

introduction

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"The Idea of Genesis in Kant's Aesthetics," which appears here in English translation, was first published in 1963 in the French journal *Revue d'Esthétique*. Earlier that same year, Gilles Deleuze had written a short book entitled *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*.¹ "The Idea of Genesis" takes up and develops a number of themes in this earlier work, and provides an essential complement to its analysis of the *Critique of Judgment*. The essay is not only a remarkable contribution to aesthetic theory and Kant studies, but constitutes an important element of Deleuze's lifelong engagement with Kant's work.

Kant's Critical Philosophy, though ostensibly an introductory text, in fact approaches Kant's thought in a rather novel manner. In Kant, the traditional problem of the relation between subject and object is internalized; it becomes the problem of the relation between subjective faculties that differ in nature (receptive sensibility and active understanding). This is the meaning of Kant's Copernican revolution: the finite subject becomes constitutive. But this raises an entirely new philosophical problem, which Deleuze points to in the subtitle of his book: our faculties differ in nature, and yet they are exercised harmoniously. How is this possible? The "doctrine of the faculties," and the nature of the various accords entered into by our faculties, is the thread that Deleuze follows through the whole of the critical philosophy. Deleuze's argument, in brief, is as follows. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the faculties enter into a harmonious accord under the legislation of the understanding in the speculative interest. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, the faculties enter into a different accord under the legislation of reason in the practical interest. What Kant

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discovers in the *Critique of Judgment*, however, is that the regulated accords of the first two critiques are possible only because the faculties are first of all capable of a *free* and *indeterminate* accord. In Deleuze's reading, this is the "great discovery" of the third critique: every harmonious accord of the faculties finds its ground in a fundamental *discord* of the faculties, a "discordant accord."²

"The Idea of Genesis in Kant's Aesthetics" pursues this same theme in the context of a more detailed reading of the *Critique of Judgment*. The essay goes beyond the material contained in *Kant's Critical Philosophy* in at least two important respects. On the one hand, it provides a remarkable reconstruction of the "order of reasons" found in Kant's "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment." In doing so, it attempts to reconcile some of the fundamental difficulties of the text (Why is the analytic of the sublime inserted

between the analytic of the beautiful and the deduction of the judgments of taste? Why do the theories of art and genius follow the deduction?) with the various points of view taken up by Kant (the viewpoint of the spectator, the viewpoint of the genius, the beautiful in nature, the beautiful in art, and so on). On the other hand, it brings to the fore a theme discussed only in passing in *Kant's Critical Philosophy*; namely, the idea of *genesis*. In 1789, Salomon Maimon had argued that the critical philosophy could not succeed in its aims with Kant's method of conditioning, but needed to be transformed through a method of *genesis*. Deleuze will suggest that Kant had already foreseen this Maimonian objection, and tried to respond to it in the *Critique of Judgment*, showing that every accord of the faculties finds its *genesis* in their a priori discord.

Deleuze himself, to be sure, would later critique the adequacy of this Kantian solution. In *Difference and Repetition* (1968), he develops, on his own account, a purely "disjunctive" theory of the faculties, which goes far beyond a mere reading of Kant, and finds the answer to the problem of *genesis* in a principle of difference.³ But the fact that Deleuze continued to ascribe such importance to the theory of the faculties testifies to his strong affinities with Kant's critical project. "Despite the fact that it has become discredited today," Deleuze writes, "the doctrine of the faculties is an entirely necessary component of the system of philosophy."⁴ Indeed, in a 1984 article entitled "On Four Formulas That Might Summarize the Kantian Philosophy," Deleuze identified the doctrine of the faculties as one of *the* fundamental problems bequeathed to the future by Kant's philosophy.⁵ Within the context of Deleuze's oeuvre, then, "The Idea of Genesis" can be read in two different registers: it functions as both a complement to *Kant's Critical Philosophy* and an important precursor to *Difference and Repetition*. It not only provides a major rereading of the *Critique of Judgment*, but analyzes a number of issues – including the problem of *genesis* and the doctrine of the faculties – that will become crucial in Deleuze's later thought.

notes

1 Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984). Originally published in France as *La Philosophie critique de Kant* (Paris: PUF, 1963).

2 *Kant's Critical Philosophy* xii.

3 Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia UP, 1994) 136–37.

4 *Difference and Repetition* 143.

5 "On Four Formulas That Might Summarize the Kantian Philosophy," in Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P; London: Verso, 1997). This essay first appeared, in a shorter version, as the preface to the English translation of *Kant's Critical Philosophy*. Its themes were developed during a series of seminars on Kant at Vincennes in 1978, which are available online in an English translation by Melissa McMahon at <http://www.imaginet.fr/deleuze>.

the idea of genesis in kant's aesthetics

gilles deleuze

The difficulties of the Kantian aesthetic, in the first part of the *Critique of Judgment*, are bound up with the diversity of its points of view. Sometimes Kant offers us an aesthetic of the spectator, as in the theory of the judgment of taste; sometimes an aesthetic, or rather a meta-aesthetic, of the creator, as in the theory of genius. Sometimes an aesthetic of the beautiful in nature; sometimes an aesthetic of the beautiful in art. Sometimes an aesthetic of form, under a "classical" inspiration; sometimes a meta-aesthetic of matter and of the Idea, close to romanticism. Only the comprehension of these diverse points of view, and the necessary passage from one to the other, determines the systematic unity of the *Critique of Judgment*. This comprehension must explain the apparent difficulties of the plan, that is, on the one hand, the place of the analytic of the sublime (between the analytic of the beautiful and the deduction of the judgments of taste), and on the other hand, the place of the theory of art and of genius (at the end of the deduction).

