Over the Aesthetical Education of Man

In a Series of Letters

TRANSLATED BY WILLIAM F. WERTZ, JR.

First Letter

You wish thus to permit me, to place before you the results of my inquiries *into the beautiful* and *art* in a series of letters.

Livelily feel I the weight, but also the charm and the dignity of this undertaking. I shall speak of a subject, which stands with the best part of our happiness in an immediate, and with the moral nobility of human nature, in no very distant connection. I shall lead the cause of beauty before a heart, which feels and practices her whole might and which with an inquiry, where one is just as oft compelled, to appeal to feelings as to principles, will take upon itself the most difficult part of my business.

What I wanted to request of you as a favor, you make in a generous manner into a duty for me and leave me then the appearance of a merit, where I merely yield to my inclination. The freedom of action, which you prescribe to me, is no constraint, rather a need for me. Little practiced in the use of forms suited to schools, I shall scarcely be in danger, through misuse of the same, of sinning against good taste. My ideas, created more from uniform intercourse with my self than a rich experience of the world or acquired through lectures, will not deny their origin, will make themselves guilty of any other error rather than sectarianism and rather fall from their own weakness, than maintain themselves through authority and alien strength.

Indeed I will not conceal from you, that it is in greatest part Kantian principles, upon which the subsequent assertions will rest; but ascribe it to my inability, not to those principles, if you should be reminded in the course of these inquiries of any particular philosophical school. No, the freedom of your mind should be inviolable to me. Your own feeling will furnish me the facts upon which I build, your own free power of thought will dictate the laws, upon which I should proceed.

With regard to those ideas, which in the practical part of the Kantian system are the dominant, only the philosophers are divided in two, but men, I trust myself to prove, at all times have been at one. One liberates them from their technical form, and they become as the inveterate claims of common reason and appear as facts of the moral instincts, which wise nature appointed as guardian of man, until clear insight makes him of age. But even this technical form, which the truth manifests to the understanding, she again conceals from the feelings; for unfortunately the understanding must first destroy the object of the inner sense, if it will make it *itself* into its own. Like the chemist, so the philosopher as well finds the connection only through analysis and the work of voluntary nature only through the agony of art. In order to catch the fleeting appearance, he must put it in the fetters of rule, its beautiful body rend to pieces in conceptions and in a miserable skeleton of words preserve its living spirit. Is it a wonder, if the natural feeling doth not find itself once more in such an image and the truth appears in the report of the analyst as a paradox?

Permit me therefore as well some forbearance, if the following inquiries should remove their object from the sense, while they seek to draw it nearer to the understanding. What is true there of moral experience, must be true in a still higher degree of the appearance of

beauty. The entire magic of the same is based upon its mystery, and with the necessary bond of its elements its being is also dissolved.

Second Letter

But should I of the freedom, which is granted me by you, not perhaps be able to make a better use, than to engage your attention upon the theater of beautiful art? Is it not at least beyond the time, to look around for a book of laws for the aesthetical world, since the concerns of the moral offer a so much nearer interest and the philosophical spirit of inquiry is invited so forcibly by the circumstances of the time, to engage itself with the most perfect of all works of art, with the construction of a true political freedom?

I would not like to live in another century and to have worked for another. One is just as good a citizen of the age, as one is citizen of the state; and if it unseemly, yea unpermitted is found, oneself from the customs and practices of the circle, in which one lives, to exclude, why should it be less a duty, in the choice of one's activity to accord a voice to the wants and the taste of the century?

This voice seems however in no way to precipitate the benefit of art; at least not that, upon which alone my inquiries will be directed. The course of events hath given to the genius of the time a direction, which threatens to remove it yet more and more from the art of the ideal. This must leave reality and elevate itself with suitable boldness above want; for art is the daughter of freedom and from the necessity of the spirit, not from the pressing need of matter will she receive her prescriptions. Now however, want rules and sunken humanity bends under its tyrannical yoke. *Utility* is the great idol of the time, for which all powers slave and all talents should pay homage. Upon this coarse balance hath the spiritual merit of art no weight, and, robbed of all encouragement, it vanishes from the noisy mart of the century. Even the philosophical spirit of inquiry tears away from conceptual power one province after the other, and the limits of art narrow themselves, the more science enlarges her boundaries.

Full of expectation the eyes of the philosopher as of the man of the world are fastened upon the political theater of action, where now, as one believes, the great destiny of humanity is treated. Betrays it not a blameworthy indifference towards the welfare of society, not to share this universal discussion? So closely as this great action, because of its contents and its consequences, everyone, who calls himself a man, concerns, so much must it, because of its mode of discussion, especially interest every self-thinker. A question, which would otherwise only be answered through the blind right of the stronger, is now, as it seems, made pending before the tribunal of pure reason, and only he who is always able, to place himself in the center of the whole and to raise his individuality to that of the species, may regard himself as a member of that tribunal of reason, at the same time as he as man and world citizen is party and sees himself more nearly or distantly involved in the outcome. It is therefore not merely his own cause, which comes to a decision in this great action, it should also be declared according to laws, which he himself as a rational spirit is capable and entitled to dictate.

How attractive must it be for me, to take under investigation such a subject with one who is just as gifted a thinker as he is a liberal citizen of the world and to rely upon a heart, that devotes itself with beautiful enthusiasm to the welfare of humanity, for the decision. How pleasantly surprising, with a yet so great difference of position and with the wide distance, which the circumstances in the real world make necessary, to concur with your unprejudiced mind in the same result on the field of ideas! That I resist this alluring temptation and cause beauty to walk in front of freedom, I believe not merely to be able to excuse with my inclination, but to justify through principles. I hope, to convince you, that this matter is far less foreign to the wants than to the taste of the age, yea that one, in order to solve the political problem in experience, must take the path through the aesthetical, because it is

beauty, through which one proceeds to freedom. But this proof can not be offered, unless I bring to your remembrance the principles, through which reason chiefly guides itself in a political legislation.

Third Letter

Nature commences with man not any better than with her remaining works: she acts for him, where he is not yet able to act as a free intelligence for himself. But even that which makes him a man, that he doth not stand still at that, which bare nature made of him, rather possesses the capability, the steps, which she anticipated with him, to retrace through reason, in order to transform the work of necessity into his free choice and to elevate physical necessity to a moral.

He comes to himself out of his sensual slumber, recognizes himself as a man, looks around himself and finds himself--in the state. The force of necessity threw him into it, before he could choose this condition in his freedom; necessity established the same according to mere laws of nature, before *he* could according to laws of reason. But with this state of necessity, which had only arisen from his natural determination and also had only been calculated upon this, could and can he not be satisfied as a moral person----and bad for him if he could! He therefore abandons, with the same right, wherewith he is a man, the rule of a blind necessity, as he parts from it in so many other respects through his freedom, as he, in order to give just *one* example, extinguishes through morality and ennobles through beauty the common character, which need impressed upon sexual love. So he later makes up, in an artificial manner, for his childhood in his majority, forms for himself a *natural condition* in the idea, which is given him indeed through no experience, but is established necessarily through the determination of his reason, lends to himself a purpose in this ideal state, of which he was not conscious in his real natural condition, and a choice, of which he was not then capable, and now proceeds not otherwise, than if he commenced anew and exchanged the condition of independence out of clear insight and free determination for a condition of compacts. However artfully and firmly blind caprice may have founded its work, however arrogantly it may maintain it and with whatever appearance of veneration may surround it--he may, with this operation, consider it as fully undone, for the work of blind power possesses no authority, before which freedom need bow, and all must accommodate itself to the highest purpose, which reason erects in his personality. In this way the attempt of a people come of age, to transform its natural state into a moral, arises and justifies itself.

This natural state (as any political body can be called, which derives its establishment originally from forces, not from laws) indeed now contradicts the moral man, whom mere legality should serve as law, but it is nevertheless sufficient for the physical man, who for this reason only gives himself laws, to accommodate himself to force. Now however the physical man is *real*, and the moral only *problematical*. Thus reason lifts the natural state, as she necessarily must, when she wants to place that of her own in its stead, thus she weighs the physical and real man against the problematical moral, thus she weighs the existence of society against a merely possible (although morally necessary) ideal of society. She takes from man something, that he really possesses, and without which he possesses naught, and assigns him something therefor, that he could and should possess; and had she reckoned too much on him, so would she for a humanity, which he is still wanting and can be wanting without detriment to his existence, have deprived him of even the means of animal existence, which however is the condition of his humanity. Before he had had time, to adhere to the law with his will, she would have pulled the ladder of nature out from under his feet.

The great deliberation is therefore, that the physical society may not cease *in time* for a moment, whilst the moral forms itself *in the idea*, that his existence may not fall into danger

for the sake of the dignity of man. If the artist hath to repair a clockwork, so he lets the wheels run down; but the living clockwork of the state must be repaired, whilst it strikes, and here it means, to exchange the rolling wheel during its revolution. One must therefore search for a support for the continuance of society, which makes it independent of the natural state, which one wants to dissolve.

This support doth not find itself in the natural character of man, which, selfishly and violently, aims much more towards the destruction than towards the preservation of society; it finds itself just as little in his moral character, which, according to the hypothesis, should first be formed, and which, because it is free and *because it never appears*, could never be worked and never with certainty be reckoned upon by the lawgiver. It would therefore depend thereon, to separate the caprice of the physical character and the freedom of the moral--it would depend thereon, to make the former harmonious with law, the latter dependent upon impressions--it would depend thereon, to distance the former somewhat further from matter, to bring the latter somewhat nearer to it--in order to produce a third character, which, related with these both, prepared a transition from the rule of naked force to the rule of law, without hindering the moral character in its development, but served rather as a sensual pledge of invisible morality.

Fourth Letter

Thus much is certain: only the predominance of such a character in a people can make a state transformation according to moral principles uninjurious, and also only such a character can guarantee its duration. In the establishment of such a moral state the moral law is reckoned upon as an active power, and free will is drawn into the realm of causes, where all things hang together mutually with stringent necessity and constancy. We know however, that the determination of human will remains always accidental and that only in the Absolute Being doth the physical necessity coincide with the moral. Thus if the moral conduct of man should be relied upon as upon *natural* results, so it must *be* nature, and he must surely be led through his instincts to such a proceeding, as only a moral character can always bring about. The will of man stands perfectly free between duty and inclination, and no physical necessity can and may seize the majestic right of his person. Should he therefore retain this power of choice and notwithstanding be a dependable link in the causal chain of forces, so can this only be effected thereby, that the effects of both those instinctive springs sally forth perfectly equally in the realm of appearances and, with every difference of form, the matter of his volition remains the same; that therefore his instincts are sufficiently harmonious with his reason, in order to be of use as universal legislation.

Every individual man, one can say, carries by predisposition and destiny, a purely ideal man within himself, to agree with whose immutable unity in all his alterations is the great task of his existence.[1] This pure man, who gives himself to be recognized more or less distinctly in every subject, is represented through the *state*; the objective and as it were canonical form, in which the multiplicity of the subjects strives to unite itself. Now however let two different ways be considered, how the man in time can coincide with the man in the idea, hence just as many, how the state can maintain itself in the individual; either thereby, that the pure man suppresses the empirical, that the state abolishes the individual; or thereby, that the individual *becomes* the state, that the man of time *ennobles* himself to the man in the idea.

Indeed, in the one-sided valuation this difference falls away; for reason is satisfied, if her law alone is valued unconditionally: but in the complete anthropological valuation, where with the form also the content is considered and the living feeling likewise hath a voice, the same will come so much the more into consideration. Unity demands indeed reason, nature however multiplicity, and man is claimed by both legislations. The law of the former is

imprinted upon him through an incorruptible consciousness, the law of the other through an indelible feeling. Hence it will everytime bespeak of a still deficient education, if the moral character can maintain itself only with the self-sacrifice of the natural; and a state constitution will still be very imperfect, which is only capable of effecting unity through the suppression of multiplicity. The state should not merely respect the objective and general, it should also respect the subjective and specific character in the individual and, whilst it spreads the invisible realm of the moral, should not depopulate the realm of appearance.

When the mechanical artist places his hand on the formless mass, in order to give it the form of his purpose, so he hath no hesitation, to do it violence; for the nature, upon which he works, deserves no respect for itself, and he is not interested in the whole for the sake of its parts, rather in the parts for the sake of the whole. When the artist of beauty lays his hand on the same mass, so he hath even less hesitation, to do it violence, he only avoids, to show it. The stuff, upon which he works he doth not respect in the least more than the mechanical artist; but the eyes, which take the freedom of this stuff under protection, he will seek to deceive through an apparent forbearance towards the same. It is entirely different with the pedagogical and political artist, who immediately makes man into his material and into his task. Here the purpose returns to the stuff, and only because the whole serves the parts, the parts may accommodate themselves to the whole. With an entirely different respect, than is that, which the artist of beauty shows his material, must the artist of the state approach that of his, and he must not merely subjectively and for an illusory effect on the senses, but rather objectively and for the inner essence spare its peculiarity and personality.

But for just this reason, because the state should be an organization which forms itself through itself and for itself, so can it also only in so far become real, as the parts have raised themselves to the idea of the whole. Because the state serves as representative of pure and objective humanity in the breast of its citizens, so will it have to observe the same relationship towards its citizens, in which they stand to themselves, and also only be able to respect their subjective humanity to *the* degree, that it is ennobled to the objective. Is the inner man one with himself, so will he even in the highest universalization of his conduct save his peculiarity, and the state will be merely the interpreter of his beautiful instincts, the more distinct formula of his inner legislation. On the contrary, offers the subjective man in the character of a people still such contradictory resistance to the objective, that only the suppression of the former can create victory for the latter, so the state will also take up the severe earnestness of the law, and, in order not to be its victim, will have to crush under its feet a so hostile individuality without respect.

Man can, however, be opposed to himself in a twofold manner: either as a savage, if his feelings rule over his principles; or as a barbarian, if his principles destroy his feelings. The savage despises art and recognizes nature as his unrestricted master; the barbarian derides and disrespects nature but, more contemptible than the savage, he frequently enough continues, to be the slave of his slaves. The educated man makes nature into his friend and honors its freedom, while he merely bridles its caprice.

When reason therefore brings her moral unity into physical society, so she may not damage the multiplicity of nature. When nature strives to maintain her multiplicity in the moral structure of society, so may occur thereby no breach in the moral unity; equally far from uniformity and confusion rests the victorious form. *Totality* of character must therefore be found in the people, which should be capable and worthy, to exchange the state of necessity for the state of freedom.

Notes

1. I refer here to a recently published work: “Lectures on the Destiny of the Savant,” by my

friend Fichte, where a very lucid and never before in this manner attempted derivation of this proposition is found.

Fifth Letter

Is it this character, which the present age, which the current events manifest to us? I direct my attention at once to the most prominent object in this vast picture.

True is it, the repute of opinion is fallen, caprice is unmasked, and, although still armed with power, yet it obtains no more dignity; man is aroused from his long indolence and self-deception, and with an emphatic majority he demands the restoration of his inalienable rights. But he doth not merely demand them, on that side and this side he rises up, to take by force, what in his opinion is wrongfully denied him. The edifice of the natural state rocks, its worn out foundations give way, and a *physical* possibility seems given, to place the law upon the throne, to honor man finally as an end in himself and to make true freedom the basis of political union. Vain hope! The *moral* possibility is wanting; and the generous moment finds an unresponsive people.

In his deeds man paints himself, and what form is it, which is reflected in the drama of the present time! Here return to a savage state, there a state of enervation: The two greatest extremes of human degeneration, and both united in *one* space of time.

In the lower and more numerous classes brutal lawless instincts present themselves to us, which unleash themselves after the dissolved bond of the civil order and hasten with unruly fury to their animal satisfaction. It may therefore be, that the objective humanity had had cause, to complain of the state; the subjective must honor its institutions. May one blame him, that he placed the dignity of human nature out of sight, so long it still mattered, to defend its existence? That he hastened, to separate through force of gravity and to bind through the force of cohesion, where he was no longer to think of the educating? Its dissolution contains its justification. The unfastened society, instead of hastening upward into organic life, falls back into the elemental realm.

On the other side, the civilized classes give us the still adverse sight of slackness and of a depravity of character, which revolts so much the more, because culture itself is its source. I no longer remember, which ancient or modern philosopher made the observation, that the more noble would be in its destruction the more horrible, but one will find it true as well in the moral. From the son of nature emerges, when he indulges in excess, a raving madman; from the pupil of art a worthless villain. The enlightenment of the understanding, on which the refined classes not entirely with injustice pride themselves, shows in the whole so little an ennobling influence on the inner convictions, that it rather strengthens the corruption through maxims. We deny nature on her legitimate field, in order to experience her tyranny on the moral, and while we resist her impressions, we receive our principles from her. The affected decency of our manners refuses her the pardonable *first* voice, in order to yield to her, in our materialistic ethics, the decisive *last*. In the very bosom of the most refined social life egoism hath founded its system, and without producing a social heart, we experience all contagions and all tribulations of society. Our free judgment we subject to its despotic opinion, our feeling to its bizarre customs, our will to its seductions, only our caprice do we maintain against her holy rights. Proud self-sufficiency contracts the heart of the man of the world, that still frequently beats sympathetically in the brutal man of nature, and as from a burning city everyone seeks only to rescue his miserable property from the devastation. Only in a complete renunciation of sentimentality doth one think to find shelter from its aberrations, and mockery, which often wholesomely chastises the schwaermer, slanders with equally little forbearance the noblest feeling. Culture, far removed, to place us in freedom, develops with every power, which it forms in us, only a new want, the bonds of the physical always tie

themselves up more anxiously, so that the fear, to lose, stifles even the fiery instinct towards improvement and the maxims of suffering obedience are considered the highest wisdom of life. Thus one sees the spirit of the time waver between perversity and brutality, between the unnatural and mere nature, between superstition and moral unbelief, and it is merely the equal weight of evils, which at times still places limits upon him.

