own "Self-Interest" in the prosperity of the artificial body politic, ought to be amputated "like dead Limbs"; meanwhile, Shaftesbury elaborates the implications of voluntarism, with a greater attention to political and moral details.[36] Ultimately, what Shaftesbury and other anti-voluntarists rejected was the "voluntaristic moral

denigration of human nature; and the fear that voluntarism had unacceptable political implications."[37] Being greatly concerned with moral motives, Shaftesbury finds highly provocative the idea that "individuals . . . instrumentally desire membership in the *civitas* solely due" to self-preservation.[38] According to him, no man can be virtuous if "he abstains from executing his ill purpose, thro a fear of some impending Punishment, or thro the allurement of some expected Pleasure or Advantage" (*Inquiry* 52 [21]).

Shaftesbury on Nature

Thus far, we have seen that Shaftesbury does not care for the idea that the goodness or beauty of a thing is relative to the agent's self-interested desires, nor is he attracted to the thought that such desires are governed by arbitrary principles of a common power. Regarding whether human nature is fundamentally good or evil—the so called Human Nature Question—Hobbes provides, to speak with Michael B. Gill, a Negative Answer, while Shaftesbury offers the Positive Answer *par excellence*.[39] Next, I want to show just how Shaftesbury advances these positive ideas by arguing that a too strong self-interest prevents man from recognizing his intrinsically productive relationship to the beauty of nature as well as to society (which is part of the beauty of nature). Bringing together inner *human nature* and the physical beauty of *external nature*, Shaftesbury develops in *The Moralists*—his most influential work in German-speaking Europe—a notion of nature that aims to target this human blockage.[40] In the following section, I focus on Part II, Section 4 of the dialogue (unless stated otherwise, all current page references are to this section), in which, as we will see, Shaftesbury's solution occurs in three rhetorical stages in the conversation between Theocles and Philocles: (1) a speech by Theocles on nature as a *whole*, (2) a conversation between Theocles and Philocles on the domination of nature, and (3) a dispute on society as part of nature.

Nature as a Whole

Section 4 opens by casting the roles of the conversation, with Theocles acting as "*the Divine* and *Preacher*" and Philocles acting as "*the Infidel*" (160 [281]), after which they decide to go for an evening walk with their guests: an old gentleman and his friend. The company immediately begins to praise nature, and while the guests admire the beauty of plants, Philocles takes the liberty to present his "Insight into the nature of *Simples*" (160 [282]). Though he expects to be commended for his expert knowledge, he is brusquely rebuked by Theocles for being "so ill *a Naturalist* in *this* WHOLE" and for grasping "so little the Anatomy of *the World* and *Nature*" (162 [283]). The fact that Philocles shows

"accurate Judgment in *the Particulars* of Natural Beings and Operations" cannot, from Theocles's perspective, make up for the fact that he fails to "judg of the Structure of Things *in general*, and of the Order and Frame of NATURE" (162 [282]). Rather, Philocles's expert knowledge becomes a disturbing signal of his ignorance of the beauty of nature: although he is, at this point, commended for being "conscious of better Order *within*" (162 [283]), he must learn that knowledge of the nature of simples is of little worth (or even counterproductive) as long as he holds an overdeveloped self-interest and fails to see the simples' bearing on the beauty of the whole. This is precisely how he moves himself, and his own mind, from a knowledge of *part* to an awareness of the "universal designing mind" that constitutes the *whole*.[41]

This provides Theocles with an opportunity to introduce two arguments about similar failures. The first argument revolves around a general tendency of man to have unjustified opinions about his own conditions of possibility by imagining "a thousand Inconsistences and Defects in this *wider Constitution*" (162 [283]). He objects to the idea that parts might outdo "*the Whole* it-self." In his notes in *Askêmata* (portions of the private notebooks were included in *The Moralists*), Shaftesbury voices this idea in the following manner:

> If there be a Nature of the Whole, it must be a Nature more perfect than that of particulars contain'd in the Whole; if so, It is a Wise & Intelligent Nature; if so, then It must order every thing for its own good: and since that wch is best for ye Univers is both the Wisest & Justest, it follows that ye Supream Nature is perfectly Wise & Just.
> (*Askêmata* 90)

Along the same lines, Theocles invites Philocles to meditate on the conditions for the perfection of particulars by casting doubt on the assumption that "there shou'd be *in Nature* the Idea of an Order and Perfection, which NATURE her-self wants" (164 [284]). A detached self-sufficient system would merely contradict the theistic idea of a coherent whole. Instead, the parts that make up a system must be considered, as a particular system, to have a "further relation" (166 [286]) to other expanding systems.

Thus, rather than allowing Philocles to go on, in an anthropocentric mode, about humankind's own assumed perfection and power to control and expose an imperfection in its origin, Theocles wants to help Philocles recognize his inability to fully comprehend the infinity of things. Hence, Theocles's second argument underscores the fact that, while there is, to a "fair and just Contemplator of the Works of Nature" (168 [288]) such as himself, abundant evidence of God's "coherent Scheme of Things" (168 [287]), one must nevertheless recognize that "in an Infinity of Things," the "Mind which sees not *infinitely*, can see nothing *fully*"

(168 [288]). Knowledge of a part is of course vital in order to distinguish its rational relation to the whole (indeed, even the kind of perceptiveness about "*Simples*" shown by Philocles can serve a purpose if adequately exercised). But expert knowledge itself can only abet such an undertaking by setting up the conditions for a reflective moral awareness of the harm triggered by a too strong Hobbesian self-interest. If man merely relates his experience of beauty to his own subjective interests, he will remain unable to recognize the relationship between *part* and *whole*. Ultimately, this kind of Hobbesian self-interest just precludes a deeper moral understanding:

> the whole Order of the Universe, elsewhere so firm, intire, and immovable, is here o'erthrown, and lost by this one View; in which we refer all things to our-selves: submitting the Interest of *the Whole* to the Good and Interest of so small *a Part*.
>
> (172 [291])

The point about part and whole is further clarified in one of the most frequently cited passages from *The Moralists* (from Part III, Section 2), often assumed to have introduced the modern conception of aesthetic disinterestedness.[42] It occurs in a discussion between Theocles and Philocles about property and possession. Let us look at this paradigmatic passage in order to better recognize Shaftesbury's neglected point about the whole.

> Imagine then, good PHILOCLES, if being taken with the Beauty of the Ocean which you see yonder at a distance, it shou'd come into your head, to seek how to command it; and like some mighty Admiral, ride Master of the Sea; wou'd not the Fancy be a little absurd?
>
> Absurd enough, in conscience. The next thing I shou'd do, 'tis likely, upon this Frenzy, wou'd be to hire some Bark, and go in Nuptial Ceremony, VENETIAN-like, to wed the *Gulf*, which I might call perhaps as properly *my own*.
>
> LET who will call it theirs, reply'd THEOCLES, you will own *the Enjoyment* of this kind to be very different from that which shou'd naturally follow from the Contemplation of the Ocean's *Beauty*. The Bridegroom-*Doge*, who in his stately Bucentaur floats on the Bosom of his THETIS, has less *Possession* than the poor *Shepherd*, who from a hanging Rock, or Point of some high Promontory, stretch'd at his ease, forgets his feeding Flocks, while he admires *her Beauty*. — But to come nearer home, and make the Question still more familiar. Suppose (my PHILOCLES!) that, viewing such a Tract of Country, as this delicious *Vale* we see beneath us, you shou'd for *the Enjoyment* of the Prospect, require the *Property* or *Possession* of the Land?

THE *Covetous* Fancy, reply'd I, wou'd be as absurd altogether, as that other *Ambitious* one.

(*Moralists* 320 [396–397])

The language in the passage is revealing. Theocles is literally asking Philocles if he thinks it is rational to exercise direct authority ("command") and human power to dominate God's creation ("ride Master of the Sea"). The reply suggests that Philocles thinks it would be as irrational as trying to hold nature as a property that he would have exclusive right to possess and use at his own selfish will. "*Property* or *Possession*" does not, as it seems, have anything to do with experiencing the beauty of nature. Indeed, a great divide occurs between the mandatory duties of the Doge of Venice—on Ascension Day, the Doge heads a procession of boats into the sea in order to renew the nuptial bond between the sea and Venice—and the poor shepherd. Any intention to profit from nature (strictly profitable by possession or, as in the case of the Doge, via a utility value) is out of the question for the shepherd: he is happily enclosed in its beauty—that of both inner and outer nature, that is to say, the *whole*. While Hobbes would have argued that the main reason for the artificial making of political society is the uncontrollable human tendency to act egoistically, Shaftesbury's reference to the economically underprivileged shepherd demonstrates that it is in fact the reverse: although the shepherd might have strong motives to act egoistically, it remains highly unlikely, given that he experiences God's rational creation as a whole, that these motives will have any influence on his actions. That the shepherd does not intentionally isolate any specific *part* as useful to his potential interest but rather is pleasantly abstracted—he even fails to give proper attention to the "feeding Flocks"—is suggested by the fact that he "admires" nature's "*Beauty.*" Thus, any detached parts coinciding with selfish desires yield to the shepherd's disinterested experience of the beauty of the whole.

Shaftesbury's point about part and whole finds an illustrative analogy to works of art in *A Notion of the Historical Draught or Tablature of the Judgment of Hercules*.[43] Here, a successful painting deserves to be referred to as a *Tablature* when it "constitutes a Real WHOLE, by a mutual and necessary Relation of its Parts, the same as of the Members in a natural Body" (*Notion* 74 [348]). The entire design of the painting must be shaped by "*one single* Intelligence," which then allows it to be "comprehended in *one* View." Rather than being self-absorbed in specific parts, the viewer is naturally moved to experience the parts' organic relation to the greater beauty of the painting as *one* whole. The artist who manages to understand the aesthetic significance of the *Tablature* must—as Theocles pleads Philocles to do—have "acquir'd the Knowledge of *a Whole* and *Parts*" before he engages in "*moral* and *poëtick Truth*" (*Notion* 134 [389]). Shaftesbury's references to Aristotle are

evident in *The Judgment of Hercules*. The organic whole is like the living body, in which the vitality of singular parts are needed for the whole to reveal its beauty.[44] In the *Poetics*, Aristotle famously argues (resounding in its turn of Socrates in *Phaedrus*) that a plot in epic poetry should be formed around an action that is a perfect whole (*περὶ μίαν πρᾶξιν ὅλην*) in itself, which permits the plot, like a whole living animal (or living being), to produce its own appropriate pleasure (*ὥσπερ ζῷον ἓν ὅλον ποιῇ τὴν οἰκείαν ἡδονήν*).[45]

Domination of Nature

After Theocles's exposition of part and whole, it is Philocles's task to criticize him. By offering an idea about causality without "a *First Cause*" (178 [296]), Theocles is, from Philocles's perspective, taking too much for granted. In Theocles's theology, the relevant question is not "about what was *First*, or *Foremost*; but what is *Instant*, and *Now* in being" (180 [297]). According to Philocles, all Theocles offers is probability. While "Divines in general" allow nature "to be challeng'd for her Failings" without ever having to call the Deity into question ("Deity, they think, is not accountable for her: Only she for her-self"), his theology looks almost like a closed system: "You [Theocles] have unnecessarily brought *Nature* into the Controversy, and taken upon you to defend her Honour so highly, that I know not whether it may be safe for me to question her" (184 [299]). Thus, at the outset, Philocles simply does not seem to understand Theocles's anti-voluntarism. However, in a Socratic fashion, the latter naturally urges the former to continue, and he does so by revisiting the anthropocentric strain of his argument: man, "the noblest of Creatures," is sadly disadvantaged ("very weak and impotent") compared to "*Brutes*, and the irrational Species" (184 [300]), he laments from his narrow, anthropocentric, outlook. While the exposed and fragile "human Life" is burdened by "Labour" and "cumbersom Baggage," animals are favorably "cloth'd and arm'd by Nature her-self" (186 [300–301]). In the limited view of Philocles, this seems terribly unfair.

The envy of Philocles should be read as a tacit reference to the Promethean myth, especially the story about Prometheus's brother Epimetheus, which helps in clarifying the dangers of being too self-centered in respect to nature. In Plato's dialogue *Protagoras*, it is Epimetheus who clothes non-human creatures.[46] A central feature in the myth is his unsuccessful distribution of powers to mortals (*θνητὰ*).[47] Due to Epimetheus's lack of foresight, the distribution gets out of control. He neglects human beings while distributing the essential powers to non-rational creatures (*τὰ ἄλογα*).[48] Before Prometheus steals fire and technical skill from the gods, and Zeus orders Hermes to distribute a sense of shame and justice amongst men so that they can organize themselves in cities, there is, according to the myth, also a threat of man's destruction.[49] Alluding

to this risk, Philocles simply claims that human beings are, in comparison with other animals, unfavorably supported by nature. Theocles's reply to Philocles is acidly concise: why not grant man the power to "take possession of *each* Element, and reign in *All*" (186 [301]). Philocles recognizes his mistake and admits that it would be morally wrong to consider man to be "by Nature, LORD *of All*" (186 [301]). His perspective reveals, to Theocles, a disturbing human selfishness towards nature. Thus, Theocles stresses that "*Nature* her-self [is] not for MAN, but *Man* for NATURE," which furthermore brings out the moral imperative that man must "submit to *the Elements of* NATURE, and not *the Elements* to him" (186 [302]). Nature is neither a means to establish the moral superiority of man nor an object of which man has entire disposal. Above all, nature is, to Shaftesbury, physis (*φύσις*), which means that it is a productive "impower'd *Creatreß*" (*Moralists* 246 [345]) that works as a principle of beauty, intrinsically manifest in every organism (including man and cosmos in itself).[50]

We should recognize the underlying sense of Theocles's sharp remarks to Philocles: namely, a strong reservation about the emerging paradigm of science (natural philosophy), present in Shaftesbury's writings at an early stage.[51] Man must steer clear of a too strong self-interest and instead think of himself in relational terms: "All things are united & have One Nature" (*Askêmata* 90). Human existence is constituted by organic relations to other kinds of existence. To detach an organism from this harmonious relationship involves precisely the kind of objectifying and self-interested tendency that Shaftesbury spots in the praxis of natural philosophy. When writing to his protégé Michael Ainsworth, Shaftesbury almost adopts the role of Theocles, stressing that, since it is a matter of Michael's (rather than Philocles's) moral progress, he must be aware that "all that pretended studdy & Science of Nature calld natural Philosophy" is "far from being necessary Improvements of the Mind" (*Ainsworth Correspondence* 377). In fact, such scientific praxis can be counterproductive since, if used carelessly, it "serve[s] only to blow it [the mind] up in Conceit & Folly, & render Men more stiff in their Ignorance & Vices." Thus, instead of recognizing man's organic relationship to the beauty of nature, we might end up with a mind which is, in a Hobbesian fashion, more selfish, impolite, amoral, and detached from the perfection of nature. We must try, argues Shaftesbury in his letter to Ainsworth, to remove our self-interest and experience the world by "look[ing] impartially into all Authors, & upon all Nations, & into all parts of Learning, & Human Life" (*Ainsworth Correspondence* 389). Furthermore, to seek and discover "true *Pulchrum* [and] the *Honestum* [and] the τὸ καλὸν [beauty itself]" is to know God. Here, the search for beauty itself cannot fail to deal with single plants (which Philocles spoke about) or anything else: "Seek for y[e] τὸ καλὸν in every thing; beginning as low as the Plants, the Fields, or even ye common

Arts of Mankind: to see w^{t} is Beauteouse & what contrary" (*Ainsworth Correspondence* 389).

The essence of Theocles's and Philocles's discussion of dominion over nature has already been sketched in *Askêmata* (under the heading "Nature"), where it is introduced by the exhortation from Epictetus that we ought to stop wondering why other animals have, by nature, capacities prepared for their bodies.[52] Thus, when Philocles complains about "Beasts" having "*Instincts*, which Man has not," and Theocles agrees that "they have indeed Perceptions, Sensations, and *Pre-sensations*" (194 [307]) which human beings lack, it is not to launch further protests about human nature but to prove the political and social benefits of such absence. Providence does not rule by chance. In fact, human beings are not simply defined by a set of emotive qualities favorably attributed by Providence. They are, more importantly, defined by their lack of certain qualities found in other species. It is true, says Theocles, that while newborns of other species are "instantly helpful to themselves," the "*human Infant* is of all the most helpless" (196 [308]). However, this does not disturb man's moral existence. Rather, "this *Defect* engage[s]" man "the more strongly to Society," where "*social* Intercourse and Community" is a "*Natural State*" (196 [309]). Consequently, matters of self-interest are uncalled for here: a fully natural reliance on, and confidence in, our fellow citizen should not be regarded as a weakness of human nature since it is precisely this so-called defect that "force[s] him to own that he is purposely, and not by Accident, made rational and *sociable*" (196 [309]). "What," asks Theocles rhetorically, "can be happier than such a Deficiency, as is the occasion of so much Good?" (196/198 [309]).

Society as Nature

In the third rhetorical stage of Part II, Section 4, Theocles's and Philocles's discussion is interrupted by one of the guests: the latter's "Adversary," the nameless "old Gentleman," who fails to recall that Philocles has, as we observed earlier, agreed to play a role of *advocatus diaboli* ("*the Infidel*"). Surprisingly few scholars have paid attention to the role played by the gentleman, an ill-disguised agent for a Hobbesian (and Lockean) perception of nature and society. Still, the benefit of reflecting on this hiatus in Theocles's and Philocles's winding conversation is, as we will see, crucial for recognizing Shaftesbury's view of self-interest and idea of society as part of the beauty of nature as a whole.

Thus, having forgotten that Philocles is, as is stated in the opening of Section 4, merely playing a role, the gentleman accuses him of having vindicated an amoral Hobbesian anthropology when making his remarks about man being unjustly treated by nature. Wittily, Philocles is blamed for dressing up as Hobbes himself by claiming "that *the State of Nature* [is] a *State of War*" (198 [310]). However, at this point in the

dialogue, Philocles begins to find his feet, and he decides to make mischief.[53] He persuades the gentleman to agree that the state of nature is neither a "*State of Government*, [n]or *publick Rule*." Instead, the exit from nature and the emergence of society ought, stresses the gentleman, to be preceded by a "Compact." It is simply in man's own strong self-interest to leave nature because of "some particular *Circumstances*" (200 [311]). At this point, the gentleman's remark that the state of nature cannot be "absolutely intolerable" (198 [310]) is a weak excuse for the flawed image he sketches. The gap between nature's perfect beauty and something only just bearable is unbridgeable. What *circumstances* could possibly master perfect beauty? Thus, the gentleman adopts Philocles's initial role (from the first rhetorical stage) by presenting unjustified opinions about nature. Having turned the tables, Philocles brings home his point:

> HIS *Nature* then, said I [Philocles], was not so very good, it seems; since having no *natural Affection*, or *friendly Inclination* belonging to him, he was forc'd into a social State, *against his Will*: And this, not from any Necessity in respect of outward Things (for you have allow'd him a tolerable Subsistence) but from such Inconveniences as arose chiefly from himself, and his own malignant Temper and Principles. And indeed 'twas no wonder that Creatures who were *naturally* thus unsociable, shou'd be as naturally mischievous and troublesom. If, *according to their Nature*, they cou'd live out of Society, with so little Affection for one another's Company, 'tis not likely that upon occasion they wou'd spare one another's Persons. If they were so sullen as not to meet *for Love*, 'tis more than probable they wou'd fight *for Interest*. And thus from your own Reasoning it appears, "That the *State of Nature* must in all likelihood have been little different from *a State of* WAR."
>
> (200 [311–312])

Even the slightest mistrust of the perfection of nature relativizes Shaftesbury's claims about natural (social) affections and God. The idea that Providence has equipped man with a strong self-interest to free himself from the beauty of God's nature is absurd to Shaftesbury. The Stoic vision of Marcus Aurelius that there is either an order of things or a maze is a fundamental issue that allows no wavering for proper philosophers.[54] Evil and chaos are only facts to the extent that they distract man from recognizing how they are related to the beauty of the whole. Shaftesbury's theodicy relies on the Aurelian trust that "all that befalls befalleth justly."[55] The lack of morality and the inability to move in a disinterested fashion towards God consists precisely in not recognizing that the whole might also contain seemingly destructive parts that nevertheless serve the good and beauty of the whole.

In line with classical beliefs, Shaftesbury thinks that time, history, and society are changing in cyclical patterns. A constant behind such patterns is the principle of the beauty and moral perfection of nature, which appears, by the stand attributed to the gentleman, and indeed to Hobbes, merely subjective and relative. The fact that it seems to be in man's own self-interest to leave nature suggests that nature is an insufficient source (as Philocles suggested in his critique of Theocles) and an imperfect cause of beauty and morality.

As the dispute between Philocles and the gentleman dies away, Theocles comfortably takes Philocles's place and explains that the mischief involved allowing the gentleman to accept that "the State of Nature and that of Society were perfectly distinct" (202 [312]). We can neither, argues Theocles, refer to an "imperfect rude Condition of Mankind" as "*a State*" since it is of no "continuance," nor recognize such a "pretended *State of Nature*" without compromising the idea of eternity. Accepting that Providence confers by chance implies either that human existence appeared "*all at once*" or that existence emerged "*by degrees*" (204 [314]). In the first case, in which Theocles supposes that man accidentally "sprang, as the old Poets feign'd, from a *big-belly'd Oak*" (204 [315]), nature merely acts, with "no Intention at all" (206 [315]). In the second case, man must have emerged by constantly changing through innumerable states, with "each Change" as "*natural*" as "another" (206 [316]). But how, asks Theocles, could she "maintain and propagate the Species, such as it now is, without Fellowship or Community" (208 [316])? It is more rational to accept the fact that "Nature was *perfect*, and her Growth *compleat*" (208 [316]), and thus recognize that man must have existed from eternity. Nature, concludes Theocles, is the state of beauty that "we see at present before our eyes" (204 [314]), and "out of Society and Community" man "never *did*, or ever *can* subsist" (210 [319]).

Conclusion

The perfect moral beauty of nature relates, as we have seen in *The Moralists*, to inner human nature as well as the physical beauty of external nature. Nature is a rational and productive *whole* from which nothing can be excluded. The classical triad of truth, goodness and beauty, is, to Shaftesbury, unbroken. In his own words (echoing Socrates and Diotima):

> Will it not be found in this respect, above all, That what is BEAUTIFUL is *Harmonious* and *Proportionable*: What is Harmonious and Proportionable, is TRUE; and what is at once both *Beautiful* and *True*, is, of consequence, *Agreeable* and GOOD?
>
> (*Miscellaneous* 222/224 [182–183])[56]

As we have seen, Shaftesbury's perception of society is integral to the beauty of nature. Thus, society is not a necessary evil to restrain excessive Hobbesian selfishness, rather society is the outcome of a perfect natural disposition. To participate in society is furthermore to recognize a *relatedness* to the whole. Thus, it makes perfect sense to bring together society and beauty itself by asking, as Shaftesbury does in *Askêmata*, "What is there in the World y^{t} has more of Beauty, or y^{t} gives ye Idea of the τὸ καλόν [beauty itself] more perfect & sensible, than ye View of an equal Commonwealth, or City" (*Askêmata* 331).

Notes

1 This established account of modern aesthetic disinterestedness was introduced by Jerome Stolnitz, "On the Origins of 'Aesthetic Disinterestedness,'" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 20, no. 2 (1961): 131–143; Stolnitz, "On the Significance of Lord Shaftesbury in Modern Aesthetic Theory," *Philosophical Quarterly* 11, no. 43 (1961): 97–113. For recent attempts to challenge the established account, see Jorge V. Arregui and Pablo Arnau, "Shaftesbury: Father or Critic of Modern Aesthetics?" *British Journal of Aesthetics* 34, no. 4 (1994): 350–362; Preben Mortensen, *Art in the Social Order: The Making of the Modern Conception of Art* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997); Miles Rind, "The Concept of Disinterestedness in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40, no. 1 (2002): 67–87; Paul Guyer, *Values of Beauty: Historical Essays in Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), e.g. 10; Karl Axelsson, *Political Aesthetics: Addison and Shaftesbury on Taste, Morals, and Society* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 177–199.

2 See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, Or the Matter, Forme, & Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill*, Vol. 2, ed. Noel Malcolm, The Clarendon Edition of the Works of Thomas Hobbes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 194.

3 Elisabeth Ellis, "The Received Hobbes," in *Leviathan: Or the Matter, Forme, & Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill*, ed. Ian Shapiro (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 493. About Hobbes's psychological egoism, see C. D. Meyers, "Hobbes and the Rationality of Self-Preservation: Grounding Morality on the Desires We *Should* Have," *The European Legacy: Toward New Paradigms* 18, no. 3 (2013): 269–286 (esp. 272–275).

4 The extent of rights relinquished remains ambiguous, see A. P. Martinich, *Hobbes: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 232–233.

5 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Vol. 2, 16.

6 A. P. Martinich, *A Hobbes Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 293.

7 Thomas Hobbes, *De Cive*, The English Version, ed. Howard Warrender (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 42. See also Aristotle, *Politics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, The Revised Oxford Translation, Vol. 2, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), esp. 1253a1–3. For further comments on Hobbes's view of Aristotle's *Politics*, see J. Laird, "Hobbes on Aristotle's *Politics*," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 43 (1942): 1–20. Hobbes's anti-Aristotelianism has recently

been problematized, see Sophie Smith, "Democracy and the Body Politic from Aristotle to Hobbes," *Political Theory* 46, no. 2 (2018): 167–196.

8 Hobbes, *De Cive*, 42.

9 Tom Sorell, "Hobbes, Locke and the State of Nature," in *Studies on Locke: Sources, Contemporaries, and Legacy*, ed. Sarah Hutton and Paul Schuurman (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008), 29.

10 Perez Zagorin, *Hobbes and the Law of Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 32.

11 About the connection between Hobbes's materialism and his political philosophy, see Nicholas Dungey, "Thomas Hobbes's Materialism, Language, and the Possibility of Politics," *The Review of Politics* 70, no. 2 (2008): 190–220. Dungey gives emphasis to the connection but argues that Hobbes's materialism "frustrates the very purpose for which it is conceived" (190), i.e., to allow men to find a common (linguistic) ground to establish a social contract.

12 Hobbes, *Leviathan,* Vol. 2, 78.

13 Hobbes, *Leviathan,* Vol. 2, 80.

14 Hobbes, *Leviathan,* Vol. 2, 80 and 82.

15 See also Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste: Food and Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 47–48. For an alternative reading, with a stress on *projectivism* rather than *subjectivism*, see Stephen Darwall, "Normativity and Projection in Hobbes's *Leviathan*," *The Philosophical Review* 109, no. 3 (2000): 313–347.

16 D. D. Raphael, *Hobbes: Morals and Politics*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 42. On Hobbes and individual and cultural moral relativism, see Stephen J. Finn, *Hobbes: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Continuum, 2007), 63–64.

17 Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste*, 47.

18 See Carolyn Korsmeyer, "Relativism and Hutcheson's Aesthetic Theory," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36, no. 2 (1975): 319–330.

19 Shane D. Courtland, "Hobbesian Justification for Animal Rights," *Environmental Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2011): 25.

20 Hobbes, *Leviathan,* Vol. 2, 202.

21 Louise Hickman, *Eighteenth-Century Dissent and Cambridge Platonism: Reconceiving the Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 5.

22 Stephen Darwall, "Norm and Normativity," in *Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy*, Vol. 2, ed. Knud Haakonssen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 991.

23 For further discussion, see Michael B. Gill, *The British Moralists on Human Nature and the Birth of Secular Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), esp. 20–23.

24 See also T. H. Irwin, "Later Christian Ethics," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Ethics*, ed. Roger Crisp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 190; Darwall, "Norm and Normativity," 992. One of Shaftesbury's champions, Leibniz, encapsulates the political relevance of the argument when he states that "[o]ur end is to banish from men the false ideas that represent God to them as an absolute prince employing a despotic power, unfitted to be loved and unworthy of being loved." See G. W. Leibniz, *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil*, ed. Austin Farrer, trans. E. M. Huggard (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), 127 (Part I, sec. 6).

25 T. H. Irwin, "Shaftesbury's Place in the History of Moral Realism," *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* 172, no. 4 (2015): 881.

26 Yves Charles Zarka, "First Philosophy and the Foundation of Knowledge," in *Cambridge Companion to Hobbes*, ed. Tom Sorell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 79.
27 See also *Inquiry* (108 [55]):

> IF . . . there be a Belief or Conception of a DEITY, who is consider'd only as *powerful* over his Creature, and inforcing Obedience to his *absolute Will* by particular Rewards and Punishments; and if on this account, thro Hope merely of *Reward*, or Fear of *Punishment*, the Creature be incited to do the Good he hates, or restrain'd from doing the Ill to which he is not otherwise in the least degree averse; there is in this Case . . . no Virtue or Goodness whatsoever.

28 See also Terence Irwin, *The Development of Ethics: A Historical and Critical Study*, Vol. 2: *From Suarez to Rousseau* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 361–365.
29 Zagorin, *Hobbes and the Law of Nature*, 9.
30 For further discussion, see Daniel Carey, "Locke, Shaftesbury, and Innateness," *Locke Studies* 4 (2004): 21–27; also in Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson: Contesting Diversity in the Enlightenment and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 112–116.
31 See Epictetus, *Discourses*, trans. W. A. Oldfather, Loeb Classical Library 131 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), 1.22. Epictetus's *Discourses* were documented by his disciple Arrian. Shaftesbury states the heading of 1.22: *Περὶ τῶν προλήψεων*. For further discussion on *prolēpseis/prolepsis*, see Carey, "Locke, Shaftesbury, and Innateness," 21–27; *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson*, 110–116. For discussion on *Askêmata* and Stoicism, see Laurent Jaffro, "Les *Exercices* de Shaftesbury: un stoïcisme crépusculaire," in *Le stoïcisme au XVIe et au XVIIe siècle: Le retour des philosophies antiques à l'âge classique*, ed. Pierre-François Moreau (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999), 340–354.
32 On anticipation and *ἐμφύτους ἐννοίας*, see apparatus criticus to *Miscellaneous Reflections* (see *Printed Notes* 200 [214]). On similar concepts, see "preconceptions," in *The Moralists* (342 [412]); "instinct," in *The Moralists* (340 [411]); "natural anticipation," in *Miscellaneous Reflections* (258 [214]). A further modification is made in a letter to Michael Ainsworth (June 3, 1709). There, Shaftesbury speaks of innate as "a Word [John Locke] poorly plays upon," identifying as the "right word, tho less usd," the term "*connatural*," which he found in Benjamin Whichcote's sermons (*Ainsworth Correspondence* 403). About the impact of Whichcote's argument on Shaftesbury, see Friedrich A. Uehlein, "Whichcote, Shaftesbury and Locke: Shaftesbury's Critique of Locke's Epistemology and Moral Philosophy," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 25, no. 5 (2017): 1031–1048.
33 Martin T. Harvey, "Hobbes's Voluntarist Theory of Morals," *Hobbes Studies* 22, no. 1 (2009): 56.
34 Harvey, "Hobbes's Voluntarist Theory of Morals," 56.
35 Peter Kivy, "Recent Scholarship and the British Tradition: A Logic of Taste—The First Fifty Years," in *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology*, ed. George Dickie, Richard Sclafani, and Ronald Roblin, 2nd ed. (New York: St Martin's Press, 1989), 259.
36 For Addison's praise of Hobbes's understanding of nature, see *The Spectator*, Vol. 1, ed. Donald F. Bond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 200. For the remarks about "Men who profess a State of Neutrality," see

Addison's propagandistic essays in *The Freeholder* (published between 1715 and 1716), ed. James Leheny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 96–97.

37 J. B. Schneewind, "Voluntarism and the Foundations of Ethics," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 70, no. 2 (1996): 27.

38 Harvey, "Hobbes's Voluntarist Theory of Morals," 57. See also Hobbes, *Leviathan,* Vol. 2, 254.

39 Gill, *The British Moralists on Human Nature and the Birth of Secular Ethics*, 1:

> Are human beings naturally good or evil? Are we naturally drawn to virtue or to vice? Is it natural for us to do the right thing, or must we resist something in our nature in order to do what is right? Call this the Human Nature Question.

40 Johann Joachim Spalding, who introduced Shaftesbury's writings to a German public, is illustrative of the general reception. In his *Lebensbeschreibung* (1804), Spalding states that reading Shaftesbury and learning about moral feeling (*moralisches Gefühl*) and disinterested virtue (*uneigennütze Tugend*) moved his soul deeply (see Johann Joachim Spalding, *Lebensbeschreibung*, in *Kleinere Schriften 2: Briefe an Gleim, Lebensbeschreibung*, ed. Albrecht Beutel and Tobias Jersak, Vol. 6 of *Kritische Ausgabe: Schriften* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002], 124). Shaftesbury's philosophy was firmly integrated in the German debate on *innere Bildung*. About this, see Rebekka Horlacher, "Bildung—A Construction of a History of Philosophy of Education," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 23, no. 5–6 (2004): 409. Shaftesbury's concept of "inward form" was, in Spalding's translation of *The Moralists*, published in 1745 and, in a translation by Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1702–1782), translated into *innere Bildung*; "formation of a genteel character" and "good breeding" was translated into *Bildung* and *Selbstbildung*. See Susan L. Cocalis, "The Transformation of *Bildung* from an Image to an Ideal," *Monatshefte* 70, no. 4 (1978): 401.

41 Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660–1780*, Vol. 2: *Shaftesbury to Hume* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 140.

42 Referring to this passage in *The Moralists* is common. See Paul Guyer, *A History of Modern Aesthetics*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 35–36. As Guyer correctly observes, the "passage is readily interpreted as introducing the idea of the disinterestedness of judgments of beauty as the basis for a solution to the problem of taste."

43 Shaftesbury completed *A Notion of the Historical Draught or Tablature of the Judgment of Hercules* in the last months of his life in Chiaia near Naples (from November 20, 1711, to February 15, 1713).

44 Here, Shaftesbury is also influenced by Marcus Aurelius's account of the universe as a living organism. See Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, ed. and trans. C. R. Haines, Loeb Classical Library 58 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), 4.40.

45 See Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1459a19–21. Malcolm Heath draws attention to the fact that Plato seems to have anticipated the Aristotelian question of the plot-structure; see Malcolm Heath, *Ancient Philosophical Poetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 84. See Plato, *Phaedrus*, in *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus*, trans. Harold North Fowler, Loeb Classical Library 36 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 264c.

46 See Plato, *Protagoras*, in *Laches, Protagoras, Meno, Euthydemus*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb, Loeb Classical Library 165 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924), 321a.
47 Plato, *Protagoras*, 320d.
48 Plato, *Protagoras*, 321c.
49 Plato, *Protagoras*, 322c.
50 See also Robert Voitle, *The Third Earl of Shaftesbury 1671–1713* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 141.
51 See *Soliloquy*, where "Searchers of *Modes* and *Substances*" that are "in-rich'd with Science" merely produce "pretended Knowledg of the Machine of *this World*" and "introduce Impertinence and Conceit with the best Countenance of Authority" (*Soliloquy* 210/212 [291]). Shaftesbury's doubts about the alleged advancement of modern science (or natural philosophy) appear at an early stage (see *Correspondence* 201 and 204).
52 *Askêmata*, 335. See also Epictetus, *Discourses*, 1.16.1.
53 See also Paul Sagar, *The Opinion of Mankind: Sociability and the Theory of the State from Hobbes to Smith* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 82.
54 Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 4.27. See also 6.10.
55 Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 4.10.
56 Cf. Plato, *Symposium*, in *Lysis, Symposium, Gorgias*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb, Loeb Classical Library 166 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), 210a–212b. See also Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, in *Memorabilia, Oeconomicus, Symposium, Apology*, trans. E. C. Marchant and O. J. Todd, Loeb Classical Library 168 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 3.8.

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3 Force Makes Right; or, Shaftesbury's Moral-Aesthetic Dynamics

Neil Saccamano

> But, pray, whence is this zeal in our behalf? What are we to you? Are you our father?[1]

Introduction

When Ernst Cassirer singles out Shaftesbury in the history of aesthetics and natural philosophy for his decisive influence on later German thought, he focuses almost exclusively on what he calls the "purely dynamic standpoint" of the Englishman's writings, the view that what constitutes beauty in nature and art is a "pure energy" and a "specific basic direction" or "immanent purpose." For Cassirer, Shaftesbury's exposition of "fundamental forces," predominantly in *The Moralists*, helped shape subsequent natural philosophy while also orienting aesthetics away from an empirical psychology of reception or enjoyment and toward an energetics of genial production. In this shift, taste as a reflective judgment of forms that are correlated with modalities of pleasure gives way in time to an aesthetics that is concerned with the creative force that figures and communicates itself in and through form. Particularly important is that the artist's activity should be "determined entirely from within": "it cannot be described by analogy with external processes, or by the action which one body exerts on another."[2] The immanent, autotelic character of force is paramount in this account of Shaftesbury's dynamic standpoint.

Although much in Cassirer's influential discussions has been critically integrated, emended, or questioned over the years, the dynamics of morality and aesthetics remains a central issue which, I believe, warrants more extensive study in Shaftesbury's writing. While acknowledging the centrality of dynamics so prominently addressed by Cassirer, I also aim to be more inclusive in considering what counts as significant force. Cassirer attends almost exclusively to a force defined as a "free inner activity of forming . . . incommensurable with all pleasure" in looking back at the Earl from the express historical vantage point of Goethe and especially Herder, who repeatedly praises

Shaftesbury and freely translates Theocles's apostrophe to nature in *The Moralists*, appending it to *God: Some Conversations*.[3] For Herder, as for Cassirer, Shaftesbury is the philosopher of the genial power or "vital principle" that moves all things with an "irresistible unwearied force" (C, 307)—the celebrant who sings, in Herder's translation, of and to the "all-animating spirit" and the "force of forces" so essential to his own philosophy, in which "space, time, and force are the primary concepts of metaphysics," and "force . . . is the essence of poetry" in his aesthetics because beauty must be described "in motion," "energetically," and poetic action must be conceived in terms not of mere succession but of "changes that follow one upon another through the force of a substance."[4] Yet, just as force in Herder is a rather general, multivalent term that can indeed signify mechanism and ranges across a number of discourses, I want to recognize and offer an account of some of the different and at times conflicting kinds, functions, and senses of force also operative in Shaftesbury.[5]

This account of force will also take some distance from the rhetorically stark claim that, in aesthetics and morality, Shaftesbury "wages [unrelenting war] against heteronomy."[6] The view of Shaftesbury as advancing a notion of autonomy usually identified with Kant is still in need of qualification with respect to at least two distinct meanings of this notion.[7] On the one hand, autonomy in Shaftesbury cannot easily be aligned with the Kantian position that the principles of aesthetics are neither identical with nor subordinate to those of science or knowledge and morality, however attuned to them aesthetic judgment might be. Herder may well have considered Kant to be the "German Shaftesbury," but Shaftesbury's claim that beauty and the good are "one and the same" (C, 320) collapses into unity the symbolic or analogical understanding of moral beauty by the critical Kant and violates the condition that consideration of the moral good be excluded in principle from pure aesthetic judgment: "the beautiful… pleases without any interest," Kant notes, but "the morally good is of course necessarily connected with an interest."[8] Since Shaftesbury affirms that individuals are affectively disposed by nature to public or human interest as the morally good, he in effect rejects this notion of aesthetic autonomy in aiming to connect the interest of "virtue, which is itself no other than the love of order and beauty in society," with aesthetic pleasure in that "there is no real enjoyment of beauty beside what is good" (C, 191, 330). On the other hand, the notion of autonomy as the freedom to employ one's judgment to pose questions regarding the true, the good, and the beautiful—Kant's conception of Enlightenment as the liberation of individual understanding from self-imposed minority—and determine an immediately obligating law to govern one's own and, in principle, everyone's actions has greater pertinence in Shaftesbury. "Taste makes claim to sheer autonomy" in a reflective judgment (CPJ 5:285), Kant claims, just as we give

ourselves the moral law; hence, in this sense, heteronomy refers to the imposing force of others' judgments, an extrinsic force that serves as the source and law of one's motions (actions and feelings). Shaftesbury argues, similarly, for the freedom to question and "combat by wit and argument" moral precepts, religious doctrines, and political philosophies on the premise that "[t]ruth . . . may bear *all* lights"; for the basis of judgments of taste in reflection on the state of our pleasure or displeasure as indicative of a "common and natural sense of a sublime and beautiful in things" (C, 30, 173); and (in contrast to Kant's non-affective, categorical constitution of moral autonomy) for the grounding of virtue in reflection on the "natural prevention or prepossession of the mind in favor of [the] moral distinction" between a felt "beauty and deformity" in actions (C, 178). As Theocles confirms in *The Moralists,* this sense of autonomy also signifies maturity for Shaftesbury: "'They are children indeed . . . and should be treated so, who need any force or persuasion to do what conduces to their health and good'" (C, 258).

In what follows, I will address the regressive character of persuasion in its conjunction with force and ask whether children can or should fully mature and give their own law to themselves in Shaftesbury; here, however, I want simply to recall that force also functions in service of heteronomy as compulsion, coercion, and violence. Theocles had just castigated religion as the "cruel enemy of virtue" for treating the devout like children who need "the rod and sweetmeat," the fear of punishment or hope of reward, as "potent motives" (C, 258, 262). For Shaftesbury, not only does such a self-interested, mediated incentive for moral conduct deny and replace the natural bent of affection that carries creatures "primarily and immediately, not secondarily and accidentally, to good" and virtue for its own sake (C, 171), but, in the case of fear, "awe alone prevails and forces obedience," transforming morality into "servility" (C, 183): "For how shall one deny that to serve God by compulsion, or for interest merely, is servile and mercenary?" (C, 269). Similarly, this objection to a so-called morality motivated by self-love and entailing submission to a master's power is, in Shaftesbury's view, a critique of not just religion but politics as well, as instanced when he dialogues with Hobbes to combat the claim that "it was only force and power which constituted right" and when he insists that what is required to make a "people" are "sympathy of affections" and the members' "passion of love to their community": "A multitude held together by force, though under one and the same head, is not properly united. . . . It is the social league, confederacy and mutual consent, founded in some common good or interest, which joins the members of a community and makes a people one" (C, 43, 400–401n10). The force of the absolute sovereign's declaration of law is opposed to confederacy as the rightful foundation of an autonomous political body since a free people must constitute or consent to their own laws (C, 470). Hobbes, too, founds the

state on some kind of self-obligating consent, as Shaftesbury acknowledges when he points out the paradox that, in the *Leviathan*, a promise must be performed to exit the state of nature, but this alone, supposedly, cannot obligate fulfillment until a sovereign enforces it in the civil society it inaugurates (C, 51). Yet confederacy and consent are, in this context in Shaftesbury, incompatible with coercion and have an affective socializing component: we are "combining spirits" by nature, who take pleasure in "the force of the confederating charm"—"[n]othing is so delightful as to incorporate"—and who consequently seek by coalition "to form a beautiful society" (C, 52–53, 243–244). Not simply based on a judgment concerning public good and free self-legislation, consent is, etymologically, akin to sympathy. In these remarks concerning politics and morality, force cannot be fundamental because it operates as the action of one foreign body on another. In fact, for Shaftesbury, it is always "the force of some foreign nature" that disturbs our moral disposition, "either by overpowering or corrupting it from within or by violence from without" (C, 304).

However, that Shaftesbury also calls social affection a "force" signals the complexity of an autonomy that is attained by an immanent drive to form an ethical-aesthetic community and thereby avoid being extrinsically driven. The alternative to force is not merely the free exercise of individual and public reason but another force. In *Sensus Communis, An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour*, Shaftesbury does speak as if what renders superfluous the "imposition of authority," the prescription of laws by "dictators," in critical discourse is the self-regulating function of reason itself, as already oriented toward public good; hence, "free wit" as the free use of an interrogative reason "is its own remedy" for excessive, delegitimating ridicule as well as the passions since the "only poison to reason is passion" (C, 41–43). In *The Moralists*, he again simply contrasts reason and force: "For where force is necessary, reason has nothing to do. But, on the other hand, if reason be needful, force in the meanwhile must be laid aside" (C, 263). Yet the pervasive figure of force as the source of motion in Shaftesbury means that foreign forces, within and without, can only be countered by other forces that perform the disciplinary function associated with the exercise of violence. More generally, what replaces a politics and religion grounded on force is the force of moral beauty and a self-regulating critical force prompting and orienting communicative practices. Although Shaftesbury objects to the Hobbesian position that "it was only force and power which constituted right," his dynamic standpoint requires this to be his position as well: "The *Venustum,* the *Honestum*, and the *Decorum* will force its way" (C, 64). Goodness and virtue are "so striking and of such force over our natures that, when they present themselves, they bear down all contrary opinion or conceit, all opposite passion, sensation or mere bodily affection" (C, 353). The "force of the confederating charm" normatively

organizes his dynamics and counters Hobbes's reliance on violence and fear to govern wholly self-interested persons and passions. As we shall stress, this striking force must also operate in a nonconsensual, involuntary, or violent mode—even transcendentally.

Counterworking and Steering Forces

Shaftesbury's dynamic standpoint thus involves an interplay or agon of forces: intrinsic and extrinsic forces do not operate independently, and the affections function as forces relationally in a system, order, or "economy of the passions" in which "nothing beside contrary affection . . . can work upon [another affection]" (C, 198, 179). When Shaftesbury attempts to explain how disorder is possible in this system, he ascribes it to a difference in magnitude of forces. The more potent "violence of rage, lust or any other counter-working passion," for instance, can overcome another affective impulsion that should, necessarily, move us toward sociality and humanity since a good creature "must needs find a beauty and deformity in actions, minds and tempers as in figures, sounds or colours" and "ought by right" of nature to possess—or to be possessed by—"right affections of force enough" to be "carried primarily and immediately" to act morally (C, 185, 171, 178). The order of such a dynamic moral-aesthetic system consists of a "due balance and counterpoise" of forces—as it also does in political systems that know how to "model" legislative and executive powers: "We [Britons] understand weight and measure in this kind and can reason justly on the balance of power and property" (C, 215, 50). Disorder is violence conceived not as a force that violates a powerless passive subject but as a difference in power of a "counterworking" force that carries us away from what carries us toward our good, individually and collectively.

Albert O. Hirschman includes Shaftesbury among those writers, such as Spinoza and Hume, who rely on what he has termed the principle of "countervailing passions" to balance self-interested passions with social passions, and he suggests that this principle might have been the basis for imagining analogous political systems of checks and balances.[9] Recently, Laurent Jaffro has shown how James Harrington's various moral, psychological, and political conceptions of balance are frequently echoed in Shaftesbury's discussions of the analogy between individual and political constitutions, but importantly, Jaffro has also focused attention on what Hirschman at times acknowledges but generally minimizes: the need for such counterworking forces to be organized or "modeled" into an autonomous system that not only self-regulates but normatively orients these forces. When Shaftesbury remarks that even the social-affective drive of the liveliest "combining spirits" must be "happily directed by right Reason" toward the "Body Politick at large" so as to manage its indiscriminate tendency toward incorporation in the

"spirit of faction" and especially war (C, 52–53), Jaffro notes the influence of Harrington's similar recourse to "right reason," recognizing that "the promotion of public good does not simply rest upon good-natured dispositions, but is constructed or at least directed"; indeed, this notion of reason as artifactual is, for Jaffro, what Shaftesbury "needed to go beyond his naïve and optimistic encomium for general benevolence."[10] The supposedly immanent and autotelic forces must, at the very least, be (repeatedly) normatively (re)oriented; at most, as we will stress, they must be conditioned and sustained by heteronomous forces to operate autonomously.

This recognition of the need for the normative steering of forces should give pause to readers of Shaftesbury who focus almost exclusively on "right affections" as if they were simply instinctual, biological or mechanical, drives. True, in his insistence on the immanent, almost ineradicable natural character of such forces, Shaftesbury at times props them onto organic processes and sanctions calling them "instincts" (C, 325), thereby allowing or asking us to consider them as possibly belonging to a physical science of forces:

> this affection of a creature towards the good of the species or common nature is as proper and natural to him as it is to any organ, part or member of an animal body, or mere vegetable, to work in its known course and regular way or growth. It is not more natural for the stomach to digest, the lungs to breathe, the glands to separate juices or other entrails to perform their several offices.
>
> (C, 192; see also 51)

He even ascribes the vicissitudes of the drive to speak freely to the agency of "animal spirits" (C, 34). Such affirmations of the organic force of moral beauty understandably lead critics such as Terry Eagleton to consider taste an ideology in Shaftesbury and other moral sense philosophers. If aesthetics is aligned with morality in its immediate, common sense of beauty and the good, and if morality is the foundation of politics (C, 51), then we are dealing not simply with analogous dynamic systems but, for Eagleton and others, with aesthetics (and the urge "to form a beautiful society") as the ideological mystification of the forces of domination at work in social and political conflict: Shaftesbury naturalizes civil and moral law by locating it in "the sensuous immediacies of empirical life, beginning with the affective, appetitive individual of civil society" and even "providentially" in the "body itself, in its most spontaneous, pre-reflexive instincts"—especially the "unerring intuition of aesthetic taste" that directs our "self-delighting impulse" toward the common good. Yet, while Eagleton stresses Shaftesbury's grounding of political order in immediate, pre-reflective affect—a "law of the heart"—he also briefly notes that "immediate feeling" alone is

insufficient for the Earl, and "the moral sense must be educated and disciplined by reason" in order to remain oriented to universal moral law.[11] The disciplinary, rationalist side of Shaftesbury argues in *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit,* in fact, that the natural passions, or the "mere goodness" of moral affection and actions, do not constitute virtue, which is a second-order, just "affection toward those very [natural] affections" produced by reflecting on what serves the public good (C, 172–173). Hence, "worth and virtue depend on a knowledge of right and wrong and on a use of reason sufficient to secure a right application of the affections" to society or humanity (C, 175, 177). As Dabney Townsend has also, more emphatically, argued, the conditions of reason must be met in relation to the pleasures of taste itself. In *The Moralists*, Theocles explains that aesthetic enjoyment is of a "rational kind" because the "beautifying, not the beautiful, is the really beautiful" (the mind or intelligence as the "*form or forming power*" is the source of beauty, not the beautiful body or object that merely provokes sense), and thus, form can never "be of real force where it is uncontemplated [and] unjudged of" (C, 322, 331)—to which Townsend responds: "while our response to beauty may be in some sense immediate and necessary, it is not simply a pleasure of sense. In theory and in practice, beauty is rational and reflective," and so "taste is subsequent to judgment, not the basis for judgment," according to Shaftesbury.[12] Making the slight admission that aesthetic pleasure must yet be immediate "in some sense," even when mediated by judgment, Townsend signals a complexity besetting not only Shaftesbury but eighteenth-century aesthetics as a philosophical project to think reflection and affective immediacy at the same time.

The need for reason to intervene normatively in the contest of forces raises the question, however, whether it (or any other entity) can function practically without itself exerting a force and, hence, whether it must be accorded the privilege of an exteriority and foreignness construed elsewhere as heteronomous, or it simply contributes to the difference of forces by adding another, perhaps more potent, one. Even Theocles's remark that force must "be laid aside" when employing reason suggests Shaftesbury's awareness of the difficulty since the former justifies their opposition by claiming, "there is no enforcement of reason but by reason" and later grants Philocles's assertion, "Your reason, you say, whose force, of necessity, you must yield to" (C, 263, 338). A kind of force remains necessary, he concedes; however, anticipating Jürgen Habermas's supposition of an unforced or non-dominating force of argument in communicative rationality, Shaftesbury, in this remark, asks that we understand the power of reason's utterances as paradoxically both force and not force because they are self-enforcing—a paradox aiming to negotiate the conflicting values of force as both necessity and freedom, coercion and consent, violence and volition.[13] This force of reason, of course, cannot be the

apparently heteronomous force of persuasion, which, we know, is suitable only for children (of all ages).

The stakes are high with regard to the success of this negotiation for Shaftesbury since taste rules, so what rules taste truly rules. If a people exists only by virtue of mutual consent and a common interest, then the practices that harmonize the community become crucial to the effectiveness of the laws governing it or by which it governs itself. For Shaftesbury, "it is not merely what we call *principle*, but a *taste* which governs men." People might know the difference between right and wrong, but "if the savour of things lies cross to honesty, if the fancy be florid and the appetite high toward the subaltern beauties and lower order of worldly symmetries and proportions, the conduct will infallibly turn this latter way" (C, 413). Shaftesbury may object to the (Lockean) tenet that "Opinion is the law and measure" of all things because then it alone "makes and unmakes beauty" and virtue, and it subjects them to the rule of chance and varying cultural conventions; for the Earl, "there is really a *standard*" of taste and morals, of taste in morals, that will "immediately and on the first view be acknowledged" (C, 328, 414).[14] Nonetheless, "the taste and relish in the concerns of life" needs to be rightly managed for "this at last is what will influence" (C, 414). So, Shaftesbury declares the "principal end" of his writings to be to make evident this standard, "*to assert the reality of a beauty and charm in moral as well as natural subjects, and to demonstrate the reasonableness of a proportionate taste and determinate choice in life and manners*" (C, 466). Even when his "pretence" is to advise writers on style, as in *Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author*, "his aim has been to correct manners and regulate lives" (C, 417–418). Moreover, in order to influence what will influence, to direct the taste that moves and directs, he must address a specific public whose taste must be influenceable. His reading public consists not of children, exactly—although, like children, its members should be conducted toward their good by Shaftesbury's (presumably self-enforcing) assertions—but of "the grown youth of our polite world," whose tastes are not yet "confirmed or hardened" like those of old or middle-aged "knave[s]" or, we should add, like those of the virtuous, who always relish higher orders of beauty and possess a moral will. The latter do not require influence; the former are immune to it. "Let the appeal be to these whose relish is retrievable and whose taste may yet be formed in morals as it seems to be already in exterior manners and behavior," he specifies (C, 414).

Rather than simply relying on an "unerring intuition of aesthetic taste" or an irresistible force of beauty to found and sustain moral and political order in practice, Shaftesbury addresses at least two conflicting issues with taste. First, taste errs, deviating from proper pleasure, and therefore must somehow be rerouted toward its original end—if it has not wandered off for so long that it is beyond the point of rescue. Second, the force of beauty does not in itself determine true taste, despite the claim

that a standard in moral-aesthetic taste will "immediately and on the first view be acknowledged"; taste may—taste must, in fact—be formed. True taste is not—and should not be—given naturally. Indeed, the fact that Shaftesbury perhaps feels compelled to mediate and communicate in writing that such a standard has, once had, or ought to have (again) immediate force indicates the very failure of that force universally to make right. The remainder of my chapter will be devoted to examining the tension between these two ways of forming taste, particularly with regard to Shaftesbury's different understandings of the force of criticism and philosophy in his writing.

Anamnesis, Inquisition, Persuasion

With regard to the first of these issues, we have noted that Shaftesbury concedes that our particular affective nature, which is or ought to be "constantly and unerringly true to itself," can "miscarry" not only through the overpowering force of other passions but also due to "anything foreign which should at any time do violence upon it or force it out of its natural way" (C, 304–305). Recalling that violence in this dynamic means not the violation or passive suffering of an entity but a difference in force, what counts as foreign violence for Shaftesbury is the greater "force of custom and education." The real, or even the imaginary but nonetheless "full[y] force[ful]," beauty we find in moral action testifies to a "natural prevention or prepossession of the mind" that can be altered only by "extraordinary means and the intervention of art and method, a strict attention and repeated check": "That which is of original and pure nature, nothing beside contrary habit and custom (a second nature) is able to displace." The pressure repeatedly exerted by cultural, religious, and "politic institution[s]" can transform "actions naturally foul and odious" into "right and honorable" ones (C, 178–179). The incestuous practices of the Magi, for instance, may counterfeit the beautiful "face of truth" (C, 40–41), and "a man, forcing himself, may eat the flesh of his enemies not only against his stomach but against his nature" in supposing this practice to serve his community and nation (C, 179). In this critique of the force of ethical-cultural norms to simulate, counter, and supplant the force of nature, Shaftesbury's belief that a cannibal still "forces himself" aligns this man with the "grown youth" who are not yet past recovery—until he finally succeeds in cultivating a taste for human flesh. Although "knavery is mere dissonance and disproportion," and the villain who "retains any conscience at all" only incurs "more contradiction and self-disapprobation" and hence misery (C, 93, 210), the Earl's hope for moral-aesthetic recovery here rests on disgust and revulsion, and on the persistence of self-dividing counterworking forces.

The forming of taste might elude the charge of heteronomy here because Shaftesbury's writing does not claim to be yet another foreign

force, that of philosophical education, vying for mastery with the foreign force of cultural education, which overcomes the native force of taste. Insofar as his writings seek to strengthen a miscarrying natural force, he could claim to be not legislating taste but mediating the aesthetic subject's relationship to its own proper but displaced taste. To influence what will influence, in this context, is not to take possession of the aesthetic subject via its affections but to enable it to be (re)possessed by the force of beauty and the "natural prevention and prepossession of the mind" (C, 178). Shaftesbury, through the medium of writing, supposedly seeks merely to lead the self back to itself for only when we are driven or possessed by the force of natural taste are we properly ourselves: "What possession of propriety" and "constancy or security of enjoyment" can belong to those "captivated by anything less than the superior, original, genuine kind" of beauty (C, 415–417n25)?

As Daniel Carey has pointed out, Shaftesbury's use of "prolepsis" (C, 429n12) or prepossession and anticipation ("prevention," in its obsolete acceptation) helps him to negotiate differences in aesthetic judgment by positing "the possibility of knowledge [before experience] without guaranteeing it: it was an anticipation rather than a fully formed idea or principle."[15] If we are proleptically disposed to be "captivated" by genuine beauty, then our beguilement by other beauties amounts to a failure of aesthetic recognition, a kind of provisional forgetting or, in the worst case, chronic amnesia. Hence, Shaftesbury implicitly engages in a therapeutic labor of unforgetting or anamnesia, repeatedly showing to those of us still capable of remembrance what we should not have forgotten so that we might recollect and recognize ourselves.[16] To form taste, in this sense, is to not construct it but to reconstruct and rehabilitate it.

Yet that other sense of forming taste—its normative construction through the force of philosophical writing—also belongs to Shaftesbury's account of aesthetic judgment because the proleptic force of nature can miscarry from the very first experience of what is called beauty before the force of custom has time to take its place and induce misrecognition or amnesia. Despite Shaftesbury's assertions to the contrary, he also concedes that the first time might not be an uncanny moment (déjà vu). Put differently, taste is not simply diverted from its natural aim by means of an extraordinary foreign force; it ordinarily and immediately errs, thereby betraying itself to be primarily wayward or inconstant. Nature divides, overcomes, and forgets itself.

To address this complication, we need to examine more carefully what counts as original and hence superior beauty and how taste for genuine beauty might be radically forgotten, as if there were no prolepsis or recognition. In his account of the "scale of beauties" in *Miscellany III*, Shaftesbury makes clear not only that animate and intelligent beauty (body and mind) provides a superior pleasure but that captivation by such beauty requires a young person to be "not so forgetful of human

kind" or "[remember] it still in a wrong way" (C, 415–416n25). Original and genuine taste must always recognize the human, or intelligence or mind, at the foundation of aesthetic pleasure. Through the prolepsis of taste, we ought to rediscover ourselves in the beautiful objects we encounter, as Theocles explains in his Platonic account of beauty in *The Moralists*:

> there is nothing so divine as beauty, which, belonging not to body nor having any principle or existence except in mind and reason, is alone discovered and acquired by this diviner part, when it inspects itself, the only object worthy of itself.

The "mind's eye," the figurative organ of aesthetic taste, only "attains its natural vigour when employed in contemplation of what is like itself," and, hence, "passing over bodies and the common forms (where only a shadow of beauty rests) ambitiously presses onward to its source and views the original of form and order in that which is intelligent" (C, 331–332). Melding description and prescription Theocles claims, as we previously noted, that we do and should pass over bodies and other "abject things" to recognize the origin of beauty in the "*form or forming power*"; what needs emphasis here is that aesthetic objects have to "confess" and "speak the beauty of design whenever it strikes [us]" for "It is mind alone which forms" (C, 322–323). If the "form [can never] be of real force where it is uncontemplated, unjudged of, and unexamined," this is because the real force that "strikes" us in beauty must be distinguished from a force that "provoke[s] sense" and must be judged—recognized and rightly remembered—to be our own (C, 331). True beauty, like true wit, according to Alexander Pope, is "*Something*, whose Truth convinc'd at Sight we find, / That gives us back the Image of our Mind."[17] Taste, for Shaftesbury, depends on apprehending bodies as signifying figures that "confess" and "speak" to us of our own force having been at the origin of the stroke of beauty to which we do or should immediately respond with pleasure. Although Shaftesbury does not explicitly formulate this connection, the requirement that beauty speak of mind or humanity seems to link it to the "communicative and social principle" of natural affection (C, 193) and to the "communicative bounty" by which we "embrace . . . the mind" when apparently "captivated by the lineaments of a fair face," and extend this metaphorical embrace to humanity and the universe, which confesses the "supreme beauty" of a "universal mind" and "providential care" (C, 243–244). To taste true beauty is to participate in a communicative event and interact with some body that seems foreign but actually speaks our language, addresses us, and initiates a kind of dialogue—or, perhaps, a soliloquy, in which we speak of and to ourselves in pronouncing an aesthetic judgment.

The communicative character of the experience of beauty and the self-recognition it ought to enable is another example of Shaftesbury's recourse to an original, native force that parries the foreign force of things as well as voices imposing taste. In the hierarchy of beauty, Shaftesbury admits that some gentlemen are caught and held fast by the "mere mechanic beauties" of "designing arts," such as sculpture and landscape gardening, but these artifactual forms produce no feeling of possession because they require "barely seeing and admiring" (C, 415n25, 64). Merely "dead forms," they are not to be "brought in competition with the original living forms of flesh and blood" and, above all, with the "human form" (C, 323). Such forms do exert force and strike us as beautiful, but we ought to "resist their splendor and make abject things of them" insofar as they do not speak to us of forming forms and allure us into forgetting and dispossessing ourselves (C, 323). Abject beauties are mute things incapable of engaging us in life-affirming, self-affecting communication. In fact, painters must avoid an "unnatural" mimesis in following "nature too close" and failing to make particular objects "yield to [a] general design" for they would then reproduce singular things for "barely seeing" (C, 66).

However, the very fact that, like a "spectre," these arts "haunt us" and exercise a power that catches us in a "specious snare," impeding our movement to pass over bodies and compelling us to linger with death, hints at a danger in our immediate, pre-reflective, and hence undefended and vulnerable tastes (C, 64, 415n25). This worry about the captivating force of designing or mechanical arts—the negative, violent side of the natural subjection of our will in aesthetic experience—is particularly evident when Shaftesbury turns from the (un)dead things of the visual and plastic arts to poetry. Unlike the arts of the eye, the arts of the tongue seem to perform an aesthetic magic that remains vital and moral to the extent that linguistic force decreases the risk of tarrying with mute bodies and facilitates self-affective communication. Reminding us in *Sensus Communis* that "Nothing affects the heart like that which is purely from itself and of its own nature," Shaftesbury praises the beguiling powers of the poet, citing Horace: "*He pains my heart, he vexes, then soothes, he fills it with empty terrors like a Magus*" (C, 63). Fittingly, Shaftesbury selects this line from a moment in an *Epistle* in which Horace stages a dialogue to satirize the debased taste of spectators of a play, clamoring at the sight of "foreign finery": "'Has [the actor] yet said anything?' Not a word. 'Then what takes [or pleases, *placet*] them so?' 'Tis the woolen robe that vies with the violet in its Tarentine dye."[18] Although the spell of spectacle needs to be broken so that the audience can be charmed instead by the words of the poet-magus, such poetic force also raises the possibility of a snare insofar as authors might have designs on spectators or readers. After all, the magnitude of this force means that we (like children) have no choice but to be directed

by a guide for a poet, dramatist, or "fabulous author leads us with such pleasure through the labyrinth of the affections and interests us, whether we will or no, in the passions of his heroes and heroines" (C, 62–63). Of course, Shaftesbury quickly denies that poet-magi might have any self-interested or strategic purposes and might employ any other kind of magic but white, "moral magic": first, they themselves are charmed by a "love of numbers, decency and proportion," not in "a selfish way (for who of them composes for himself?), but in a friendly social view for the pleasure and good of others"; second, they can "render this music of the passions more powerful and enchanting" and "so effectually move others" only because their "vocal measures of syllables and sounds . . . express the harmony and numbers of an inward kind and represent the beauties of the human soul" (C, 63). A concern about the possible subjection of the reader's will by designing poets who bypass the arresting mimesis of bodies is countered here by the subjection of the poet's will in the unselfish love of numbers and the expression of the human soul for the "good of others."