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The judgment of taste "This is beautiful" expresses an accord in the spectator, a harmony of two faculties: the imagination and the understanding. If the judgment of taste is distinguished from the judgment of preference, it is because it claims a certain necessity, a certain a priori universality. It thus borrows its legality from the understanding. But this legality does not appear here in determinate concepts. The universality in the judgment of taste is that of a pleasure; the beautiful thing is singular, and remains without a concept. The understanding intervenes, but abstracted from any determinate concept, as the faculty of concepts in general. The imagination, for its part, is exercised freely, since it is no longer subjected to a concept. That

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the imagination agrees with the understanding in the judgment of taste thus signifies the following: the imagination as *free* accords with the understanding as *indeterminate*. The characteristic feature of the judgment of taste is that it expresses a free and indeterminate accord between the imagination and the understanding. Thus, aesthetic pleasure, far from preceding the judgment, on the contrary depends on it. The pleasure is the accord of the faculties themselves, insofar as this accord, being made without a concept, can only be felt. One could say that the judgment of taste begins with the pleasure, but does not derive from it.

We must reflect on this first point: the theme of an accord between several faculties. The idea of such an accord is a constant theme of the Kantian critique. Our faculties differ in nature, and yet they are exercised harmoniously. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the understanding, the imagination, and reason enter into a harmonious relation, in conformity with the speculative interest. Likewise reason and understanding, in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (we leave aside the examination of a possible role for the imagination in this practical interest). But one can see that, in these cases, one of the faculties always plays a predominant role. "Predominant" means three things here: determined in relation to an interest; determining in relation to objects; determining in relation to the other faculties. Thus, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the understanding makes use of perfectly determinate a priori concepts in the speculative interest; it applies its concepts to objects (phenomena) which are necessarily subjected to it; it induces the other faculties (imagination and reason) to fulfill specific functions, given this interest of knowing and in relation to these objects of knowledge. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, the Ideas of reason, and primarily the Idea of freedom, are determined by the moral law; through the intermediary of this law, reason determines suprasensible objects that are necessarily subjected to it; finally it induces the understanding to a certain exercise, as a function of this practical interest. Already in the first two critiques, then, we find ourselves before the principle of a harmony of the faculties among themselves. *But this*

harmony is always proportionate, constrained, and determined. There is always a determining faculty that legislates, either the understanding in the speculative interest, or reason in the practical interest.

Let us return to the example of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. It is well known that the schematism is an original and irreducible act of the imagination; only the imagination has the capacity to schematize. But the fact remains that the imagination does not schematize by itself, in the name of its freedom. It does so only insofar as the understanding determines or induces it to do so. It only schematizes in the speculative interest, as a function of the determinate concepts of the understanding, when the understanding itself has the legislative role. This is why it would be wrong to scrutinize the mysteries of the schematism, as though they harbor the final word of the imagination in its essence or in its free spontaneity. The schematism is a secret, but not the deepest secret of the imagination. Left to itself, the imagination does something completely different from schematizing. The same applies to reason. Reasoning is an original act of reason, but reason only reasons in the speculative interest, in the sense that the understanding determines it to do so; that is, the understanding induces reason to seek a middle term for the attribution of one of its concepts to the objects the concept subsumes. By itself, reason does something completely different than reasoning; this can be seen clearly in the *Critique of Practical Reason*.

In the practical interest, reason becomes legislative. Thus, in turn, it determines the understanding to assume an original exercise that conforms to the new interest. The understanding extracts from the sensible natural law a "type" for a suprasensible nature. It alone can fulfill this task, but it would not fulfill it were it not determined by reason in the practical interest. The faculties thus enter into relations or harmonious proportions according to the faculty that legislates in this or that interest. *One can thus conceive of diverse proportions or permutations in the relation of the faculties.* The understanding legislates in the speculative interest, and reason, in the practical interest. In both cases, an accord among the faculties appears, but this

accord is determined by the legislating faculty. Now such a theory of permutations must lead Kant to a final problem. The faculties would never enter into an accord that was determined or fixed by one of them if they were not in the first place, by themselves and spontaneously, capable of an indeterminate accord, a free harmony, a harmony without fixed proportion.¹ It would be vain to invoke here the superiority of the practical interest over the speculative interest; the problem would not thereby be solved, but put off and accentuated. How can a faculty, legislative in a given interest, induce the other faculties to indispensable complementary tasks, if all the faculties together were not first of all capable of a free spontaneous accord, without legislation, with neither interest nor predominance?

This means that the *Critique of Judgment*, in its aesthetic part, does not simply complete the two others; in reality, it grounds them. It discovers a free accord of the faculties as the presumed *ground* of the two other critiques. Every determinate accord refers to the free indeterminate accord that makes it possible in general. But why is it precisely the aesthetic judgment that reveals this ground, hidden in the two preceding critiques? In the aesthetic judgment, the imagination finds itself freed from the domination of the understanding as well as from that of reason. Aesthetic pleasure is itself a disinterested pleasure. It is not only independent of empirical interest, but also from speculative interest and practical interest. This is why the aesthetic judgment does not legislate; it implies no faculty that legislates over objects. Moreover, how could it be otherwise, since there are only two sorts of objects – phenomena and things in themselves – the first referring to the legislation of the understanding in the speculative interest, the second to the legislation of reason in the practical interest? Thus, Kant can quite rightly say that the *Critique of Judgment*, contrary to the two others, has no "domain" of its own; and that judgment is neither legislative nor autonomous, but only heautonomous (it only legislates over itself).² The first two critiques developed the following theme: the idea of a necessary subjection of one type of objects in relation to a dominant or determining