Sixth Letter

Should I with this description of the age indeed have done too much? I do not expect this reproach, but rather another: that I have proven too much thereby. This picture, you will say to me, indeed resembles the present humanity, but it resembles primarily all peoples, who are engaged in culture, because all must indiscriminately fall away from nature through sophistry, before they can return to her through reason.

But with some attention to the character of the times, the contrast must put us in astonishment, which is encountered between the present form of humanity and between the previous, especially the Greek. The glory of education and refinement, which we with justice put forward as against every other *mere* nature, cannot stand us in good stead in comparison to the Greek, which was married to all the charms of art and to all the dignity of wisdom, but without, like ours, being the sacrifice of the same. The Greeks shame us not merely through a simplicity, which is foreign to our age; they are at the same time our rivals, yea frequently our models in the same good qualities, with which we are wont to comfort ourselves over the natural unpleasantness of our manners. At once full of form and full of abundance, at once philosophizing and creating, at once tender and energetic, we see them unite the youth of phantasy with the manliness of reason in a glorious humanity.

At that time, with that beautiful awakening of the powers of the mind, the senses and the mind still had no rigidly separated peculiarity; for no conflict had yet provoked them, to hostilely part from one another and to determine their border. Poetry had not yet had illicit intercourse with wit and speculation had not yet violated itself through sophistry. Both could in case of need exchange their functions, because each, only in his own way, honored truth. As high as reason also climbed, so it yet always drew matter lovingly after it, and as purely and sharply as it also separated, so it yet never mutilated. It indeed dissected human nature and presented it magnified in its glorious circle of gods but not thereby, that it tore it to pieces, rather thereby, that it mixed it repeatedly, for the whole of humanity was missing in no individual god. How entirely different with moderns! Likewise with us is the image of the species presented magnified in individuals--but in fragments, not in altered mixtures, such that one must ask around from individual to individual, in order to gather together the totality of the species. Among us, one would almost attempt to assert, the mental powers express themselves in experience as well as separated, as the psychologist separates them in the representation, and we do not see merely the individual subject, but rather entire classes of men unfold only a part of their natural gifts, while the rest, as with stunted plants, scarcely are suggested with a faint trace.

I am not unaware of the good qualities, which the present age, regarded as unity and upon the balance of the understanding, may maintain before the best in former ages; but in closed ranks must it begin the contest and the whole must measure itself as against the whole. Which individual modern steps forth, to contend man against man with the individual Athenian for the prize of humanity?

Whence indeed this disadvantageous relation of individuals with every advantage of the species? Why did the individual Greek qualify himself to represent his time, and why may the individual modem not dare this? Because to the former the all-uniting nature, to the latter the all-dividing understanding imparted his forms.

It was culture itself, which inflicted these wounds upon modern humanity. So soon on the one side the enlarged experience and the more determinate thinking made necessary a sharper separation of the sciences, on the other side the more complicated clockwork of the state a stricter division of ranks and occupations, so likewise the inner bond of human nature ruptured, and a destructive struggle divided her harmonious powers. The intuitive and speculative understanding dispersed themselves now hostilely-minded upon their different fields, whose boundaries now began to be guarded with mistrust and jealousy, and with the sphere, upon which one confined its effectiveness, one hath given also unto oneself a lord, who not seldom is wont to end with the suppression of the remaining abilities. Whilst here the luxuriant conceptual power devastates the laborious plantings of the understanding, there the spirit of abstraction extinguishes the fire, in which the heart had been warmed and phantasy should be kindled.

This disruption, which art and learning began in the inner man, made the new spirit of government complete and universal. It was of course not to be expected, that the simple organization of the first republic survived the simplicity of the first customs and relations, but instead of climbing to a higher animal life, it sank down to a common coarse mechanism. The polyp-nature of the Greek state, where each individual enjoyed an independent life and, if it were necessary, could become the whole, now made place for an elaborate clockwork, where from the disintegration into the infinitely many, but inanimate parts, a mechanical life is formed in the whole. Torn asunder now were the state and the church, the laws and the customs; enjoyment was separated from the work, the means from the end, the effort from the reward. Eternally chained to only a single fragment of the whole, man only develops himself as a fragment, eternally only the monotonous noise of the wheel, that he revolves, in the ear, he never develops the harmony of his being, and instead of impressing humanity upon his nature, he becomes merely an imprint of his business, of his science. But even the scanty fragmentary part, which still knits the individual member to the whole, doth not depend upon forms, which they automatically give themselves (for how might one confide such an artificial and light-shunning clockwork to their freedom?), but rather is prescribed to them with scrupulous severity through a formula, in which one holds their free insight bound. The dead letter replaces the living understanding, and a practiced memory guides more safely than genius and feeling.

If the common being makes the office the measure of the man, if it honors in one of its citizens only the memory, in another the tabular understanding, in a third only mechanical facility, if it here, indifferent to character, insists only on knowledge, there on the other hand allows the greatest darkness of the understanding to the benefit of the spirit of order and a lawful behavior--if it at the same time wants to see these individual facilities driven to a just as great intensity, as it permits the subject to forego in extension--may we then wonder, that the remaining abilities of the mind are neglected, in order to the one, which honors and rewards, to devote all care? Indeed we know, that the powerful genius doth not make the limits of his business into the limits of his activity, but the mediocre talent consumes in the business, that falls to his lot, the whole scanty sum of his energy, and it must no doubt be no common head, in order, without detriment to his profession, to reserve the remainder for favorite pursuits. Moreover it is seldom a good recommendation with the state, if one's powers exceed one's commission, or if the higher spiritual needs of the man of genius provide a rival to his office. So jealous is the state of the exclusive possession of its servants, that it is easier to be decided thereon (and who can find it unjustified), to share its man with a Venus Cytherea than with a Venus Urania.

And so the individual concrete life is then gradually extirpated, therewith the abstract of the whole may devour his scanty existence, and eternally the state remains foreign to its citizens, because feeling doth not find it anywhere. Compelled to relieve itself of the

multiplicity of its citizens through classification and to receive humanity never otherwise than through second hand representation, the governing part at last loses sight of it altogether, whilst it confuses it with a mere concoction of the understanding; and the governed can receive not otherwise than with coldness the laws, which are so little directed to himself. Finally weary of entertaining a bond, the which is lightened so little by the state, the positive society falls to pieces (which is long since the fate of most European states) in a moral natural condition, where the public power is only one party *more*, hated and deceived by those, who make it necessary, and only by those, who can do without it, respected.

Could humanity with this double power, which presses upon it from within and without, indeed take another direction than it actually took? Whilst the speculative mind strove in the realm of ideas after inalienable possessions, it had to become a stranger in the sensual world and lose the matter on account of the form. The spirit of business encompassed in a uniform circle of objects and in this restricted still more by formulas, had to see the free whole removed from its sight and at the same time impoverished within its sphere. Just as the former is tempted, to model the actual after the thinkable and to elevate the subjective conditions of his power of imagination to constitute laws for the existence of things, so the latter rushed to the opposite extreme, to value all experience on the whole based upon a particular fragment of experience and to wish the rules of his business to adapt to every business without distinction. The one had to become prey to an empty subtlety, the other to a pedantic narrow-mindedness, because the former stood too high for the individual, the latter too low for the whole. But the disadvantage of this direction of mind did not confine itself merely to knowledge and bringing forth; it extended itself no less to feeling and action. We know, that the sensibility of the mind depends, for its degree upon the liveliness, for its extent upon the richness of the conceptual power. But now the predominance of the analytical capability must necessarily rob phantasy of its power and its fire and a more restricted sphere of objects diminish its richness. The abstract thinker hath for this reason very often a *cold* heart, because he analyzes impressions, which yet only move the soul as a totality; the businessman hath very often a *narrow* heart, because his conceptual power, confined in the uniform circle of his profession, can not expand itself to a foreign mode of conception.

It lay in my path, to uncover the disadvantageous direction of the character of the time and its sources, not to show the advantages, whereby nature makes it good. Gladly will I admit to you, that, as little as individuals can enjoy the dismemberment of their being, yet the species had been able to make progress in no other mode. The appearance of Grecian humanity was incontestably a maximum, that could on these steps neither continue nor climb higher. Not continue; for the understanding through the supply, which it already had, had to be compelled inevitably, to separate itself from the feeling and intuition and to strive towards clarity of knowledge: also not climb higher; because only a determinate degree of clearness can exist together with a determinate fullness and warmth. The Greeks had achieved this degree, and if they wanted to progress to a higher development, so must they as we, give up the totality of their being and pursue the truth on separate roads.

To develop the manifold abilities in man, there was no other means, than to place them in opposition to one another. This antagonism of forces is the great instrument of culture, but also only the instrument; for so long as the same lasts, one is only on the road to this one. Thereby alone, that individual forces are isolated in man and take upon themselves an exclusive legislation, they come into conflict with the truth of things and compel the common sense which otherwise rests with lazy contentedness upon the external appearance, to penetrate into the depths of objects. Whilst the pure understanding usurps an authority in the sensual world and the empirical is engaged, to subject it to the conditions of experience, both talents develop themselves to the highest possible ripeness and exhaust the whole extent of their sphere. Whilst here the conceptual power dares through its caprice to extinguish the

world order, there it compels reason, to climb to the supreme sources of knowledge and to invoke against it the law of necessity for help.

One-sidedness in the exercise of its powers leads the individual inevitably to error, but the species to truth. Thereby alone, that we assemble the whole energy of our mind in *one* focal point and concentrate our whole being in a single power, we add wings to this single power as it were and lead it thence artificially far beyond the bounds, which nature seems to have imposed on it. So certain is it, that all human individuals, taken together, with the power of sight, which nature grants them, never would have come thither, to spy out a satellite of Jupiter, which the telescope of the astronomer discovers; just as completely certain is it, that the human mental power never would have produced an analysis of infinity or a critique of the pure reason, if the reason had not separated itself into particular- thereto-destined subjects, had as it were unwound itself from all matter and had armed its view into the unconditioned through the most unremitting abstraction. But will indeed such a mind, as it were, dissolved in pure understanding and pure intuition, be capable thereof, to exchange the severe fetters of logic for the free action of the power of poetry and to seize the individuality of things with faithful and chaste sense? Here nature even imposes a limit on the universal genius, which it can not overstep, and the truth will make martyrs so long as philosophy must still make it her principal business, to make preparations against error.

However much may therefore be won for the whole of the world through this divided cultivation of human powers, so it is not to be denied, that the individuals, who encounter it, suffer under the curse of this world aim. Through gymnastic exercises athletic bodies are developed, but only through the free and uniform play of the limbs is beauty. Just so, the harnessing of individual powers of mind can indeed produce extraordinary, but only the uniform temperature of the same, happy and perfect men. And in which relationship stand we to past and coming ages, if the education of human nature made such a sacrifice necessary? We had been the servants of mankind, we had engaged in slave labor for it for a few thousand years and impressed upon our mutilated nature the shameful traces of this servitude-- therewith the later generation could await in a happy idleness their moral health and develop the free growth of its humanity!

However can man indeed be certain thereof, to neglect himself for some other end? Should nature be able to rob us through her own ends of a perfection, which reason prescribes to us through hers? It must therefore be false, that the cultivation of individual powers makes the sacrifice of their totality necessary; or if even the law of nature yet strove so much thither, so must it stand with us, to reestablish this totality in our nature, which art hath destroyed, through a higher art.

Seventh Letter

Should this effect perhaps be expected from the state? That is not possible, for the state, as it is now constituted, hath occasioned evil, and the state, as reason conceives it in the idea, instead of being able to found this better humanity, had to be grounded thereupon. And thus had the previous inquiries led me back once again to the point, from which they took me away for some time. The present age, far removed, from showing us this form of humanity, which is become recognized as a necessary condition of a moral improvement of the state, on the contrary shows us the direct opposite therefrom. Are therefore the principles, advanced by me, correct, experience confirms my picture of the present age, so must one declare every attempt of such an alteration of state as untimely and every thereupon-grounded hope as chimerical, until the division in the inner man is once again dissolved and his nature is sufficiently fully developed, in order itself to be the artist and to guarantee the reality of the

political creation of reason.

Nature shows us the way in her physical creation, which one hath to travel in the moral. Not earlier, than until the struggle of elementary forces in the lower organizations is pacified doth she elevate herself to the noble form of the physical man. Even so must the elementary strife in the ethical man, the conflict of blind instincts, be at first becalmed, and the coarse antagonism must have ceased in himself, before one may dare, to favor multiplicity. On the other side, the independence of his character must be secured and the subservience to foreign despotic forms have made place for a decent freedom, before one may subordinate the multiplicity in him to the unity of the ideal. Where the natural man still abuses his caprice so lawlessly, there one may scarcely show him his freedom; where the artificial man still employs his freedom so little, there one may not take his Caprice from him. The gift of liberal principles becomes treason to the whole, when it associates itself with a still fermenting force and transmits strength to an already too powerful nature; the law of conformity becomes tyranny against the individual, when it knits itself to an already ruling weakness and physical restriction and so extinguishes the last glimmering spark of self-activity and particularity.

The character of the time must therefore raise itself up first from its deep degradation, there escape the blind power of nature and here return to its simplicity, truth and fullness; a task for more than one century. Meanwhile, I gladly admit, some attempt in the particular can succeed, but nothing will be improved on the whole thereby, and the contradiction of conduct will always be proof against the unity of maxims. One will in another part of the world honor humanity in the negro and in Europe revile it in the thinker. The old principles will remain, but they will wear the clothes of the century, and to an oppression, which the church at other times authorized, philosophy will lend its name. Alarmed by freedom, which in its first attempts always announces itself as an enemy, one will there throw oneself into the arms of a comfortable servitude and here, brought to despair by a pedantic tutelage, escape into the wild license of the natural condition. The usurpation will plead the weakness of human nature, insurrection the dignity of the same, until finally the great ruler of all human things, blind force, steps in between and decides the ostensible contest of principles like a common boxing-match.

Eighth Letter

Should philosophy therefore, dejectedly and without hope, retreat from this domain? Whilst the dominion of forms extends itself in every other direction, should this most important of all goods be abandoned to formless chance? Should the conflict of blind forces continue eternally in the political world and the social law never triumph over hostile egoism?

Not in the least! Reason herself will indeed, with this raw might, which resists her arms, not directly attempt combat and as little, as the son of Saturn in the Iliad, acting on her own, descend to the dark field of action. However from the midst of the combatants she selects the worthiest, beclothes him, as Zeus his grandson, with godly arms and through his triumphing force brings about the great decision.

Reason hath performed, what she can perform, when she finds and promulgates the law; it must be executed by the courageous will and the living feeling. If truth should obtain victory in struggle with force, so must she herself first become *force* and advance an *instinct* to plead her cause in the realm of phenomena; for instincts are the only moving forces in the sensible world. Hath she until now her triumphing force yet so little demonstrated, so this is not due to the understanding, which she did not know to unveil, but rather to the heart, which remained closed to her, and to the instinct, which did not act on her behalf.

For whence this still so universal dominion of prejudices and this darkness of the head in the midst of all the light, that philosophy and experience turned on? The age is enlightened, that is, the knowledge is discovered and publicly revealed, which would suffice, to rectify at least our practical principles. The spirit of free inquiry dispelled the delusions, which for a long time barred access to the truth, and undermined the grounds, upon which fanaticism and fraud erected their throne. Reason hath purified herself from the deceptions of the senses and from a fraudulent sophistry, and philosophy herself, which at first made us faithless to her, calls us loudly and urgently back into the bosom of nature--whereon is it, that we are still always barbarians?

There must therefore, since it doth not lie in things, be something present in the minds of men, which stands in the way of the reception of truth, even if she radiated yet so brightly, and the acceptance of the same, even if she persuaded yet so livelily. An ancient wise man hath perceived it and it lies concealed in the many-meaning expression: sapere aude.

Embolden thyself, to be wise. Energy of courage is needed therefor, to combat the hindrances with which the inertia of nature as well as the cowardice of the heart oppose instruction. Not without meaning the ancient mythos caused the goddess of wisdom to emerge in full armament from Jupiter's head; for her first action is already warlike. Already at birth hath she a hard battle to endure with the senses, which do not want to be torn from their sweet repose. The more numerous part of mankind is far too much exhausted and enervated by the battle with necessity, to rally itself to a new and harder battle with error. Satisfied, if it itself avoids the hard labor of thinking, it gladly abandons the guardianship of its conceptions to others, and if it happens, that higher needs are aroused in it, so it grasps with thirsting faith the formula, which the state and the priesthood hold in readiness for this case. If these unhappy men deserve our compassion, so our just contempt befalls the others, whom a better lot sets free from the yoke of want, but their own choice bends thereunder. These prefer the twilight of obscure conceptions, where one feels more livelily and phantasy fashions comfortable forms at its own pleasure, to the beams of truth, which chase away the pleasant deceptions of their dreams. Upon these very delusions, which the hostile light of knowledge should dispel, have they founded the entire edifice of their happiness, and should they purchase a truth so dearly, which commences therewith, to take everything from them, which possesses worth for them? They had to already be wise, in order to love wisdom: a truth, which that one already felt, who gave philosophy its name.