The question regarding the addressee of one's writing is apparently a rhetorical one: the act of composing poetry itself must always be considered communicative and productive of ethical community, even before a poem is recited, heard, published, or read. For the Earl, the magic of words evidently consists of a structural address to others—a kind of transcendental responsibility founded on acts of language independent of the will and conscious motives or aims. As we know from his critique of Hobbes, one cannot *not* write for the good of others, even if one believes one writes selfishly of the selfishness of human nature, for the very act of composing philosophy bears witness to the civility impelling such "savages": "It is the height of sociableness to be thus friendly and communicative" (C, 43). While Hobbes may want or mean to say that "it was only force and power that constituted right" and there is "no secret charm or force of nature by which everyone was made to operate willingly or unwillingly towards public good," the inclination to compose and then publish his philosophy is the force of nature he denies, "the very charm itself" compelling him, "willingly or unwillingly," to "take pains to communicate such a discovery" and thereby inextricably ensnaring his acts of speech in dramatic irony for his Shaftesburian readers (C, 43). By locating the ethical in communicative force, Shaftesbury (once more) argues that force makes right and endorses its pains and a kind of violence: Hobbes's apparent "love of such great truths . . . made him the most laborious of all men composing systems of this kind for our use and forced him . . . to run continually the risk of being a martyr for our deliverance" (C, 42–43). On the basis of an ethics of communicative force that operates transcendentally or providentially and independently of a conscious will to promote public interest, even knaves such as Hobbes, who must surely be suffering from amnesia, could be understood to retain some vestige of their proper,

natural affection and be diagnosed as self-divided youths capable of rehabilitation. In this unrecognized love of others displayed by the love of speaking (truth) lies "*the hope of the soul*" and "[*trust*] *in returned affection*" (C, 64). In an equally friendly, communicative act, Shaftesbury dialogically returns this affection by directly addressing Hobbes and acknowledging his "zeal on our behalf": "We are beholden to you for your instruction" (C, 43). In so doing, he dramatizes how this hope for hearts affecting themselves is not in vain—or how the ambition to write and publish is not mere vanity—and encourages still unconfirmed knaves "to account in some manner for their lives and form themselves to some kind of constancy and agreement" (C, 65).

Shaftesbury's labor of anamnesis seeks to negotiate the conflict between a naturally given, once immediate taste and a taste still to be formed. A commitment to the autonomy of taste requires the mediation of philosophical writing to prompt us to (re)form ourselves and make us agree with ourselves, rather than lead or mislead us, like some foreign force or black magic, into a labyrinth of passions. As Shaftesbury claims in another doubly prescriptive and descriptive statement: "It is we ourselves create and form our taste. If we resolve to have it just, it is in our power" (C, 417). But he slides here between the autonomy and heteronomy of taste insofar as we need to acquire some notion of what counts as "just" or superior taste—the beauty of bodies speaking of minds and communicating affection to us, even if only spectrally—to employ as a standard in forming ourselves. Just reflection on the immediacy of our tastes, as Karen Valihora points out, "does not come easily": Shaftesbury recognizes a difficulty in "how to gain that point of sight whence probably we may best discern and how to place ourselves in that unbiassed state in which we are fittest to pronounce" (C, 251)—a difficulty which, Valihora notes, suggests "the importance of art—literature, painting, philosophy, history . . . in developing our ability to judge."[19] Shaftesbury frequently insists that we find this unbiassed state by placing ourselves under the direction of philosophy:

> Is it any other art than that of philosophy or the study of inward numbers and proportions, which can exhibit this [beauty] in life? If no other, who then can possibly have a taste of this kind without being beholden to philosophy?
>
> (C, 416)

Not pretending simply to call back a just taste erring from itself, philosophy must form our self-forming in the face of beauty.

Shaftesbury is unsentimentally clear about what happens when philosophy has to teach us a lesson about self-critique:

> As cruel a court as the Inquisition appears, there must, it seems, be full as formidable a one erected in ourselves, if we would pretend

> to that uniformity of opinion which is necessary to hold us to one will and preserve us in the same mind from one day to another. Philosophy, at this rate, will be thought little better than persecution, and a supreme judge in matters of inclination and appetite must needs go exceedingly against the heart. Every pretty fancy is disturbed by it; every pleasure interrupted by it.
>
> (C, 83–84)

Kant's well-known use of the metaphor of the tribunal for reason's critical judgment hardly compares to Shaftesbury's surprising turn to the Inquisition to figure a supposedly self-enforcing reason as a force of cruelty and persecution in his moral-aesthetics, especially in light of the therapeutic aim of anamnesis as well as his desire to distinguish the "gentle [writing] of philosophy" from the "dispatching pen of the magistrate" who signs execution warrants (C, 264). He is frank: the "regimen" of philosophy must, "mortifyingly," give the law of taste to the heart against the heart, although he hopes "our patient (for such we naturally suppose our reader)" will endure the violent operation "to gain him a will and ensure him a certain resolution by which he will know where to find himself [and] be sure of his own meaning and design" (C, 84). The affections and pleasures that immediately charm us—"without asking our consent or giving us any account"—must all be interrupted and interrogated as possibly "so many boyish fancies, unlucky appetites and desires, which are perpetually playing truant and need correction" (C, 84). Philosophy makes our pleasures speak, properly, so that we can procure a self we can possess or be dispossessed of. Soliloquy in Shaftesbury, as Vivasvan Soni has stressed, is a device of suspension or interruption that aims to allow a self to constitute itself paradoxically in splitting and judging itself.[20] But, as Stephen Darwall argues, "soliloquy works [as an effort at self-government] through the agent's recognition of the *authority* of her better self"—a not-yet-self that must be normatively constituted through the intervention of the force of philosophical writing.[21] In Shaftesbury's imperative to give an account of all our pleasures, we find no simple trust in natural affection, no sustained reliance on prolepsis as a force that carries us immediately to true moral beauty, no abiding hope for the recovery of what had been merely forgotten. On the contrary, our inclinations are themselves contingent and aleatory, betraying the unreliability or perhaps fictionality of prolepsis: "But who dares search opinion to the bottom or call in question his early and prepossessing taste?" (C, 417). Our earliest prepossessions cannot be presumed to be naturally just; moreover, if "a natural good taste be not already formed in us," we must "force nature" to form it and thereby "become natural" (C, 151). Darwall remarks that the term "natural" is a synonym for "good" in Shaftesbury insofar as affections belong within a teleological "natural order as an integrated system in which subsystems function together to realize a well-functioning whole"; natural affections here, however, are

detached from nature in its normative, rational sense: what is natural is not (yet and must become) natural.[22] Moreover, our earliest, immature tastes might have become so constitutive of our moral-aesthetic affections that Shaftesbury is not at all sanguine that most of us will dare to know (sapere aude) and endure the pain of philosophically questioning the justness of our pleasures. Perhaps he has in mind Locke's friend, who was cured of madness (the association of ideas by chance and custom rather than nature) by "a very harsh and offensive Operation," and who afterwards "could never bear the sight of the Operator": "That Image brought back with it the *Idea* of the Agony which he suffer'd from his Hands, which was too mighty and intolerable for him to endure." Philosophical reflection on and judgment of one's tastes—for Locke, too, "Beauty appears at first sight" and pleases without any "labour of thought, to examine what Truth or Reason there is in it"—may well be an operation that replicates the pathology it seeks to cure: one force of education differing from another force of education.[23]

The claim that a force of nature carries us toward beauty "no sooner the eye opens upon figures" and that "a *standard* . . . will immediately and on the first view be acknowledged" is at odds with the necessity to interrogate prepossession as a critically blind or culturally conditioned inclination (C, 326, 414). The truth of this counterclaim is a philosophical lesson dialogically learned in *The Moralists*. In response to Theocles's persistent questioning concerning whether we are "rightly pleased and choose as we should do" or should "appeal . . . from the immediate feeling and experience of one who is pleased and satisfied with what he enjoys," Philocles eventually avows his guilty first pleasures to Theocles:

> I must confess . . . It was my way to censure freely on first view . . . I have dwelt, it seems, all this while upon the surface . . . Like the rest of the unthinking world, I took for granted that what I liked was beautiful and what I rejoiced in was my good.
>
> (C, 250, 321)

The pleasure in what we deem beautiful "on first view" must be interrupted or suspended because the involuntary, unthinking charm of beauty, which is the natural foundation of Shaftesbury's moral aesthetics, is itself a vulnerability and a danger at which his writing must take aim. In the absence of prolepsis and recollection (first sight as déjà vu), Theocles insists on the constitutive mediation of time and critical reflection over immediacy:

> How long before a true taste is gained! . . . For it is not instantly we acquire the sense by which these beauties are discoverable. Labour and pains are required and time to cultivate a natural genius ever so apt or forward.
>
> (C, 320)

Shaftesbury mobilizes the figure of "cultivation" to reconcile natural taste as immediate sentiment and natural taste as critically constituted, as if the constitutive inquisitorial violence of philosophy only gently trains what naturally moves in the right direction. But this metaphor is somewhat misleading: we do not already possess but, on the contrary, must "acquire the sense" to discover such beauty. As Shaftesbury repeats more emphatically elsewhere, "A legitimate and just taste," which "can hardly come ready formed with us into the world," "can neither be begotten, made, conceived or produced without the antecedent labour and pains of criticism"; since critics or those "esteemed good judges" can alone sense true beauty, we are "obliged to choose what pleased others and not [ourselves]." Only the "tender sex" and "effeminate" men will insist upon the autonomy of taste, expressing a "soft languishing contempt for critics and their labours" and resisting what they take to be the coercive force wielded by critical judgment (C, 408–409). Virile men, evidently, do and should sacrifice their judgment and submit to the pain of accounting for their pleasures. This gendering of aesthetic judgment invites us to imagine that Kant's autonomous judges of taste, who "will listen to no reasons and arguments. . . and [could] believe that those rules of the critics are false," must, according to Shaftesbury, be women (CPJ 5:284–285).

The demand that we submit the pleasure taken in what we call beauty to a standard of judgment supplied by critical and philosophical authority cannot, then, simply be a response to a foreign force corrupting or overwhelming our native affections since taste has no natural, unerringly just, and true telos but must, paradoxically, be formed by force to become natural. The vagaries of aesthetic pleasure disclose that "something foreign has already impaired and wounded" the autotelic force of nature, and this "something foreign" is also "the force of a foreign nature" within us that leads us away from a self or a will that we have not yet formed (C, 304). Moreover, as we might expect, the foreign natures which supposedly wound with their charms are also necessary for a sound taste. Since taste should never be forgetful of humankind, Shaftesbury argues that its formation through critical-philosophical soliloquy or self-accounting requires "a previous commerce with the world":

> we must necessarily be at the pains of going farther abroad than the province we call home . . . to gather views and receive light from every quarter in order to judge the best of what is perfect, and according to a just standard and true taste in every kind.
>
> (C, 404–405)

The pains involved in forming a true taste are also the pains taken to depart from one's native (here, provincial) pleasures and seek enlightenment

about humanity and the ingenious creations of foreign nations. In fact, such a cosmopolitan understanding of humanity precedes and conditions any affection for particular human beings.[24]

Finally, if, on the one hand, Theocles serves as an instructor who examines his willing male pupil in *The Moralists*, he does so, on the other hand, with enthusiasm—with a communicative force or charm, to which Herder's affection for Shaftesbury, and especially Theocles's hymn to nature, might well attest. The inclusion of the lyrical hymn within the philosophical dialogue counterpoints the argumentative interrogation aimed at persuasion. Aristotle observes that "a prayer is a sentence, but is neither true nor false"; as non-propositional speech, a prayer or vow falls outside the purview of dialectic, but it might belong to rhetoric insofar as it elicits pathos for the purpose of persuasion.[25] In *Soliloquy*, Shaftesbury traces the birth of poetry, rhetoric, music, and other arts to the "goddess Persuasion" and ancient communities organized by "consent and voluntary association" because the "people were to be convinced before they acted," and these "pathetic sciences and arts" rendered them "more treatable in a way of reason and understanding, and more subject to be led by men of science and erudition" as well as "chief men and leaders." Once again, Shaftesbury counterposes an imperial and imperious "force and a despotic power" to "free communities," which, however, employ the enchanting arts' "power of moving the affections" to constitute cultural and political authority and subject the people to it. The way in which poetry and music, which resemble prayer in not being necessarily propositional, render the people more treatable or tractable is by treating them to the gift of aesthetic pleasure: "not only the best order of thought and turn of fancy but the most soft and inviting numbers must have been employed to charm the public ear and to incline the heart by the agreeableness of expression," by the pleasure taken in "mere sounds and natural harmony"—like the "vocal measures and syllables" employed by poet-magi and fabulous authors to render the passions more enchanting and thereby interest and lead us whether we will or no. Those with the "strongest interest to persuade" use "the highest endeavours to please" (C, 106–107).

It is no surprise, then, that Shaftesbury has Theocles lyrically chant to and of what might otherwise be considered merely dead nature in order to dramatize his own affective communication with a beauty capable of speaking to him and, most importantly, to enchant his pupil. In *Soliloquy*, Shaftesbury tells his readers that he will forget their presence for a while and "fall insensibly" into the "frenzy" of a soliloquy; similarly, Theocles turns away from Philocles, who encourages his teacher to "give but voice and accents" to the divinity moving him and "take no more notice of me than if I were absent" (C, 131, 298). Still, Shaftesbury is quite aware of the strategic dramaticality of such moments.[26] Theocles resembles the lover in *Soliloquy*, who "addressed the woods

and rocks in audible articulate sounds, and seemingly expostulated with himself" but nonetheless still conducted his meditation in "the imagined presence of the mistress he pursues": "Not a thought, not an expression, not a sigh, which is purely for himself"—all is "tendered to the object of his passion" and "should be witnessed by the party whose grace and favour he solicits" (C, 79). Philocles might have encouraged Theocles to address himself to nature (perhaps seeking relief from his teacher's interrogation), but the communicative force of Theocles's utterances cannot *not* tend to others as their end. Apostrophe is a technique in classical rhetoric that consists, according to Quintilian, in the "diversion of our words to address some person [or thing] other than the judge . . . whose favour we desire to win," and it is employed by orators and poets because it is "wonderfully stirring," as when we "turn [from the object of our persuasion] to make some invocation such as, 'For I appeal to you, hills and groves of Alba.'"[27] Jonathan Culler has noted that the "apostrophizing poet identifies his universe as a world of sentient forces" potentially responsive to the power of the voice, but the apostrophes of Theocles—"O mighty nature! Wise substitute of Providence! . . . Or thou empowering deity, supreme creator! Thee I invoke" (C, 298)—belong to a hymn or prayer and apparently seek less to exert the force of will "by asking inanimate objects to bend themselves to [his] desire" than to disclose a vital or at least spectral force already informing a beautiful nature that should not be considered an abject object animated only by a rhetorical figure.[28] Yet, regardless of whether Theocles insensibly falls into or stages an enthusiastic transport in which he no longer can or wants to distinguish animate from inanimate—and thus does not know or believe he is speaking figuratively—he does acknowledge the power of his song to move and form the judgment of a witness who theatrically seems not to be the object of all his thoughts and expressions. Hence, when he pauses in his frenzy, he rouses Philocles from a "musing posture" and admonishes his pupil to remain critically vigilant: "Have you at once given over your scrupulous philosophy to let me range thus at pleasure" and "without the least interruption?" (C, 310). Later, after his philosophical interrogation yields Philocles's confession of guilt, Theocles must also inquire into the means by which the taste of this grown youth has been formed:

> "I remember," said I, "what you forced me to acknowledge more than once before. And now, good Theocles, that I am become so willing a disciple, I want not so much to be convinced, methinks, as to be confirmed and strengthened. And I hope this last work may prove your easiest task."
>
> "Not unless you help in it yourself," replied Theocles, "for this is necessary as well as becoming. It had been indeed shameful for you to have yielded without making good resistance. To help oneself to

> be convinced is to prevent reason and bespeak error and delusion. But, upon fair conviction, to give our heart up to the evident side and reinforce the impression, this is to help reason heartily. And thus we may be said honestly to persuade ourselves."
>
> (C, 327)

In an effort to distinguish between the forces of reason and persuasion that must also coincide with each other, Shaftesbury acknowledges in this dialogue that those addressed by philosophy and poetry in order to form true taste and morals must participate in the process so as to appear to form themselves. In characterizing the activity required to form oneself as one of resistance, however, he acknowledges the imposing forces ranged against oneself. The apostrophic hymn, which supplements the philosophical reflection that interrupts our unaccounted tastes and affections, must be interrupted, in turn, to break the spell of an enthusiastic force to which we might yield. Philocles cannot want to help himself be convinced because such an inclination will "prevent" (preempt) reason from enforcing itself and will affectively dispose him to be led astray. Only upon first resisting such a transporting but potentially misdirecting force by interrupting our affections should we "give up the heart," help reason "heartily," and in so doing "persuade ourselves." Theocles cannot simply form Philocles: the monological author must be annihilated, as Shaftesbury argues in *Soliloquy* (C, 90). Of course, even this lesson on the necessity of self-conviction for self-formation concludes with an appeal to the philosopher and poet for guidance: "Show me, then, how I may best persuade myself" (C, 327). We are still beholden to Shaftesbury.

Notes

1 Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times,* ed. Lawrence E. Klein (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 43. Hereafter abbreviated as C and cited in the body of my text.

2 Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, trans. Fritz C. A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951), 322, 84–85, 316–317. Also see Cassirer's *The Platonic Renaissance in England*, trans. James P. Pettegrove (1953; New York: Gordian Press, 1970), 157–202.

3 Cassirer, *Philosophy of Enlightenment,* 153. See Johann Gottfried Herder's, *Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität* (*Letters for the Advancement of Humanity*), Letter 33, in *Werke*, Vol. 7, ed. Günter Arnold, Martin Bollacher, Jürgen Brummack, Ulrich Gaier, Gunter E. Grimm, Hans Dietrich Irmscher, Regine Otto, Rudolf Smend, Rainer Wisbert, and Thomas Zippert (Frankfurt: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1991), 169. Also see John H. Zammito, *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 313n20.

4 Johann Gottfried Herder, "Naturhymnus von Shaftesburi," in *Gott: Einige Gespräche* in *Werke,* Vol. 2, ed. Wolfgang Pross (München: Carl Hanser

Verlag, 1987), 1109: "Allbelebender Geist, O Du Begeisterer / Kraft der Kräfte, du Quell jeder Veredelung, / Quell auch meiner Gedanken, / Inhalt meine Gedankenkraft"; and Herder, *Critical Forests,* First Grove, in *Selected Writings on Aesthetics*, trans. and ed. Gregory Moore (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 140, 158, and 142. Although Herder's reference to the "force of a substance" echoes Leibniz's use of substantial forms (see Robert M. Adams's astute discussion of "form as force" in *Leibniz: Determinist, Theist, Idealist* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1994], 308–323), we know, for Herder, "daß man in ihm [Shaftesbury] alle Blüten der Leibnitzischen Philosophie . . . dazu im jüngsten schönsten Flor blühen sehe" (*Briefe, Das Studium der Theologie Betreffend* [*Letters Concerning the Study of Theology*], Letter 28, in *Werke,* ed. Arnold, Bollacher, et al., 9.1: 406).

5 See H. B. Nisbet, *Herder and the Philosophy and History of Science* (Cambridge: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1970), 8–16 and 124–140, and Robert E. Norton, *Herder's Aesthetics and the European Enlightenment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 144–154. See, too, Christoph Menke's vigorous effort to distinguish Herder's notion of force from mechanism and vitalism in his *Force: A Fundamental Concept of Aesthetic Anthropology*, trans. Gerrit Jackson (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013). My analysis of Shaftesbury is in sympathy with Menke's argument that "force" in aesthetics unsettles or interrupts the agency of the subject. Also see Saccamano, "The Sublime Force of Words in Addison's 'Pleasures,'" *ELH* 58 (1991): 83–106.

6 Cassirer, *Platonic Renaissance,* 188.

7 For a strong critique of still prevalent views of Shaftesbury's aesthetics that seek to detach it from morality and theology, and connect it with a modern (post-Kantian) aesthetics of disinterestedness, see Karl Axelsson, *Political Aesthetics: Addison and Shaftesbury on Taste, Morals and Society* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), especially 177–199.

8 Herder, *Werke,* ed. Arnold, Bollacher, et al., 2:420. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 227–228 [AA 5:354]. Hereafter abbreviated CPJ.

9 Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), esp. 20–66.

10 Laurent Jaffro, "Psychological and Political Balances: The Third Earl of Shaftesbury's Reading of James Harrington," in *Shaping Enlightenment Politics: The Social and Political Impact of the First and Third Earls of Shaftesbury*, ed. Patrick Müller (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2018), 149–162, esp. 160–161. Hirschman admits, for instance, that one might "quibble" with Hume when he introduces the "alien element" of reason and reflection in his discussions of countervailing passions (*Passions and Interests,* 25).

11 Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 33–36.

12 Dabney Townsend, "Shaftesbury's Aesthetic Theory," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 41(1982): 209–210. See also Paul Guyer on "Disinterestedness in Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics," in *Kant and the Experience of Freedom* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 48–93.

13 For Habermas, the public process of rational-critical debate allows for the supposed "power of the better argument" to produce a consensus that seeks to eliminate political or strategic force: the "domination of the public" in its

"rational agreement" is "an order in which domination itself was [sought to be] dissolved: *veritas non auctoritas facit legem*" in an "inversion of the Hobbesian statement" (*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere,* trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989], 54 and 82).

14 For Shaftesbury's critique of Locke's reliance on opinion, see Daniel Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson: Contesting Diversity in the Enlightenment and Beyond* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 133–135; R. L. Brett. *The Third Earl of Shaftesbury* (New York: Hutchinson's University Library, 1951), 78–80.

15 Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson*, 116.

16 See Mark-Georg Dehrmann's comments on anamnesis as Stoic self-recognition in "Transition: 'Pedagogy of the Eye' in Shaftesbury's *Second Characters*," in *New Ages, New Opinions: Shaftesbury in his World and Today*, ed. Patrick Müller (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 50–51.

17 Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Criticism,* in *The Poems of Alexander Pope,* ed. John Butt (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1963), lines 299–300.

18 Horace, *Epistle* II.i, in *Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica,* trans. H. R. Fairclough (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), lines 203–207.

19 Karen Valihora, *Austen's Oughts: Judgment after Locke and Shaftesbury* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2010), 107.

20 Vivasvan Soni, "How to Hit Pause: Language, Transcendence, and the Capacity for Judgment in Shaftesbury's *Soliloquy; or, Advice to an Author*," in *Judgment and Action: Fragments toward a History* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2018), 5–40.

21 Stephen Darwall, *The British Moralists and the Internal "Ought": 1640–1740* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 203.

22 Darwall, *The British Moralists*, 183.

23 John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 399, 156.

24 "Theocles had almost convinced me that to be a friend to any one in particular, it was necessary to be first a friend to mankind" (C, 258). For insightful explorations of this issue, see David Alvarez, "Shaftesbury's Non-Secular Cosmopolitanism," in *Shaping Enlightenment Politics*, 177–195, and Michael B. Gill, "Love of Humanity in Shaftesbury's *Moralists*," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 24 (2016): 1117–1135.

25 Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, in *The Categories, On Interpretation, Prior Analytics*, trans. Harold P. Cook (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 2.17a.

26 See David Marshall, *The Figure of Theater: Shaftesbury, Defoe, Adam Smith, and George Eliot* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 13–70.

27 Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, trans. H. E. Butler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), IV.i.63, IX.ii.38.

28 Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 139. The understanding of apostrophe as merely a trope relying on the difference between animate and inanimate is complicated for Shaftesbury since, as Axelsson notes, "Providential nature is animate and wise, which makes it difficult to consider aesthetic objects as simply reactive entities organized to supply aesthetic experiences to the determination of an active disinterested perception" (*Political Aesthetics,* 195).

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4 Civilization in Eighteenth-Century Britain

A Subject for Taste

Maria Semi

Has taste ever been a "mere" matter of taste? What role did the reflections on taste play in the economy of eighteenth-century thought? Are the reflections about taste developed in eighteenth-century Europe part of the discipline that goes by the name of aesthetics?

The last question is perhaps the least relevant: first of all, during the eighteenth century, most authors who wrote about topics we usually associate with aesthetics did not develop a coherent aesthetic theory, or, when they did, as in Baumgarten's and Meier's case, they did so in terms quite different to those one usually finds in post-Kantian aesthetics. Second, it would perhaps be more productive to adopt the argumentative strategy espoused by Paul Guyer when he declares that

> there is little value in attempting to stipulate a clear definition of the field in advance: How philosophers have conceived of the boundaries of the field has been part of its history, and we will simply have to see how that history goes. The history will have to define the field for us rather than the other way around.[1]

But, unless we believe in an invisible hand guiding history in our stead, it is not always easy to understand how "history defines the field for us" as it is the historian who selects what shall be included in his narrative and what shall be excluded from it. Moreover, taste in the eighteenth century is only in part a topic of the so-called philosophical aesthetics: it pervades many aspects of the culture of the age.

The other two questions sound more promising. Like the other types of value judgements, taste has arguably never been a mere matter of taste, and indeed, the insistent reference to this concept in the century we are concerned with, and its prominence in written sources, forces us to ask what changes brought taste so forcefully to the fore. Historians have already pointed out several important societal changes that impacted the emergence of taste in eighteenth-century Britain: the birth of consumerism; journalism; the creation of public places, like coffee-houses, where illiterate people could listen to the public reading of journals; pleasure gardens; public theatres; and paying concerts. One should also not forget

other kinds of amusements—such as cock-fighting, attending hangings, fireworks, and visiting places like prisons and madhouses—that historians frequently overlook in their narratives of eighteenth-century leisure. These grim forms of amusement were broadly shared by the whole spectrum of the British population and tell us a lot about how people "construed the world, invested it with meaning, and infused it with emotion," to use Robert Darnton's words.[2] Some of the above-mentioned forms of amusement involve kinds of taste which have little to do with aesthetics and a lot to do with morals and socially approved attitudes; others (like attending fireworks) could find their way into a history of aesthetics, but they seldom do.

To explain easily and briefly how the topic of taste can lend itself to multiple considerations, I will examine the visits to Bethlem Hospital. Here, the same event or attitude (visiting the Bedlamites) could be interpreted as the fruit of different tastes, according to the social standing—and the willingness to open one's purse—of the people involved:

> Sightseers—of an approved kind—were positively courted by the Governors. The ideal visitor was the "person of quality," who came to the Hospital with the intention of doing "the poore Lunatiques" good "& relieving them." Such "people of note and quallitie" who were given particular access by the rulers, were defined in accordance with elite notions of morality and benevolence and with Bethlem's charitable status.[3]

The delight afforded to visitors by the Bedlamites could denote two different kinds of taste: the good taste of the "people of quallitie" when the delight was coupled with moral concerns and charity, and the wicked taste of the rabble when the very same delight didn't imply any act of benevolence. Both might have laughed at the Bedlamites, but their laughs did not denote the same taste: "people of quallitie" could *de facto* buy their way into the realm of good taste. But changes in sensibility influenced these forms of social entertainment, and, as evidenced by the authors of *The History of Bethlem*,

> as sensibilities grew more refined, the fun went out of seeing the insane. The new sentiments of the Age of Sensibility robbed visiting Bethlem of its humour, replacing the ribaldry of a Brown or Ward with the tears of a "Man of Feeling." . . . While, before the mid-eighteenth century, there had been nothing more remarkable or amusing than Bedlam and its inmates, there was subsequently "nothing so affecting."[4]

As we will see later in this chapter, Hume devotes some thoughts to the question of historical changes in sensibility, morals, and taste, asserting

that morality has to be taken into account when judging, for example, literary descriptions. Morality has a retroactive value, and it can influence our judgement of works of past ages.

Indeed, reflections on taste populate so many domains of eighteenth-century discourse that the concept seems extremely far-reaching. Unless one defines the eighteenth century as starting in 1790, when Kant's third *Critique* was published, it is difficult to argue that the ideas of aesthetic autonomy and aesthetic disinterestedness emerged in their modern shape during this period. I will not deny that I think it's wrong, though academically common, to talk about aesthetics in an eighteenth-century context (English speakers didn't even use the word *aesthetics* to describe what they were talking about).[5] Are we sure it is really aesthetics, as we usually define it, that best subsumes all the aspects of eighteenth-century thought that we attribute to its realm? My position in this chapter is that if we want to talk about taste as part of eighteenth-century aesthetics, we must either narrow down, as has been done, the realm of taste—which, in the eighteenth century, far exceeds aesthetics—or expand the realm of aesthetics.[6] This makes any claim about autonomy, disinterestedness, and the like unsustainable.

Reading Hume's *Essays Moral, Political, Literary* and other British literature of the age, I will argue that considerations about taste were (among other things) inextricably connected to ideas about human difference and civilization, and therefore to the domains of morals, history, and politics. Considering taste simply as the "capacity for disinterested contemplative pleasure"[7] would make us miss the complexity of that category in eighteenth-century discussions, even when these discussions relate to the world of the arts. As Suvir Kaul argues,

> Scholars must continue to work with the idea that Great Britain . . . was forged both via internal commerce, conflict, and treaty, and via overseas trade, warfare, and colonization. This means that—in the instance of Britain—the frames of reference, whether in an analysis of an English lyric or a parliamentary document . . . will not simply be the poet or the parliamentarian . . . but will expand to incorporate questions about the making of national subjects and civic and military institutions adequate to the demands of international trade and a burgeoning . . . empire.[8]

The perspective depicted here is one which is often absent in traditional discussions about aesthetics. The otherwise deep and well-argued analysis one finds in works by Dabney Townsend, who calls for a contextual reading of Hume, and in Peter Kivy's analysis of Hume's aesthetic views deals with philosophical theories as if they were enmeshed not in a worldly dimension but in a philosophical one.[9] Narratives of philosophical aesthetics often resemble the history of ideas, detached, as it

were, from the flesh of their subjects; from their daily toils; and from their social and political concerns.

Civilization as History and the Historicity of Taste

To narrow down the scope of this chapter, I will focus only on one of the possible novelties in eighteenth-century conceptions of taste, trying to show that, in that century, a powerful alliance between the ideas of taste and civilization was established, and that both performed what can be described—using the words of Quentin Skinner[10]—as an evaluative-descriptive function and became markers of difference. Skinner points to the fact that historians should consider the texts they study from the point of view of the theory of speech acts, hereby endowing words with a double agency: as illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. This means that, when we analyze words that were used in a determinate sentence, we should pay attention not only to the plain meaning of the phrases but also to the aim of the sentence, what its author wanted it to perform (the illocutionary act), and what in the end was the result of the phrase (the perlocutionary act). Brett Bowden has shown how and why we should consider the term "civilization" to have the double evaluative-descriptive function. As he points out:

> The label civilization is not usually used to describe the collective life of just any group, as culture sometimes is; rather, it is reserved for social collective that demonstrate a degree of urbanization and organization.[11]

In following the history of the use of the term "civilization," Bertrand Binoche has stressed that, during the last part of the eighteenth century, an important shift took place: "From being an abstraction, deducted from the analysis of empirical histories (therefore, from being a natural history of humanity), civilization became *the universal history of human beings*. . . . Becoming universal, civilization also becomes *irreversible*."[12] Such an irreversibility was, in a British context, closely linked to the development of so-called conjectural histories, and the result of this process was that civilization became the outcome of historical development. Cultural productions also became part of this teleologically oriented narrative.

Much has been written about the birth of a specific type of historical narrative in eighteenth-century Scotland that goes by the name of "stadial history" or "conjectural history."[13] I will briefly retrace some important aspects of this intellectual tradition, without which it would be impossible to understand the significance of the connection established during the age of Enlightenment between taste and civilization. In the words of David Allan, "Smith and his colleagues were recognised very

quickly by contemporaries as having developed a new type of historiography marked by a strong abstract or conceptual content informed by essentially philosophical concerns."[14] In particular, it was their analysis of social and economic factors, and of the influence these had on political institutions and laws, that gave their histories a peculiar and innovative flavor.[15] What matters most to our discourse is that the arts and what we would now call cultural aspects were englobed in these histories. Civilization developed in stages, equally valid for any population, and each stage was characterized by specific forms of government, laws, and customs. Since especially the first stages of humanity were thought to have the same characteristics, general histories also provided the means for transcultural comparison.

A main theme that underlies many of the works written by philosophers and historians, specifically as these apply to the development of society through the ages, was the understanding of change and difference. Encapsulating diversity in a historical dynamic has been a peculiar way in which the Scottish Enlightenment tried to deal with it, as Daniel Carey observes: "The strategy that eventually gained favour among Scottish writers was to recast difference as a product of history, conditioned by varying economic and social situations."[16] One of the categories that benefitted from this new trend was taste, which also acquired a historical dimension. The ideal "history of taste" was interpreted as presenting an imagined uniformity at its beginning (in a natural, simple world, devoid of the needs induced by commercial society) and then a subsequent differentiation brought about through economic and social change. A statement like that by Racine, who, in his preface to *Ifigénie* (1674), said that he was happy to ascertain that "common sense and reason don't change over the centuries," and "The taste of Paris is therefore in agreement with the one of Athens,"[17] would not have been prevalent a hundred years later. Taste, together with politeness, is enmeshed in eighteenth-century society at large and bears significant relations not only to the domain of morals and civility but also to economy, political science, and history. As emphasized by many scholars, the discourse about taste in the eighteenth century also acquires a peculiar significance because it "arose in no small measure as a reactionary new regime of social demarcation, enabling those of a certain social standing to continue to distinguish themselves in a commercialist age from the promiscuous hordes of parvenus at their heels,"[18] making taste a preeminently evaluative-descriptive concept. The intellectual effort of framing the discourse about taste in historical terms has been one of the powerful methods used by men of letters and philosophers to legitimize the values they championed. The temporal dimension acquired by taste in this period has been underscored by James Noggle, who describes its dual nature thus:

> Discussions of taste imposed two forms of contemporaneity—the present of an individual mind's experience and the impersonal,

> historical present, distinguished from what preceded it—upon each other. The two were obviously related but drew on different kind of thinking. One came from the period's discussions of human nature and their characterizations of the mind as a theatre of present impressions. The other derived from increasingly elaborate distinctions between what was called the "modern" era and Europe's Gothic and classical past.[19]

Edmund Burke exemplifies this dual nature when he writes that

> when it is said, taste cannot be disputed, it can only mean, that no one can strictly answer what pleasure or pain some particular man may find from the taste of some particular thing. This indeed cannot be disputed; but we may dispute, and with sufficient clearness too, concerning the things which are naturally pleasing or disagreeable to the sense. But when we talk of any peculiar or acquired relish, then we must know the habits, the prejudices, or the distempers of this particular man, and we must draw our conclusion from those.[20]

On the one hand, taste refers to what is naturally pleasing or disagreeable to one's senses; on the other hand, particular men tend to have "habits, prejudices or distempers." As we will see in Hume's case, even if—as Burke states—the taste of particular men cannot be disputed, circumstances are different when addressing a greater number of people, where it is possible to discover regularities which can lead to a standard of taste historically defined.

Hume's Normative Taste

In his *Essays Moral, Political, Literary*, Hume frequently addressed the topic of taste. Townsend points our attention to the fact that

> many of the arguments in Hume's work that bear on aesthetics must be based on parallels that Hume himself suggests between aesthetic and moral emotions. . . . Moral emotions are Hume's usual focus; typically, emotions of beauty or taste in the aesthetic realm play a supporting role. For example, Hume often will begin an analysis of some emotion or passion such as envy or pride and in the process discuss beauty and deformity. . . . The relation between aesthetic and moral emotions, beauty and virtue, and taste and moral judgment must be worked out if one is to understand Hume's position and influence on aesthetics.[21]

In the case of Hume's discussions of taste in his *Essays*, we can venture to assert that, in addition to morals, his opinions were strongly influenced

by his views about history, human nature, and politics. Reasoning about uniformity and singularity in human history, Hume asserted that

> In *civil* history, there is found a much greater uniformity than in the history of learning and science, and that the wars, negociations, and politics of one age resemble more those of another, than the taste, wit, and speculative principles.[22]

The principal cause of this difference lies in numbers. In the analysis developed in the essay "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences," Hume explains that "*What depends upon a few persons is, in a great measure, to be ascribed to chance, or secret and unknown causes: What arises from a great number, may often be accounted for by determinate and known causes*,"[23] and this is why

> it is more easy to account for the rise and progress of commerce in any kingdom, than for that of learning. . . . Avarice, or the desire of gain, is an universal passion, which operates at all times, in all places, and upon all persons: But curiosity, or the love of knowledge, has a very limited influence. . . . We may, therefore, conclude, that there is no subject, in which we must proceed with more caution, than in tracing the history of the arts and sciences. . . . Those who cultivate the sciences in any state, are always few in number: The passion, which governs them, limited: Their taste and judgment delicate and easily perverted: And their application disturbed with the smallest accident. Chance, therefore, or secret and unknown causes, must have a great influence on the rise and progress of all the refined arts.[24]

However, looking at history and comparing civilizations, Hume finds a few "rules" that enable the development of the arts (a prerequisite for the refinement of taste). The first requisite he singles out is the existence of a free government. Second, "Nothing is more favourable to the rise of politeness and learning, than a number of neighbouring and independent states, connected together by commerce and policy."[25] The third rule is that the freedom of the State is necessary only for arts and sciences to develop, but once they are invented, they can be transmitted to any other form of government. Analyzing specifically the case of republics and monarchies, Hume adds that "A strong genius succeeds best in republics: A refined taste in monarchies" because "to be successful in the first one, it is necessary for a man to make himself *useful*; to be prosperous in the second one, it is requisite for him to render himself *agreeable*."[26] Agreeableness, therefore, is not only a generic human characteristic; instead, it becomes the marker of a political strategy.[27] Thus, refined taste also becomes a product of the historical development of the

forms of government and the kind of human qualities they promote. If Hume's second rule already establishes a link between commerce and politeness (which go hand in hand with refinement), it is in the essay "Of Refinement in the Arts" that he explains the interplay between industry, refinement, and civilization: he denotes *luxury*, a keyword of the age, as meaning a "great refinement in the gratification of the senses," and he explains why it rose so prominently as a characteristic of his own times:

> Another advantage of industry and of refinements in the mechanical arts, is, that they commonly produce some refinements in the liberal; nor can one be carried to perfection, without being accompanied, in some degree, with the other. . . . The more these refined arts advance, the more sociable men become. . . . Thus *industry*, *knowledge*, and *humanity*, are linked together by an indissoluble chain, and are found, from experience as well as reason, to be peculiar to the more polished, and, what are commonly denominated, the more luxurious ages.[28]

These luxurious ages are characterized by sociability, which enhances a natural penchant of the human mind, which is

> of a very imitative nature; nor is it possible for any set of men to converse often together, without acquiring a similitude of manners, and communicating to each other their vices as well as virtues. The propensity to company and society is strong in all rational creatures; and the same disposition, which gives us this propensity, makes us enter deeply into each other's sentiments, and causes like passions and inclinations to run, as it were, by contagion, through the whole club or knot of companions.[29]

Natural characteristics of the human mind, forms of government, development of industry, and commerce—all these elements in Hume's analysis become tools that partially explain the prominence of taste in eighteenth-century society. Commerce is particularly relevant as it makes it possible to develop a specific relish for superfluous goods, among which one counts the products of art.[30] We should also remark that none of the above discussed elements relate directly to anything that we usually link with the domain of aesthetics. Generally speaking, Hume defines refined taste as something which should guide man toward happiness and which

> enables us to judge of the characters of men, of compositions of genius, and of the productions of the nobler arts. A greater or less relish for those obvious beauties, which strike the senses, depends entirely upon the greater or less sensibility of the

> temper: But with regard to the sciences and liberal arts, a fine taste is, in some measure, the same with strong sense, or at least depends so much upon it, that they are inseparable. In order to judge aright of a composition of genius, there are so many views to be taken in, so many circumstances to be compared, and such a knowledge of human nature requisite, that no man, who is not possessed of the soundest judgment, will ever make a tolerable critic in such performances.[31]

It is therefore evident that taste here is a very broad concept, characterized by two major points: being able to be affected (positively or negatively) and being prone to judge. These abilities may exert themselves in the domain of art as well as morals (judging the characters of men). As Hume stated in his essay "Of Commerce," man is a variable being

> susceptible of many different opinions, principles, and rules of conduct. What may be true, while he adheres to one way of thinking, will be found false, when he has embraced an opposite set of manners and opinions.[32]

This holds true in the domain of taste, making taste something which is heavily influenced by what we commonly call the culture of an age, the set of opinions and manners in eighteenth-century language. Although durable approbation is identified as a possible constitutive element of a standard of taste, Hume nevertheless heavily circumscribes the likeliness of such a standard.

Though it is not possible to establish a coherent theory of taste from Hume's essays, what I suggest we are entitled to say is that he links taste to both phylogenetic and ontogenetic factors: the world's differing tastes are ultimately the products of the opinions and manners both of the age and of particular men. We can identify several factors which help the refinement of taste, and these are by no means confined to the domain of aesthetics, instead ranging from political conditions to the development of commerce.

Among Hume's essays, the one devoted to the standard of taste is best known among scholars and is undeniably a rich text which gives no definite answer to the problem of the nature (subjective or objective) of taste. Indeed, Hume identifies a law which can help us in directing our taste toward adequate objects, like that of durable admiration ("the uniform consent and experience of nations and ages"), [33] but he cleverly avoids creating a formula appropriate for all seasons. Although in the opening of "Of the Standard of Taste," Hume seems to adopt an utterly relativistic point of view, we will see that his opinion is far more nuanced. He observes that

> those, who can enlarge their view to contemplate distant nations and remote ages, are still more surprized at the great inconsistence and contrariety [of taste]. We are apt to call *barbarous* whatever departs widely from our own taste and apprehension: But soon find the epithet of reproach retorted on us.[34]

This sentence is remarkable. It shows the awareness of the benefits of a comparatist approach in intellectual forays, a method Hume uses often in his *Essays* and which characterizes the Scottish tradition of thought that gave birth to conjectural history. At the same time, it recognizes the importance of one's own standpoint: *barbarous* is an epithet that only denotes an incomprehension, a lack of knowledge, a distance in customs. Another quote seems to share the same degree of openness:

> every work of art, in order to produce its due effect on the mind, must be surveyed in a certain point of view, and cannot be fully relished by persons, whose situation, real or imaginary, is not conformable to that which is required by the performance. . . . A critic of a different age or nation, who should peruse this discourse [by an orator], must have all these circumstances in his eye, and must place himself in the same situation as the audience, in order to form a true judgment of the oration.[35]

One might infer from these quotes a readiness on Hume's part to judge cultural productions in their own terms, but other statements in "Of the Standard of Taste" seriously limit the reach of the preceding quotes. At a certain point in this text, Hume addresses the topic of changes in morals over the centuries:

> Must we throw aside the pictures of our ancestors, because of their ruffs and fardingales? But where the ideas of morality and decency alter from one age to another, and where vicious manners are described, without being marked with the proper characters of blame and disapprobation; this must be allowed to disfigure the poem, and to be a real deformity.[36]

So, although it is hard to establish a standard of taste, and although times and places modify our sensibilities, there are "real deformities" that one has to recognize. When we are dealing with "fardingales," we can place ourselves in the same situation as the audience and try to annihilate the temporal distance that would make us "throw aside" a picture due to our not having considered it in its own terms. But if we are dealing with morals, we cannot behave in the same way. We can here recall the Bedlam example at the opening of this chapter, with the shift

in sensibility that led from laughing at the insane to being affected by their status: a powerful representation of these two different attitudes can be found in Hogarth's eight plate of the *Rake's Progress* (1735), with the contrast between Sarah's sorrow and the amusement of the two fashionable ladies. In the age of the man of feeling, such laughs are no longer approvable, and the moral disapprobation of which Hume writes clearly has a retroactive validity. A poem or a picture that would display sympathy for blamable subjects should therefore be an object of blame as well, and in this case, we should not adopt the point of view of the age in which that sympathy was shown.

Apart from moral concerns, Hume seems to allow for the existence of other elements that further limit the reach of his aesthetic relativism:

> By comparison alone we fix the epithets of praise and blame, and learn how to assign the due degree of each. The coarsest daubing contains a certain lustre of colours and exactness of imitation, which are so far beauties, and would affect the mind of a peasant or Indian with the highest admiration. The most vulgar ballads are not entirely destitute of harmony or nature; and none but a person, familiarized to superior beauties, would pronounce their numbers harsh, or narration uninteresting.[37]

It is difficult to reconcile this last quote with that in which Hume talked about *barbarism*. Here, the peasant and the Indian share the same unprivileged standpoint; they represent the unpolished observer, who can clearly feel admiration for a picture but, in this very exertion of his emotions, denounces his socially subordinate position since what he is admiring would appear "harsh" or "uninteresting" to someone "familiarized to superior beauties." This last position is common in Hume's age, and the "tell me what you like, and I'll tell you who you are" perspective was used in order to judge the grade of civilization of the Other. As Hume clearly puts it, "though a civilized nation may easily be mistaken in the choice of their admired philosopher, they never have been found long to err, in their affection for a favourite epic or tragic author."[38] So, we can add, if a nation fails in its affection for an acclaimed author, this might mean that it is not civilized enough (or at all). I will conclude this chapter with an example of this kind of reasoning.

Writing about Musical Counterpoint, Talking about Civilization

An interesting example of the temporal dimension of taste in the musical realm relates to polyphonic music. The ability to create pieces of music in which multiple layers of sounds coexist following determinate rules

was a Western cultural emblem prized by European literati. In the words of David Irving, Europeans

> used counterpoint as a self-conscious cultural emblem to emphasize their difference from the non-European Other: one of the principal ways they could maintain a sense of musical "uniqueness" and "superiority" was to point to the apparent absence of counterpoint elsewhere, thereby increasing intercultural difference. Essentialist ideas about the exceptionalism of European musical theory and practice have long pervaded historical musicology, and contrapuntal polyphony was considered to be the exclusive preserve of early modern European music.[39]

In an ideal picture in which polyphony became a marker of civilization (and of polite taste), and the relish for polyphonic counterpoint was also considered natural—because polyphony was considered "naturally" pleasing to the senses—any instance (and there were many) in which a cultural encounter did not lead to a universal appreciation of European music puzzled the European observer. For example, the reverend Richard Eastcott, in his *Sketches of the Origin, Progress and Effects of Music, with an Account of the Ancient Bards and Minstrels* (1793), asserts that

> I have in my possession, a number of native airs, collected from different parts of Hindoostan, by Mr. William Bird, of Calcutta; and I was surprised to find by him, that accompaniments are totally unknown in every part of India; he says, that during a residence of nineteen years in India, and with the most favourable opportunities, he never heard the addition of a third or fifth, and that neither composers or performers have an idea beyond an octave. I bring this forward only as an extraordinary circumstance, considering the long intercourse which has subsisted between the people of that country and the Europeans.[40]

How is it possible to justify the fact that a Western musical practice, which ought to be perceived as part of a natural (and therefore universal) standard of taste, is not perceived as such by several other cultures?[41] A common answer to the question was precisely linked to the temporality of taste, but not in the sense that any time or place could, or indeed should, sport its specific values in matters of taste but rather in terms of the "irreversible civilization" Binoche writes about: when non-Western cultures failed to demonstrate a proper taste for polyphony (or "contrapuntal harmony," as it was then called), they stated their place in the hierarchy of civilized societies. As counterpoint should be naturally pleasing to a polite and civilized ear, not being sensible to its objective

beauties implied that said ear was not ready for appreciating the universal beauties relished by a highly civilized society.[42] Therefore, counterpoint became an evaluative-descriptive concept: writing, as the music historian Charles Burney did, that the Chinese had no taste for European harmony meant that they were cast a few steps down on civilization's ladder. Chinese culture was often a cause of puzzlement; Europeans acknowledged China's antique culture but were unable to perceive how it changed across centuries, therefore regarding China as a place frozen in time. Hume also addressed the "Chinese case" in his *Essays*. He thought that the stillness that, according to Westerners, characterized Chinese culture was motivated by the political nature of their empire:

> In CHINA, there seems to be a pretty considerable stock of politeness and science, which, in the course of so many centuries, might naturally be expected to ripen into something more perfect and finished, than what has yet arisen from them. But CHINA is one vast empire, speaking one language, governed by one law, and sympathizing in the same manners. . . . This seems to be one natural reason, why the sciences have made so slow a progress in that mighty empire.[43]

As we have already observed, Hume argued that a nation's development of arts and sciences required neighboring free states connected by commerce, a characteristic which the Chinese empire lacked.[44]

The example taken from the musical domain is telling. When addressing attributions of a lack of taste in music, we must recognize that it is not merely a description of a matter of fact, and the implications far exceed the domain of aesthetics. Being able to appreciate polyphonic music becomes a marker of politeness and civilization. As pointed out by Jennifer Tsien, in the eighteenth century,

> One could even say that the difference between good and bad taste was as important . . . as the difference between good and evil or between truth and illusion. In all of these areas of human experience philosophers attempted to resolve the problematic relationship between subjectivity and authority, and they sought to mark the difference between a savage and a civilized man.[45]

Being a man of taste meant many things in the eighteenth century; it marked a sense of belonging, and taste became part of what constituted a man's identity.

It is now time to resume the three questions which opened this chapter. Has taste ever been a *mere* matter of taste? What is the status of the reflections on taste in the economy of eighteenth-century thought? Are the reflections about taste developed in eighteenth-century Europe

part of the discipline that we refer to as aesthetics? In the preceding pages, I have argued that taste in the eighteenth century is a very broad concept, and by reading passages from Hume's *Essays*, I have showed that he discussed taste together with morals but also politics and economy (commerce). My main interest in this chapter has been in showing that taste acquired a historical dimension which was used to compare both ancient and new tastes as well as distant and homely tastes. This comparative method, together with the ideology of progress, brought about an evaluative system in which Western tastes and customs were often interpreted as the paramount of civilization. As such, Western taste was not only used as a touchstone to evaluate geographically distant cultures but also applied to create a standard which divided elite and popular culture (as we have seen in Hume's quote, in which the Indian and the peasant were on the same footing), a topic which, in the wake of the Ossian debate, was actively discussed in Europe. In judging geographically distant tastes, Europeans often exerted the "denial of coevalness" which Johannes Fabian has recognized as a typical historicist move:[46] some were assumed to be living in a modern civilized state, while others were regarded as being still "in the infancy of mankind." Taste has been used to demarcate these differences, and even if it is an element of aesthetics, we should bear in mind that it is so entrenched in social, political, and cultural life that we need to go beyond autonomy in order to fully comprehend its scope.

Notes

1 Paul Guyer, *A History of Modern Aesthetics*, Vol. 1 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 3.
2 Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 3.
3 *The History of Bethlem*, ed. J. Andrews, A. Briggs, R. Porter, P. Tucker, and K. Waddington (Abingdon: Routledge, 1997), 176–177.
4 *The History of Bethlem*, 184.
5 Dabney Townsend refers to this issue at the onset of his *Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2018 [1999]), 2:

> To use the word at all with regard to eighteenth-century Britain is anachronistic. It is also misleading because the issues in eighteenth-century British discussions centered on the arts and do not reflect many of the Kantian presuppositions that references to aesthetics now take for granted. Kantian notions of disinterestedness, intuitive sensibility, and the free play of the imagination, as well as relations to art, the beautiful, and the sublime based on aesthetic attitude appear, if at all, only in tentative ways in the eighteenth century.

See also Karl Axelsson, *Political Aesthetics: Addison and Shaftesbury on Taste, Morals and Society* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 17n72.
6 For example, when Dabney Townsend writes in *Hume's Aesthetic Theory: Taste and Sentiment* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 10, that Hume's way of

dealing with problems relating to the relationship between reason and passions "presumes a role for sentiment that is essentially aesthetic in the sense that 'aesthetics' refers to the way that feeling and sentiment determine how the mind represents its world," he is *de facto* expanding the realm of aesthetics.

7 Quote from David Lloyd, "The Pathological Sublime: Pleasure and Pain in the Colonial Context," in *The Postcolonial Enlightenment*, ed. Daniel Carey and Lynn Festa (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 73. I am using this quote to give an example of an established post-Kantian definition of taste.

8 Suvir Kaul, "How to write Postcolonial Histories of Empire," in *The Postcolonial Enlightenment*, ed. Daniel Carey and Lynn Festa (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 316.

9 Townsend, *Hume's Aesthetic Theory*; Peter Kivy, *The Seventh Sense: Francis Hutcheson and Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003).

10 Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, Vol. 1: *Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 148.

11 Brett Bowden, "Civilizational Security," *The Routledge Handbook of New Security Studies*, ed. P. J. Burgess (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 9. As highlighted by David Lloyd, culture has also been used as such a marker of difference: "the civilized society, with the complex differentiation of spheres that distinguish modernity, *has* culture. The uncivilized, who fail to differentiate the spheres of religion, art, labour, and so forth, *are* culture." See Lloyd, "The Pathological Sublime," 73.

12 Bertrand Binoche, *Les équivoques de la civilisation* (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2005), 16: "D'abstraction induite à partir de l'analyse des histoires empiriques, c'est-à-dire d'histoire naturelle de l'humanité, la civilisation devint *l'histoire universelle du genre humain* . . . En s'universalisant ainsi, la civilisation devient aussi *irreversible*."

13 Think of Hume's letter to William Strahan in August 1770, in which he says, "I believe this is the historical Age, and this the historical Nation." Quoted in David Allan, "Identity and Innovation: Historiography in the Scottish Enlightenment," in *A Companion to Enlightenment Historiography*, ed. Sophie Bourgault and Robert Sparling (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 307. About Scottish historiography, see also "Smith's Edinburgh Lectures: A Conjectural History," chap. 5 in Nicholas Phillipson, *Adam Smith: An Enlightened Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), and Silvia Sebastiani, "National Characters and Race: A Scottish Enlightenment Debate," in *Character, Self, and Sociability in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. Thomas Ahnert and Susan Manning (New York: Palgrave, 2011), 187–205.

14 Allan, "Identity and Innovation," 319.

15 Milestones of this historiographical tradition are William Robertson's *History of Scotland* (1759), Adam Ferguson's *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), many of David Hume's essays in *Essay and Treatises on Several Subjects* (1772), Adam Smith's *Lectures on Jurisprudence* (1762–1763), John Millar's *Observations Concerning the Distinction of Ranks in Society* (1771), and Lord Kames's *Sketches of the History of Man* (1774).

16 Daniel Carey, *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson: Contesting Diversity in the Enlightenment and Beyond* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 188.

17 Quoted by Marc Fumaroli, "Les abeilles et les araignées," in *La Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, ed. Anne-Marie Lecoq (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 171: "le bon sens et la raison étaient les mêmes dans tous les siècles. Le goût de Paris s'est trouvé conforme à celui d'Athènes."

18 David L. Porter, "Monstruous Beauty: Eighteenth-Century Fashion and the Aesthetics of the Chinese Taste," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35, no. 3 (2002): 400.
19 James Noggle, "Literature and Taste, 1700–1800," *Oxford Handbooks Online*, https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935338.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935338-e-108, accessed August 19, 2019. On the temporality of taste, see also Noggle, *The Temporality of Taste in Eighteenth-Century British Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
20 Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, ed. Paul Guyer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 66.
21 Townsend, *Hume's Aesthetic Theory*, 137.
22 David Hume, "Of Eloquence," in *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary* (hereafter *EMPL*), ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Classics, 1987), 97.
23 Hume, "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences," in *EMPL*, 112.
24 Hume, "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences," in *EMPL*, 113–114.
25 Hume, "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences," in *EMPL*, 119.
26 Hume, "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences," in *EMPL*, 126–127.
27 Rousseau, too, showed in his first *Discourse* a link between political regimes, like monarchies, and the requisite of making oneself "agreeable"; in Rousseau's case, however, this progress in the arts was negatively connoted, as it spread deceit, opacity, and cheat.
28 Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts," in *EMPL*, 270–271.
29 Hume, "Of National Characters," in *EMPL*, 202.
30 Hume, "Of Commerce," in *EMPL*.
31 Hume, "Of the Delicacy of Taste and Passion," in *EMPL,* 6.
32 Hume, "Of Commerce," in *EMPL*, 256.
33 Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," in *EMPL*, 237.
34 Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," in *EMPL*, 227.
35 Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," in *EMPL*, 239.
36 Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," in *EMPL*, 246.
37 Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," in *EMPL*, 238.
38 Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," in *EMPL*, 243.
39 David Irving, *Colonial Counterpoint: Music in Early Modern Manila* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 18.
40 Richard Eastcott, *Sketches of the Origin, Progress and Effects of Music, with an Account of the Ancient Bards and Minstrels* (Bath, 1793), 256. A similar remark is to be found in Jean-Baptiste Labat's *Voyage du Chevalier Des Marchais en Guinée, Isles voisines et a Cayenne…*, Vol. 2 (Amsterdam, Aux dépens de la Compagnie, 1731), 200:

> Il est surprenant que les Européens établis à Juda, et particulièrement les François qui y ont introduit le luxe de leurs meubles et l'abondance et la délicatesse de la table, n'ayent pas encore fait passer chez ces peuples leur musique et leur symphonie. Rien n'est plus aisé : car ces peuples ont du gout, et il ne faudroit pas beaucoup de tems pour les persuader d'abandonner leur concerts barbares qui déchirent les oreilles les plus dures, et leur faire aimer nos instrumens et notre musique.

41 Rousseau is one of the few writers who will actually use this observation not to support the view of the primacy of Western civilization but to call into question the very principle of the universal validity of harmony and counterpoint. It is, however, significant that his position was a result not of a purely "aesthetic" theory but of his uncommon views about the nature of progress and his social theories as well.

42 Indeed, "unreadiness" has been a characteristic Westerners attributed their Others: "Historicism . . . one might say, came to non-European peoples in the nineteenth century as somebody's way of saying 'not yet' to somebody else." See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincialising Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008 [2000]), 8.

43 Hume, "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences," in *EMPL*, 122.

44 For a more nuanced discussion of Scottish references to China, see Philip Dodds, "'One vast empire': China, Progress, and the Scottish Enlightenment," *Global Intellectual History* 3 (2018): 47–70.

45 Jennifer Tsien, *The Bad Taste of Others: Judging Literary Value in Eighteenth-Century France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 2.

46 Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), chaps. 1 and 2.

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5 Adam Smith's Aesthetic Psychology

Emily Brady and Nicole Hall

Introduction

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Adam Smith did not develop a comprehensive theory of taste. He did not write extensively on or publish essays dealing with key questions of the time—for example, the nature of beauty, sublimity, tragedy, and aesthetic judgment—and his published work in aesthetics is limited to his essays on the imitative arts and student notes from his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*.[1] Little has been written about these essays, and for good reason, as they are largely derivative of work by his contemporaries.[2] Fortunately, and interestingly, aesthetic themes arise in his other philosophical writings which can extend our understanding of his views on the key aesthetic issues of his day. Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (hereafter TMS) and his essays on the history and philosophy of science provide especially interesting sources for his reflections on beauty, imagination, tragedy, and the sublime.[3] In TMS, we see extensive use of aesthetic concepts and examples from the arts. Smith's essay on "The History of Astronomy" places creative imagination at the center of scientific theory and knowledge, and aesthetic concepts and judgments appear to be fundamental in our experiences of wonder, surprise, and admiration in relation to, for example, natural systems.[4]

Several commentators have sought to identify some of these aesthetic dimensions of Smith's moral philosophy.[5] Others have taken the further step to show his tendency to bring moral and aesthetic norms together.[6] For example, it has been argued that the fundamental evaluative concepts of TMS, "propriety" and "impropriety," apply to sentiments in general, not only moral ones. Approbation and disapprobation are equated with concepts such as "decency" and "ungracefulness," while "harmony and correspondence" characterize the fellow feeling which gives rise to approbation.[7] Understanding the virtues also reveals an aesthetic orientation, in which, for example, "Virtue is excellence, something uncommonly great and beautiful, which rises far above what is vulgar and ordinary."[8] This thought is akin to views held by Smith's contemporaries, who, writing in an explicitly aesthetic context, found

that virtues of character, such as heroism or benevolence, evoke a feeling of the sublime.[9]

Our chapter builds upon these insights to argue that Smith's most interesting aesthetic ideas can be found in his discussion of sympathy and sympathetic imagination, and how they operate in the development of his theory of moral sentiments. To structure our discussion, we draw out four aesthetic themes: (1) the place of aesthetic concepts in TMS, (2) moral and aesthetic perception, (3) sympathetic attention and imagination, and (4) aesthetic communication. Overall, through our discussion, we hope to establish something like a Smithian "aesthetic psychology." The close relationship between aesthetic and moral philosophy is well documented in the history of aesthetics, and over the course of discussing these four themes, interactions between Smith's moral and aesthetic psychology will also surface.[10]

Sympathy

Before examining these themes, we turn to their source and context: Smith's concept of sympathy. This concept is used in a technical sense, that is, it does not refer to the emotions of pity or compassion, and it is best understood in terms of the communication of feeling, as Smith puts it, our "fellow-feeling for any passion whatever."[11] He writes, "As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation."[12]

The exercise of projective imagination underpins sympathy—or imaginatively putting oneself in the shoes of another: "By the imagination we place ourselves in his situation . . . we enter as it were into his body. . . ."[13] Through a "double movement" of imagination, we project ourselves into the shoes of an "impartial spectator" and, then, from that position, imaginatively put ourselves into the shoes of the other.[14] The standpoint of the impartial spectator is not abstract or detached in a strong sense. Rather, it involves affective engagement with the situation and person/s at hand so that the impartial spectator judges the moral situation from a position that is not wholly abstracted from oneself. One is imaginatively placed into the situation in a more impartial way and then considers how one reacts to it. It is significant for Smith that sympathy is not concerned with trying to feel the *same* feelings as the other person but rather imagining oneself in the other person's situation. He finds it important that a gap may exist between one's own feelings and the feelings of the other person—each may be experiencing different emotions with respect to the situation.[15]

Why does Smith see things this way? The act of projective imagination provides a more objective standpoint, and he recognizes that there will

be situations in which one cannot empathize with others, as illustrated by his discussion about trying to sympathize with the dead.[16] The inability to feel empathy is not a weakness in the moral spectator; rather, it is a function of, and reveals, differences between ourselves and others. Such inability shows the limitations of our imaginative abilities and the fact that we are distinctive as individuals. On his account, we do not—and cannot—fully abstract from our own feelings and positions in the world.[17]

These ideas are especially helpful in retaining the subject and her or his own character when making moral judgments. Our perspectives as persons with our own histories and affective experiences are very much at the heart of what it is to be a moral agent. In these imaginative efforts, overly abstracting from one's situation would be challenging, and not necessarily desirable. Understanding the position of the moral agent in this thicker, more situated, sense provides a rich source for reflecting on the aesthetic scope of Smith's ideas in TMS. In his time—and still today—aesthetic judgments are distinguished by their particularity as well as their communicability. The character of aesthetic judgment as both particular but also communicable to others—what Kant viewed as a "subjective universality"—lies at the heart of the problem of taste for many eighteenth-century philosophers. Judgments of taste necessarily capture the particularity of the individual while also involving some mechanism by which they have social force.

Smith's Use of Aesthetic Concepts

In order to draw out the aesthetic themes arising through sympathy, we identify first, in broader terms, the function of *aesthetic concepts* in Smith's moral philosophy. Consider these examples of aesthetic concepts drawn from across TMS.[18] Beginning with positively valenced concepts, we find the following: beautiful, noble, majestic, admirable, graceful, agreeable, soft, gentle, cheerful, glittering, concord, harmony, order, tranquility, regularity, delicacy, stile, and wonder. Several negatively valenced aesthetic concepts also appear, such as: awful, harsh, jarring, discordant, irregular, vulgar, gaudy, ugly, and deformity.

These aesthetic concepts function in at least two different ways. First, they are sometimes applied as terms of approval or disapproval with respect to moral choices or actions. Robert Fudge goes so far as to describe them as the application of *aesthetic norms* to moral action.[19] For example, Smith describes benevolence as beautiful: "As benevolence bestows upon those actions which proceed from it, a beauty superior to all others, so the want of it, and much more the contrary inclination, communicates a peculiar deformity to whatever evidences such a disposition."[20] Virtue is also described in aesthetic terms: "Virtue is excellence,

something uncommonly great and beautiful, which rises far above what is vulgar and ordinary."[21]

Smith then divides the virtues into those related to the beautiful and those related to the sublime:

> The amiable virtues consist in that degree of sensibility which surprises by its exquisite and unexpected delicacy and tenderness. The awful and respectable, in that degree of self-command which astonishes by its amazing superiority over the most ungovernable passions of human nature.[22]

The language here appears to be one of making aesthetic judgments about different kinds of virtues. The amiable ones are exquisite, delicate, and tender, while the awful and respectable amaze, astonish, or show a superiority of self-command. These descriptions were very much in use during Smith's time as terms that distinguished beauty and sublimity in both art and nature.