faculty. But there are no objects that are necessarily subjected to the aesthetic judgment, nor to a faculty in the aesthetic judgment. The beautiful things of nature are found to be in a merely contingent accord with judgment, that is, with the faculties that are exercised together in the aesthetic judgment as such. We can see at what point it would be inexact to conceive of the *Critique of Judgment* as completing the two others. For in the aesthetic judgment, the imagination in no way attains a role comparable to that which the understanding had in the speculative judgment, and reason in the practical judgment. The imagination is freed from its tutelage to the understanding and to reason. But it does not become legislative in its turn; more profoundly, it signals an exercise of the faculties in which each must be capable of acting freely on its own account. In two respects, the *Critique of Judgment* introduces us to a new element, which is like the element of the ground: a contingent accord of sensible objects with all of our faculties taken together, rather than a necessary subjection to one of the faculties; a free indeterminate harmony between the faculties, rather than a harmony determined under the chairmanship of one of them.

Kant happens to say that the imagination, in the judgment, “schematizes without a concept.”³ This formula is brilliant rather than exact. The schematism is an original act of the imagination, but in relation to a concept determined by the understanding. Without a concept of the understanding, the imagination does something other than schematizing. In fact, it *reflects*. Such is the true role of the imagination in the aesthetic judgment: it reflects the form of the object. By form, here, we must not understand the form of intuition (sensibility). For the forms of intuition are still related to existing objects, which constitute a sensible matter within them; and they make themselves part of the knowledge of these objects. Aesthetic form, on the contrary, is merged with the reflection of the object in the imagination. It is indifferent to the existence of the reflected object; this is why aesthetic pleasure is disinterested. It is no less indifferent to the sensible matter of the object; and Kant goes so far as to say that a color or a sound cannot in

itself be beautiful, being too material, too ensconced in our senses to be reflected freely in the imagination. Only design counts, only composition counts. These are the constituent elements of the aesthetic form, colors and sounds being mere auxiliaries.⁴ In all these respects, we must thus distinguish the intuitive form of sensibility and the reflected form of the imagination.

Every accord of the faculties defines a *common sense*. What Kant objects to in empiricism is that it conceived of common sense as a particular empirical faculty, whereas it is the manifestation of an a priori accord of all the faculties taken together.⁵ The *Critique of Pure Reason* invokes a logical common sense, “*sensus communis logicus*,” without which knowledge would not be communicable in principle. Likewise, the *Critique of Practical Reason* frequently invokes a properly moral common sense, expressing the accord of the faculties under the legislation of reason. But the free harmony must lead Kant to recognize a third sense: “*sensus communis aestheticus*,” which posits *in principle* the communicability of the feeling or the universality of aesthetic pleasure.⁶ “Experience cannot be made the ground of this common sense, for the latter is invoked to justify judgments containing an ‘ought.’ The assertion is not that every one *will* fall in with our judgment, but rather that everyone *ought* to agree with it.”⁷ We do not grant this to someone who says, I do not like lemonade, I do not like cheese. But we judge severely someone who says, I do not like Bach, I prefer Massenet to Mozart. The aesthetic judgment thus lays claim to a universality and a necessity in principle, represented in a common sense. It is here that the true difficulty of the *Critique of Judgment* begins. For what is the nature of this aesthetic common sense?

We cannot affirm this common sense categorically. Such an affirmation would imply determinate concepts of the understanding, which could only intervene in the logical sense. Nor can we *postulate* it, since postulates imply a knowledge that allows of being determined practically. It would thus seem that a purely aesthetic common sense can only be *presumed*, *presupposed*.⁸ But it is easy to see the insufficiency of this solution. The free indeterminate accord of the faculties is

the ground, the condition of every other accord; aesthetic common sense is the ground, the condition of every other common sense. How could it be sufficient to presuppose, to give a hypothetical existence, to what must serve as the ground for all the determinate relations between our faculties? How can we escape the question: where does this free and indeterminate accord of the faculties *come from*? How can we explain that our faculties, differing in nature, enter spontaneously into a harmonious relationship? We cannot be content to presume such an accord. We must engender it in the soul. This is the only issue: to establish the genesis of aesthetic common sense, to show how the free accord of the faculties is necessarily engendered.

If this interpretation is correct, the whole of the analytic of the beautiful has a very precise object. In analyzing the aesthetic judgment of the spectator, Kant discovers the free accord of the imagination and the understanding as a ground of the soul, presupposed by the other two critiques. This ground of the soul appears in the idea of a common sense that is more profound than any other. But is it sufficient to presume this ground, to simply “presuppose” it? The analytic of the beautiful as exposition cannot go any further than this. It can only end by making us feel the necessity of the genesis of the sense of the beautiful. Is there a principle that can provide us a rule for *producing* aesthetic common sense in us? “Is taste a natural and original faculty, or is it only the idea of one that is artificial and to be acquired by us?”⁹ A genesis of the sense of the beautiful cannot belong to the analytic as an exposition (“For the present we have only to resolve the faculty of taste into its elements, and to unite these ultimately in the idea of a common sense” (sect. 22)). The genesis can only be the object of a deduction, a *deduction of aesthetic judgment*. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the deduction sets out to show how objects are necessarily subjected to the speculative interest, and to the understanding which presides over this realization. But in the judgment of taste, the problem of such a necessary subjection is no longer posed. By contrast, what is posed is the problem of a deduction for the genesis of an accord between the faculties, a

problem that would not appear if the faculties were considered to be already engaged in a relation determined by the legislation of one of them.