Not enough therefore, that all enlightenment of the understanding only deserves respect insofar, as it flows back upon the character; it proceeds also to a certain extent from the character, since the way to the head must be opened through the heart. Development of the capacity of feeling is therefore the more pressing need of the time, not merely because it is a means, to make the improved insight into life effective, but rather even therefore, because it awakens to improvement of insight.

Ninth Letter

However is this not perhaps a circle? Theoretical culture should bring about the practical and the practical be yet the condition of the theoretical? All improvement in the political should proceed from the ennoblement of the character--but how can the character ennoble itself under the influence of a barbarous state constitution? One had thus to search for an instrument to achieve this end, which the state doth not provide, to open up springs thereto, which preserve themselves pure and clear in the midst of every political corruption.

Now I have reached the point, to which all my previous considerations have striven. This instrument is beautiful art, these springs open up in its immortal models.

From everything, that is positive and that human conventions established, art like science

is released, and both enjoy an absolute *immunity* from the caprice of man. The political lawgiver can cordon off her domain, but he can not rule therein. He can banish the friend of truth, but the truth subsists; he can degrade the artist, but he can not falsify art. Indeed there is nothing more common, than that both, science and art pay homage to the spirit of the age and the creative taste receives the law from the critical. Where the character grows rigid and hardens itself, there we see science guard her boundaries strictly and art proceed in the heavy fetters of rules; where the character relaxes and loosens up, there will science strive to please and art to gratify. For entire centuries philosophers like artists have shown themselves engaged, to plunge truth and beauty down into the depths of vulgar humanity; the former go under therein, but with their own indestructible vital power the latter struggle upwards victoriously.

The artist is indeed the son of his time, but bad for him, if he is at the same time its pupil or even yet its favorite. A beneficent deity snatches the suckling betimes from his mother's breast, nourishes him with the milk of a better age and lets him mature under distant Grecian skies to full age. If he is then become a man, he thus returns, a strange form, to his century; but not, in order to please it with his appearance, but rather, frightful as Agamemnon’s son, in order to purify it. The matter will he indeed take from the present, but the form derive from a nobler time, yea beyond all time, from the absolute immutable unity of his essence. Here from the pure ether of his daemonic nature flows forth the spring of beauty, uncontaminated by the corruption of the generations and ages, which roll deep beneath it in turbid eddies. Its matter whim can dishonor, as it hath ennobled it, but the chaste form is removed from its alteration. The Roman of the first century had long ago already bent his knee to his emperor, when the statues still stood upright, the temples remained holy to the eye, when the gods long ago were fit for laughter, and the disgraceful crimes of a Nero and of a Commodus were put to shame by the noble style of the building, which gave its cover thereto. Humanity hath lost its dignity, but art hath saved it and preserved it in meaningful stone; the truth lives on in illusion, and from the copy the original will be restored. So as noble art *survived* noble nature, so too she strode ahead of the same in inspiration, forming and awakening. Yet before truth sends her triumphing light into the depths of the heart, the power of poetry intercepts her beams, and the summits of humanity will glisten, when a damp night still lies in the valleys.

But how doth the artist preserve himself before the corruptions of his time, which surround him from every side? If he despises its judgment. He glances upwards towards his dignity and the law, not downwards towards fortune and need. Equally free from vain activity, which would gladly impress its trace on the fleeting moment, and from the impatient schwaermer spirit, which employs the measure of the unconditioned to the miserable offspring of time, let him abandon to the understanding, which here is at home, the sphere of the actual; let him strive however, to produce the ideal from the bond of the possible with the necessary. Let him stamp this on illusion and truth, stamp it on the play of his creative power and on the earnestness of his deeds, stamp it on all sensuous and spiritual forms and hurl it silently into infinite time.

But not on everyone, in whom this ideal glows in the soul, was the creative repose and the great patient sense bestowed, to impress it upon the silent stone or to pour it forth in the sober word and to entrust it to the faithful hands of time. Much too stormy, to proceed by these peaceful means, the godly instinct of form often plunges immediately into the present and into active life and undertakes, to remold the formless matter of the moral world. Urgently the unhappiness of his species speaks to the feeling man, more urgently its degradation; enthusiasm is inflamed, and the glowing desire strives in powerful souls impatiently to the deed. But did he also ask himself, if these disorders in the moral world offend his reason or not rather cause pain to his self-love? Knows he it not yet, so will he recognize it by the eagerness, wherewith he presses for definite and expedited effects. The pure moral instinct is

directed at the unconditioned, there is no time for it, and the future becomes the present to it, so soon it must necessarily develop out of the present. Before a reason without limits is the direction at once the completion, and the way is traversed so soon it is taken.

Give thus, I shall give as answer to the young friend of truth and beauty, who would know from me, how he may satisfy the noble instinct in his breast, in the face of all the opposition of the century, give the world, upon which thou actest, the *direction* towards the good, so will the calm rhythm of time bring the development. This direction thou hast given it, when thou, teaching, elevatest its thoughts to the necessary and eternal, when thou acting or forming, transformest the necessary and eternal into an object of its instinct. The structure of delusion will fall and of arbitrariness, it must fall, it hath already fallen, so soon thou art certain that it inclines; but in the inner, not merely in the outer man must it incline. In the modest stillness of thy heart educate the victorious truth, set it forth from within thyself in beauty, that not merely the thoughts pay homage to it, but rather also the sense lovingly seizes its appearance. And therewith lest it befall thee, to receive the model from the actual, that thou shouldst give it, so venture not sooner into its doubtful society, until thou art assured of an ideal following in thy heart. Live with thy century, but be not its creature; give to thy contemporaries, but what they need, not what they praise. Without having shared their guilt, share with noble resignation their punishments and bend with freedom beneath the yoke, that they equally badly dispense with and bear. Through the steadfast courage, with which thou despisest their fortune, wilt thou prove, that thy cowardice doth not submit to their sufferings. Imagine them to thee, as they should be, if thou hast to act upon them, but imagine them to thee, as they are, if thou wilt attempt to act for them. Seek their applause through their dignity, but upon their unworthiness reckon their happiness, so there will thine own nobility awaken that of theirs and here their unworthiness not destroy thy purpose. The earnestness of thy principles will frighten them away from thee, but in play they bear them still; their taste is more chaste than their heart, and here must thou seize the shy fugitive. Their maxims wilt thou storm in vain, their deeds condemn in vain, but thou canst try thy forming hand upon their idleness. Chase away the caprice, the frivolity, the roughness from their pleasures, so wilt thou banish them imperceptibly too from their actions, finally from their character. Where thou findest them, surround them with noble, with great, with ingenious forms, enclose them all around with symbols of excellence, until appearance overcomes reality and art, nature.

Tenth Letter

You are thus at one with me thereon and convinced by the content of my former letters, that man can deviate from his destiny upon two opposing roads, that our age is actually proceeding upon both false roads and here is become the prey of roughness, there of enervation and perversity. From this twofold aberration it should be led back through beauty. But how can beautiful culture encounter both opposing defects at once and unite in itself two contradictory qualities? Can it put nature in the savage in fetters and place the same in the barbarian in freedom? Can it at once tighten and loosen--and if it doth not really do both, how can such a great effect, as is the education of mankind, be reasonably expected from it?

Indeed hath one already had to hear to the point of satiety the assertion, that the developed feeling for beauty refines the manners, so that it appears to need no new proof further hereto. One relies upon the everyday experience, which almost universally shows an educated taste united with clarity of the understanding, agility of feeling, liberality and even dignity of conduct, with an uncultivated one usually the opposite. One cites, confidently enough, the example of the most cultured of all the nations of antiquity, with which the feeling of beauty achieved its highest development, and the opposite example of those partially savage, partially barbarous peoples, who expiate their insensibility to the beautiful with a rough or yet

austere character. Nonetheless, it occurs occasionally to thinking heads, either to deny the facts, or yet to doubt the legitimacy of the conclusions derived therefrom. They think not quite so badly of that savagery, of which one reproaches uncultivated peoples, and not quite so favorably of this refinement, which one praises in the cultivated. Already in antiquity there were men, who held beautiful culture for anything but a benefit and on this account were very inclined, to deny entrance into their republic to the arts of imaginative power.

Not of those do I speak, who merely for that reason inveigh against the Graces, because they never experienced their favor. They, who know no other measure of worth than the effort of acquisition and palpable gain--how should they be able, to value the quiet work of taste in the outer and inner man, and not lose sight of its essential advantages on account of the accidental disadvantages of beautiful culture? The man without form despises all grace in diction as corruption, all refinement in social intercourse as dissimulation, all delicacy and greatness in conduct as overstraining and affectation. He cannot forgive the favorite of the Graces, that he as companion brightens every circle, as businessman guides all heads towards his purpose, as author impresses his spirit perhaps upon his whole century, whilst that *he*, the victim of diligence, with all his learning can exact no attention, move no stone from its place. Since he is never able to learn, the genial secret, to be pleasant, from that one, so nothing else remains left to him, than to bemoan the perversity of human nature, which pays more homage to appearance than to substance.

But there are voices worthy of respect, which declare themselves against the effects of beauty and are armed by experience with frightful grounds thereagainst. “It is undeniable,” they say, “the charms of the beautiful can in good hands effect laudable ends, but it doth not contradict their essence, in bad hands to do just the opposite and to employ its soul-fettering power for error and injustice. Exactly for this reason, because taste pays attention only to the form and never to content, so it finally gives the disposition the dangerous direction, to neglect all reality in general and to sacrifice truth and morality to a charming investiture. All essential distinction among things disappears and it is merely the appearance, which determines their value. How many men of talent,” they continue, “are not drawn away by the seductive power of the beautiful from an earnest and strenuous effectiveness, or at least induced, to treat it superficially! How many weak minds are merely for that reason at odds with the civic organization, because it pleased the phantasy of poets, to erect a world, wherein everything occurs quite differently, where no convenience binds opinion, no art suppresses nature. What dangerous dialectic have the passions not learned, since they are resplendent with the most glistening colors in the pictures of the poets and commonly maintain the field in combat with laws and duties? What hath society indeed won thereby, that beauty now gives laws to social intercourse, over which truth formerly ruled, and that the external impression decides the respect, which should only be confined to merit. It is true, one now sees all virtues blossom, which produce a pleasing effect in appearance and bestow a value in society, therefor however all excesses prevail as well and all vices are in vogue, which are compatible with a beautiful exterior.” It must indeed excite reflection, that in well-nigh every epoch of history, where the arts blossom and taste rules, mankind is found sunken and also not a single example can be produced, that a higher degree and a great universality of aesthetical culture among a people had gone hand in hand with political freedom and civil virtue, beautiful manners with good morals and polish of conduct with truth of the same.

So long as Athens and Sparta maintained their independence, and respect for the law served as the foundation of their constitution, taste was still not mature, art still in its childhood, and it was still very much lacking, that beauty governed dispositions. Indeed poetry had already taken an exalted flight, but only with the swings of genius, of which we know, that it borders nearest to savagery and is a light, that gladly shimmers from the darkness; which testifies therefore rather against the taste of its age than for the same. When

under Pericles and Alexander the golden age of art came hither, and the reign of taste was spread more universally, one no longer finds Greece's strength and freedom, eloquence falsified the truth, wisdom gave offense in the mouth of a Socrates, and virtue in the life of a Phocion. The Romans, we know, first had to exhaust their strength in civil wars and, unmanned by oriental opulence, bend beneath the yoke of a fortunate dynast, before we see the Grecian art triumph over the rigidity of their character. Also the dawn of culture did not arise among the Arabs sooner, than until the energy of their warlike spirit was relaxed beneath the scepter of the Abbasidae. In modern Italy beautiful art did not manifest itself sooner, than after the glorious alliance of the Lombards was torn asunder, Florence had submitted to the Medici and the spirit of independence in all those courageous cities had made place for an inglorious surrender. It is well-nigh superfluous, to still recall to mind the example of modern nations, whose refinement increased in the same proportion, as their independence ceased. Whither we always direct our eyes in the bygone world, there do we find, that taste and freedom flee from one another and that beauty only grounds her dominion upon the ruin of heroic virtues.

And yet exactly this energy of character, with which aesthetical culture is usually purchased, is the most effective spring of all greatness and excellence in man, the lack of which no other advantage, however great can replace. Keeps one therefore solely to that, which previous experiences teach about the influence of beauty, so can one indeed not be very encouraged, to develop feelings, which are so dangerous to the true culture of man; and one will prefer, at the risk of roughness and harshness, to dispense with the melting power of beauty, rather than see ourselves, with all the advantages of refinement surrendered to her enervating effects. But perhaps *experience* is not the tribunal, before which to decide a question such as this, and before one accorded weight to her evidence, it had to be placed first beyond doubt, that it is the same beauty, of which we speak and against which those examples bear witness. However this appears to presuppose a concept of beauty, which hath another source than experience, since through the same should be discerned, whether that, which is called beautiful in experience, bears this name with justice.

This pure *rational conception of beauty*, if such may be exhibited, must therefore--since it can be created from no actual case, rather first rectifies and guides our judgment in respect to every actual case--be sought upon the path of abstraction and be able to be inferred already from the possibility of sensuous-rational nature: with one word: beauty had to exhibit itself as a necessary condition of mankind. To the pure conception of humanity must we therefore elevate ourselves henceforth, and since experience shows us only particular circumstances of individual men, but never humanity, so must we discover the Absolute and the Enduring from these their individual and changeable modes of appearance, and through the casting away of all accidental limitations, seek to secure ourselves the necessary conditions of their existence. Indeed this transcendental course will for a time remove us from the intimate circle of phenomena and from the living presence of things and dwell upon the naked fields of abstract ideas, but we strive yea towards a firm ground of knowledge, which nothing ever should shake, and who doth not venture out beyond reality, he will never conquer the truth.

Eleventh Letter

When abstraction ascends as high, as it ever can, so it arrives at two ultimate conceptions, at which it must stand still and recognize its limits. It distinguishes in man something, that endures and something that changes incessantly. The enduring it names his *person*, the changing his *condition*.

Person and condition--the self and its determinations--which we imagine to ourselves in the Necessary Being as one and the same, are eternally two in the finite. In spite of all

persistence of the person the condition changes, in spite of all change of condition the person persists. We go from rest to activity, from emotional state to indifference, from agreement to contradiction, but *we* are yet always, and what immediately ensues from us, endures. In the absolute subject alone persist *with* the personality also all its determinations, because they flow *from* the personality. Everything, that divinity is, it is for that reason, *because* it is; it is consequently everything for eternity, because it is eternal.

Since in man, as finite being, person and condition are distinct, so can neither the condition be grounded upon the person, nor the person upon the condition. Were the latter, so the person would have to change; were the former, so the condition would have to persist; therefore in every case either the personality or the finiteness would have to cease. Not because we think, will, feel, are we; not because we are, think, will, do we feel. We are, because we are; we feel, think and will, because outside of us there is still something other.

The person must thus be its own ground, for the Enduring can not flow from the changeable; and so we had then first of all the idea of the absolute, in-itself-grounded Being, i.e. *freedom*. Condition must have a ground; since it is not through the person, and is therefore not absolute, it must *result*; and so we had secondly the condition of all dependent being or becoming, time. Time is the condition of all becoming: is an identical thesis, for it says nothing other than: the result is the condition, that something results.

The person, which manifests itself in the eternally persistent I and only in this, can not become, not commence in time, because time must on the contrary commence in it, because something persevering must lay the basis for change. Something must be altered, if alteration should exist; this something can therefore not itself be alteration. Whilst we say, the flower blooms and fades, we make the flower into the enduring in this transformation and lend it as it were a person, in which both those conditions are manifested. That man first becomes, there is no objection, for man is not merely person in general, but rather person, which finds itself in a determinate condition. Every condition however, every determinate existence arises in time, and so must man therefore, as phenomenon, have a beginning, although the pure intelligence in him is eternal. Without time, that is, without becoming it, he would never be a determinate being; his personality would indeed exist in capacity, but not in fact. Only through the succession of its notions doth the persevering I itself become a phenomenon.

Thus the matter of activity or the reality, which the highest Intelligence creates out of itself, man must first *receive*, and indeed he receives the same as something outside of him existing in space and as something in him changing in time upon the path of perception. This in-him-changing matter is accompanied by his never-changing I--and in all change to remain constantly *he* himself, to make all perceptions into experience, i.e., into unity of knowledge and each of its modes of appearance in time into law for all time, is the prescription, which is given him by his rational nature. Only whilst he changes, doth he *exist*; only whilst he remains unchangeable, doth *he* exist. Man, conceived in his perfection, were accordingly the persistent unity, which in the flood of alteration remains eternally the same. Now although an infinite being, a deity, cannot *become,* so must one yet name a tendency divine, which hath the most essential characteristic of divinity, absolute announcement of capacity (reality of everything possible) and absolute unity of appearance (necessity of everything real) as its infinite task. Incontrovertibly man carries the predisposition for divinity in his personality within himself; the way to divinity, if one can name a way, that which never leads to the goal, is open to him in the *senses*.

His personality, considered for itself alone and independent of all sensuous matter, is merely the predisposition to a possible infinite expression; so long he doth not intuit and doth not feel, he is still nothing further than form and empty capacity. His sensuousness, regarded for itself alone and separately from all self-activity of the mind, can do nothing further, than

that it makes him, who without sensuousness is mere form, into matter, but in no way, that it unites matter with him. So long he merely feels, merely desires and acts from mere appetite, he is still nothing further than *world*, if we understand by this term merely the formless content of time. His sensuousness it is alone, indeed, which makes his capacity effective power, but it is only his personality, which makes his action his own. Therefore in order not to be merely world, he must impart form to matter; in order not to be mere form, he must give the predisposition, which he bears within himself, reality. He realizes the form, if he creates time and opposes change to the persevering, the manifoldness of the world to the eternal unity of his I; he forms matter, if he annuls time again, maintains perseverance in change and makes the manifoldness of the world subordinate to the unity of his I.