Not surprisingly, these ideas also reflect a neoclassical notion of beauty, as embraced by many of his peers in the eighteenth century. Beauty is understood in terms of order, harmony, and tranquility, associations that, as we have seen, are also used as terms of merit and demerit in the moral domain. The value of harmonious and orderly systems is clear across Smith's philosophical works.[23] Along with his peers, he marked out a clear role for the sublime, both in relation to moral character (as noted above, this was common in his time) and in other contexts. While his views tended to reflect the more harmonious sublimity of grandeur that we see in Addison and Kames rather than the terrible sublime of Burke, we do see an interest in aesthetic qualities beyond order, such as the "awful" and "irregular greatness."[24] In his essay "The History of Astronomy," as objects of study, the movements of the planets are considered great as well as scientific truths. The sublime and wonder also appear to serve as an original motivation for early philosophical and scientific inquiry, with reactions of amazement to comets, eclipses, and other natural phenomena, while frightening, nonetheless raising questions about their origins and causes.[25]

Smith uses aesthetic concepts in another way by constructing analogies between aesthetic and moral judgments. Sometimes, the aim is to illustrate or reinforce some point about moral judgment: for instance,

> The man whose sympathy keeps time to my grief cannot but admit the reasonableness of my sorrow. He who admires the same poem, or the same picture, and admires them exactly as I do, must surely allow the justness of my admiration. He who laughs at the same joke, and laughs along with me, cannot well deny the propriety of my laughter.[26]

At other times, Smith draws a contrast between the moral and the aesthetic. While the ultimate aim is to shed light on the moral, we do learn something about his views regarding taste. In a section of the TMS, "Of the Influence of Custom and Fashion upon Moral Sentiments," he notes that, since aesthetic taste is strongly influenced by "custom and fashion," we would also expect such influence to be present with respect to our moral sentiments. However, he then points to an important difference:

> The principles of the imagination, upon which our sense of beauty depends, are of a very nice and delicate nature, and may easily be altered by habit and education: but the sentiments of moral approbation and disapprobation, are founded on the strongest and most vigorous passions of human nature; and though they may be somewhat warpt, cannot be entirely perverted.[27]

Aesthetic judgment appears to be more vulnerable to influence than moral judgment because, with the latter, we feel more strongly about our views and will hold onto them more firmly.[28]

So, we find that aesthetic concepts serve to characterize features of Smith's moral theory as well as present contrasts between the two domains, thereby also *distinguishing* the two domains. More broadly, it is important to emphasize how sympathy and propriety, his two central moral concepts, are linked to aesthetic concepts. There is a recurring identification of sympathy with beauty through aesthetic terms such as "harmony" and "concord." As Charles Griswold notes, "The pull of sympathy in our lives testifies, in short, to our love of beauty."[29] A key moral principle for Smith, propriety, has a strong aesthetic tone in itself *and* in its connections to the concord of sympathy:

> When original passions of the person principally concerned are in perfect concord with the sympathetic emotions of the spectator, they necessarily appear to this last as just and proper, and suitable to their objects. . . .To approve of the passions of another, therefore, as suitable to their objects, is the same thing as to observe that we entirely sympathize with them.[30]

Propriety refers to the ways in which one's actions may be seen as appropriate or proportional to the cause or object of some other action. It expresses a fittingness, a sense of right proportion. In relation to our conscience, Smith writes, "it is only by consulting this judge within, that we can ever see what relates to ourselves in its proper shape and dimensions."[31] It is almost as if one is judging whether some action takes the right form, in a literal sense—not unlike judging form in a painting or a work of architecture. Did the artist get the balance just right? Is the result harmonious or discordant? The influence of Aristotle is clear

here, with virtue as harmony, and the golden mean, having an important place.

Moral and Aesthetic Perception

The next theme we explore is the *perceptual* character of Smith's moral philosophy. Rather than being based in moral reasoning or a set of duties, moral judgment is strongly, though not exclusively, perceptual.[32] This perceptual character lies in Smith's emphasis on the spectator—not only the impartial spectator of sympathetic imagination but also the fundamental role played by perception and feeling as such.

How does perception function in moral judgment, according to Smith? Sympathetic imagination begins in perception; we observe actions and use projective imagination to place ourselves as spectators of our own and other's actions. As moral spectators, we observe the particulars of any situation; in approving or disapproving of our own actions, we "view it, as it were, with his eyes and from his station."[33] Griswold has pointed to the theatrical aspect running through Smith's moral theory, wherein human actions and moral situations are compared to dramatic spectacles, often with an emphasis on *tragic* drama.[34] The moral self is observed—appreciated—as if it were on a stage, and, as we have seen, Smith's rendering of the concept of propriety is itself highly suggestive of something having the appearance of harmonious form. Perspectival and spatial analogies are also used to support various points: for example,

> As to the eye of the body, objects appear great or small, not so much according to their real dimensions, as according to the nearness or distance of their situation; so do they likewise to what may be called the natural eye of the mind: and we remedy the defects of both these organs pretty much in the same manner. In my present situation an immense landscape of lawns, and woods, and distant mountains, seems to do no more than cover the little window which I write by, and to be out of all proportion less than the chamber in which I am sitting. I can form a just comparison between those great objects and the little objects around me, in no other way, than by transporting myself, at least in fancy, to a different station, from whence I can survey both at nearly equal distances, and thereby form some judgment of their real proportions.[35]

Smith's view of the self is also explained via the perceptual metaphor of a mirror. Importantly, he does not develop an idea of the isolated self that then sympathizes with others; rather, the self is constituted through relationships with others. This point is made through the thought experiment of the solitary person growing up outside of human society: "he could no more think of his own character . . . of the beauty or deformity

of his own mind, than of the beauty or deformity of his own face." But if this person is brought into society, "he is immediately provided with the mirror which he wanted before."[36] (We shall have more to say about the social character of the moral self below.)

Perception provides the basis of aesthetic judgment, according to just about any eighteenth-century or contemporary account, so it should not be difficult to see the close links between the moral and the aesthetic. Although the grounds of judgment may differ between the likes of Addison, Gerard, and Kant, that is, empirical or *a priori*, perception (and imagination) has a greater role to play than reason and understanding, marking an important difference between aesthetic and other types of judgments. The classification of aesthetic qualities as similar to secondary qualities, perceptual qualities, is linked to Locke, with imagination's role being traceable, at least, back to Addison.

In eighteenth-century aesthetics, arguably, the boldest account of aesthetic perception comes from Hutcheson, Smith's teacher at Glasgow, who claimed that beauty was perceivable through a special internal sense. This special internal sense was distinct from the imagination (since the imagination evokes objects that are not necessarily perceived) and the intellectual sense (since it is reflective, comparative, evoking ideas without images).[37] However, Hutcheson wrote:

> It is of no consequence whether we call these Ideas of Beauty and Harmony, Perceptions of the external senses of Seeing and Hearing, or not. I should rather chuse to call our power of perceiving these Ideas, an internal sense, were it for the convenience of distinguishing them from other sensations of Seeing and Hearing, which men may have without Perception of Beauty and Harmony.[38]

Beauty was an idea that found its origin in passive corporeal sensation but was brought about by reflection.[39] It thus included features of the object and the capacity for comparison and abstraction through thought, unlike primary or secondary qualities, which otherwise require neither comparison nor abstraction. In this way, Hutcheson's aesthetic theory could vacillate between perceptual, external, objects and internal objects, such as mathematical theorems, without either over-rationalizing aesthetic experience or restricting it to the privacy of idiosyncratic, personal, judgment.

Now, we should be careful when considering just how perception figures because Smith disagreed with Hutcheson's notion of a moral sense: moral perception should *not* be understood as a kind of immediate or intuitive grasp of moral values. We don't just see them. Rather, importantly, moral judgment involves reflection and interpretation, aided by imagination and any knowledge of the facts and context of the particular situation. Griswold suggests how imagination, rather than reason,

carries out this work: "The imagination assembles the background assumptions and narrative within which someone's emotions or action or expression strike the observer as noble or base, graceful or offensive."[40] In Smith's moral philosophy, imagination is productive (or creative) rather than merely reproductive, which also indicates links to aesthetic modes of this capacity.

So, it is possible to see how sensibility lies at the heart of Smith's approach. There are clear links to perception, and the pleasure one takes in moral concord seems to be one of the perception of harmonious qualities—except that the object is a moral situation rather than a work of art or landscape.

Sympathetic Attention and Imagination

Sympathy, perception, and imagination ground an orientation of moral judgment as one of sympathetic attention. In contrast to ethical rationalism, Smith puts the subject's feelings and imagination, combined with the abstraction of the impartial spectator, front and center for discerning moral value. Sympathetically directed attention is also a feature of judgments of beauty or taste—not altogether surprising, given discussions of the concept of disinterestedness found in writers before and after Smith in the eighteenth century.

From the outset, and to be clear, we do not equate sympathetic attention with disinterestedness, and we do not subscribe to the idea of disinterestedness, reinterpreted by Jerome Stolnitz, which has exercised a significant amount of influence in the history of aesthetics to this day. That is to say, we do not take disinterestedness to be a concept that equates it, as per Stolnitz, to "a mode of attention," "a way of organizing attention" that "terminates upon the object itself." Rather, its value lies in it as a beginning, a concern for making the object central to aesthetic experience in the first instance while retaining openness with regard both to the object and to the subjectively felt response.[41]

Both sympathetic attention and disinterestedness with respect to judgments of beauty reflect the ideas in moral philosophy at the time, that is, a movement away from self-interest and desire. Shaftesbury, for example, rejected Hobbes's idea that the natural state of man was one in which he is not empowered by reason—quite to the contrary, ethics was derived from reason and sentiment that strives for the public good.[42] If "man" is virtuous, that is to say, not in a state of self-interested desire, he is able to contemplate objects of aesthetic interest: namely, the arts.[43] For Shaftesbury, the qualities of beauty, harmony, and deformity are perceivable, and indicate something about their "sensibility," which is about attending to an object with the same kind of approach and care with which we attend to other persons. In this case, instead of having an opening onto another mind, we have an opening onto external objects

and states of affairs. Furthermore, in Hutcheson's view, the feeling of beauty involves indifference to the "practical advantages of the object" on the part of the spectator. In addition to his thoughts on the internal sense, his ideas provide further context for Smith's views on moral approbation.[44]

The pleasure of moral approbation, for Smith, seems very similar to the disinterested pleasure that is, in his time, associated with judgments of beauty.[45] In the very first line of TMS, he writes:

> How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles of his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it.[46]

We could easily replace "in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him" with "in natural beauty and the arts," making the sentence read as: "How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles of his nature, which interest him ***in natural beauty and the arts***, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it." Our deriving "nothing except from it" speaks to the *non-instrumental* interest taken with respect to both types of value: aesthetic and moral. Moral sympathetic attention involves the careful attention to particulars, similar to that taken when perceptually and imaginatively exploring landscapes or works of art. The difference, of course, lies in the implications of the two kinds of non-instrumental interest. For other people, one is concerned about their happiness, whereas, with natural beauty and the arts, one is concerned not with their happiness but with their beauty (or, more generally, aesthetic qualities) only.

So, another very close relationship between moral and aesthetic judgment becomes evident in TMS. But we can take this point a step further by showing just how Smith's notion of sympathetic attention is valuable to contemporary debates in aesthetics. First, sympathetic imagination provides a robust notion of a type of imaginative activity, which, as Smith articulates it, operates in appropriate ways. This notion can serve to fill out an understanding of a creative yet not unbridled imagination: one that is consistent with appreciating the aesthetic object for its own sake. Second, his idea of the impartial spectator can provide, we believe, a richer and less problematic notion than disinterestedness, which has a rather troubled recent history in aesthetics.[47] The emphasis Smith places on both perception and imagination in his moral epistemology, coupled with a lesser role for knowledge and understanding, opens up interesting territory for drawing explicitly on his ideas to think through aesthetic judgment and experience.

Let us begin with imagination. Smith's theory of this mental capacity is inherently social. He emphasizes imagination's creative and productive

powers as stemming from the individual but indicates that it functions in an essentially communicative way. He constructs a creative yet solid account in which he trusts imagination's creative powers but recognizes that it could be led astray. The "illusion of imagination" is not an exercise of fantasy; rather, it refers to the fact that, as he puts it, "we have no immediate experience of what other men feel," and so we use imagination to "conceive what we ourselves should feel in the like situation."[48] In so far as imagination operates in a projective mode, it is directed outwards rather than inwards and used, essentially, to adopt a position in relation to others. Smith's moral rendering of this power is deeply *sympathetic*. It is even sympathetic in science and natural philosophy, in which imagination seeks to bring order and harmony to the world. On natural philosophy's use of imagination to aid scientific discovery, he writes:

> Those philosophers transported themselves, in fancy, to the centres of these imaginary Circles, and took pleasure in surveying from thence, all those fantastical motions, arranged, according to that harmony and order, which it had been the end of all their researches to bestow upon them. Here, at last, they enjoyed that tranquillity and repose which they had pursued through all the mazes of this intricate hypothesis; and here they beheld this, the most beautiful and magnificent part of the great theatre of nature, so disposed and constructed, that they could attend, with ease and delight, to all the revolutions and changes that occurred in it.[49]

In these ways, we find that Smith outlines a theory of imagination that is largely other-directed, rather than self-directed.

Again, imagination was fundamental to the turn toward the subject that is often remarked upon as central to eighteenth-century aesthetics,[50] and Smith would have been familiar with imagination's aesthetic as well as its more general philosophical uses. Although he does not really develop a theory of imagination in his essays on aesthetics, we can look to his moral philosophy to discover just how imagination might function in an other-directed mode in the aesthetic response.

Why would such an application be of any interest? It can help us to develop an understanding of how imagination functions in appropriate ways in our aesthetic judgments of both art and nature.[51] Sympathetic imagination provides the basis of a robust account of imaginative projection, whether in the context of developing an ethical attitude or within the less action-oriented situation of the aesthetic response. In aesthetic appreciation, projection identifies a form of imaginative activity that is not uncommon, as in cases in which we project ourselves into the shoes of fictional characters or, more abstractly, into the scene depicted in a painting. Indeed, Smith himself supports his discussion of

sympathetic imagination by noting how we may have fellow-feeling for the plight of characters in tragic drama.[52]

Let us turn to the impartial spectator and what role it might take in aesthetic judgment. How are our aesthetic judgments appropriate or fitting to their objects? What would constitute impropriety, not in moral judgment but in aesthetic judgment? Cases are not difficult to find; appropriate judgments are not idiosyncratic or sentimental, and they do not distort the aesthetic object through bias or inappropriate emotions. Although aesthetic judgment does not have the depth and potential life or death impacts of moral concern, the impartial spectator and self-command aid in understanding propriety in the aesthetic realm. It shows us how to stand outside ourselves to check indulgent or distorting tendencies and bring judgment back to the aesthetic object itself.

The idea of the impartial spectator can, thus, be adopted in order to provide a better notion than disinterestedness, which has been viewed more recently as defining an overly abstracted, distanced aesthetic perceiver. The impartial spectator gives more content to a kind of aesthetic distancing and takes account of the individual. This position balances partiality and impartiality by including the sentiments of the perceiver and at the same time involving a mechanism for distancing oneself from individual bias or too personal emotions and imaginings. Through internalizing the impartial spectator, we might find the right balance between the character of the aesthetic perceiver and the character of the aesthetic object.

The impartial spectator reins his imagination in when required. Essentially, in this case, the subject cannot imagine the impartial spectator sharing in these imaginings or the various feelings associated with the more personal aspects of the situation. The aspects of appreciation that cannot be shared are judged to be inappropriate to the object. Here, we suggest an aesthetic application of Smith's idea of *self-command*. Because he was more Aristotelian than both Hutcheson and Hume, he maintains the importance of *moderating* feeling and argues that self-command is a virtue developed through practice.[53] In applying self-command to aesthetic judgment, it may have the benefit of guiding aesthetic responses, though it may not operate consciously and, in fact, may simply become a habit over time. Self-command in an aesthetic situation may serve to firmly direct the subject's perceptual, emotional, and imaginative attention outwards, and help to maintain a focus on the qualities of the aesthetic object. The potential upshot is a more sensitive and deeper form of aesthetic engagement.

In essence, we might say that the components of sympathetic attention—imagination appropriately directed, plus the impartial spectator—provide something like a "regulative ideal" for aesthetic judgment. The moral agent exercising sympathetic imagination is somewhat like Hume's true judge from "Of the Standard of Taste," in which

"Strong sense, united to delicate sentiment, improved by practice, perfected by comparison, and cleared of all prejudice, can alone entitle critics to this valuable character."[54] It is not difficult to bring Smith's own ideas into the aesthetic context since he provides the comparison himself:

> The decision of the man who judges that exquisite beauty is preferable to the grossest deformity, or that twice two are equal to four, must certainly be approved of by all of the world, but will not, surely, be much admired. It is the acute and delicate discernment of the man of taste, who distinguishes the minute, and scarce perceptible differences between beauty and deformity; it is the comprehensive accuracy of the experienced mathematician, who unravels, with ease, the most intricate and perplexed proportions; it is the great leader in science and taste, the man who directs and conducts our own sentiments, the extent and superior justness of whose talents astonish us with wonder and surprise, who excites our admiration, and seems to deserve our applause . . .[55]

The aesthetic self maintains the perceptual sensitivity, careful consideration of detail, and emotional and imaginative attention which underpin appropriate and reliable aesthetic judgments.

Aesthetic Communication

We have seen that sympathetic imagination is essentially social in character. The moral self is not an isolated individual making judgments from a completely abstracted standpoint; rather, it is formed through our spectatorship of ourselves from the outside.[56] Smith's account recognizes both the inner life of the moral self and the sense in which that self cannot be conceived apart from others. He is also very much concerned with how our moral judgments fit with the judgments of the rest of society—after all, the development of moral sentiment is a social matter.[57] Lewis White Beck draws out this point:

> I feel my emotions and I do not feel another's, but I learn what they are, what they are called, how they are appropriately expressed by watching other people respond to what I believe is the same public world having the same emotion-provoking features, listening to what they say, and speaking the same language.[58]

What is the significance of the social and public character of the moral self for aesthetics? Aesthetic and moral judgments are sometimes contrasted using the claim that aesthetic judgment is not subject to social norms. While this difference exists in some respects, it can certainly be overplayed. Although aesthetic judgment is associated with what

Kant called a "judgment of taste," most theories distinguish between preferences and aesthetic judgments which seek justification beyond the individual (the "community of sentiment" is a familiar notion in eighteenth-century aesthetics). Making proper aesthetic judgments is not only a matter of the aesthetic object in question but also about how these judgments fit with those of other appreciators. Both moral and aesthetic values contribute to the character of an individual, and in this respect, they also to some extent determine how we fit in and get along with others. Smith points to the importance of concord in human life, generally, by using a musical metaphor: "The great pleasure of conversation and society, besides, arises from a certain correspondence of sentiments and opinions, from a certain harmony of minds, which like so many musical instruments coincide and keep time with one another."[59]

It is not entirely clear, though, that Smith values the correspondence of sentiments equally in both aesthetic and moral contexts because he does note differences. He seems to think that lack of agreement is both easier and less important in aesthetic situations than it is in moral situations. Moral matters affect me "much more nearly," and "We do not view them from the same station, as we do a picture, or a poem." We may disagree on the beauty of a picture, but we do not feel strongly about that disagreement; rather, we feel "indifferent." But without sympathy for my misfortunes, my grief, my injuries, or my feelings of resentment, Smith says, "we can no longer converse on these subjects."[60] We are not sure what he means by our viewing pictures and poems from the same station because it would seem that our aesthetic judgments can diverge as much as our moral ones. He may be trying to emphasize the more difficult task of the moral compared to the aesthetic spectator, wherein it becomes necessary to perform an act of moral projection. Perhaps in aesthetic matters, discussion is clearer, whereas in moral matters, fellow-feeling is key—but not always clear.

In any case, if Smith is putting moral concerns above aesthetic ones, he is not alone among his eighteenth-century peers. Many views of this time display a closeness between moral and aesthetic situations, if you will (as we have illustrated above). From his view, it seems that the aesthetic subject might feel quite different than someone else about the value of a work of art, but that lack of fellow-feeling would not have deep consequences. If you could not agree with my praise of Mozart's music, I might think you lack taste, but I would not be likely to see it as a serious failing or the grounds to end a friendship. However, against this, imagine an instance in which deep partiality in aesthetic taste becomes more serious, though still without life and death implications—for example, a Baroque enthusiast who refuses to rate any other musical styles as valuable. We might see the scope of this enthusiast's taste as problematically partial, even selfish, as well as seriously narrow-minded. Indeed, it might make us wonder

whether or not such a person would be intolerant in other kinds of judgments.

Smith may, in fact, overlook the extent to which our aesthetic tastes do matter to many of us, especially when they are based in extensive experience or some skill we may have developed with respect to a specific art form. Thinking in more contemporary terms, a jazz buff might be offended if their views were not taken seriously. Smith is right to distinguish our lack of fellow-feeling as one thing and the context and implications of that lack of fellow-feeling as another. In at least this respect, aesthetic and moral matters diverge. Nevertheless, Smith's ideas in TMS provide interesting support for the relevance and importance of aesthetic communication, then and now.

The Relationship between Aesthetic and Moral Value

We close our discussion by clarifying how we view relationships between moral and aesthetic value in TMS (limited to sketching out a few points rather than a deeper treatment of this aspect in Smith's thought).

First, we think it can be shown that Smith recognizes the moral and the aesthetic as independent domains of value. There is plenty of evidence that aesthetic and moral taste have different objects and concerns, even if there are overlaps and affinities too. Smith's uses of aesthetic concepts and examples from the arts suggest that they have meaning independently of moral usage and contexts. Although others have made a case for this, we have not been arguing that his moral theory is based strongly on aesthetic norms.[61] We do not endorse the view that moral sentiment is a type of aesthetic sentiment. Certainly, his use of aesthetic concepts reveals a kind of aesthetic orientation in TMS, but Smith is also careful to identify the differences between aesthetic and moral situations—even if various analogies to the arts are used to illustrate the latter. Indeed, Smith's examples, literary devices, and rhetoric may be seen as reflecting his keen interest in stories, theater, and literature. As such, he uses them to articulate a moral story, without thereby identifying the moral with the aesthetic. If one accepts that there are two domains of value, it is easier to see how they might be said to mutually support one another. Aesthetic concepts can help us to grasp how sympathy works as well as the perceptual, spectatorial character of moral judgments; the concept of propriety; and the ideal of order and harmony in morality.

Leading to our second point, we can also see how ideas from his moral philosophy might inform a latent aesthetic psychology in TMS. There is careful, sympathetic attention in both moral and aesthetic situations. The ways in which the agent develops imagination in more challenging and serious matters, and works toward impartiality in situations which absolutely demand it can help us to become better and more careful

aesthetic critics; enable us to see other points of view; and encourage us to become less wedded to views which are, perhaps, less well justified or well grounded. Smith points to ways in which sympathy can be distorted and distorting—so, we will need to be careful and find ways to develop something like "aesthetic appreciative virtues." Concepts like appropriate judgment and impartiality will have a place in producing sound aesthetic judgments, yet we also need to allow for the freedom that lies at the heart of the aesthetic response. The sense in which the moral can support the aesthetic does not run *too* deep.

Third, we can see how the categories of aesthetic and moral become blurred at times, even if the two domains are largely independent in the first instance. Broadie has emphasized the influence of Aristotle on Smith: it is perhaps best shown through the emphasis on moral character rather than moral duties or principles in TMS (though we do get general, flexible rules).[62] As such, there is room for aesthetic concepts as more easily applied to character, just as they might be applied to works of art or landscapes that have particular virtues, such as harmonious order. The idea of a beautiful soul, or living one's life as a work of art are certainly not foreign in aesthetics and ethics today, with Smith providing one interesting account of this sort of idea.[63] We might try to live our lives as works of art in a couple of ways, that is, by striving for propriety in our actions and by becoming better critics of human life by developing sympathetic imagination and fine-tuning our capacity to become impartial spectators.

Even though Smith aims to develop a theory of moral sentiments, there are valuable ideas to be found on various themes that resonate in the field of philosophical aesthetics today, such as sensitive perception, sympathetic attention and appropriate imaginative engagement, the importance of aesthetic communication, and the relationship between moral and aesthetic value. His ideas are not to be found in any detail in his actual writings on the arts, yet they extend the aesthetic content of his philosophy in significant ways, also pointing toward an understanding of propriety and virtue in an aesthetic context.

Notes

1 Adam Smith, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (posth. 1795), in *The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith*, Vol. 4, ed. W. P. D. Wightman and J. C. Bryce (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1982); "Of the Nature of that Imitation which takes Place in What are called the Imitative Arts/Of the Affinity Between Music, Dancing, and Poetry" (1795), in The *Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence*, Vol. 3, ed. W. P. D. Wightman and J. C. Bryce, *Essays on Philosophical Subjects* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1982), 176–209.

2 See James S. Malek, "Adam Smith's Contribution to Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 31, no. 1 (1972):

49–54; Peter Jones, "The Aesthetics of Adam Smith," in *Adam Smith Reviewed*, ed. Peter Jones and Andrew Skinner (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 57 and 58–59; Catherine Labio, "Adam Smith's Aesthetics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Adam Smith*, ed. Christopher J. Barry, Maria Pia Paganelli, and Craig Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 105–125; James Chandler, "Adam Smith as Critic," in *The Oxford Handbook of Adam Smith*, ed. Christopher J. Barry, Maria Pia Paganelli, and Craig Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 126–142.

3 Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976, 1982). See Arby T. Siraki, *Adam Smith and the Problems of Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics* (PhD dissertation, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada, 2013), accessed December 14, 2018, http://www.ruor.uottawa.ca/handle/10393/24061.

4 Charles Griswold, "Imagination: Morals, Science, and Arts," in *The Cambridge Companion to Adam Smith*, ed. Knud Haakonssen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 22–56.

5 Emily Brady, "Adam Smith's Sympathetic Imagination and the Aesthetic Appreciation of Environment," *Journal of Scottish Philosophy* 9, no. 1 (2011): 95–109; Griswold, "Imagination"; Hiroyuki Furuya, "A Language of Taste in the Moral Philosophy of Adam Smith," *The Kyoto Economic Review* 79, no. 1 (2010): 40–65; Arby T. Siraki, "Adam Smith's Solution to the Paradox of Tragedy," in *Essays on the Philosophy of Adam Smith: The Adam Smith Review*, Vol. 5, ed. Vivienne Brown and Samuel Fleischacker (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 213–230.

6 Samuel Fleischacker, *A Third Concept of Liberty: Judgment and Freedom in Kant and Adam Smith* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); Robert Fudge, "Sympathy, Beauty, and Sentiment: Adam Smith's Aesthetic Morality," *The Journal of Scottish Philosophy* 7 (2009): 133–146.

7 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, I.i.3.6, 11; I.i.4.5, 10. Fudge, "Sympathy, Beauty, and Sentiment," 135.

8 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, I.i.5.6, 25.

9 Emily Brady, *The Sublime in Modern Philosophy: Aesthetics, Ethics, and Nature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 39.

10 Cf. Fudge, "Sympathy, Beauty, and Sentiment."

11 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, I.i.1.5, 10. Sympathy is derived from *συμπάθεια*, which can be translated as fellow-feeling.

12 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, I.i.1.2, 9.

13 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, I.i.1.2, 9.

14 The notion of sympathy historically differs from that of empathy. The latter term is introduced into the English language in the early twentieth century as a translation of the German concept *Einfühlung* (feeling into).

15 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, I.i.1.2, 9; Patrick Frierson, "Adam Smith and the Possibility of Sympathy with Nature," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 87 (2006): 442–480; cf. Charles Griswold, *Adam Smith and the Virtues of the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 86–95, and "Imagination."

16 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, I.i.1.13, 12–13.

17 Frierson, "Adam Smith and the Possibility of Sympathy with Nature," 454.

18 See also Dan Lyons's list of "nuanced terms of (non-moral) aesthetic judgement" in "Adam Smith's Aesthetic of Conduct," *International Journal of Moral and Social Studies* 8 (1993): 41–60, 55–56.

19 Fudge, "Sympathy, Beauty, and Sentiment."

20 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, VII.ii.3.5, 301.

21 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, I.i.5.6, 25.
22 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, I.i.5.6, 25.
23 See, for example, "The History of Astronomy" (1795), in The *Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith*, Vol. 3, ed. W. P. D. Wightman and J. C. Bryce, *Essays on Philosophical Subjects* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1982).
24 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, III.6.7, 173, on the sublimity of ambition.
25 Smith, "The History of Astronomy," III.8, 56.
26 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments,* I.i.3.1, 16. The same appears to hold for disagreement.
27 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, V.2.1, 200.
28 See also Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, I.i.4, 19–23.
29 Griswold, *Adam Smith and the Virtues of the Enlightenment*, 112.
30 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, I.i.3.1, 16.
31 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, III.2.35, 134.
32 Fudge, "Sympathy, Beauty, and Sentiment," 135.
33 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, III.1.2, 110.
34 Griswold, *Adam Smith and the Virtues of the Enlightenment*, 65; Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments,* I.i.1.4, 10.
35 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, II.3.3, 135. See also Smith's "chair arrangement" example, which he uses to illustrate his views on beauty and utility, and in which he disagrees with Hume (*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, IV.i.4, 180).
36 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, III.I.3, 110.
37 Hutcheson was strongly influenced by Shaftesbury's internal sense theory.
38 Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, ed. Wolfgang Leidhold, rev. ed. (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2008), 23.
39 Emily Michael, "Francis Hutcheson on Aesthetic Perception and Aesthetic Pleasure," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 24, no. 3 (1984): 241–255, 242.
40 Griswold, *Adam Smith and the Virtues of Enlightenment*, 192.
41 Jerome Stolnitz, "On the Origins of Aesthetic Disinterestedness," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 20 (1961): 131–143. Our objection here is supported by Miles Rind's detailed critique of Stolnitz in "The Concept of Disinterestedness in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40, no. 1 (2002): 67–87.
42 Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (London: John Darby, 1711), 53.
43 Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks*, 29.
44 Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, 96.
45 Fudge, "Sympathy, Beauty, and Sentiment," 135; Griswold, *Adam Smith and the Virtues of Enlightenment*, 111.
46 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, I.i.1.1, 9.
47 Brady, *Aesthetics of the Natural Environment*, chap. 5.
48 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, I.i.1.2, 9.
49 Smith, "The History of Astronomy," IV.21, 65.
50 For example, see Andrew Ashfield and Peter de Bolla, "Introduction," in *The Sublime: A Reader in British and Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Theory*, ed. Andrew Ashfield and Peter de Bolla (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 2.
51 See Brady, "Adam Smith's Sympathetic Imagination and the Aesthetic Appreciation of Environment."
52 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments,* I.i.1.4, 10.

53 Fleischacker, *A Third Concept of Liberty*; Alexander Broadie, "Aristotle, Adam Smith and the Virtue of Propriety," *Journal of Scottish Philosophy* 8, no. 1 (2010): 79–89.
54 David Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," in *Essays Moral, Political, Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller, rev. ed. (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1987), 148.
55 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, I.1.4.3, 20.
56 See Griswold, *Adam Smith and the Virtues of Enlightenment*, 106.
57 Eric Schliesser argues that, for Smith, "moral" is used much as we would use "social" today, and "moral sentiment" is most clearly rendered as "social passion." See "The Theory of Moral Sentiments," in *Adam Smith: His Life, Thought, and Legacy*, ed. Ryan Patrick Hanley (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016), 35.
58 Lewis White Beck, *The Actor and the Spectator* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977), 64–65.
59 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, VII.iv.28, 337. See also Smith, "Of the Nature of that Imitation which takes Place in What are called the Imitative Arts/Of the Affinity Between Music, Dancing, and Poetry," II.13; II.31.
60 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, I.i.4.5, 21.
61 Fudge, "Sympathy, Beauty, and Sentiment," 139.
62 Broadie, "Aristotle, Adam Smith and the Virtue of Propriety," 79–89.
63 Griswold, *Adam Smith and the Virtues of Enlightenment*, 64–67.

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Part II

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6 Aesthetic Autonomy Is Not the Autonomy of Art

Paul Guyer

Introduction

The autonomy of art was not an eighteenth-century idea, nor could it have been. The English aristocrat Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, and, following him, the Scots-Irish minister and teacher Francis Hutcheson formulated the idea of the disinterestedness of our *pleasure* in beauty, and Immanuel Kant applied the term "autonomy," which he had previously transformed from a political into a moral value, to the *experience* of pleasure in beauty and *judgment* of taste, the judgment that an object is beautiful. Still, by these ideas none of these thinkers meant that *art* was not typically concerned with morality as a central part of its subject-matter, nor that the production and reception of art are in any way exempt from the moral standards that govern all other human activities, whether those mandate or merely permit particular kinds of action—the two ideas that I take to comprise the core of the nineteenth-century idea of the autonomy of art or "art for art's sake."[1] Kant first used the term "autonomy" with respect to the feeling or experience of beauty, and was, I think, the first to do so,[2] in the conclusion of the Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, when he summed up the argument to follow thus:

> In regard to the faculties of the soul in general, insofar as they are considered as higher faculties, i.e., as ones that contain an autonomy, the understanding is the one that contains the **constitutive** principles *a priori* for the **faculty of cognition** (the theoretical cognition of nature); for the **feeling of pleasure and displeasure** it is the power of judgment, independent of concepts and sensations that are related to the determination of the faculty of desire and could thereby be immediately practical; for the **faculty of desire** it is reason, which is practical without the mediation of any sort of pleasure, wherever it might come from, and determines for this faculty, as a higher faculty, the final end, which at the same time brings with it the pure intellectual satisfaction in the object.
>
> (*CPJ*, Introduction, Section IX, 5:196–197)[3]

In this passage, Kant's initial suggestion is that what makes the three main faculties of the soul—its capacity for cognition, pleasure, and desire—autonomous is what makes them higher, that is, independent of mere sensation and dependent instead on their own *a priori* principles. He also suggests that the autonomy of the higher faculty of pleasure or displeasure is independent of the faculty of desire and immediate practical desires. This, as we will see, is a thought that Shaftesbury and Hutcheson also had, expressed in Kant's inimitable style. Kant then introduces his explanation for our pleasure in beauty, namely, "spontaneity in the play of the faculties of cognition," but immediately adds that this state of mind "promotes the receptivity of the mind for the moral feeling" (5:197). How the autonomous experience of beauty prepares the mind for moral feeling remains to be explained later in the work, but Kant is already making it clear that the autonomy of pleasure in beauty, whatever that may be, does not mean that aesthetic and moral experience are simply walled off from each other.

They could not be, for there is nothing that is immune to moral evaluation, according to Kant. To be sure, there are choices that are morally indifferent, such as whether one prefers wine or beer (Kant's example), but it is morality itself that will determine what is morally indifferent, when it determines that, in a case like this, either of two maxims, that of preferring wine to beer or that of preferring beer to wine, are equally universalizable. Later, in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant makes it clear that the omnipresence of morality is not just a theoretical abstraction but a basic element of human psychology when he writes, of all things, about the "combination of the beautiful arts in one and the same product": for example, the combination of "poetry with music in **song**" or the further combination of this, in turn, "with a painterly (theatrical) presentation in an **opera**." He writes here that, while "in all beautiful art what is essential consists in the form, which is purposive for observation and judging," this pure pleasure in the beauty of form must be combined with "culture" and "ideas" to avoid being mere

> entertainment . . . aimed merely at enjoyment, which leaves behind nothing in the idea, and makes the spirit dull, the object by and by loathsome, and the mind, because it is aware that its disposition is contrapurposive in the judgment of reason

—that is, moral or pure practical reason—"dissatisfied with itself and loathsome." Kant continues, "If the beautiful arts are not combined, whether closely or at a distance, with moral ideas, which alone carry with them a self-sufficient satisfaction, then the latter is their ultimate fate" (*CPJ*, §51. 5:326). That is, the beauty of a work of art essentially depends on its form, and we are capable of enjoying that on its own—but if a work of art does not also have some significant moral content,

we will not enjoy it for very long; indeed, it will quickly become distasteful to us because our moral interest must be satisfied. Kant does not say, because he hardly needs to, that if a work of art in any way *violates* morality—using more contemporary language, if it endorses immoral attitudes or actions—we will surely not enjoy it at all. The theoretician may be able to distinguish the faculties of cognition, feeling, and desire, and may need to in order to avoid a raft of metaphysical mistakes (that is what Kantian "critique" is all about), but human psychology is not compartmentalized, and aesthetic pleasure does not take place in a moral vacuum.

One writer who made explicit what everyone took for granted was the Aberdeen philosophy professor James Beattie. Kant scorned Beattie's "common sense" response to Hume's anti-rationalistic account of our belief in causation, but Kant could have found nothing to object to in this statement in Beattie's essay "On Poetry and Music" (first published in 1776):

> Let it be remarked too, that though we distinguish our internal powers by different names, because otherwise we could not speak of them so as to be understood, they are all but so many energies of the same individual mind; and therefore it is not to be supposed, that what contradicts any one leading faculty should yield permanent delight to the rest. That cannot be agreeable to reason, which conscience disapproves; nor can that gratify imagination, which is repugnant to reason.—Besides, belief and acquiescence of mind are pleasant, as distrust and disbelief are painful; and therefore, that only can give solid and general satisfaction, which has something of plausibility in it; something which we conceive it possible for a rational being to believe. But no rational being can acquiesce in what is obviously contrary to nature, or implies palpable absurdity.[4]

In the last part of this passage, Beattie is thinking of the consistency of poetry with fact and logic, and thus with what Kant would call theoretical reason; but the same time, Beattie insists on the consistency of imagination with conscience, what Kant would call practical reason. Like Kant, Beattie implies that imagination might find momentary pleasure in something contrary to reason, whether theoretical or practical, but not enduring pleasure. For both authors, the mind's unity, indeed, its interest in or drive for its own unity, means that purely aesthetic enjoyment of beauty cannot be separated for long from our moral assessment of a work of art. They can both accept the idea of the autonomy of aesthetic judgment but not that of the autonomy of art.

In what follows, I will first review the ways in which a variety of eighteenth-century authors before Kant, both British and German, put together their recognition of the autonomy of purely aesthetic pleasure

with grounds for the rejection of the autonomy of art, had anyone, contrary to fact, actually formulated the latter idea. I will then examine Kant's position in a little more detail.

Aesthetic but Not Artistic Autonomy in Pre-Kantian Britain

Shaftesbury is widely credited with the introduction of the concept of the disinterestedness of aesthetic judgment, though he did not use those terms.[5] However, at this time, he was not developing anything that would be considered a free-standing aesthetic theory by modern standards; he was using what he clearly considered to be a non-controversial claim about our pleasure in beauty to pave the way for a central claim in his moral theory.[6] The latter, already present in his 1699 *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit* but presented less formally in the 1709 dialogue *The Moralists* (for a close reading of *The Moralists*, see Chapter 2 in this volume), is that action performed in accordance with the moral law but out of the motivation of fear of divine punishment or reward is "mercenary," not genuinely virtuous; to introduce this point, Shaftesbury's spokesman in *The Moralists* makes the following statement about beauty, notably, natural rather than artistic beauty:

> [Theocles:] O PHILOCLES! . . . Suppose that being charm'd, as you seem to be, with the *Beauty of these* TREES, under whose shade we rest, you shou'd long for nothing so much as to taste some delicious *Fruit* of theirs; and having obtain'd of Nature some certain *Relish* by which these *Acorns* or *Berrys* of the Wood became as palatable as the *Figs* or *Peaches* of the Garden, as oft as you revisited these *Groves*, seek hence the *Enjoyment* of them, by satiating your-self in these new Delights.
>
> [Philocles:] THE Fancy of this kind, reply'd I, wou'd be sordidly *luxurious* . . .[7]

This is not a claim about the experience of art at all; it is meant to prepare the way for the large claim that virtue has nothing to do with self-interest—rather, it requires contributing to the harmonious order of the human community and, indeed, in our little human way, the order of the world as a whole. While working toward this general point, Shaftesbury also makes the argument that, although our pleasure in beauty, now in works of art, such as works of music or architecture, as well as in works of nature, is at the most superficial level a response to our perception of the form of the object, it is really pleasure in response to deeper "forms." These are, first, "*the Forms which form*, that is, which have Intelligence, Action, and Operation," that is, in the case of human art, to human artistry; second, to "*another Form* above them . . . *a superiour Art*, or

something *Artist-like*, which guided their Hand, and Made tools of them in this specious Work"; and finally, to a "*third* Order of Beauty, which forms not only such as we call mere Forms, but even *the Forms which form*," in short, God.[8] In the case of natural beauty, the intermediary is not human artists but, presumably, natural forces, such as geological or biological forces, which are, of course, designed by God. Insofar as our pleasure in beauty, whether natural or artistic, is ultimately pleasure in the recognition of the artistry of God, for Shaftesbury, neither pleasure in beauty in general nor pleasure in artistic beauty in particular is divorced from our more general values; rather, our pleasure is entrenched in our most fundamental value. In spite of his insistence on the disinterestedness of our pleasure in beauty, Shaftesbury is hardly offering a doctrine of aesthetic or artistic autonomy.

Francis Hutcheson presented the first edition of his 1725 *Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* as an explanation and defense of "the principles of the late Earl of Shaftesbury . . . against the Author of the *Fable of the Bees*," the cynical Bernard Mandeville, who, like Hobbes, thought that everyone was motivated by self-interest alone.[9] However, he did not adopt Shaftesbury's Neoplatonism and came closer to developing a conception of the autonomy of pleasure in beauty or aesthetic response, but not a doctrine of the autonomy of art. Like Shaftesbury, Hutcheson used aesthetics to introduce an idea central to his moral philosophy, specifically, he used what he took to be the non-controversial claim that our response to beauty is an immediate, sensory response to introduce the more controversial idea that the basis of morality is a moral sense, an immediate feeling of approbation toward benevolent intentions that is independent of any calculations of our own self-interest. His argument is that our perception of beauty

> is justly called a Sense, because of its Affinity to other Senses in this, that the Pleasure does not arise from any Knowledge of Principles, Proportions, Causes, or of the Usefulness of the Object; but strikes us at first with the Idea of Beauty.
>
> And further, the Ideas of Beauty and Harmony, like other sensible Ideas, are necessarily pleasant to us, as well as immediately so; neither can any Resolution of our own, nor any Prospect of Advantage or Disadvantage, vary the Beauty or Deformity of an Object: For as in the external Sensations, no view of Interest will make an Object grateful, nor View of Detriment, distinct from immediate Pain in the Perception, make it disagreeable to the Sense . . .[10]

This passage may count as the formal introduction of the idea of disinterestedness into eighteenth-century aesthetics. The argument is from the sensory character of our response to beauty to its disinterestedness: because the response takes place immediately, it does not allow time

for any calculation of personal advantage. As he continues the quoted passage, Hutcheson argues that even a calculation of personal disadvantage will not affect "our Sentiments of the Forms, and our Perceptions" or our pleasure in them. All of these claims can be considered empirical ones, based on observation, as can Hutcheson's further argument, implicit in the last remark, that it is harmonious, proportionate forms; shapes or patterns of extension; sound; and even color that produce this immediate pleasure. He does not use such terminology, but this could certainly be taken as an argument for the autonomy or even "modularity" of our perceptual system and its pleasures from our calculations of advantage and disadvantage. In his confidence that our perceptions of the beauty of form are not disturbed even by potential disadvantages—although those may affect our *actions*, leading us to "abstain from any pursuit of the Beautiful"—Hutcheson may be allowing a greater degree of mental compartmentalization than Beattie, as we saw, would admit fifty years later.

But none of this is to say that Hutcheson was introducing an idea of the autonomy of *art*. This becomes clear in his comments about poetry. He first discusses poetry under the rubric of "Relative or Comparative Beauty," which is our response not to mere form but to a comparison of one thing, typically a work of art, to something else, what the first thing represents: in other words, the beauty of imitation. It is this kind of beauty that we experience when we are pleased with a representation of an object that is not itself pleasing, as when we enjoy "the Deformitys of old Age in a Picture."[11] In this regard, Hutcheson observes that we may take more pleasure in "lively Ideas of imperfect Men with all their Passions, than of morally perfect Heroes, such as never really occur to our Observation; and of which consequently we cannot judge exactly as to their Agreement with the Copy,"[12] that is, we do not simply judge the merits of a work of art by the moral merits of the object: in this case, personages portrayed. Nevertheless, Hutcheson holds that the main object of poetry is to arouse our moral sentiments and, conversely, that a well-developed moral sense strengthens our love of poetry and other arts. Thus, in his treatise on virtue, he argues that our "powerful Determination even to a limited Benevolence, and other moral sentiments, is observ'd to give a strong biass to our Mind toward a universal Goodness, Tenderness, Humanity, Generosity, and Contempt of private Good in our whole Conduct," and "As soon as a Heart, before hard and obdurate, is soften'd in this Flame, we shall observe, arising along with it, a Love of Poetry, Musick, the Beauty of Nature in rural Scenes," and so on.[13] This can only be because poetry especially is connected with morality, presumably by its content. (This connection might be different in the other arts that Hutcheson mentions.) Hutcheson makes this assumption explicit a few pages later: of the moral sense, he says,

> We shall find this Sense to be the Foundation also of the chief Pleasures of Poetry . . . as the contemplation of moral Objects, either of Vice or Virtue, affects us more strongly, and moves our Passions in quite a different and more powerful manner, than natural Beauty . . . so the most moving Beautys bear a Relation to our moral Sense, and move us more vehemently, than the Representation of natural Objects in the liveliest Descriptions. Dramatic, and Epic Poetry, are addressed entirely to this Sense.[14]

Perhaps Hutcheson hereby leaves room for a degree of autonomy, that is, independence from moral considerations, in our appreciation of natural beauty, but he certainly is not arguing for the autonomy of art, especially in the paradigmatic case of poetry: art moves us precisely by addressing and employing our moral sentiments.

David Hume's argument that our moral principles are grounded in sentiment rather than reason was deeply indebted to Hutcheson,[15] but Hume did not adopt Hutcheson's approach to beauty and taste.[16] Hume touched upon beauty in his *Treatise of Human Nature*, written early in his career, and upon taste in his later essay "Of the Standard of Taste," inserted into his *Four Dissertations* in 1757 when his publisher balked at including his essays rejecting the immortality of the soul and defending the permissibility of suicide. In the earlier work, Hume does not argue that our pleasure in beauty is disinterested. Instead, he says that, while some of our pleasures in beauty are stimulated by the form of the appearance or "*species*" of objects,[17] our pleasure in beauty more often arises from the apparent utility of the objects, their well-adaptedness for their intended purposes or functions; however, we transcend our own, merely individual interests in the use of objects, not by setting aside all considerations of our own interest but rather by sympathizing with or sharing the pleasure of others in their well-designed objects in our imagination. Thus, some of our experiences of pleasure arise from "such an order and construction" of parts in an observed object "as either by the *primary constitution of our nature*, by *custom*, or by *caprice*, is fitted to give satisfaction to the soul," but "the great part of the beauty, which we admire either in animals or in other objects, is deriv'd from the idea of convenience and utility," such as "the shape, which produces strength" in an animal or the "Order and convenience of a palace," which "are no less essential to its beauty, than its mere figure and appearance."[18] Hume feels no need to argue that the experience or judgment of the latter sort of beauty is disinterested; rather, "That effect is the pleasure or advantage of some . . . person" or other, and if that person is not oneself, then one can enjoy the pleasure of another through sympathy. "Wherever an object has a tendency to produce pleasure in the possessor, or in other words, is the proper *cause* of pleasure, it is sure to please the spectator, by a delicate sympathy with the possessor."[19] In other words, sympathy

does for Hume what disinterestedness did for Hutcheson: namely, make it possible for us to transcend our individual or "peculiar position with regard to others" and instead "fix on some *steady* and *general* points of view" in our judgments of beauty.[20]

None of this is to say that, for Hume, our pleasure in beauty is a moral sentiment; he states that "A good composition of music and a bottle of good wine equally produce pleasure," but we would not "say upon that account, that the wine is harmonious, or the music of a good flavour," nor would we confuse either of these pleasures, the pleasures of taste in the literal and metaphorical senses, with pleasant moral sentiment at the thought of virtuous "characters and actions."[21] Hume seems to think that there are phenomenological and contextual differences between pleasures sufficient for us to distinguish among them. Yet he also thinks that there are close connections between our pleasures in works of *art* and our moral sentiments; here, he comes closer to Hutcheson's account of poetry. This is evident in "Of the Standard of Taste." In this, Hume argues that it is in vain to seek rules directly applicable to works of art that will tell us which are best and which are not, but it is possible to specify the characteristics of critics whose sound judgments can establish a body of works that should be canonical for the rest of us because we are capable of sharing the pleasure of such critics in those objects once their merits have been pointed out to us.[22] One of the qualifications is that "he must preserve his mind free from all *prejudice*, and allow nothing to enter into his consideration, but the very object which is submitted to his examination."[23] This might sound like a requirement of disinterestedness, but what Hume means is not that a work of art must be experienced and judged on the basis of some purely aesthetic criteria that has nothing to do with ordinary human interests but rather that

> every work of art, in order to produce its due effect on the mind, must be surveyed in a certain point of view, and cannot be fully relished by persons, whose situation, real or imaginary, is not conformable to that which is required by the performance.[24]

In other words, appreciation of a work of art requires approaching it not without *any* prejudices but with the *right* prejudices. Hume also says that the qualified critic requires "good sense," which means, in part, approaching a work of art with a proper understanding of the particular "end or purpose, for which it is calculated" and on the basis of which it "is to be deemed more or less perfect." Thus, "The object of eloquence is to persuade, of history to instruct, of poetry to please by means of the passions and imagination."[25] But those passions may very well be moral passions—indeed in poetry they typically are; thus, our response to a paradigmatic art such as poetry is not disinterested in the sense of being detached from other human values. Our pleasure in poetry can

include a response to its formal features but is also a response to its content or the sentiments aroused in us by that content. This fact also places a limit on Hume's substitute for disinterestedness, that is, our ability to "enter into" the prejudices of others by means of sympathy and imagination:

> where the ideas of morality and decency alter from one age to another, and where vicious manners are described, without being marked with the proper characters of blame and disapprobation; this must be allowed to disfigure the poem, and to be a real deformity. I cannot, nor is it proper that I should, enter into such sentiments.[26]

This caveat would make no sense if our response to art was supposed to be disinterested or if art was supposed to be autonomous in the sense of being free from the normal constraints of morality. Some aspects of the beauty of a work of art, such as the metric or rhythmic structure of a poem, may be independent of our moral sentiments, but our response to the work as a whole is not.

I have not offered a complete inventory of eighteenth-century British aestheticians, but I hope I have provided enough examples to suggest that their idea of the disinterestedness of aesthetic response, whatever their terminology, is not a theory of the autonomy of art. Now, I will turn to an important German aesthetician who was both a target for and an influence on Kant. I refer to Moses Mendelssohn, who was five years younger than Kant but established himself as a leading figure in German aesthetics in the 1750s, long before Kant turned to the subject. (For further discussion of Mendelssohn, see Chapter 8.)

Mendelssohn on Mixed Sentiments

The discipline of aesthetics, so named by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten in 1735,[27] developed within the generally Leibnizian approach to philosophy in Germany, and the young Mendelssohn assimilated this approach to philosophy alongside his assimilation of modern European learning and culture more generally in the Berlin of the 1740s and 1750s.[28] Baumgarten has often been thought of as having taken a strictly cognitivist approach to aesthetic experience, theorizing the work of art—paradigmatically, the poem—as a dense or "confused" rather than discrete or "distinct" presentation of ideas. However, for Baumgarten, it is just as important that a poem arouse "affects" or emotions as it is that it present information,[29] and Mendelssohn developed the view that works of art engage our affective and conative capacities just as much as our cognitive capacities.

In particular, Mendelssohn developed a conception of "mixed sentiments" within a conceptual framework developed by both Christian

Wolff and Baumgarten. Whereas Wolff, following Leibniz, defined pleasure, including pleasure in beauty, as the *sensory perception of perfection*,[30] Baumgarten defined beauty, the "end of aesthetics," as the "perfection of sensory cognition."[31] Mendelssohn synthesized these two thoughts in the statement that "the essence of the fine arts and sciences consists in an *artistic sensorily perfect representation*, or in a *sensory perfection represented through art*."[32] The key thought is that our response to a work of art is a response *both* to the "perfections" of what is represented and to those of the artistic representation. This, in turn, explains how we can take pleasure in the artistic representation of something unpleasant: we can take pleasure in the perfection of the representation even when our response to what is represented is negative or, in the more usual case, mixed. The

> imitation of paradigms that are in nature unpleasant produces a . . . mixed sentiment. The representation of them is, in and for itself, unpleasant in relation to the object, but it is mixed with some gratification in relation to the [artistic] projection [*Vorwurf*] of them.[33]

If our response to the object in nature would be purely negative, such as our response to some ugly creature, our response to a skillful artistic representation of it can still be a mixed sentiment because our response to the representation is so pleasant. Still, the more characteristic case in the arts will be the kind of response we have to that paradigmatic work of art, a successful tragedy, in which our response to the object of the tragedy, the tragic hero, will itself be a mixed sentiment, a mixture of sympathetic pain for the travails of the hero and pleasant admiration at the strength of character with which the hero bears or accepts these travails—all that, combined with pleasure at the perfection of the representation. In a tragedy, "We wish, hope, and fear for the object of our love or our sympathy and admire his or her great soul that is beyond hope and fear," and combine that mixed sentiment with our pleasure in the excellence of the artistic representation and the "perfections of the artist," which we recognize as the source of such perfections.[34] Mendelssohn also makes his point by arguing that, although pleasure must come from "affirmative determinations" of the soul, a work of art "engages [both] the soul's capacities of knowing and desiring," including capacities for both feeling and judging the appropriateness of our feelings; thus,

> the picture of a deficiency in the object, just like the expression of discontent with it, are [*sic*] not deficiencies on the part of the thinking being, but rather affirmative and material determinations of it. We cannot perceive a good action without approving it, without feeling inside a certain enjoyment of it, nor can we perceive an evil

> action without disapproving of the action itself and being disgusted by it. Yet recognizing an evil action and disapproving of it are affirmative features of the soul, expressions of the mental powers of knowing and desiring, and elements of perfection which, in this connection, must be gratifying and enjoyable.[35]

The right mixture of both pleasurable and painful emotions is more pleasurable than the former alone: as with food or drink, “If a few bitter drops are mixed into the honey-sweet bowl of pleasure, they enhance the taste of the pleasure and double its sweetness.”[36] To that complexity can be added pleasure in the artistic representation of the object producing such a mixed sentiment and the pleasurable admiration of the human artistry that produced such a representation. Our response to a work of art is complex.

Two points about Mendelssohn’s theory are important for our present purposes. First, he clearly assumes that works of art can engage the full range of human emotions and judgment about our emotions, so there is no suggestion that art is detached from fundamental human interests or not judged at least in part by our normal standards of judgment, including moral judgment. This is not a doctrine of the autonomy of art. Second, he does not use the language of disinterestedness (although he was certainly familiar with the work of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson)[37] but instead focuses on the distinction between artistic content and artistic representation, arguing that our awareness of the artistic representation creates *distance* between the spectator and what is represented, a space in which the complexity of our response to art can flourish. The techniques of artistic representation make possible both our emotional engagement with the work of art and the distance from the actuality of what it represents that is necessary to make room for the complexity of our response. Thus,

> Another means of rendering the most terrifying events pleasant to gentle minds is the imitation by art, on the stage, on the canvas, and in marble, since an inner consciousness that we have an imitation and nothing genuine before our eyes moderates the strength of the objective disgust and, as it were, elevates the subjective side of the representation. It is true, the soul’s sentient knowledge and capacities to desire are deceived by art and the imagination is so swept away that at times we forget every sign that it is an imitation and fancy that we truly see nature. But this magic lasts only as long as is necessary to give our conception of the object the proper vitality and fire. . . . The difference between the material of the imitation and the material of nature, the marble and the canvas are the most obvious sensed features which, without damaging the art, call the attention back from the illusion whenever necessary.[38]

Mendelssohn points toward a wide range of artistic devices that make possible the distinction between our ordinary emotions in their engagement and the complexity of our response to art, without requiring that art be disengaged from our underlying values. Thus, he recognizes the uniqueness of artistic representation without requiring or advocating for the autonomy of art.

Kant on Aesthetic Autonomy

Against this background, although of course it is incomplete, we can see Kant synthesizing the discourse of disinterestedness from Shaftesbury and Hutcheson with a theory of the complexity of artistic representation in the spirit of Mendelssohn in order to arrive at a theory of the autonomy of aesthetic response and judgment that is not a theory of the autonomy of art.[39]

As we saw at the outset, Kant introduces the concept of autonomy at the conclusion of the Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*.[40] What he means by the term here is that the feeling of pleasure in beauty arises from "the power of judgment, independent of concepts and sensations that are related to the determination of the faculty of desire and could thereby be immediately practical" (*CPJ*, Introduction, Section IX, 5:196). This is one sense of aesthetic autonomy in Kant: what we might call the autonomy of aesthetic response, that is, the response to beauty. As his argument develops, Kant introduces a second sense of aesthetic autonomy: his view that, even though a judgment of taste, which ascribes beauty to a particular object, claims "subjectively universal validity," that is, claims to be valid for any subject who would approach the object under ideal or optimal conditions, such a judgment must be made on the basis of the subject's own experience of the object and her own reflection upon it, not on the basis of the opinions of other people. We can call this the autonomy of aesthetic judgment. But these two senses of aesthetic autonomy do not lead to a doctrine of the autonomy of art. On the contrary, Kant makes it clear that the production and reception of art and even natural beauty are subject in a variety of ways to the permeating influence of morality on everything in human life. His theory of art is more complex than his initial analysis of beauty and includes the claim that art typically has morally significant content; this is Kant's theory of "aesthetic ideas" (*CPJ*, §§49, 51). He also claims, as we noted at the outset, that we cannot long tolerate art that does not have moral significance. He says that aesthetic experience, here including the experience of natural as well as artistic beauty, perhaps even the former more than the latter, "prepares" us for morality in several ways and is part of our experience of the world as an arena for morality and ourselves as moral actors in this arena. Let us consider these points, in turn.

(i) *The autonomy of the experience of beauty*. Kant explicitly introduces the idea of the autonomy of the experience of beauty as a way of characterizing the independence of such an experience from concepts of objects, *a fortiori* from concepts of the purposes or ends of objects, whether merely prudential or properly moral. Kant uses the Hutchesonian concept of disinterestedness to make this point, although he also uses it to introduce the idea of special kinds of universal validity, claimed by judgments of beauty or taste.

Kant introduces the idea of interest and therefore the idea of disinterestedness in a different way from Hutcheson. The latter maintained that the immediate, sensory character of the experience of pleasure in beauty simply did not leave time for reflection upon the potential practical advantages of an object or on our possible interest in it. Kant formally defines an interest as "the satisfaction that we combine with the representation of the existence of an object," so disinterested pleasure is by contrast found in "mere contemplation (intuition or reflection)" (*CPJ*, §2, 5:204). It takes him several more steps (*CPJ*, §§3–5) to argue that pleasure in the existence of an object is pleasure in its sensory gratification or practical use, always mediated by the application of a concept to an object in a judgment of the "agreeable" or the "good" so that judgments of beauty, by contrast, are independent of the application of any concept, at least, any concept of its use or purpose, to an object. Of course, we do apply concepts to objects which we judge to be beautiful, just as we do to any objects of consciousness at all: for example, when we identify a beautiful object as a rose, a hummingbird, or a string quartet; Kant's point is that the application of concepts like those is never sufficient for us to find the object to which they apply beautiful. But before he even gets to that point, he uses his association of interest with the *existence* of an object to show that, by contrast, a disinterested aesthetic response to its beauty concerns only the *representation* of the object. When one asks whether an object is beautiful, one is not asking a question about how it came into existence: for example, whether one approves of the exploitation of labor in the erection of a palace or of the use to which the object, once it exists, may be put, as when a visitor is pleased more by the cook-shops of Paris than by any of its sights. Rather, in asking about beauty, "One only wants to know whether the mere representation of the object is accompanied with satisfaction in me, however indifferent I might be with regard to the existence of the object of this representation" (*CPJ*, §2, 5:205). In other words, Kant uses the Hutchesonian concept of disinterestedness to make the Mendelssohnian point that we have an aesthetic response to the representation of an object that is independent from other considerations about the object of such representation itself—although, as we have seen, for Mendelssohn, this pleasure in the representation may be combined with

other sentiments about the object of representation. This turns out to be the case for Kant as well when he describes the "intellectual interest" we may permissibly take in the existence of the objects of our disinterested pleasure in the representation of those objects (*CPJ*, §42).

But first things first: for Kant, the idea, the first "moment" of his analysis of beauty, that the judgment of taste is "**without any interest**," leads to his second "moment" in which "The beautiful is that which, without concepts, is represented as the object of a **universal** satisfaction" (*CPJ*, §6, 5:211). To justify this claim, Kant introduces his core theory that our pleasure in beauty arises from a "free play" of the cognitive powers of imagination and understanding.[41] His idea is that, in order for the response to beauty to be universally valid, it has to involve mental capacities that are common to all—so, imagination and understanding—but in order to be disinterested, it has to be free from determination by concepts (at least concepts of purpose, but he takes this to mean free from all determining concepts); yet to be pleasurable, the response must arise from a *harmony* between the mental faculties involved. Thus, Kant infers from the disinterested but pleasurable character of the experience of a beautiful representation that "The powers of cognition that are set into play by this representation are hereby in a free play, since no determinate concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition," and the pleasurable "state of mind in this representation must be that of a feeling of the free play of the powers of representation in a given representation for a cognition in general" (*CPJ*, §9, 5:217). Although we might think that Kant falls short of proving this point,[42] he also assumes that the faculties of imagination and understanding must work the *same* way in every human being, so that a representation that really does please one person by triggering the free play of these faculties must please every other person in the same way as long as some extraneous factor is not interfering with the proper operation of their cognitive faculties. Therefore, a person who correctly judges that her own pleasure in the representation of an object has been caused in this way is justified in judging that anyone else who responds to that representation under optimal conditions will feel the same pleasure that she does (*CPJ*, §§21, 28). This is what she asserts in calling the object that produces the representation beautiful. Of course, people are not always right in their judgments about the origins of their own feelings (*CPJ*, §19), so their judgments of taste are not always correct.

By a slight of hand, namely, his equation of the free play of the cognitive powers as "merely formal purposiveness in the play of the cognitive powers of the subject in the case of a representation through which an object is given" (*CPJ*, §12, 5:222) with the "mere form of purposiveness in the representation through which an object is **given** to us" (*CPJ*, §11, 5:221) and then the inversion of "form of purposiveness" into

"purposiveness of form" (*CPJ*, §13, 5:223), Kant arrives at an initial assertion of a restrictive aesthetic formalism. For example, in painting and sculpture, indeed, in all visual art, "the **drawing** is what is essential . . . not what gratifies in sensation but merely what pleases through its form," and in music, it is the "composition" rather than the "agreeable tone of instruments" that is properly beautiful (*CPJ*, §14, 5:225). It would be natural to suppose that pleasure in pure visual or auditory form cannot be linked to practical or moral interests in any way, thus, it might seem natural to infer a doctrine of the autonomy of art from Kant's apparent formalism. However, although Kant does use these examples from the arts at this stage in his analysis of the experience of beauty and judgment of taste, he is by no means offering his complete theory of our pleasure in art. He is just illustrating his claim that *beauty* is to be found in pure form, but his eventual theory of art will not be that our response to it is merely and purely a response to its beauty. Art and our response to it is more complex than that.

(ii) *The autonomy of aesthetic judgment.* Before we see why Kant does not assert the autonomy of art, let us look at the second sense in which he conceives of the autonomy of aesthetic judgment, indeed, one of the few places within the "Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment," as opposed to the Introduction, where he explicitly uses the word "autonomy."[43] This is in his exposition of the "First peculiarity of the judgment of taste" (§32) on the way to the "deduction" of judgments of taste or the justification of their claim to universal validity (§38). Kant begins this exposition with a restatement of the result of the previous analysis of judgments of taste that "The judgment of taste determines its object with regard to satisfaction (as beauty) with a claim to the assent of **everyone**, as if it were objective" (*CPJ*, §32, 5:281). But now he adds that

> it is required of every judgment that is supposed to prove the taste of the subject that the subject judge for himself, without having to grope about by means of experience among the judgments of others . . . thus that he should pronounce his judgment not as imitation . . . but *a priori*,
>
> (5:282)

although not *a priori* in the usual fashion of being "grounded on concepts." He illustrates this claim with the example of a young poet who rightly "does not let himself be dissuaded from his conviction that his poem is beautiful by the judgment of the public nor that of his friends," although, in the fullness of time, he may come to revise his overestimation of his juvenile poem after all. Kant sums up this example with the statement "Taste makes claim merely to autonomy. To make the

judgments of others into the determining ground of one's own would be heteronomy" (5:282). So, here, autonomy means simply making a judgment of taste on the basis of one's own feeling of pleasure (or displeasure) in an object and one's own reflection on and evaluation of the real source and therefore potential universality of that feeling.