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The post-Kantians, notably Maimon and Fichte, addressed a fundamental objection against Kant: Kant had ignored the demands of a genetic method. This objection has two meanings, objective and subjective. Kant relies upon facts, for which he only searches for conditions; but also, he invokes ready-made faculties, between which he determines a certain relation or proportion, already presupposing that they are capable of some sort of harmony. If we consider that Maimon's *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy* appeared in 1790, we must recognize that Kant, in part, foresaw the objection of his disciples.¹⁰ The first two critiques invoked facts, searched for conditions for these facts, and found them in already-formed faculties. They thereby referred to a genesis they were incapable of securing on their own. But in the aesthetic part of the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant poses the problem of a genesis of the faculties in their first free accord. He then discovers the ultimate ground, which was still lacking in the other critiques. The critique in general ceases to be a simple *conditioning* in order to become a transcendental formation, a transcendental culture, a transcendental genesis.

The question at which we left the analytic of the beautiful was: where does the free indeterminate accord of the faculties come from? What is the genesis of the faculties in this accord? The analytic of the beautiful ends precisely because it does not have the means to respond to this question. At the same time, one notes that the judgment “This is beautiful” only brings the understanding and the imagination into play (there is no place for reason). The analytic of the beautiful is followed by the analytic of the sublime, which appeals to reason. But what does Kant expect from this, with regard to the solution of a problem of genesis relative to the sense of the beautiful itself?

The judgment “This is sublime” no longer expresses an accord of the imagination and the understanding, but of reason and the imagina-

tion. Now this harmony of the sublime is highly paradoxical. Reason and the imagination accord with each other only within a tension, a contradiction, a painful laceration. There is an accord, but a discordant accord, a harmony in pain. And it is only this pain that makes the pleasure possible. Kant insists on this point: the imagination submits to a violence, it even seems to lose its freedom. Since the feeling of the sublime is experienced before the formless or the deformed in nature (immensity or power), the imagination can no longer reflect upon the form of an object. But far from discovering within itself another activity, it accedes to its own passion. The imagination has two essential dimensions, successive apprehension and simultaneous comprehension. If apprehension easily moves toward the infinite, comprehension (as aesthetic comprehension independent of any numeric concept) always has a maximum. The sublime puts the imagination face to face with this maximum, forcing it to reach its own limit, making it confront its own limitations. The imagination is pushed *to the limit of its power*.¹¹ But what is it that pushes and constrains the imagination in this way? It is only in appearance, or by projection, that the sublime is related to sensible nature. In truth, it is nothing other than reason that obliges us to unite the infinity of the sensible world into a whole; nothing else could force the imagination to confront its limit. The imagination thus discovers the disproportion of reason; it is forced to admit that all its power is nothing in relation to a rational Idea.¹²

And yet an accord is *born* in the midst of this discord. Kant has never been closer to a dialectical conception of the faculties. Reason puts the imagination in the presence of its limit in the sensible; but conversely, the imagination awakens reason as the faculty capable of thinking a suprasensible substrate for the infinity of this sensible world. Submitting to a violence, the imagination seems to lose its freedom; but it is also elevated to a transcendent exercise, taking its own limit as its object. Surpassing all parts, the imagination surpasses its own limitations, in a negative way it is true, by representing to itself the inaccessibility of the rational Idea and by making this inaccessibility something present in

sensible nature. "The imagination, although it finds nothing beyond the sensible to which it can attach itself, yet feels unbounded by this removal of its limitations; and thus that very abstraction is a presentation of the Infinite, which can be nothing but a mere negative presentation, but which yet expands the soul."¹³ At the very moment the imagination believes it has lost its freedom, through the violence of reason, it is freed from all the constraints of the understanding, it enters into an accord with reason to discover what the understanding had hidden from it, namely, its suprasensible destination, which is also like its transcendental origin. In its own passion, the imagination discovers the origin and destination of all its activities. Such is the lesson of the analytic of the sublime: even the imagination has a suprasensible destination.¹⁴ The accord of the imagination and reason is effectively engendered in this discord. Pleasure is engendered within pain. Furthermore, everything happens as if the two faculties were fecundating each other reciprocally and found the principle of their genesis, one in the proximity of its limit, the other beyond the sensible, and both in a "point of concentration," which defines the most profound point of the soul as the suprasensible unity of all the faculties.

The analytic of the sublime gives us results that the analytic of the beautiful was incapable of conceiving. In the case of the sublime, the accord of the opposing faculties is the object of a veritable genesis. This is why Kant recognizes that, contrary to the sense of the beautiful, the sense of the sublime is inseparable from an education: "In the evidence of the dominion of nature, in its destructions ... the uneducated man will only see misery, danger, distress."¹⁵ The uneducated man remains in the "discord." Not that the sublime is an affair of an empirical and conventional education; but the faculties it brings into play refer to a genesis of their accord within an immediate discord. It is a question of a transcendental genesis, not an empirical formation. Consequently, the analytic of the sublime has two senses. It first of all has a sense for itself, from the point of view of reason and the imagination. But it also has the value of a model: how can this discovery, which is valid for the sublime, be extended or adapted

to the sense of the beautiful? That is, must not the accord of the imagination and the understanding, which defines the sense of the beautiful, itself be the object of a genesis, for which the analytic of the sublime provides the example?