Hence flow now two opposite demands upon man, the two fundamental laws of sensuous-rational nature. The first insists upon absolute *reality*; he should make everything into world, which is mere form, and bring all his predispositions into appearance: the second insists upon absolute *formality*: he should extirpate everything in himself, which is mere world, and bring about harmony in all his alterations; in other words: he should externalize everything internal and give form to everything external. Both tasks, considered in their highest fulfillment, lead back to the conception of divinity, from which I have proceeded.

Twelfth Letter

To the fulfillment of this double task, to bring the necessary in us into reality and to subject the real *outside of us* to the law of necessity, we are urged by two opposite forces, which one, because they impel us, to realize their object, entirely appropriately calls instincts. The first of these instincts, which I will call the sensuous, proceeds from the physical existence of man or from his sensuous nature, and is concerned, to place him in the limits of time and to make him into matter; not to give matter to him, because a free activity of the person already belongs thereto, which matter receives and distinguishes from itself, the persistent. However matter is here nothing but alteration or reality, which fills time; consequently this instinct demands, that alteration be, that time have a content. This condition of merely filled time is called sensation, and it is it alone, through which physical existence announces itself.

Since everything, that is in time, is *successive*, so thereby, that something is, everything else is excluded. Whilst one touches a note upon an instrument, among all notes, which it can possibly sound, only this single one is real; whilst man perceives the present the entire infinite possibility of his determinations is limited to this single mode of existence. Where therefore this instinct works exclusively, there is necessarily the highest boundary at hand; man is in this condition nothing but a unity of magnitude, a filled moment of time--or on the contrary he is nothing, for his personality is annulled so long as sensation rules him and time carries him forth.[1]

So far man is finite, the domain of this instinct extends; and since every form appears only in matter, everything absolute only through the medium of limits, so is it of course the sensuous instinct, in which ultimately the entire appearance of mankind is fostered. But although it alone awakens and unfolds the predispositions of mankind, so is it yet it alone, which makes their perfection impossible. With indestructible bonds it fetters the higher striving spirit to the world of sense, and it calls back abstraction to the boundaries of the present from its freest wandering into the infinite. The thought may indeed escape it for a moment, and a firm will victoriously resists its demands; but soon suppressed nature steps back again into her rights, to press for reality of existence, for a content to our knowledge and for a purpose to our actions.

The second of these instincts, which one can call the *formal instinct*, proceeds from the absolute existence of man or from his rational nature and strives, to set him free, to bring

harmony to the diversity of his appearance and to maintain his person despite all changes of condition. Now that the latter as absolute and indivisible unity can never be in contradiction with itself, *since we are we to all eternity*, so that instinct, which insists upon the maintenance of the personality, can never demand something other, than what it must demand to all eternity; it therefore decides for ever, as it decides for now, and commands for now, what it commands for ever. Hence it encompasses the whole succession of time, that is as much as: it annuls time, it annuls alteration, it wishes, that the real be necessary and eternal, and that the eternal and necessary be real: in other words: it insists upon truth and upon justice.

If the first only produces cases, so the other gives *laws*; laws for every judgment, if it concerns knowledge, laws for every will, if it concerns action. Be it now, that we recognize an object, that we attribute objective validity to a condition of our subject, or that we act from knowledge, that we make the objective the determining ground of our condition--in both cases we tear this condition from the jurisdiction of time and grant to it reality for all men and all time, i.e., universality and necessity. Feeling can merely say: that is true *for this* subject and *in this moment*, and another moment, another subject can come, that takes back the statement of the present sensation. But if the thought once pronounces: *that is*, so it decides for ever and eternally, and the validity of the pronouncement is vouched for by the personality itself, which defies all change. Inclination can merely say: that is good for *thy individuality* and *for thy present need*; but thy individuality and thy present need will be carried away by alteration and, what thou now ardently desirest, one day will be made into the object of thine abhorrence. If however the moral feeling says: *that should be*, so it decides for ever and eternally--if thou confessest truth, because it is truth, and practicest justice, because it is justice, so hast thou made a single case into the law for all cases, treated one moment in thy life as eternity.

Where therefore the formal instinct exerts dominion and the pure object acts in us, there is the highest enlargement of being, there disappear all limits, there from the unity of magnitude, in which the needy sense confined him, hath man arisen to a unity of ideas, which contains the entire realm of phenomena under itself. We are with this operation no more in time, rather time is in us with its entire never-ending succession. We are no more individuals, rather species; the judgment of all spirits is expressed by that of our own, the choice of all hearts is represented by our deed.

Notes

1. Language hath the very appropriate expression for this condition of loss of self under the domination of sensation; *to be beside oneself*, that is, to be outside one's I. Although this phrase only occurs there, where the sensation becomes an emotional state and this condition more noticeable by its longer duration, so is yet everyone beside himself, so long as he only perceives. To return to self-possession from this condition, one just as correctly calls: *to go into oneself*, that is, return to one's I, restore one's person. Of one, who lies in a swoon, one doth not say: he is beside himself, rather he is *passed out*, i.e., he hath been robbed of his I, since he is simply not in the same. Hence he, who returned from a swoon, is only *come to*, which can exist quite well with being beside oneself.

Thirteenth Letter

At first sight nothing appears to be more opposed to one another than the tendencies of both of these instincts, in that the one insists upon alteration, the other upon immutability. And yet it is both of those instincts, which exhaust the conception of mankind, and a third fundamental instinct, which could mediate both, is an absolutely unthinkable conception.

How shall we therefore restore the unity of human nature, which seems fully annulled by this original and radical opposition?

True is it, their *tendencies* contradict themselves, however, what is well to observe, not in *the same objects*, and what doth not encounter another, can not collide with another. The sensuous instinct indeed demands alteration, but it doth not demand, that it also be extended to the person and its domain: that there be a change of principles. The formal instinct insists upon unity and perseverance--but he doth not wish, that the condition also be fixed with the person, that there be identity of sensation. They are therefore not opposed to one another by nature, and if notwithstanding this they so appear, so they have first become through a free transgression of nature, in that they misunderstand themselves and confuse their spheres.[1]

In a transcendental philosophy, where everything depends thereon, to liberate the form from the content and to preserve the necessary pure of everything accidental, one is easily accustomed, to think of the matter itself merely as hindrance and to represent sensuousness, because it stands directly in the way in *this* business, as in a necessary contradiction with reason. Such a mode of representation lies indeed in no way in the *spirit* of the Kantian system, but it could very well lie in the *letter* of the same.

To watch over these and to secure for each one of both of these instincts its boundary, is the task of *culture*, which therefore owes both an equal justice and hath not merely to maintain the rational instinct against the sensuous, rather also the latter against the former. Its business is therefore twofold: *firstly*: to secure sensuousness against the encroachments of freedom: *secondly*: to secure the personality against the power of sensations. The former it achieves through the education of the capacity of feeling, the latter through the education of the capacity of reason.

Since the world is something prolonged in time, alteration, so will the perfection of that capacity, which places man in relation with the world, have to be the greatest possible mutability and extensiveness. Since the person is the subsisting in alteration, so will the perfection of that capacity, which should be opposed to change, have to be the greatest possible self-reliance and intensity. The more many-sided the receptivity is developed, the more motile the same is, and the more surfaces it offers to phenomena, so much the more world doth man *apprehend*, so much the more potentialities doth he develop in himself; the more strength and depth the personality, the more freedom the reason wins, so much the more world doth man *comprehend*, so much the more form he creates outside himself. His culture will therefore subsist therein: *firstly*: to provide to the receiving capacity the most manifold contacts with the world and upon the side of the feeling to drive passivity to its highest: *secondly*: to acquire for the determining capacity the highest independence from the receiving and upon the side of reason to drive activity to its highest. Where both qualities are united, there will man combine with the highest fullness of existence the highest self-reliance and freedom and, instead of losing himself in the world, he will rather draw this into himself with the entire infinity of its phenomena and subject it to the unity of his reason.

This relation man can now *invert* and thereby fail to achieve his destiny in a twofold manner. He can place the intensity, which the active power requires, upon the passive, forestall the formal instinct by means of the instinct of matter and make the receiving capacity into the determining. He can assign the extensiveness which is proper to the passive power, to the active, forestall the instinct of matter by means of the formal instinct and substitute the determining for the receiving capacity. In the first case he will never be *he himself*, in the second he will never be *something else*; hence precisely for that reason in both cases he will be *neither one*, consequently---nought.[2]

Becomes in fact the sensuous instinct determining, is sense the lawgiver, and the world oppresses the person, so it ceases in the same proportion, to be object, as it grows in power.

So soon as man is only the content of time, so is he not, and he hath consequently also no content. With his personality his condition is also annulled, because both are conceptions of change--because alteration demands a persevering and the limited reality an infinite. Is the formal instinct received, that is, doth the power of thought anticipate sensation and is the person substituted for the world, so it ceases in the same proportion, to be self-supporting power and subject, as it thrusts itself into the place of the object, because the persevering demands alteration, and the absolute reality limits to its manifestation. So soon as man is only form, so *hath* he no form; and the person is consequently also annulled with the condition. In one word: only in so far as he is self-supporting, is reality outside him, is he receptive; only in so far as he is receptive, is reality in him, is he a thinking power.

Both instincts therefore have limitation and, in so far as they are thought of as energies, necessary relaxation; the former, that it may not invade the domain of legislation, the latter, that it not enter into the domain of sensation. This relaxation of the sensuous instinct may however by no means be the effect of a physical incapacity and of a bluntness of sensation, which overall only deserves contempt. It must be an act of freedom, an activity of the person, which by its moral intensity moderates the sensuous and by mastering the impressions takes from them in depth, in order to give to them in surface. The character must determine for the temperament its limits, for the sense may lose *only to the mind*. That relaxation of the formal instinct may be just as little the effect of a spiritual incapacity and of a flaccidity of thought or will powers, which would degrade mankind. Fullness of sensations must be its glorious source; sensuousness itself must maintain its domain with victorious power and resist the violence, which by its encroaching activity the mind would fain inflict upon it. In one word: the material instinct must be held by the personality, and the formal instinct by the receptivity or nature in its proper limits.

Notes

1. So soon as one maintains an original, hence necessary antagonism of both instincts, so there is indeed no other means, to preserve the unity in man, than that one unconditionally subordinates the sensuous instinct to the rational. However, therefrom mere uniformity, but no harmony can arise and man still remains divided for ever. The subordination must by all means be, but reciprocal; for although the limits can never establish the absolute, thus freedom can never be dependent upon time, so is it just as certain, that the absolute through itself can never establish the limits, that the condition in time can not be dependent upon freedom. Both principles are therefore at once subordinated to one another and coordinated, i.e., they stand in reciprocity; without form no matter, without matter no form. (This concept of reciprocity and the entire importance of the same one finds excellently set forth in Fichte's "Foundation of the Whole Theory of Science," Leipzig 1794.) How it stands with the person in the realm of ideas, we of course do not know; but that it, without receiving matter, can not manifest itself in the realm of time, we know for certain; in this realm therefore matter will have to determine something not merely *under* the form, but rather also *alongside* the form and independent of the same. As necessary as it is therefore, that feeling decide nothing in the domain of reason, equally necessary is it, that reason presume to determine nothing in the domain of feeling. Already in that one awards a domain to each of both, one excludes the other therefrom and places a boundary on each, which can not be passed over except to the disadvantage of both.
2. The bad influence of a preponderant sensuality upon our thinking and action easily catches the eye of everyone; not so easily, although it occurs just as frequently and is just as important, the disadvantageous influence of a preponderant rationality upon our knowledge and our conduct. Permit me therefore, to recall only two out of the great

number of relevant cases, which can bring to light the damage of an encroaching mental and will power to intuition and sensation.

One of the most eminent causes, why our natural sciences make such slow strides, is evidently the universal and scarcely conquerable propensity towards teleological judgments, by which, so soon as they are used constitutively, the determining capacity is substituted for the receiving. Nature may touch our organs ever so energetically and ever so variously--all her manifoldness is lost for us, because we seek nothing in her, but what we have put in her because we do not permit her, to move *inward towards us*, but on the contrary strive with impatiently anticipating reason *from within towards her*. Comes after that in centuries one, who nears her with calm, chaste and open senses and for this reason encounters a number of phenomena, which we by our prevention have overlooked, so we are highly astonished thereover, that so many eyes should have observed nothing on such a bright day. This premature striving towards harmony, before one hath gathered together the individual tones, which should constitute it, this violent usurpation of the mental power in an area, where it doth not govern unconditionally, is the grounds of fruitlessness of so many thinking heads for the best of science, and it is difficult to say, whether the sensuousness, which assumes no form, or the reason, which awaits no content, hath done more damage to the enlargement of our knowledge.

Just as difficult may it be to determine, whether our practical philanthropy is more disturbed and chilled by the vehemence of our desires or by the rigidity of our principles, more by the egoism of our senses or by the egoism of our reason. In order to make us into cooperating, helpful, active men, feeling and character must be united, just as in order to furnish us experience, openness of the senses must be combined with energy of the understanding. How can we, with ever so praiseworthy maxims, be just, good and human towards others, if the capacity fails us, to include foreign nature faithfully and truly in ourselves, to appropriate foreign situations to ourselves, to make foreign feelings our own? This capacity however is suppressed as well in the education, which we receive, as in that, which we give ourselves, in the same measure, as one seeks to break the power of desires and to strengthen the character by means of principles. Because it is difficult, to remain faithful to his principles amid all the activity of the feelings, so one seizes the more comfortable means, to make the character more secure by blunting the feelings; for no doubt it is infinitely easier, to be calm before an unarmed opponent, than to master a courageous and robust enemy. In this operation then consists also for the most part, what one calls *to form a man*; and indeed in the best sense of the word, where it means cultivation of the inner, not merely the outer man. A man so formed will indeed be secured therefrom, to be raw nature and to appear as such; he will however at once be armoured against all sensations of nature by means of principles, and humanity *from without* will be as little able to reach him as humanity *from within*.

It is a very pernicious misuse, which is made of the ideal of perfection, if one in the judgment of other men and in the cases, where one should act for them, sets it up in all its severity as the ground. The former will lead to schwaermerei, the latter to harshness and to coldness. One makes his social duties uncommonly easy to be sure, if one for the *actual man*, who demands our help, substitutes in thought the *ideal man*, who could probably help himself. Severity with oneself, combined with softness towards others, constitutes the truly excellent character. But mostly he who will be soft towards other men will also be thus towards himself, and he who will be severe towards himself will also be thus toward others; soft towards oneself and severe towards others is the most contemptible character.

Fourteenth Letter

We have now been led to the conception of such a reciprocal action between both of the instincts, where the effectiveness of the one establishes and limits at the same time the effectiveness of the other, and where each one thereby reaches for itself its highest manifestation precisely in that the other is active.

This reciprocal relation of both instincts is indeed merely the task of reason, which man is capable of fully achieving only in the completion of his being. It is in the truest sense of the word the *idea of his humanity*, hence an infinite, to which he can approach ever more closely in the course of time, but without ever reaching it. "He should not strive for form at the cost of his reality, and not for reality, at the cost of form; on the contrary he should seek the Absolute Being through a determinate and the determinate being through an infinite. He should place opposite himself a world, because he is person, and should be person, because a world stands opposite him. He should feel, because he is conscious of himself, and should be conscious of himself, because he feels."--That he truly in conformity with this idea, hence, in the full meaning of the word, is man, can he never bring into experience, so long as he only satisfies one of both instincts exclusively or only one after the other; for so long as he only feels, his person or his absolute existence remains to him, and, so long as he only thinks, his existence in time or his condition remains to him a mystery. Were there however cases, where he made this double experience *at the same time*, where he were at once conscious of his freedom and felt his existence, where he at once felt himself as matter and came to know himself as spirit, so had he in these cases, and positively only in these, a complete intuition of his humanity, and the object, which provided him this intuition, would serve him as a symbol of his *realized destiny*, consequently (because this is to be achieved only in the totality of time) as a representation of the infinite.

Supposing, that cases of this kind can occur in experience, so would they awaken a new instinct in him, which just therefore, because both of the others work together in it, would be opposed, to each one of the same, considered alone and with justice would be regarded as a new instinct. The sensuous instinct desires, that there be alteration, that time have a content; the formal instinct desires, that time be annulled, that there be no alteration. That instinct therefore, in which both act in combination (it be me for the time being, until I shall have justified this appellation, permitted, to call it *play instinct*), the play instinct therefore would be directed thither, to annul the time in time, to reconcile Becoming with Absolute Being, alteration with identity.

The sensuous instinct wants to *become* determinate, it wants to receive its object; the formal instinct wants to determine *itself*, it wants to bring forth its object: the play instinct will therefore be exerted so to receive, as it would have brought itself forth, and so to bring forth, as the sense aspires to receive.