Kant does not offer much explanation of this requirement. He suggests that one needs to make a judgment of taste based on one's own resources in order to demonstrate that one *has* taste, or good taste. This seems like a jump from the notion of a *judgment* of taste as a particular assertion to the possession of *taste* as a personal property: that of being good at making judgments of taste. It seems like something more should be said to get from the former to the latter. One thing that might be said is that, since judgments of taste are so frequently erroneous, one will not increase one's chance of getting it right by simply imitating the views of people nearby. But that seems open to a Humean objection: what if one is imitating the views of expert critics, not just anyone who happens to be around? Wouldn't that increase the likelihood of rendering correct judgments of taste, and perhaps even acquiring good taste as an enduring property by repeatedly making correct judgments? Perhaps the response to this should be that it completely misses the point of aesthetic judgment: the point is not simply to go around correctly stating which objects should be found universally pleasing but to actually experience the pleasure oneself. Just as moral autonomy consists not in knowing what the moral law is but in actually being willing to act in accordance with the moral law, in the aesthetic case there is not much value in simply knowing which objects would be universally pleasing if everyone were, in fact, in the optimal circumstances to experience them—the value lies in actually experiencing the pleasure. One should judge the object for oneself because one should experience it for oneself, and knowing how others have judged it is no substitute for that.

But, however Kant's claim should be defended, one point is clear: his claim has nothing to do with the autonomy of art. He illustrates his claim with an example from the realm of art, the poem of the young poet, but nothing turns on that—he could just as well have used an example of judging natural beauty, although since people are prone to overrate (or underrate) their own work, the example of the young poet judging his own work suggests that the autonomy of aesthetic judgment is going to have to coexist with the possibility of erroneous judgments of taste. In any case, Kant's claim that either judgments of taste or taste as a disposition must be autonomous does not add anything to the explanation of pleasure in beauty as due to the free play of the cognitive powers of imagination and understanding that he has previously given, nor does it stand in the way of the claim that he will subsequently make: namely, that, in the case of art, this free play is brought into connection with ideas of reason, moral ideas, so that our creation and reception of

art is hardly separated from moral concerns. Let us now turn to that claim.

(iii) *Aesthetic ideas as the "spirit" of art.* Kant presents his account of art after he has completed the deduction of judgments of taste.[44] He presents it in the form of an analysis of genius—thus, in the guise of a theory of the production of art—but this account is clearly inspired by and intended to be compatible with the preceding theory of aesthetic experience and judgment, and thus with a theory of the reception of beauty in general and artistic beauty in particular. The key claim of the theory is that the "spirit" (*Geist*) of art, the "animating principle in the mind . . . which purposively sets the mental powers into motion, i.e., into a play that is self-maintaining," consists in "the presentation of **aesthetic ideas**," where an aesthetic idea is

> that representation of the mind that occasions much thought without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e., **concept**, to be adequate to it . . . One readily sees that it is the counterpart (pendant) of an **idea of reason** . . . a concept to which no **intuition** (representation of the imagination) can be adequate.

Kant goes on to state that aesthetic ideas "seek to approximate a presentation of concepts of reason (intellectual ideas)," more precisely, ideas of pure practical reason, that is, moral ideas or at least ideas connected to morality and moral judgment. Thus, "The poet," with whom Kant seems to have in mind, above all, John Milton,[45]

> ventures to make sensible rational ideas of invisible beings, the kingdom of the blessed, the kingdom of hell, eternity, creation, etc. . . . as well as to make that of which there are examples in experience, e.g., death, envy, and all sorts of vices, as well as love, fame, etc., sensible beyond the limits of experience, with a completeness that goes beyond anything of which there is an example in nature, by means of an imagination that emulates the precedent of reason in attaining to a maximum.
>
> (*CPJ*, §49, 5:313–314)

Kant here threatens to drown us in a sea of verbiage, but his basic idea seems to be this. On the one hand, a work of art must originate in (on the part of the artist) and stimulate (on the part of the audience) a free play of cognitive powers if it is to be pleasing, but, on the other hand, it must have content, in particular moral or morally relevant content, if that free play and thus our pleasure in the work is to be truly "self-maintaining" or enduring. Moral ideas are fit for the free play of imagination because they transcend the ordinary limits of experience, and the play of the imagination is not tied down by the ordinary limits of conceptualization.

In this sense, works of art play with moral ideas, that is, they seek imaginative presentations of such ideas in the absence of determinate rules for their presentation. Works of genius, of course, are those that are successful in finding convincing, engaging, and self-sustaining ways of presenting such ideas where lesser works are not: a successful work of art

> stimulates so much thinking that it can never be grasped in a determinate concept, hence [it] aesthetically enlarges the concept itself in an unbounded way . . . in this case the imagination is creative, and sets the faculty of intellectual ideas (reason) into motion.
>
> (*CPJ*, §49, 5:315)

Such a work of art satisfies the basic condition for the experience of beauty, stimulating a free play of the imagination but now a free play with intellectual ideas; thus, the free play of imagination is now not just with the understanding but with reason as well. As long as free play with intellectual ideas is possible, the aesthetic does not have to be independent from the moral—there is no need for the autonomy of art in that sense.

Kant does not explain why only morally relevant ideas can give spirit to art. One might have thought that ideas of theoretical reason could play the same role; after all, they can never be fully captured in ordinary intuition either, so they might only be suggested by the freely playing imagination. But, by this point in his career, Kant has argued that moral ideas are the only ideas of pure reason that there really are. That is, he has argued in his previous two critiques that pure reason can generate the rational ideas of the soul, the world, and God, but the only way in which these ideas can be given determinate content and justified is on moral grounds: morality requires us to think of the soul as a genuinely free will, the world as an arena for the realization of morality, and God as the author of a nature whose laws are consistent with morality. So, although Kant hardly spells out his argument in his discussion of genius, his view is that the only ideas of reason are the moral ideas. Further, he assumes that only moral ideas engage our enduring interest: the pleasures of pure form soon fade and indeed become loathsome to us, while the pleasure of combining play with mere form and play with moral ideas can last. This assumption must be what underlies his claim, cited at the outset, that "If the beautiful arts are not combined, whether closely or at a distance, with moral ideas, which alone carry with them a self-sufficient satisfaction," then the "ultimate fate" that awaits them, as we saw, is that "the mind, because it is aware that its disposition is contrapurposive in the judgment of reason," will become "dissatisfied with itself and moody," and "the object by and by loathsome" (*CPJ*, §52, 5:326). Art can have moral content without giving up its claim to beauty, and indeed, only art with moral content can retain its

claim to our satisfaction. The aesthetic experience of beauty considered in isolation is one of free play and autonomy in one sense, but this is hardly a doctrine of the autonomy of art.

This is the core of Kant's theory that aesthetic experience has a kind of autonomy, while art does not. But let us conclude this discussion of Kant with a quick look at several further connections that he draws between aesthetic experience and morality.

(iv) *Further connections to morality*. Four points can be mentioned here. The first is Kant's claim that "The beautiful prepares us to love something, even nature, without interest; the sublime, to esteem it, even contrary to our (sensible) interest" (*CPJ*, General Remark following §29, 5:267). Since Kant thinks that art cannot really attain sublimity, rather it can only beautifully represent the immense or powerful vistas in nature that do (*Anth*, §68, 7:243), the second part of this statement does not bear upon art.[46] The first part would seem to concern the experience of either artistic or natural beauty, and the suggestion is that, because the experience of beauty is disinterested, through it one learns how to rise above personal interest and enjoy doing that. This is helpful for being moral since morality requires that one always be prepared to rise above personal interest in principle and may sometimes require one to do this in practice. Kant does not say that the experience of beauty is *necessary* in order to become moral, only that it may be helpful. He also does not say that art needs moral content in order to produce this benefit; any experience of beauty, natural beauty, or the purely formal beauty of merely decorative or fine art would seem to have this benefit. Nevertheless, if the experience of beauty, including in the case of art, can have this benefit, then we will have a moral interest in having this experience, in addition to our sheer pleasure in it. Further, if something about art, for example, immoral content, could block this benefit, this would seem to be a reason to criticize the art—perhaps not as strong a reason for criticism as in the case of art that might directly lead to immoral action, if there is such a thing, but still some grounds for criticism. The experience of art is not immune from moral praise if it supports morality, through its content or otherwise, and may be subject to blame if it interferes with morality or even foregoes the possibility to support morality in some specific circumstances.

Second, under the rubric of our "intellectual interest" in beauty, Kant argues that, since we have an interest in the "objective reality" of our moral ideas, that is, in our moral ideals being realizable in nature, we take an interest—take pleasure—in any "trace or sign that [nature] contains in itself some sort of ground for assuming a lawful correspondence of its products with our satisfaction"; the existence of natural beauty is such a sign and thus a moral ground for our pleasure in it, in addition to our purely aesthetic pleasure (*CPJ*, §42, 5:300). Since this argument turns on our moral interest in nature's receptivity to our own goals,

it would seem to apply only to the case of natural beauty. However, since Kant's theory of genius includes the claim that genius is a gift of nature—a "talent (natural gift) that gives the rule to art" (*CPJ*, §46, 5:307)—works of art are also gifts of nature, and their existence should count as a pleasing sign of nature's receptivity to human morality just as much as beautiful sunsets or sea-shells do. The distinction between natural and artistic beauty, although not trivial—art involves human intentionality in a way that the *other* beauties of nature do not (*CPJ*, §43, 5:303)—does not exclude art from this "intellectual interest." So, art, even without overtly moral content, can reinforce our moral commitments, and art that would, in virtue of its content or anything else, undermine this effect would seem to be criticizable for this reason. At the same time, art which. in virtue of its content or attitude, blocks such "intellectual interest" would seem to be criticizable on that account.

Third, Kant holds that "the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good" because there are analogies between the experience of beauty and the internal conditions for moral action: above all, an analogy between the "**freedom** of the imagination" in aesthetic experience and the freedom of the will in moral motivation and action (*CPJ*, §59, 5:354). The two types of freedom are not the same because the freedom of imagination in the experience of beauty is freedom *from* rules imposed by understanding, while the freedom of the will in morality is the freedom of the will *from* determination by mere inclination but also the freedom *to* act in conformity with the moral law imposed by reason. In this way, moral freedom of the will is freedom in both a negative and positive sense; it is less clear that aesthetic freedom of the imagination can be seen in both ways. Still, the experience of beauty is an experience of freedom—and perhaps our only experience of freedom, since Kant claims in his moral writings that we do not have any direct experience of freedom of will. Kant's thought, then, seems to be that aesthetic experience gives us a kind of empirical confirmation of our freedom in the other sense that we do not otherwise have and may be helpful for morality for that reason. This argument, like the previous one, seems to apply to the experience of artistic as well as natural beauty. And again, any art that was contrapurposive for morality would seem to be criticizable on that account.

Finally, Kant suggests that it is a virtue of art, specifically, that it can foster

> the reciprocal communication of the ideas of the most educated part [of society] with the cruder, the coordination of the breadth and refinement of the former with the natural simplicity and originality of the latter, and in this way to discover that mean between higher culture and contented nature which constitutes the correct standard . . . for taste as a universal human sense

but also for society as such (*CPJ*, §60, 5:356). The experience of art can serve as a social solvent or glue—pick your metaphor—although Kant has also pointed out that people can use their possession of art to distinguish themselves from and elevate themselves above others (*CPJ*, §42, 5:298),[47] so this effect is by no means guaranteed. But while it might not be grounds for criticism of a work of art that it does not positively promote this morally desirable effect, it would certainly seem to be a ground for criticism if a work of art in any way interferes with it and sows the seeds of social discord rather than harmony. This is not to say that it is a criticism of art if it criticizes or weakens the *status quo* since the *status quo* itself might be one of social discord rather than harmony; indeed, it almost always is. On the contrary, Kant's comment makes room for a progressive role for art. But again, that is not the autonomy of art.

In all these ways, Kant argues that the experience of beauty, either explicitly or implicitly including the beauty of art, can play a positive role in the realization of morality, and while it might not be grounds for criticism of any particular art medium, genre, or individual work of art if it does not directly play this role, it would certainly seem to be grounds for criticism if it interferes with it. This is, to say the least, a far cry from a doctrine of the autonomy of art.

Notes

1 Fur surveys of the concept of artistic autonomy, see Michael Einfalt, "Autonomie," in *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe*, Vol. 1, ed. Harlheinz Barck, Martin Fortis, Dieter Schlenstedt, Burkhart Steinwachs, and Friedrich Wolfzettel (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2000), 431–479; Paul Guyer, *A History of Modern Aesthetics*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 229–269; and Casey Haskins, "Autonomy: Overview," in *The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, ed. Michael Kelly (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 247–252.

2 There is certainly no entry for "autonomy" in Johann Georg Sulzer's encyclopedic *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste*, not even in the second, "enlarged" edition published in 1792–1794, thus after the appearance of Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, expanded by Friedrich von Blankenburg. See Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste*, 2nd expanded ed., ed. Friedrich von Blankenburg, 4 Vols. plus index vol. (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1792–1794).

3 Quotations from Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (*CPJ*) will be located by section number, followed by the volume and page number of *Kant's gesammelte Schriften*, ed. the Royal Prussian (later German, then Berlin-Brandenburg) Academy of Sciences, 29 Vols. (Berlin: Georg Reimer, later Walter de Gruyter, 1900–), where *CPJ* appears in Volume 5.

4 James Beattie, *Essays: On the Nature and Immutability of Truth; On Poetry and Music, as they affect the Mind; On Laughter; On the Utility of Classical Learning* (Edinburgh: William Creech, 1776), 372–373; this passage may also be found in Beattie, *Selected Philosophical Writings*, ed. James A. Harris (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2004), 145.

5 See Jerome Stolnitz, "On the Origins of 'Aesthetic Disinterestedness,'" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 20, no. 2 (1961): 131–143; and Guyer, *A History of Modern Aesthetics*, Vol. 1, 33–47, with additional references at 34–35n6.

6 Isabel Rivers stresses the moral context of Shaftesbury's remarks about beauty; see Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660–1780*, Vol. 2: *Shaftesbury to Hume* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 141–152. For a more detailed account of Shaftesbury than I offer here, see Guyer, *A History of Modern Aesthetics*, Vol. 1, 33–47. On all three British writers to be discussed here, see also George Dickie, *A Century of Taste* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

7 Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711), Vol. 2, ed. Philip Ayres (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 103.

8 Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks*, Vol. 2, 108–109.

9 On Hutcheson's aesthetics, see Peter Kivy, *The Seventh Sense* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); and Guyer, *A History of Modern Aesthetics*, Vol. 1, 98–113.

10 Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725), ed. Wolfgang Leidhold, rev. ed. (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund 2008), Treatise I, Section I, §§xiii–xiv.

11 Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, Treatise I, Section IV, §i, 42.

12 Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, Treatise I, Section IV, §ii, 43.

13 Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, Treatise II, Section VI, §vi, 171.

14 Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, Treatise II, Section VI, §vii, 174.

15 Hume's argument for this thesis in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book III, Part I, is heavily indebted, to say the least, to Hutcheson's argument in his *Inquiry*, Treatise II, Sections II–III. See David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–1740), ed. David Fate and Mary J. Norton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007).

16 On Hume's aesthetics, see Paul Guyer, *Values of Beauty: Historical Essays in Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), chap. 2; and Guyer, *A History of Modern Aesthetics*, Vol. 1, 124–139. See also Peter Jones, *Hume's Sentiments: Their Ciceronian and French Context* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1982); Dabney Townsend, *Hume's Aesthetic Theory: Taste and Sentiment* (London: Routledge, 2001); and Timothy M. Costelloe, *Aesthetics and Morals in the Philosophy of David Hume* (London: Routledge, 2007).

17 Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book III, Part III, Section vi, Paragraph 6, 393.

18 Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book II, Part I, Section viii, Paragraph 2, 195.

19 Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book III, Part III, Section i, Paragraph 8, 368.

20 Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book III, Part III, Section i, Paragraph 15, 371–372; see also paragraph 23, 374–375.

21 Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book II, Part I, Section ii, Paragraph 4, 303; see also Book III, Part III, Section vi, Paragraph 6, 393.

22 David Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," in *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller, rev. ed. (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1987), 243.

23 Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," 239.

24 Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," 239.

25 Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," 240.
26 Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," 246.
27 See Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Meditationes philosophicae nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus/Philosophische Betrachtungen über einige Bedingungen des Gedichtes*, ed. Heinz Paetzold (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1983), §CXVI; and Baumgarten, *Ästhetik* (Latin-German), Vol. 1, ed. Dagmar Mirbach (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2007), §1.
28 On Mendelssohn's assimilation into European culture, see the incomparable Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn: A Biographical Study* (University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1973). On Mendelssohn's aesthetics, see Frederick C. Beiser, *Diotima's Children: German Aesthetic Rationalism from Leibniz to Lessing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Anne Pollok, *Facetten des Menschen: Zur Anthropologie Moses Mendelssohns* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2010), 154–244; Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Experience of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 131–160; *A History of Modern Aesthetics*, Vol. 1, 341–362; "Mendelssohn, Kant, and the Aims of Art," in *Kant and his German Contemporaries*, Vol. 2: *Aesthetics, History, Politics, and Religion*, ed. Daniel O. Dahlstrom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); and *Reason and Experience in Mendelssohn and Kant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020). On the development of aesthetics in eighteenth-century Germany more generally, see, in addition to Beiser's *Diotima's Children*, Stefanie Buchenau, *The Founding of Aesthetics in the German Enlightenment: The Art of Invention and the Invention of Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); and Simon Grote, *The Emergence of Modern Aesthetic Theory: Religion and Morality in Enlightenment Germany and Scotland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
29 Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §§XXV–XXVI.
30 See Christian Wolff, *Vernünftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt, und der Seele des Menschen* (1719), 4th ed. (Halle: Renger, 1751), §404.
31 Baumgarten, *Ästhetik*, Vol. 1, §14.
32 Moses Mendelssohn, *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Daniel O. Dahlstrom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 173 (trans. modified).
33 Mendelssohn, *Philosophical Writings*, 173.
34 Mendelssohn, *Philosophical Writings*, 199. This quotation is from the essay "On the sublime and naïve in the fine sciences." Mendelssohn developed his analysis of tragedy more fully in a three-way correspondence with his friends Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Friedrich Nicolai; see Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Moses Mendelssohn, and Friedrich Nicolai, *Briefwechsel über das Trauerspiel* (1764–1765), ed. Jochen Schulte-Sasse (Munich: Winkler Verlag 1972).
35 Mendelssohn, *Philosophical Writings*, 134. This is from the "Rhapsody" and was added to Mendelssohn's 1755 *Letters on Sentiments* for the 1761 and 1771 editions of his *Philosophical Writings*.
36 Mendelssohn, *Philosophical Writings*, 74; *Letters on Sentiments*, Conclusion.
37 Mendelssohn, Nicolai, and Thomas Abbt had even embarked on the daunting project of a complete translation of Shaftesbury's *Characteristicks*, although they did not complete it; see Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn*, 109–112.
38 Mendelssohn, *Philosophical Writings*, 139 (from "Rhapsody").
39 Much of the following is of course written against the background of what I have previously written about Kant's aesthetics, especially Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press,

1979; 2nd enlarged ed., Cambridge University Press, 1997), and "The Harmony of the Faculties Revisited," chap. 3 in Guyer, *Values of Beauty: Historical Essays in Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 77–109. From the extensive literature on Kant's aesthetics since the 1970s, see also Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste: A Reading of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and Birgit Recki, *Ästhetik der Sitten: Die Affinität von ästhetischen Gefühl und praktischer Vernunft bei Kant* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2001).

40 This is in the published version of the Introduction, written in January 1790, after the rest of the text was finished; the term does not appear in the first draft of the Introduction, written about a year earlier, before Kant had completed the rest of the work.

41 See especially Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, chap. 3, and "The Harmony of the Faculties Revisited," chap. 3 in Guyer, *Values of Beauty*.

42 See Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, chaps. 8 and 9; for a contrary view, see Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste*, chap. 8.

43 In the "General Remark on the first section of the Analytic," following section 22, Kant also applies the term to the imagination (*CPJ*, 5:241).

44 See Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, chap. 12. This chapter appears only in the 1997 edition.

45 See Sanford Budick, *Kant and Milton* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

46 Though see Guyer, "The Poetic Possibility of the Sublime," in *Proceedings of the XII. International Kant Congress*, Vol. 1, ed. Violetta L. Waibel, Margit Ruffing, and David Wagner (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2018), 297–316 and the papers by Robert Clewis and Uygar Abaci referred to there.

47 This was of course the gravamen of Bourdieu; see his *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).

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7 From Spiritual Taste to Good Taste? Reflections on the Search for Aesthetic Theory's Pietist Roots

Simon Grote

In the historiography of eighteenth-century German aesthetics, heteronomy has long received careful attention. Over the past thirty years, even as Immanuel Kant's 1790 *Critique of the Power of Judgment* and various Kant-inspired concepts of autonomous aesthetic experience have remained important lenses through which to interpret and assess the importance of earlier, ostensibly aesthetic theories,[1] a parallel stream of scholarship has attempted to situate the authors of those early theories in contemporary contexts more familiar from the histories of art; logic; rhetoric; literature; religion and theology; and natural, moral, and political philosophy.[2] Much of this scholarship has revealed that German authors, like some of their British contemporaries,[3] constructed aesthetic theories that ignored or denied the autonomy of aesthetic experience[4] or functioned as solutions to problems external to the modern discipline of aesthetics.[5]

Within this formidable and growing body of scholarship on heteronomy in eighteenth-century German aesthetics, one perennial subject shows no signs of losing its power to fascinate: the commonplace that early eighteenth-century German aesthetic theory, much like the "sentimentalist" tendency in literature of the same period, had origins in German Pietism. The undiminished currency of this commonplace is probably nowhere more evident than in recent scholarship on Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714–1762), coiner of the term *aesthetica* in 1735 and the first author of a theory to bear that name. In various studies, we read that Baumgarten's education by Pietist theologians in Halle supplied him with many of the pieces from which he built that aesthetic theory: key terms, concepts, allusions, attitudes, arguments, functions, and purposes.[6]

In tracing the roots of something recognizably modern to something recognizably religious, such accounts of aesthetic theory's origins in Pietism share one of the problems endemic to secularization theses: not perhaps the tendentious insinuation that modernity's debts to religion render its own achievements illegitimate[7] but rather the simpler and apparently more innocuous presupposition that religion, in some sense, came "before" its putatively modern heirs and brought them into

existence.[8] In the case of aesthetic theory, admittedly, this presupposition seems unquestionable. We are faced with simple facts of chronology and geography: aesthetic theory began at least nominally in 1735 with Alexander Baumgarten, who had been educated by Pietists in Halle from an early age. If we wish to discover whatever roots his innovation may have had in Pietism, as has long seemed reasonable, it is only natural that we should regard "Pietism" as preceding Baumgarten, just as a cause must precede its effect.

Where we go wrong is in discovering commonalities between Baumgarten's aesthetic philosophy and examples of Pietist theology, then presupposing, rather than demonstrating, that those commonalities must represent transmissions from one to the other, marks of the influence of one upon the other, or perhaps even signs of a transformation of the one into the other. We thereby tend to overlook the possibility that the relationship between them may not be primarily causal. In fact, they may have had common roots, sources, or models, or may represent two different projects, two parts of one shared project, or two contributions to one or more ongoing discussions. Thinking in terms of secularization or "roots," in other words, encourages the fallacy of *post hoc propter hoc*. This danger could hardly be clearer than it is in August Langen's investigation of the influence of Pietism on eighteenth-century German secular literature. While careful to acknowledge that Pietist words, concepts, and literary structures were by no means the only source of the "language of feeling" (*Gefühlssprache*) characteristic of much eighteenth-century literature,[9] the search for Pietist sources of such language occasionally leads him simply to assert relations of cause and effect where, in fact, the real connections between earlier and later texts must have been more complex. Those who seek the roots or sources of Baumgarten's aesthetics in Pietist theology risk committing a similar fallacy.

This risk becomes particularly evident in the case of "good taste," a concept present in Baumgarten's aesthetics that bears a fascinating resemblance to "spiritual taste," a concept central to Pietist theology. On the one hand, the case for tracing a genealogical connection from Pietist "spiritual taste" to Baumgarten's "good taste" seems strong. The characteristically Pietist insistence that acquiring "spiritual taste" through partly supernatural means is inseparable from conversion and essential to faith would seem to have in some way stimulated Baumgarten to develop aesthetic philosophy as a complementary but solely natural means of acquiring something with similar benefits, including "good taste." On the other hand, as is so often the case in secularization narratives, expanding the context to include relevant texts by authors other than the putative theological source and its putative inheritor, which is to say, in this case, other than Baumgarten and his Pietist teachers, makes the real genealogy begin to look more complex.

Affinities with Joachim Lange

One of the most elaborate of the various late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Lutheran theological accounts of "spiritual taste" (*geistlicher Geschmack*) can be found in the works of Joachim Lange (1670–1744), who developed and deployed the concept in service of the decades-long polemical campaign against Lutheran orthodoxy waged by the luminaries of Halle Pietism's first generation. A central axis of this conflict came into especially sharp focus in the early 1700s, when an extended quarrel between Lange and the Wittenberg theologian and defender of late orthodoxy *par excellence*, Valentin Ernst Löscher (1673–1749), revealed that the essential question was how to understand Luther's well-known teaching that God's word alone is the means of salvation. The point of disagreement, arguably "the center of the so-called Pietist theology," was what all parties involved in the controversy called the doctrine of "illumination" (*Erleuchtung*).[10] From the perspective of Lange's occasional theological ally Johann Georg Walch (1693–1775), writing in the late 1720s, this debate hinged on a single question: whether the Holy Spirit illuminates the unconverted in such a way as to provide them with spiritual knowledge—literally, "knowledge and cognition of godly things" (*Wissenschaft und Erkänntnis von göttlichen Dingen*).[11] Lange argued, opposing Löscher, that it does not. Key to Lange's argument was his insistence that acquiring spiritual knowledge requires more than a merely intellectual assent to doctrine because many key doctrines—such as the doctrines that God is just, that he is omnipresent and omnipotent, that his Word is revealed in scripture, that his grace is necessary to restore his image in us, and so on—are fundamentally "practical" (*praktisch*) rather than merely theoretical. That is to say, genuine assent to practical doctrines is inseparable from a change in the believer's will and actions, and this change can occur only in those people who have "experienced" (*erfahren*) the truth of "godly teachings which are practical in their use" (*göttliche Lehren, die in ihrem Gebrauch praktisch sind*) by virtue of having experienced the supernatural power of God's word.[12] For Lange, this "spiritual experience" (*geistliche Erfahrung*) is the result of supernatural illumination by the Holy Spirit during the process of conversion.[13] It is a prerequisite of the restoration of God's image in the individual Christian; it is essential for sound biblical interpretation and effective preaching, and it is not available to the unconverted.[14]

Drawing upon a plethora of scriptural passages, and in line with the metaphors of taste and sweetness characteristic of medieval mysticism and baroque spiritual poetry,[15] Lange grounds his account of spiritual experience in a well-worn analogy to the human faculty of taste.[16] We cannot assess the taste of food or drink, he observes, nor desire them for their taste, without having had the experience of that taste. Just as

the sweetness of honey, for example, cannot be understood by anyone who has not yet tasted that sweetness, so the supernatural power of God's word—our supernatural food, so to speak—cannot be recognized by anyone who has not yet experienced it.[17] Lange therefore glosses spiritual experience as "spiritual taste" (*geistlicher Geschmack*, *gustus spiritualis*) or "internal taste" (*der innere Geschmack*). He also calls it, referring specifically to Philippians 1:9, *aisthēsis*. It is inseparable from what, on other occasions, Lange calls a "living perception" (*lebendige Erkenntnis*) of spiritual truths: an experience of "internal conviction" (*innerliche Überzeugung, convictio interioris*) and highly affect-laden desire for those spiritual things whose goodness is presented to us in scripture.[18] As one might expect, it cannot be acquired without God's grace, but Lange also insists on the importance of a regimen of exercise (*Übung*)—a "way of *aisthēsis*" (*Weg der Aisthesis*, *via αἰσθήσεως*) or "way of true *askesis* and *aisthēsis*" (*Weg der wahren Askese und Aisthesis*, *via verae ἀσκήσεως & αἰσθήσεως*) that will produce in us a "habit of experience" (*habitus experientiae*) and strengthen our sincere love of God and neighbor.[19] This regimen has the three-part structure advocated by Martin Luther and, following Luther, Lange's teacher and colleague August Hermann Francke (1663–1727) for the study of scripture: *oratio*, *meditatio*, and *tentatio*. Prayer (*oratio*) is to be followed by diligent scriptural interpretation (*meditatio*) guided by the Holy Spirit and finally by *Anfechtung* (*tentatio*), an attempt to experience the spiritual truths of scripture in one's own life.[20] This third stage, according to Lange, contributes most to the development of spiritual taste.[21]

The affinities between Lange's and Baumgarten's projects are unmistakable. The latter, admittedly, uses the term *taste* (*gustus* or *sapor*) infrequently, and strictly speaking, he presents its cultivation as merely one of the purposes of aesthetics. But its position in his *Aesthetica* is central.[22] It refers to the sensate or intuitive judgment of the degree to which a thing is perfect or imperfect.[23] This faculty of judgment, one of the several "lower cognitive faculties" (*untere Erkenntniskräfte*) whose improvement Baumgarten, in his 1735 *Meditationes*, claimed should be the aim of aesthetics, is the faculty responsible for "aesthetic critique" (*aesthetica critica*), i.e. "the art of forming taste" (*ars formandi gustum*) by passing sensate judgment upon a thing and presenting that judgment to others.[24] But although Baumgarten describes the more general aim of aesthetic philosophy not in terms of the cultivation of "good taste" per se but rather as "the perfection of sensate cognition as such" (*perfectio cognitionis sensitivae, qua talis*),[25] he does gloss this formulation simply as "beauty" (*pulchritudo*), defined as "perfection of the phenomenon, i.e. perfection observable by taste in the broad sense [i.e. sensate judgment]" (*perfectio phenomenon, s. gustui latius dicto observabilis*).[26] He also suggests that achieving this perfection necessarily involves enabling those who study aesthetics to cultivate in themselves and in

their audiences "living cognition" of truth—in other words, precisely what Lange, with reference specifically to spiritual truths, calls "spiritual taste." The means prescribed by Baumgarten for the cultivation of this living perception are likewise not only theoretical but also practical. That is to say, they include not only acquiring theoretical knowledge (*Wissenschaft*) of the criteria of perfection in the arts but also undertaking "*askesis* and aesthetic exercise" (*ἄσκησις et exercitatio aesthetica*) directed toward the improvement of not only one's mind or *Geist* (*ingenium*) but also one's "character and aesthetic temperament" (*indolem et temperamentum aestheticum*).[27]

Both these means, theoretical and practical, recall Lange's project for the cultivation of spiritual taste and, with it, a newfound conviction of the supernatural power of God's word and a newfound love of God and neighbor. By demonstrating the criteria of a good work of art or literature in the theoretical section of his *Aesthetica*, Baumgarten was consciously developing a means of demonstrating the supernatural authority of the Bible. Allusions to this purpose could be found already in his 1735 *Meditationes*,[28] and in his lectures on dogmatic theology a decade later at Frankfurt (Oder) he confirmed it. Subjecting scripture to aesthetic critique, he explained in those lectures, reveals a degree of perfection so far beyond that of other ancient texts that it cannot have been the effect of merely natural human ability and is very likely attributable to divine inspiration.[29] As for Baumgarten's practical exercises, their nominal affinity with Lange's "way of true *askesis* and *aisthēsis*" is clear. That Baumgarten understood his own "*askesis* and aesthetic exercise" as a means of improving the moral character of their practitioners, akin to Lange's exercises for the development of spiritual taste, is perhaps less obvious but can be inferred from scattered references in his *Aesthetica* and his 1741 inaugural lecture at the Viadrina.[30]

Given Baumgarten's awareness of Lange's ideas—from reading the latter's writings, from hearing his lectures in Halle, and via a variety of other oral and written modes of communication with him and his colleagues in Francke's schools and at the university—Lange's polemical deployment of the concept of "spiritual taste" may well have provided Baumgarten with part of the impetus to develop his own aesthetic theory. Moreover, given the affinities suggested above, it hardly seems unreasonable to construe Baumgarten's aesthetic theory as a "secular," philosophical version of Lange's theological program for cultivating spiritual taste, a version larger in its ambit and designed to be effective to a certain degree even in the absence of supernatural assistance. Baumgarten seems to have imagined aesthetics as a means of developing, without aid from the Holy Spirit, the perceptual faculties necessary for moral action and creating works of art and literature with the power to edify an audience by arousing salutary affects.[31] And yet the relative slightness of this conjecture's foundation, namely, the affinities between

Lange's and Baumgarten's concepts and projects, on the one hand, and the fact of Baumgarten's contact with Lange, on the other hand, would also seem to warrant caution.

Affinities with Johann Ulrich von König

The need for caution becomes especially obvious in light of another text, much like Baumgarten's aesthetics in its purported aim, also written by an acquaintance of Lange's but not obviously derivative of his concept of "spiritual taste" or of the theological polemic in which he was engaged: Johann Ulrich von König's (1688–1744) *Untersuchung von dem guten Geschmack in der Dicht- und Rede-Kunst*, an afterword to his 1727 edition of the poems of Friedrich Rudolph Ludwig von Canitz (1654–1699).[32] On the one hand, König's project resembles Baumgarten's. By way of making the case that Canitz's poems reveal him to have been a German of exemplary good taste, worthy of the most diligent emulation by his fellow countrymen, König offers his readers a theoretical account of good taste itself, particularly in the domain of poetry. Good taste, he asserts, is what allows those who possess it to produce works of the most perfect beauty.[33] Literally the name of our tongue's judgment about whether or not we enjoy any given food or drink, *taste* refers metaphorically to an "internal sensation" (*innerliche Empfindung*) or "feeling of the intellect" (*Gefühl des Verstandes*): an intuitive judgment of the degree of perfection in any given object and consequently a corresponding attraction or aversion to the object.[34] It can be perfected by acquiring solid knowledge (*Wissenschaft*) of the fundamental principles of good taste—the "immutable rules of beauty and truth"[35]—and by applying those rules in practical exercise (*Ausübung*) guided by a teacher.[36] Throughout this discussion, König continually seems to anticipate Baumgarten, perhaps most strikingly at the end of his *Untersuchung*, where he promises to enumerate and illustrate at some indefinite later date the fundamental principles of constructing a perfect poem.[37] Baumgarten, of course, made good on this promise seven years later in his 1735 *Meditationes*.

On the other hand, König ostensibly does not present a "secularized" version of Lange's program for the cultivation of spiritual taste. As it happens, the latter was the first to edit a volume of Canitz's poems—his edition appeared in 1700—and König does claim to have consulted with Lange while assembling his own edition, a quarter-century later.[38] But this contact with Lange notwithstanding, and despite König's ostensible acquaintance with the contemporary theological literature on spiritual taste, König's account of good taste clearly had other sources.[39] "Spiritual taste," according to him, is merely one of several types of good taste; one can also have good taste in the domains of ethics, prudence, everyday life, and poetry and rhetoric.[40] The impetus to discuss taste in

general and in all these particular domains, he explains, has accordingly come not from the ongoing discussions of spiritual taste but rather from recent theoretical discussions of *Goût* by such French authors as Jean-Baptiste Dubos (1670–1742), Dominique Bouhours (1628–1702), Jean Frain du Tremblay (1641–1724), Anne Dacier (1654–1720), Charles Rollin (1661–1741), and Jean-Baptiste Morvan de Bellegard (1648–1734) as well as from recent German commentaries on Baltasar Gracian's (1601–1658) *L'Homme de Cour* by Christian Thomasius (1655–1728) and others.[41] Some of these authors, such as Gracian and Bouhours, appear to have recognized the relationship between their own concepts and that of spiritual taste,[42] but their texts and all the others mentioned by König appeared before or contemporaneously with those by Lange and his Pietist colleagues, and contain no reference to them. In other words, just as Pietist theological discussions of spiritual taste did not obviously have roots only or even primarily in the long-standing French and German discussion of taste to which König refers,[43] the discussion to which König presented himself as contributing did not have roots in Pietist theology. To some extent, the same must be true in Baumgarten's case. In fact, one long-standing genealogy of Baumgarten's project—presented by Alfred Riemann nearly a century ago—places its roots in those seventeenth-century French theories of taste that König helped introduce to a German readership.[44]

Baumgarten's Purposes

We are thus faced with a puzzle. What may look like a transmission of concepts from Lange to Baumgarten, suggesting aesthetic theory's roots in Pietist theology, looks quite different in light of the resemblances between Baumgarten's and König's projects. How, then, can we best summarize the relationship between Baumgarten and Lange, or between Baumgarten's aesthetics and Pietist theology?

We can begin by recognizing that our historical narratives, such as those that lead from Pietist theology to Baumgarten's aesthetics, inevitably reflect both the texts and the concepts around which we have decided to construct those narratives. Concepts such as "roots," for example, tend to produce genealogical narratives in which the emergence of a later thing is explained quasi-biologically as the result of an earlier thing's teleological growth or transformation. In the case of Baumgarten, such a narrative leads us astray. Instead of simply drawing central concepts from Lange, adopting Lange's own impetus, or developing an aesthetic theory merely for the purpose of extending Lange's theological program into the realm of philosophy, Baumgarten drew upon a range of sources, probably at least as broad as König's, for purposes that he, like König, cannot simply have taken over from Lange.[45] Accounting for the relationship between Baumgarten's aesthetic theory and the theological

polemic in which Lange deployed the concept of "spiritual taste" requires a careful investigation of those purposes.

Such investigation has already produced several plausible conjectures. In recent studies, for example, we read that Baumgarten wrote his 1735 *Meditationes* as a philosophical intervention in support of his Pietist teachers in an ongoing debate about whether highly affect-laden utterances of the Bible's human authors should be regarded as divinely inspired[46]; that Baumgarten meant to intervene in different but related debates between his Pietist teachers and Christian Wolff (1679–1754) about ethics, such as whether moral education should engage the lower cognitive faculties and enlist rather than suppress the affects[47]; and that Baumgarten developed his aesthetic theory as a contribution to the Pietist campaign against the Wertheim Bible, a Wolff-inspired translation of the Pentateuch by Johann Lorenz Schmidt (1702–1749), whom Joachim Lange and others accused of purchasing linguistic unequivocality and logical transparency at the expense of poetry and sublimity.[48] Yet the plausibility of all these conjectures notwithstanding, still another one—closely related to the last in this brief list—may afford the most direct view of the relationship between Baumgarten's purposes and Lange's in the specific domain of taste: a conjecture suggested by Andres Straßberger's observation that Baumgarten's aesthetic theory provided ammunition to critics of the so-called "philosophical sermon" in the 1740s.[49] In fact, from the perspective suggested by Lange's theory of spiritual taste, Baumgarten did more than supply others with ammunition; he employed the ammunition himself in 1735.

The "philosophical sermon," apparently endorsed by Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700–1766) in a series of textbooks and other writings on rhetoric, homiletics, poetics, and philosophy beginning in the mid-1720s, had already aroused the suspicion of Halle's Pietist theologians by the early 1730s, even before the publication of the Wertheim Bible in 1735.[50] Gottsched had used Wolff's "mathematical method" of philosophical demonstration to argue that sacred rhetoric, like secular rhetoric, should aim at perspicuity. It should move the listener's will primarily using an appeal to the intellect, and its chief means of persuasion should be logic.[51] Having provided the Halle theology faculty with ample polemical firepower in its successful campaign against Wolff himself in the early 1720s, Joachim Lange now led the charge in Halle against what seemed a dangerous new development: Gottsched's and his followers' application of Wolffian philosophy to the domain of homiletics. Just as worrisome to Lange, naturally, was the prospect of a general rehabilitation of Wolff's philosophy by Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm I.[52]

Among Lange's targets was Alexander's brother Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten (1706–1757), whose Wolffian sympathies had worried Lange and some of his colleagues on Halle's theology faculty even before Baumgarten's appointment as Professor of Theology in 1734.[53] In March

1736, shortly after Baumgarten's new moral theology textbook had begun to appear in print,[54] Lange and his colleagues presented Baumgarten with a letter outlining their concerns—among others, that his method of teaching theology made excessive reference to the principles of "the Wolffian philosophy."[55] Drawing upon arguments already familiar from Lange's and others' published attacks on philosophical preaching and the Wertheim Bible over the past several years, Baumgarten's colleagues worried that inculcating Wolffian philosophical principles was causing theology students to "lose all taste for God's word"—and even "to be disgusted [*eckeln*] by the good [*lieb*] word of God as though it were a defective text."[56] Consequently, the colleagues continued, too many Halle theology students were philosophizing in the pulpit, "devoid of zest and power," with the "simple, honest, pure word of God" nowhere to be heard. Their sermons tended to "enervate the Gospel rather than planting it in the heart with proof of the Spirit and its power."[57]

For Lange and his colleagues, "taste" was much more than an everyday metaphor for habitual preference. In reference to the Bible, as in their letter to Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten, it denoted spiritual taste: an experience of the supernatural power of God's word and, consequently, a "living" (*lebendig*), practically applied knowledge of spiritual truths, all developed by following the "way of *aisthēsis*." What concerned them was that congregations were hearing not biblical language with the power to produce this experience but rather a philosophical language that could perhaps produce intellectual assent but had no power to change a listener's heart. Baumgarten, they worried, seemed to be promoting this mode of sermonizing both in the homiletic principles he advocated, which appeared to resemble Gottsched's, and in his own overly philosophical manner of exposition in the classroom and in print.

To this worry, reaffirmed later in 1736 by a royal order instructing both sides in the controversy to "lead their theology students to true, living Christianity and to genuine competence in serving God usefully as preachers,"[58] Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten and his brother Alexander offered a simple response. Siegmund Jacob's came explicitly, in his introduction to the 1738 edition of his moral theology textbook: if students took his philosophical mode of persuasion as a model for their sermons, then this was "an unnecessary abuse" (*zufällige[r] Misbrauch*) of his textbook that violated the very rules of good preaching asserted in it.[59] A "Wolffian" pedagogical method, in other words, was quite suitable for teaching students to give spiritually edifying sermons without employing that pedagogical method in the pulpit. The same response was already implicit in Alexander Baumgarten's 1735 *Meditationes*, itself a philosophical demonstration that poetry, or "perfect sensate discourse" (*vollkommene sinnliche Rede*), should employ ideas that are as clear and indistinct as possible—which is to say highly imagistic, concrete, and affect-laden, much like the biblical language that Lange and

his colleagues wanted theology students to employ in their sermons.[60] Years later, in his lectures on aesthetics, Baumgarten made the point more explicitly. By means of aesthetics, he explained to his students, "a theologian will become a good homilete."[61]

On this reading, Baumgarten may perhaps have written his *Meditationes* in response to König's call for a philosophical poetics, though König's was of course not the only call of this kind known to Baumgarten. In the early 1720s, König himself had found in Johann Jacob Bodmer (1698–1783) and Johann Jacob Breitinger's (1701–1776) *Discourse der Mahlern* a stimulus to his own investigations.[62] Baumgarten knew not only Bodmer and Breitinger's *Discourses* but also Gottsched's poetics, published in 1729 and perhaps itself construable as a response to König's call.[63] Yet Baumgarten cannot have intended to intervene only in a seventeenth-century French debate transmitted to Germany by König, nor even only in a German debate about literary taste whose terms had been set by Bodmer, Breitinger, König, and Gottsched in the 1720s.[64] Rather, he found himself in the midst of a heated controversy in the mid-1730s about how best to educate ministers, in which his Pietist teachers feared that using Wolff's mathematical method to teach theology students poetic and rhetorical principles akin to Gottsched's was inducing them to preach in an uninspired philosophical idiom rather than in the affect-laden, inspired, poetic idiom of the Bible. Replacing the latter idiom with the former, of course, meant giving up on the cultivation of spiritual taste in themselves and the members of their congregations—in direct violation of what Lange, in his long-standing polemic against Lutheran orthodoxy, had presented as Pietism's defining project.[65] Baumgarten responded with a poetics, and later with a more general aesthetics, that employed Wolff's method to produce a result different from Gottsched's. By demonstrating the aesthetic perfection of precisely the idiom that Lange feared was becoming distasteful to theology students, Baumgarten purported to motivate them to undertake the aesthetic exercises that would develop their taste for that idiom. This was the idiom whose aesthetic perfection became the subject of controversy in 1740s debates about taste associated with the "small war of poets" (*kleiner Dichterkrieg*) in Halle and Leipzig.[66]

If this conjecture about Baumgarten's intent has merit, then his aesthetics was by no means a straightforward extension of Lange's program for the cultivation of spiritual taste. After all, Lange himself attacked Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten's pedagogical use of a Wolffian idiom similar to Alexander's, and he may have looked askance at any effort to propose a set of principles by which even a preacher lacking divine inspiration could produce an effective sermon.[67] To be sure, Alexander Baumgarten himself considered the Bible's extraordinary degree of aesthetic perfection, unequalled even by the other literary masterpieces of antiquity, to be proof of its authors' divine inspiration.[68] An inspired

author or preacher, it followed, could reach a higher degree of aesthetic perfection, as measured by Baumgarten's principles, than even the most gifted and well-trained but uninspired one. Lange can hardly have disagreed with such a sentiment. Still, his and others' skepticism about the usefulness of philosophical demonstration in encouraging the development of a taste for biblical language needed to be addressed. The fact that Baumgarten's aesthetic theory performed this function, and that he may have intended it to do so, reflects a historical relationship between the concepts of spiritual taste and good taste that searching merely for the roots of aesthetic theory in Pietist theology cannot reveal.[69]

Notes

1 As described in, e.g., Simon Grote, *The Emergence of Modern Aesthetic Theory: Religion and Morality in Enlightenment Germany and Scotland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1–8.

2 Recent contributions to this scholarship include Frederick Beiser, *Diotima's Children* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Stefan Borchers, *Die Erzeugung des ganzen Menschen* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011); Stefanie Buchenau, *The Founding of Aesthetics in the German Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Dorothea von Mücke, *The Practices of the Enlightenment: Aesthetics, Authorship, and the Public* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); and Grote, *The Emergence of Modern Aesthetic Theory*.

3 On the parallels between British and German aesthetic theories: Howard Caygill, *Art of Judgement* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989); Robert Norton, *The Beautiful Soul: Aesthetic Morality in the Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); and Grote, *The Emergence of Modern Aesthetic Theory*.

4 E.g. Beiser, *Diotima's Children*.

5 E.g. Buchenau, *The Founding of Aesthetics*; Grote, *The Emergence of Modern Aesthetic Theory*.

6 E.g. Wilhelm Ludwig Federlin, *Kirchliche Volksbildung und bürgerliche Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1993), 61–95; Norton, *The Beautiful Soul*, esp. 55–99; Joachim Jacob, *Heilige Poesie* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1997), 17–54; Ernst Müller, *Ästhetische Religiosität und Kunstreligion* (Berlin: Akademie, 2004), 45–53; Petra Bahr, *Darstellung des Undarstellbaren* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 11–170; Simon Grote, "Pietistische *Aisthesis* und moralische Erziehung bei Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten," *Aufklärung* 20 (2008): 175–198; Simon Grote, *Moral Philosophy and the Origins of Modern Aesthetic Theory in Germany and Scotland* (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2010); Borchers, *Die Erzeugung des ganzen Menschen*, esp. 136–162; Clemens Schwaiger, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten: ein intellektuelles Porträt* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 2011), 27–29, 79–95, 139–143, et passim; Steffen W. Gross, *Cognitio Sensitiva* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2011), esp. 47–158; Martin Fritz, *Vom Erhabenen* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), esp. 230–283; Ursula Goldenbaum, "Mendelssohn's Spinozistic Alternative to Baumgarten's Pietist Project of Aesthetics," in *Moses Mendelssohn's Metaphysics and Aesthetics*, ed. Reinier Munk (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 299–315; Alessandro Nannini, "Da Baumgarten a Baumgarten: Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten e la

fondazione dell'estetica moderna," *Premio Nuova Estetica* supplementa 28 (April 2013): 67–90; *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, 2nd ed., ed. Michael Kelly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), s.v. "Origins of Aesthetics: Theological Origins of Aesthetics," by Simon Grote; Nannini, "Per una storia dell'idea di 'conoscenza viva': De Lutero all'estetica dell' 'Aufklärung'," *Intersezioni* 34, no. 3 (December 2014): 381–402; Mücke, *The Practices of the Enlightenment*, esp. 85–108; Nannini, "Biblical Hermeneutics in the Light of Aesthetics: The Case of Gottlob Samuel Nicolai," in *Religion und Aufklärung: Akten des Ersten Internationalen Kongresses zur Erforschung der Aufklärungstheologie*, ed. A. Beutel and M. Nooke (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016); Grote, *The Emergence of Modern Aesthetic Theory*, esp. 67–146.

7 Hans Blumenberg, "'Säkularisation': Kritik einer Kategorie historischer Illegitimität," in *Die Philosophie und die Frage nach dem Fortschritt*, ed. Helmut Kuhn and Franz Wiedman (Munich: Anton Pustet, 1964), 240–265.

8 The classic diagnosis of the similar problems afflicting any identification of *Empfindsamkeit* as "secularized Pietism" can be found in Gerhard Sauder, *Empfindsamkeit*, Vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1974), 58–64.

9 August Langen, *Wortschatz des deutschen Pietismus*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1968), 434.

10 Johann Georg Walch, *Historische und Theologische Einleitung in die Religionsstreitigkeiten der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche*, Vol. 2 (Jena: Meyer, 1730), §53, 253.

11 Walch, *Einleitung*, Vol. 2, §53, 256. Cf. Martin Greschat, *Zwischen Tradition und neuem Anfang: Valentin Löscher und der Ausgang der lutherischen Orthodoxie* (Wittenberg: Luther-Verlag, 1971), 263–78; with particular reference to Lange's, Johann Georg Pritius's (1662–1732), and Gottlieb Wernsdorff's (1668–1729) positions on the issue: Ernst Koch, "*De Theologia experimentali.* Akademische Diskurse um 1700 in Leipzig, Halle und Wittenberg," in "*Aus Gottes Wort und eigener Erfahrung gezeiget": Erfahrung—Glauben, Erkennen und Handeln im Pietismus. Beiträge zum III. Internationalen Kongress für Pietismusforschung*, Vol. 1. ed. Christian Soboth and Udo Sträter (Halle: Verlag der Franckeschen Stiftungen, 2012).

12 Joachim Lange, *Die richtige Mittelstraße*, Vol. 2 (Halle: Renger, 1712), 203, 205, 207, 208–231.

13 Lange, *Die richtige Mittelstraße*, 204.

14 Joachim Lange, *De experientia spirituali* (Halle: Henckel, 1710), 30–31.

15 Histories of these metaphors include *Frühneuhochdeutsches Wörterbuch*, ed. Ulrich Goebel, Anja Lobenstein-Reichmann, and Oskar Reichmann, Vol. 6 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), s.v. "Geschmak"; Langen, *Wortschatz*, 296; Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1955, repr., Munich: Dt. Taschenbuch Verlag, 1999), s.v. "Geschmack"; Joseph Imorde, *Affektübertragung* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2004), esp. chap. 3; Joseph Ziegler, *Dulcedo dei: ein Beitrag zur Theologie der griechischen und latienischen Bibel* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1937); Werner Armknecht, *Geschichte des Wortes "süß": I. Teil: Bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters* (PhD diss., Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Berlin, 1936); Fridolin Marxer, *Die inneren geistlichen Sinne: ein Beitrag zur Deutung ignatianischer Mystik* (Freiburg: Herder, 1963), 104–107; and Endre Szécsényi, "*Gustus Spiritualis*: Remarks on the Emergence of Modern Aesthetics," *Estetika: The Central European Journal of Aesthetics* 51, no. 1 (2014): 62–85.

16 Cf. Richard Cross, "Thomas Aquinas," in *The Spiritual Senses*, ed. Paul L. Gavrilyuk and Sarah Coakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 188.

17 Lange, *Die richtige Mittelstraße*, 211, 215; Lange, *De experientia spirituali*, 17.
18 Lange, *Die richtige Mittelstraße*, 206; Lange, *De experientia spirituali*, 35. Cf. Georg Pasor's gloss of *aisthēsis* as "gustus bonorum coelestium" in *Lexicon Graeco-Latinum In Novum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi Testamentum* (Leipzig: Gleditsch, 1686), s.v. "*aisthēsis*."
19 Lange, *Die richtige Mittelstraße*, 205; Lange, *De experientia spirituali*, 35.
20 Chi-Won Kang, *Frömmigkeit und Gelehrsamkeit* (Giessen: Brunnen, 2001), 78–87, 364–401. My thanks to Jonathan Strom for alerting me to the genealogy of this tripartite scheme.
21 Lange, *De experientia spirituali*, 27.
22 For this reason, the obvious contrast between Baumgarten's apparent reticence about taste and, for example, Shaftesbury's repeated and extensive discussions of it in his *Characteristics* should probably be regarded as a symptom of the difference between the two books' genres, not of differences in their understandings of taste itself. Whereas in his essays, Shaftesbury deliberately avoids the mode of philosophizing characteristic of universities, Baumgarten offers in his textbook a network of propositions designed to serve as the foundational system for a series of university lectures. In such a system, the frequency of a word's mention need not have anything to do with the importance of its function within the system of propositions. Baumgarten praises Shaftesbury's own taste, pronouncing him "one of the best judges of fine things [*unus ex summis elegantiarum arbitris*]." A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, ed. and trans. Dagmar Mirbach (Hamburg: Meiner, 2007), §556.
23 A. G. Baumgarten, *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus* (Halle: Grunert, 1735), §§115–116; A. G. Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, ed. and trans. Günter Gawlick and Lothar Kreimendahl (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 2011), §§607–608, 662; A. G. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §§5, 56.
24 Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §§115–116; Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, §607, cf. §533.
25 Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §14.
26 Baumgarten, *Metaphysica,* §§662, 607.
27 Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §§47, 59; A. G. Baumgarten, *Kollegium über die Ästhetik*, in *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten: Seine Bedeutung und Stellung in der Leibniz-Wolffischen Philosophie und seine Beziehungen zu Kant*, ed. Bernard Poppe (Borna-Leipzig: Noske, 1907), §44; Ernst Stöckmann, *Anthropologische Ästhetik* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2009), 25, 104–110; Schwaiger, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten*, 141; Gabriel Trop, *Poetry as a Way of Life: Aesthetics and Askesis in the German Eighteenth Century* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2015), chap. 1. My thanks to Gabriel Trop for showing me the final manuscript of his book shortly before its publication.
28 Cf. Grote, "Pietistische *Aisthesis*," 191–192.
29 A. G. Baumgarten, "Isagoge philosophica in theologiam theticam," taken down by Joannes Gottfried Beneke, 3 Vols. [1748], Berliner Staatsbibliothek Ms theol. lat. Oct. 48, §§41–69. Cf. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §22. Cf. Grote, *Emergence of Modern Aesthetic Theory*, 91–93; more extensively on the relationship between aesthetic theory and biblical hermeneutics in the work of Baumgarten and his contemporaries, Nannini, "Biblical Hermeneutics in the Light of Aesthetics."
30 Grote, *Emergence of Modern Aesthetic Theory*, 103–120; cf. Dagmar Mirbach, "Ingenium *venustum* und *magnitudo pectoris:* Ethische Aspekte von Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens *Aesthetica*," *Aufklärung* 20 (2008): 204.

31 Cf. nearly all the texts (except Federlin, *Kirchliche Volksbildung*) cited in note 6, above.
32 Johann Ulrich von König, *Untersuchung Von dem guten Geschmack in der Dicht- und Rede-Kunst*, in *Des Freyherrn von Caniz Gedichte*, ed. König (Leipzig: Hauden, 1727).
33 König, *Untersuchung*, 229.
34 König, *Untersuchung*, 240, 248, 254–258.
35 König, *Untersuchung*, 321, quoting Charles Rollin.
36 König, *Untersuchung*, e.g. 262–276, 318.
37 König, *Untersuchung*, 318.
38 König, ed., *Des Freyherrn von Caniz Gedichte*, xxiv, l–li.
39 Contra August Langen's assertion (*Wortschatz*, 297), unaccompanied by explicit evidence, that König drew his vocabulary "from the religious tradition" (*aus der religiösen Überlieferung*).
40 König, *Untersuchung*, 277–291.
41 König, *Untersuchung*, 241–242, 250–254, 269–271, 282.
42 As illuminated in Szécsényi's pioneering "*Gustus Spiritualis*" (see above, note 15). My thanks to Endre Szécsényi for bringing this article to my attention.
43 Notwithstanding the reference by Lange's colleague Christian Thomasius to "lebendige[r] Geschmack am Wort Gottes" in his *Von der Artzeney wider die unvernünfftige Liebe* (Halle: Salfeld, 1696), 527.
44 Alfred Riemann, *Die Aesthetik Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus nebst einer Ubersetzung dieser Schrift* (Wiesbaden: M. Sandig, 1973), 5–14. Cf. e.g. Sven Aage Jørgensen, Klaus Bohnen, and Per Øhrgaard. *Aufklärung, Sturm und Drang, Frühe Klassik 1740–1789* (Munich: Beck, 1990), 111–112; and Stöckmann, *Anthropologische Ästhetik*, e.g. 25, which offers a prehistory of Baumgarten's aesthetics that includes Dubos but focuses on French psychological theories of affect rather than theories of taste per se.
45 On the reception of Shaftesbury by Alexander Gottlieb and Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten, see Grote, *Emergence of Modern Aesthetic Theory*, 236–237.
46 Grote, "Pietistische *Aisthesis*"; Grote, *Emergence of Modern Aesthetic Theory*, 67–101; offering a similar but more elaborate account of Baumgarten as philosophical proponent of an "aesthetics of the sublime" formulated in a Wolffian manner and built upon a Pietist foundation, Fritz, *Vom Erhabenen*, 230–283, esp. 247–248, et passim. Cf. Grote, "Theological Origins of Aesthetics"; and Nannini, "Biblical Hermeneutics in the Light of Aesthetics."
47 Various conjectures about Baumgarten's intervention in ethical debates such as this one can be found in Jacob, *Heilige Poesie*, esp. 42–48; Müller, *Ästhetische Religiosität*, 46–56; Grote, *Moral Philosophy and the Origins of Aesthetic Theory*, 141–253; Gross, *Cognitio Sensitiva*, 104–106; Grote, "Theological Origins of Aesthetics"; and implicitly (i.e. with reference primarily to Baumgarten's ethical rather than aesthetic writings) Schwaiger, *Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten*, 79–95, 135–43.
48 Goldenbaum, "Mendelssohn's Spinozistic Alternative," 305–315.
49 Andres Straßberger, *Johann Christoph Gottsched und die "philosophische" Predigt* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 481, 491–493; cf. Müller, *Ästhetische Religiosität*, 53–56.
50 Straßberger, *Johann Christoph Gottsched*, 347–351, 430–451, esp. 435.
51 Straßberger, *Johann Christoph Gottsched*, 145–153, cf. 384–389, 399.

52 Straßberger, *Johann Christoph Gottsched*, 346.
53 Straßberger, *Johann Christoph Gottsched*, 430–444; F. A. Tholuck, *Geschichte des Rationalismus*, Vol. 1 (Berlin: Wiegandt und Grieben, 1865; repr., Aalen: Scientia, 1990), 135; Martin Schloemann, *Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974), 38–50, esp. 40; and Grote, *Emergence of Modern Aesthetic Theory*, 120–128.
54 Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten, *Unterricht vom rechtmässigen Verhalten eines Christen oder Theologische Moral* (Halle: Bauer, 1738). On the first appearance of sections in 1736: C. G. Ludovici, *Ausführlicher Entwurf einer vollständigen Historie der Wolffischen Philosophie*, Vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1737; repr., Hildesheim: Olms, 1977), §472.
55 "Einige Scripturae, des Hn. Prof. Baumgartens philosophische Lehrart betreffend / de anno 1736. d. 19 Febr. bis 29 April," Archive of the Franckesche Stiftungen in Halle, AFSt /H E7, fol. 3r.
56 "Einige Scripturae," AFSt /H E7, fols. 4r–4v.
57 "Einige Scripturae," AFSt /H E7, fol. 4v.
58 Frederick Wilhelm I to Joachim Lange, September 22, 1736, in F. W. Schrader, *Geschichte der Universität Halle*, II.462: "dass die Studiosi Theologiae zum wahren lebendigen Christenthum und r[i]chtigen Tüchtigkeit Gott in Predigt Amt nützlich zu dienen, angeführet werden. . . ."
59 S. J. Baumgarten, Introduction, *Unterricht vom rechtmässigen Verhalten eines Christen oder Theologische Moral* (Halle: Bauer, 1738), [xxvi].
60 Cf. Grote, "Theological Origins of Aesthetics." On the homiletic education developed by the Halle theologians for this purpose: Andres Straßberger, "'. . . reden und predigen nach dem, was der Geist Gottes eingibt': Aspekte der Theorie und Praxis der homiletischen Ausbildung an der Universität Halle zurzeit August Hermann Franckes," *Pietismus und Neuzeit* 43 (2017): 33–70. My thanks to Andres Straßberger for directing my attention to this article.
61 Baumgarten, *Kollegium,* §3.
62 Johann Jacob Bodmer and Johan Jacob Breitinger, *Die Discourse der Mahlern* (Zurich: Lindinner, 1721–1722) and *Die Mahler oder Discourse von den Sitten der Menschen* (Zurich, 1723). Bodmer and Breitinger had in fact planned to edit Canitz's poetry, and it was their abandonment of the project that left the field open to König. Max Clemens Rosenmüller, *Johann Ulrich von König: ein Beitrag zur Litteraturgeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (PhD diss., Univ. Leipzig, 1896), 133–137, 143.
63 Johann Christoph Gottsched, *Versuch einer critischen Dichtkunst vor die Deutschen* (Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1730); Baumgarten, *Meditationes*, §91; Straßberger, *Johann Christoph Gottsched*, 91. On Gottsched's at least superficially warm relationship with König in the late 1720s, including his offer to help König edit Canitz's poetry: Rosenmüller, *Johann Ulrich von König,* 47–56; and Theodor Wilhelm Danzel, *Gottsched und seine Zeit* (Leipzig: Dyk, 1855), 70–72.
64 Cf. Stöckmann, *Anthropologische Ästhetik*, 25.
65 On Gottsched's affinities with Lutheran orthodoxy: Hans-Joachim Kertscher and Günter Schenk, eds., *Frühe Schriften zur ästhetischen Erziehung der Deutschen in 3 Teilen*, by Georg Friedrich Meier, Vol. 1 (Halle: Hallescher Verlag, 2000), 173–174; and also exposing Gottsched's conflicts with the orthodox, Straßberger, *Johann Christoph Gottsched*, 379–424, 451.
66 Straßberger, *Johann Christoph Gottsched*, 493–518, esp. 495; Stöckmann, *Anthropologische Ästhetik*, 113–148; and Kertscher and Schenk, ed., *Frühe Schriften*, 173–83, 187–212, among other treatments of these debates.