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The problem of a transcendental deduction is always objective. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, for example, after having shown that the categories were a priori representations of the understanding, Kant asked why and how objects are necessarily subjected to the categories, that is, to the legislative understanding or the speculative interest. But if we consider the judgment of the sublime, we can see that no objective problem of deduction is posed in this regard. The sublime is indeed related to objects, but only through a projection of the state of our soul; and this projection is immediately possible, because it is directed toward what is formless or deformed in the object.¹⁶ Now at first sight, the same seems to be the case for the judgment of taste or beauty: our pleasure is disinterested, we abstract from the existence and even the material of the object. No faculty is legislative; no object is necessarily subjected to the judgment of taste. This is why Kant suggests that the problem of the judgment of taste is only subjective.¹⁷

And yet, the great difference between the sublime and the beautiful is that the pleasure of the beautiful results from the form of the object. Kant says that this characteristic is enough to ground the necessity of a "deduction" for the judgment of taste.¹⁸ No matter how indifferent we may be to the existence of the object, there is nonetheless an object *in relation* to which, *on the occasion* of which we experience the free harmony of our understanding and our imagination. In other words, nature is capable of producing objects that are reflected formally in the imagination. Contrary to what happens in the sublime, nature here manifests a positive property "which gives us the occasion to perceive the internal finality of our mental faculties by judging certain of its productions."¹⁹ Here we see that the internal accord between our faculties implies an external accord between nature and these same faculties. This second accord is very special.

It must not be confused with a necessary subjection of the objects of nature, but neither should it be taken as a final or teleological accord. If there were a necessary subjection, the judgment of taste would be autonomous and legislative; if there were a real, objective finality, the judgment of taste would cease to be autonomous ("it would be necessary to learn from nature what we must find beautiful, so that the judgment would be subjected to empirical principles").²⁰ The accord is thus without purpose: nature obeys only its own mechanical laws, whereas our faculties obey their own specific laws. "*The accord presents itself without purpose, of itself, as appropriated by chance to the needs of the judgment relative to nature and its forms.*"²¹ As Kant says, it is not nature that does us a favor, it is we who are organized in such a way that we receive it favorably.

Let us go back a bit. The sense of the beautiful, as common sense, is defined by the presumed universality of aesthetic pleasure. The aesthetic pleasure itself results from the free accord of the imagination and the understanding, and this free accord can only be felt. But it is not sufficient to presuppose, in turn, the universality and necessity of this accord. It must be engendered a priori in such a way that its claim can be grounded. The true problem of the deduction begins here: it is necessary to explain "why one expects the feeling in the judgment of taste of everyone, as a sort of duty."²² Now the judgment of taste seemed to us to be connected with an objective determination. It is a question of knowing if, *from* this determination, we can find a principle for the genesis of the accord of the faculties in the judgment itself. Such a viewpoint would have the advantage of accounting for the order of ideas: (1) the analytic of the beautiful discovers a free accord of the understanding and the imagination, but can only posit it as presumed; (2) the analytic of the sublime discovers a free accord of the imagination and reason, but under internal conditions that at the same time trace its genesis; (3) the deduction of the judgment of taste discovers an external principle from which the understanding-imagination accord is in turn engendered a priori; it thus makes use of a model furnished by the sublime,

but with original means, the sublime for its part having no need of a deduction.

How is this genesis of the sense of the beautiful produced? It is because the *idea* of the purposeless accord between nature and our faculties defines an *interest* of reason, a rational interest connected to the beautiful. It is clear that this interest is not an interest for the beautiful as such, and that it is completely different from the aesthetic judgment. If not, the whole *Critique of Judgment* would be contradictory. The pleasure of the beautiful is entirely disinterested, and the aesthetic judgment expresses the accord of the imagination and the understanding without the intervention of reason. It is a question of an interest that is connected to the judgment synthetically. It does not bear on the beautiful as such, but on the aptitude of nature to produce beautiful things. It concerns nature, insofar as nature presents a purposeless accord with our faculties. But precisely because this accord is external to the accord between our faculties, because it merely defines the occasion upon which our faculties accord with each other, the interest connected with the beautiful is not part of the aesthetic judgment. Consequently, it can without contradiction make use of the principles of genesis for the a priori accord of the faculties in this judgment. In other words, *aesthetic pleasure is disinterested, but we experience a rational interest in the accord of the productions of nature with our disinterested pleasure*. "It is of interest to reason that ideas should have an objective reality ..., that is to say, that nature should at least indicate by a trace or sign that it encloses within itself a principle that allows us to admit a legitimate accord of its productions with our satisfaction *independent of any interest*.... Reason must take an interest in every manifestation on the part of nature of some such accordance."²³ Thus we should not be surprised that the interest connected with the beautiful bears upon determinations to which the sense of the beautiful remained indifferent. In the disinterested sense of the beautiful, the imagination reflects the form. What is difficult to reflect escapes it: colors, sounds, matter. On the contrary, the interest connected to the beautiful bears upon sounds and colors, the color of flowers and the

songs of birds.²⁴ Here again, we should see no contradiction. The interest concerns matter, for it is with matter that nature, in conformity with its mechanical laws, produces objects that are apt to be reflected formally. Kant even defines the primary matter that intervenes in the natural production of the beautiful: fluid matter, part of which separates or evaporates, while the rest suddenly solidifies (formation of crystals).²⁵