The sensuous instinct excludes from its subject all self-activity and freedom, the formal instinct excludes from its, all dependency, all passivity. Exclusion of freedom is however physical, exclusion of passivity is moral necessity. Both instincts therefore compel the mind, the former through natural laws, the latter through laws of reason. The play instinct therefore, as in which both act in combination, will compel the mind at once morally and physically; it will therefore, because it annuls all contingency, annul all compulsion also and set man free not only physically but also morally. If we embrace someone with passion, who is worthy of our contempt, so feel we painfully the *compulsion of nature*. If we are disposed hostilely towards another, who compels our respect, so feel we painfully the *compulsion of reason*. But so soon as he at once interests our inclination and hath gained our respect, so disappears not only the constraint of feeling but also the constraint of reason, and we begin, to love him, i.e., at once to play with our inclination and with our respect.

Whilst moreover the sensuous instinct compels us physically and the formal instinct morally, so the former leaves our formal, the latter our material constitution contingent; i.e. , it is contingent, whether our happiness is in agreement with our perfection, or the latter with the former. The play instinct therefore, in which both act in union, will make at the same time our formal and our material constitution, at once our perfection and our happiness contingent; it will therefore, just because it makes *both* contingent, and because the contingency also disappears with the necessity, annul the contingency again in both, hence bring form into the material and reality into the form. In the same measure as it takes from the feelings and emotional states their dynamic influence, it will bring them into agreement with ideas of reason, and in the same measure, as it takes away from the laws of reason their moral compulsion, it will reconcile them with the interest of the senses.

Fifteenth Letter

I am coming ever nearer to the goal, towards which I am leading you upon a not very cheerful path. May it please you, to follow me yet a few steps further, so a freer horizon will disclose itself and a brighter prospect perhaps reward the labors of the way.

The object of the sensuous instinct, expressed in a universal concept, is *life* in its broadest meaning; a concept, which means all material being and everything immediately present in the senses. The object of the formal instinct, expressed in a universal concept, is *form*, not only in the figurative but also in the literal meaning; a concept, which includes within itself all formal qualities of things and all relations of the same to the thinking powers. The object of the play instinct, represented in a universal scheme, will therefore be able to be called *living form*; a concept, which serves to designate all aesthetical qualities of phenomena and, in a word, what one calls *beauty* in the broadest meaning.

By means of this explanation, if it were one, is beauty neither extended to the entire domain of the living, nor merely confined in this domain. A block of marble, although it is and remains lifeless, can therefore nonetheless become a living form through the architect and sculptor; a man, although he lives and hath form, is therefore still not by any means living form. That requires, that his form be life and his life form. So long as we merely think about his form, it is lifeless, mere abstraction; so long as we merely feel his life, it is formless, mere impression. Only in that his form lives in our feeling and his life forms itself in our understanding, is he living form, and this will be primarily the case, where we judge him to be beautiful.

Thereby however, that we know to indicate the component parts, which in their fusion bring forth beauty, the genesis of the same is still in no manner explained; for it would be required, that one conceive *that fusion itself*, which to us, as in general all reciprocal action between the finite and infinite, remains inscrutable. Reason sets up the demand out of transcendental grounds: there shall be a communion between the formal instinct and material instinct, i.e., a play instinct, because only the unity of reality with form, of contingency with necessity, of passivity with freedom completes the conception of humanity. It must set up this demand, because it is reason--because it insists in accord with its essence upon completeness and upon removal of all limitations, but every exclusive activity of one or the other instinct leaves human nature incomplete and establishes a limit in the same. So soon therefore as it makes the decision: there shall exist a humanity, so hath it thereby established the law: there shall be a beauty. Experience can answer us, *whether* there is a beauty, and we shall know it, so soon as it hath taught us, whether there is a humanity. But *how* a beauty can be, and how a humanity is possible, neither reason nor experience can teach us.

Man, we know, is neither exclusively matter, nor is he exclusively spirit. Beauty, as consummation of his humanity, can therefore be neither exclusively mere life, as by ingenious

observers, who adhered too precisely to the evidence of experience, hath been maintained, and whereto the taste of the times would fain pull it down; nor can it be exclusively mere form, as hath been judged by speculative philosophers, who removed themselves too far from experience, and by philosophizing artists, who let themselves be guided in explanation of the same all too much by the needs of art:[1]

It is the common object of both instincts, that is, of the play instinct. This name is completely justified by the usage of language, which is accustomed to denote everything, which is neither subjectively nor objectively contingent and yet compels neither outwardly nor inwardly, with the word play. Since the mind finds itself in the intuition of beauty in a happy mean between law and need, so precisely therefore, because it is divided between both, is it withdrawn not only from the constraint of the one but also of the other. The material instinct like the formal instinct is *earnest* in its demands, because the one relates, in its cognition, to the reality, the other to the necessity of things; because, in action, the first is directed to the maintenance of life, the second to the preservation of dignity, both therefore to truth and perfection. However life becomes more indifferent as dignity is intermixed, and duty compels no more, so soon as inclination attracts: just as the mind takes up the reality of things, the material truth, more freely and calmly, so soon as such encounters the formal truth, the law of necessity, and feels itself no longer strained by abstraction, so soon as the immediate intuition can accompany it. In a word: whilst it comes into communion with ideas, everything real loses its earnestness, because it becomes *small*, and whilst it encounters sensation, necessity puts aside its own, because it becomes *easy*.

Is, however, you would long have been tempted to object to me, is not the beautiful degraded thereby, that one makes it into mere play, and places it on an equal level with frivolous objects, which were all along in possession of this name? Doth it not contradict the rational conception and the dignity of beauty, which are yet regarded as an instrument of culture, to limit it to a *mere play*, and doth it not contradict the concept of play from experience, which can exist together with exclusion of all taste, to limit it merely to beauty?

But what then is *a mere play*, when we know, that in all conditions of man it is precisely play and only play, which makes him complete and unfolds at once his twofold nature? What you, according to your representation of the matter, call *limitation*, that I call, according to mine, which I have justified through proofs, *enlargement*. I would therefore rather say precisely the reverse: with the agreeable, with the good, with the perfect man is *only* earnest, but with beauty he plays. Of course we do not permit ourselves to mention here the plays, which are in process in real life and which are commonly only directed to very material objects; but in the actual life we would also seek in vain for the beauty, of which we are here speaking. The actually present beauty is worthy of the actually present play instinct; but by the ideal of beauty, which reason establishes, an ideal of the play instinct is also presented, which man should have before his eyes in all his plays.

One will never err, if one seeks a man's ideal of beauty upon the same path, upon which he satisfies his play instinct. If the Grecian peoples delight themselves in the athletic sports at Olympia in the bloodless contests of strength, of speed, of agility and in the nobler conflict of talents, and if the Roman enjoy themselves in the death struggle of a slain gladiator or of his Libyan opponent, so becomes it comprehensible to us from this single trait, why we must seek for the ideal form of a Venus, a Juno, an Apollo not in Rome, but rather in Greece.[2]

But now reason speaks: the beautiful should not be merely life and not merely form, but rather living form, that is, beauty; in that it dictates to man the two-fold law of the absolute formality and the absolute reality. Hence it also makes the decision: man shall with beauty only *play*, and he shall *only with beauty play*.

For, in order to finally say it at once, man plays only, where he in the full meaning of the

word is man, and *he is only there fully man, where he plays*. This thesis, which in this moment perhaps appears paradoxical, will receive a great and deep meaning, if we have first come thither, to apply it to the twofold earnestness of duty and of destiny; it will, I promise you, bear the whole structure of aesthetical art and the yet more difficult art of life. But this thesis is also only in science unexpected; it long since lived and acted in the art and in the feeling of the Greeks, its most distinguished master; only that they transferred to Olympus, what should have been realized upon the earth. Guided by the truth of the same, they caused not only the earnestness and the work, which furrow the cheeks of mortals, but also the futile pleasure, which smooths the empty visage, to vanish from the brows of the blissful gods, freed the eternally satisfied from the fetters of every aim, every duty, every concern and made *idleness* and *indifference* the envied lot of the godly state; a merely more human name for the freest and most sublime Being. Not only the material constraint of natural laws but also the spiritual constraint of moral laws lost itself, in its higher conception of necessity, which embraced both worlds at once, and from the unity of these two necessities issued forth to them true freedom for the first time. Inspired by this spirit, they extinguished from the features of their ideal at once together with *inclination* also all traces of the *will*, or better, they made both unrecognizable, because they knew to knit both into the most intimate alliance. It is neither grace, nor is it dignity, which speaks to us from the glorious countenance of a Juno Ludovici; it is not one of both, because it is at once both. Whilst the womanly god demands our worship, the godlike woman enkindles our love; but whilst we allow ourselves to dissolve in the heavenly loveliness, the heavenly self-sufficiency frightens us back. In itself rests and dwells the whole form, a completely closed creation, and as if it were beyond space, without yielding, without resistance; there is no force, which struggled with forces, no weak point, where temporal power could break in. Irresistibly seized and attracted by that one, by this one held at a distance, we find ourselves at once in the condition of highest rest and of highest motion, and there results that wonderful emotion, for which the understanding hath no conception and language no name.

Notes

1. In his “Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Conception of the Sublime and the Beautiful,” Burke makes beauty mere life. As far as I am aware, it is made into mere form, by every follower of the dogmatic system, who hath ever made his confession on this subject: among artists Raphael Mengs in his “Thoughts on Taste in Painting”; not to mention others. So as in all, also in this piece hath *critical* philosophy opened the way, to lead empiricism back to principles and speculation back to experience.
2. If one (in order to remain in the modern world), contrasts the horse races in London, the bull fights in Madrid, the spectacles of former times in Paris, the gondola races in Venice, the animal hunts in Vienna and the happy, beautiful life of the Corso in Rome, so can it not be difficult to determine the shades of taste of these different people. However, far less uniformity is displayed among the popular games in these different lands than among the games of the fashionable society in just these lands, which is easy to explain.

Sixteenth Letter

From the reciprocal action of two opposite instincts and from the combination of two opposite principles we have seen the beautiful arise, whose highest ideal is therefore to be sought in the most perfect possible union and *equilibrium* of reality and form. This equilibrium remains however always only an idea, which can never be fully achieved by reality. In reality there will always remain a preponderance of the *one* element over the other, and the highest, that experience achieves, will consist of an *oscillation* between both principles, where now reality, now the form is predominant. Beauty in the idea is therefore

eternally but indivisibly single, because there can only be one single equilibrium; beauty in experience on the contrary will eternally be double, because in oscillation the equilibrium can be overstepped, in a twofold manner, namely on this side and that side.

I have observed in one of the foregoing letters, also it follows with rigorous necessity from the coherence of the previous, that a dissolving and a tensing effect be expected simultaneously from the beautiful: a *dissolving*, in order to keep not only the sensuous instinct but also the formal instinct within their bounds; a *tensing*, in order to preserve both in their strength. Both of these modes of action of beauty should however, in idea, be absolutely only a single one. She should dissolve, thereby that she makes both natures uniformly tense, and should become tense, thereby that she dissolve both natures uniformly. This follows already from the conception of a reciprocal action, in virtue of which both parts necessarily condition one another at once and are conditioned through one another, and beauty is the purest product thereof. However, experience offers us no example of such a perfect reciprocal action, rather, here everytime, more or less, the excess weight will establish a deficiency and the deficiency an excess weight. What therefore is distinguished in the ideally beautiful only in the conception, that is distinct in the beautiful in the experience of existence. The ideally beautiful, although indivisible and simple, shows in different conditions not only a melting but also energetic quality; in experience there is a melting and energetic beauty. So is it, and so will it be in all cases, where the Absolute is placed within the limits of time and the ideas of reason should be realized in humanity. So the reflecting man conceives of virtue, truth, happiness; but the acting man will merely practice *virtues*, merely seize *truths*, merely enjoy *happy* days. To lead these latter back to the former--to put in the place of morals morality, in the place of information knowledge, in the place of blisses happiness, is the business of physical and moral education; to make beauty from beauties, is the task of the aesthetical.

Energetic beauty can preserve man just as little before a certain residue of savagery and harshness, as the melting protect him before a certain degree of softness and enervation. For since the effect of the first is, to make the disposition tense, not only in the physical but also moral, and to augment his elasticity, so it happens only too easily, that the resistance of temperament and character diminishes receptiveness to impressions, that also the gentler humanity experiences an oppression, which should have only befallen his raw nature, and that his raw nature participates in a gain of strength, which should only have applied to his free person; therefore one finds in the ages of strength and abundance true greatness of conception together with the gigantic and adventurous, and the sublimity of conviction paired with the most horrible outbursts of passion; therefore in the ages of rules and form one will find nature just as often oppressed as mastered, just as often offended as surpassed. And because the effect of melting beauty is, to dissolve the disposition in the moral as in the physical, it occurs just as easily, that with the violence of desire energy of feeling is also stifled and that the character also shares a loss of strength, which should only affect passion: therefore one will see in the so-called refined ages softness degenerate not seldomly into effeminacy, plainness into insipidity, correctness into emptiness, liberality into arbitrariness, lightness into frivolity, calm into apathy and the most contemptible caricature border upon the most glorious humanity. For the man under the constraint either of matter or of form, melting beauty is therefore a need, for he is long moved by greatness and strength, ere he begins to become sensitive to harmony and grace. For the man under the indulgence of taste the energetic beauty is a need, for only all too gladly he frivolously forfeits in a state of refinement a strength, which he brought over from a state of savagery.

And henceforth, I believe, every contradiction will be explained and answered, which one usually encounters in the judgments of men about the influence of the beautiful and in the valuation of aesthetical culture. It is explained, this contradiction, so soon as one recalls, that in experience there is a twofold beauty and that both parties assert of the whole species, what

each is only able to prove of a particular kind of the same. It is lifted, this contradiction, so soon as one distinguishes the double need of humanity, to which that double beauty corresponds. Both parties will therefore probably be found right, if they are only first agreed with one another, which kind of beauty and which form of humanity they have in mind.

I shall therefore, in the continuation of my inquiries make the path, which nature follows with man in respect to aesthetics, also my own, and elevate myself from the kinds of beauty to the species conception of the same. I shall examine the effects of the melting beauty in the relaxed man upon the effects of the energetic in the tense, in order to dissolve at last both of the opposite kinds of beauty in the unity of the ideally beautiful, just as those two opposite forms of humanity perish in the unity of the ideally human.

Seventeenth Letter

So long as it was merely a matter, of deriving the universal idea of beauty from the conception of human nature in general, we could call to mind no other limits to the latter, than which are directly established in the being of the same and are inseparable from the conception of finiteness. Unconcerned about the accidental limitations, which it might suffer in the real phenomenon, we created the conception of the same directly from reason, as the source of all necessity, and with the ideal of humanity was at once also given the ideal of beauty.

Now however we climb down from the region of ideas into the scene of reality, in order to meet man *in a determinate* condition, hence under limitations, which do not flow originally from his conception, but rather from external circumstances and from an accidental use of his freedom. But in however manifold ways the idea of humanity may also be limited in him, so the mere content of the same already teaches us, that in the whole only *two* opposite deviations from the same can occur. Lies, that is to say, his perfection in the harmonious energy of his sensuous and spiritual powers, so can he fail to achieve this perfection only either through a deficiency of harmony or through a deficiency of energy. Therefore before we have even heard the testimony of experience thereon, we are already certain in advance through mere reason, that we shall find the actual, consequently limited man either in a condition of tension or in a condition of relaxation, according as either the one-sided activity of single forces disturbs the harmony of his being or the unity of his nature is grounded upon the uniform slackening of his sensuous and spiritual powers. Both opposite limits are, as now should be demonstrated, lifted by beauty, which restores in the tense man harmony, in the relaxed, energy and in this way, in conformity with her nature, leads the limited condition back to an absolute and makes man into a whole, complete in himself.

Therefore in reality she in no way belies the conception, which we conceived of her in speculation; except that she hath here an incomparably less free hand than there, where we were able to apply her to the pure conception of humanity. In man, as experience establishes him, she finds an already rotten and resisting matter, which robs her just as much of her ideal perfection, as it mixes in of his *individual* nature. She will therefore in reality appear everywhere only as a particular and limited species, never as pure genus, she will in tense dispositions lay aside her freedom and manifoldness, she will in relaxed, her enlivening force; however, we who have by now become more familiar with her true character, shall not be led astray by this contradictory appearance. Far from determining with the great crowd of critics their conceptions from isolated experiences and making *her* responsible for the deficiencies, which man shows under her influence, we know on the contrary, that it is man, who transfers to her the imperfections of his individuality, who through his subjective limitation stands incessantly in the way of her perfection and reduces her absolute ideal to two limited forms of phenomenon.

The melting beauty, it was asserted, be for a tense disposition, and for a relaxed the energetic. But I call the man tense not only, if he finds himself under the constraint of conceptions. Every exclusive domination of one of his two fundamental instincts is a condition of constraint for him and of violence; and freedom lies only in the cooperation of both his natures. The man ruled one-sidedly by feelings or sensuously tense is thus dissolved and set free by form; the man ruled one-sidedly by laws or spiritually tense is dissolved and set free by matter. The melting beauty, in order to satisfy this double task, will therefore reveal herself under two different forms. She will *firstly* as a calm form soften the savage life and pave the way for a transition from sensations to thoughts; she will *secondly* as living image equip the abstract form with sensuous force, lead the conception back to intuition and the law to feeling. The first service she renders to the natural man, the second to the artificial man. But because she in both cases doth not rule with complete freedom over her matter, but rather depends upon that, which either formless nature or unnatural art offers her, so she will in both cases bear yet traces of her origin and lose herself there more in the material life, here more in the mere abstract form.

In order to be able to form for ourselves a conception thereof, how beauty can become a means, to remove that double tension, we must seek to explore the origin of the same in the human disposition. Make up your mind therefore to yet one short sojourn in the domain of speculation, in order to leave it thereupon for ever and with more secure steps to stride forth upon the field of experience.