67 Straßberger, *Johann Christoph Gottsched*, 154–155.
68 Baumgarten, “Isagoge philosophica in theologiam theticam,” §§41–69.
69 I thank Peter Erickson, Jonathan Strom, and Christopher Wild for the opportunity to submit an earlier version of this essay to the seminar “Conversion in the Eighteenth Century: Narrative, Spirituality, Aesthetics” at the annual meeting of the German Studies Association in October 2014; to Carol Dougherty, then director of the Newhouse Center for the Humanities at Wellesley College, for the invitation to present the project to colleagues at Wellesley in March 2015; to Corinna Kirschstein, Christian Soboth, and Pia Schmid for the invitation to present it at the Interdisciplinary Center for Pietism Research in Halle in July 2015; to Andrea Allerkamp and Dagmar Mirbach for publishing a version of this essay as “Vom geistlichen zum guten Geschmack? Reflexionen zur Suche nach den pietistischen Wurzeln der Ästhetik,” trans. Claudia Drese, in *Schönes Denken: A. G. Baumgarten im Spannungsfeld zwischen Ästhetik, Logik und Ethik*, ed. Andrea Allerkamp and Dagmar Mirbach (Hamburg: Meiner, 2016); and finally to Karl Axelsson, Camilla Flodin, and Mattias Pirholt for the invitation to publish (with permission from Meiner Verlag) this revised, English version in the present volume. The participants in the GSA seminar and my colleagues at Wellesley and in Halle have my gratitude for their feedback. I am also, as ever, indebted to Britta Klosterberg, Thomas Müller-Bahlke, Christian Soboth, and many others at the Franckesche Stiftungen in Halle for their unfailing hospitality and their assistance with this research, much of which I conducted in Halle during summer 2014. For helpful conversations and bibliographical advice during that summer and the following year, I thank especially Jonathan Strom, Endre Szécsenyi, and Kelly Whitmer. For more recent discussions of this article’s subject, and for his unremitting encouragement, camaraderie, and intellectual generosity, I thank Alessandro Nannini, author of articles cited in notes 6, 29, and 46 above.

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8 Is there a Middle Way? Mendelssohn on the Faculty of Approbation

Anne Pollok

We blind ourselves to an adequate assessment of the earliest developments of aesthetics as a discipline if we look at it from the goal of aesthetic autonomy. Mendelssohn's philosophy, as one influential take on aesthetics in the second half of the eighteenth century, cannot be captured adequately if understood as a mere forerunner to Kant, even though some of his thoughts invite such an interpretation. This counts in particular for Mendelssohn's conception of the faculty of approval (*Billigungsvermögen*), which he develops in the *Morning Hours* (1785). Read in the appropriate context of Mendelssohn's theory of aesthetic perfection, it should become clear that this mysterious faculty is by no means a sibling of Kant's concept of judgment nor does it invite the same kind of disinterested pleasure.[1] I intend to show that Mendelssohn's aesthetics is a sophisticated form of aesthetic perfectionism that strives to offer a theory of the interplay of all human faculties. This interplay presupposes a certain freedom within aesthetic appreciation but does not let go of the ultimate connection of beauty to perfection and our human interest in it.

Including all faculties, and not discussing them away as an inferior form of cognition, is the main crux of aesthetics in the wake of Leibniz and—in particular—Wolff. To ignore the influence of the non-rational senses on our aesthetic appreciation, as the common interest in writings in the anglophone tradition attests, is not as easy as it seems. Mendelssohn sets out to connect both Empiricists' contentions for the role of sensibility and Rationalists' insistence on the superiority of reason.

Mendelssohn's references to the role of sensibility have, thus, to be understood within the Rationalist framework: as clear but confused ideas that command an immediate influence on the body. It is also in this sense that he conceptualizes moral sense, which he recasts as a feeling of the good that consists in many confused ideas of it, which pass through our system so fast that we can no longer discern the individual judgments but just feel one encompassing, confused impression that moves us. In this context, Mendelssohn references Hume, for instance, in his essay *On Evidence* (1763) but also in his aesthetic and practical writings of the same time,[2] in which he treats Hume's concern with causality

as a psychological matter: our expectation of a conformity of events is the result of a *training* of the mind.[3] Thus, Mendelssohn explains both causality as well as moral sense as modes of habit: because we have experienced—countless times—that a certain idea is connected to pleasure and righteousness, we come to merely "sense" that they are good. Seen this way, a moral sense cannot *prove* moral worth but offers a psychological explanation for why we have the impression of something *as* good without meticulously proving it—we can actually only "sense" this as a result of countless previous judgments that are immediately (if only confusedly) present in the moment of our present judgment. This, for Mendelssohn, is not an argument against the metaphysical claims of Wolff or Leibniz but instead only serves to reinforce them. In short, Mendelssohn likes to think of British Empiricism and Neoplatonism as a psychological extension of German metaphysics (since, as his Palemon in the *Letters on Sentiments* holds,[4] Germans are just a bit more diligent with their philosophical proof than others).

However, Mendelssohn goes beyond a straightforward dismissal of the senses as providing essential input for our moral and aesthetic judgments. In a Leibnizian tradition, and with particular reference to Johann Georg Sulzer, Mendelssohn argues that, since confused ideas are more efficient motivators than clear and distinct rational insight, we should train ourselves to turn our abstract thoughts and concepts into a habit so that we feel instead of think them: "The more good my representation of the object contains, the clearer my insight into it is, and the less time is needed to fully view it—the bigger my desire, the more pleasurable the enjoyment."[5] It is quite obvious that this theory has its drawbacks: is it really true that *only* obscure ideas can move us, as Sulzer claims? This would shed a strange light on anyone who acts on better (i.e., clearer and more distinct) insight. If all qualities (clarity, goodness, comprehensiveness) can be translated into a quantity, doesn't that turn the notion of perfection into a merely quantitative issue? The question I raise in this chapter is more limited, even though it pertains to the overarching issue in that it deals with the connection of our faculties that enable a comprehensive worldview. How does Mendelssohn envisage the interplay of intellect and sensibility, if both differ in their respective degree of clarity and hence in their motivational force?

In my reconstruction of Mendelssohn's answer, I will first show that, despite the continuity of perceptions that range from clear and distinct to obscure, he favors a more complex view that distinguishes between faculties according to their *direction of fit*. Whereas reason is concerned with truth, and hence the reasoning subject has to align herself according to the information she gets from the object, in desire, this direction is reversed: the subject intends to change the objective world according to her will, or, in other words, what the subject represents becomes the measure according to which reality is judged. Second, this necessitates a more

elaborate theory of the interconnection of faculties—a theory Mendelssohn develops in starts and fits, and only fully embraces toward the end of his career. Bringing his view on theoretical, practical, and aesthetic interest together, Mendelssohn presents us, in the *Morning Hours*, with a trifold root of human engagement with the world. This should enable us to transition from cognition on the one hand and desire on the other hand to the human capacity to reflect and judge, a capacity that engages both intellect and sensibility. Mendelssohn did not single-handedly invent the faculty of approval (*Billigungsvermögen*), but in his works, he offers an interesting theory of its function. This becomes particularly apparent in the *Morning Hours*, but it is already subtly present in preceding reflections and half-thoughts.[6] It is less fascinating that this faculty almost reads like a precursor of Kant's disinterested pleasure (*Critique of the Power of Judgment*, §§ 1–5)—I find this less interesting because a similarity in terms is not enough to diagnose a similarity in concepts, and Mendelssohn's concept of beauty is rather different from Kant's[7]—but what is interesting is the function this faculty plays in Mendelssohn's overall assumption of human benevolence and, hence, for the human vocation. Since we know that "reason does not always act as master,"[8] Mendelssohn must explain how our acting is still rationally explicable and how the senses are actually supporting reason rather than distracting from it.

Sources and Differentiations: The Emergence of an Idea

The view that human emotions are rationally grounded and need a more precise philosophical treatment was widely shared in the eighteenth century. In his prize essay from 1775 (published in 1776 as *General Theory of Thinking and Feeling*),[9] Johann August Eberhard stresses that we should do more research on human thinking and feeling:

> The most important study of man is on man himself, his inclinations, his passions. The most important observations which he could make of himself would be those on his sensations and passions, about their origin, affinity, development, growth, and decline; our complete understanding of ourselves that is useful for our moral education, for guiding our will, is dependent on these.

Indeed, one could argue[10] that (mainly British)[11] philosophers, prior to Eberhard, began studying human "passions and inclinations" to develop a fully fledged anthropology as a foundation for their philosophy. Among these discussions, references to the relations among human faculties became the subject of philosophical research in the wake of Wolff's works on psychology (in particular, the *Psychologia empirica*).

But Malebranche's considerations were also influential. His *De la Recherche de la verité* (1675) was widely popular in Mendelssohn's time; he himself owned and most likely read the book.[12] Malebranche distinguishes between desire and approval: "Mere approval and desire for that which the soul represents as good are principally different, for we often approve of something and applaud it, even though we wish that it had never happened, and tend to avoid otherwise."[13]

In a striking essay, *Anmerkungen über den verschiedenen Zustand, worinn sich die Seele bey Ausübung ihrer Hauptvermögen, nämlich des Vermögens, sich etwas vorzustellen, und des Vermögens zu empfinden, befindet* from 1763 (reprinted in his *Vermischte Philosophische Schriften*, 1773, henceforth cited as *Anmerkungen*), Johann Georg Sulzer strictly distinguishes between representation and sensation, and stresses the mediating role of a "state of contemplation" (Sulzer, *Anmerkungen*, 236).[14] This state, however, is not a distinct faculty but a mode of interaction between sensibility and cognition "which keeps its balance between both" (Sulzer, *Anmerkungen*, 236). These poles of human activity are distinct, as Sulzer holds in clear reference to Wolff: when we feel, we are not feeling "the object, but ourselves," but when we think, we are concerned with the object. Overall, the different states of understanding are marked by the respective relationship between subject and object that each functions on:

> there is a state in which man understands distinctly but does not feel; another one in which he strongly feels but doesn't understand anything; and a third, in which he sees clearly and distinctly enough to recognize what is outside and inside of him.
>
> (Sulzer, *Anmerkungen*, 238)

Given this, it is easy to understand why reflection is so important: it represents the only state of mind that offers a mediation between thinking and feeling, and thus involves all faculties. However, Sulzer complicates things again when he considers the motivating force of sensibility and cognition, and argues—as I have pointed out above—that only the former can actually move us (Sulzer, *Anmerkungen*, 213). This would indicate that we had to turn any clear and distinct understanding into a feeling, so that it could ever motivate us. Thus (what Sulzer doesn't quite acknowledge), we would have to redirect any objective interest back into the subject's emotions.[15]

Be that as it may, in the following years, the discrete nature of a state of reflection that does not immediately indicate a cognition or act did fascinate thinkers, in particular those concerned with aesthetics. In his *Theory of the Fine Arts* (*Theorie der schönen Künste*, 1767), Friedrich Justus Riedel defines the beautiful as that "which can please without

interested intention [*interessierte Absicht*], and which can even please us even if we do not own it."[16] We find a similar formulation in Jakob Friedrich Abel's *Aesthetical Statements* (*Aesthetische Säze*, 1777)[17]: "Taste, in its widest sense, is concerned only with objects that generate pleasure or displeasure through their mere representation, without a specific relation of the object with ourselves."[18] What matters is the emotional reaction toward the representation of the object, not the status of the object itself. We find a similar reflection in Abel's speech *Origin and Characterization of Great Minds*:

> No concept, nor any insignificant judgment can be made without the contribution of all faculties [*Kräfte*]; the senses contribute the original materials, imagination and memory generate connected concepts, reason sees the relations between them, and the inclination that is immediately and indirectly connected with it determines our attention.[19]

Both Riedel and Abel reference Shaftesbury, for whom beauty is the foundation for the recognition of truth. Human sensibility is not sufficient to ascertain and penetrate the inner principle of being—thus, we must establish the mode of "pure contemplation" that reflects on everything without personal interest or prejudice. As Rind points out against Stolnitz,[20] this formulation is less concerned with the function of disinterestedness in aesthetic judgments than it is with the broader concept of the human appreciation of the cosmos. Hence, passages in Shaftesbury's works[21] that connect an aesthetic attitude with our not being interested in the possession of the object in question can more convincingly be related to Shaftesbury's overarching concept of "rational enthusiasm" that rejoices in our insight into the harmonious order of the universe.[22] This is not the characterization of a particularly aesthetic judgment, but it references the human capacity to appreciate divine order in general. In this sense, we are emotionally invested in the experience of complete comprehension that involves all faculties.

A similar reservation counts for Mendelssohn: the faculty of approval does not center around an aesthetic attitude but instead characterizes a human form of appreciation of the world guided by the principle of sufficient reason. When we approve of something, we are not limited by the interests of reason or will; instead, we reflect freely on what is before us. This does not negate the connection of reflection with reason and will; it just stresses that neither of these can offer a full grasp of the cosmos without mediation and involvement of the other faculty. This is of particular importance for Mendelssohn's theory of human perfectibility. Ultimately, only a theory that encompasses all human capacities and their harmonious interplay can offer the key to a full formulation of a humanly possible perfection.

Human Perfection as a Dynamic Principle

In his earlier writings, Mendelssohn often references *interest* when he discusses the worth of art. May it be our interest in awakening, strengthening, or guiding human passions (or simply indulging in them); may it be the interest of the moral educator (*Sittenlehrer*) who uses art to make his teachings more attractive and convincing—it seems that Mendelssohn's aesthetics is a pretty far cry from a Kantian disinterested pleasure. Even his theory of mixed sentiments[23] that distinguishes between the object and its "projection"[24] is ultimately concerned with the human interest in the attractive mixture of pleasure and displeasure. According to this theory, paired with Mendelssohn's concept of illusion,[25] we can be aesthetically attracted to imperfect objects because (a) we are interested in the perfection of the presentation of said object and (b) because we exercise our positive capacity to ascertain the good by rejecting what is bad. So, for one, in many circumstances involving an imperfect object, we are not necessarily keen on not perceiving it; rather, we "merely prefer instead for the object *not to be* [*Nichtseyn* des Gegenstandes]" (Rhapsodie, JA 1:383 [131])[26] so that its reality cannot hurt us (or others). But we might seek those perceptions due to their being "affirmative predicates" of our mind:

> In relation to the thinking subject, the soul, . . . perceiving and cognizing the features as well as testifying to enjoying them or not constitutes some *sort of content* [*Sachliches*] that is posited in the soul, an affirmative determination of the soul. Hence, every representation, at least in relation to the subject, as an affirmative predicate of the thinking entity, must have something about it that we like.
>
> (*Rhapsody*, JA 1:385 [133])

As Mendelssohn stresses in response to Lessing, our capacity to reject the bad is indeed a perfection of our soul.[27] In such a view, the object of said sentiments loses its draw—instead, its *artistic representation* and *our relation to it* take center stage. In her representation and subsequent mixture of rejection (of the object of said representation) and attraction (toward the perfection in the representation itself), the viewer could ascertain her worth as an involved, but independently judging, instance. Mendelssohn's main purpose is to show that human agency and reason is not centered on pleasurable sentiments, and thus, happiness is not necessarily a sensible experience but lies in the furthering of all human capacities toward perfection. Let me explain this in more detail.

Mendelssohn also takes up this stress on perfection in his *Letters Concerning Latest Literature*: for instance, in number 73 (December 13, 1759). There, he argues for the "refined epicureanism"[28] that reflects on the relationship between pleasure and perfection:

> God prefers good over evil—this everybody gladly admits. But he does not do that because of the pleasurable sentiment, but one must

> step up to a higher reason, to *perfection*, in order to explain divine choice intelligibly. And what we can most certainly assume for God, we can also hold, with appropriate limitation, for us contingent, but reasonable beings. Perfection is thus the highest good, not pleasurable sentiments.[29]

In the subsequent *Letter* (no. 74, December 20, 1759), Mendelssohn stresses the dynamic nature of such a highest good:

> the most common [*allergemeinste*] rule of perfection in human life [*des menschlichen Wandels*], of which no exception can be made if it conflicts with other rules, is that the highest good is the uninterrupted progress from one stage of perfection to the next.[30]

Hence, if there is an apparent conflict of duties, we must choose that action which fosters development. The ultimate goal of human striving is neither pleasure nor truth but the development of all human faculties.

Mendelssohn does not treat pleasure as a hindrance but as an important aspect of individual self-perfection. In his considerations on habit, he widens the scope to include conscience, taste, and a sense for truth (*bon-sens*). This marks Mendelssohn's inclusion of Sulzer's theory and appropriation of Hume's empiricism. If reasonable insight should become a motivating factor (*Triebfeder*) and set the faculty of desire into motion, "it must turn itself into a beauty; the single concepts of the manifold must shed their tiring distinctness [*ermüdende Deutlichkeit*], so that the whole shines forth in even more transfigured light."[31] Mendelssohn thus does not treat taste, moral sense, and *bon-sens* as distinct faculties; he reformulates them as the more efficient modes of their higher (i.e., clear and distinct) counterparts. Instead of obeying rational principles, we must incorporate them into our temperament "through constant training"—"they are turned into sap and blood, so to say."[32]

As we have already seen in Sulzer, the mode of reflection offers a sense of freedom in that it enables the perceiver to view herself and her environment at the same time, and develop the relationship between these two poles accordingly. If Mendelssohn seeks to anchor the ability for perfection in the human psyche itself, this mode of reflection seems like an attractive candidate as it allows personality and universality to be integrated in one dynamic move. It is no wonder that we see Mendelssohn's fascination with this topic in nearly all of his writings. In particular, in *On Mastery of Inclinations* and the subsequent *Rhapsody* and *On Evidence* as well as in the 1770 crafted *Notes on Philosophical Writings, 1761* (JA 1:223–226), all of which focus on the connection between will, reason, and inclination. What is noteworthy is that Mendelssohn approaches the issue not through a harmonizing model but via the *failures* of rational interaction.

In these writings, Mendelssohn reconsiders the relationship between these faculties (JA 1:225), which, in the earlier *Letters on Sentiments* (1755), he just distinguished gradually (JA 1:66). In these, he considered representation and inclination but had not yet developed a satisfying take on the role of pleasure, even though he had already been skeptical of the simple consequence that "I must desire whatever I judge to be good." We can see his more ardent mouthpiece, Palemon,[33] struggle with any form of evil inclination (which cannot be explained by the aforementioned simple syllogism since we do *not* see what we desire as good, as in our fascination with battlefields). By 1771, Mendelssohn had developed a better grip on those feelings that we seek, in spite of our better moral and rational judgment. In the third version of the *Letters* and *Main Principles*, and the second version of the *Rhapsody* (which are all published in the second edition of the *Philosophical Writings*, 1771), Mendelssohn stresses the distinction and relationship between those different "motions" of the soul. "Pleasure is a favorable judgment of the soul about her real state; willing, in contrast, is the strive of my soul to realize this representation. The desire that usually accompanies pleasure is not an integral part of said pleasure."[34] Our enjoyment of beauty gains a new dignity with this view in that it is tied not to the objects *simpliciter* but to the reflective faculty of the perceiver: the feeling of pleasure is instantiated by a feeling of the increased perfection of the representing soul, not by a supposed perfection of the represented object. In such pleasure, the soul experiences a feeling of fulfillment. This, quite cleverly, ultimately grounds perfection in self-perfecting. Still, with this, the faculties of cognition and desire drift apart considerably. How can we bridge this gap that, instead of disappearing, just grew wider?

In his essay *On Evidence*, Mendelssohn differentiates between the cognition of truth (directed at the object) and its recognition, which lies within the subject's orientation toward this object. When we gain sufficient insight into a state of affairs, we experience the feeling of "acclaim" or "internal applause" (*Beyfall*) that marks the subject's turn toward and recognition of the state of affairs as "right." If the conviction of reason is complete, we cannot keep this feeling of approval away.[35] What is important in this view is that it recasts the relationship between subject and object as a relationship of *recognition*: truth is not merely in the object but needs our approval to count for us. This is much clearer in practical issues, where—as exemplified in the phenomenon of *akrasia*[36]—we seem more able to withhold said recognition. When we have completely penetrated a theoretical question and answered all aspects of it, we have a much harder time not recognizing that everything fits together, and what we see is "true." But understanding all aspects of a moral issue, and even fully approving them, may not be enough to actually act accordingly. In his theory of the sensualization of clear and distinct cognition in *bon-sens* and conscience (for theoretical and

practical matters), Mendelssohn has not yet fully explained how we can turn toward the issue—a first and necessary step in our recognition of it. In *On Evidence* and related writings, he makes attempts to conceptualize the faculty of taste as the clear and confused equivalent of an intellectual judgment that explains the transition from mere cognition to full involvement of the subject. We see this in reference to aesthetics in the *Letters on Sentiments* and parts of the *Rhapsody*, in reference to theoretical cognition in the abovementioned essay, and with respect to his psychological-practical considerations in the *Rhapsody* and drafts like *On Mastery of Inclinations* (*Von der Herrschaft über die Neigungen,* 1756). In all these, but most clearly in the *Morning Hours*, we see Mendelssohn's effort to bridge the gap between object and subject—between cognition and desire, between mere insight and conviction—that presupposes a mediation between intellect and sensibility. In this sense, the faculty of approval could not be further from a Kantian conception of disinterested pleasure. It is, rather, the turn toward rational interest and our emotive involvement in cognition which is at stake for Mendelssohn.

Bridging the Gap: Mendelssohn on Approval

In a note in 1776, Mendelssohn once again returns to this thought.

> Between the faculty of cognition and that of desire lies the faculty of sensation [*Empfindungsvermögen*], according to which we feel pleasure or displeasure in a thing, in which we approve of it, affirm it, are pleased by it, or in which we disapprove of it, rebuke it, or feel displeased.[37]

Objects of this "faculty of sensations" do not need to be desired at the same time. Furthermore, some "sentiments do not develop into desires at all,"[38] such as those elicited by the experience of art. We can enjoy a painting without wanting to possess its depicted content or the painting itself. However, there is still an interest involved: if not in possession then in the good that is presented through it.[39] This is also apparent in a very similar passage in *Jerusalem*, in which Mendelssohn, now using the same term as in *Morning Hours*, mentions the "faculty of approval" (*Billigungsvermögen*) that is guided by our representations of good and evil.[40] However, the note in *Jerusalem* is ultimately too confused to offer much orientation since it treats desire, approval, and pleasure nearly interchangeably. Both in his notes and in the *Morning Hours*, Mendelssohn is more careful to distinguish mere feeling or desire from "*billigen*," the reflected mode of approval that already includes a second-order judgment on the sensation in question.

Mendelssohn couples the pleasure of art with morality, albeit not in a straightforward way: it is not that a feeling of pleasure

indicates a morally beneficial direction of desire. Rather, he points out that the very *complexity* of our sensations offers the seed for perfection to be found in either the perceived object, the perfection of the perception itself, [41] or the artist creating the work of art.[42]

How exactly this relates to our faculties Mendelssohn finally tries to clarify in the *Morning Hours*, a work concerned not with the newest trends in aesthetics but—as a crucial step in the Pantheism debate with Jacobi—with the difficult task of proving the existence of God (and redefining Pantheism in the process). Mendelssohn places the discussion of the faculty of approval in the context of the first part of this metaphysical treatise, within the "*Preliminary Reminder [Vorerinnerung] on Truth, Semblance, and Error.*" The question "What is truth" that guides this *Vorerinnerung* is put aside to consider our desire for truth as a motivating factor for belief. Mendelssohn expresses hope that his theory will be "considerably useful" for the overall examination.[43] As he himself (as a defender of his late friend Lessing against the accusation of Pantheism) has an eminent reason to believe in a certain truth, he indeed must show that his overall argumentation is guided not by his *interest* in the truth of his version of Pantheism[44] but by the *overriding reasons for* his reading. With this, he argues against Johann Bernhard Basedow's "duty to believe" (*Glaubenspflicht*), which requires us to believe in whatever we deem necessary for human happiness.[45]

Thus, Mendelssohn turns from the distinction between truth and illusion to our overall interest in truth and asks why this interest might *not* taint our acknowledgment of it when we see it. He thus moves from considering the *cognition* of truth to our *sentiments* that accompany such recognition.

Most importantly in this regard, Mendelssohn distinguishes between what he calls the "material" and the "formal" aspect of our representations. Whereas questions regarding the truth of a proposition pertain to the object and require us to align our view of it with its content, questions regarding goodness are structured the opposite way: what we consider to be good guides us in our dealings with our surroundings in that we attempt to change the objects according to our representations of what is good, not the other way around. The formal aspect, in contrast to the material, is subject to gradation. A state of affairs cannot be more or less true, but it can be more or less good. As Paul Guyer argues, this differentiation is not equivalent to Kant's distinction between form and matter but rather runs parallel to the distinction between theoretical and practical.[46] Obviously, Mendelssohn does not tie the concept of the good to a categorical imperative; rather, he aligns both with their respective version of perfection. Concerning the formal, the perfection addressed is not the theoretical/external perfection of the universe but an internal perfection, that is, the perceiving soul's orientation toward the good (by which Mendelssohn means divine absolute perfection). This is a state of

affairs, not in the world but in perceivers, in human beings, who have the distinct attribute of perfectibility: the capacity to make themselves and others more perfect. Here, the *direction of fit* is crucial: whereas theoretical perfection originates outside of us and changes our perception according to it, practical perfection is internal and allows us (or even necessitates or urges us) to form the world around us according to our image of goodness. Again, this image is not a personal affair but oriented by the ideal goodness of God as the most perfect being. However, as the faculty of approval makes clear, what is needed is that moment of reflection to make us see what this perfection actually is.[47] To approve is to judge what the direction of fit might be and orient ourselves accordingly. If circumstances are right, this also allows us to remain in this state of *billigen* (approval) without turning in either direction, that is, in a state where the direction of fit remains in a playful circle.

Approval thus emerges through an interplay of representations and their respective connection to our possible perfection. But instead of marking this connection as the realization of our humanity, as Schiller seems to do in letter 15 of the *Aesthetic Education* (1795),[48] Mendelssohn defines approval merely as a "transition from knowing to desiring" (JA 3.2:62 [43]).

> Typically, one tends to divide the faculties of the soul into the faculty of knowledge and the faculty of desire and to reckon the sensation of pleasure and displeasure as already part of the faculty of desire. Yet it occurs to me that between knowing and desiring there lies the approving, the approbation, the satisfaction of the soul, that is still genuinely far removed from desire. . . . We consider the beauty of nature and art with pleasure and satisfaction, without the least stirring of desire. It seems rather to be a particular characteristic mark of beauty that it is considered with tranquil satisfaction, that it pleases even if it is not in our possession, and that it is even far removed from any longing to possess it . . .[49]

Generally, every representation is accompanied by a degree of approval since having representations at all is preferable to not being determined.[50] We feel displeasure in a negative comparison of one representation with another—seen theoretically, if our idea does not match that of the object (and we do not know the truth); seen practically, if the world does not represent our idea of goodness and calls for an action of ours to change the world accordingly. The harmonious interlude between them is perceivable as aesthetic pleasure that neither calls for truth nor action. As Mendelssohn holds in the passage above, the faculty of approval alone is engaged in our pleasure and delight in "poetic creations" (*Erdichtungen*, which supposedly covers all artistic areas of creativity). Aesthetic pleasure is thus not concentrated on changing the subject or the objects;

instead, the representation just playfully entertains our inclinations. The relationship to the good is still there, but in the background: this state of being entertained is the expression of an inner perfection (not as a preform of the act of perfection, which would call for a morally relevant action). On the one hand, it is parallel to the engagement of the faculty of desire in that it resolutely remains within us. On the other hand, it remains a mental activity that does not necessitate a change in the world and hence contains a certain moment of passivity.

However, this passivity has to be taken with caution as even the faculty of approval is capable of being perfected by exercise. This is why we love fiction, creativity, and art: here, we can playfully bring both a feeling of "satisfaction and dissatisfaction" (we can assume that Mendelssohn refers to positive or negative approval here, JA 3.2:65 [45]) in interaction. This willingness "to be moved" (JA 3.2:65 [45]) does indeed set our apparatus in motion—but without any noticeable outcome beyond a sensitized perception of such instances.

Aesthetic sentiments cannot be translated into rational insights without losing what is characteristic of them. These sentiments, rather, showcase a rational structure that fits into the interplay of human faculties. However, it is important to note that Mendelssohn still aligns aesthetic sentiments closely with moral considerations.[51] As already hinted at in his notes from 1776, Mendelssohn parallels human approval with the divine approval of the best of all possible worlds. Hence, we approve of what we deem to be good, materially or formally speaking. Accordingly, Mendelssohn closes his considerations of human approval with his favorite motto: "man searches for the truth, approves the good and the beautiful, desires all that is good, and does what is best" (JA 3.2:66 [46, trans. modified]).

Even though Mendelssohn uses approval mostly as a direction toward the faculty of desire (in that it stays oriented toward the good), it still fulfills a dual function and can help to perfect our overall cognition of ourselves and the world. Through the faculty of approval, Mendelssohn attempts to explain the human interest in catastrophes and other people's pain. Our fascination with such instances, for example, with "corpse-strewn battlefields" (JA 3.2:66 [46]), for him, represents a healthy case of human curiosity. Since we would understand that no act of ours can change what happened, we would conclude (supposedly through our approbating reflection) that our faculty of desire is no longer the main addressee. Rather, our faculty of cognition takes center stage, and, since we cannot *do* anything, we want to *know* what happened. With this rather daring interpretation, the disturbing human tendency to flock toward other people's suffering is seen as another way of perfecting ourselves. As Mendelssohn already hinted at this in the 1761 version of the *Rhapsody*, evil seen this way can have an "ineffable draw" (*unaussprechlichen Reiz*)[52] that incites our rational capacity. If such things

are artistically presented to us, we can even come to enjoy the talent of the creator to capture this complex issue. So, in the end, artistic presentation can *add* a layer of perfection to the specter of something as awful as a shipwreck.[53] The pleasure mentioned in this regard in each version of the *Rhapsody* (1761 and 1771) and in the *Morning Hours* thus pertains to our heightened cognitive awareness and our ability to reject what is bad—a capacity, following Lessing, that is just another expression of our overall interest in perfection.[54]

Overall, Mendelssohn's distinction between the different faculties aims at an integrative view on human nature in that it focuses on their interplay rather than their distinguishing marks. The faculty of approval serves to test representations according to their direction and worth, and then to let the respective faculty take over—or stay in possession, if the representation invites reflection.

The tripartite source of pleasure that Mendelssohn first diagnosed in the *Letters on Sentiments* is here reflected, according to its adequate role in the interplay of faculties. Concerning aesthetics, this also means that beautiful and sublime objects are not just seen as occasions for delight (or a delightful shudder) but also regarded in their evaluative and cognitive dimensions. By defining beauty as an approving representation in free reflection, he accepts a relative autonomy of aesthetic pleasure—without setting it completely free of the concerns of reason.[55] Ultimately, what is beautiful aligns with what is good and true, even if it first makes itself known through a mixed sentiment. This way, Mendelssohn can integrate seemingly irrational tendencies into an overarching picture of human perfectibility. The experience of art cannot be fully translated into human cognition, but it harmonizes the demands of cognition and desire. "What slavery if heart and head are not in harmony!" exclaims Palemon in the *Letters* (JA 1:64). Indeed, if the human faculties are not in harmony, one has to take on the role of the master and keep the other in submission. The faculty of approbation is meant to avoid this situation and integrate all aspects of our comprehending faculties into one coherent picture. Mendelssohn remains in line with the Wolffian primacy of perfection and integrates his references to French and British authors in a dynamic account of human perfection.

Notes

1 With the first claim, I am in line with Paul Guyer, "Mendelssohn, Kant, and the Aims of Art," in *Kant and his German Contemporaries*, ed. Daniel O. Dahlstrom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 36; with the second claim, I deviate from his argumentation.

2 Luigi Cataldi Madonna shows that Mendelssohn's certainty that aesthetic cognition can be reliable is due to Baumgarten's influence; see Cataldi Madonna, "The Eighteenth-Century Rehabilitation of Sensitive Knowledge and the Birth of Aesthetics: Wolff, Baumgarten, and Mendelssohn," in *Moses*

Mendelssohn's Metaphysics and Aesthetics, ed. Reinier Munk (New York: Springer, 2011), 292.

3 See Anne Pollok, *Facetten des Menschen: Zur Anthropologie Moses Mendelssohns* (Hamburg: Meiner, 2010), 248–261.

4 Mendelssohn is a typical representative of this general stereotypical understanding of the French as sensual, the British as witty and keen observers, and the German as deep metaphysical thinkers (see JA 1:43). Repetition does not prove this impression right, of course.

5 "Je mehr Gutes in der Vorstellung der Sache enthalten ist, je deutlicher wir das Gute einsehen, und je weniger Zeit erfordert wird, es völlig zu übersehen, desto größer ist die Begierde, desto angenehmer der Genuß" (*Von der Herrschaft über die Neigungen*, JA 2:149).

6 As I argued in Pollok, *Facetten des Menschen*, 342–353.

7 See on this Guyer, "Mendelssohn, Kant, and the Aims of Art."

8 "*. . . daß unsere Vernunft in uns selbst nicht allezeit den Meister spiele . . .*" (*Rhapsodie*, JA 1:412).

9 Johann August Eberhard, *Allgemeine Theorie des Denkens und Empfindens* (Berlin, bey Christian Friedrich, Voß, 1776). The quoted passage is from 141.

> Das wichtigste Studium des Menschen ist der Mensch selbst, seine Neigungen, seine Leidenschaften. Die wichtigsten Beobachtungen, die er über sich selbst anstellen könnte, wären gerade diejenigen, die er über seine Empfindungen und Leidenschaften anstellt, über ihre Entstehung, ihre Verwandtschaft, ihre Umwandlung, Wachsthum und Abnahme; denn davon hängt die ganze Kenntniß unserer selbst, sofern sie uns zu unserer moralischen Bildung, zur Lenkung unseres Willens nützlich seyn kann, am meisten ab.

10 See Pollok, *Facetten des Menschen*, introduction and chap. 1 for further references.

11 As Karl Axelsson remarked in our discussions, we should pay particular attention to Shaftesbury here. See *Soliloquy* and Book II of the *Inquiry*, where he attempts to establish a new science, a new "Art of *Surgery*" (*Soliloquy*, Part 1, Section 1, in Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, etc.*, Vol. 1, ed. John M. Robertson [London, 1900], 105), that primarily focuses not on the material world but on the "inward Anatomy" of the mind (*Inquiry*, Book 2, Part 1, Section 2, in Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, Vol. 1, 284). The "*Solutio Continui*" familiar to real surgery should, according to Shaftesbury, be used by "Surgeons of another sort" (*Inquiry*, Book 2, Part 1, Section 2, in Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, Vol. 1, 284) that are able to investigate the anatomy of the mind and reach real knowledge of the affections.

12 See the catalogue of his books, *Verzeichnis der auserlesenen Büchersammlung des seeligen Herrn Moses Mendelssohn* (Berlin, 1786), 44, no. 484.

13 Book 1, 18 of the German translation of 1776.

14 In *Morning Hours*, Mendelssohn uses *Beschauung* synonymously with *contemplatio* and contrasts both with reason and *sensus communis*, respectively; see JA 3.2:81–88.

15 See my discussion in Pollok, *Facetten des Menschen*, 306–308.

16 "was ohne interessierte Absicht sinnlich gefallen, uns auch dann gefallen kann, wenn wir es nicht besitzen." According to Michael Albrecht, "Moses Mendelssohn: Ein Forschungsbericht 1965–1980," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* (1983): 118–119, this theory is already heavily influenced by Mendelssohn's early works on

aesthetics. On the one hand, this is interesting, given that Mendelssohn himself wasn't quite clear about the autonomy of aesthetics; on the other hand, even this influence did not hinder Mendelssohn from ultimately rejecting Riedel's overall assumptions (see Pollok, *Facetten des Menschen*, 226–227).

17 This work is a fascinating culmination of Abel's aesthetic theory and delves into such diverse topics as the difference between poetry and painting, a critique of normative aesthetics à la Gottsched (instead, Abel offers an empirical theory of taste in the wake of Hume), and the importance of antiquity.

18 Jacob Friedrich Abel, "Aesthetische Säze" (1777), in *Jacob Friedrich Abel: Eine Quellenedition zum Philosophieunterricht an der Stuttgarter Karlsschule 1773–1782*, ed. Wolfgang Riedel (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1995), 39: "Der Geschmack, im weitesten Verstand, beschäftiget sich nur mit Gegenständen, die Vergnügen und Misvergnügen durch ihre blosse Vorstellung, ohne eigenthumliche Beziehung der Gegenstände auf uns, zeugen."

19 Jacob Friedrich Abel, "Rede über die Entstehung und Kennzeichnung großer Geister" (1776), in *Jacob Friedrich Abel: Eine Quellenedition zum Philosophieunterricht an der Stuttgarter Karlsschule 1773–1782*, ed. Wolfgang Riedel (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1995), 194–195:

> Kein Begriff, kein noch so geringfügiges Urtheil kann gebildet werden, ohne daß alle Kräfte dazu beitragen; die Sinne geben ursprüngliche Materialien, Einbildungskraft und Gedächtniß bringen ähnliche Begriffe hervor, der Verstand sieht die Verhältnisse ein, ausserdem, daß die mittelbar und unmittelbar damit verbundene Neigung die Aufmerksamkeit bestimmt.

20 As Miles Rind argues in "The Concept of Disinterestedness in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40 (2002)—see for instance 68–69, 85–87—Shaftesbury, Addison, and Hutcheson aim at not disinterested pleasure but taste. But, for taste, disinterestedness is, as Rind stresses, not necessary; it is mostly mentioned in passing.

21 Rind, "The Concept of Disinterestedness in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics," lists them (and rejects Stolnitz' respective claims), 72–74.

22 And, with Stolnitz, we should remember that being disinterested means not lacking subjective investment in the issue but rather lacking regard for the consequences of my action (see Jerome Stolnitz, "On the Origins of Aesthetic Disinterestedness," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 20 (1961): 132–133) in its "privative meaning" and being more concerned with the perception than its reality in its "perceptual significance" (Rind, "The Concept of Disinterestedness in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics," 70).

23 See Anne Pollok, "Beautiful Perception and its Object: Mendelssohn's Theory of Mixed Sentiments Reconsidered," *Kant-Studien* 109, no. 2 (2018): 270–285; Alexander Rueger, "Enjoying the Unbeautiful: From Mendelssohn's Theory of 'Mixed Sentiments' to Kant's Aesthetic Judgments of Reflection," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 67 (2009): 181–189; Paul Guyer, "Mendelssohn's Theory of Mixed Sentiments," in *Moses Mendelssohn's Metaphysics and Aesthetics*, ed. Reinier Munk (New York: Springer, 2011), 259–278.

24 *Vorwurf*, here meant in the rather literal way of casting its shadow/form.

25 See, in particular, Pollok, *Facetten des Menschen*, 196–220. Mendelssohn's aesthetics rests heavily on the notion of illusion—but what is crucial is not the deception of the senses but the actual *break* in illusion that makes us

aware of the genius of the artist. In this sense, aesthetic illusion draws us in and then reminds us of our human capacity to beautify and hence create perfection where there is none. See also my "Gazing Upwards to the Stage—Mendelssohn's Notion Admiration and its Consequences," in *The Moral Psychology of Admiration*, ed. André Grahle and Alfred Archer (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 79–94, and "Beautiful Perception and its Object."

26 I cite from the *Jubiläumsausgabe* (= JA) of Mendelssohn's works, *Gesammelte Schriften: Jubiläumsausgabe*, ed. Alexander Altmann and Eva J. Engel (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1929–1932; repr., Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1971–) and give, where needed, the translation by Daniel O. Dahlstrom, *Mendelssohn's Philosophical Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)—in brackets.

27 I discuss the genesis of Mendelssohn's theory of mixed sentiments at length in my *Facetten des Menschen*, 180–186.

28 With this, he deviates strongly from Shaftesbury's rather dismissive treatment of Epicureanism as a counter movement to the Platonic and Stoic schools.

29 "Gott ziehet das Gute dem Bösen vor, das gesteht man ein. Er thut es aber nicht der angenehmen Empfindung wegen, sondern man muß zu einem höhern Grunde[,] zur *Vollkommenheit* hinauf steigen, diese göttliche Wahl verständlich zu erklären. Was bey Gott in dem allerhöchsten Grade angenommen wird, kann bey zufälligen vernünftigen Wesen mit der gehörigen Einschränkung Statt finden. Die Vollkommenheit ist also das höchste Gut, nicht aber die angenehme[n] Empfindungen" (JA 5.1:111).

30 "die allergemeinste Regel der Vollkommenheit des menschlichen Wandels, von welcher, wenn ein Streit der Regeln entstehet, niemals eine Ausnahme geschehen kann . . ., das allerhöchste Gut sey der ununterbrochene Fortgang von einer Stufe der Vollkommenheit zur andern" (JA 5.1:112).

31 "[Wenn] die verständige Vollkommenheit . . . die Triebfedern des Begehrungsvermögens in Bewegung setzen soll, so muß sie sich in eine Schönheit verwandeln; die einzelne Begriffe der Mannigfaltigkeit müssen ihre ermüdende Deutlichkeit verlieren, damit das Ganze in desto verklärterem Lichte hervorstrahlen könne" (*Hauptgrundsätze*, JA 1:430–431). As Alexander Altmann holds, this is Mendelssohn's embrace of the theory of common sense, which he still aligns with the main tenets of Rationalism; see Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohns Frühschriften zur Metaphysik* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1969), 354.

32 "die durch anhaltende Uebung unserm Temperamente einverleibt, bey uns gleichsam in Saft und Blut verwandelt worden sind" (JA 2:325).

33 Later renamed as Theokles. I argue elsewhere that, though Palemon/Theokles is more talkative, Mendelssohn's stance must actually be seen as a combination of both Palemon's and Euphranor's respective views (Pollok, *Facetten des Menschen*, 168–169, n100). It should also be noted that Mendelssohn took the names for his main character from Shaftesbury's *Moralists*, the obvious model for his work. Right at the beginning of the *Letters on Sentiments*, in the 1755 version, Mendelssohn announces that he appropriated the protagonist Palemon from Shaftesbury's *Moralists*—in the version from 1761, he changes this to Theokles, another character from the same work (Euphranor, the, as the very name has it, euphoric, rather sense-concentrated partner in dialogue, stays the same). In 1755, Mendelssohn characterizes Palemon as an "endearing enthusiast" (JA 1:43)—but the firmer direction toward rational theism and optimism on a grander scale rather than a mere

treatment of pleasures (*Vergnügen*) seemed to have initiated this character-change. See Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohns Frühschriften zur Metaphysik*, 86–92, who also stresses that Mendelssohn's placement of a British character in Germany (and therewith, also closer to strict German metaphysics) and his subsequent characterization of this person as seeking more metaphysical depth is also telling of Mendelssohn's reservations against British philosophy.

34 "Das Vergnügen ist gleichsam ein günstiges Urteil der Seele über ihren wirklichen Zustand; das Wollen hingegen ein Bestreben der Seele, diese Vorstellung wirklich zu machen. Das Verlangen, von welchem das Vergnügen begleitet zu werden pflegt, gehört nicht wesentlich zum Genusse des Vergnügens." *Bemerkungen zu den "Philosophischen Schriften," 1761*, JA 1:225.

35 We could only fail in this simple appreciation if we were in the thrall of an overpowering passion and hence not master of our own faculties; see JA 2:325.

36 *Evidenzschrift*, JA 2:326–327.

37 "Zwischen dem Erkenntnisvermögen und dem Begehrungsvermögen liegt das Empfindungsvermögen, vermöge dessen wir an einer Sache Lust oder Unlust empfinden, sie billigen, gutheißen, angenehm finden, oder mißbilligen, tadeln und unangenehm finden" (*Kollektaneen,* JA 3.1:276). As Altmann, in his commentary (JA 12.2:249), points out, these notes were written in the wake of Mendelssohn's reading of Teten's *Philosophical Essays on Human Nature and its Development* (*Philosophische Versuche über die menschliche Natur und ihre Entwicklung,* 1776).

38 "[Es gibt auch] Empfindnisse, die noch in kein Begehren übergehen" (JA 3.1:276).

39 As I argue elsewhere (Pollok, "Beautiful Perception and its Object," 279–281), this good can be either the perfection of the object, the perfection of my perception, or the perfection of the artist.

40 "Furcht und Hoffnung wirken auf den *Begehrungstrieb* der Menschen; Vernunftgründe auf sein *Erkenntnisvermögen*. . . . Vorstellungen des Guten und Bösen sind Werkzeug für den *Willen*; der Wahrheit und Unwahrheit für den *Verstand*. . . . Grundsätze sind frey. Gesinnungen leiden ihrer Natur nach keinen Zwang, keine Bestechung. Sie gehören für das Erkenntnißvermögen des Menschen, und müssen nach dem Richtmaß von Wahrheit und Unwahrheit entschieden werden. Gutes und Böses wirkt auf sein Billigungs- und Mißbilligungsvermögen. Furcht und Hoffnung lenken seine Triebe. Belohnung und Strafe richten seinen Willen, spornen seine Thatkraft, ermuntern, locken, schrecken ab" (*Jerusalem*, JA 8:130, 137).

41 A modification in the second version of the *Main Principles* from 1761 that brings him much closer to Baumgarten; see Pollok, *Facetten des Menschen*, 197–198.

42 I have tried to showcase the full conceptual development of this theory in my introduction to the edition of Mendelssohn's aesthetic writings (Meiner: Hamburg, 2006). Paul Guyer explicitly endorsed my view as a more fruitful direction of inquiry (see Guyer, "Mendelssohn, Kant, and the Aims of Art," 30). I sincerely hope to prove him right.

43 JA 3.2:61. I cite according to Dyck's and Dahlstrom's translation, *Morning Hours* (New York: Springer, 2011), here 42. In what follows, I will give the page number from JA 3.2, followed by the page number of the translation.

44 In essence, Mendelssohn argues that Spinozism is compatible with Leibnizianism; see, for instance, Detlef Pätzold, "Moses Mendelssohn on Spinoza," in *Moses Mendelssohn's Metaphysics and Aesthetics*, ed. Reinier Munk (New York: Springer, 2011), esp. 123–126.

45 And indeed, as Mendelssohn insists in the subsequent chap. 8 on Basedow, it is the role of approval to be concerned with obligations and duty—but the only duty for our faculty of cognition is to know the truth; see JA 3.2:70 [50].

46 See Guyer, "Mendelssohn, Kant, and the Aims of Art," 37–38, 42.

47 It should be noted that, as far as God is concerned, the faculty of approval and desire fall in one. There is, for instance, no material reason for my existence at this place in this time (otherwise, I would be eternal and unchangeable), but my existence is dependent on the necessary being's approval. Hence, said approval is here a choice guided by the best reason rather than a free interplay of the faculties: "By virtue of its inner goodness and perfection, it must have come to be the best under certain circumstances *somewhere* and at *some time*, and the necessary cause must have approved it and brought it about as such" (JA 3.2:97 [70]). This once more stresses the connection between perfection and aesthetic pleasure in the widest sense.

48 I discuss this in more detail in "Engel oder Vieh? Schillers sentimentalische Erziehung im Lichte Mendelssohns rationaler Anthropologie," *Mendelssohn Studien* 21 (2019): 71–92, and in "Die schöne Seele: Ansätze zu einer ganzheitlichen Anthropologie bei Mendelssohn, Garve und Schiller," in *Christian Garve (1742–1798): Philosoph und Philologe der Aufklärung*, ed. Udo Roth and Gideon Stiening (Berlin and Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2020) [forthcoming].

49 "Man pflegt gemeiniglich das Vermögen der Seele in Erkenntnisvermögen und Begehrungsvermögen einzutheilen, und die Empfindung der Lust und Unlust schon mit zum Begehrungsvermögen zu rechnen. Allein mich dünkt, zwischen dem Erkennen und Begehren liege das Billigen, der Beyfall, das Wohlgefallen der Seele, welches noch eigentlich von Begierde weit entfernt ist. . . . Es scheinet vielmehr ein besonderes Merkmal der Schönheit zu seyn, daß sie mit ruhigem Wohlgefallen betrachtet wird. . ." (JA 3.2:61). This, of course, is still close to some main tenets of contemporaneous British philosophy, locating aesthetic desire apart from material possession (Mendelssohn widens the scope of these accounts to include the metaphysical concept of perfection). In this context, scholars reading eighteenth-century thinkers as progressing toward the goal of a modern aesthetic disinterestedness commonly refer to Addison's essays in *The Spectator* and passages in Shaftesbury's *The Moralists*. See Brian Michael Norton, "*The Spectator* and Everyday Aesthetics," *Lumen: Selected Proceedings from the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 34 (2015): 123–136.

50 As Mendelssohn argues, this is also the reason why there cannot be any representation of the perfect evil or ugly—since any determination of the soul is, qua being a determination, something positive (see JA 1:399–400). What feels like absolute evil is merely a low degree of positive determination. Again, the differentiation between the material and the form of a representation is important: materially, the content of the representation is bad; formally, as a representation, it determines the person having it and, in good Baumgartian fashion, adds to her reality. On this, see Pollok, "Beautiful Perception and its Object," 276.

51 Even in the context of the *Morning Hours* itself, Mendelssohn uses the faculty of approval repeatedly when he should actually reference the faculty of desire; see JA 3.2:65–66.

52 See the *Rhapsody* from 1761, JA 1:571; important for this are also his notes on Burke, JA 3.1:240 and his review of Burke's *On the Sublime,* JA 4:220.

53 Mendelssohn already develops this in the 1761 version of the *Rhapsody* but explains it further in the 1771 version of *On the Sublime and Naïve*; see JA 1:474–475 and 479. Both passages are not included in earlier versions.

54 With this, Mendelssohn did not really change his view as defended in the *Rhapsody*; rather, he strengthened it. Carsten Zelle's question—in *"Angenehmes Grauen": Literaturhistorische Beiträge zur Ästhetik des Schrecklichen im achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1987), 353—why humans then linger by these representations of something bad (and don't just condemn it and move on to avoid being exposed to the bad any longer), Mendelssohn seems to have answered with this reference to the human drive for knowledge: if we cannot change what happened, we need to know those bad circumstances—however, it is less clear why, despite a mere accumulation of knowledge. The intuitive suggestion, that we need to learn in order to not repeat old mistakes, is an argument that Mendelssohn does not employ.

55 Quite the opposite, as Alexander Altmann argues: with this, we are actually getting closer to divine perfection in that our faculty of approval breaks the stronghold of the passions on the human mind. See Altmann, "Moses Mendelssohn's Proofs for the Existence of God," in *Die trostvolle Aufklärung: Studien zur Metaphysik und politischen Theorie Moses Mendelssohns* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1982), 141.

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9 Germaine de Staël and the Politics of Taste

Karen Green

Introduction

At first glance, Germaine de Staël and Immanuel Kant evince strikingly different attitudes toward aesthetic judgment. There is therefore considerable irony in the fact that the former's *On Germany* (1810/1813) was a work that helped popularize the latter's dominant position within nineteenth-century philosophy and was credited, by Thomas Carlyle, as "the precursor, if not parent, of whatever acquaintance with German literature" existed among the British in 1830.[1] Staël's most sustained contribution to aesthetics, *On Literature*, was published in 1800, some years prior to her travels in Germany and the immersion in German philosophy that resulted. Her earlier reflections on literature, style, taste, and culture consider literature in its relations with national, social, and political institutions, and develop in directions that are, on first appraisal, completely at odds with Kant's aesthetics, as developed in the *Critique of Judgement*. She sets out to demonstrate the influence of geography, historical moment, political circumstance, morals, and manners on the literary output and taste of nations as well as the influence, in the opposite direction, of literature on the development of social and political institutions. She associates an appreciation for the arts with that superiority of character that inspires virtue.[2] Approaching literature from what would now be called a sociological perspective, she reads the literature of a time and place as rooted in the material and political aspects of the society that produced it as well as that society's place in human history, which is assumed to be progressive. In this, she may well have been influenced by earlier British writers, as was clearly the case for her evocation of Ossian. Literary taste is taken to be intimately intertwined with developments in morals, politics, and the general cultural moment. Taste thus appears to be culturally relative. She says, "what one looks for in great works of the imagination are agreeable impressions. Thus, taste is the art of knowing and predicting what will cause such impressions."[3] She also assumes that which impressions are agreeable will change with political circumstances and will be relative to the social situation of those by and for whom works of art are produced. Kant, by

contrast, takes aesthetic judgment to be disengaged from politics and morals as well as from what is agreeable. He asserts that "a pure judgment of taste is independent of charm and emotion."[4] Superficially then, nothing could be starker than their contrasting positions, and one is led to wonder how Staël could have promoted Kant's philosophy so fulsomely, given its apparent sharp conflict with her own.

What is one to make of this paradox? Has Staël simply forgotten her earlier commitments in her later work? Is she ignorant of Kant's claims in relation to the autonomy of aesthetic judgment? Are Kant and Staël simply talking past each other? Is Staël a confused, non-systematic thinker, as many have suggested, or has she markedly changed her views between the two works? In this chapter, I show that Staël understood Kant's aesthetics perfectly well and that the solution to the paradox lies in a combination of the above factors. I read *On Germany* as an application of Staël's approach in her earlier work and argue that, while the accusation that she was an intellectual gadfly and a non-systematic thinker is partly justified, a more charitable reading is that she found in Kant's philosophy a solution to a problem that had been troubling her since the descent of the French Revolution into the Terror. Her attitude both accepts and historicizes Kant. At the same time, although she repeats quite accurately his theory of aesthetic judgment, she unintentionally demonstrates the illusion of the aesthetic autonomy he proposed and displays the inevitable political dimension of taste.[5]

Staël's Project

The first years of the French Revolution had appeared to many of those enthusiastically involved as the culmination of a process of enlightenment, leading logically from arbitrary domination to government on the basis of natural law and reason. The American Declaration of Independence had asserted that the equality of men is a self-evident truth. The Declaration of the Rights of Man had likewise proposed the "natural, unalienable, and sacred rights" of men to freedom and liberty. Yet the principles declared in the first had only rather partially been put into practice in the actual United States of America, while the situation in France had quickly descended into chaos, passion, fear, and a new form of arbitrary domination by the masses.[6] Germaine de Staël's political writings following the Terror struggled to come to terms with the failure of the revolution to achieve its progressive ends. One obvious response would have been to give up on the enlightenment project and all belief in the perfectibility of humanity. Such defeatism was not attractive to Staël, who, instead, attempted to understand the forces that had derailed the revolution and the means by which its promise could be retrieved. In *Of the Influence of the Passions on the Happiness of Individuals and of Nations*, published four years before *On Literature,* she identified

the passions as constituting a major obstacle to the establishment of just institutions of government and suggested that an understanding of their influence was necessary for the wise construction of political institutions.[7] In the title of that work, she promised to discuss the influence of the passions on the happiness of nations, but the first and only published volume merely reviewed the rather well-worn topic of the influence of the passions on the happiness of individuals and failed to engage in detail with nations. In writing *On Literature,* she can be seen to be attacking the same question from a different angle. It is at least partly through literature that human passions influence and are influenced by the happiness and progress of nations. It is through novels, in particular, that the passions of the masses are influenced, modified, or aroused.[8] So, in *On Literature*, she sets out, indirectly, on her unfinished project, aiming to show how human faculties are gradually developed and improved by means of the great works of literature that have been composed.[9]

Staël's subject in *On Literature* is far broader than Kant's concern in the third *Critique*, and this needs to be taken into account in order to understand how she could be so sanguine in relation to the apparent conflict in their outlooks. Her subject is literature in general, while Kant's is initially the judgment of visual beauty, which he first considers in relation to nature and only later considers in relation to visual art. In both cases, he assumes that "the judgement of taste applies to objects of the senses."[10] So, Staël and Kant are interested in very different subjects. Her topic is literature broadly defined, which includes poetry, drama, novels, history, philosophy, and the sciences. His is the judgment of visual, auditory, sensual, and artistic beauty, to which, he claims, standards of universal validity apply, without there being any possibility of demonstrating that validity through the analysis of concepts of the understanding. This is not to say that concepts are not involved, but aesthetic ideas are products of the imagination, which Kant distinguishes from the understanding. Aesthetic ideas illuminate concepts by taking the mind beyond what is available in nature.[11] By contrast, the ideas and concepts deployed in literature, as Staël understands it, are not sharply differentiated from those used in science, since literature implicitly encompasses both imagination and the analysis and development of concepts of the understanding. It is the vehicle through which science and philosophy develop. Words are the outward form of the progress of the human spirit and express this development. This implies a conflict between Staël's outlook and Kant's for it is difficult to see how, once achieved, the universal standard of beauty, as postulated by the latter, can change.[12] Interestingly, Staël's account of the development of literature already has resources to accommodate this apparent conflict in their views, though only at the expense of revealing an ambiguity in her own thought: she implicitly accepts that there is cultural progress, thus contradicting any deep commitment to the cultural relativity of taste. She argues that different genres are perfected at

different rates and under different conditions. Thus, she takes poetry to be the evocation, through literary expression, of natural, visual beauty, which makes us feel the presence of divinity within us.[13] She postulates that it had already achieved its highest form with the Greeks, who created the genre. The originality of their expressive imagination may not have been surpassed, she suggests, in 3,000 years, but this does not refute her thesis of the progress of the human spirit for this is a progress in human moral nature in general, not in the capacity to appreciate visual beauty.[14] So, one can, to an extent, reconcile their views by taking Kant's aesthetics to be concerned with specific regions or aspects of the realm of literature, as Staël conceives it.

While, according to Staël, poetry has not genuinely progressed, the same cannot be said for drama and literature.[15] In developing her theories relating to developments in literary taste, she may well have been influenced by contemporary British stadial history, which was popular in her time. She is also taken in by the purported ancient Gaelic poetry ascribed to Ossian and contrasts the spirit of the Midi with that of the North on the assumption of its authenticity.[16] Like stadial theorists, she represents women as playing an important part in the progress of culture, as evident through literature, and she, at least implicitly, ties the improved status of women to the spirit of the North as well as the rise of Christianity.[17] She represents the Greeks as active and original in their capacity to capture what is perceived but as lacking in philosophical reflection and even more thoroughly in "true sensibility." This only comes about with the power of love, which accrues once new manners emerge that invite women to participate in the progress of the human spirit and partake in humanity's destiny.[18]

There is also a certain pride in French culture and literature to be found in Staël's writing, which harkens back to the defense of the moderns against the ancients and attitudes that were promoted during the seventeenth century by Madeleine de Scudéry.[19] Scudéry had already pointed to the danger that the unleashing of the passions of the people constituted for the stability of governments after a revolution.[20] She had also argued for a connection between the growth of taste, refined culture, and politeness, and the status of women. The salon culture that evolved in France after the publication of the Scudéries' very popular novels *Artamène* and *Clélie* had, to a certain extent, embodied these ideals.[21] This was the atmosphere in which Staël grew up in her mother's salon, for which she clearly felt not a little nostalgia. Both connect the spirit of chivalry and ideas of nobility within monarchies with a possible high status for at least some women while claiming that, in republics, women are less respected; indeed, Staël claims that, in republics, "women are nothing" apart from their own talents and that, while intellectual women are in danger of being mocked in monarchies, in republics, they fear being hated.[22]

In *On the Passions,* Staël characterized the aim of her reflections as being to discover how one might form a great nation, founded in liberty, which brought together the splendor of the arts, sciences, and letters as they had been promoted by monarchies while maintaining the independence of a republic.[23] In *On Literature*, she returns to the question of how one might characterize the literature of "an enlightened people among whom had been established liberty, political equality and the manners adapted to such institutions."[24] She remained sufficiently nostalgic for the *ancien régime* to extol the good taste of much that had been produced in monarchist France and to blame the vulgarity of elements in English literature, in particular as found in Shakespeare, on the necessity to please the masses in the less absolutist atmosphere of England. In the case of humor, in particular, she is convinced that only the French could achieve the taste, grace, and fine observation of the human heart found in Molière's comedies.[25] Comedy, however, is not a sufficient basis for the kind of literary developments necessary for a society that combines the independence of republicanism with the splendor of a monarchy, and near the end of *On Literature*, Staël begins to speculate on what such a combination might require.

One might have expected, given her earlier comments in relation to the importance of women participating in the progress of the human spirit, that her reflections would lead her to see women's participation in the arts as an essential aspect of the development of a republican literature. Indeed, she claims that to enlighten, instruct, and perfect both women and men is the secret to founding reasonable, durable social and political relations.[26] She also comments, in passing, that it might be natural in an enlightened republic for women to concern themselves with what is properly called literature, while men confine themselves to the higher reaches of philosophy, thus anticipating a division that is still, to an extent, in operation.[27] However, she does not develop these thoughts in *On Literature* and instead turns to rebutting the perceived danger that, as a result of being educated, a few women might make the mistake of pursuing glory. This rebuttal then degenerates into what are only thinly veiled, bitter reflections on the way she herself had been treated by society.

Elsewhere, her reflections on the requirements for a republican literature are mostly negative. The mocking satire of a Voltaire, for instance, cannot provide such a model since its bite depends on the affectation, vanities, injustices, and incoherence of the aristocratic politics it satirizes.[28] More positively, she claims that within a republic, it should be possible to combine a literary and a public life because of the need, in a free state, for truth to find persuasive expression.[29] She muses, therefore, on the possibility of using the science of probability to enhance morality and thereby develop a new, more rationally based science of society. Thus, she anticipates the growth of the newly forming disciplines

of sociology and economics, but she would have been unhappy with the positivist orientation of these areas of inquiry as they evolved since she never ceases to insist on the importance of an ethical literature designed to foster appropriate virtues in the populace. Ultimately, the details of the philosophy and literature that she envisages are vague, and although she concludes with an impassioned apology for the progress of humanity and the inescapable need for the growth of enlightened reason, just what an appropriate literature consists of remains vague.

Reconciling *On Literature* with *On Germany*

In *On Literature*, German novels are briefly discussed, and Kant is mentioned in passing, but the treatment is cursory. Staël's involuntary exile and travels in Germany allowed her to extend her investigation into German literature, and the beginning of *On Germany* applies the perspective of her earlier work to the German example. She contrasts France, where there is a single literary center, Paris, and a literary public to whose judgment authors have to conform, with Germany, where individual authors live in relative isolation, scattered across the country, and are forced to take their own individual path to literary excellence.[30] This, she suggests, results in more diversity and originality in German literature than there is in French. She also comments on what she takes to have been the deleterious influence of Frederick II's Francophilia, which slowed the establishment of a genuinely national German style.[31]

Midway through the work, there is something of a change in orientation. Staël's discussions with Henry Crabb Robinson and close communion with August Wilhelm Schlegel during the period when she was composing *On Germany* resulted in a far greater appreciation of philosophy as a part of literature than had been the case earlier, and her discussion suggests a development in her understanding of the causes of failure of the French Revolution.[32] While she continues to insist that philosophy is of value and not to blame for society's misfortunes, in her account of German philosophy, she introduces a theme, already found in the works of the early German romantics, according to which a certain kind of philosophy had been responsible for unleashing the destructive forces of the Terror.[33] This was French materialism, which she believed had its roots in English empiricism and had resulted in the destruction, in France, of belief in free will and moral conscience. Staël represents philosophy in general as vacillating between the empire of sensation and that of the soul, a contrast also captured in the opposition between terrestrial mortality and immortal survival. These are further associated with what we derive from experience and what we are inspired to do in virtue of our moral instincts. Like the early German romantics, Staël adapts from Plato a notion of the soul as the source of a universal, innate desire for virtue and hatred of vice, which manifests itself under

different guises in various moral codes; these are not constant but develop with the progress of human understanding.[34]

Staël's commitment to progress encouraged her to find in Kant's philosophy a hoped-for harbinger of a future stage of human enlightenment. Empiricism and materialism had reduced morals to self-interest and destroyed belief in free will; the dogmatic metaphysics of the past was also a dead end, as Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* showed, but the new, critical, transcendental philosophy allowed for the reconciliation of the inner conviction of freedom and rational moral agency with the outer understanding of material being.[35] The teleological aspect of Staël's worldview explains her enthusiastic embrace of a new Kantian dawn as illuminating the philosophical pathway towards a literature appropriate for an enlightened, republican polity.