We will call this interest connected with the beautiful, or with the judgment of beauty, a "meta-aesthetic." How does this interest of reason secure the genesis of the understanding–imagination accord in the judgment of beauty itself? In sounds, colors, and free matters, reason discovers so many presentations of its Ideas. For example, we are not content to subsume color under a concept of the understanding; in addition, we relate it to a completely different concept (an Idea of reason), which does not have its own object of intuition, but which determines its object by analogy with the object of intuition that corresponds to the first concept. In this way we transfer "the reflection upon an object of intuition to quite a new concept, and one with which perhaps no intuition could ever directly correspond."²⁶ The white lily is not simply related to the concepts of color and flower, but awakens the Idea of pure innocence, the object of which, though never given, is a reflexive analogue of whiteness in the lily.²⁷ But this meta-aesthetic interest of reason has two consequences: on the one hand, the concepts of the understanding are enlarged to infinity, in an unlimited manner; on the other hand, the imagination is freed from the constraint of the determinate concepts of the understanding, to which it was still subordinated in the schematism. The analytic of the beautiful as exposition only allows us to say: in the aesthetic judgment, the imagination becomes free at the same time that the understanding becomes undetermined. But how did it free itself? How did the understanding become indeterminate? It was through reason, which thereby secures the genesis of the free indeterminate accord of the two faculties in the judgment. The deduction of the aesthetic judgment gives an account of what the analytic of the beautiful could not explain: it finds in reason the principle of a

transcendental genesis. But it was first necessary to pass through the genetic model of the sublime.

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The theme of a presentation of Ideas in sensible nature is, in Kant, a fundamental theme. There are several modes of presentation. The sublime is the first mode: a direct presentation, which is produced by *projection* but remains negative, concerned with the inaccessibility of the Idea. The second mode is defined by the rational interest connected with the beautiful: this is an indirect but positive presentation, which is produced by a *symbol*. The third mode appears in the genius: a positive presentation again, but secondary, being produced by the *creation* of an "other" nature. Finally, a fourth mode is teleological: a positive presentation, primary and direct, which is produced under the concepts of an end and a final accord. We do not have to analyze this latter mode. However, the mode of genius poses an essential problem in Kant's aesthetics, given the point of view that concerns us.

Rational interest has given us the key to a genesis of the a priori accord of the faculties in the judgment of taste. But on what condition? On the condition that one adds to the particular experience of the beautiful "the thought that nature has produced this beauty."²⁸ At this level, then, a disjunction appears between the beautiful in nature and the beautiful in art. *Nothing in the analytic of the beautiful as exposition authorizes such a distinction*; it is only the deduction that introduces it, that is, the meta-aesthetic viewpoint of the interest connected to the beautiful. This interest concerns natural beauty exclusively; the genesis thus bears upon the accord of the imagination and the understanding, but only insofar as it is produced in the soul of the spectator of nature. Faced with a work of art, the accord of the faculties still remains without principle or foundation.

The final task of the Kantian aesthetic is to find for art a principle analogous to that of the beautiful in nature. This principle is genius. In the same way that rational interest is the means through which nature gives a rule to judgment, genius is the subjective disposition through which nature gives rules to art (it is in this sense

that it is the "gift of nature").²⁹ Just as the rational interest bears upon the materials with which nature produces its beautiful things, genius provides the materials with which the subject it inspires produces beautiful works: "genius essentially furnishes a rich material to the fine arts."³⁰ Genius, like rational interest, is a meta-aesthetic principle. In effect, it is defined as a mode of presentation of Ideas. It is true that Kant speaks here of aesthetic Ideas, and distinguishes them from Ideas of reason. The latter would be concepts without intuition, the former, intuitions without concept. But this opposition is only apparent; there are not two kinds of Ideas. If the aesthetic Idea surpasses every concept, it is because it produces the intuition of *another nature* than the one that is given to us. It creates a nature in which phenomena are immediately events of the mind, and the events of the mind, phenomena of nature. Invisible beings, the kingdom of the blessed, and hell assume a body; and love and death assume a dimension that makes them adequate to their spiritual meaning.³¹ Consequently, one could think that the intuition of genius is precisely the intuition that Ideas of reason were lacking. The *intuition without concept* is what the *concept without intuition* was lacking. So that, in the first formula, it is the concepts of the understanding that are surpassed and disqualified; in the second, it is the intuitions of sensibility. But in the genius, creative intuition as the intuition of another nature and the concepts of reason as rational Ideas are united adequately.³² The rational Idea contains something inexpressible; but the aesthetic Idea expresses the inexpressible, through the creation of another nature. Thus the aesthetic Idea is truly a mode of presentation of Ideas, close to symbolism, although it operates differently. And it has an analogous effect: it "gives food for thought," it enlarges the concepts of the understanding in an unlimited manner, it frees the imagination from the constraints of the understanding. Genius "animates," "vivifies." As a meta-aesthetic principle, it makes possible, it engenders the aesthetic accord of the imagination and the understanding. It engenders each of the faculties in this accord – the imagination as free, the understanding as unlimited. The theory of genius

thus comes to fill the hole that was hollowed out between the beautiful in nature and the beautiful in art. This is why, after section 42 of the *Critique of Judgment* had disjoined the two types of the beautiful, sections 58 and 59 could restore their unity, under the idea of a genesis of the faculties that is common to them.