Eighteenth Letter

Through beauty is the sensuous man led to form and to thought; through beauty is the spiritual man led back to matter and restored to the world of sense.

From this it appears to follow, that between matter and form, between passivity and activity there must be a *middle condition*, and that beauty transfers us into this middle condition. This conception of beauty is also actually formed by the greatest part of man, so soon as he hath begun, to reflect upon her effects, and all experiences point thereto. On the other side, however, nothing is more absurd and contradictory than such a conception, since the distance between matter and form, between passivity and activity, between sensation and thought is *infinite* and can become mediated absolutely through nothing. How do we now remove this contradiction? Beauty combines the two opposite conditions of feeling and of thinking, and yet there is absolutely no middle between both. The former is certain through experience, the latter is immediately through reason. This is the essential point, to which the whole question of beauty finally leads, and if we succeed, to solve this problem satisfactorily, so we have at the same time found the thread, which leads us through the whole labyrinth of aesthetics.

It hereby concerns however two utterly different operations, which must necessarily support one another in this inquiry. Beauty, it is said, knits together two conditions, *which are opposed to one another* and never can become one. From this opposition must we proceed: we must apprehend and recognize it in its whole purity and strictness, so that both conditions are separated in the most definite way; otherwise we mix, but do not unite. Secondly, it is said: beauty combines those two opposite conditions and therefore cancels the opposition. However because both conditions remain eternally opposed to one another, so are they not otherwise to be combined, than in that they are cancelled. Our second business is therefore, to make this combination perfect, to realize it so purely and completely, that both conditions disappear entirely in a third and no trace of the division remains behind in the whole; otherwise we isolate, but do not unite. All disputes, which have ever prevailed in the philosophical world about the conception of beauty and in part still prevail to this day, have

no other origin, than that one either began the inquiry not with the requisite rigorous distinction, or did not carry it through to a completely pure union. Those among the philosophers, who in reflection on this subject blindly trust in the guidance of their *feelings*, can achieve no *conception* of beauty, because they distinguish nothing individual in the totality of sensuous impressions. The others, who take the understanding exclusively as a guide, can never achieve a conception of *beauty*, because they never see in the totality of the same anything other than the parts, and spirit and matter remain divided eternally to them even in their most perfect unity. The first fear, to cancel beauty *dynamically*, i.e. as acting power, if they should separate, what is yet combined in feeling; the others fear, to cancel beauty *logically*, i.e. as conception, if they should unite, what is yet separated in the understanding. The former want to think of beauty, just as she acts; the latter want to cause her to act, just as she is thought. Both must therefore miss the truth, the former because they attempt to imitate infinite nature with their limited capacity of thought; the latter, because they want to limit infinite nature according to their laws of thought. The first fear, to rob beauty of its freedom through a too-strict dissection; the others fear, to destroy the definiteness of its conception through a too-bold union. The former do not reflect however, that the freedom, in which they with all justice place the essence of beauty, is not lawlessness, but rather harmony of laws, not arbitrariness, but rather the highest inner necessity; the latter do not reflect, that the definiteness, which they with equal justice demand from beauty, consists not in the *exclusion of certain realities*, but rather in the *absolute inclusion of them all*, that she therefore is not restriction, but rather infinity. We shall avoid the rocks, on which both are run aground, if we begin from the two elements, in which beauty is divided before the understanding, but thereupon also elevate ourselves to the pure aesthetical unity, through which she acts on sensation and in which both those conditions completely vanish.[1]

Notes

1. To the attentive reader the observation will have presented itself in the comparison drawn here, that the sensual aestheticians, who value the testimony of sensation more than that of reason, are *in respect to reality* far less distant from the truth than their opponents, although *in respect to insight* they cannot match them; and this relationship one finds everywhere between nature and science. Nature (sense) everywhere unites, the understanding everywhere separates, but reason unites again; hence man is, before he begins to philosophize, nearer to truth than the philosopher, who hath not yet ended his inquiry. One can on this account declare without all further examination a philosophical statement to be erroneous, so soon as the same, *in respect to result*, hath common feeling against it; with the same justice however one can hold it as suspect, if it in respect to form and method, bath the common feeling on its side. With the latter every writer may be consoled, who cannot expound a philosophical deduction, as many readers seem to expect, like a fireside chat. With the former one may reduce everyone to silence, who wants to found new systems at the expense of human understanding.

Nineteenth Letter

There can be distinguished generally in man two different conditions of passive and active determinability and just as many conditions of passive and active determination. The explanation of this thesis leads us most quickly to the goal.

The condition of the human spirit before all determination, which is given him through impressions of the senses, is a determinability without bounds. The endlessness of space and of time is given to his conceptual power for free use, and because, according to hypothesis, nothing in this wide realm of the possible is fixed, consequently also nothing is yet excluded, so one can call this condition of indeterminability an *empty infinity*, which is by no means to

be mistaken for an infinite emptiness.

Now should his senses be moved, and from the infinite number of possible determinations a single reality should obtain. A conception should arise in him. What in the foregoing condition of mere determinability was nothing but an empty capacity, that now becomes an acting power, that receives a content; but at the same time it receives, as acting power, a limit, since it, as mere capacity was unlimited. Reality is therefore there, but the infinity is lost. In order to describe an form in space, we must *limit* the endless space; in order to conceive to ourselves an alteration in time, we must *divide* the totality of time. We arrive thus at reality only through limits, only through *negation* or exclusion at *position* or at actual affirmation, only through annulment of our free determinability at determination.

But from a mere exclusion no reality would arise in eternity, and from a mere sense perception no conception would arise in eternity, if there were not something present, *from which* it was excluded, if through an absolute action of the mind the negation were not related to something positive and from non-affirmation, antithesis did not arise; this activity of the mind is called judging or thinking, and the result of the same, *thought*.

Before we determine a place in space, there is really no space for us; but without absolute space we would never again determine a place. Likewise with time. Before we have the moment, there is really no time for us; but without eternal time we would never have a conception of the moment. We thus arrive, to be sure, only through the part at the whole, only through the limit at the unlimited; but we also arrive only through the whole at the part, only through the unlimited at the limit.

If therefore it is now asserted of the beautiful, that it paves the way for man to a transition from feeling to thought, so is this by no means so to be understood, as if by beauty the gap could be filled, which divides feeling from thought, passivity from activity; this gap is infinite, and without the intervention of a new and independent capacity nothing universal in eternity can arise from the individual, nothing necessary can arise from the contingent. Thought is the immediate action of this absolute capacity, which must indeed be called forth through the senses, to express itself, but in its expression itself so little depends on sensuousness, that it manifests itself on the contrary only through opposition to the same. The independence, with which it acts, excludes every foreign influence, and not insofar as she helps in thinking (which contains an obvious contradiction), merely insofar as she secures for the mental powers the freedom, to express themselves according to their own laws, can beauty become a means, to lead man from matter to form, from sensations to laws, from the limited to an absolute existence.

But this presupposes, that the freedom of the mental powers could be checked, which appears to conflict with the conception of an independent capacity. A capacity namely, which receives from outside nothing but the material of its work, can be hindered only through withdrawal of the material, thus only negatively in its work, and one misconstrues the nature of spirit, if one attributes to the sensuous passions a power, to be able to positively suppress the freedom of the mind. Indeed, experience provides examples in number, where the powers of reason appear suppressed in the same proportion, as the sensuous powers act more passionately, but instead of deriving this weakness of mind from the strength of the emotional state, one must on the contrary explain this predominant strength of the emotional state through this weakness of the mind; for the senses can not otherwise represent a power over man, than insofar as the mind hath freely neglected, to demonstrate itself as such.

But whilst I seek through this explanation to meet an objection, I have, as it seems, involved myself in another and have only saved the independence of the mind at the expense of its unity. For how can the mind take *from itself* at the same time the grounds of inactivity and activity, if it is not itself divided, if it is not opposed to itself?

Here we must now recall, that we have the finite, not the infinite mind before us. The finite mind is that, which becomes active not otherwise than through passivity, only achieves the absolute through limits, only, in so far as it receives matter, acts and forms. Such a mind will therefore combine with the instinct towards form or towards the absolute an instinct towards matter or towards limits, as which are the conditions, without which he could neither have nor satisfy the first instinct. In how far in the same being two so opposite tendencies could subsist together, is a task, which can indeed place the metaphysician, but not the transcendental philosopher in embarrassment. The latter by no means claims, to explain the possibility of things, but rather satisfies himself, to establish the knowledge, from which the possibility of experience is apprehended. And since experience were just as little possible without that opposition in the mind as without the absolute unity of the same, so he sets up both conceptions with perfect right as equally necessary conditions of experience, without troubling himself further about their reconcilability. This indwelling of two fundamental instincts moreover in no way contradicts the absolute unity of the mind, so soon as one merely distinguishes the *mind itself* from both instincts. Both instincts exist and act indeed in it, but it itself is neither matter nor form, neither sensuousness nor reason, which those seem not always to have considered, who only allow the human mind itself to act there, where its proceedings agree with reason, and where this contradicts reason, declare it merely passive.

Each of these two fundamental instincts strives, so soon as it hath achieved development, according to its nature and necessarily towards satisfaction, but just for that reason, because both strive necessarily and both yet towards opposite objectives, so this double necessity mutually cancels itself, and the will preserves complete freedom between both. It is therefore the will, which acts towards both instincts as a *power* (as ground of reality), but neither one can act for itself as a power towards the other. Through the most positive impulse to justice, whereof he by no means lacks, the violent man is not deterred from injustice, and through the most lively temptation to enjoyment the strong-minded man is not brought to a breech of his principles. There is no other power in man than his will, and only that which annuls the man, death and the theft of consciousness, can annul his inner freedom.

A necessity *outside us* determines our condition, our existence in time by means of sense perception. This is entirely involuntary and so, as it acts upon us, must we suffer. In the same manner, a necessity in us reveals our personality, at the instigation of that sense perception and through opposition to the same; for self-consciousness can not depend on the will, which presupposes it. This original announcement of the personality is not our merit, and the lack of the same not our defect. Only from him, who is conscious of himself, is reason, i.e. absolute consequence and universality of consciousness demanded; beforehand he is no man, and no act of humanity can be expected from him. So little as the *metaphysician* can explain the limits, which the free and independent mind suffers through the sensation, so little as the *physical scientist* comprehends the infinity, which is revealed at the instance of these limits in the personality. Neither abstraction nor experience guides us back to the source, from which our conceptions of universality and necessity flow; its early appearance in time shields it from the observer and its super-sensuous origin, from the metaphysical inquirer. But enough, that self-consciousness is there, and at once with the inalterable unity of the same the law of unity for all, that is *for* man, and for everything, that *through* him should become, is established for his cognition and action. Inescapable, incorruptible, incomprehensible the conception of truth and justice present themselves even in the age of sensuousness, and without one knowing to say, whence and how it arose, one observes the eternal in time and the necessary in the train of the contingent. So arise sensation and self-consciousness completely without assistance from the subject, and the origin of both lies just as much beyond our will, as it lies beyond the sphere of our knowledge.

Are both however real, and hath man, by means of sensation, the experience of a definite

existence, hath he through self-consciousness had the experience of his absolute existence, so will both his fundamental instincts arise with their objects. The sensuous instinct awakens with the experience of life (with the commencement of the individual), the rational, with the experience of the law (with the commencement of the personality), and only now, after both are come into existence, is his humanity erected. Until this hath occurred, everything in him ensues according to the law of necessity; but now the hand of nature abandons him, and it is his concern, to assert the humanity, which she established and revealed in him. So soon, that is to say, as two opposite fundamental instincts are active in him, so both lose their compulsion and the antithesis of two necessities produces the origin of freedom.[1]

Notes

1. In order to prevent all misinterpretation, I observe, that, so often as freedom is here discussed, that kind is not meant, which necessarily befits man, regarded as intelligence, and can neither be given to him nor taken from him, but rather that kind, which is grounded upon his mixed nature. Thereby, that on the whole man acts only rationally, he demonstrates a freedom of the former kind, thereby, that he acts rationally within the limits of matter and materially under the laws of reason, he demonstrates a freedom of the second kind. One could explain the latter simply by means of a natural possibility of the former.

Twentieth Letter

That freedom could not be acted upon, ensues from its very conception; but that *freedom itself* be an effect of nature (this word taken in its widest sense), not a work of man, that it therefore also could be promoted and hampered by natural means, follows equally necessarily from the preceding. It takes its start first, when man is *complete* and *both* his fundamental instincts have developed; it must therefore be lacking, so long as he is incomplete and one of both instincts is excluded, and must by all that, that gives him back his completeness, be able to be restored.

Now a moment may indeed be exhibited, not only in the entire species but also in the individual man, in which man is not yet complete and one of both instincts is exclusively active in him. We know, that he commences with mere life, in order to end with form; that he is an individual earlier than a person, that he proceeds from limitations to infinity. The sensuous instinct comes into effect earlier than the rational, because sensation precedes consciousness, and in this *priority* of the sensuous instinct we find the key to the entire history of human freedom.

For there is now a moment, where the life instinct, because the formal instinct doth not yet counteract it, acts as nature and as necessity; where sensuousness is a power because man hath not yet begun; for in man himself there can be no other power than the will. But in the state of thinking, to which man should now pass over, reason should precisely on the contrary be a power, and a logical and moral necessity should replace the physical. The power of sensation must therefore be annihilated, ere the law can be elevated thereto. It is therefore not enough, that something begin, which did not yet exist; something must first cease, which was. Man can not immediately pass over from sensation to thought; he must *take a step backward*, because only, in that one determination is again annulled, can the contrary take place. He must therefore, in order to exchange passivity for self-activity, a passive determination for an active, *be free of all determination* momentarily and pass through a condition of mere determinability. Hence must he return in a certain manner to that negative condition of mere indeterminability, in which he found himself, ere anything made an impression upon his sense. That condition however was completely empty of content, and it is now a matter

thereof, to unite an equal indeterminability and an equal unlimited determinability with the greatest possible contents, because something positive should follow immediately from this condition. The determination, which he receives through sensation, must therefore be held fast, because he may not lose the reality; at the same time however, insofar as it is limitation, it must be annulled, because an unlimited determinability should take place. The task is therefore, to annihilate and at the same time to preserve the determination of the condition, which is only possible in the single fashion, that one *opposes another* to it. The scales of the balance stand level, if they are empty; however they also stand level, if they contain equal weights.

The mind therefore passes over from sensation to thought by means of a middle state of mind, in which sensuousness and reason are *simultaneously* active, however, just for this reason, mutually annul their determining power and effect a negation through an opposition. This middle state of mind, in which the mind is compelled neither physically nor morally and yet is active in both manners, deserves preeminently to be called a free state of mind, and if one names the condition of sensuous determination the physical, but the condition of rational determination the logical and moral, so must one call this condition of real and active determinability the *aesthetical*.[1]

Notes

1. For readers, to whom the pure meaning of this word--through ignorance so often misused--is not entirely familiar, may the following serve as an explanation. All things, which can come forth anywhere in the phenomenon, may be thought of under four different connections. One thing can be connected to our sensuous condition (our existence and well-being); that is its physical nature. Or it can be connected to the understanding and supply us knowledge; that is its *logical* nature. Or it can be connected to our will and be regarded as an object of choice for a rational being; that is its *moral* nature. Or finally, it can be connected to the entirety of our different powers, without being a specific object for a single one of the same; that is its *aesthetical* nature. A man can be agreeable to us through his readiness to serve; he can cause us to think through his conversation; he can instill respect through his character; finally however, independent of all these, and without our taking into consideration either any law, or any purpose in our judgment of him, he can also please us in mere contemplation and through his mere mode of appearance. In this quality we judge him aesthetically. Thus there is an education for health, an education for insight, an education for morality, an education for taste and for beauty. This last hath for its purpose, to cultivate the whole of our sensuous and spiritual powers in the greatest possible harmony. Because one is in the meanwhile led astray by a false taste and through a false reasoning fortified still more in this error, takes the conception of arbitrariness gladly along into the conception of the aesthetic, so I here observe superfluously (although these letters about aesthetic education are concerned with almost nothing other, than to refute that error), that the mind in the aesthetical condition indeed acts free and in the highest degree free from all constraint, but in no way free from the law, and that this aesthetical freedom is only distinguished thereby from the logical necessity in thought, and from the moral necessity in willing, that the laws, according to which the mind operates, *are not conceived* and, because they find no resistance, do not appear as compulsion.

Twenty-first Letter

There is, as I observed at the beginning of the preceding letter, a double condition of determinability and a double condition of determination. Now I can make this thesis clear.

The mind is determinable, merely insofar as it is not determined at all; it is however determinable, insofar as it is not exclusively determined, i.e., is not limited by its determination. The former is mere indeterminacy (it is without limits, because it is without reality); this is the aesthetical determinability (it hath no limits, because it unites all reality).

The mind is determined, only insofar as it is limited at all; it is however also determined, insofar as it limits itself out of its own absolute capacity. In the first case it finds itself, when it perceives, in the second, when it thinks. Therefore what the thinking is in regard to determination, that the aesthetical composition is in regard to determinability; the former is limitation from inner infinite power, the latter is a negation from inner infinite fullness. Just as sensation and thinking touch one another in the single point, that in both conditions the mind determines, that man is exclusively something--either individual or person--but otherwise are removed from one another into the infinite; precisely thus the aesthetical determinability agrees with the mere indeterminacy in one single point, that both of them exclude every determined existence, whilst they in all remaining points like nothing and something, are consequently infinitely different. If therefore the latter, indeterminacy from deficiency, were conceived as an *empty infinity*, so must the aesthetical freedom of determination, which is the real counterpart of the same, be regarded as a *fulfilled infinity*; a conception, which with that, which the foregoing inquiries teach, coincides most exactly.