In her own way, then, she developed a teleological history of the development of human spirit, thus walking in step with Hegel, whose *Phenomenology of Spirit* had appeared while Staël was writing *On Germany.* But just because such a teleological view of history can no longer be easily assumed, Staël's account of Kant's philosophy, and that of the early nineteenth-century German philosophers in general, brings home the extent to which, as she set out to show in *On Literature,* philosophy and literature in general are influenced by politics. The eighteenth century had developed conflicting styles of enlightenment, rooted in the same modern advances in science and its empirical methods but pointing in very different directions. The first read progress in science as developing in step with the trajectory of spiritual progress—long promised to believers in Christian millennialism—and claimed the identity of rational morality with rational (Christian) religion and the universal validity of natural law. Female supporters of republicanism or constitutional monarchy on Lockean principles, including Catharine Macaulay, Laetitia Barbauld, and Mary Wollstonecraft, had ecstatically welcomed the first phases of the French revolution. Staël had subscribed to this enlightenment faith and believed the revolution to have resulted from the progress of reason.[36] Macaulay hailed it as "the most illustrious event that ever graced the annals of humanity."[37] Barbauld represented it as the spirit of enquiry, swelling to a searching wind that was to sweep away all the infirmities of the body politic.[38] For Wollstonecraft, it was a time when "the image of God implanted in our nature" was more rapidly expanding, and reason, having "at last, shown her captivating face, beaming with benevolence," was so dominant that it would be "impossible for the dark hand of despotism again to obscure it's radiance, or the lurking dagger of subordinate tyrants to reach her bosom."[39]

By contrast, proponents of the second strand of enlightenment thought find no reason to accept consoling religious belief in miracles, immortality, and freedom of the will, given the physical explanation of events, developed by the progress of science. They doubt the rational basis of

morality and the existence of natural, immutable, moral law. Among these, Hume and his French materialist followers were typical. This second style of enlightenment thinking posed an existential threat to the first. From this point of view, Kant's philosophy stands out as offering a last-ditch attempt to rescue the consoling optimism of the first style of enlightenment from the searing acid of skeptical disillusion, promoted by the second. As Staël represents his thought, Kant transcends the dualist opposition between atheistic materialism and dogmatic, rationalist, idealism, restoring dualism in a new register that recognizes the limits of speculative reason while retaining the inner certainty of freedom and ethical duty, revealed through practical reason. Kant offers "a crowd of brilliant ideas on all subjects," and Staël suggests that, uniquely, his doctrine opens up the possibility of developing new insights, "returning to religion through philosophy and to sentiment via reason."[40] She represents subsequent German philosophers as depending on Kant but variously deviating from him in either placing too much emphasis on the ideal or moving too far in the direction of the material. Given her commitment to human progress, Kant's philosophy was naturally attractive, though, had she been less determined to cling to the idea of the progress of the human spirit, she would have seen it for what it was: a new consoling myth, developed in the historical circumstance of the failure of the revolution, the waning plausibility of traditional Christianity, and the incapacity of humans to agree on what reason requires of morality.

Conclusion

One can apply the orientation of *On Literature* to Staël's own writing. For her and others of her generation, who remained optimistic in relation to the possibility of political progress, the failure of the French revolution was the most challenging philosophical and political problem. The direction of her early musings on this problem suggest that she hoped to develop themes found in earlier stadial histories, which had emphasized the role of women in the progress of society and their salutary influence on the refinement of passion. Staël's early praise of Rousseau parted with him only on the issue of female literary talent for she believed women could claim a greater understanding of love and sensibility than men.[41] At the conclusion of *Of the Influence of the Passions*, she inserted an impassioned plea for the growth of pity, the only universally serviceable sentiment and one characteristically gendered as feminine.[42] According to her account of its moral purpose, the novel *Delphine* was intended to show the need for sympathy, goodness, and toleration, even in the treatment of those who have erred.[43] In *On Literature,* Christianity, chivalry, nobility, and emulation are taken to have fostered the development of a more refined spirit, and the progress of humanity is taken to depend on the inclusion of women.[44] In *Corinne*, published between

On Literature and *On Germany*, the eponymous heroine is represented as writing poetry that expresses a passionate sensibility which imaginatively captures the intimate connection between the beauties of nature and the impressions of the soul.[45] Corinne can be read as the kind of superior woman whose literary contribution is essential for the development of the human spirit.[46] Although this novel has been represented as an expression of German romanticism, implicitly indebted to Kant for its representation of female genius, it is structured around the impact of a feminine sensibility on the moral and aesthetic awakening of a man, thus harkening back to seventeenth-century themes rather than evoking Kantian transcendental philosophy.[47]

However, the place of women in the progress of spirit no longer figures in *On Germany*. One suspects that, seduced by the German philosophers, Staël renounced her earlier half-formed thoughts on the need for a feminized, republican, literary tradition, and adopted instead the figure of Kant as the supreme philosopher who had opened to way to a genderless progress of spirit. Though feeling and sentiment remain important, they are no longer associated with the influence of women. During the nineteenth century, women who, like Staël, aspired to the status of genius characteristically took on masculine names.[48] Genius wore pants, even when representing the female artist. No doubt there were good pragmatic, social reasons for this. Yet, during the late seventeenth and eighteenth century, women increasingly discarded anonymity and advertised themselves as female writers. Staël was happy to be represented as Corinne; her followers, more Kantian than her, represented their genius from behind a veil of masculinity. Staël was swept up in the politics of her own time and became a herald of German philosophical domination and nationalism in the guise of the progress of human spirit.

The paradox with which we began is explained along various lines. The topic of *On Literature* is not that of the *Critique of Judgement*. At the same time, Staël has modified her opinion. Where she earlier imagined that what was required was the reestablishment of a feminized sensibility—a goodness and virtue, associated, since the seventeenth century, with women, feeling, pity, and tenderness—her intercourse with the German romantics persuaded her that it was the inner certainty of the transcendent—recognized through the appreciation of beauty and the sublime, as expressed equally in art and duty—that was necessary. She did not have the courage of her earlier convictions but succumbed to the sexless image of the progress of a transcendent spirit. Access to this spirit, colonized during the nineteenth century by men, in particular, Hegel, was thereafter pursued, during the nineteenth century, by women pretending to be men. It would not be until Beauvoir that sexual difference once again slipped into the dialectic of the progress of the human spirit and the question of humanity's destiny. Beauvoir introduced the question of whether the perceived conflict between spirit and matter, subject and

object, transcendence and immanence, is not just a sublimated dialectic of male and female. Sadly, just as Staël failed to seriously consider works written by individual women in *On Literature,* thus truncating the story of the influence they had already exercised on the politics of taste during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, so Beauvoir reduced Staël to a brief mention as one of "the most intelligent" women of her time, who, Beauvoir says, "fought for her own cause rather than that of her sisters."[49] Politics continued to imply the tastelessness of works by women who aspired to literary or philosophical glory; ironically, Staël contributed to the emergence of a new phase of German nationalism even more hostile to literary women than eighteenth-century monarchism had been.

Notes

1 Thomas Carlyle, "Jean Paul Friedrich Richter's Review of Madame de Staël's 'Allemagne,'" *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* 1 (1830): 28.
2 Germaine de Staël, *De la littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales*, Vol. 2 (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1959), 20–23.
3 Staël, *De la littérature*, Vol. 1, 190.
4 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), I.13, 54.
5 Germaine de Staël, *Œuvres complètes de Madame la baronne de Staël-Holstein*, Vol. 3 (Geneva: Slatkine reprints, 1976), 185–186.
6 Jonathan Israel, *The Expanding Blaze: How the American Revolution Ignited the World, 1775–1848* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017).
7 Germaine de Staël, "De l'influence des passions sur le bonheur des individus et des nations," in *Oeuvres complètes, ser. 1*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Champion, 2008), 138.
8 Staël, *Œuvres complètes de Madame la baronne*, Vol. 1, 62–63.
9 Staël, *De la littérature considérée*, 17.
10 Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, §57, 167.
11 Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, §49, 142–147.
12 It is true, as Camilla Flodin has pointed out to me, that Kant speaks of taste as introducing clearness and order into thought, and as stabilizing ideas, thus qualifying them for "permanent and universal approval" and a "continually progressive culture," *Critique of Judgement,* §50, 148. Thus, he accepts that change in aesthetic judgment is possible but only in so far as it is a progress towards universal agreement.
13 Staël, *Œuvres complètes de Madame la baronne*, Vol. 2, 59–60.
14 Staël, *De la littérature*, Vol. 1, 47–53.
15 Although "poetry" may have sometimes been used during the eighteenth century to designate literature in general, Staël clearly follows the modern tendency to identify it with verse not intended for the stage and to distinguish it from drama and prose literature.
16 Staël, *De la littérature*, Vol. 1, 178–187. For an account of the influence of both stadial history and Ossian on eighteenth-century British women writers, see JoEllen DeLucia, *A Feminine Enlightenment: British Women Writers and the Philosophy of Progress, 1759–1820* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015).
17 Staël, *De la littérature*, Vol. 1, 131–142.
18 Staël, *De la littérature*, Vol. 1, 58–59.

19 Joan DeJean, *Tender Geographies: The Politics of Female Authorship under the Late Ancien Régime* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); *Ancients Against Moderns: Culture Wars and the Making of a Fin de Siècle* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Myriam Maître, "Sapho, *reine* de *Tendre*: Entre monarchie absolue et royauté littéraire," in *Madeleine de Scudéry: Une femme de lettres au XVII*[e] *siècle*, ed. Delphine Denis and Anne-Elisabeth Spica (Arras: Artois Presses Université, 2002); Karen Green, "Women's Writing and the Early Modern Genre Wars," *Hypatia* 28 (2013): 499–515.
20 Madeleine de Scudéry, *Clélie, histoire romaine*, Vol. 3 (Paris: Champion, 2003), 44–45, 217–237.
21 Scudéry, *Clélie, histoire romaine*; Georges and Madeleine de Scudéry, *Artamène, ou Le Grand Cyrus*, 10 Vols. (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1972).
22 Madeleine de Scudéry, *"De l'air galant" et autres conversations: Pour une étude de l'archive galante*, ed. Delphine Denis (Paris: Champion, 1998), 137; Staël, *De la littérature*, Vol. 2, 312, 33.
23 Staël, "De l'influence des passions," 142.
24 Staël, *De la littérature*, Vol. 2, 291.
25 Staël, *De la littérature*, Vol. 2, 212.
26 Staël, *De la littérature*, Vol. 2, 338.
27 Staël, *De la littérature*, Vol. 2, 335.
28 Staël, *De la littérature*, Vol. 2, 301.
29 Staël, *De la littérature*, Vol. 2, 325.
30 Staël, *Œuvres complètes de Madame la baronne*, Vol. 2, 5–6.
31 Staël, *Œuvres complètes de Madame la baronne*, Vol. 2, 31–34.
32 Staël, *Œuvres complètes de Madame la baronne*, Vol. 2, 158; Margaret R. Higonnet, "Madame de Staël and Schelling," *Comparative Literature* 38 (1986): 164; Frederick Burwick, *Mimesis and its Romantic Reflections* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 18–44.
33 Staël, *Œuvres complètes de Madame la baronne*, Vol. 2, 175. Staël's understanding of philosophy in the first chapter of the third part of *On Germany* manifests a striking resemblance to the characterization of the ideas of the early German romantics, as outlined in Frederick C. Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 45–69. Like her, they had welcomed the French Revolution and developed their views in the light of its failure.
34 Staël, *Œuvres complètes de Madame la baronne*, Vol. 2, 171.
35 André Monchoux, "Madame de Staël, interprète de Kant," *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France* 66 (1966): 71–84.
36 Germaine de Staël, *Considerations on the Principle Events of the French Revolution* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2008), 128.
37 Catharine Macaulay, *The Correspondence of Catharine Macaulay*, ed. Karen Green (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 282.
38 Anna Lætitia Barbauld, *Address to the Opposers of the Corporation and Test Acts* (London: J. Johnson, 1790), 32. Quoted in Karen Green, "Catharine Macaulay and Laetitia Barbauld: Two Eighteenth-Century 'Republicans,'" in *Political Ideas of Enlightenment Women: Virtue and Citizenship*, ed. Lisa Curtis-Wendlandt, Paul Gibbard, and Karen Green (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 171.
39 Mary Wollstonecraft, "An Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution," in *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft*, Vol. 6, ed. Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler (London: Pickering, 1989), 22.
40 Staël, *Œuvres complètes de Madame la baronne*, Vol. 2, 187.

41 Germaine de Staël, "Lettres sur les écrits et le charactère de J-J Rousseau," in *Œuvres complètes*, *ser. 1, Oeuvres critiques*, Vol. 1, ed. Florence Lotterie, (Paris: Champion, 2008), 48–49.
42 Staël, "De l'influence des passions," 294–300; Nanette Le Coat, "The Virtuous Passion: The Politics of Pity in Staël's *The Influence of the Passions*," in *Staël's Philosophy of the Passions: Sensibility, Society, and the Sister Arts*, ed. Tili Boon Cuillé and Karyna Szmurlo (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2013), 39–55.
43 Staël, *Œuvres complètes de Madame la baronne*, Vol. 1, 646–653.
44 Staël, *De la littérature*, Vol. 1, 58–59.
45 Staël, *Œuvres complètes de Madame la baronne,* Vol. 1, 664.
46 Karen de Bruin, "Melancholy in the Pursuit of Happiness: *Corinne* and the *Femme Supérieure*," in *Staël's Philosophy of the Passions: Sensibility, Society, and the Sister Arts*, ed. Tili Boon Cuillé and Karyna Szmurlo (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2013), 88.
47 Kari Lokke, "'Children of Liberty': Idealist Historiography in Staël, Shelley, and Sand," *PMLA* 118 (2003): 502–520.
48 Linda M. Lewis, *Germaine de Staël, Georges Sand, and the Victorian Woman Artist* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003), 1–2.
49 Simone de Beauvoir, *Le deuxième sexe*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), 140. For an attempt to do justice to the history of women's contributions to the politics of taste, and to politics in general, see Jacqueline Broad and Karen Green, *A History of Women's Political Thought in Europe, 1400–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), and Karen Green, *A History of Women's Political Thought in Europe, 1700–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

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Part III

Science and a New Model of Society Around 1800

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10 Goethe's Exploratory Idealism

Mattias Pirholt

"One has to always *experiment* with ideas."
Georg Christoph Lichtenberg

"Everything that exists is an analogue to all existing things."
Johann Wolfgang Goethe

Johann Wolfgang Goethe made his famous Italian journey in the late 1780s, approaching his forties, and it was nothing short of life-changing. Soon after his arrival in Rome on November 1, 1786, he writes to his mother that he would return "as a new man"[1]; in the retroactive account of the journey in *Italienische Reise*, he famously describes his entrance into Rome "as my second natal day, a true rebirth."[2] Latter-day critics essentially confirm Goethe's reflections, describing the journey and its outcome as "Goethe's aesthetic catharsis" (Dieter Borchmeyer), "the artist's self-discovery" (Theo Buck), and a "Renaissance of Goethe's poetic genius" (Jane Brown).[3] Following a decade of frustrating unproductivity, the Italian sojourn unleashed previously unseen creative powers which would deeply affect Goethe's life and work over the decades to come. Borchmeyer argues that Goethe's "new existence in Weimar bore an essentially different signature than his pre-Italian one."[4] With this, Borchmeyer refers to a particular brand of neoclassicism known as Weimar classicism, *Weimarer Klassik*, which is less an epochal term, seeing as it covers only a little more than a decade, than a reference to what Gerhard Schulz and Sabine Doering matter-of-factly call "an episode in the creative history of a group of German writers around 1800."[5]

Equally important as the aesthetic reorientation, however, was Goethe's new-found interest in science, which was also a direct consequence of his encounter with the Italian nature. "The parallelism, even the identity of natural and artistic laws is literally the main theme of the *Italian Journey*," Borchmeyer summarizes.[6] What later would become Goethe's most famous—or perhaps infamous—contributions to science, his theory of colors and his morphology, draw on the Italian experience,

to which they explicitly refer (cf. MA 12:69; MA 4.2:265). His earliest work in other fields of science, such as meteorology and chemistry, stems from this period as well, implying a holistic view on nature. John Erpenbeck has suggested that the insights into the field of science that Goethe gained during his Italian journey were not fundamentally new; the experiences, however, enabled him to see scientific connections and articulate a more comprehensive scientific worldview. “Italy—that was most of all an experience of integration,” Erpenbeck concludes.[7]

As a result, these two trajectories in Goethe’s post-Italian writing, the aesthetic and the scientific, are not merely simultaneous but essentially rooted in the same experience. Goethe’s classicist experience, to put it succinctly, is a double experience, encompassing both nature and art. Or, as Ernst Osterkamp puts it:

> Only what does not deviate from the laws of nature can be classic. Thus, in the *Italian Journey* Goethe did not access the “classical soil” primarily as an antiquary or art lover but as a scientist, that is from the point of view of its natural conditions.[8]

In other words, Goethe’s conception of classicism in aesthetics is intimately associated with how nature is construed from a scientific point of view. The consequences of this double experience would unfold in the decade that followed the Italian journey. As Jutta Van Selm explains, Goethe’s mature thinking “bears completely upon the Italian experience,” and, as a result, there are “unmistakable parallels between the Italian experience and Goethe’s later theories on science and art.”[9]

This chapter will look at the methodological parallels between Goethe’s aesthetic writings and his scientific theories of the post-Italian, classicist period, which stretches from the return to Weimar in 1788 to Schiller’s death in 1805. Focusing on Goethe’s theoretical reflections in both of these fields, this chapter will unveil an essentially experimental, exploratory, collective, and open-ended conception of both art and nature. In science as well as in aesthetics, man’s pursuit of knowledge and beauty is epitomized by a never-ending search for an underlying idea. As we will see, this regulative idea is repeatedly made visible in often ephemeral manifestations of individual works of art and scientific experiments. Only by observing series of manifestations—reproductions of both images and experiments—is the idea made graspable. Despite being empirically present, it is not immediately perceivable but experienceable by means of exploratory investigation.

Furthermore, this exploratory idealism, I will argue, challenges much of what we take for granted in Weimar classicist aesthetics. For a long time, scholars have agreed that one of the key features of Weimar classicism, perhaps even *the* key feature, is aesthetic autonomy. It has been labeled the norm and the core of Weimar classicism,[10] and Wilhelm

Voßkamp has concluded, "No other concept is perceived as more characteristic for the epoch of Weimar classicism than *aesthetic autonomy*."[11] However, a comparison between the experimental methodology in Goethe's aesthetic and scientific writings reveals a conspicuous *heteronomy* pertaining to the nature of the work of art, which, as we will see, cannot be described in terms of "intensive wholeness," as Hans-Jürgen Schings suggests.[12] Rather, the aesthetic exploratory idealism that Goethe articulates in his classicist writings arranges the individual work in a sequence that points toward a regulative idea. This kind of sequencing of the work of art is analogous to the Goethean brand of experimental scientific methodology—which I will outline in the next section—pointing to a deep-seated experiential link between aesthetics and science. In other words, although Goethe does not conflate science and aesthetics, there is a common methodological denominator that joins the two fields, forming an analogical connection between them. Thus, this chapter will investigate two forms of heteronomy: a weaker form, which consists in the experiential link between science and art, to which Osterkamp and Van Selm have drawn attention and which is visible in the methodological homology between science and art, and a stronger form, which pertains to the heteronomy of the aesthetic experience as such, that is, its collective and sequential nature.

Experimentalism in the Age of Goethe

By the time Goethe started performing systematic scientific studies in the wake of his Italian journey, empirically grounded experimentalism had been around for almost two centuries. Galileo Galilei, who conducted experiments in the early seventeenth century, was supposedly the first practical experimentalist in the modern sense of the word,[13] and around the same time, philosophers started laying the theoretical foundation of experimental knowledge. Francis Bacon, in the introduction to *Novum Organum* (1620), famously argued that new knowledge is obtained not through argument but through experience.[14] In the decades and centuries that followed, empirical experiments (as opposed to thought experiments) became more prevalent, gaining solid philosophical ground in the works of Locke and Hume, among many others, who emphasized the *a posteriori* nature of all knowledge. Simultaneously, experimental practices evolved, establishing conventions for the relationship between hypotheses, experiments, and conclusions, and assigning mathematics a key role in scientific knowledge production. On German soil, Georg Lichtenberg and Kant provided the practical and the theoretical impetuses of experimentalism.

Still, around 1800, the reach and limits of experiments were yet not fixed. For the romantic, post-Kantian scientists and philosophers, the means and the goals of experimental science pointed far beyond what was

empirically given toward a total understanding of man and nature. The ultimate goal was an omniferous theory of nature, which should unify everything, including science, art, and politics, into one romantic, essentially poetic (or poietic) principle. Johann Wilhelm Ritter and Alexander von Humboldt, among others, used their own bodies as experimental objects in order to empirically uncover the fundamental principles of life that unify man with nature and the universe.[15] From a philosophical point of view, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, in his philosophy of nature—or speculative physics, as he revealingly calls it—construes the experiment as a kind of prophetic invasion of the construction of nature that produces the phenomena it wishes to investigate.[16] The grand ambition manifests itself perfectly in Novalis's unfinished (and perhaps also unfinishable) encyclopedic *Allgemeine Brouillon*, composed in 1798 and 1799. Here, the author—or rather editor—collects and comments on excerpts from a multitude of sources, including Humboldt, Kurt Sprengel, and Abraham Gottlob Werner,[17] while adding his own aphorisms and reflections. In this context, the experiment explicitly constitutes a romanticizing art of invention, and the experimental process of observation is seen simultaneously as ideal (subjective) and real (objective).[18]

Goethe's scientific writings offer something of a link between or a combination of the two diametrically opposed worldviews: the mathematically based empiricism of the scientific community on the one side and the spiritual holism of the romantics on the other side. To be sure, Goethe carefully describes all the experiments that he undertook, accounting for the premises and outcomes of each and every test. He modifies the premises of the experiment systematically in order to infer regularities. Thus, he makes sure that others are able to repeat them (indeed, a cornerstone of the scientific method). For instance, in "Beiträge zur Optik," Goethe explicitly exhorts amateurs (*Liebhaber*) of science to copy (*nachahmen*) the included illustrations and, on the basis thereof, "repeat the experiments with even more ease and larger success" (MA 4.2:292). Also, he emphasizes that there is nothing to be found *beyond* the world of phenomena. "Let us not seek for something behind the phenomena—they themselves are the theory," one of his maxims states (MA 17:533/CW 12:307): an extreme level of empiricism that almost goes beyond the mathematization of the experience in generic science.

Then again, Goethe strived for a comprehensive understanding of nature in its totality, which, according to H. B. Nisbet in his well-known book *Goethe and the Scientific Tradition* (1972), draws on a Neoplatonic tradition that emphasizes the unity of nature, including man.[19] Furthermore, there is an autobiographical trait in his scientific work that undeniably renders his scientific method a subjective slant. In *Zur Farbenlehre* and *Zur Morphologie*, Dorothea Kuhn maintains, the autobiographical form is transformed "into the foundation and principle of the entire scientific representation."[20] Goethe also engaged in science

poetically, particularly in his didactic poems. Poems such as "Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen" (1798), "Metamorphose der Tiere" (1798/1799), and "Urwort: Orphisch" (1817) were in fact published in his scientific journals in order to comment on more traditionally scientific texts. According to Jocelyn Holland, the poems play with the limits of scientific experimentation by pointing to the limits of representation.[21] To Goethe, then, the wider scope of science is to understand man's place in nature and the harmonious unity between the two.[22]

This double bind influences one of Goethe's most important contributions to the theory of the experiment: the essay "Der Versuch als Vermittler von Objekt und Subjekt," written in 1792 in connection with his early color experiments but published in 1823, with minor revisions and with the title added (possibly by Goethe's secretary Friedrich Wilhelm Riemer).[23] Wolfgang Krohn argues that Goethe's conception of the experiment, as articulated in this essay, appears "to circulate *within* the aims of modern science but at the same time to develop a view of the relationship between subject and object that is distinct from the concept of the experiment in the main tradition."[24] Goethe did not reject the experimental methods of his contemporaries, Krohn continues; rather, he wanted to expand the notion of the experiment, suggesting

> that the concept of the experiment, introduced by Bacon and Galilei and worked out epistemologically in detail by Kant, carries a *constructive* feature that best describes the *controlled* environment of the laboratory sciences, whereas the conditions of experimentation by Goethe is epitomized by *experience* [*Erleben*], which focuses on the phenomena of the investigation that stand in an open relation to reality.[25]

Friedrich Steinle, correspondingly, distinguishes between a theory-oriented conception of the experiment, which constitutes a means to prove a hypothesis, and an exploratory one, which, as the expression reveals, has less to do with proving a point and more to do with presuppositionlessly investigating a phenomenon. While the former is the Newtonian approach, which continues to dominate science today, the latter, endorsed by Goethe, constitutes an important undercurrent, which contemporary science has re-evaluated and refined.[26] To be sure, this methodology refers not to an unsystematic modus operandi or to the use of a spontaneous trial-and-error procedure. Instead, it is more open than theory-oriented experimentalism to the concrete result of the conducted experiment as it focuses primarily on the outcome rather than on the hypothesis.[27] As Steinle shows, Goethe's works, especially his contributions to the theory of color, are part of this often-ridiculed tradition:

> The fundamental procedure consisted in varying different parameters of the experimental construction: the form of the monitored

> surfaces, their size, color and brightness, the angle, from which they were observed, the refractive angle of the prism, the kind of glass of the prism, and the distance between the prism and the surface. The number of experiments conducted in this way could surely reach the hundreds.[28]

Thus, a key feature of exploratory experimentalism is the systematic sequencing of experiences, a principle that Goethe utilizes in the strongest possible sense, as Steinle shows in his essay. In fact, according to Goethe's definition of the experiment, sequentiality constitutes the *sine qua non* of the concept in question: "When we intentionally reproduce empirical evidence found by earlier researchers, contemporary, or ourselves, when we re-create natural or artificial phenomena, we speak of this as an experiment" (MA 4.2:325/CW 12:13; cf. MA 4.2:269). Goethe seems to suggest that only in so far as an experience is sequentialized, either through replication or variation, can it be called an experiment.[29] As a result, an experiment is never an isolated entity. Quite the contrary: an experiment "receives its real value only when united or combined with other experiments" (MA 4.2:326/CW 12:13). Compared to Newton, who is praised for his experimental rigor but in reality kept the amount of experiments to a minimum, Goethe's experimentalism is excessive, fully embracing the exploratory method.[30]

However, not only the object submitted to the experiment but also the subject conducting it is collectively determined. Science, Goethe understood, is essentially a collective process. We do not appreciate enough, he says, "our need for communication, assistance, admonition, and contradiction to hold us to the right path and help us along it" (MA 4.2:325/CW 12:13). In this respect, science differs from art:

> An artist should never present a work to the public before it is finished because it is difficult for others to advise or help him with its production. . . . In science, on the other hand, it is useful to publish every bit of empirical evidence, even every conjecture; indeed, no scientific edifice should be built until the plan and materials of its structure have been widely known, judged and sifted.
>
> (MA 4.2:325/CW 12:13)

To be sure, this understanding of the collective nature of scientific endeavors is noticeable in Goethe's practical work as well, particularly in the later journals *Zur Morphologie* and *Zur Naturwissenschaft überhaupt*, which contained contributions by several authors.[31]

These subjective and objective collective processes at work—the experimental sequences and the collaborations in the scientific community—are signs of what James M. Van der Laan has described as Goethe's experimental "polyperspectivity": "Because reality has an interpretative

basis," Van der Laan argues, "the essay [i.e., "Der Versuch als Vermittler von Objekt und Subjekt"] seeks to illuminate each object or topic or issue from numerous different perspectives."[32] The aim of these collective processes and repetitions is to "attain certainty" about the isolated empirical evidence we find in the experiment, as Goethe suggests (MA 4.2:327/CW 12:14). However, this singularity is merely apparent since the ultimate object of scientific knowledge is the totality of nature:

> All things in nature, especially the commoner forces and elements, work incessantly upon one another; we can say that each phenomenon is connected with countless others just as we can say that a point of light floating in space sends its rays in all directions.
>
> (MA 4.2:329/CW 12:15–16)

As a result, "we can never be careful enough in studying what lies next to it or derives directly from it" (MA 4.2:329/CW 12:16). Indeed, the ambition of grasping the totality of nature links Goethe's conception of science with the romantic and idealistic tendencies of his time, as outlined above. Then again, the desire for totality is also the motivation behind Goethe's exhortation to repeat experiments, which connects him with mainstream science. "To follow every single experiment through its variations," he declares, "is the real task of the scientific researcher" (MA 4.2:329/CW 12:16). Once again, he contrasts science and poetry, maintaining that the writer, "who writes to entertain" (MA 4.2:329/CW 12:16), must refrain from repetition. Replication, on the other hand, creates a series (*Reihe*) of experiments that, together, from a certain point of view, constitutes one experiment and one experience:[33]

> In the first two parts of my *Contributions to Optics* I sought to set up a series of contiguous experiments derived from one another in this way. Studied thoroughly and understood as a whole, these experiments could even be thought of as representing a single experiment [*Einen* Versuch], a single piece of empirical evidence [*Eine* Erfahrung] explored in its most manifold variations.
>
> (MA 4.2:329–30/CW 12:16)

This single experiment and single empirical experience, which consists of many experiments and many experiences, "is clearly of a higher sort," Goethe concludes, repeating, "In my view, it is the task of the scientific researcher to work toward empirical evidence of this higher sort" (MA 4.2:330/CW 12:16). The rest of the essay is devoted to explaining this particular scientific duty: to develop a higher form of experience on the basis of a series of singular experiments. Interestingly, the scientist must make use of not only his intellect (*Verstand*) but also his imagination

(*Einbildungskraft*) and wit (*Witz*) to construct this higher form of experience, which is ultimately the aim of the scientific endeavor.

The nature of this scientifically valid higher experience, however, remains somewhat of a mystery throughout the essay on the experiment as mediator. A few years later (1798), in a short text, posthumously published in 1893 with the title "Erfahrung und Wissenschaft" (renamed by later editors as "Das reine Phänomen"), Goethe elaborates further on the ultimate aim of science, which, in this context, he labels *the pure phenomenon*. The scientist should focus on "not only how the phenomena appear, but also how they should appear" (MA 6.2:820/CW 12:24). As a result, many phenomena constitute what Goethe calls "empirical fractions which must be discarded if we are to arrive at a pure, constant phenomenon," which explicitly constitutes "a type of ideal" (MA 6.2:820/CW 12:24). In other words, it is on behalf of "the idea of the pure phenomenon" that the fractions of empirical experience are sacrificed (MA 6.2:820/CW 12:24). The pure phenomenon, however, is not visible to the naked eye. Rather, it

> stands before us as the result of all our observations and experiments. It can never be isolated, but it appears in a continuous sequence of events. To depict it, the human mind gives definition to the empirically variable, excludes the accidental, sets aside the impure, untangles the complicated, and even discovers the unknown.
> (MA 6.2:821/CW 12:25)

As a mediator between the empirical phenomenon, which each and every one of us may experience in nature, and the pure phenomenon, identical to the higher form of experience that Goethe talks about in the essay on the experiment as mediator, there is the scientific phenomenon to which empirical phenomena "is then raised through experiments . . . by producing it under circumstance and conditions different from those in which it was first observed, and in sequence which is more or less successful" (MA 6.2:821/CW 12:25). The parallels between "Der Versuch als Vermittler von Objekt und Subjekt" and "Das reine Phänomen" are striking. In the latter, empirical and pure phenomena substitute object and subject, a move that emphasizes an important development in Goethe's scientific thinking. Possibly under the influence of Kant, whose philosophy Goethe praises in "Einwirkungen der neueren Philosophie" (1820; MA 12:94–95), Goethe clearly makes a transcendental turn of his own as, in the earlier text, he focuses not on the object as such (nor on the subject) but on the givenness of the phenomenon.

Similar to the higher experience in "Der Versuch als Vermittler von Objekt und Subjekt," the pure phenomenon, or the "Urphänomen," as it is later renamed, is neither a singularity nor separated from the empirical reality. Quite the contrary: it manifests itself "in a continuous

sequence of events." In other words, the pure phenomenon is intrinsically empirical but, at the same time, not empirically experienceable as such or in isolation—only in the form of a sequence. Joseph Vogl refers to the pure phenomenon as a form of "extended or higher empiricism" whose aim is nothing less than pure visibleness (*reine Sichtbarkeit*), consisting of a "fabric of sensuousness and idea."[34] Drawing on Herder's concept of "Hauptform," Dalia Nassar argues, in a similar vein, that Goethe construes similarities and analogies structurally as they are "not necessarily to be found in the *perceptible* appearance, but in the structural and formal integrity of the whole."[35] The ideal component, I would argue, is important. As Goethe famously claims in the autobiographical account of his first encounter with Schiller, "Glückliches Ereignis," published in *Zur Morphologie* (1817), he was able to "have ideas without knowing it" and capable of "see[ing] them with [his] own eyes" (MA 12:89/CW 12:20).[36] However, the Goethean idea—the pure phenomenon—is not (Neo)platonic since it does not constitute a more genuine or original reality from which the empirical reality emanates. Rather, as "the result of all our observations and experiments," it represents a regulative idea of the scientific endeavor, inseparable from the sequence of experiences from which it is constructed. Once again, the influence of Kant's transcendental philosophy is evident. According to him, the direction of our understanding (*Verstand*) toward a particular goal, the desire to seek unity and completeness in nature, for instance, constitutes a regulative principle of reason (*Vernunft*).[37] Goethe, correspondingly, construes the pure phenomenon as such a goal, which should encompass all of nature. Unlike Kant, however, Goethe considers the idea to be empirical in the sense that it is experienceable, though not immediately but as the result of sequential experience. "Only at the end of the experimental sequence is the sought-after rule rectified," Sabine Schimma maintains, "and thus scientifically verified."[38] To be sure, the rule of the "Urphänomen," which is generated "experimentally and processually from a multitude of isolated occurrences" but which, at the same time, "is experienceable in each individual phenomenon," constitutes a "sensorily experienceable and likewise abstract totality."[39]

In that sense, Goethe's pure phenomenon is constantly reconstructed as a result of the experiences (empirical and scientific) made by the experimenting subject. New experiences add to the experience of the pure phenomenon, which, as a regulative principle, is not experienceable as such but is noticeable in the continuously evolving totality of experiences. The subject itself, correspondingly, evolves as a result of the experimental enterprise: "[T]he more we pursue this study," Goethe claims in "Der Versuch als Vermittler von Objekt und Subjekt," "discovering further relations among things, the more we will exercise our innate gift of observation" (MA 4.2:322/CW 12:12).

To summarize the discussion so far, Goethe's concept of the experiment displays the following characteristics, which both conform and are at odds with the notion of the experiment of his peers:

1. experiments are serialized and controlled empirical experiences, warranting replication and variation;
2. experimental experiences are essentially collective and communicative, that is, they must be experienceable by the scientific community;
3. the scientific process is ultimately regulated by a simultaneously experienceable and abstract idea, the pure phenomenon, which is inferable from the series of experiments and constantly reconstructed.

What this means, in short, is that the series of controlled experiments to which the scientific community contributes pertains to forming a preliminary image ("Über die Notwendigkeit von Hypothesen," MA 3.2:298). This image is increasingly refined and perfected by means of said experiments, that is, scientific phenomena, which point to the ideal pure phenomenon. Since the pure phenomenon is both empirical and ideal, continuous reconstruction of knowledge is necessary: the idea and the experience affect each other reciprocally and constantly.

The Sequencing of the Work of Art in Goethe's Classicist Aesthetics

To be sure, the leap from science to aesthetics in Goethe's oeuvre is never far. As a matter of fact, Goethe construes deep ties between them, arguing that science is essentially rooted in poetry. Lamenting the tepid reception of his early work on morphology, *Versuch die Metamorphose der Pflazen zu erklären* (1790), he claims that the critics forgot that "science has developed from poetry" and that "one did not consider that both could very well once again, after a change of times, come together in a friendly manner at a higher level, for the benefit of them both" (MA 12:74). Furthermore, art is, as Goethe maintains in a posthumously published aphorism, "a second nature that is also mysterious but more intelligible, since it originates from reason" (MA 17:903, #1105).

Despite these ties, critics habitually link his conception of art with aesthetic autonomy. His classicist writings of the 1790s and early 1800s, particularly, are construed as an expression of the autonomization of art, which traditionally is assumed to be heralded in the works of Karl Philipp Moritz and Kant. Key features of aesthetic autonomy, particularly in the tradition of Moritz, which focuses primarily on the nature of the work of art and, to some extent, the creative process, include the completeness (*Vollkommenheit*), totality (*Ganzheit*), and internal purposiveness (*innere Zweckmäßigkeit*) of the work of art.[40] In other words, it is assumed to constitute a self-contained, organic totality that

lacks external purposes, which may be secondary at most. Although Goethe was well-read in Kant's philosophy, its particular emphasis on the subject's disinterestedness seems however to have left few traces in Goethe's writings on aesthetics.[41] A closer look at Goethe's aesthetic writings from his classicist period reveals a heteronomous conception of the work of art. As a matter of fact, the heteronomization of the work draws on his classicist experience, that is, his experience during his Italian sojourn, of the *ideality* of the works of the classical age and the Renaissance. The ideality of these works—the Laocoön group, the Apollo Belvedere, Raphael's *Transfiguration*, and Leonardo's *Last Supper*, for instance—does not isolate the aesthetic experience to one particular version. On the contrary, the idea of the work, as we will see, constitutes the ultimate aim of the aesthetic experience, which is formed over time as the experience engages with various manifestations of the same idea. Thus, Goethe draws on this sequential experience of the work's idea in order to form, as in his scientific work, a *polyperspective* or *pluralized* view of the idea.

The Italian journey is what opened Goethe's eyes to the heteronomy of the work of art and the processual nature of the aesthetic experience.[42] His first-hand encounters with masterpieces from Greek and Roman antiquity, as well as from the Italian Renaissance, are described in detail in *Italienische Reise*, which is essentially a cultural and aesthetic *tour de force*. Indeed, seeing the antique marbles and Renaissance paintings, and encountering the Italian nature and lifestyle, contributed to his feeling of rebirth. Goethe remarks, however, that these works are not entirely new to him. In his account of the Italian journey, after having beheld Raphael's ceiling paintings in Villa Farnesina and the *Transfiguration*, he refers to them as "All old acquaintances" (MA 15:162/CW 6:113):

> For it may well be said that a new life begins when something previously known inside and out, but still only in parts, is beheld in its entirety. Now I see all my childhood dreams come to life; I see now in reality the first engravings that I remember (my father had hung the prospects of Rome in a corridor); and everything long familiar to me in paintings and drawings, copperplates and woodcuts, in plaster and cork, now stands together before me. Wherever I go I find something in this new world I am acquainted with; it is all as I imagined, and yet new. And the same can be said of my observations, my thoughts. I have had no entirely new thought, have found nothing entirely unfamiliar, but the old thoughts have become so precise, so alive, so coherent that they can pass for new.
>
> (MA 15:147/CW 6:104)

Nothing is really new, then, although the old acquaintances appear more alive in their original setting. This includes statues as well, which

Goethe had often seen as plaster casts at various drawing schools in Germany. Commenting on his experience of the Laocoön group, to which he devotes an influential essay, published in the first issue of *Die Propyläen* (1798), he even goes as far as to say that the encounter with the marble original—to be sure, he was fully aware of the fact that it was a Roman copy of a lost Greek original—did not add anything of substance to the interpretation he had made some twenty years earlier in Mannheim, for which he accounts in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (third part, 1814; MA 16:537). Although Goethe considers the plaster cast as lifeless in comparison to the skin-like marble—whereas the former appears "chalky and dead," in the latter, he notices the "elegant semitransparency of the yellowish, nearly flesh-colored stone" (MA 15:178/CW 6:124)—the nature of the material only plays a minor role as, ten years after the return from Rome, in "Über Laokoon," Goethe reflects on his experiences in the Vatican Museum.[43] On one occasion only does he refer to the physical material of the group: "I would suggest that you face the sculpture from a proper distance, eyes closed. If you open and then immediately close your eyes, you can see the whole marble in motion" (MA 4.2:81/CW 3:18). In the end, the experience of the marble only contributes to the already established interpretation based on the experience of an inferior reproduction of the work.

Although Goethe, as his long involvement with the Laocoön group shows, might have considered himself an ideal art lover, capable of appreciating the finer details of art even at a young age, he believed that education on aesthetic sensibility was essential in most cases. Thus, in the introduction to the journal *Die Propyläen*, the closest we come to a classicist program by Goethe's hand, he writes that

> Even a rough, imperfect plaster cast of a fine ancient work will have a strong effect on the viewer who, although inexperienced, is receptive to beauty. For even in an inferior reproduction we still perceive the idea, the simplicity and grandeur of form, in short, the general concept—as much as one with poor eyesight would see when looking at the original from a distance.
>
> As we know, such imperfect reproductions often arouse a strong interest in art; yet the effect is commensurate with the object. What the novice art lover experiences is more an undefined, muddled feeling that the real worth and greatness of the original work.
>
> (MA 6.2:21–22/CW 3:86–87)

There is a practical side to art reproductions which Goethe was not only fully aware but also approved of. Even "such imperfect reproductions" may promote the education of the art lover, though they only provide "an undefined, muddled feeling." This indeterminate feeling is a response to the idea of the work, which is palpable even in the most

inferior reproduction. In the introduction to *Die Propyläen*, Goethe outlines a kind of progressive methodology that leads the art lover from the imperfect copy to the higher spheres of the original:

> However, if after more experience and practice they see a finished rather than a rough cast, or even an original work, their enjoyment together with their insight grows, and increases as they become acquainted with originals, and finally with originals of the highest order.
>
> (MA 6.2:22/CW 3:87)

As Johannes Grave and Jonas Maatsch have aptly suggested, Goethe engaged with art "not only 'historically' but also 'progressively' [*stufenweise*]."[44] At the core of the aesthetic experience, then, lies a conception of the work of art as essentially multifarious. The original, of course, constitutes the ultimate goal of the progressive aesthetic education. However, both the unique original and the ever-so-inferior reproduction embody the idea of the work and contribute to the complete understanding of it.

Goethe continued to collect reproductions of the works he had seen in Italy after his return home. Thanks to these, he was able to continuously refine his understanding of the work. Grave talks about Goethe's *comparing gaze*, which was intended to "intensify the study of the model [*Vorlage*] as well as of the reproduction."[45] Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*, for instance, which Goethe saw in Milan on his way back to Germany in 1787, was the object of persistent study and resulted in an extensive essay thirty years later. This essay deals explicitly with the pros and cons of copies, emphasizing the fundamental but nevertheless productive difference between these and the original (cf. MA 11.2:416–418). The experience of the original in itself, clearly, did not provide enough material for a complete understanding of the work. Rather, copies of various sorts—engravings, drawings, plaster casts, and later lithographies—facilitated a continuous retrospective reflection.

So far, we have only looked at the receptive side of the aesthetic experience: namely, the art lover's encounters with various manifestations of works of art and the education of the art lover. Despite having abandoned his dreams of becoming a visual artist himself during his sojourn in Italy (cf. MA 15:610–611), Goethe remained engaged in the practical matters of producing art. Together with Johann Heinrich Meyer, he used his influence—as writer, editor, Geheimrat, and superintendent of the court theater in Weimar—to point the art of his time in a classicist direction. In particular, the prize competitions for visual artists are, Ernst Osterkamp explains, "of crucial importance for the understanding of Goethe's artistical intention during the 'classical decade,' as he attempted, with great personal stakes, to gain influence on the current

development of the fine arts."[46] According to the first announcement, published in *Die Propyläen* in 1799, the two initiators, Goethe and Meyer, would suggest "a suitable object [*Gegenstand*]" (MA 6.2:411), usually one or two scenes from Homer's epic poems, each year. The participating artists were asked to submit works that presented the selected object in accordance with the artists' own temper and preferences but also with the maxims for selection of aesthetic objects established by Goethe and Meyer (MA 6.2:411).

To be sure, the prize competitions turned out to be a gigantic failure[47]; even within the unfathomable amount of scholarly work on Goethe, Osterkamp claims, the texts outlining the themes of the competitions are rarely commented on, unloved as they are by scholars.[48] However, being key works in Goethe's classicist project, they are vital to the understanding of his notion of the aesthetic experience during these important years, around 1800. It is obvious that what Goethe and Meyer were looking for were not complete works of art but preliminary sketches and drawings, which they referred to as *Versuche*: attempts or even experiments—"Every artist will at each attempt [*Versuch*], which he makes from his own impulse or is prompted to make, contemplate everything more deeply and penetrate whence no text, regardless how well written it may be, could ever lead him" (MA 6.2:411). Sculptors, too, were instructed to submit drawings in order to be "judged with proper respect to the special conditions of sculpture" (MA 6.2:414). Thus, the aim of the competition was ultimately not to produce ideal works of art but rather to set "the talent in motion" (MA 6.2:413). As a result, the prize money was considered not "as a reward but rather as incitement and encouragement" (MA 6.2:413). In other words, Goethe and Meyer considered their endeavor as a kind of nudging, through which they gently pushed the artists of their time in a classicist direction.[49]

As might be expected, the entries to the competition could hardly be called masterpieces. In fact, with few exceptions, they were mostly a great disappointment, and the entire endeavor was discontinued in 1805. Nevertheless, Goethe drew some interesting conclusions based on the works that were submitted:

> We have justly entertained the idea that the formation of a work of art can only occur successively. The first hasty draft, the drawing with light and shadow, the sketch with colors, the large cartoon are all stages beyond which the artist nurtures his work in order to raise it toward the final completion in the large painting and gives it only in this form all of that which he, with regards to circumstances and skills, is able to give. (MA 6.2:420)

The description of the successive formation of the work of art echoes the account of the progressive education of the art lover's engagement

with the work. The prize competitions, Goethe seems to suggest, offered the ideal venue for making this processual nature of art visible. Not only did they lack an original, apart from Homer's verse; they also enabled a multitude of comparisons between various drafts of the same object, whose ideality Homer's words warranted. "Much," Goethe and Meyer avow, "is already portrayed so vivid, so simple and true in him that the fine artist finds his work already half-done" (MA 6.2:512).

What Goethe's post-Italian account of aesthetic experience—the encounter with already familiar works of art, the constantly enlarged collection of graphic art for comparison, and the prize competitions—boils down to, is that it must be regulated by an idea. The aesthetic experience, analogously to the scientific experience, is determined by a regulatory principle: namely, the idea of the work, which, alluding to Kant's conception of this principle, constitutes the desire to seek unity and completeness—what Goethe, in his scientific studies, calls the pure phenomenon. Analogous to the constant reconstruction of the pure phenomenon in science, the experience of the work's idea is at the same time empirical—it is indeed realized in the work of art and its various manifestations (drafts, copies, drawings, plaster casts, etc.)—and constantly postponed and restructured. Striving to grasp the idea of the work by means of the multitude of manifestations that it produces—they might be of better or worse quality; in either case, they contribute to the full experience—resembles the scientist's exploratory experimentation, which forms a series of preliminary experiences contributing to the experience of the pure phenomenon. The possibility or even the necessity of drafting, copying, imitating, transforming, rearranging, and revisiting works of art, including the most celebrated and supposedly inimitable ones, and their history is in fact fundamental to the aesthetic experience as such. These acts of reconstruction—they might precede or succeed the creation of the original—all contribute to the experience of the work as a pure phenomenon. Thus, the idea is experienceable in the array of the work's manifestations, which means that the work is never *only* singular. In other words, the work is not construed as a self-contained, complete, and perfect entity, that is, autonomous in the sense that is often attributed to Moritz. On the contrary, it is essentially experienceable as another work.

Goethe's conception of the heteronomous experience of the work of art displays a series of analogies to his scientific methodology and may be summarized in three points that correspond to the three points listed above:

1 the work of art is necessarily reproducible and exists as a series of manifestations that either proceeds or succeeds the original, and that includes visual (drafts, drawings, copies, etc.), verbal (descriptions, ekphrases, etc.), and possibly audial (operas, lieder, etc.) representations;

2 as a result, the work is collectively produced and involves artists, engravers, writers, and musicians;
3 together, the manifestations pertain to a regulatory idea, ideally manifested in the original masterpiece but not necessarily perceivable in the original since the experience of it presupposes both the preparatory education and the succeeding reflection of the observer.

The striking analogies between science and aesthetics in Goethe's classicist works indicate a common experiential origin. "How I used to observe nature, I now observe art," Goethe writes from Rome to his confident, Charlotte von Stein.[50] The analogy between the two forms of engaging in the world, the scientific and the aesthetic, denotes not some sort of identity between the two but rather, as the key words *how* and *observe* reveal, a connection between modes of investigation: the analogy as an exploratory form of knowledge production, open-ended and susceptible to what is yet undecided in the concrete experience.[51] In conclusion, Goethe's idealism is essentially exploratory, both methodologically, relating to the way in which nature and art are investigated, and epistemologically, pertaining to the essence of knowledge as such.

Notes

1 Letter to Katharina Elisabeth Goethe, November 4, 1786. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Werke*, Weimarer Ausgabe, Vol. IV/8 (repr., Munich: Deutsche Taschenbuch Verlag, 1987), 43.
2 Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Italienische Reise*, in *Sämtliche Werke nach Epochen seines Schaffens*, Vol. 15, Münchner Ausgabe, ed. Karl Richter (Munich: Hanser, 1992), 174; Goethe, *Italian Journey*, in *Goethe's Collected Works*, Vol. 6, ed. Thomas P. Saine and Jeffrey L. Sammons (Cambridge, MA: Suhrkamp, 1989), 121. These editions are henceforward referred to in the main text as MA and CW, respectively. All other translations are mine.
3 Dieter Borchmeyer, *Weimarer Klassik: Portrait einer Epoche* (Weinheim: Beltz Athenäum, 1998), 141; Theo Buck, *"Der Poet, der sich vollendet": Goethes Lehr- und Wanderjahre* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2008), 168 (caption); Jane K. Brown, "The Renaissance of Goethe's Poetic Genius in Italy," in *Goethe in Italy, 1786–1986: A Bi-Centennial Symposium November 14–16, 1986, University of California, Santa Barbara: Proceedings Volume*, ed. Gerhart Hoffmeister (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988), 77 (caption).
4 Borchmeyer, *Weimarer Klassik*, 125. For further reflections on the postponed consequences of the Italian journey, see 141–143.
5 Gerhard Schulz and Sabine Doering, *Klassik: Geschichte und Begriff* (Munich: Beck, 2003), 83. See also Borchmeyer, *Weimarer Klassik*, 13–40, and Stuart Atkins, "*Italienische Reise* and Goethean Classicism," in *Aspekte der Goethezeit*, ed. Stanley A. Corngold, Michael Curschmann, and Theodore J. Ziolkowski (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), 81–96.
6 Borchmeyer, *Weimarer Klassik*, 127.
7 John Erpenbeck, "'. . . die Gegenstände der Natur an sich selbst. . .': Subjekt und Objekt in Goethes naturwissenschaftlichem Denken seit der italienischen Reise," *Goethe Jahrbuch* 105 (1988): 216. Cf. Emil Staiger, *Goethe*,

Vol. 2 (Zurich: Atlantis, 1956), 19: "The south only revived and confirmed, by means of a plethora of new perceptions, what had been imposed upon him during the last years in Weimar."

8 Ernst Osterkamp, "Zum Verständnis des Klassischen in der Weimarer Klassik," in *Heikle Balancen: Der Weimarer Klassik im Prozess der Moderne*, ed. Thorsten Valk (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2014), 172.

9 Jutta Van Selm, "Erfahrung und Theorie bei Goethe: der 'erste' und der 'reine' Eindruck: Von den italienischen Erfahrungen zu den Theorien in Natur und Kunst," *Goethe Yearbook* 2 (1984): 121–122.

10 Gerhard Sauder, "Ästhetische Autonomie als Norm der Weimarer Klassik," in *Normen und Werte*, ed. Friedrich Hiller (Heidelberg: Winter, 1982), 130–150; Hans-Jürgen Schings, "*Laokoon* und *La Mort de Marat* oder Weimarer Kunstfreunde und Französische Revolution," in *Klassizismus in Aktion: Goethes* Propyläen *und das Weimarer Kunstprogramm*, ed. Daniel Ehrmann and Norbert Christian Wolf (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2016), 77.

11 Wilhelm Voßkamp, "Klassik als Epoche: Zur Typologie und Funtion der Weimarer Klassik," in *Epochenschwelle und Epochenbewußtsein*, ed. Reinhart Herzog and Reinhart Koselleck (Munich: Fink, 1987), 496.

12 Schings, "*Laokoon* und *La Mort de Marat*," 99.

13 Thomas B. Settle, "Galileo and Early Experimentation," in *Springs of Scientific Creativity: Essays on Founders of Modern Science*, ed. Aris Rutherford, H. Ted Davis, and Roger H. Stuewer (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 3–20.

14 Francis Bacon, *The New Organon*, ed. Lisa Jardine and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 27.

15 On eighteenth-century self-experimentation, see Joan Steigerwald, "The Subject as Instrument: Galvanic Experiments, Organic Apparatus and the Problems of Calibration," in *The Uses of Humans in Experiment: Perspectives from the 17th to the 20th Century*, ed. Erika Dyck and Larry Stewart (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill Rodopi, 2016), 80–110.

16 Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Einleitung zu dem Entwurf eines System der Naturphilosophie: Ueber den Begriff der spekulativen Physik und die innere Organisation eines Systems dieser Wissenschaft*, in *Ausgewählte Werke*, Vol. 1, ed. Manfred Frank, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), 344. See also Robert J. Richards, *The Romantic Conception of Life: Science and Philosophy in the Age of Goethe* (Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 140–145.

17 Hans-Joachim Mähl, "Einleitung," in Novalis, *Schriften: Die Werke Friedrich von Hardenbergs*, 2nd ed., Vol. 3, ed. Paul Kluckhohn and Richard Samuel (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1968), 238–241. Novalis's sources are listed in the commentaries, 1002–1010.

18 Novalis, *Das allgemeine Brouillon*, in *Schriften*, Vol. 3, 256 (#89), 357–358 (#529).

19 H. B. Nisbet, *Goethe and the Scientific Tradition* (London: Institute of Germanic Studies, University of London, 1972), 6–22.

20 Dorothea Kuhn, "Das Prinzip der autobiographischen Form in Goethes Schrifentreihe 'Zur Naturwissenschaft überhaupt, besonders zur Morphologie,'" in *Typus und Metamorphose: Goethe-Studien*, ed. Renate Grumach (Marbach: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft, 1988), 55.

21 Jocelyn Holland, *German Romanticism and Science: The Procreative Poetics of Goethe, Novalis, and Ritter* (New York and London: Routledge, 2009), 44–49.

22 Jörn Göres, "'Wie wahr! Wie seiend!': Reflexionen zu Goethes Italien-Reise," *Goethe Jahrbuch* 105 (1988): 25–26.
23 See John Neubauer's comments in MA 4.2:1075–1077.
24 Wolfgang Krohn, "Goethes Versuch über den Versuch," in *Goethe und die Verzeitlichung der Natur*, ed. Peter Matussek (Munich: Beck, 1998), 399.
25 Krohn, "Goethes Versuch über den Versuch," 404.
26 Friedrich Steinle, "'Das Nächste ans Nächste reihen': Goethe, Newton und das Experiment," in *Grenzüberschreitende Diskurse: Festgabe für Hubert Treiber*, ed. Kay Waechter (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 63–65.
27 Friedrich Steinle, "Exploratives vs. theoriebestimmtes Experimentieren: Ampères erste Arbeiten zum Elektromagnetismus," in *Experimental Essays—Versuche zum Experiment*, ed. Michael Heidelberger and Friedrich Steinle (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 1998), 272–297.
28 Steinle, "'Das Nächste ans Nächste reihen,'" 59.
29 As Sebastian Meixner has shown, there is a narrative quality to the act of sequentialization which also involves imagination and wit. "In such a manner are the subjective and objective method mediated," he concludes. Sebastian Meixner, *Narratologie und Epistemologie: Studien zu Goethes frühen Erzählungen* (Berlin and Boston, MA: de Gruyter, 2019), 307. See also Eva Geulen, "Keeping it Simple, Making it Difficult: Morphologische Reihen bei Goethe und anderen," in *Komplexität und Einfachheit: DFG-Symposion 2015*, ed. Albrecht Koschorke (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2017), 357–373. Hartmut Böhme, on the other hand, has emphasized temporalization of nature as the result of Goethe's Italian journey. Hartmut Böhme, "Goethes Erde zwischen Natur und Geschichte—Erfahrungen der *Italienischen Reise*," in *Natur und Figur: Goethe im Kontext* (Paderborn: Fink, 2016), 55–83.
30 Cf. Steinle, "'Das Nächste ans Nächste reihen,'" 57–59.
31 John Neubauer, "Einführung," MA 12:829–833.
32 James M. Van der Laan, "Of Goethe, Essays, and Experiments," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 64 (1990): 49. Sabine Schimma, correspondingly, refers to Goethe's "method of pluralization." Sabine Schimma, *Blickbildungen: Ästhetik und Experiment in Goethes Farbstudien* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2015), 53.
33 On the concept of *Reihe*, see also Chapter 11 of this volume.
34 Joseph Vogl, "Bemerkung über Goethes Empirismus," in *Versuchsanordnungen 1800*, ed. Sabine Schimma and Joseph Vogl (Zurich and Berlin: Diaphanes, 2009), 120. See also Nisbet, *Goethe and the Scientific Tradition*, 39–42.
35 Dalia Nassar, "Understanding *as* Explanation: The Significance of Herder's and Goethe's Science of Describing," in *Herder: Philosophy and Anthropology*, ed. Anik Waldow and Nigel DeSouza (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 119.
36 On Goethe's conception of the idea, see Jonas Maatsch, "Ideen mit den Augen sehen: Anschauliche Erkenntnis bei Goethe," in *Weimarer Klassik: Kultur des Sinnlichen*, ed. Sebastian Böhmer, Christiane Holm, Veronika Spinner, and Thorsten Valk (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2012), 72.
37 Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft 2*, in *Werkausgabe*, Vol. 4, ed. Wilhelm Weischedel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), 563–582.
38 Schimma, *Blickbildungen*, 74.
39 Schimma, *Blickbildungen*, 86.
40 See Karl Philipp Moritz, "Versuch einer Vereinigung aller schönen Künste und Wissenschaften unter dem Begriff des in sich selbst Vollendeten," in *Schriften zur Ästhetik und Poetik: Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Hans Joachim Schrimpf (Tubingen: Niemeyer, 1962), 3–9. The amount of studies on Moritz and aesthetic autonomy is extensive. See, for instance, Borchmeyer,

Weimarer Klassik, 140–141; Alessandro Costazza, *Schönheit und Nützlichkeit: Karl Philipp Moritz und die Ästhetik des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1996); and Martha Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 11–33.

41 See, e.g., Géza von Molnár, "Goethes Studium der *Kritik der Urteilskraft*: Eine Zusammenstellung nach den Eintragungen in seinem Handexemplar," *Goethe Yearbook* 2 (1984): 137–222. Sauder's argument in "Ästhetische Autonomie als Norm der Weimarer Klassik" (143–144) that "Goethe endorsed 'disinterestedness' in art reception, postulated by Kant," is not convincing since the letter to Carl Friedrich Zelter (January 29, 1830) to which Sauder refers in no way, shape, or form addresses the problem of disinterestedness. Cf. Goethe, *Werke*, Vol. IV/46, 223.

42 For a more detailed line of argument, see chaps. 4 and 5 of my book *Grenzerfahrungen: Studien zu Goethes Ästhetik* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2018), 129–220.

43 Goethe's sensitivity for the material aspects of art, however, comes to the fore in essays such as "Material der bildenden Kunst" (1788) and "Baukunst" (1795).

44 Johannes Grave and Jonas Maatsch, "Das Allgemeine im Anschaulichen: Morphologische Reihen in Goethes Sammlungen," in *Heikle Balancen: Die Weimarer Klassik im Prozess der Moderne*, ed. Thorsten Valk (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2014), 297.

45 Johannes Grave, *Der "ideale Kunstkörper": Johann Wolfgang Goethe als Sammler von Druckgraphiken und Zeichnungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 236.

46 Ernst Osterkamp, "'Aus dem Gesichtspunkt reiner Menschlichkeit': Goethes Preisaufgaben für bildende Künstler 1799–1805," in *Goethe und die Kunst*, ed. Sabine Schulze (Stuttgart: Hatje, 1994), 310. For an extensive documentation of the project, see Walther Scheidig, *Goethes Preisaufgaben für bildende Künstler 1799–1805* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1957).

47 See Scheidig, *Goethes Preisaufgaben für bildende Künstler 1799–1805*, 33–34; and Osterkamp, "'Aus dem Gesichtspunkt reiner Menschlichkeit,'" 318.

48 Ernst Osterkamp, *Im Buchstabenbilde: Studien zum Verfahren Goethescher Bildbeschreibungen* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1991), 310.

49 Gerhard Sauder, on the other hand, refers more belligerently to Goethe's "fight [*Kampf*] against the public." Sauder, "Ästhetische Autonomie als Norm der Weimarer Klassik," 143.

50 December 20, 1786. Goethe, *Werke*, Vol. IV/8, 100.

51 On analogy as exploratory knowledge, see Hans Dietrich Irmscher, "Witz und Analogie als Instrumente des entdeckenden Erkennens," in *"Weitstrahlsinniges" Denken: Studien zu Johann Gottfried Herder*, ed. Marion Heinz and Violetta Stolz (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2009), 207–235. On Goethe's Herder-inspired use of the analogical method, see Nassar, "Understanding *as* Explanation," 117–120.

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11 Physics as Art

Johann Wilhelm Ritter's Construction Projects

Jocelyn Holland

This chapter will consider an alternate model to aesthetic autonomy offered by one of the most idiosyncratic writers active in the German context around 1800: the Romantic physicist Johann Wilhelm Ritter. Well known in the time period for his scientific work on galvanism and batteries, Ritter's sole literary project, *Fragmente aus dem Nachlaß eines jungen Physikers* [*Fragments from the Estate of a Young Physicist*] (1810), which consists of a fictionalized biography of Ritter's own early years as well as 700 fragments, exists as an anomaly. It will likely strike some readers as ironic that from within the intellectual environment of German Romanticism, a movement frequently associated with notions of artistic autonomy,[1] there emerged a work such as Ritter's. If aesthetic autonomy is understood, at least according to one definition, as a state where "aesthetic experience and aesthetic judgment, in particular in the context of the proper attitude toward the creation, practice and experience of art" are "independent of and irreducible to other objects of analysis, other types of reasoning, or data pertaining to other disciplines," then Ritter's fragment project refuses to check off any of the required boxes.[2] Challenges to the notion of aesthetic autonomy include the close connections to his other speculative writings; a clearly articulated program of bridging science and aesthetics; the presence of a fictionalized author figure who is fragmented into multiple identities, some of whom have clear historical connections; and, not least of all, a poetics that deliberately incorporates moments of its own rupture and expansion. Though it is easy enough to agree upon what might characterize a work's artistic autonomy in the eighteenth century, the same cannot be said for those projects that deviate from this long-accepted "norm." It is safer to say that literary products characterized by a tendency toward heteronomy, as opposed to autonomy, each deviate in their own way on the basis of their historical positioning, the particular parameters of their literary poetics, and the degree to which they rely upon "non-literary" discourses. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to define what is uniquely heteronomous about Ritter's own project.

For readers who are encountering Johann Wilhelm Ritter for the first time in these pages, a few additional words about his scientific and

literary interests will help give a sense of his particular intellectual trajectory. Ritter was born in the small Prussian village of Samitz in the year 1776. After receiving training as an apothecary, somewhat against his own inclinations, he escaped to Jena and enrolled at the university there in 1796. In the following years, he acquired a reputation as a bold, even reckless experimenter. He is legendary for his observations on the effect of electricity on muscles, sensory organs, and his own body, having subjected himself to several high-voltage experiments.[3] Ritter's best-known work from the Jena years is the 1798 *Proof that a Constant Galvanism Accompanies the Life Process in the Animal Realm (Beweis, dass ein beständiger Galvanismus den Lebensprocess in dem Thierreich begleite)*, which attempted to bridge the views of Volta and Galvani while arguing for the existence of a uniquely animal electricity. He was also responsible for other significant scientific achievements, including the discovery of the ultraviolet end of the light spectrum, the construction of the first dry-cell battery, and the proof of a connection between galvanism and chemical reactivity. Beyond the history of science, Ritter is also of interest in literary history. While at Jena, he met Friedrich Schlegel and Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis). He also earned the respect of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and was close enough to Johann Gottfried Herder to read the *Oldest Document of the Human Race* with the author himself.

As Michael Gamper has noted in his book devoted to Ritter, *Elektropoetologie*, Ritter's physics was not just one of "supersensory forces" but also one of "speculation and aesthetics."[4] The thematic interests of the fragments vary greatly in scale, from phenomena of chemical and galvanic experiments to the planetary bodies of the solar system, and they vary in other ways, depending on the scientific emphasis of the fragment in question (which, in addition to chemistry, galvanism, and physics in general, includes optics, organic theory, and various phenomena related to magnetism). Some fragments tend toward the pragmatic, such as the very first one, which reflects upon warmth and matter; others tend toward the speculative, such as the 675th fragment, with its more abstract thoughts on matter and spirit.

The physics of Ritter's day was located in a solidly Newtonian worldview: the study of bodies in motion and at rest, in various states of matter. Ritter's project could also be described as "corporeal," or at least object-oriented, to the degree that references to *Körper*, as objects of scientific and speculative thinking, occur over 300 times in the fragments alone.[5] On the one hand, these diverse bodies testify to the fact that Ritter's literary project includes reflections on topics that run the gamut from physics and chemistry on one end to art, history, and theology on the other. On the other hand, what Ritter does with these diverse objects also testifies to the heteronomous nature of this work in that

he does not merely want to write about bodies in various states and experimental configurations: his fragments also perform the possibility that corporeal objects may emerge from the arrangement of symbols within textual space (or, more concretely, on the printed page). The fact that he connects such physical and intellectual labor directly to the construction of monuments and other new objects demands that his writing be understood not only within a history of speculative physics but also within a history of aesthetic theories and practices.