However, the parallel between the interest connected to the beautiful in nature and the genius related to the beautiful in art must not be overemphasized. For with genius, we enter into a much more complex genesis. In order to engender the accord of the imagination and the understanding, we had to leave behind the point of view of the spectator. Genius is the gift of the creator-artist. It is first of all in the artist that the imagination is freed and the understanding enlarged. The difficulty is this: how can the genesis have a universal scope, since it has the singularity of the genius as its rule? It indeed seems that, in genius, we did not find a universal subjectivity but rather an exceptional intersubjectivity. Genius is always an appeal cast toward the birth of other geniuses. But many deserts must be crossed before genius responds to genius. "Genius is the exemplary originality of the natural endowments of an individual in the free employment of his cognitive faculties. On this showing, the product of a genius is an example, not for imitation, but to be followed by another genius – one whom it arouses to a sense of his own originality in putting freedom from the constraint of rules so into force in his art that for art itself a new rule is won.... Genius is one of nature's elect – a type that must be regarded as but a rare phenomenon."³³ Nevertheless, this last difficulty is resolved if we consider that these genius-artists have two activities. On the one hand, they *create*, that is, they produce the *material* of their work, they push their imagination to a free creative function by inventing another nature adequate to Ideas. But on the other hand, artists also *form*; they adjust their free imagination to their indeterminate understanding, so that they give their work the form of an object of taste ("To give this form to the product of fine art, taste merely is required").³⁴ What is inimitable in genius is precisely the first aspect: the enormity of the Idea, the astonishing material, the

genial deformity. But under the second aspect, the work of genius can become an example for all. It inspires imitators, it arouses spectators, it engenders *everywhere* the free indeterminate accord of the imagination and the understanding that constitutes taste. Even if another genius has not responded to genius, we still are not in a simple desert. People of taste, students and admirers populate the interval between two geniuses, and allow expectation.³⁵ Thus, the genesis that begins with the genius effectively assumes a universal value (the genius of the creator engenders the accord of faculties in the spectator). "Taste, as judgment in general disciplines genius.... It introduces a clearness, an order into the plentitude of thought, and in so doing gives stability to the ideas, and qualifies them at once for permanent and universal approval, for being followed by others, and for a continually progressive culture."³⁶

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Kant's aesthetics thus presents us with three parallel geneeses: from the sublime, the genesis of the reason–imagination accord; from the interest connected with the beautiful, the genesis of the imagination–understanding accord with regard to the beautiful in nature; from genius, the genesis of the imagination–understanding accord with regard to the beautiful in art. Moreover, in each case, it is the faculties involved which are engendered in their free original state and in their reciprocal accord. The *Critique of Judgment* thus reveals to us a completely different domain than that of the two other critiques. The two preceding critiques started with already formed faculties, which entered into determinate relationships and assumed organized tasks under the chairmanship of one of the faculties: the understanding legislates in the speculative rational interest, and reason legislates in its own practical interest. When Kant tries to define the novelty of the *Critique of Judgment*, he says this: it assures both the *passage* from the speculative interest to the practical interest, and the subordination of the first to the second.³⁷ For example, the sublime already shows that the suprasensible destination of our faculties can only be explained as the predestination of a moral being; the

interest connected with the beautiful in nature bears witness to a soul destined to morality; and finally, genius itself allows us to integrate the artistically beautiful with the moral world, and to surmount the disjunction between the two types of beautiful (it is the beautiful in art, no less than the beautiful in nature, which is finally said to be a “symbol of morality”).³⁸

But if the *Critique of Judgment* opens a *passage* for us, it is first of all because it unveils a *ground* that remained hidden in the two other critiques. To take the idea of passage literally would make the *Critique of Judgment* a simple complement, a preparation; in fact, it constitutes the originary ground from which the two other critiques are derived. No doubt it shows how the speculative interest can be subordinated to the practical interest, how nature can accord with freedom, how our destination is a moral predestination. But it shows this only by relating judgment, inside the subject and outside of it, “to something which is *neither nature nor freedom*.”³⁹ The interest connected with the beautiful is in itself neither moral nor speculative. If we are destined to be moral beings, it is because this destiny develops or explicates a supra-sensible destination for all our faculties; the latter nonetheless remains enveloped as the true nucleus of our being, as a principle more profound than any formal destiny. This, in effect, is the meaning of the *Critique of Judgment*: beneath the determinate and conditioned relations of faculties, it discovers a free, indeterminate, and unconditioned accord. A determinate relation of the faculties, conditioned by one of them, would never be possible were it not first of all *made* possible by this free unconditioned accord. Moreover, the *Critique of Judgment* does not hold to the viewpoint of conditioning as it appeared in the other critiques: it makes us enter into their genesis. The three geneses of the *Critique of Judgment* are not only parallel, they converge toward a single principle: the discovery of what Kant calls the soul, that is, the supra-sensible unity of all our faculties, “the point of concentration,” the vivifying principle from which each faculty is “animated,” engendered in its free exercise, and in its free accord with the others.⁴⁰ An original free imagination, which is

not content to schematize under the constraint of the understanding; an original unlimited understanding, which has not yet folded under the speculative weight of its determinate concepts, or has not already been subjected to the ends of practical reason; an original reason that has not yet acquired the taste to command, but frees itself by freeing the other faculties – these are the extreme discoveries of the *Critique of Judgment*, each faculty finding the principle of its genesis by converging toward this focal point, the “point of concentration in the supra-sensible” from which all our faculties extract both their force and their life.