In the aesthetical condition man is therefore *naught*, insofar as one pays attention to a single result, not to the whole capacity and takes into consideration the lack of any particular determination in him. Thus one must recognize as completely right those, who declare the beautiful and the state of mind, into which it transports our mind, in regard to *knowledge* and *inner conviction*, to be fully indifferent and unfruitful. They are completely right, for beauty gives absolutely no individual result either for the understanding or for the will, she realizes no individual, either intellectual or moral purpose, she finds no single truth, helps us fulfill no single duty, in a word, equally inept, to establish the character and to enlighten the head. Thus the personal worth of a man or his dignity, insofar as these can depend only upon himself, still remains fully undetermined by aesthetical culture, and nothing further is achieved, than that it is now made possible for him *on account of nature*, to make of himself, what he will--that to him the freedom, to be, what he should be, is completely restored.

But precisely thereby is something infinite achieved. For so soon as we recall, that precisely this freedom was taken from him by the one-sided compulsion of nature in sensing, and by the excluding legislation of reason in thinking, so must we regard the capacity, which is given back to him in the aesthetical state of mind, as the highest of all gifts, as the gift of humanity. Certainly he already possesses this humanity as disposition before any determinate condition, into which he can come, but in reality he loses it, with any determinate condition, into which he comes, and it must, if he should be able to pass over to an opposite, be given back to him anew every time by the aesthetical life. [1]

Thus it is not merely allowed poetically, but also philosophically correct, when one calls beauty our second creator. For although she merely makes humanity possible for us, and in the rest leaves it to our free will, to what extent we want to make it real, so hath she this with our original creator, nature, in common, which gives us likewise nothing further than the capacity for humanity, but leaves the use of the same to our own willful determination.

Notes

1. Indeed the celerity, with which certain characters pass over from sensations to thoughts and to resolutions, allows the aesthetical state of mind, which they most necessarily pass through in this time, to become scarcely or not at all observable. Such dispositions can not long endure the condition of indeterminacy and press impatiently for a result, which

they do not find in the condition of aesthetical boundlessness. On the other hand, with others, who locate their enjoyment more in the feeling of the *whole capacity* than of a *single* action of the same, the aesthetical condition spreads itself out over a far *greater surface*. So much as the first are frightened before emptiness, so little can the latter endure limitation. I scarcely need to mention, that the first are born for detail and subordinate occupations, the latter, provided, that they unite reality at the same time with this capacity, for the whole and to great roles.

Twenty-second Letter

If therefore the aesthetical disposition of the mind in *one* regard must be considered as *naught*, so soon, that is, as one directs his attention to individual and determinate effects, so is it in another regard to be looked upon again as a condition of *the highest* reality, insofar as one thereby considers the absence of all limits and the sum of powers, which are jointly active in the same. One can therefore just as little consider those wrong, who declare the aesthetical condition to be the most fruitful in regard to knowledge and morality. They are perfectly right; for a disposition of the mind, which contains in itself the whole of humanity, must necessarily also every individual expression of the same, according to its capacity, include in itself; a disposition of mind, which removes all limits from the whole of human nature, must necessarily remove them also from every individual expression of the same. Just for that reason, because it takes no individual function of humanity exclusively under protection, so is it favorable to everyone without distinction, and it favors no single one pre-eminently, only because it is the ground of the possibility of all. All other exercises give to the mind some particular fate, but place upon it therefor also a particular limit; the aesthetical alone leads to the unlimited. Every other condition, in which we can come, sends us back to a previous, and requires for its solution a following; only the aesthetical is a whole in itself, since it unites in itself all conditions of its origin and of its continuance. Here alone do we feel ourselves as if swept out of time; and our humanity expresses itself with a purity and *integrity*, as if it had not yet experienced injury from the influence of external forces.

What flatters our senses in immediate sensation, that opens our soft and pliant disposition to every impression, but makes us also in the same degree less fit for exertion. What strains our thinking powers and invites to abstract conceptions, that strengthens our mind for every kind of resistance; but hardens it also in the same proportion and robs us just as much of receptiveness, as it helps us towards a greater self-activity. Just for this reason, the one also finally leads like the other necessarily to exhaustion, because matter cannot long do without the formative power, because the power cannot long do without the plastic matter. Have we on the contrary given ourselves up to the enjoyment of genuine beauty, so are we in such a moment master in the same degree of our passive and active powers, and we shall turn with equal ease to earnestness and to play, to rest and to movement, to compliance and to resistance, to abstract thinking and to intuition.

This lofty equanimity and freedom of mind, combined with strength and vigor, is the state of mind, in which a genuine work of art should set us free, and there is no more certain touchstone of true aesthetical goodness. Find we ourselves after an enjoyment of this kind preeminently disposed to some particular mode of feeling or mode of action, to another, on the other hand, awkward and annoyed, so this serves as an unerring proof, that we have experienced no *pure aesthetical* effect; be it now, that it be owing to the object or to our mode of feeling or (as almost always is the case) to both at once.

Since in reality no pure aesthetical effect is to be met (for man can never step outside the dependence of forces), so can the excellence of his art work merely consist in his greater approximation to that ideal of aesthetical purity, and with all freedom, to which one may

enhance it, we shall always leave it in a particular state of mind and with a specific direction. The more universal the state of mind and the less limited the direction is, which is given to our disposition by a definite kind of art and by a definite product of the same, the nobler is that kind and the more excellent such a product. One can attempt this with works from different arts and with different works of the self-same art. We leave beautiful music with aroused feeling, a beautiful poem with enlivened conceptual power, a beautiful picture and building with awakened understanding; but whoever wanted to invite us immediately after a high musical enjoyment to abstract thinking, immediately after a high poetical enjoyment employ us in a ceremonious affair of common life, immediately after contemplation of beautiful paintings and sculptures inflame our conceptual powers and surprise our feelings, he would not choose his time well. The reason is, because even the most spiritually rich music stands *through its material* in a still greater affinity to the senses, than true aesthetical freedom allows, because even the happiest poem shares still more of the arbitrary and accidental play of the imagination, *as its medium*, than the inner necessity of true beauty permits, because even the most excellent picture, and this perhaps most of all, borders on earnest science *through the definiteness of its conception*. However, these particular affinities are lost with every higher degree, which a work from among these three kinds of art achieves, and it is a necessary and natural consequence of their perfection, that, without displacing their objective borders, the different arts *in their effect upon the mind* always become more similar to one another. Music in its highest ennobling must become form and work upon us with the serene power of the antique; graphic art in its highest perfection must become music and move us through its immediate sensuous presence; poetry in its most perfect cultivation must, like musical art, seize us powerfully, but at the same time, like the plastic, surround us with serene clarity. Therein is revealed the perfect style in any art, that it knows to remove the specific limitations of the same, without however annulling its specific advantages, and through a wise utilization of its peculiarity, imparts to it a more universal character.

And not merely the limitations, which the specific character of the type of art brings along with it, but also those which adhere to the particular matter, which he works, the artist must overcome through the treatment. In a truly beautiful work of art the content should do nothing, but the form everything; for through the form alone is an effect produced upon the whole of man, through the content, on the contrary, only upon individual powers. The content, however exalted and comprehensive it be, always acts therefore, restrictively upon the spirit, and only from the form is true aesthetical freedom to be expected. Therein therefore consists the real artistic secret of the master, *that he destroys the material through the form*; and the more imposing, arrogant, seductive the material is in itself, the more arbitrarily the same thrusts itself forward with its operation, or the more inclined the observer is, to involve himself with the material, the more triumphant is the art, which forces the former back and asserts its dominion over the latter. The disposition of the viewer and hearer must remain completely free and unimpaired, it must go forth from the magic circle of the artist pure and perfect as from the hands of the Creator. The most frivolous subject must be so handled, that we remain disposed, to pass over directly from the same to the most severe earnestness. The most earnest material must be so handled, that we retain the capability, to exchange it immediately for the lightest play. Arts of the emotions, such as tragedy is, are no exception; for *firstly* they are not entirely free arts, since they stand under the servitude of a particular aim (the pathetic), and then no true connoisseur of the arts will indeed deny, that works, even from this class, are all the more perfect, the more they care for the freedom of the mind even in the highest storm of the emotions. There is a beautiful art of passion, but a beautiful passionate art is a contradiction, for the unfailing effect of the beautiful is freedom from passion. No less contradictory is the conception of a beautiful instructing (didactic) or improving (moral) art, for nothing disagrees more with the conception of beauty, than to give to the disposition a definite tendency.

Nonetheless it doth not always prove formlessness in the work, if it merely makes an effect through its content; it can just as often evidence a deficiency of form in the critic. Is this one either too tense or too slack, is he accustomed, either merely to absorb with the understanding or merely with the senses, so will he hold to the parts even with the happiest whole and only to the matter with the most beautiful form. Only responsive to the raw *element*, he must first destroy the aesthetical organization of a work, before he finds an enjoyment therein, and carefully disinter the particular, that the master with infinite art made disappear in the harmony of the whole. His interest therein is simply either moral or physical, only precisely, what it should be, aesthetical, is it not. Such readers enjoy a serious and pathetic poem like a sermon and a naive or painful, like an intoxicating drink; and were they tasteless enough, from a tragedy and epic, even if it were a Messiah, to demand *edification*, so shall they without fail be scandalized by a song after the fashion of Anacreon or Catullus.

Twenty-third Letter

I take up once again the thread of my inquiry, which I have only broken off for this reason, in order to make application of the theses laid down to the practicing art and to the judgment of its works.

The transition from the passive condition of feeling to the active of thinking and willing occurs therefore not other than through a middle condition of aesthetical freedom, and although this condition in itself decides something neither for our insights nor convictions, hence leaves our intellectual and moral worth entirely problematical, so is it yet the necessary condition, under which alone we can attain an insight and a conviction. In one word: there is no other way, to make the sensuous man rational, than that one makes the same aesthetical first.

But, would you object to me, ought this mediation to be thoroughly indispensable? Ought not truth and duty to be able to find for themselves alone and through themselves entry to the sensuous man? Hereupon I must reply: they not only can, they absolutely ought to be indebted for their determining power merely to themselves, and nothing would be more contradictory to my previous assertions, than if they had the appearance, to defend the opposite opinion. It hath been expressly proven, that beauty gives no result either for the understanding or the will, that she mingles in no affair either of thinking or of resolution, that she imparts to both merely the capacity, but determines absolutely nothing in respect to the actual use of this capacity. With this, all foreign help falls away, and the pure logical form, the conception, must speak directly to the understanding, the pure moral form, the law, directly to the will.

But that she is really only capable of this--that there is really only one pure form for the sensuous man, this, I maintain, must be made possible first through the aesthetical disposition of the mind. Truth is nothing, which can be received from outside like the reality or the sensuous existence of things; it is something, that the power of thought produces self-actively and in its freedom, and it is just this self-activity, this freedom, which we miss in the sensuous man. The sensuous man is already (physically) determined and hath consequently no free determinability any longer: this lost determinability he must necessarily first recover, before he can exchange the passive determination for an active. He cannot however recover it otherwise, than either in that he loses the passive determination, which he had, or in *that he contains already in himself the active*, to which he should pass over. Lost he merely the passive determination, so would he lose at the same time with the same, also the possibility of an active one, because thought needs a body and the form can only be realized by way of matter. He will therefore already contain the latter in himself, he will be determined at the same time passively and actively, that is, he will have to become aesthetical.

Through the aesthetical disposition of mind is the self-activity of reason thus already revealed in the field of sensuousness, the power of sensation already broken within its own borders and the physical man so far ennobled, that the intellectual now merely needs to develop himself out of the same according to the laws of freedom. The step from the aesthetical condition to the logical and moral (from beauty to truth and to duty) is thence infinitely easier, than the step from the physical condition to the aesthetical (from the mere blind life to form) was. The former step man can accomplish through his mere freedom, since he needs merely to take, and not to give himself, merely to individualize, not to expand his nature; the aesthetically-inclined man will judge universally, and act universally, so soon as he will wish it. The step from raw matter to beauty, where an entirely new activity should be revealed in him, nature must facilitate for him, and his will can command nothing in respect to a state of mind, which itself first gives existence to the will. In order to lead the aesthetical man to insight and great convictions, one may give him nothing further than weighty reasons; in order to achieve even that from the sensuous man, one must first alter his nature. With the former it often needs nothing but the challenge of a sublime situation (which most directly operates upon the capacity of the will), in order to make him into a hero and into a sage; one must first transplant the latter under another sky.

It therefore appertains to the most important task of culture, to subject man even in his mere physical life to form and, so far as the realm of beauty can ever extend, to make him aesthetical, because only from the aesthetical, but not from the physical condition can the moral be developed. Should man in each individual case possess the capacity, to make his judgment and his will the judgment of the species, should he find from every limited existence the passage through to an infinite one, from every dependent condition to be able to take the upward swing to self-dependence and freedom, so must he take care therefor, that he be in no moment mere individual and merely serve the law of nature. Should he be able and ready, to elevate himself out of the narrow circle of natural ends to rational ends, so must he already within the former have practiced for the latter and have already realized his physical determination with a certain freedom of mind, i.e., according to laws of beauty.

And indeed he is capable of this, without thereby contradicting in the least his physical aim. The demands of nature upon him are directed at that, *which he works, at the contents* of his action, about the way, in *which* he works, about the form of the same, nothing is determined by natural ends. The demands of reason on the other hand are directed strictly to the form of his activity. So necessary as it is therefore for his moral determination, that he be purely moral, that he show an absolute self-activity, so indifferent is it for his physical determination, whether he is purely physical, whether he conducts himself absolutely passively. In regard to this latter it is therefore placed entirely at his discretion, whether he wants to act upon it merely as being of sense and as natural force (namely as a force, which only acts, according as it suffers), or whether at the same time as absolute force, as being of reason, and there may indeed be no question, which of both corresponds more to his dignity. On the contrary, so much as it degrades and dishonors him, to do from sensuous impulse that, which he ought to have determined from pure motives of duty, so much as it honors and ennobles him, to strive for legality, for harmony, for boundlessness even there, where the common man only satisfies his legitimate longing.[1] In one word: in the domain of truth and morality sensation may have nothing to determine; but in the province of happiness form may exist and the play instinct may govern.

Therefore even here, upon the indifferent field of physical life, man must commence to be moral; yet in his passivity he must begin his self-activity, yet within his sensuous limits, his rational freedom. Already must he impose the law of his will upon his inclinations; he must, if you will permit me the expression, play the war against matter within its own boundaries, thereby he be spared, from fighting upon the holy soil of freedom against this frightful foe; he

must learn to desire *more nobly*, thereby he need not, *to will sublimely*. This is accomplished through aesthetical culture, which subjects to the laws of beauty all that, in which neither laws of nature nor laws of reason bind human caprice, and in the form, which it gives to the outer life, already reveals the inner.

Notes

1. This intellectually-rich and aesthetically-free treatment of common reality is, where one encounters it, the characteristic of a *noble* soul. In general a disposition is to be called noble, which possesses the gift, to transform even the most limited business and the most trivial object through the mode of treatment into an infinite one. Noble is every form called, which impresses the stamp of self-dependence, upon that, which according to its nature merely serves (is merely a means). A noble spirit is not satisfied thereby, to be free himself, he must set free all else around him, even the lifeless. But beauty is the only possible expression of freedom in the phenomenon. The predominant expression of the *understanding* in a face, a work of art and the like, can therefore never turn out noble, just as it is then also never beautiful, because it lays stress on the dependence (which is not separate from appropriateness), instead of concealing it.

   The moral philosopher indeed teaches us, that one could never do more than his duty, and he is perfectly right, if he merely means the relation, which actions have to the moral law. But in respect to actions, which merely relate to a purpose, to pass *beyond this purpose* into the supersensuous (which can here be called nothing other than to perform the physical aesthetically), is tantamount to passing *beyond duty*, in that the latter can only direct, that the *will* be holy, not that *nature* too have already been hallowed. There is therefore indeed no moral, but there is an aesthetical surpassing of duty, and such a conduct is called noble. However just for this reason, because an excess is always observed in the noble, in that that also possesses a free formal worth, which needed to have merely a material, or unites with the inner worth, which it should have, yet an outer, which may be lacking to it, so many have confused aesthetical excess with a moral and, seduced by the appearance of the noble, have introduced into morality itself an arbitrariness and contingency, whereby it would be entirely annulled.

   From a noble conduct is a sublime to be distinguished. The first goes beyond moral obligation, but not so the last, although we esteem it far higher than the other. But we esteem it not for this reason, because it surpasses the rational conception of its object (the moral law), but rather because it surpasses the empirical conception of its subject (our knowledge of human goodness of will and strength of will), because it oversteps the nature of the subject, out of which it must on the contrary flow forth completely unconstrained, but rather because it steps beyond the nature of its object (the physical aim) into the spiritual realm. There, one might say, we are astounded at the victory, which the object wins over man; here we admire the swing, which man gives to the object.

Twenty-fourth Letter

There are therefore three different moments or stages of development to be distinguished, which not only the individual man but also the entire species must necessarily and in a definite order pass through, if they should realize the entire circle of their determination. Through accidental causes, which lie either in the influence of external things or in the free choice of man, the individual periods can indeed be now lengthened, now shortened, but none can be entirely leapt over, and even the order, in which they follow one another, can be reversed neither through nature nor through the will. Man in his *physical* condition merely suffers the power of nature; he frees himself from this power in the *aesthetical* condition, and

he rules over it in the *moral*.