By focusing on how Ritter has constructed a heteronomous work of writing, this chapter analyzes his techniques of ordering bodies and constructing new ones by drawing from both scientific and aesthetic practices. The first section will describe how he positions bodies in relation to one another through the formation of intellectual genealogies that emerge in close conjunction to the topic of monumental construction. The second section considers bodies as they are arranged for the purpose of series formation in Ritter's work, with reference to both the fragment collection and one of Ritter's most programmatic pieces of writing, "Physics as Art." This section shows how the composition of a series, through the imposed contiguity and idealized continuity of its constituents, requires the reader to visualize a construction that emerges from two-dimensional space. The final section, on the formation of new characters and symbols, considers the construction of bodies in and as text. It addresses specific techniques, such as layering, as well as other ways in which the fragment collection, in its function as the workshop of the physicist, allows readers to witness the emergence of monuments *in nuce*. A focus on how the various techniques of ordering and construction operate in Ritter's thinking—and, in particular, how they extend from the creation of temporal and conceptual sequences to the emergence of form from the printed page—allows us to witness an innovative and idiosyncratic model for aesthetic practice. This practice has little in common with traditional late eighteenth-century notions of aesthetic autonomy, whereby, as Edgar Landgraf has also described it, "notions of genius, of active unconscious drives, and of nature speaking through the artist" were used as "attempts to recuperate agency and the teleology of the creative process under the conditions of aesthetic autonomy."[6] Instead, with Ritter's fragment project, one finds oneself within a radically hybrid environment: neither his intellectual influences, his subject matter, nor his diverse selves, as depicted in the prologue, can be said to be driven by purely scientific or literary interests. The sheer fact that the physicist, as writer and constructor of the fragment project, cannot be easily reduced to a single entity yet willingly adopts both elements of foreign names and birth and death dates suggests that the model of aesthetic creativity underlying this project could not be farther removed from that of the singular Romantic genius.

Heteronomy through Pedagogical Practices in the Prologue to the Fragment Collection

By now, some 200 years after its publication in 1810, it is widely known that the "posthumous" *Fragments from the Estate of the Young Physicist* is the work of someone who was still very much alive at the time of publication. Most readers are also aware that the prologue to the fragments, a semi-fictional biography of a "young physicist," was written by Ritter himself. For those unfamiliar with Ritter's writing, however, it is quite difficult to describe the prologue. It is a hermetic text filled with codes to be cracked, in the form of switched identities and dates whose significance is somewhat different from their apparent value.[7] Yet, at the same time, it is the work of one who wears his heart on his sleeve, an exuberant and emotional outpouring of personal feelings and the intellectual excitement that comes from encountering, both in writing and in person, some of the most influential personages in late eighteenth-century German culture. The young physicist's relationship to these figures defies convention. Of Herder, for example, the physicist says that he learned the most simply from watching him—that to see Herder take a walk in nature on a Sunday, to observe him as a "living hieroglyph," was much more instructional than to hear him or even to read his work.[8] The young physicist even goes so far as to identify Herder as one of his *Bildner*, a word for someone engaged in the production of visual images or the plastic arts. Such a designation recalls Herder's writing on sculpture[9] as well as, perhaps, the constellation of tutor and pupil associated with the genre of the *Bildungsroman*, although the intellectual environment of the physicist bears little resemblance to that of Wilhelm Meister, Franz Sternbald, or any of the other fictional characters associated with that genre. One need only to contrast the fact that the traditional *Bildungsroman* functions through pedagogically grounded conversations (or at least the production of the spoken word) with the fact that Herder, as the young physicist's primary instructor, is depicted as mute; he does not speak and merely gestures: both toward nature and, in the spirit of an education in aesthetics, by presenting the young physicist with Winckelmann's *History of the Art of Antiquity* as a gift.[10]

Herder's gift of Winckelmann to the young physicist is significant for its connection to two concepts that play an important role in Ritter's poetics of construction: the monument and the series. In an effort to convince readers that the young physicist's intellectual abilities were adequate for comprehending Winckelmann's theory of art, the narrator shares "just one thing" the physicist has already learned on the very first page: the primary character of art is that it "monuments" (*daß sie "monumentirte"*).[11] A closer look at Winckelmann's own language on the first page of the 1763 preface to *The History of the Art of Antiquity* shows that monument-building functions in more than one way: both

in Winckelmann's stated attempt to write a history "in the more extensive meaning which it has in the Greek language," where it would also denote a pedagogical structure (*Lehrgebäude*), and in the process of defining the "essence of art" through a careful portrayal of its monuments (*Denkmale*).[12] Winckelmann's essay therefore reveals to the young physicist the possibility of a dual meaning of monument as both physical object and discursive structure. To these features, Ritter adds one more: not only does art monumentalize; its monuments transcend both scale and, as his examples of "worm" and "planet" suggest, the divide between nature and culture.[13] It requires no stretch of the imagination to think of the fragments themselves as a project of "monumental" proportions, even if the genesis of this particular monument within the "very secret workshop of the physicist" is somewhat unconventional.[14] This notion of workshop, with its alchemic and procreative undertones,[15] correlates to a task "bequeathed" to the editor of the fragment collection that is nothing other than the transformation of bodies into structures: to "collect the *disjecti membra poëtae*" and "build them into a *temple with the god inside*."[16] According to Ritter, in his capacity as editor, this temple—or monument—is a book: "that day demands its own monument [*Denkmal*] and it is enough for me to know that I have laid it in place for him with this book, whatever the opinion of others about it might be."[17] What Ritter learns from Winckelmann therefore has less to do with particular cultural events that collectively inform a "history of art" and more to do with the abstract question of how a theory of art might be expressed in terms of monumental construction.

A second significant aspect of Herder's gift of Winckelmann to the young physicist is connected to the problem of how to articulate theoretical constructions through language. Through the symbolic act of transmitting an instructional, formative text designed to mold the young physicist into greatness, he is exposed to a basic thought pattern: that of a historically and philosophically grounded series. Such a thought pattern can be found both in the preface to Winckelmann's work and on the very first page of the treatise. For example, one can read in the preface that "the history of art should teach the origin, the growth, the change, and the decline of the same [i.e., art],"[18] and, in the treatise, one finds reference to "the three most preeminent levels of art": necessity, beauty, and excess.[19] The self-inscription into an intellectual history, or genealogy, therefore goes hand in hand with exposure to a historical thinking that is "no mere narration of temporal chronology," as Winckelmann states in the first sentence of his preface, but rather an emphatically constructive mode of historical narration as sequential thinking within the trajectory of a serial structure. Alongside this structurally oriented view of history, with its (meta)physical metaphor of "levels" (*Stufen*), one can consider Ritter's unique understanding of what kind of work Winckelmann is accomplishing. It is perhaps no surprise that

Ritter groups him with other "great artists and poets" who, over time, have tended toward physics.[20]

Series Building in the Fragments and *Physics as Art*

The word "series" (*Reihe*) occurs numerous times in the preface to Ritter's fragments, in which it usually denotes a grouping of texts. There is a series of love letters, never sent[21]; a series of notes on Winckelmann[22]; and a reference to the "most colorful" series of the fragments themselves.[23] Techniques and practices of series construction do not belong exclusively to the domain of either art or science around 1800. One need only consider the numerous references to experiments constructed "in series" which one finds in the reference books of chemistry and physics or the phenomenon of the "serial publication" of literary texts that evolved with the rise of periodicals.[24] With regard to the intellectual environment of the fragment collection, one could also consider the well-known opening paragraphs of Novalis's posthumously published novel *The Apprentices of Sais*, which describe the activities of an instructor who "collected all kinds of stones, flowers, beetles, and placed them in various kinds of series."[25]

Scientific and aesthetic notions of order are intertwined in Ritter's series concept. This is most evident in "Physics as Art," and also occurs in the fragment collection, with its theoretical reflections as to what constitutes a series in the first place: "more and more," Ritter writes, "I am losing my belief in series which should be discovered through *external* characteristics."[26] His reason for this is that "everything in the body ["body" refers to the physical object of the series] always joins itself to one phenomenon," be it coherence, thickness, or a different characteristic altogether:

> Who knows how it is even with the chemical series which should still first of all be something basic. More important and more primary are without doubt the electric or galvanic series. One must necessarily *come* to all of these series from the inside. There *can* be no series because each one always has only *one member.* Metals, etc., are like border stones, what land lies between them is empty.—[27]

The fragment is noteworthy both for the degree to which it mobilizes the series concept through various disciplinary contexts in the search for a "more primary" series and because it raises a question of limits in a perfectly ambivalent statement—"there *can* be no series because each one has only *one member*"—that preserves its dual meaning in the English translation.[28] Equally perplexing is the question of what it would mean to come to a series "from the inside," as the fragment proposes we do. If, by this, Ritter means that we must not impose the series

concept on a pre-existing multiple but rather witness the expansion into series with our own eyes, then "Physics as Art" can be read as a response to just such a possibility as well as a clear example of how Ritter conceives of series as collections of diverse, heteronomous, elements, joined by a sense of temporal or spatial unity.

Written in 1805 on the occasion of Ritter's induction into the Bavarian Academy of Sciences, "Physics as Art" was both lauded and decried for its speculative rhetoric.[29] Ritter organized the speech into two parts: a prologue in which he sets up the historical problem of mankind's separation from nature, followed by a fervent call to overcome it.[30] By bridging this divide, man will complete the work which nature left unfinished and achieve a harmonious relationship with the world around him. Within this essay, as in the fragment project, physics is abstracted from empirical experimentation and valued as an art "higher" than all other arts, capable of facilitating man's goal of self-completion. The speech's title refers to the anticipated culmination of a historical trajectory, not to the current state of affairs. Ritter can only arrive at a notion of an ideal physics as art via a serial progression of other art forms that precede physics. This series, which will be discussed in more detail below, includes architecture, which Ritter characterizes in somewhat primitive terms, followed by the plastic arts, which have the advantage of commemorating the artist himself as much as the aesthetic product, and finally physics. As the culmination of the series, physics is (or should be, in Ritter's vision) the supreme art of the individual.

The items of this series require further nuance in order to understand how Ritter both integrates and departs from the eighteenth-century aesthetic tradition. In architecture, for example, one sees man devoting his creative energy to monumentalizing the telluric:

> thus one sees in the *architecture* of the greatest period only man's hasty effort to rescue from oblivion for all following times the *Kraftgewalt* of his first race by piling immense masses of the most durable [material] on earth, and still the organizer of these masses appears by them, only expressed as a hieroglyph in the harmony of his own formation.[31]

This statement connects directly back to the fragment project, where Ritter's references to architecture can be traced back to two sources: Winckelmann, who, as we have already seen, makes an appearance in the prologue to the fragments, and the first-century Roman writer Vitruvius. With regard to Winckelmann, in addition to the references to his *History of Art*, which left the young physicist with the awareness that both "human" and "natural" forms of art share the tendency to erect monuments, the fragments also refer to Winckelmann's *Comments on the Architecture of the Ancients* (1762).[32] If, from Winckelmann, Ritter

learns that the function of the monument is to preserve the memory of the dead, from Vitruvius, Ritter would have received a much different impression, given that Vitruvius includes under the heading of "architecture" observations on mechanics, harvesting, and the life cycles of humans and the natural world. Together, Winckelmann and Vitruvius contribute to an understanding of monument that synthesizes notions of transience and permanence. In the fragments, Ritter brings these two viewpoints together as follows:

> If, for example, *death* were not comprised of anything other than the disappearance of the *arbitrary* consciousness, then consciousness, being, life, could be summoned again for the dead person, and a life which contained everything past, and which also could have the future revealed before itself—merely through the recollections of the living left behind. Here the meaning of so many institutions would reveal itself, to celebrate this memory and sustain it: the *sense of the monument*, which was perhaps the only thing which never left men. For the monument precisely maintains life and gives life to whom it is dedicated.[33]

In the spirit of Winckelmann, the monument preserves by celebrating and sustaining the memory of what has departed. In the spirit of Vitruvius, it also maintains and gives life. Each of these tendencies will have a role to play when symbols and characters are brought together in the construction practices of the fragment collection.

Ritter's techniques of construction go well beyond the actual accumulation of materials to include the question of how the monument is perceived—and extended—by an observer. In the series of architecture, plastic arts, and physics constructed within "Physics as Art," the advent of the plastic arts heralds a significant development in terms of what is being constructed within the monumentalizing tendency of art as a whole. In the plastic arts, Ritter writes that the work of art commemorates the artist as much as it does the act of creation itself: the agent is "eternalized" and "stands in the same advantageous relation to the act as in architecture the act did to him."[34] At the same time, the act of artistic creation in the realm of the plastic arts does not disappear altogether in the shadow of the artist-creator. Instead, it is reconfigured within a peculiar relationship that emerges between the observer and the work of art. Ritter writes that only through the presence of the observer can painting become a complete embodiment of the artistic act.[35] The observed act of artistic creation in the medium of painting "summons" the observer to "complete [the embodiment]" and "proclaims to him the beginning of a new individual activity."[36] The aesthetic vision which Ritter articulates thereby grants painting a central, indeed pivotal, position. Whereas the series could be read as one of reduction, with its shift

of attention from three- to two-dimensional art, the counterbalance is extraordinary: every completed painting also has the ability to "compensate," as it were, for its reduced dimensionality through the way it compels observers to dissolve the threshold of frame and share an embodied, multidimensional reality. In the fragment collection, one finds an analogous idea. As early as 1801, Ritter states that, first of all, the dual purpose of art is to make what is absent present and to construct the monument.[37] Note that in German, the "making present" (*Vergegenwärtigung*) of something is more than a temporal displacement from the past to the present (*Gegenwart*). It is also the making-real, making-present of that thing which is absent.

What, then, is the role of physics in a series devoted to modes of aesthetic production as they evolve in human history? Another way of posing the same question would be to ask what kind of physics, as art, can do more than traverse the limits of its own media and cross the boundary between two- and three-dimensional art forms? What kind of art can, through the interplay of observer and work of art, come to embody something "more" than just the work itself? The answer to these questions leads, at the same time, to the heteronomous nature of Ritter's fragment project, in which one can observe such acts of construction through boundary-breaking first-hand. The final section of this chapter will therefore explore the possibility that the answer to these questions lies in a mode of human-powered construction that manipulates graphical characters and symbols into something new.

Notational Practices in the Fragment Project

We have seen, by now, that thinking in terms of series provides Ritter with a structure of thought broad enough to include his self-inscription within intellectual genealogies and the broad categories of humankind's artistic productivity, from architecture to the plastic arts and, eventually, to physics. Such a series, viewed retrospectively, can also be seen as a temporal model of heteronomy, a kind of disciplinary genealogy that posits their intrinsic connections. In the examples discussed above, the series in question is ordered chronologically, although we have also seen, in "Physics as Art," how temporal ordering can be compatible with the implied presence (or "making present") of physical bodies. According to Ritter, we need to construct an observer to complete the work of art. Such willingness to conceptualize an aesthetic product whose perfection requires, somewhat paradoxically, that the plane of representation (as in the case of a two-dimensional canvas) be broken for the work of art to be completed should perhaps not be surprising, given the procreative tendencies of Ritter's thinking. This is, after all, the same writer who maintains that when a man emerges from the "act of love," he is "pregnant" with the work of art (see Fragment 495). The broader

implication of such thinking is that acts of construction and (pro)creation can be articulated concomitantly with the breakdown of other categories, such as the distinction between nature and culture. A man who becomes "pregnant" with art and an artwork deliberately opened to include the physical observer are just two distinct articulations of this same tendency.

What happens, however, when the problem that we have been considering in terms of time—where series is tantamount to historical sequencing—is reconsidered in terms of spatial constructs? In the remainder of this section, I will show how such a phenomenon occurs through the manipulation of *Zeichen* and *Symbole* in Ritter's fragments, and how such manipulation can be seen as the product of heteronomous influences in cases where aesthetic practices occur on the printed page through the articulation of speculative scientific ideas. The examples chosen to illustrate the specific techniques and practices that Ritter has in mind will also address a few broader questions: how Ritter distinguishes between *Zeichen* and *Symbole*, why this distinction matters, and what role scientific ideas have to play in this process.

First, to understand how such constructions emerge within a literary text like the fragment project, it helps to consider the more general problem of how conducive this textual environment is to thought experiments involving symbolic notation. In that regard, it is telling that the first graphical symbol in the fragment project (aside from the usual letters, numbers, and punctuation marks that make up Ritter's prose) is comprised of two triangles, one of which is the inverse of the other and each of which has a small circle in the middle. They are symbols for heat and cold such as one can find in eighteenth-century (al)chemical tables.[38] In Fragment 48, Ritter has combined them to create a composite character that represents matter:

> 48. According to heat △ = force of expansion, and coldness ▽ = force of contraction, one can designate the limit of both, matter, with ✡.

With this fragment, Ritter records the genesis of a new sign that stands in both for matter and, in its very composition, for a nature-philosophical idea about how matter comes to exist in the first place through the balance of expanding and contracting forces. It is especially noteworthy, in light of what is yet to come in the fragment collection, that this particular fragment does not reference the status of its signs: they are not identified as *Zeichen*, *Symbole*, or anything else. The focus is instead on the act of construction itself: the ideas are illustrated through the very simple process of placing one sign on top of another. The compilation of two into one invokes the coupling of concepts (the forces of expansion and attraction), which, in turn, is supposed to represent three-dimensional matter (the physical state that results from the coupling of these forces). The status of the resulting sign may seem

somewhat ambiguous, given that placing one geometrical shape on top of another still appears to result in a two-dimensional object. At the same time, the syntax of the fragment suggests a procedure of layering, which thereby helps construct the illusion of breaking through the two dimensions of the geometrical shape and the printed page. As readers, we are privy to the rudiments of an axis which, if extended, will not just reach out from the page. Just as the workshop of the physicist—as described in the prologue to the fragments—for all its secrecy, has been conceived with a voyeur in mind, so too are we, as readers, implicated in an act of construction.

Yet another sign[39] in Ritter's fragment project, ⊗, inscribes itself into the history that began with the creation of matter in Fragment 48:

> 74. Better characters [*Zeichen*] than + und – would be + und O; the combination would be ⊗.

As in Fragment 48, a new sign is created through the act of superimposing one thing—in this case identified as a character—over another. Here, too, the result is a product whose two-dimensional representation on the printed page cannot quite capture this rhetorical gesture of combination. What is important to Ritter is that the two characters "+" and "O", once joined, remain visually distinct. To support this interpretation, one needs only to address the question of what, precisely, makes the replacement of "–" with "O" better, according to Ritter, from a practical point of view. In terms of graphical representation, the "+" and "–" characters are indistinguishable when directly superimposed. If one really wants to capture a state of co-existence—and that means doing so both simultaneously in space and time, and graphically in the same position on the page—one needs a character for negation that can be superimposed on the "positive" character without being visually cancelled out. For Ritter, then, the logic of how signs are represented on the printed page needs to be commensurate with the ideas undergirding them. If we understand Fragment 48 as the beginning of a process of notation that refers to the construction of matter itself, then the common denominator of Fragments 48 and 74 is a concern with techniques of indexing the emergence of form through the repeated process of superimposition.

These ideas are reinforced when the ⊗ returns in Fragment 76:

> 76. There is a polarity of space. It is the opposed figures [*Figuren*] ✳ and O in the combination ⊛ or ⊗. There is a polarity of time. In water decomposition, in galvanism, etc., it occurs. Hydrogen is future, oxygen past. What are their characters [*Zeichen*], as what do they express themselves?—All formation [*Gestaltung*] is a polarity of space. Polarity of time is all polarity of quality.

Whereas the polarity of time may defy simple representation, the polarity of space does not suffer from the same problem. When Ritter designates

⚹ and O in their combination ⊗ as signs that operate within a logic of *Gestaltung*, to the degree that they represent spatial polarity, he taps into the same thought process described above. The rudimentary axis created through the placement of one sign over another (such as the triangles of expansive and attractive forces in Fragment 48) returns, more clearly stated, as the problem of spatial dimensions in Fragment 76. In both cases, the organization of the signs on the printed page is intimately linked to the general problems of matter, construction, and equilibrium. As in Fragment 48, Fragments 74 and 76 couple a particular mathematical or scientific problem with the process of notation itself.

Let's take a step back, for a moment, to consider Ritter's choice of terminology. In the fragment collection, *Zeichen* are graphic signs, visible representations of a concept, such as the signs that stand in for positive and negative magnitudes (Fragment 74). They can be manipulated and placed into proximity to one another to create new signs. This juxtaposition of multiple *Zeichen* can create a singular *Zeichen* that signifies something new, such as the world itself (Fragment 88). However, the distinction between characters and symbols—between *Zeichen* and *Symbole*—is not always clearly demarcated in the fragments. In light of the fragments discussed above, one could very well ask why, in another fragment, "+" and "O" are each identified as *Symbol* when they are used to refer to *Evolution* and *Involution*, respectively: "+ is at the same time [*zugleich*] symbol of evolution, O symbol of involution" (Fragment 173).[40] The word *zugleich* provides a clue. The "+", in this case, is not just a graphical mark or character: it does something more by connecting to an additional concept beyond the immediate context of a mathematically based sign system. This notion that characters—including words—become symbols when they do something "more" also aligns with other uses in Ritter's fragments. Zinc, silver, and water, for example, are not just physical substances in Fragment 447: they also stand in for the primary epochs (*Hauptepoche*) in human history. In a similar vein, the Madonna and child are symbols of polarity (Fragment 501), man and woman are symbols of duality in the solar system (Fragment 518), and the system of the body is a symbol of the universe (Fragment 511). Like the Kantian symbol, as articulated in §59 of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, these latter cases work indirectly through analogy.[41] Kant and Ritter differ, however, in their willingness to grant simple characters (such as those one uses for mathematical signs) the status of symbol. For Kant, this is an incorrect usage of the term, a mistake that logicians are guilty of making. For Ritter, analogical statements can be made just as well with words as with non-linguistic signs. The fact that before they are granted something "more" (i.e., placed in a context conducive for a reader to make analogical inferences), they remain "just" *Zeichen* is also attested in Ritter's essay "Physics as Art," which argues that those things which have not yet been deciphered ("was man . . . zu entziffern

sucht")[42] are precisely *Zeichen* that have not (yet) achieved the status of *Symbole*.

The same distinction between *Zeichen* and *Symbole* holds up in Ritter's scientific essays, with some qualifications. In the *Physical-chemical Treatises*, for example, he uses the word *Zeichen* to refer to marks on a printed page—literally, what has been *gezeichnet* as well as in the sense of a sign or indication of a physical phenomenon: voltage, as indicated on a meter, would be a *Zeichen* that an electrical charge is present.[43] *Symbol*, meanwhile, has a special role to play in Ritter's scientific writing in the context of galvanism (animal electricity). To understand this, one needs to be aware of the fact that, for Ritter, galvanism itself is a product or "effect" (*Wirkung*): an electrical current that emerges under certain conditions when a series of conducting material components are brought into contact with one another. Ritter describes this process, in mathematical terms, as the emergence of a figure from the movement of a line: galvanism is "an effect, arisen from the transition from a series with bodies of a certain quality brought into contact with one another to a chain, from the transition of the line into the figure."[44] Within the context of the animal body (or, in Ritter's terms, the "thierischen Maschine"),[45] galvanism generates a chain reaction of further effects that, collectively, include the primary phenomena of animal life that Ritter calls "the first symbol of all organization, as self-reproduction," adding that "it would not be too bold, to compare life itself with the ultimate expression of galvanism for the animal body."[46] One could say, then, that galvanism has a special status as symbol for Ritter by virtue of the fact that it is both "first" ("the first symbol of all organization") and iterated (as "self-reproduction"). It emblematically embodies a process analogous to the transition from *Zeichen* (here, as *Figur*) to *Symbol*.

In addition to *Zeichen* and *Symbol*, there is a third term—the hieroglyph—connected to Ritter's use of the ⊗. Many of his contemporary readers would likely have recalled its use in the *Oldest Document of the Human Race* (1774).[47] Herder refers to the ⊗ as a "really authentic, old hieroglyph"—a kind of mystical pattern—found in the first seven days of creation in *Genesis*.[48] According to Herder, the hieroglyph in *Genesis* is not an arbitrary metaphorical image but can provide an actual foundation for all branches of human thought before their division.[49] Ritter inverts this idea, using the ⊗ as a kind of collective singular in order to unify what has been divided. In the final appearance of the ⊗ in Ritter's fragments, he makes his most definitive statement that the connections of oppositions, in terms of both their visualization (as "O" and "+") and their material products, is nothing less than the construction of the human:

> 175. (1806.) On the large-scale X is that which is solid, fixed, and O the gas. I would like to add:
>
> ⊗ the "human"—taken as condition, flesh. *Every* process however goes the way of the "*flesh*," is an eternal beginning human

> creation, a human*becoming*, mostly however without finite (--ending in) *having*-become human.—[50]

Fragment 175 synthesizes several key moments in the history of the ⊗ which I have been pursuing in Ritter's fragment project. It recalls the construction of matter through the joining of attractive and expansive forces (Fragment 48) in that it, too, proposes an origin through the layering of two opposed signs. Using the notation of "+" and "O", it constructs "flesh." What we first encountered as a problem of visual negativity (solved when the "O" replaced the "–" as the symbol of negation) is here translated into the physical states of (visible) solids and (invisible) gases. In both fragments, the combination of "+" (or "X") and "O" contrives to reconcile a problem of visibility and invisibility. The tension in Fragment 175 does not derive only from the equilibrium of solids and gases, a "spatial" problem; it has a temporal dimension as well, articulated through the balance between the state of something having been constructed and an ongoing process. It is the process of creating the human: a "becoming" man that has not yet reached the state of a "having become" man. At the same time, the phrase "eternal becoming" invokes precisely the situation already described in other contexts. In the act of superimposition, of placing on top of the other, and the corresponding enclosure of form, we saw the illusion of three dimensions emerging from the two of the printed page. Throughout the first fragment group, one finds in these repeated rhetorical gestures the suggestion of a three-dimensional form emerging from two dimensions, which, in turn, points toward a prolonged interest in the potential materialization of the sign.

On the basis of this example and the others discussed above, one can see that aesthetic and scientific concepts are deeply connected in Ritter's thinking. Within a worldview in which poets and philosophers such as Winckelmann can, with time, turn to physics, it makes little sense to think of histories of literature, science, and art as distinct narratives. What also makes Ritter a particularly interesting case study from the point of view of aesthetic heteronomy is his resistance to traditional forms of and styles of writing (the treatise, the essay, the philosophical system), and his willingness to allow scientific and aesthetic concepts to exist in such close proximity both within the "secret" workshop of the fragment collections and on the public stage of the Bavarian scientific community, as is the case with "Physics as Art." It has perhaps become a bit cliché to refer to "experimental" thinking when it comes to bold or original ideas, but, in Ritter's case, the shoe fits. If to experiment is to take an intuition and see how far it can go, and run it through various test cases, Ritter's writing is nothing less than an experiment in heteronomy. In this experiment, physical bodies and symbolic objects—whether in the

form of intellectual genealogies, objects placed within a series, or those implicated in the construction of new symbols—are subjected to both physical manipulation and aesthetic observation, both of which are necessary components of an intellectual process of construction that itself forms one of the central pillars of Ritter's thought.

Notes

1 A seminal work in this area of scholarship is Géza von Molnár's book, *Romantic Vision, Ethical Context: Novalis and Artistic Autonomy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987), but there have been numerous works published since then, such as Nicholas Germana's recent contribution, *The Anxiety of Autonomy and the Aesthetics of German Orientalism* (Rochester: Camden House, 2017).
2 Eran Guter, *Aesthetics A-Z* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 26–27.
3 See Stuart Walter Strickland, "The Ideology of Self-Knowledge and the Practice of Self-Experimentation," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31 (1998): 453–471.
4 Michael Gamper, *Elektropoetologie: Fiktionen der Elektrizität 1740–1870* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009), 184. Gamper shows how Ritter's version of speculative thinking participated in two traditions, on the one hand, in a kind of contemplation of God which, deriving the concept etymologically from the Latin *speculum*, placed "reflecting" (or "mirroring," *Spiegelndes*) in a reciprocally clarifying relationship with "reflected" (or "mirrored," *Gespiegeltes*); and on the other hand, in a tradition of 'speculation' (*Spekulation*), a translation of the Greek *theoria*, as a method opposed to, yet benefitting from, practice (Gamper, *Elektropoetologie*, 185).
5 All citations of Ritter's fragment project are from Johann Wilhelm Ritter, *Key Texts of Johann Wilhelm Ritter (1776–1810) on the Science and Art of Nature*, ed. and trans. Jocelyn Holland (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2010).
6 Edgar Landgraf, *Improvisation as Art: Conceptual Challenges, Historical Perspectives* (New York: Continuum, 2011), 8.
7 For example, Ritter appropriates his mother's birth and death dates as his own, and he couples these dates with the genesis of the fragment project and the prologue. He also refers to himself using the letter 'N' at one point, after describing the death of Novalis.
8 Herder, as "living hieroglyph," comments through showing, not speaking:

> He himself did not describe and portray; he merely *led* to the place and *pointed*; he was not able, nor did he try, to *pronounce* it. But in this moment he himself—his entire being, his eye, his countenance and existence—became the living hieroglyph of the word for which the tongue was no longer the sufficient organ. Thus one had to see *Herder* speak in order even to listen and understand him; thus one had to have *heard* him—and *seen him be silent*—in order to say, one were reading him.

Johann Wilhelm Ritter, "Prologue," in *Key Texts of Johann Wilhelm Ritter (1776–1810) on the Science and Art of Nature*, ed. and trans. Jocelyn Holland (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2010), 51.

9 Johan Gottfried Herder, *Plastik: Einige Wahrnehmungen über Form und Gestalt aus Pygmalions bildendem Traume* (Riga: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1778). Thank you to the editors for pointing out this reference.
10 Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*, 2 Vols. (Dresden: Walther, 1764).
11 Ritter, "Prologue," 64.
12 Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Altherthums*, Vol. 1, i.
13 Ritter, "Prologue," 65.
14 Ritter, "Prologue," 97.
15 See Jocelyn Holland, *German Romanticism and Science: The Procreative Poetics of Goethe, Novalis, and Ritter* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 129–130.
16 Ritter, "Prologue," 112.
17 Ritter, "Prologue," 27. Here, it is helpful to reference Aleida Assman's definition of monument as a sign "which is related directly to an addressee." See *Kultur als Lebenswelt und Monument*, ed. Aleida Assmann and Dietrich Harth (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1991), 13–14. The next section of this chapter will show how, in the context of "Physics as Art," Ritter develops both the idea of the monument and the relation of an active subject to a work of art.
18 Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*, Vol. 1, i.
19 Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*, Vol. 1, 1.
20 Ritter, Fragment 625.
21 Ritter, "Prologue," 56–57.
22 Ritter, "Prologue," 64.
23 Ritter, "Prologue," 92.
24 See Nicholas Seager, "The Novel's Afterlife in the Newspaper, 1712–1750," in *The Afterlives of Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, ed. Daniel Cook and Nicholas Seager (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 111–132.
25 Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis), *Die Lehrlinge zu Sais*, in *Schriften: Die Werke Friedrich von Hardenbergs*, Vol. 1, ed. Paul Kluckhohn and Richard Samuel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1977), 80.
26 Fragment 100.
27 Fragment 100.
28 This sentence states with equal emphasis that no series can have only one member (which, by definition, would not meet the minimum requirements of "series") *and* that it is possible to imagine a state where series are unable to develop precisely because they never contain more than one member.
29 A translation of "Physics as Art" is included in my volume, *Key Texts of Johann Wilhelm Ritter*. See my introductory essay, "A Speech for the Academy," 511–523.
30 Throughout his speech, Ritter invokes ideas found in Herder's *Oldest Document of the Human Race*, a work also cited in the introduction to the fragments for its importance to the young physicist's education. However, the church and "God" do not make an appearance until the final page of Ritter's speech, and references to the divine are otherwise scarce. The thrill of creation is man's, and his gift of creation is natural. Though *Physics as Art* owes a clear debt to Herder, its model of separation and unification is more a far-reaching epistemic narrative of human intellectual progress than it is an allegory of Christian salvation.
31 Ritter, "Physics as Art," 579. See also Walter D. Wetzels, *Johann Wilhelm Ritter: Physik im Wirkungsfeld der deutschen Romantik* (Berlin and New York: Water de Gruyter, 1973), 47–48.

32 Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Anmerkungen über die Baukunst der Alten* (Leipzig: Johann Gottfried Dyck, 1762). See Fragment 132.
33 Fragment 478.
34 Ritter, "Physics as Art," 579.
35 Ritter, "Physics as Art," 579.
36 Ritter, "Physics as Art," 579.
37 See Fragment 619. Ritter also notes that this is something art has in common with grave markers (see Fragment 621).
38 See, for example, the characters for "feu" and "eau" in the tables on the *caractères de chymie* included in Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert, *Encyclopédie, Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, par une Société de Gens de lettres*, Vol. 4 (Lausanne and Berne: Sociétés Typographiques, 1772), 1. Another source is Basil Valentine, *The Last Will and Testament of Basil Valentine* (London: Edward Brewster, 1671), non-paginated.
39 For lack of a better word, in cases where neutrality is called for, I will use the "sign" in the most general linguistic sense of something that possesses both a meaning (a signified) and a means of expressing this meaning (a signifier).
40 It is worth noting, as a tangent to the present discussion, that the terms *autonom* and *heteronom* also make an appearance in Ritter's scientific work in the context of an organic "evolution" as a way of differentiating between "electricism" and magnetism. See, for example, Johann Wilhelm Ritter, *Beyträge zur nähern Kenntniss des Galvanismus* (Jena: Frommann, 1805), 331–334.
41 Thank you to the volume editors for encouraging me to put Ritter's use of *Symbol* into starker contrast against Kant's.
42 Ritter, "Physics as Art," 572.
43 Johann Ritter, *Physisch-chemische Abhandlungen in chronologischer Folge*, 3 Vols. (Leipzig: C. H. Reclam, 1806), Vol. 2, 97, and Vol. 3, 99.
44 Ritter, *Physisch-chemische Abhandlungen*, Vol. 1, 141.
45 Ritter, *Physisch-chemische Abhandlungen*, Vol. 1, 142.
46 Ritter, *Physisch-chemische Abhandlungen*, Vol. 1, 142.
47 The hieroglyph Herder describes in the *Oldest Document of the Human Race*, found in the first seven days of creation, as recorded in *Genesis*, forms the basis for all branches of human knowledge. This "primal image. . . according to which gradually the whole script and symbolism of humans crafted so many inventions, arts and sciences," is the same symbol Ritter (re)constructs in the first fragment group. The theta can be written with a single line or with a cross. In the *Oldest Document of the Human Race*, Herder connects this symbol to the first letter of the Egyptian God Theut's name. In Egyptian mythology, Theut is the founder of arts and sciences. For Herder, Theut is monument, writing, and hieroglyph all at once. See Johann Gottfried Herder, *Älteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts: Eine nach Jahrhunderten enthüllte heilige Schrift*, in *Werke in zehn Bänden*, ed. Martin Bollacher, Gunter E. Grimm, Hans Dietrich Irmscher, Rainer Wisbert, and Günter Arnold, Vol. 5 (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985), 319.
48 Herder, *Älteste Urkunde*, 269.
49 For an extensive discussion of this hieroglyph in Herder's writing, see Staffan Bengtsson, "*Von Deutscher Baukunst*: Über eine deutsche Kunst, Texte zu bauen," in *"Darum ist die Welt so groß": Raum, Platz und Geographie im Werk Goethes*, ed. Mattias Pirholt and Andreas Hjort Møller (Heidelberg:

Winter Verlag, 2014), 107–156. Bengtsson's focus is on Goethe's essay, but his reading of Goethe's attempt to create a "Text als Denkmal" is illuminating for its willingness to explore what happens in the "Spiel zwischen materiellen Teilen (Buchstaben, Worte, Abschnitte) und Öffnungen zwischen diesen" (113, 120). He also connects Goethe's project directly to Herder's use of the hieroglyph (127–128).

50 Few of Ritter's fragments are dated. The dated fragments are not necessarily arranged chronologically, although this is the case in Group 1 (Fragments 1–177). The first fragment in Group 1 to bear a time stamp is N. 55, dated as 1800. The final fragment of the first group, N. 177, is dated 1808.

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12 Hölderlin's Higher Enlightenment

Camilla Flodin

Introduction

The purpose of the chapter is to analyze Friedrich Hölderlin's emphasis on the importance of aesthetic comportment for reconceiving the relationship between human beings and their surroundings, and for enabling what he calls a "higher enlightenment."[1] Hölderlin shares the romantic critique of the mechanistic conception of nature and life, and argues that human beings have to achieve a higher connection than the mechanical one between themselves and their surroundings. In order to establish this, the bond between human beings and their environment needs aesthetic representation. Poetry is able to particularize and concretize that which in discursive knowledge remains abstract and removed from life. A necessary feature of a higher enlightenment is, according to Hölderlin, the salutary remembrance that human creations, such as art and society, are not completely autonomous but ultimately dependent on nature. As this chapter shows, for Hölderlin, an authentic poem is not a closed autonomous work of art but rather an open unity that remembers its dependence on nature and thus can be said to reflect on its own aesthetic heteronomy.[2]

That a privileging of aesthetic experience does not by necessity involve the approval of the establishment of independent spheres of value is clear from the writings of Hölderlin. For him, aesthetic experience is central for mediating between the modern human subject and its surroundings, be they social or natural. Hölderlin belonged to the first generation of post-Kantians, and like his peers, he found Kant's critical philosophy and especially the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* to be immensely important (see his letter to Hegel on July 10, 1794, EL 29/MA 2:541).[3] In the third *Critique*, Kant attempted to mediate between objective nature and subjective freedom, that is, between the domains which his two previous *Critique*s had severed. The link between them was to be achieved through the concept of nature's purposiveness: in other words, the human ability (through reflective judgment) to regard nature as meaningful. This meaningfulness comes forth in both aesthetic and teleological judgments. However, despite his reconciliatory efforts, the

purposiveness of nature remains, for Kant, a subjective and heuristic concept.[4] Thus, the dualism between nature and freedom continues to reverberate in the third *Critique*, at least according to Kant's critics. Like other post-Kantians, Hölderlin considers Kant's union between nature and freedom to be merely symbolic. But, also like many of his peers, Hölderlin holds on to the Kantian conception of aesthetic experience and art as crucial mediating instances between nature and humanity.[5]

Already in the early fragments "'There is a natural state. . .'" (1794) and "On the Concept of Punishment" (early 1795), Hölderlin struggles with the Kantian opposition between nature and freedom, attempting to find a connection between the receptivity (passivity) of nature and the spontaneity (activity) of freedom.[6] In his most famous and influential fragment, "Being Judgement Possibility" (written in the first half of 1795, also known as "Judgment and Being"), Hölderlin argues that the opposition between the judging subject (mind) and the judged object (nature) that occurs in the act of making judgments shows the need for a unity beyond this division (EL 231–232/MA 2:49–50).[7] In a letter to Schiller in September 1795, Hölderlin states that "the union of subject and object . . . though possible aesthetically, in an act of intellectual intuition, is theoretically possible only through endless approximation [*eine unendliche Annäherung*]" (EL 62/MA 2:595). During the second half of 1795, he was working on what was to become the penultimate version of the novel *Hyperion*. The preface to this version claims that "[t]he blessed unity, Being, in the unique sense of the word, is lost to us . . . We have been dislocated from nature," and "[w]e would have no presentiment [*Ahndung*] of this infinite peace, of this Being . . . if [it] was not present [*vorhanden*] (to us). It is present—as beauty" (MA 1:558).[8] Hölderlin's position could, at first glance, be interpreted as proclaiming the loss of an original unity with(in) nature in modernity (along Schillerian lines), a unity which can be regained in aesthetic experience. However, Hölderlin was not satisfied with this version of *Hyperion*, and the conception of nature in the final version of the novel (published in two parts in 1797 and 1799) is more complex; interestingly, the novel itself narrates this shift in the comprehension of beauty and nature, as we will see below. Hölderlin's more developed conception thus emphasizes the temporal structure of the aesthetic experience itself, which allows us to perceive unity not so much regained as *created* through the dynamic interconnections of the particulars gathered in the aesthetic whole.[9]

But it is indeed through art and aesthetics that this unity can be created and experienced. In a letter to Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer on February 24, 1796, Hölderlin speaks of his plan to write a series of letters which he aims to call "New Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man," showing that he thinks it is necessary to move beyond Schiller's "old" effort, published the year before. In these new letters, Hölderlin plans to explain why "an aesthetic sense [*ästhetischen Sinn*]" is necessary

in order to overcome "the conflict between the subject and the object, between our selves and the world, and between reason and revelation" (EL 68/MA 2:614–615). What exists of these aesthetic letters is probably what goes by the name "Fragment of Philosophical Letters."[10] This piece can also be seen as antedating crucial concepts from the fragment known as "The Oldest Programme for a System of German Idealism" ascribed to Hegel, Schelling, and Hölderlin, if you accept the dating of the latter piece to 1797 (see EL 377n18, and EL 390n1). In any case, there are many resemblances between the two fragments: for example, the critique of the mechanistic conception of nature and the emphasis on the unifying power of aesthetic ideas.

Fragment of Philosophical Letters

In "Fragment of Philosophical Letters," Hölderlin refers to the natural human drive to overcome need (*Nothdurft*) and live "a higher human life" in which there is a "more than mechanical *connection*, a higher *fate* between [man] and his world" (EL 235/MA 2:53). In order to be able to do this, we need to "*represent* [vorstellen]" the bond, the connection, between ourselves and the world (EL 235/MA 2:53). Only in this way can we reach what Hölderlin calls "the higher enlightenment" (EL 237/MA 2:55). Man "has to form [*machen*] an idea or an image [*Bild*] of his fate, which, strictly speaking, can neither really be thought, nor is available to the senses" (EL 235/MA 2:53). For Hölderlin, neither theoretical knowledge nor mere sense perception is capable of bringing about the "higher connection" in which man "feels himself and his world . . . as being united [*vereiniget fühlen*]" (EL 235/MA 2:53). He also emphasizes the prerequisite of remembrance and gratefulness—I will return to these concepts later—in achieving a higher connection beyond the abstract and one-sided mechanical relationship between self and world.

The problem with mere thought, that is to say, discursive knowledge (cognition through concepts), is that it can only repeat the necessary connection; it only deals with universal laws which can be proven *without* particular examples.[11] What is more than necessary connections cannot be reached by thought alone; thought cannot "exhaust" the "more infinite, more than necessary relations in life" (EL 236/MA 2:54). Mere sense perception has the opposite problem: it is limited to the particular, without connection to the universal. Admittedly the relationship between the particular and the universal is a very old problem in philosophy. Often, philosophy has looked to works of art and aesthetic experience for guidance beyond the conundrum of how to relate particular and universal in a manner that acknowledges both of them, not one at the expense of the other; in short, works of art are often seen as exemplary in creating a unity or a whole which simultaneously allows the incorporated particulars to shine forth in their particularity, in their

non-exchangeability and concreteness, while they are simultaneously related to each other in a meaningful way.

That Hölderlin, being a poet as well as a philosopher (and occasionally feeling torn between these occupations),[12] looks to art and specifically to poetry for guidance is not surprising, but in his efforts to elaborate on (especially) philosophy's need of poetry, he is also part of a long tradition in aesthetics (I will address this need in further detail toward the end of this chapter). In the "Fragment," Hölderlin characterizes the higher connection as religious, but this characteristic turns on the relationships involved being "considered not so much in themselves, as with regard to the *spirit* that governs the sphere in which those relationships take place" (EL 237/MA 2:55). This is the spirit of poetic unity. Hölderlin distinguishes religious relationships as incorporating "the personality, the independence, the reciprocal limitation [*Beschränkung*], the negative" which characterizes intellectual relationships as well as "the intimate connection, the implication of the one in the other, the inseparability in their parts, which characterize the parts of a physical relationship" (EL 238/MA 2:56). Poetic unity is able to combine these two poles—the intellectual (universal) and the physical (particular) or, if you prefer, the spiritual (ideal) and the material (real)—in a way that allows them to uphold a dynamic relationship, and that is why Hölderlin claims that "all religion would in its essence [*Wesen*] be poetic" (EL 239/MA 2:57). His insistence on the necessity of combining these poles, without either one gaining the upper hand, can be fruitfully compared to Plato's emphasis, in *Phaedrus*, on the importance of including both the procedure of *diairesis* (division) and that of *synagoge* (bringing together) in thinking. Hölderlin himself leads us to this dialogue: already in 1794, in a letter to his friend Christian Ludwig Neuffer, he announces that he is planning an essay on aesthetic ideas, which is to "be considered a commentary on Plato's *Phaedrus*" (EL 34/MA 2:551). In *Phaedrus*, Socrates says:

> Now I myself, Phaedrus, am a lover of these processes of division and bringing together, as aids to speech and thought. And if I think any other man is able to see a unity that by nature is simultaneously a manifold, him I follow after and "walk in his footsteps as if he were a god."[13]

Given that Socrates is paraphrasing a recurring expression in Homer's *Odyssey*, when he admits that he would follow the person who is able to see such a unity and *walk in his footsteps as if he were a god*, this is an (indirect) admittance of the guiding light of poetic language.[14] For Hölderlin, however, it was the *Iliad* that constituted the preeminent poetic model, especially the formation of the character of Achilles, whom Hölderlin regards as "the most perfectly achieved and the most transient blossom of the heroic world" (EL 249/MA 2:64).[15] That perfection

and transience should not be thought of as mutually exclusive is a recurrent theme both in Hölderlin's theoretical writings and in his poetry, and below, I will expand on the ability of the poetic work of art to achieve a model unity that also allows for the ethical significance of transience.

Theoretical knowledge is, for Hölderlin, characterized by the one-sided privileging of the element of division and abstraction. In order to know nature as measurable and determinate, scientific language must be stripped of anything reminiscent of life and worldliness; the word must become an abstract sign able to master its frozen content and renounce its bonds with the material world, that is, its sensuous sonority and its affinity with nature. "[W]ith our iron concepts we believe ourselves to be more enlightened than the ancients," Hölderlin comments in "Fragment" (EL 237/MA 2:55). Scientific knowing generally operates by dissection; looking for the most basic constituents of reality, it risks treating living unities as machinelike, killing the object of study, either literally or symbolically, by separating it from the greater surroundings in which it partakes (this is also Shaftesbury's worry; see Chapter 2 of this volume). Kant's description, in the First *Critique*, of the totality of external nature as the sum total of appearances—that is to say, as a mere aggregate—is in line with this mechanistic conception.[16] In the second *Critique*, the freedom of reason is described as "independence from everything empirical and so from nature generally."[17] As mentioned, Kant himself found this strict division untenable, and, apart from the general notion of nature's purposiveness, the conception of aesthetic ideas is an effort to mediate between the previously severed realms. Through production of aesthetic ideas—a production which can be regarded as ultimately stemming from nature's productivity or purposiveness since genius is defined as a "natural gift" by Kant[18]—sensuous particularity is joined with the sphere of universal ideas.[19] "The Oldest Programme for a System of German Idealism" takes this further and claims that "the philosopher must possess as much aesthetic power as the poet," and "aesthetic sense" is necessary for thinking properly (EL 342).[20] The capability of art and aesthetic sense to produce meaningful unities which do not suppress particularity becomes exemplary for experience as such, just as it is portrayed in Hölderlin's "Fragment" (and in Plato's *Phaedrus*). This is the case because aesthetic production, the creation of aesthetic ideas or images, is a unique kind of forming or making—*poiesis*—which is mimetic in the sense that it is not merely fiction but imitative—imitative not by being a mere copy of something already existing but in the manner of relating to reality (to the world and to nature) by emphasizing those aspects that are cut away from ordinary conceptual representation: the sensuous and concrete or, in other words, the qualitative aspects. This kind of creation can be regarded as structurally similar to (or even related to) natural production because

aesthetic or poetic unity seems to have emerged out of the qualitative interconnectedness between the incorporated parts, rather than being determined from outside by a preformed concept (like the conceptual synthesis in thinking qua discursivity). This is one of the reasons for the long-standing analogy between the organism and the work of art in the history of aesthetics.[21] I want to stress that this analogy need not be interpreted as directly concerning the "autotelic self-organization" of the organism and the work of art[22] but, rather, can be viewed as an example that Hölderlin allows us to recognize: a way of acknowledging art's (and other human creations') dependence on nature. In a letter to his half-brother Karl Gok on June 4, 1799, Hölderlin points out that man should "not think himself the lord and master of nature" but should

> in all his arts and activity [preserve] a modesty and piety towards its [that is, nature's] spirit—the same spirit he carries within him and has all about him and which gives him material and energy. For human art and activity, however much it has already achieved and can achieve, cannot produce life, cannot itself create the raw material it transforms and works on; it can develop creative energy, but the energy itself is eternal and not the work of human hands.
>
> (EL 137/MA 2:770)[23]

An important counter-voice to Kant's more moderate recognition of the importance of aesthetics was that of Herder, and the latter's insistence on the need for poetry in order to overcome the traditional opposition between sensation and cognition is also echoed in Hölderlin's own efforts.[24] In Herder's "On Image, Poetry, and Fable" (1787), we find arguments similar to those that Hölderlin expressed in his "Fragment" regarding the creation of poetic images:

> Our inner poetic sense is able to bind together the manifold features of the sensation so faithfully and accurately that in its artificial world [*Kunstwelt*] we feel once more the whole living world, for it is precisely the minor details—which the frigid understanding [*der kalte Verstand*] might not have noticed and which the even more frigid vulgar understanding omits as superfluous—that are the truest lineaments of the peculiar feeling and that precisely because of this truth, therefore, possess the most decided efficacy. The so-called redundancy of Homer's similes is the very thing that brings them to life in the first place; he sets them in motion, and so the living creature must of necessity stir its limbs. If these limbs were severed, the lifeless trunk could neither stand nor walk.[25]

The creation of an artificial world is, for Herder, a prerequisite for experiencing the world as a living one—the understanding is not capable

of caring for the details which enable such an experience; poetic sense is necessary in order to reach truth. Like Hölderlin, in the letter cited above, Herder is careful to point out that, even though this artificial world bears the mark of human creativity, it is ultimately dependent on nature:

> In real and absolute terms, the human being can neither poeticize nor invent, for otherwise in doing so he would become the creator of another world [*der Schöpfer einer neuen Welt*]. What he can do is conjoin images and ideas, designate them with the stamp of *analogy*, thus leaving his own mark on them. This he can and may do. For everything that we call image [*Bild*] in Nature becomes such only through the reception and operation of his perceiving, separating, composing, and designating soul.[26]

Poetic creation is thus not a matter of *ex nihilo* creation for Herder[27] but always takes place in relation to the natural world, which also shapes human beings—neither one is static and finished; both continually impact one another. Aesthetic sense is indispensable in distinguishing the infinite relations—the inexhaustible bonds between particulars, all "the minor details" that Herder speaks of—which allow for a more inclusive unity than "the frigid understanding" (Herder) or the "iron concepts" (Hölderlin) are able to achieve. Universal, abstract rules are insufficient for achieving a truly ethical relationship between the human being and the surrounding world because they risk neglecting the sensuous uniqueness of the individual or particular we are facing. Hölderlin argues in the "Fragment" that ethics becomes "arrogant morality" when abstracted from life (EL 237/MA 2:55). In his critique of the merely mechanic connection between human beings and their world, and his attempt to counteract disenchantment and the separation of the true, the good, and the beautiful, he emphasizes the ethical import of art and aesthetic experience.

Another problematic aspect of philosophical generality is the tendency to privilege that which is seen as stable, eternal, and unchanging over the transient and fleeting manifold of particularities. Traditional conceptions of beauty conceive of it as on par with this stability: an eternal idea beyond its mere sensuous and particular manifestations. Hölderlin questions this conception of beauty in his epistolary novel *Hyperion*. Here, the main character, at the beginning of his "eccentric path [*exzentrische Bahn*],"[28] regards beautiful nature as eternal and unchanging, in contrast to the shifting lives of humans: "Yes, only forget that there are men, O famished, beleaguered, infinitely troubled heart! and return to the place from which you came, to the arms of Nature, the changeless, the quiet, the beautiful."[29] But when Diotima (Hyperion's teacher and

beloved, just as her namesake was Socrates' teacher) dies, Hyperion realizes that "all the transformations of pure Nature are part of her beauty too."[30] Thus, his journey moves opposite the way in which Plato, in the *Symposium,* explains our journey from experiencing material beauty to finally reaching the idea, or form, of beauty which surpasses the transient manifestations of beauty in life.[31] Hyperion instead moves from the abstract idea of beauty as eternal and unchanging to the experiential insight that transience and death are also part of life and nature's beauty, rather than their strict opposites. After all, life only appears in mortal, physical, finite beings—organisms. That is to say, the opposite (or what is seen as the opposite) is needed for life to become manifest, to appear *as life*. Our mortality, our finitude, is what connects us to organic life, as well as to the inorganic, into which we will ultimately decompose since, as living beings, we are also composed of inorganic matter. We can find similar arguments in Hölderlin's aphorisms from around 1799, when he writes of "[t]he deep feeling of mortality, of change, of one's temporal limitations" that has to be acknowledged in order for one to exercise all of one's powers and be able to grasp the whole or the unity of life (EL 242/MA 2:60). But it is through the novel's unifying representation—in this case, a narrative of a particular individual's non-goal oriented (eccentric) journey[32]—that this is truly turned into a *felt* experience, something which mere (goal-oriented) discursivity cannot achieve.

Nature and Art

This brings me to a consideration of something I have not yet properly reflected on: if poetry (broadly construed) has this ability that discursivity lacks, why does Hölderlin feel a need to dwell on this in his theoretical writings? Why a need of poetology, of theory, if poetry alone is able to overcome, as I quoted in the beginning of the chapter, "the conflict between the subject and the object, between our selves and the world, between reason and revelation"? This may be generalized as the question of the need of aesthetics: why do we need it when we have art?

Hannah Vandegrift Eldridge reads the tension between Hölderlin's theoretical texts and his poetry as a specifically modern tension. She highlights the apparent paradox between what Hölderlin claims in his reflections on poetry—that poetic language is able to reveal something that discursive language cannot—asking, if that is true, why bother with theory? Why attempt to explain something with discursive language if only to argue that it cannot be achieved except in poetry? Vandegrift Eldridge takes "the paradox . . . as a symptom of anxiety about the political, moral, and aesthetic problem of finding a modern world to be a home for finite human subjectivity."[33] It is thus a matter of disenchantment in modernity: the usual ties (family and religion) lose their ability to provide

meaning for the worldly human subject. Placing Hölderlin's worries "in the post-Kantian landscape" with its concern for how the human mind relates to the external world, Vandegrift Eldridge argues that Hölderlin recognizes "the desire for infinite knowledge and at the same time the impossibility of that knowledge."[34]

While I am very sympathetic to Vandegrift Eldridge's effort to shed light on the paradox in Hölderlin's theoretical reflections, her interpretation focuses entirely on the subjective and intersubjective side: in other words, on the experience of the alienation characteristic of human life in modern society that she persuasively argues comes forth in Hölderlin's poetry. However, the estranged relationship between the individual and society—as well as between individuals themselves in modern society—cannot be properly conceived without reflecting on the human being's alienation from nature. To put this crudely, if nature is increasingly regarded as devoid of intrinsic value and completely exhaustible by the quantitative methods of natural science, and these methods, in turn, become decisive for what is considered progress in the dominant spheres of human activity (politics, economy, and science), then the feeling of cosmic meaninglessness and that of individual meaninglessness in modern society are two sides of the same coin. Not only does Hölderlin raise serious concern regarding the alienation from nature in his theoretical writings and his letters,[35] but what is so remarkable about Hölderlin's achievement is that, in his literary works, he actually manages to give voice to non-human nature. I have argued for reading *Hyperion* in this way, that is, as allowing transient nature to matter (to be considered beautiful), but in Hölderlin's poetry, this is achieved in a perhaps even more sophisticated manner.

In the ode "Nature and Art or Saturn and Jupiter" ("Natur und Kunst oder Saturn und Jupiter"), written around 1800, Hölderlin offers a dialectical presentation of the established opposition between *physis* (nature) and *techne* (art). Nature corresponds to the mythological Saturn (whom the Romans identified with the Greek Titan Chronos), and art corresponds to the mythological Jupiter (the equivalent of the Greek Olympian Zeus in Roman mythology), referred to as "Saturn's son" in the poem. According to the myth, Zeus overpowered his father and enclosed him together with the other Titans in Tartaros (the underworld). Through Hölderlin's rendering of the relationship between nature and art in a mythical fashion, we understand that this relationship is not a question of strict opposition but of kinship. It is through the recognition of humankind and her art as dependent on nature, not set above nature, even in our attempt to dominate it, that the poem's critique of the mastery over nature is achieved. As Theodor W. Adorno has pointed out, the poem is able to express that, through violence against nature, we unconsciously repeat the cruelty from which we were looking to wrest

ourselves.[36] In order to rise above this condition and become what the idea of culture and art promises—"the higher enlightenment," of which Hölderlin speaks—we need to remember what we thought could simply be left behind, the same way Jupiter/Zeus needs to pay tribute to his precondition:

So down with you! Or cease to withhold your thanks!
And if you'll stay, defer to the older god
And grant him that above all others,
Gods and great mortals, the singer name him![37]

This remembrance is not about *returning*; nature is not a First to which we can return but an Other that we must acknowledge in order to reach proper consciousness, to know who we really are. As Gerhard Kurz has pointed out, "thanks" ("Dank") here is the name for art's relationship with its origin; "thanks" is the consciousness of art, the expression of its thankfulness for its origin in nature.[38] But this origin is not something we can go back to; it only shows itself in remembrance. According to Hölderlin, art *is* this remembrance of nature. It is not an autonomous creation from nothing; in order to come into its own, it has to remember its condition of possibility: nature.

The "thanks" ("Dank") can also be described as Nature's relationship to itself.[39] This is evident from the opening stanza of "What Is Mine" ("Mein Eigentum," 1799), in which the lyrical I wanders in a ripe autumnal garden:

The autumn day rests now in fullness,
The clear grapes are pressed, and the orchard is red
With fruit, though many lovely
Blossoms have fallen to Earth in thanks.[40]

In the poem, the blossoms that have fallen to the ground are interpreted as a thanks to the earth, a gift to the earth from that which has emerged from it. It seems clear that this thankfulness should be regarded as a model for human behavior toward the rest of nature for, in the third stanza, we read, "for the fruits didn't / Grow by human hands alone."[41] This dependence on nature is what art, or poetry in Hölderlin's case, acknowledges. The earth's "abundance [*Reichtum*]," not human labor, is the ultimate basis for the riches.[42] The lyrical I reflects on poetry's role and hopes that his "song [*Gesang*]" will be a safe place, a "garden" with trees that shelter it from storms and heat in the same manner that the trees in the orchard protect the workers: a poietic mimesis of nature which acknowledges nature's priority.[43] The work of the poet can make the "blossoms" "ever-young" through the poem's remembrance, which

is a commemoration on an elevated plane but one that never forgets mortality as its precondition:

O heavenly powers! You kindly bless
What belongs to each mortal;
O bless what I own too, lest Fate
Cut down my dreaming life too soon.[44]

Art allows human beings to acknowledge themselves as part of nature through remembrance and gratefulness; this is what enables "the higher enlightenment," which Hölderlin writes about in the "Fragment" (EL 237/MA 2:55). He also emphasizes receptivity (*Rezeptivität/Empfänglichkeit*) and openness in our approach to nature. In the essay "When the poet is once in command of the spirit. . ." (1800), he writes about the importance of the spirit being "RECEPTIVE [*receptiv*]" in order to create authentic poetry (EL 284/MA 2:85).[45] In the same essay, he characterizes poetic unity as an "INFINITE UNITY" (EL 286/MA 2:87). Thus, what poetry aims at is the creation of an open unity: not a closed and self-contained work of art but a work that remembers its dependence on nature.

The thanks can also travel upward, so to speak. This is the case in the poem "The Shelter at Hardt" ("Der Winkel von Hahrdt," published 1805),[46] which reads, in Nick Hoff's translation:

The forest slopes down,
And the leaves turned inward
Hang like buds, below
A ground blooms up toward them,
Not at all speechless.
For Ulrich walked
There; a great destiny
Often ponders over his footprint,
Ready, on the site that remains.[47]

The shelter of which Hölderlin writes is composed of two large blocks of sandstone leaning against each other where Duke Ulrich of Württemberg was said to be hiding from his enemies (he was exiled by Emperor Charles V in 1519). "Not at all speechless" is how Hoff translates Hölderlin's "Nicht gar unmündig," capturing the spirit well: reaching maturity (*Mündigkeit*) implies that you speak for yourself, with your own mouth (*Mund*). "The Shelter at Hardt" is an implicit critique of the notion of nature as the backdrop to human affairs; it is a subtle objection to the image of nature as a wordless inferior that must be left behind in order for humans to become civilized. In the poem, the blooming ground below the trees is instead presented as eloquent, as expressive, offering an alternative to the conventional Enlightenment opposition of a self-determining

and autonomous humankind versus a dependent and heteronomous nature.[48] For Hölderlin, such a notion of nature is not enlightened enough. The ground below the trees is expressive because it is ready and waiting to be interpreted as a sign of a historical event: "For Ulrich walked / There." But it is also expressive because the natural shelter constitutes the very ground, the concrete condition of possibility, for this event. This expression is made possible through Hölderlin's use of parataxis, that is to say, his non-hierarchical way of placing the linguistic elements alongside each other; this, in contrast to the procedure of reasoning, discursive language, and its syntactic periodicity, which, by using subordinate clauses, creates a closed and causally structured unity. Instead, Hölderlin's poem negates the subordinating, nature-dominating logic of discursive language, by refusing a hierarchical arrangement: we thus encounter a strange sentence construction in the first part of the poem (up to and including the "Not at all speechless"/"Nicht gar unmündig"). But this strangeness does not turn the poem into merely a different kind of closed unity, say, the lyrical-subjective expression of an autonomous work of art. Instead, we experience the sudden appearance of the name Ulrich, and furthermore, the introduction of Ulrich is formulated in a more conversational tone that also breaks with the previous convoluted sentence structure: "For Ulrich walked / There" ("Da nemlich ist Ulrich / Gegangen"). It is a *caesura* of sorts, creating space for reflection and remembrance. (Not a caesura by the letter but by the spirit.)[49] Through this kind of poetic remembrance, the ground shines forth ("blooms up") and becomes eloquent; we are presented with living, beautiful, transient nature, staking its claim on us, reading this as a meaningful unification of sensuous multiplicity. By acknowledging the poem's dependence on natural beauty, expressing its gratefulness toward it, the poem gives nature its voice back.

The poem also appears as a whole seemingly brought forward through the interconnectedness between the parts which stand in a mimetic and reciprocal relationship to one another, both on the level of content and that of form: "the leaves turned inward / Hang like buds [*Knospen ähnlich*]"; the ground, in its turn, "blooms up" to meet the bud-resembling leaves. The convoluted sentence structure in the first part of the poem may, in turn, be interpreted as imitating the inward-turned leaves, a mimesis of the language of nature. This kind of open unity—allowing for the breaking open of apparent seamlessness *and* the mimetic interconnection between the particulars—cannot be achieved in ordinary discursive language. However, philosophy, as discursivity *par excellence*, can let itself be guided by art and by poetry, and through philosophy's reflection on and acknowledgment of its dependence on art—which is what I think Hölderlin achieves in his poetological essays, which strain discursivity to the utmost, becoming almost incomprehensible in their efforts to follow poetry's guiding light[50]—it may achieve an echo (or a second reflection, if you will) of art's acknowledgment of its dependence on nature and, in this way, endeavor to reach beyond its limits, breaking through its apparent self-sufficiency.

Conclusion

If we take Hölderlin's achievement as a model, we are able to see that the relationship between philosophy and poetry need not be one of warfare, as appears in Plato's *Republic*. Hölderlin is part of a long-standing effort to elaborate on philosophy's need for poetry—which, as mentioned, Plato himself concedes in other dialogues, such as *Phaedrus*—in order to remain in contact with what thinking depends upon and what it should acknowledge: transient material nature.

The need for unification, or reconciliation, between subject and object—or, less epistemologically phrased, between the human being and nature, the self and the world—does not, for Hölderlin, involve returning to some claimed original state; it is not a backwards movement and is attainable only through poetic re-presentation and creation. Poetry is able to create an image, a unified whole, which does not suppress the manifold particulars it gathers but instead seems to grow out of the intimate and non-exhaustible connections between the particulars themselves.