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Our problem was a double one. How to explain the fact that the connection between the exposition and the deduction of the judgment of beauty was interrupted by the analysis of the sublime, whereas the sublime has no corresponding deduction? And how to explain the fact that the deduction of the judgment of beauty is prolonged in the theories of interest, art, and genius, which seem to answer very different concerns? We believe that the system of the *Critique of Judgment*, in its first part, can be reconstituted in the following manner:

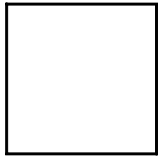
1. Analytic of the beautiful as exposition: *a formal aesthetic of the beautiful in general, from the point of view of the spectator*. The different moments of this analytic show that the understanding and the imagination enter into a free accord, and that this free accord is constitutive of the judgment of taste. In this manner, the aesthetic point of view of a spectator of the beautiful in general is defined. This point of view is formal, since the spectator reflects the form of the object. But the final moment of the analytic, that of modality, poses an essential problem. The free indeterminate accord must be a priori. Moreover, it is the most profound aspect of the soul; every determinate proportion of the faculties presupposes the possibility of this free and spontaneous harmony. In this sense, the *Critique of Judgment* must be the veritable ground of the other two critiques. It is there-

fore obvious that we cannot be content to presume the a priori accord of the understanding and the imagination in the judgment of taste. This accord must be the object of a transcendental genesis. But the analytic of the beautiful is unable to provide this genesis; it signals its necessity, but on its own it cannot go beyond a simple "presumption."

2. Analytic of the sublime, as both exposition and deduction: *a nonformal aesthetic of the sublime, from the point of view of the spectator*. Taste does not bring reason into play. The sublime, on the contrary, is explained by the free accord of reason and the imagination. But this new "spontaneous" accord is produced in very special conditions: in pain, in opposition, in constraint, in discord. Here, freedom or spontaneity is experienced in limit-regions, when faced with the unformed or the deformed. But the analytic of the sublime thereby gives us a genetic principle for the accord of the faculties that it puts into play. For this reason, it goes further than the analytic of the beautiful.
3. Analytic of the beautiful as deduction: *a material meta-aesthetic of the beautiful in nature, from the point of view of the spectator*. If the judgment of taste requires a particular deduction, it is because it is at least related to the form of the object; on the other hand, it in turn needs a genetic principle for the accord of the faculties it expresses between the understanding and the imagination. The sublime gives us a genetic model; it is necessary to find the equivalent for the beautiful, with other means. We are looking for a rule under which we can in principle presuppose the universality of aesthetic pleasure. As long as we are content to invoke the accord of the imagination and the understanding as a presumed accord, the deduction remains easy. The difficulty is to produce the a priori genesis of this accord. Now precisely because reason does not intervene in the judgment of taste, it can give us a principle from which the accord of the faculties in this judgment is engendered. There exists a rational interest connected to the beautiful: this meta-aesthetic interest bears upon the aptitude of nature to produce

beautiful things, and upon the materials nature utilizes for such "formations." Thanks to this interest, which is neither practical nor speculative, reason enlivens itself, enlarges the understanding, frees the imagination. It ensures the genesis of a free indeterminate accord of the imagination and the understanding. The two aspects of the deduction are thus joined together: an objective reference to a nature capable of producing beautiful things, and a subjective reference to a principle capable of engendering the accord of the faculties.

4. Result of the deduction in the theory of genius: *an ideal meta-aesthetic of the beautiful in art, from the point of view of the creator-artist*. The interest connected with the beautiful ensures the genesis only by excluding the case of artistic beauty. Genius thus intervenes as a meta-aesthetic principle characteristic of the faculties exercised in art. It has properties analogous to those of interest: it provides a material, it incarnates Ideas, it makes reason enliven itself, it frees the imagination and enlarges the understanding. But genius first of all exercises these properties from the point of view of the creation of a work of art. Finally, without losing its exceptional and singular character, genius must give a universal value to the accord it engenders, and communicate to the faculties of the spectator some of its own life and animation. Kant's aesthetic thus forms a systematic whole in which the three geneses are joined together.



notes

1 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986), Introduction, sects. 2–5.

2 Sect. 35.

3 On this theory of proportions, see sect. 21.

4 Sects. 14 and 51. In these two texts, Kant's argument is the following: colors and sounds would be truly aesthetic elements only if the imagination were capable of *reflecting* the vibrations that

genesis in kant

compose them; now this is doubtful, because the speed of the vibrations produces divisions in time that escape us. Section 51 nevertheless reserves for certain people the possibility of such a reflection.

5 Sect. 40.

6 Sect. 40.

7 Sect. 22.

8 Sects. 20–22.

9 Sect. 22.

10 Salomon Maimon, *Versuch über die Tranzendentalphilosophie* (Berlin: Vos, 1790); *Essai sur la philosophie transcendente*, trans. Jean-Baptiste Scherrer (Paris: Vrin, 1989).

11 Sect. 26.

12 Sect. 26.

13 Sect. 29, General Remark.

14 Ibid.

15 Sect. 29.

16 Sect. 30.

17 Sect. 38: "What makes this deduction so easy is that it is spared the necessity of having to justify the objective reality of a concept..."

18 Sect. 30.

19 Sect. 58.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Sect. 40. It is this paragraph that revives the problem of the deduction.

23 Sect. 42.

24 Ibid.

25 Sect. 58.

26 Sect. 59.

27 Sect. 42.

28 Sect. 42.

29 Sect. 46.

30 Sect. 47.

31 Sect. 49.

32 Sect. 57, Remark I.

33 Sect. 49.

34 Sect. 48.

35 Sect. 49.

36 Sect. 50.

37 Introduction, Sects. 3 and 9.

38 Sect. 59.

39 Ibid.

40 Sects. 49 and 57.

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