Thus, the poetic work does not turn its unity into an infinite which stands over and above the finite, making the finite particulars exchangeable and ultimately meaningless. Instead, it allows the finite and transient particulars to become eloquent through these connections, providing a model for a different kind of unity, an open unity, in which the living, finite, and sensuous manifold is allowed to matter.

Notes

1 Friedrich Hölderlin, *Essays and Letters*, trans. and ed. Jeremy Adler and Charlie Louth (London: Penguin, 2009), 237; *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, Vol. 2, ed. Michael Knaupp (Munich: Hanser Verlag, 1992), 55. These editions are henceforth referred to in the main text as EL and MA. For the most part, I cite from the MA, which sits somewhere between Friedrich Beißner's *Große Stuttgarter Ausgabe* (with its emphasis on coherence and separation of "reading texts" from critical apparatus) and D. E. Sattler's *Frankfurter Ausgabe* (with its presentation of variants, fragments, and drafts, together with commentary). However, since I take issue with the MA rendering of one of the poems (see note 47 below), for convenience sake, I cite all poetry from the *Große Stuttgarter Ausgabe*.

2 For another version of the heteronomy of the work of art, see Chapter 10 of this volume.

3 For further discussion, see Violetta Waibel, "Kant, Fichte, Schelling," in *Hölderlin-Handbuch*, ed. Johann Kreuzer (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2002), 90–94.

4 See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 247 (§65) [Akademie-Ausgabe 5:375], where Kant describes the concept of the organism, qua "natural end," as a regulative, not a constitutive concept.

5 This is also emphasized by Andrew Bowie in *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche*, 2nd ed. (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), 16.

6 See also Johann Kreuzer, "Einleitung," in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Theoretische Schriften*, ed. Johann Kreuzer (Hamburg: Meiner, 1998), xii–xiii.

7 Knaupp uses the editorial title "Seyn, Urtheil, Modalität."

8 My translation. In the preceding passage, Hölderlin claims, in similar phrasing to that in the letter to Schiller, that knowledge and action can merely reach an endless approximation of this unity.

9 Hannah Vandegrift Eldridge also points to the importance of the temporal quality of aesthetic experience for Hölderlin; see her *Lyric Orientations: Hölderlin, Rilke, and the Poetics of Community* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press and Cornell University Library, 2015), e.g. 56.

10 Friedrich Beißner treats the fragmentary essay as a later piece (though he admits that dating it is difficult) and calls it "Über Religion"; see Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke: Große Stuttgarter Ausgabe* (henceforth: StA), Vol. 4.1, ed. Beißner (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1961), 416. Wolfram Groddeck and D. E. Sattler date it to 1796/97; see Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke: Frankfurter Ausgabe* (henceforth: FHA), Vol. 14, ed. Groddeck and Sattler (Frankfurt am Main: Roter Stern, 1979), 11–12. Knaupp hypothetically dates it to early 1796; see MA 3:389.

11 If we remain within the Kantian framework, which is the framework that Hölderlin is struggling with. See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1998), 205 [A 68/B 93], where Kant defines knowledge in the human understanding as cognition through concepts and thus "not intuitive but discursive."

12 In the letter to Niethammer quoted above, Hölderlin speaks of philosophy as "a tyrant" and claims that he "suffer[s] its rule rather than submitting to it voluntarily" (EL 68/ MA 2:614).

13 Plato, *Phaedrus*, in *Plato I: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus*, trans. Harold North Fowler, Loeb Classical Library 36 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 266b (trans. modified). Regarding "And if I think any other man is able to see a unity that by nature is simultaneously a manifold" (*Ἐάν τέ τινα ἄλλον ἡγήσωμαι δυνατὸν εἰς ἓν καὶ ἐπί πολλὰ πεφυκὸς ὁρᾶν*), I have followed the French translator Léon Robin; see Platon, *Phèdre* in *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol. 4.3, trans. Robin (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1970), 73 ("En outre, si je crois voir chez quelqu'un d'autre une aptitude à porter ses regards dans la direction d'une unité et qui soit l'unité naturelle d'une multiplicité"), and the Swedish translator Jan Stolpe; see Platon, *Faidros* in *Skrifter*, Vol. 2, trans. Stolpe (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2001), 359 ("Och om jag anser att någon kan se en enhet som av naturen samtidigt är en mångfald"; see also 500n77). Both Robin and Stolpe stick to the manuscripts' *πεφυκὸς* instead of, like Fowler, following Aldus Manutius, and several later editors, in changing it to *πεφυκόθ'*.

14 The phrase in Homer is *μετ' ἴχνια βαῖνε θεοῖο* (he followed in the footsteps of the goddess); see Homer, *Odyssey*, Vol. 1, trans. A. T. Murray, rev. George E. Dimock, Loeb Classical Library 104 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919), book 2, line 406 (here Telemachus follows Pallas Athene); book 3, line 30 (Telemachus follows Pallas Athene again); book 5, line 193 (Odysseus follows Calypso); book 7, line 38 (Odysseus follows Pallas Athene). It should of course be stressed that Homer refers to goddesses on these occasions (even though "theos" is a masculine noun). Plato has: *μετ'*

ἴχνιον ὥστε θεοῖο (I walk/follow in his footstep [singular] *as if he were* (a) god).

15 Reflection on characters in Homer was also decisive for Hölderlin's idea of tone as a basic feature of the poem; see Jeremy Adler and Charlie Louth, "Introduction," in *Essays and Letters*, xxxviii–xli.

16 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 466 [A418–419/B446].

17 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, in Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 217 [AA 5:97].

18 Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 186 (§46) [AA 5:307].

19 Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 192 (§49) [AA 5:314].

20 The Stuttgart edition offers the "Systemprogramm" as an appendix with the editorial title "Entwurf (Das älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus)," StA 4.1:297–299 (quotations are from 298).

21 Indeed, as Malcolm Heath claims, Aristotle's famous likening of a well-composed plot to "a single whole animal [*ζῷον ἓν ὅλον*]," which can be seen as a starting point for this "organic analogy," actually bears resemblances to Plato's earlier claim about discourse/text (*logos*), which he states (through Socrates), in *Phaedrus* 264c,

> must be organised, like a living being [*ζῷον*], with a body of its own, as it were, so as not to be headless and footless, but to have a middle and members, composed in fitting relation to each other and the whole [*τῷ ὅλῳ*].

See Malcolm Heath, *Ancient Philosophical Poetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 84. For Aristotle's comparison, see Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. and ed. by Stephen Halliwell, in *Aristotle, "Poetics," Longinus, "On the Sublime," "Demetrius," "On Style,"* Loeb Classical Library 199 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 1459a20.

22 Amanda Jo Goldstein, "Epigenesis by Experience: Romantic Empiricism and Non-Kantian Biology," *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 40, no. 13 (2018). doi:10.1007/s40656-017-0168-8.

23 In "On the Standpoint from which we should consider the Antiquity" (written around the same time as the letter), Hölderlin also warns against the possibility of a human being's natural creative drive going astray and the importance of knowing from "*whence it came*" in order for this drive not to lose its way (EL 246/MA 2:63).

24 On the general influence of Herder on Hölderlin, see Ulrich Gaier, "Rousseau, Schiller, Herder, Heinse," in *Hölderlin-Handbuch*, 82–89 (for Herder).

25 Johann Gottfried Herder, "On Image, Poetry, and Fable," in Herder, *Selected Writings on Aesthetics*, trans. and ed. Gregory Moore (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 362; "Über Bild, Dichtung und Fabel," in Johann Gottfried Herder, *Werke*, Vol. 4: *Schriften zu Philosophie, Literatur, Kunst und Altertum 1774–1787*, ed. Jürgen Brummarck and Martin Bollacher (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1994), 641.

26 Herder, "On Image, Poetry, and Fable," 365; Über Bild, Dichtung und Fabel," 645.

27 Amanda Jo Goldstein, "Irritable Figures: Herder's Poetic Empiricism," in *The Relevance of Romanticism*, ed. Dalia Nassar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 284.

28 Hölderlin, *Hyperion: Vorletzte Fassung*, MA 1:558.

29 Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hyperion*, trans. Willard A. Trask, adapted by David Schwarz, in *Hyperion and Selected Poems*, ed. Eric L. Santner (New York: Continuum, 1990), 3/MA 1:614.
30 Hölderlin, *Hyperion*, 84/MA 1:706. See also Stefan Büttner, "Natur—Ein Grundwort Hölderlins," *Hölderlin Jahrbuch* 26 (1988–1989): 232.
31 Plato, *Symposium*, in *Plato III: Lysis, Symposium, Gorgias*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb, Loeb Classical Library 166 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), 211b–e.
32 An eccentric (ex-centric) path being "a path with neither a center nor a fixed destination," as Dieter Henrich points out in "Hegel and Hölderlin," trans. Taylor Carman, in *The Course of Remembrance and other Essays on Hölderlin*, ed. Eckart Förster (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 124.
33 Vandegrift Eldridge, *Lyric Orientations*, 50–51. See also her "Poetology as Symptom in Friedrich Hölderlin," *The German Quarterly* 86, no. 4 (2013): 444–463 for a similar argument.
34 Vandegrift Eldridge, *Lyric Orientations*, 51.
35 On this topic, see Alison Stone, "Hölderlin and Human–Nature Relations," in *Human–Environment Relations: Transformative Values in Theory and Practice*, ed. Emily Brady and Pauline Phemister (Dordrecht: Springer, 2012), 55–67.
36 Theodor W. Adorno, "Parataxis: On Hölderlin's Late Poetry," in *Notes to Literature*, Vol. 2, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 140–141; "Parataxis: Zur späten Lyrik Hölderlins," in *Noten zur Literatur*, Vol. 11 of *Gesammelte Schriften* (henceforth GS 11), ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), 482. My interpretation of this poem, as well as that of "Der Winkel von Hahrdt" below, is influenced by Adorno's reading. I discuss Adorno's reading of Hölderlin further in Flodin, "'The eloquence of something that has no language': Adorno on Hölderlin's Late Poetry," *Adorno Studies* 2, no. 1 (2018): 1–28, http://adornostudies.org/ojs/index.php/as/article/view/21.
37 Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, trans. Michael Hamburger, 4th ed. (London: Anvil Press Poetry, 2013), 223; https://www.carcanet.co.uk/cgi-bin/indexer?product=9780856463600; Hölderlin, StA 2.1: 37: "Herab denn! oder schäme des Danks dich nicht! / Und willst du bleiben, diene dem Älteren, / Und gönn' es ihm, daß ihn vor Allen, / Göttern und Menschen, der Sänger nenne!" See also Adorno, "Parataxis," 140–141/GS 11:482.
38 Gerhard Kurz, *Mittelbarkeit und Vereinigung: zum Verhältnis von Poesie, Reflexion und Revolution bei Hölderlin* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1975), 125.
39 See also Kreuzer, "Einleitung," xvii.
40 Friedrich Hölderlin, *Odes and Elegies*, trans. Nick Hoff (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), 69; StA 1.1:306: "In seiner Fülle ruhet der Herbsttag nun, / Geläutert ist die Traub und der Hain ist roth / Vom Obst, wenn schon der holden Blüthen / Manche der Erde zum Danke fielen."
41 Hölderlin, *Odes and Elegies*, 69; StA 1.1:306: "denn es wuchs durch / Hände der Menschen allein die Frucht nicht."
42 Hölderlin, *Odes and Elegies*, 69; StA 1.1:306.
43 Hölderlin, *Odes and Elegies*, 71; StA 1.1:307.
44 Hölderlin, *Odes and Elegies*, 71; StA 1.1:307: "Ihr seegnet gütig über den Sterblichen / Ihr Himmelskräfte! jedem sein Eigentum, / O seegnet meines auch und daß zu / Frühe die Parze den Traum nicht ende."

45 Christoph Jamme has also pointed to the importance of receptivity as a guiding principle for Hölderlin, see Jamme, "'Entwilderung der Natur': Zu den Begründungsformen einer Kulturgeschichte der Natur bei Schiller, Hölderlin und Novalis," in *Evolution des Geistes: Jena um 1800*, ed. Friedrich Strack (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1994), 590.
46 The poem was published as part of a group of poems called "Nightsongs."
47 Hölderlin, *Odes and Elegies*, 183; StA 2.1:116:

> Hinunter sinket der Wald, / Und Knospen ähnlich, hängen / Einwärts die Blätter, denen / Blüht unten auf ein Grund, / Nicht gar unmündig. / Da nemlich ist Ulrich / Gegangen; oft sinnt, über den Fußtritt, / Ein groß Schiksaal / Bereit, an übrigem Orte.

Hoff also relies on Beißner's edition here, which ends the line "Nicht gar unmündig" with a period. I believe Beißner is right in concluding that it is the ground that is "Nicht gar unmündig," which is the reason he gives for adding the period missing in the first published version (see StA 2.2:662). Both the Munich edition (see MA 2:446) and the Frankfurt one (see FHA 8:758) omit the period. See also Hoff's comment in Hölderlin, *Odes and Elegies*, 250.
48 The conventional view of nature is conveyed in Kant's first *Critique*, in which human sensibility and understanding stipulate laws for how natural objects are to be comprehended. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 236 [A 114]; 241–243 [A 125–128]; 262–263 [B 163–164]; 320 [A 216/B 263]. Despite the outspoken attempt to reconcile the spheres of nature and freedom, the conventional view of nature resurfaces in Kant's discussion of the dynamic sublime in the third *Critique*, which pits human reason against nature; see Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 140–148 (§27–28) [AA 5:257–264].
49 For Hölderlin's own reflections on the caesura as a break ("a counter-rhythmic interruption") which not only makes possible the presentation of successive "ideas [*Vorstellungen*]" but also makes "the idea itself" present, see "Notes on the *Oedipus*," EL 318/MA 2:310, and see also "Notes on the *Antigone*," EL 325–326/MA 2:369–370.
50 I am thinking especially of the previously quoted "When the poet is once in command of the spirit. . .," in which the simultaneous breaking open of the seemingly continuous unity *and* the sensuous-mimetic interconnection between parts, achieved by poetry at its highest capacity, is described in winding sentences which stretch over several pages.

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13 Rethinking Disinterestedness Through the Rise of Political Economy

Natalie Roxburgh

> "Art is autonomous and it is not; without what is heterogenous to it, its autonomy eludes it."
>
> Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*

The latter half of the twentieth century saw a critical backlash against a principle of aesthetic autonomy that had reached its pinnacle with the rise of modernism and the advent of the New Criticism.[1] A compelling repudiation comes from Pierre Bourdieu, who argues that it masks a socio-political order in which a small group of elites possess the leisure time to enjoy art, while the less privileged do not, a social structure in which economic interest is disavowed but is in fact dependent on certain privileged interests.[2] Terry Eagleton's *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* similarly critiques aesthetic autonomy, associating it with the myth of the possessive individualist, autonomous subject that upholds the bourgeois State.[3] More recently, the critique of autonomy has been carried out by art critics who show the way in which aesthetics, described through a notion of autonomy, often ends up being racist, classist, or sexist.[4] In these critiques, to propose a notion of aesthetic autonomy is seen as an act of preserving a problematic social or political order. Despite the persistence of critical approaches to aesthetic autonomy, however, there have been attempts to recover some version of it, as evidenced by the work of Jonathan Loesberg[5] and Theodor Adorno and his followers.[6] Whatever side of the debate one is on, disinterestedness is one of the key terms tied to autonomy and even seems to be one of autonomy's defining criteria.

The still-unresolved critical debate on the privileged place of the aesthetic—which is related to whether aesthetic objects are autonomous—reveals a need for considering what is at stake not only in a notion of aesthetic autonomy but also in its opposite: what is meant by aesthetic heteronomy or the notion that art objects are determined or conditioned by outside factors. This chapter will attempt to bridge the gap between autonomy and heteronomy by reconsidering the relationship between disinterestedness and the rise of political economy, arguing

that a historicized notion of disinterestedness can be used to understand aesthetic heteronomy in the sense that Adorno suggests when he hints that aesthetic autonomy needs to be understood through its heteronomy.[7] The chapter will suggest that humans make meaning in collectives; art is a collective endeavor at the level of creation and reception, and disinterestedness takes on particular collective meaning in the nineteenth century owing to the rise of a political economic understanding of interest. In this reading, aesthetic autonomy is what happens when disinterestedness becomes formally self-reflexive at a particular historical moment.[8]

Critics such as Isobel Armstrong, George Levine, and Andrew Goldstone have pushed back against the thesis that the aesthetic and the political are posed as a contradiction or somehow at odds with one another.[9] In these readings of disinterestedness, the term is not conceptualized in the way that Bourdieu or Eagleton use it. Similarly, art critic Mariana Alina Asavei writes:

> Disinterestedness is not the suppression or absence of all interests, but it is opposed to pecuniary or selfish interests. Disinterestedness is a "noble" word denoting an ethical attitude toward art appreciation and not a privative concept as the absence of all interests excepting the aesthetic one. The so-called aesthetic interest is just an interest among others.[10]

She argues that there is a version of disinterestedness independent of economic interest which returns to a concept of good in an ethical sense. Philosopher Thomas Hilgers also defends disinterestedness, arguing for the notion of a "disinterested attitude" in which "one is not distracted by one's own personal interests or beliefs."[11] Despite his focus on attitude, art has the capacity to engender such a stance somehow, and, according to Hilgers's reading, disinterestedness is worth defending and even promoting. Both of these cases advocate for thinking about the political agency inherent in disinterestedness. In both, there is a turn against the orthodoxies of aesthetic theory that begs the question of the conceptual role of disinterestedness—and, more importantly, its historical unfolding as a concept that is again beginning to carry a critical purchase. What is more, while attitude is key, the art object seems to have agency in triggering it.

This chapter argues against a transhistorical claim about disinterestedness and aesthetic autonomy by suggesting that there is a way in which one can say that the aesthetic is heteronomous rather than autonomous while at the same time preserving a notion of the aesthetic that differentiates it from other forms of cultural practice in a meaningful way. I argue that literary aesthetics in the nineteenth century can be discussed through the concept of disinterestedness in a way that need not

fall prey to old associations and that we should not throw the baby out with the bathwater by rejecting the cultural value of disinterestedness.[12] Political economy recalibrates *interest* in a way that provokes a moral—and a political—response, and attention to disinterestedness in this period can be seen as being fundamentally political and even pro-democratic.[13] Victorian disinterestedness works as a counter-argument to a type of rationalization of human behavior that emphasizes a certain notion of the individual, to which Romantic solipsism falls prey.[14] Aesthetic discourses and literary strategies attempt to compete with, and critically assess, standardized value oriented around political economy, calling into question the "view from nowhere" of political economic discourses, and should therefore be read as connected to (rather than independent of) social and cultural concerns. Understood as an aspect of literary form, disinterestedness can be seen to possess a function or an "affordance"[15] to distance a subject from a particular interest or guarantee a parsing of interest tied to social and cultural concerns. That is to say, while many commentators focus on disinterestedness as an attitude, I am focusing on the way it is *represented*.

Re-Situating Disinterestedness

Scholars working in the field of philosophical aesthetics position disinterestedness at the center of inquiry as it is linked to the category of the beautiful. When evoking the concept, many cite a 1961 piece by Jerome Stolnitz entitled "On the Origins of 'Aesthetic Disinterestedness,'" which argued that disinterested perception is central to the "aesthetic attitude" and therefore to the field of philosophical aesthetics itself.[16] Eighteenth-century theorists such as Shaftesbury, Addison, Hutcheson, Alison, and Burke are read as envisioning disinterestedness at the heart of aesthetics. However, more recent work in philosophical aesthetics has called this view into question since earlier writers did not envision disinterestedness as belonging to aesthetics as a universal category in the way writers would later.[17] In fact, as Miles Rind points out, the term disinterestedness does not often appear in these eighteenth-century texts, and when it does appear, it is often used to mean something quite different from the aesthetic attitude.[18] Indeed, this gap between how contemporaries used the term and how it has been appropriated might be key to a useful understanding of aesthetic autonomy in mid-century literary production.

When Shaftesbury wrote about disinterested virtue early in the eighteenth century, he related it to the capacity to make judgments of taste. In *Soliloquy,* first published in 1710, he writes:

> Cou'd we once convince our-selves of what is in it-self so evident: 'That in the very nature of Things there must of necessity be the

> Foundation of a right and wrong TASTE, as well in respect of inward Characters and Features, as of outward Person, Behaviour, and Action'; we shou'd be far more asham'd of Ignorance and wrong Judgment in the former, than in the latter of these Subjects.[19]

In other words, it is obvious for Shaftesbury what good taste is, but it is nonetheless impossible to rationalize: it simply goes without saying as he relies on a Platonic understanding of what is beautiful. Furthermore, as a moral concept with theological undertones, disinterestedness refers primarily to an attitude toward God. Shaftesbury is often credited with contributing to the debate on disinterested judgment in general, including the way the term finds itself into party politics,[20] referring to it explicitly throughout his *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*. However, as Dabney Townsend points out, Shaftesbury does not ever truly give "disinterestedness a special significance. It is not really proposed as any kind of test, nor does it characterize a special class of perceptions or judgments. It is much more important to Shaftesbury to determine what our true interests are."[21] That is to say, when we read Shaftesbury, we do not find a thorough definition of aesthetic disinterestedness. Instead, we seem to be applying the term to his *oeuvre* from the perspective of what philosophical aesthetics has told us after the fact.

Importantly, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the word disinterestedness was not used to refer to aesthetics at all. Rather, it was a term that referred to the qualities or attributes of individual human beings, such as benevolence, generosity, and impartiality. When one systematically searches for the term on Early English Books Online (EEBO) or Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO), its use is quite limited: it is an individual attribute of someone usually considered to have noble qualities, a sort of sovereign unbiasedness. Sometimes, it is related to the terms "probity" and "candor"; other times, it refers to a person's attitude towards fellow citizens—it is often related to magnanimity, patriotism, or the notion of acting on behalf of a public good.[22] In EEBO, ECCO, and even the Nineteenth-Century Fiction database, all references to disinterestedness are to a disposition that might be found in a person acting with a sort of generosity. What is implied here is that one is in a position beyond need and utility, and one does not need to receive anything in return for an action. Disinterestedness, in other words, meant impartial or unbiased *in the moral sense* to contemporaries, but only people of a certain status were seen to have access to this sort of moral virtue, and this was for economic reasons: only a few had the status that absolved them of material need.

Michael McKeon argues that, with the waning of a tacit notion that sovereign neutrality came with property ownership, the moral notion of disinterestedness became subject to public discussion, "engendering a debate about the grounds for disinterested judgment" in the

period, and with the rise of commerce, property owners were re-named "the landed interest," rendering their claims to be above the fray open for discussion.[23] This making explicit of what constitutes disinterested judgment is related to other discussions, such as efforts to practice empirical method and contemporary discussions about what justifies pleasure. McKeon reminds us that, even in the writings of Samuel Johnson or in the pornographic *Fanny Hill, Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1748), there is a notion of "pleasure itself" and the "rational pleasurist," who "is not one who intellectualizes pleasure but one who is best able to give and feel pleasure because" she/he is "not wholly embedded in and habituated to the realm of the personal, local, and temporary senses."[24] Therefore, even in *Fanny Hill*, there is something like scientific distance, "the sort of ethico-epistemological detachment required for generalizable knowledge."[25] Here, distance or self-restraint—a detachment from particular interest or use—is key to noting an emergent concept of the aesthetic, even though the term disinterestedness is not explicitly used. That is to say, the so-called aesthetic attitude is deeply tied to other developments requiring subjective distance from an object of inquiry, and, in this sense, there are many types of disinterestedness. These have in common a pushing back against what is merely useful to a particular agent, and they suggest a sort of collective empiricism in their gesture.[26]

It is in this general pushback, which comes from a more explicit discussion of disinterestedness, that I am locating Kant's intervention on how we understand the concept's resonances for aesthetics. As previously mentioned, aesthetic disinterestedness—and the notion of aesthetic autonomy—is often assumed to have taken root in the reception of Kant's *Critique of Judgement*. However, as Martha Woodmansee has pointed out,[27] the German cultural context was very different from the British one in terms of understanding aesthetic autonomy, with important consequences for thinking about the relevance of *interest* as a concept. What is more, Kant never uses the term (or a German equivalent to what the English connoted) explicitly. His term, "ohne Interesse," is often translated into English as disinterestedness. "*Taste* is the faculty of judging an object or a mode of representation by means of a delight or aversion *apart from any interest*. The object of such a delight is called *beautiful*."[28] According to Kant, beauty is a form of purposiveness that exists within the object, but it is a purpose that is perceived "apart from the representation of an end."[29] Unlike Shaftesbury, Kant explicitly links disinterested judgment to taste, which comes from identifying the beautiful object that expresses *Zweckmäßigkeit ohne Zweck* or purposiveness without purpose. This capacity overcomes the problem of interest associated with delight in the good or the agreeable, both of which depend on the observer and thus are not included in pure judgment. The formulation (judgment of taste = detachment from interest) pushes back against what is merely useful for a particular agent: existing for its own

sake, not usable for an interest outside of it, the beautiful object allows for a free play of the faculties. Here, despite the emphasis on judgment, the form of the aesthetic object matters in terms of giving taste a universal criterion. I will return to this later, but one of the things that makes taste universal is that it is not specific to one interest. Consequently, it is non-teleological and even non-utilitarian before its time. This might be another way of contextualizing Dickie's claim that Kantian aesthetics is somewhere between a theory of taste and an aesthetic attitude.[30]

In what follows, I will explicate a logic that underpins the way in which Kant's third *Critique* attempts to nail everything down, exposing an underlying political and epistemological question: how do we understand experience by subtracting particular interest so that what we claim has universal or collective purchase? We do so by finding a way to create distance from a particular interest. As commentators have pointed out, disinterestedness seen in this light—as distanced from use in accordance with one's particular interests—was also a concept evoked by contemporaries in order to describe and re-frame new efforts in an empirical and emergent scientific method.[31] Ultimately Kant's notion of the universal is non-utilitarian insofar as aesthetic judgment precludes, from the outset, the way in which an individual might use an object. However, *use* is a term that floats between empirical and economic practices. It is, I am arguing, the economic side that is relevant to our understanding of why autonomy became an operative concept from the nineteenth century onwards, and to fully register this, we need to see what is heterogenous to aesthetics: the outside factor that makes autonomy salient, as Adorno suggests. This is also, according to Jacques Derrida, what makes liberal art, whose production "must not enter into the economic circle of commerce," "an occupation that is agreeable in itself."[32]

Not being partial to any single interest and not being used in a way that comes from outside of the object's internal purpose are ways of thinking about art. But unlike previous notions of disinterestedness, these implicate the object of inquiry: the object formally exists "for its own sake" at the same time as the observer's taste is dependent on recognizing the beautiful in this way. It is no longer Platonic but rather exists as a simultaneous dynamic between the observer and the object. With Kant's universalizing gesture, the term picks up connotations that relate it to emergent objectivity as well as aesthetic beauty, transferring the concept of disinterestedness from a personal characteristic to a mode of judgment, an object, a method, a form.

As Loesberg points out, one way of thinking about Kant's version of disinterestedness is as an indifference to the actual existence of the object; this makes his theory particularly salient for the art object, not just beautiful entities that exist in the world.[33] But while Loesberg argues that autonomy evolves from theology and design,[34] I am suggesting it is more secular. This is why I am emphasizing a particularly British

history and what historians have described as a transition from politically constructed property to economically constructed property. Political economy—a way of rationalizing economically constructed property around a concept of the public good—will recalibrate interest, which leads disinterestedness and disinterested judgment to require new criteria. While this story might be yet another tale about what the rise of the middling sort has to do with aesthetics, it will at the same time complicate the commonplace idea of the way in which autonomy empowers the bourgeois State.

A Transformation of Interest

The account I am providing here is not a story that political economy tells itself. Rather, it comes from economic historians who are able to contextualize the changes that political economists would find to be natural. Over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, property ownership underwent a transformation. Whereas before, owning property meant that one had land through birth, it gradually became dependent on economic factors. Once defined in terms of land, property became more virtual, driven by new credit instruments as well as a more elaborate system of taxation. Through the gradual empowerment of the commercial classes, land became only one kind of property among others. By way of a process of enclosure, it gradually came to be defined through the same system of value that supported the empowerment of the commercial classes: credit and money. Following historian Robert Brenner, Ellen Meiksins Wood argues that capitalism did not emerge suddenly as a neutral system that came into being naturally after State restrictions were lifted.[35] Rather, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the market—and a market logic—gradually became an imperative rather than an opportunity.[36] In actuality, Meiksins Wood argues, economically constructed property entails an obligation that everyone should eventually participate in markets. Without registering this imperative as such, political economy describes human behavior as inherently or even naturally economically interested; this description allows for a prescription that the State (that is, a government) should stay out of the picture.

The disinterested State, which purported not to be an economic agent, became a neutral background mechanism. It took the place of the landholder in the old system; the landholder, who was sovereign by not being subject to economic needs, still presided over his tenure in a self-sufficient manner. Contrary to *laissez-faire* doctrine, however, the State maintained its role in the economy because it issued and policed the currency that became the unit of account over the course of the eighteenth century, accepting its own public credit instruments—paper money—in the form of tax payments, which Christine Desan calls a "fiat loop."[37]

The Bank Act of 1844 "established the legal conditions in which Bank of England notes could fall beneath the horizon of cultural visibility—in which they could pass without scrutiny or question," as Mary Poovey argues.[38] During this period, political economy depoliticized commercial interests and, at the same time, reconfigured the concept of interest as a part of human nature, removing the pejorative connotations it had during the seventeenth century and thus allowing for an emergent science of political economy—a way of calculating interest in an aggregate—that could proceed with the assumption that everyone *has* one. The issue here is that there was no consensus that this type of interest was really natural, and many worried that following such interest merely empowered the financial elites rather than added up to a true common good.

This informs the difference between *price* and *value*, a distinction which many literary critics draw upon when attempting to define how literary discourses differentiate themselves from economic discourses in the nineteenth century. Critics such as Poovey, Catherine Gallagher, and Patrick Brantlinger argue that political economy comes to describe commerce and credit—and economic interests—as natural. Singling out works such as Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776), Thomas Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798), Henry Thornton's *Enquiry into the Nature and Effects of the Paper Credit of Great Britain* (1802), David Ricardo's *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (1817), and John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* (1848), this body of criticism tends to relate political economy to the development of a credit economy, which Brantlinger cynically calls an "ideological subterfuge whereby the majority of people are led to mistake national debt for national or common wealth."[39] This point—a prevalent interpretation in literary criticism—is important because many contemporaries (such as Burke, Wordsworth, and Carlyle) remained opposed to political economy on the grounds that it privileged the financial interests (at the time, the mainstay of investors in public credit) over those with land and, for all of these thinkers, thereby undermined traditional authority and social stability. Today, we read such figures as antidemocratic, unprogressive, or even counter-Enlightenment.[40] To historicize them properly, then, we might register that they took issue with the transformation of all interests into economic interest that was enabled by political economy acting as an early social science, something about which literary producers were ambivalent.

Smith's *Wealth of Nations* famously argues that, when acting out of one's own interest, one is "led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention."[41] The mechanism is invisible, but one only needs to follow one's nature, which ultimately results in a public good: "By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote

it."[42] Twentieth-century advocates of *laissez-faire* policy often pick up this quote, which is somewhat unfair since Smith was responding specifically to mercantilism by proposing a labor theory of value rather than one grounded in property, as John Locke had done a century before. In the labor theory of value, Smith argues that all men behave in the same way: "Every man thus lives by exchanging, or becomes in some measure a merchant, and the society itself grows to be what is properly called a commercial society."[43] It is telling that, in this passage, he leaves no room for landed property or the type of sovereignty that might come from not needing to work in the first place: "Labour," he says, "is the only universal, as well as the only accurate measure of value, or the only standard by which we can compare the values of different commodities at all times and all places."[44] By reconfiguring interest in terms of a labor theory of value, Smith produces a way in which to naturalize human behavior around economic interest, and he naturalizes the price mechanism by simply dismissing—by writing out—those with landed tenure.

While Smith is often read as positing individual interest as a motivating factor, it was later political economic writers, who had more of a utilitarian bent, who would fully emphasize the view from above: what happens when people follow their interests and when the invisible hand mechanism works to provide for the public good. In *Manual of Political Economy* (1793), Jeremy Bentham argues that "nothing ought to be done or attempted by government"[45] for

> [t]he wealth of the whole community is composed of the wealth of several individuals belonging to it taken together. But to increase his particular portion is, generally speaking, among the constant objects of each individual's exertions and care. Generally speaking, there is no one who knows what is for your interest, so well as yourself—no one is disposed with so much ardour and constancy to pursue it.[46]

In this passage, and in others, interest is related to individual wealth, and there is an idea of liberal self-determination in it. But there is also an implicit view from above that guides and defines individual interests in a commonwealth. It is this issue—of self-interest framed as coming not from the self but a larger system—that contemporaries took issue with. This implies that no human is disinterested—everyone has an interest, which can be translated into an economic interest. This is related to price versus value insofar as the implicit determining system is called into question: value is interpersonal, whereas price comes from a disinterested system—the "State" or the "economy," depending on who one asks.

Utilitarianism takes the rationale that all humans are economically interested and then puts a positive spin on it from the perspective of the individual: interest is not just about a sort of gain through labor; it is

about the type of *happiness* or *pleasure* which such behavior affords, within certain constraints. Utilitarianism is the discourse that makes interest, defined through labor, moral, thereby generally displacing the previous moral understanding of disinterestedness. Bentham states:

> By the principle of utility is meant that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question: or, what is the same thing in other words, to promote or to oppose that happiness.[47]

Everyone desires happiness; everyone pursues pleasure and avoids pain; everyone has an interest. No one is disinterested, but no one is left out of State reckoning either. The caveat here is that everything proceeds from an individual, and utilitarian public policy recommendations place the interests of each individual equal to the interests of the whole: the greatest amount of good for the greatest number, a concept adopted from Bentham. Bentham writes:

> The community is a fictitious body, composed of the individual persons who are considered as constituting as it were its members. The interest of the community then is, what?—the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it. . . . It is in vain to talk of the interest of the community without understanding what is the interest of the individual.[48]

A paradox is that this requires an engineering of the individual and a transformation of government, in line with what Michel Foucault calls "biopower."[49]

As Mill points out later, with regard to policy, interest should also be configured in such a way that it preserves the whole, the common good. For him, the community to which Bentham refers is actually a configuring mechanism—representative government. Mill points out a problem that other political economists will describe: that pursuing *individual* interests is not future-thinking enough for the collective posterity. His *Considerations on Representative Government* (1865) brings back the concept of disinterestedness, arguing that, since people are inherently interested, the government needs to be set up to ensure the disinterested regard for others that is necessary for thinking of the future:

> One of the greatest dangers, therefore, of democracy, as of all other forms of government, lies in the sinister interest of the holders of power: it is the danger of class legislation, of government intended for (whether really effecting it or not) the immediate benefit of the dominant class to the lasting detriment to the whole. And one of the

> most important questions demanding consideration in determining the best constitution of a representative government is how to provide efficacious securities against this evil.[50]

The *laissez-faire* State has a constitution that manages the interests that political economy describes since these pose the problem of factionalism, the bugbear of seventeenth-century England.

> The representative system ought to be so constituted as to maintain this state of things: it ought not to allow any of the various sectional interests to be so powerful as to be capable of prevailing against truth and justice and the other sectional interests combined. There ought always to be such a balance preserved among personal interests as may render any one of them dependent for its successes on carrying with it at least a large proportion of those who act on higher motives and more comprehensive and distant views.[51]

The State, in being set up as a representational mechanism, becomes disinterested due to the dubiousness that individual people can be disinterested. It is in this sense that the representative government takes over the disinterested stance of the landholder, who is—after all—*merely* a landed interest now rather than a tacitly agreed-upon disinterested agent. This tension, between self-interest and the interest of the whole, eschews the force of explicit government in favor of a set of behaviors and codes—a constitution—that simultaneously cultivate individual interest and force (or, if one prefers, entice) people to behave in such a way that all interests are served. My argument about literary aesthetics is that this newer idea of interest and disinterestedness was politically charged in the nineteenth century, and it was especially divisive to the Victorians.

Interest, the Individual, and Nineteenth-Century Literary Aesthetics

Critics have pointed out a relationship between the labor theory of value, utilitarianism, and the way in which Romanticism reconfigures aesthetic experience as a reaction to political economy. Catherine Gallagher's *Body Economic* argues that the literary producers of the nineteenth century created a way of competing with contemporary political economic precepts, in particular, a labor theory of value and a utilitarian outlook in which pleasure and pain are rendered as a binary means for calibrating value:

> The poet, in other words, came up with a competing answer to the question of how laborers produce value, and he made himself

> the center of that process; but as in the political economists' account, value still seems to rely on deprivation. Romanticism, we might say, activated a latent contradiction between eighteenth-century aesthetics, which often privileged the desirable pain of sublimity, and Utilitarianism, which assumed all pain to be undesirable.[52]

While utilitarianism flattens affect in the same way that political economy flattens interest, it also attempts to formally frame interests in an aggregate. In other words, it tries to pose a solution to the problem of interest, and it gestures towards disinterestedness at the State level.

Among the early nineteenth-century theorizers of disinterestedness, William Hazlitt responds to the Romantic emphasis on subjectivity, arguing that truth does not come from individual perspectives and feelings but rather from passionate—but various—communication. For him, "[d]isinterestedness is the capacity to sympathize with 'different views and feelings' in the process of arriving at a judgment."[53] He is critical of "Wordsworth's 'devouring egotism' which reduces the range of human feeling to whatever Wordsworth can sanction as his own."[54] His *An Essay on the Principles of Human Action* (1805) counters the notion that humans are motivated by self-interest, arguing for

> the principle of a disinterested love of good as such, or for it's [*sic*] own sake without any regard to personal distinctions to be the foundation of all the rest. In this sense self-love is in it's [*sic*] origin a perfectly disinterested, or if I may so say *impersonal* feeling. The reason why a child first distinctly wills or pursues his own good is not because it is *his*, but because it is *good*.[55]

Hazlitt focuses his writings on the importance of public opinion but also on the importance of the diversity of discourse. In *Characteristics* (1823), he argues that "Truth is not one, but many; and an observation may be true in itself that contradicts another equally true, according to the point-of-view from which we contemplate the subject."[56] Hazlitt's critique of Romanticism before its end can be read as a basis for what Victorians—especially Mill—do with disinterestedness.

As the latter points out, the system of interests only works if individuals can maintain their individuality—I would argue that he also attempts to insert disinterestedness back into the individual when it comes to literary aesthetics. Mill's "On Liberty" (1859) emphasizes the importance of the individual for the functioning of the whole. That is to say, the essay looks for a way of positing a self-sufficient individual within an opinion system and questions "how to make the fitting adjustment between individual independence and social control."[57] For the utilitarian system of

freedom and authority to find its natural balance, true individuals need to be actively maintained:

> A person whose desires and impulses are his own—are the expression of his own nature, as it has been developed by his own culture—is said to have a character. One whose desires and impulses are not his own, has no character, no more than a steam-engine has character.[58]

The purely interested individual—who is taught what to desire from an economic system—is no individual at all. Thus, Mill argues that in a state of despotism, individuals as such are inconceivable:

> Even despotism does not produce its worst effects, so long as Individuality exists under it; and whatever crushes individuality is despotism, by whatever name it may be called, and whether it professes to be enforcing the will of God or the injunctions of men.[59]

In a sense, what I am discussing might be an alternative connecting thought from Romanticism to Victorianism: the former represents interest and expresses a will to affirm the self against mechanizing forces, while the latter recognizes the authority of mechanism for managing interests but worries that the individual, defined this way, is not really an individual at all, attempting to keep a voice by playing with disinterestedness at the level of form. Something one sees throughout the nineteenth century is a tendency towards the proliferation of perspective and an attempt to represent a diversity of interests through experimentations in, for example, narrative focalization or self-conscious contradiction in lyric poetry. This is what I am calling the aestheticization of interest. Interest itself is subjected to literary experimentation and formal calibration.

Hazlitt's statements on public opinion bear a similarity to what Mill would later write about poetry: that it, unlike other forms of eloquent language, is meant to be "overheard" and not "heard." In both statements, what characterizes the poem is strategic self-effacement and a pushing back from a narcissistic form of interest that puts the author too close to the poem's speaker. Mill discusses the problem of the economically interested poet, one who writes out of his own interest, and he seeks to differentiate self-interest from the notion of an artwork that comes from a purpose beyond self-interest:

> But when he turns round and addresses himself to another person; when the act of utterance is not itself the end, but a means to an end, viz., by the feelings he himself expresses, to work upon the feelings

> or upon the belief, or the will, of another—when the expression of his emotions is tinged also by that purpose, by that desire of making an impression upon another mind, then it ceases to be poetry, and becomes eloquence.[60]

Mill weighs in on the debate on poetic representation, discussing what he believes makes a poem beautiful and not merely eloquent.[61] Read in the context of "On Liberty," his famous prescription can also be taken as a way of providing a space for an individual to practice an imperviousness to economic determination through the production of literature. This differs from the Arnoldian version of disinterestedness, which sees the cultural critic as the agent who can and should be disinterested.[62]

What we might be seeing in the transition from Romanticism to Victorianism is a strategic effacement of particular perspective, an embracing of uncertainty, a proliferation of point of view, and an intention to produce that which acts as a thing in itself rather than that which can be accused of being a means to a particular end. This has to do with the rise and acceptability of professional authorship as much as it does with a need to calibrate taste when everyone—in theory—is interested. I would also argue that this passionate and varied communication has a pro-democratic political agenda: it is not at all disinterested in a political sense. Rather, it is interested in cultivating a common good that is not eroded by *laissez-faire* principles without the right checks and balances. In other words, it is looking for a type of individualism not solely determined by the *laissez-faire* system. This sort of disinterestedness is not monolithic but rather a means for getting people to inhabit a specific or particular perspective amongst others, maintaining the cosmopolitan detachment that Amanda Anderson discusses in a book which is especially relevant to our purposes insofar as it pertains to the *oeuvre* of Oscar Wilde.

Wilde's ironic argument in "The Soul of Man Under Socialism" (1891)—that socialism might actually lead to individualism—can be read as another response to Mill's "On Liberty." The problem posed in the essay is that individuals are not really free under the existing economic conditions, and true individuals can only exist if socialism is implemented, allowing individuals to look after interests that are not economically determined:

> Every man must be left quite free to choose his own work. No form of compulsion must be exercised over him. If there is, his work will not be good for him, will not be good in itself, and will not be good for others. And by work I simply mean activity of any kind.[63]

This utopian vision centers art in a way that is even more emphatic than that in "On Liberty":

> Art is Individualism, and Individualism is a disturbing and disintegrating force. Therein lies its immense value. For what it seeks to disturb is monotony of type, slavery of custom, tyranny of habit, and the reduction of man to the level of machine.[64]

Wilde's own *oeuvre* playfully obfuscates his own opinions and perspectives through formal layering and through the mixing of genre.

Nineteenth-century aesthetics can be seen as a means of countering the economically oriented version of democracy that calibrates concepts of equality by not factoring in perspective: a flat—rather than a layered—notion of representation that liberal thinkers were worried about. This is thus a parallel universe of politics in which aesthetics and democracy are not antithetical but rather utopian and political in their resistance to a reduction of interest to economic interest alone, just as the Frankfurt School argued. This means that attitudes towards disinterestedness—and disinterested representation—differ, and they do so in accordance with views on the efficacy and promises of emergent liberal democracy. Disinterestedness is a fundamentally political concept, and aesthetic autonomy is a profoundly political gesture, determined by a cultural need to calibrate interest at the moment when the concept faces a crisis.

The rise of the aesthetic is interwoven with the rise of liberal democracy as a pushback against a mass recalibration of interest. Disinterestedness is about heteronomy and real, rather than flattened, difference. But opinions on who or what are disinterested vary according to ideological outlook. This, I would suggest, maps onto decisions for representing interests and perspectives in a formal system. A re-reading of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century texts through such a framework sheds new light on the rise of the aesthetic—and the rise of (and later hegemony of) aestheticism—revealing its origins to be determined by the political economic shifts of the time, but not in a way that suggests that literary producers simply affirm value over price. Disinterestedness is therefore not a marker for *actually* being outside of politics (and therefore masking power structures). Rather, varying attitudes towards disinterestedness can show us a way of re-reading literature's democratic potential. While the simple, knee-jerk opposition to economic interest can lead to fascism, a more complex understanding of the free play of interests within a modern art object, which formally *encourages* distance from a singular perspective, can also shed light on the powerful force of literary form as instantiating pro-democratic thought. Perhaps, though, we would not see the need

for historicizing this way if democracy were not being politicized in our historical moment. It is being politicized at present, and thus now is a compelling time to address the heteronomy of aesthetic autonomy and how human beings make meaning in collectives.

Notes

1 I am grateful to Felix Sprang, Katrin Becker, Benjamin Kohlmann, Monika Class, Katharina Boehm, Gero Guttzeit, and Norbert Schaffeld for helpful feedback on this paper.
2 Pierre Bourdieu, "The Market of Symbolic Goods," in *In the Field of Cultural Production*, ed. Randal Johnson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 40.
3 Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 22–23.
4 Robin James, "Oppression, Privilege, & Aesthetics: The Use of the Aesthetic in Theories of Race, Gender, and Sexuality, and the Role of Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Philosophical Aesthetics," *Philosophy Compass* 8, no. 2 (2013): 101.
5 Jonathan Loesberg, *A Return to Aesthetics: Autonomy, Indifference, and Postmodernism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005).
6 Cf. Lambert Zuidervaart, *Adorno's Aesthetic Theory: The Redemption of Illusion* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 225.
7 Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 6.
8 This chapter thus argues for the type of formalism that George Levine calls for when he advocates for the disinterested utopian space. Referring to both institutions and literary texts, he argues for "a new kind of formalism, one that recognizes the ideological implications of the formal even as it values and deliberates over nuances of the text in ways that might, to vulgar eyes, seem like mere 'formalism.'" George Levine, "Reclaiming the Aesthetic," in *Aesthetics and Ideology*, ed. George Levine (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 16 and 23.
9 Isobel Armstrong, *The Radical Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000). George Levine, "Saving Disinterest: Aesthetics, Contingency, and Mixed Conditions," *New Literary History* 32, no. 4 (2001): 908. Andrew Goldstone, *Fictions of Autonomy: Modernism from Wilde to de Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 4.
10 Marina Alina Asavei, *Aesthetics, Disinterestedness, and Effectiveness in Political Art* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2018), 91.
11 Thomas Hilgers, *Aesthetic Disinterestedness: Art, Experience, and the Self* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 62.
12 Cf. Levine, "Saving Disinterest"; Amanda Anderson, *The Power of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).
13 Cf. Armstrong, *The Radical Aesthetic*.
14 Jerome J. McGann, *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 69.
15 Caroline Levine, *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015).
16 Jerome Stolnitz, "On the Origins of 'Aesthetic Disinterestedness,'" *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 20, no. 2 (1961): 131–143.

17 George Dickie's work was critical of disinterestedness, and many writing against the concept within philosophy cite his work. See: "The Myth of the Aesthetic Attitude," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 1 (1964): 56–66. The difference between what Dickie calls taste and the aesthetic attitude is key here. Whereas thinkers such as Shaftesbury had a Platonic notion of taste, Kantian and post-Kantian theorists would understand aesthetics as a disposition to appreciate an object of beauty.
18 Miles Rind, "The Concept of Disinterestedness in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40, no. 1 (2002): 85.
19 Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2001), 207.
20 Cf. Jacob Sider Jost, "Party Politics in *Characteristicks*," in *Shaping Enlightenment Politics: The Social and Political Impact of the First and Third Earls of Shaftesbury*, ed. Patrick Müller (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2018), 135–147.
21 Dabney Townsend, "Shaftesbury's Aesthetic Theory," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 41 (1982): 211.
22 I thank Ewan Jones and John Regan at the Concept Lab in Cambridge for lending me the tool that illuminated these insights as well as for helping me with a qualitative interpretation of the results. For a practical example, see Peter de Bolla's contribution to this volume.
23 Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 787.
24 McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity,* 668.
25 McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity,* 668.
26 Cf. Joanna Picciotto, *Labors of Innocence in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 5.
27 Martha Woodmansee, "The Interests in Disinterestedness: Karl Philipp Moritz and the Emergence of the Theory of Aesthetic Autonomy in Eighteenth-Century Germany," *Modern Language Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (1984): 22–47.
28 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 42 (§5) [AA 5:211].
29 Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, 66 [AA 5:236].
30 George Dickie, *Art and the Aesthetic Attitude: An Institutional Analysis* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), 57.
31 Monika Class, "K. P. Moritz's Case Poetics: Aesthetic Autonomy Reconsidered," *Literature and Medicine* 32, no. 1 (2014): 46; Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 121.
32 Jacques Derrida, "Economimesis," trans. R. Klein, *Diacritics* 11, no. 2 (1981): 5–6.
33 Jonathan Loesberg, *A Return to Aesthetics: Autonomy, Indifference, and Postmodernism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 7, 75.
34 Loesberg, *A Return to Aesthetics*, 52.
35 Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1999), 6.
36 Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism*, 62.
37 Christine Desan, *Making Money: Coin, Currency, and the Coming of Capitalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 311–312.
38 Mary Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 219.
39 Patrick Brantlinger, *Fictions of State: Culture and Credit in Britain, 1694–1994* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 101.

40 Brantlinger, *Fictions of State*, 99.
41 Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Cause of the Wealth of Nations*, Vol. 1, ed. R.H. Campbell and A.S. Skinner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 456.
42 Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Cause of the Wealth of Nations*, Vol. 1, 456.
43 Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Cause of the Wealth of Nations*, Vol. 1, 37.
44 Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Cause of the Wealth of Nations*, Vol. 1, 54.
45 Jeremy Bentham, "Manual of Political Economy," in *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, Vol. 3 (Edinburgh: William Tait, 1843), 32.
46 Bentham, "Manual of Political Economy," 32.
47 Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (Oxford: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1907), 2.
48 Bentham, *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, 3.
49 Cf. Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College de France, 1977–78*, ed. Michel Sennelart, trans. Graham Burchell (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 115.
50 John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, ed. Currin V. Shields (Indianapolis, IN: Library of Liberal Arts, 1958), 101.
51 Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, 101.
52 Catherine Gallagher, *The Body Economic: Life, Death, and Sensation in the Victorian Novel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 28.
53 Jon Cook, "Introduction," in William Hazlitt, *Selected Writings*, ed. Jon Cook (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xxxiv.
54 Cook, "Introduction," xxxiii.
55 William Hazlitt, *An Essay on the Principles of Human Action: Being an Argument in Favour of the Natural Disinterestedness of the Human Mind* (London: J. Johnson, 1805), 34.
56 William Hazlitt, "Characteristics," in *Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, Vol. 9, ed. P. P. Howe (New York: AMS Press, 1967), 228.
57 John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty," in *The Basic Writings of John Stuart Mill*, ed. Dale E. Miller (New York: Modern Library, 2002), 7.
58 Mill, "On Liberty," 62.
59 Mill, "On Liberty," 65.
60 John Stuart Mill, "Thoughts on Poetry and Its Varieties," *Crayon* 7, no. 4 (1860): 95.
61 This concept of disinterestedness thus establishes a place for poetry that is not rhetorical. Differentiating itself from rhetoric was a precondition of the concept of the literary in the nineteenth century (Hayden White, "The Suppression of Rhetoric in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Rhetoric Canon*, ed. Brenda Deen Schildgen [Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1997], 22), a tendency which literary aesthetics shares with the evolution of the sciences.
62 As Jonah Siegel points out, the purely Arnoldian version—of disinterested criticism as a cure for political factionalism—leads to a lack of sophistication. The formal approach I promote here cannot be said to be a simple remedy against partisan factionalism since political interest is but one way in which to register the ideological stakes. Jonah Siegel, "Victorian Aesthetics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Literary Culture*, ed. Juliet John (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 576.
63 Oscar Wilde, "The Soul of Man," in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, Vol. 4, ed. Josephine M. Guy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 236.
64 Wilde, "The Soul of Man," 250.

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Index

Abel, Jakob Friedrich 184
Abrams, M. H. 4
Addison, Joseph 115, 118, 279; "Pleasures of the Imagination" 2, 51
Adorno, Theodor W. 266, 277, 278, 282
aesthetic experience 6, 8, 118, 119, 143, 258, 260, 287; autonomy 2, 161, 239; heteronomy 2, 219, 227
aesthetic theory 1–3, 9, 27, 32, 51, 94, 118, 138, 161–162, 165, 167–168, 171, 278
Akenside, Mark 39
Alison, Archibald 37, 40, 279
anamnesis *see* Shaftesbury
Aristotle 55, 87, 116, 126; *Poetics* 56, 272n21
architecture 1, 50, 116, 138, 245–247
artistic representation *see* Mendelssohn
autonomy of art 4–5, 8, 135, 137–141, 143, 145–146, 149–150, 152–153, 155

Bacon, Francis 219, 221
Barbauld, Laetitia 207
Baumgarten, Alexander Gottlieb 3, 9, 94, 143–144, 161–162; *Aesthetica* 164–165; beauty 144, 164; good taste 9, 162, 164, 166, 171; *Meditationes* 164–165, 166, 168, 169–170; perfection 144, 164–165, 170–171
Baumgarten, Siegmund Jacob 168–170
Beattie, James 8, 137, 140
beauty 21, 26, 43; *see also individual authors*
Beiser, Frederick 5
Bentham, Jeremy 285–286
Bethlem Hospital 95
Binoche, Bertrand 97, 105
Blair, Hugh 42–43
Bodmer, Johann Jacob 170
Borchmeyer, Dieter 217
Bourdieu, Pierre 277, 278
Brantlinger, Patrick 284
Breitinger, Johann Jacob 170
Burke, Edmund 26, 29, 99, 115

Cambridge Concept Lab 7, 22, 23, 26, 30, 34, 293n22
Cambridge Platonism 49
Canitz, Friedrich Rudolph Ludwig von 166
Carey, Daniel 79, 98
Cassirer, Ernst 7, 70–71
Christianity 163, 169, 204, 207, 208
conjectural history *see* stadial history
contemplation 4, 6, 8, 27, 28, 54, 80, 141, 147, 183, 184, 253n4

Darwall, Stephen 84
de Beauvoir, Simone 209–210
de Scudéry, Madeleine 204
de Staël, Germaine 9–10; beauty 204, 209; *On Germany* 9, 201, 202, 206–207, 209; *On Literature* 201, 202–203, 205–209; poetry 203, 204, 209; taste 9, 201–202, 204, 205, 210; virtue 201, 206, 209
democracy 11, 286, 291–292
disinterestedness 3–6, 8, 9, 11, 96, 119–120, 122, 138–143, 145–148, 153, 184, 227, 277–283, 285–291; *see also* Shaftesbury

Eagleton, Terry 75, 277, 278
Eberhard, Johann August 182

Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO) 7, 21, 22, 28, 280
Eldridge, HannahVandegrift 265–266

French Revolution 5, 10, 202, 206, 207, 208

Galilei, Galileo 219, 221
Gallagher, Catherine 284, 287
Gamper, Michael 240
genius 241; artistic (*see* Kant); female 209
Gerard, Alexander 29, 37, 118
Gill, Michael B. 52
Grave, Johannes 229
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von 5, 6, 10, 70; aesthetic experience 229, 230, 231; beauty 218, 228; experimentalism 10, 219, 222; *Italian Journey* 217–218, 227; nature 10, 217, 218, 220, 221, 223, 224, 225, 227, 232; poetry 223, 226; *Die Propyläen* 228, 229, 230; pure phenomenon 224–226, 231; "Der VersuchalsVermittler von Objekt und Subjekt" 221–223, 224, 225
Gottsched, Johann Christoph 168, 169, 170
government 59, 98, 100–101, 202, 203, 204, 283, 285, 286–287

Harrington, James 74, 75
Hazlitt, William 11, 288, 289
Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich 207, 209, 258, 260
Herder, Johann Gottfried 5, 10, 70–71, 87, 90n4, 225, 240, 242–243, 251, 254n28, 255n45, 263–264
heteronomy 1, 6, 10, 11, 71–72, 78, 83, 150, 161, 239, 242, 247, 252, 258, 277–278, 291–292; *see also* aesthetic experience
Hilgers, Thomas 278
Hirschman, Albert O. 74
Hobbes, Thomas 72, 82–83; beauty 49, 51; *De Cive* 48; *Leviathan* 47–48, 73; self-interest 47, 49, 50, 54, 55, 57, 60, 61, 74, 139; state of nature 7, 47–49, 51, 58–60, 73, 119; voluntarism 49–51
Hölderlin, Friedrich 5, 6, 10–11; aesthetic experience 259, 264; aesthetic ideas 260, 261, 262; beauty 259, 264–265, 269; dependence on nature 6, 11, 258, 263, 267–269; "Fragment of Philosophical Letters" 260–262, 264; gratefulness 260, 268, 269; *Hyperion* 259, 264, 266; "Nature and Art or Saturn and Jupiter" 266–267; open unity 11, 258, 268, 269, 270; poetry 258, 261–263, 265–269, 270; remembrance 11, 258, 260, 267–269; "The Shelter at Hardt" 268–269; "What Is Mine" 267–268
Homer 28, 230, 231, 261, 263, 271n14
Humboldt, Alexander von 220
Hume, David 8, 74, 96; beauty 99, 141–143; morality 95–96, 103, 104, 143, 208; sensibility 95, 101, 103–104; "Of the Standard of Taste" 102, 103, 122, 141, 142; taste 99–103, 107
Hutcheson, Francis 49, 122, 136, 142; beauty 135, 139–141; internal sense 118, 120; moral sense 139, 140–141

Jaffro, Laurent 74–75

Kames, Lord (Henry Home) 40, 115
Kant, Immanuel: aesthetic experience 146, 151, 153–154, 159; aesthetic ideas 146, 151, 203, 262; artistic genius 5, 6, 151–152, 154, 262; beauty 5, 135–137, 146–155, 203–204, 281–282; *Critique of the Power of Judgment* 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 96, 135–136, 146, 161, 182, 201, 203, 209, 250, 258, 259, 281, 282; *Critique of Practical Reason* 6, 262; *Critique of Pure Reason* 207, 262; disinterested pleasure 4, 5, 9, 147–148, 180, 182, 185, 188, 281–282; freedom 4, 5, 71, 154, 207, 208, 258–259, 262, 274n46; imagination 137, 148, 150–152, 154, 203; judgment of taste 124, 135, 146, 148–151, 154, 202, 203, 281–282; morality 135, 136, 137, 146, 151–155, 208; purposiveness of nature 5, 6, 258, 259, 262; symbol 154, 250
Korsmeyer, Carolyn 49

Kristeller, Paul Oskar 1–2, 4
König, Johann Ulrich von 166–167, 170

laissez-faire doctrine 283, 285, 287, 290
Lange, Joachim 163–166
Laocoön group 227, 228
Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm 6, 62n22, 90n4, 143, 144, 180, 181
Leonardo da Vinci 227, 229
Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim 185, 189, 192
Locke, John 58, 63n30, 77, 85, 118, 207, 219, 285
Loesberg, Jonathan 277, 282
Longinus 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35
Luther, Martin 163, 164

Macaulay, Catharine 207
McKeon, Michael 280–281
Marcus Aurelius 59
Mendelssohn, Moses 8; artistic representation 144–146, 185; beauty 180, 182, 186–187, 190, 192; *On Evidence* 180, 186, 187, 188; faculty of approval 9, 180, 182, 184, 188–192; the good 180, 185, 188, 189, 191; *Letters on Sentiments* 181, 187, 188, 192; mixed sentiments 143, 144–145, 185, 192; *Morning Hours* 9, 180, 182, 188, 189, 192; Pantheism debate 189; perfection 9, 144–145, 180, 181, 184, 185–187, 189–192; *Rhapsody* 186, 187, 188, 192; taste 186, 188
Meyer, Johann Heinrich 229–230, 231
Mill, John Stuart 11, 284, 286, 288, 289–290
Milton, John 27, 28, 151
mimesis 2, 6, 81, 82, 262, 267, 269
Monk, Samuel H. 3
Moritz, Karl Philipp 4, 5, 226, 231
music 1, 50, 87, 104–106, 124, 136, 137, 138, 140, 142, 149, 232

Newton, Isaac 221, 222, 240
Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg) 10, 220, 240, 244

organism 57, 263, 265, 270n4
Ossian 107, 201, 204
Osterkamp, Ernst 218, 219, 229–230

painting 1, 55, 83, 116, 121, 149, 188, 227, 230, 246–247
Pantheism debate *see* Mendelssohn
Pietism 9, 161–163, 170
Plato 206; *Phaedrus* 56, 261, 262, 270, 271n13, 272n21; *Protagoras* 56; *Symposium* 265
politeness 98, 100–101, 106, 204
polyphony 104–106
Poovey, Mary 284
Pope, Alexander 80
Porter, James I. 2
Promethean myth 56–57
property 54–55, 74, 280–281, 283, 285

Racine, Jean 27, 98
Raphael 27, 227
relativism 10, 48, 49, 59, 60, 102, 104, 201, 203
Riedel, Friedrich Justus 183, 184
Rind, Miles 184, 279
Ritter, Johann Wilhelm 6; monuments 241, 242–243, 245–247; nature 220, 242, 243, 245, 248; "Physics as Art" 10, 241, 244, 245, 246, 247, 250, 252; series 241, 242, 243, 244–247, 248, 251, 252, 254n26; sign 248–252, 255n37; symbol 241, 246, 247, 248, 250–253, 255n45
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques 109n25, 110n39, 208

Schelling, Friedrich 5–6, 10, 220, 260
Schiller, Friedrich 5, 190, 218, 225, 259
sculpture 1, 50, 81, 149, 228, 230, 242
Shaftesbury, third Earl of (Anthony Ashley Cooper) 2–4; aesthetic experience 49, 81; anamnesis 8, 78, 83–84; anti-voluntarism 7, 47, 51, 56; *Askêmata* 51, 53, 57, 58, 61; beauty 4, 7, 51–61, 70–81, 83–87, 138–139, 184; disinterestedness 3–4, 6, 47, 54–55, 59, 135, 138–139, 279–280; *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit* 49, 50, 51, 63n25, 76, 138, 193n11;

The Judgment of Hercules 55–56; *The Moralists* 7, 47, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 60, 70, 71, 72, 73, 76, 80, 85, 87, 138; morality 49, 50, 51, 59, 60, 71, 72, 73, 75, 135; natural affections 7, 59, 76, 80, 82, 84; prolepsis 51, 63n29, 79–80, 84, 85; science (natural philosophy) 57, 70; *Sensus Communis* 50, 73, 81; society 6, 7, 47, 48, 51, 52, 55, 58–61, 71, 73, 75–76; *Soliloquy* 50, 77, 87, 89, 193n11, 279; taste 70, 71, 72, 75–79, 81, 83–86, 88–89, 138, 173n22, 279–280
Skinner, Quentin 97
Smith, Adam 8; beauty 112, 114–120, 123–124; imagination 112, 113, 116, 117, 118–119, 120–122, 123, 125, 126; moral philosophy 8, 112, 113, 114, 117, 119, 121, 125; sentiments 112, 113, 116, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126; sympathy 8, 113–114, 115, 116, 117, 119, 120, 121–122, 123, 124, 125–126; taste 112, 116, 119, 123; *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* 8, 112, 113, 114, 116, 120, 125, 126; *Wealth of Nations* 284
Socrates 56, 60, 261, 265
stadial history 97, 103, 204, 208
Steinle, Friedrich 221–222
Stewart, Dugald 40
Stolnitz, Jerome 3, 119, 184, 279
sublime 4, 21–28, 30–44, 72, 112, 113, 115, 153, 192, 209, 274n46
Sulzer, Johann Georg 181, 183, 186

taste 8, 42, 43, 94–96, 97–99, 104–107, 114, 124, 125, 290; spiritual 9, 162–167, 168, 169, 170–171; *see also individual authors*
Townsend, Dabney 76, 96, 99, 107n5, 280
tragedy 27, 112, 144

utilitarianism 11, 285–286, 287–288

Valihora, Karen 83
Van derLaan, James M. 222–223
Virgil 27
Vitruvius 245–246
Voßkamp, Wilhelm 5, 219

Weimar classicism 5, 217, 218–219
Wilde, Oscar 11, 290–291
Winckelmann, Johann Joachim 10, 242–243, 244, 245–246, 252
Wolff, Christian 143–144, 168–169, 170, 180, 181, 182, 183, 192
Wollstonecraft, Mary 207
Wordsworth, William 284, 288

Zeus 56, 266–267