What is man, before beauty lures from him his free enjoyment and peaceful form calms the savage life? Eternally uniform in his aims, eternally changing in his judgments, self-serving, without being himself, unrestrained, without being free, a slave, without serving any rule. In this epoch the world is to him mere destiny, not yet object; everything hath existence for him, only insofar as it provides existence to him, what neither gives to him nor takes from him, is not existent to him at all. Isolated and cut off, as he finds himself in the series of beings, every phenomenon stands there before him. Everything, that is, is through the moment's word of command, every alteration is to him an entirely fresh creation, because with the necessary *in him* the necessity *outside him* is lacking, which binds together the changing forms into a world-all and, whilst the individual flees, holds fast the law upon the field of action. In vain doth nature let her rich multiplicity pass before his senses; he sees in her glorious fullness nothing but his prey, in her power and greatness, nothing but his foe. Either he rushes into objects and wishes to pull them to himself, in desire; or the objects press destructively upon him, and he pushes them from himself, in abhorrence. In both cases his relation to the world of sense is immediate *touch*, and eternally anxious from its pressure, restlessly tormented from the imperious need, he finds rest nowhere but in enervation and limits nowhere but in exhausted desire.

> Indeed the mighty bosom and the Titans'
>
> Most pow'rful heart is his . . . . . .
>
> Assured heritage; and yet the god
>
> Did forge a brazen band around his brow,
>
> Advice, restraint, sagacity and patience
>
> He hid before his timid, gloomy look.
>
> In him each craving grows unto a rage,
>
> And limitless his rage doth rush around.
>
> --*Iphigenia in Tauris*

Unaware of his own human dignity, he is far removed, from honoring it in others, and conscious of his own savage greed, he fears it in every creature, which looks similar to him. Never doth he perceive others in himself, only himself in others, and society, instead of expanding him to the species, confines him only more narrowly in his individuality. In this dull limitation he wanders through the night-filled life, until a favorable nature rolls away the burden of material from his darkened senses, reflection separates *himself* from things and the objects finally show themselves in the reflection of consciousness.

This condition of raw nature, as it is here described, cannot indeed be shown in any definite people and age; it is mere idea, but an idea, with which experience agrees in individual features most exactly. Man, one can say, was never entirely in this animal condition, but he hath never entirely escaped it. Even in the roughest subjects one finds unmistakable traces of rational freedom, just as in the most cultivated moments are not lacking, which recall that gloomy natural state. It is peculiar to man, to unite the highest and the lowest in his nature, and if his *dignity* is founded upon a strict distinction of one from the other, so his *happiness* is founded upon a skillful removal of this difference. Culture, which should bring his dignity into agreement with his happiness, will have to provide for the highest purity of both these principles in their most intimate mixture.

The first appearance of reason in man is therefore not yet the beginning of his humanity. The latter is first determined by his freedom, and reason commences at first thereby, to make

his sensuous dependence limitless; a phenomenon, that seems to me not yet sufficiently developed for its importance and universality. Reason, we know, makes itself known in man through the demand for the absolute (the upon-itself founded and necessary), which, as it can be satisfied in no single condition of his physical life, compels him to leave the physical entirely and ascend from a limited reality to ideas. But, although the true sense of that demand is, to tear him away from the limitations of time and to lead him aloft from the sensuous world to an ideal world, so it can yet through a (in this epoch of prevailing sensuousness scarcely to be avoided) misinterpretation, be directed to physical life and, instead of making him independent, plunge man into the most fearful servitude.

And thus it stands also in reality. On the wings of conceptual power man leaves the narrow limits of the present, in which mere animality is enclosed, in order to strive forwards toward an unlimited future; but whilst the infinite rises before his reeling imagination, his heart hath not yet ceased, to live in the individual and to serve the moment. In the midst of his animality the instinct to the absolute surprises him--and as in this dull condition all his strivings are directed only at the material and temporal and are confined merely to his individuality, so he is merely induced by that demand, to extend his individuality, instead of abstracting from the same, into the endless, to strive for an inexhaustible matter instead of for form, for an everlasting alteration and for an absolute affirmation of his temporal existence instead of for the immutable. The same instinct, which, applied to his thinking and action, should lead him to truth and morality, now brings forth, relative to his passion and feeling, nothing but an unlimited desire, but an absolute want. The first fruits, which he harvests in the realm of spirits, are therefore *care* and *fear*; both of them the effects of reason, not of sensuousness, but of a reason, which mistakes its object and applies its imperative immediately upon matter. All unconditional systems of happiness are fruits of this tree, may they have the present day or the whole life or, what makes them no more venerable, the whole eternity for their object. An unlimited duration of existence and well-being, merely for the sake of existence and well-being, is merely an ideal of the desires, hence a demand, which can only be thrown up by an animality striving towards the absolute. Without therefore winning something for his humanity by a rational expression of this kind, he loses thereby merely the happy limitation of the animal, before which he now merely possesses the unenviable privilege, to lose possession of the present over striving towards the distant, yet without seeking in the whole limitless distance anything other than the present.

But even if reason doth not mistake its object and err in the question, so sensuousness will yet for a long time falsify the answer. So soon as man hath begun, to employ his understanding and to knit together the phenomena around him according to cause and effect, so reason presses, according to its conception, for an absolute knitting together and for an unconditioned cause. In order to be able to merely put forward such a demand, man must have already stepped beyond sensuousness; but it makes use of this demand, in order to fetch back the fugitive. Here were in fact the point, where he had to leave the world of sense entirely and swing up into the pure realm of ideas; for the understanding remains eternally within the conditioned and questions eternally, without coming to a last one. But as the man, who is here discussed, is not yet capable of such an abstraction, what he doth not find in his sensuous *sphere of knowledge* and not yet seek above the same in pure reason, so will he seek beneath it in his *sphere of feeling*, and apparently find. Sensuousness indeed shows him nothing, which were its own cause and gave itself law; but it shows him something, which knows of no cause and respects no law. As he therefore can bring the questioning understanding to rest through no final and inner cause, so, he brings it silence at least through the conception of the *causeless* and remains within the blind compulsion of matter, since he is not yet capable of comprehending the sublime necessity of reason. Because sensuousness knows no other *aim* than its advantage and feels itself driven by no other *cause* than blind

chance, so he makes the former the determiner of his actions and the latter the ruler of the world.

Even the holy in man, the moral law, cannot with its first appearance in sensuousness escape this falsification. As it speaks only forbiddingly and against the interest of his sensuous self-love, so must it appear to him as something foreign so long, as he hath not yet come, to consider that self-love as the foreign and the voice of reason as his true self. He therefore feels only the fetters, which the latter imposes on him, not the infinite liberation, which it procures for him. Without suspecting in himself the dignity of the lawgiver, he feels merely the constraint and the impotent resistance of the subject. Because the sensuous instinct *precedes* the moral in his experience, so he gives to the law of necessity a beginning in time, a *positive origin*, and through the most unhappy of all errors he turns the immutable and eternal in himself into an accident of the ephemeral. He persuades himself, to consider the conceptions of right and wrong as statutes, which are established by a will, not which are valid in themselves and in all eternity. As he passes beyond *nature* in explanation of particular natural phenomena and seeks outside the same, that which can be found only in its inner lawfulness, just as he steps beyond *reason* in explanation of the moral and forfeits his humanity, whilst he seeks a divinity upon this road. No wonder, if a religion, which was purchased with the casting away of his humanity, shows itself worthy of such an origin, if he holds laws, which have not been binding from *eternity*, also not to be unconditional and binding *to* all eternity. He hath to do thus not with a holy, merely with a powerful Being. The spirit of worship of God is therefore fear, which degrades him, not reverence, which elevates him in his own estimation.

Although these manifold aberrations of man from the ideal of his determination can not all take place in the self-same epoch, whilst the same hath to wander through several stages from thoughtlessness to error, from lack of will power to depravity of will, so yet all these belong to the consequences of his physical condition, because in all the instinct of life plays master over the formal instinct. Be it now, that reason may not yet have spoken in man at all and the physical still may rule over him with blind necessity; or that reason may have not yet purified itself enough from the senses and the moral still may serve the physical, so in both cases the sole principle authoritative in him is a material one, and man, at least in his ultimate tendency, a sensuous being; with the single difference, that he is in the first case a reasonless, in the second a rational animal. But he should be neither, he should be man; nature should not rule him exclusively and reason should not rule him conditionally. Both legislations should exist completely independent of one another and yet be completely at one.

Twenty-fifth Letter

So long as man, in his first physical condition, receives the world of sense merely passively into himself, merely perceives, he is also still fully one with the same, and just because he himself is mere world, so is there no world yet for him. Not until he sets it outside himself or *contemplates* it in his aesthetical condition, is his personality differentiated from it, and a world appears to him, because he hath ceased, to be constituted as one with the same.[1]

The contemplation (reflection) is the first liberal relation of man to the world-all, that surrounds him. If desire directly seizes its object, so contemplation moves its, into the distance, turns it thereby into its true and inalienable property, such that it secures it from passion. The necessity of nature, which governed him in the condition of mere sensation with undivided power, abandons him in reflection, in the senses an instantaneous peace ensues, time itself, the eternally changing, stands still, whilst dispersed beams of consciousness are gathered, and an after-image of the infinite, *the form*, is reflected upon the ephemeral ground. So soon as it becomes light in man, it is also no longer night outside him, so soon as it

becomes still within him, the storm in the world-all also subsides, and the contending forces of nature find calm between remaining boundaries. Hence no wonder, if the ancient poems speak of the great occurrence in the inner man as of a revolution in the outer world and make sensuous the thought, which triumphs over the laws of time, in the image of Zeus, who terminates the reign of Saturn.

From a slave of nature, so long as he merely perceives her, man becomes her lawgiver, so soon as he thinks her. She who governed him formerly only as *might*, stands now as *object* before his judging view. What is object to him, hath no power over him, for in order to be object, it must experience that of his. So far as he gives form to matter, and so long as he gives it, he is invulnerable to her effects; for nothing can injure a spirit, but what robs him of his freedom, and he proves that of his, in that he gives form to the formless. Only where the mass rules heavily and shapelessly and the dim outlines waver between uncertain boundaries, hath fear its residence; to every terror of nature man is superior, so soon as he knows to give it form and to transform it into his object. just as he begins, to assert his self-dependence towards nature as phenomenon, so he asserts also his dignity towards nature as power, and with noble freedom he rises up against his gods. They throw off the ghostly masks, wherewith they had frightened his childhood, and surprise him with his own image, in that they become his conception. The godly monster of the Orient, that administers the world with the blind strength of the beast of prey, contracts in the Grecian phantasy into the friendly contour of humanity, the realm of the Titans falls, and the infinite force is restrained by the infinite form.

But whilst I merely sought an exit from the material world and a passage into the world of mind, the free run of my conceptual power hath already led me into the midst of the latter. The beauty, which we seek, lies already behind us, and we have sprung over her, in that we passed directly from the mere life to the pure form and to the pure object. Such a spring is not in human nature, and in order to keep even pace with the latter, we shall have to return to the world of sense.

Beauty is certainly the work of the free contemplation, and we tread with her into the world of ideas--but it must he observed, without thereby leaving the sensuous world, as occurs with cognition of truth. The latter is the pure product of abstraction from everything that is material and contingent, pure object, in which no barrier of the subject may remain behind, pure self-activity without admixture of a passion. Indeed there is a way back to sensuousness from the highest abstraction, for thought moves the inner sensation, and the conception of logical and moral unity passes over into a feeling of sensuous agreement. But when we take delight in cognition, so we distinguish very exactly from our sensation and look upon this latter as something accidental, which could very well be omitted, without that on this account the cognition cease and truth were not truth. But it would be an entirely futile undertaking, to want to sever this relation to the capacity of sensation from the conception of *beauty*; hence it is not sufficient for us, to think of the one as the effect of the other, but rather we must look upon both conjointly and reciprocally as effect and as cause. In our pleasure in cognition we distinguish without effort the *passage* from activity to passivity and observe distinctly, that the first is over, when the last commences. In our liking of beauty, on the contrary, no such succession, between activity and passivity, may be distinguished, and here reflection dissolves so completely with feeling, that we believe we perceive the form immediately. Beauty is therefore indeed an *object* for us, because reflection is the condition, under which we have a sensation of it; but it is at the same time a *state of our subject*, because the feeling is the condition, under which we have a conception of her. It is therefore indeed form, because we contemplate her, but she is at the same time life, because we feel her. In one word: she is at the same time our state and our deed.

And just because she is at the same time both of these, so she serves us thus as a

triumphant proof, that passivity in no way excludes activity, nor matter form, nor limitation infinity--that consequently man's moral freedom is in no way annulled by his necessary physical dependence. She proves this, and, I must add, she alone can prove it to us. For since in the enjoyment of truth or of logical unity feeling is not necessarily at one with thought, rather accidentally follows the same, so the same can merely prove to us, that a sensuous nature can follow a rational and conversely, not, that both subsist together, not, that they act upon one another reciprocally, not, that they are to be absolutely and necessarily united. Rather, on the contrary, from this exclusion of feeling, so long as there is thought, and of thought, so long as there is feeling, an *incompatibility* of both natures must be concluded, in consequence of which analysts do not really know to adduce any better proof of the practicability of pure reason in mankind than, that it is imperative. But since in the enjoyment of beauty or *aesthetical unity* a real union and interchange of matter with form and of passivity with activity takes place, so is proven thereby the *compatibility* of both natures, the practicability of the infinite in finiteness, hence the possibility of the most sublime humanity.

We may therefore be no longer at a loss, to find a passage from sensuous dependence to moral freedom, according as the case is given by beauty, that the latter can exist together perfectly with the first, and that man in order to show himself as mind, need not escape from matter. Is he however already free in association with sensuousness, as the fact of beauty teaches, and is freedom something absolute and supersensuous, as its conception necessarily implies, so the question can no longer be, how he succeed thereto, to elevate himself from the limited to the absolute, to oppose sensuousness in his thinking and will, since this hath already occurred in beauty. It can, in one word, no longer be the question, how he passes from beauty to truth, which in its capacity already lies in the former, rather how he makes his way from a common reality to an aesthetical, from mere feelings of life to feelings of beauty.

Notes

1. I recall once more, that both these periods are indeed in idea to be necessarily separated from one another, but in experience are more or less mingled. One must also not think, as if there had been a time, where man found himself only in this physical state, and a time, where he had freed himself entirely from the same. So soon as man *sees an object*, so is he already no more in a merely physical condition, and so long as he will continue, to see an object, he will also not run from that physical state, because he can only see, insofar as he perceives. Those three moments, which I noted at the beginning of the twenty-fourth letter, are therefore indeed, regarded in full, three different epochs for the development of humanity as a whole and for the whole development of an individual man, but they may also be distinguished in every single perception of an object and are in a word the necessary conditions of every cognition, which we receive through the senses.

Twenty-sixth Letter

Since the aesthetical disposition of mind, as I have developed in the foregoing letters, first gives rise to freedom, so is it easy to realize, that it cannot arise from the same and consequently can have no moral origin. A gift of nature must it be; the favor of chance alone can loosen the fetters of the physical state and lead the savage to beauty.

The germ of the latter will develop itself equally little, where a scanty nature robs man of every refreshment, and where a prodigal one frees him of every effort of his own--where blunt sensuousness feels no need, and where vehement desire finds no satiation. Not there, where man hides himself like a *troglodyte* in caves, is eternally individual and never finds humanity *outside himself*, also not there, where he moves *nomadically* in great multitudes, is eternally only number and never finds humanity in himself--there alone, where he speaks in his own

but quietly with himself and so soon he emerges, with the entire race, will her lovely bud unfold. There where a light ether opens the senses to every gentle touch and an energetic warmth animates the abundant matter--where the realm of blind mass is overthrown even in the inanimate creation and the triumphing form ennobles even the basest natures--there in the joyous relations and in the blessed zone, where only activity leads to enjoyment and only enjoyment to activity, where from life itself the holy order wells up and from the law of order life alone develops--where conceptual power eternally escapes from reality and yet never goes astray from the simplicity of nature--here alone will sense and mind, receiving and forming power develop in the happy equilibrium, which is the soul of beauty and the condition of humanity.

And what kind of phenomenon is it, through which the entrance to humanity of the savage is announced? So far as we also examine history, it is the same in all races, who have escaped the slavery of the animal state: the joy in *appearance*, the inclination for *adornment* and for *play*.

The highest stupidity and the highest understanding have therein a certain affinity with one another, that both seek only the *real* and are entirely insensible to mere appearance. Only through the immediate presence of an object in the senses is the former torn from its rest, and only through reduction of conceptions to the data of experience is the latter brought to rest; in one word, dumbness cannot be elevated above reality and the understanding not remain below. Insofar therefore as the need of reality and adherence to the real are mere consequences of deficiency, the indifference to reality and the interest in appearance are a true enlargement of humanity and a decisive step towards culture. In the first place it is evidence of an external freedom, for so long as necessity commands and need impels, conceptual power is bound with strong fetters to the real; only when the need is satisfied, doth it develop its unbounded capacity. But it is evidence also of an inner freedom, because it lets us see a force, which independent of an external material sets itself in motion through itself, and possesses enough energy, to keep back from itself the pressing matter. The reality of things is their (the things') work; the appearance of things is the work of man, and a disposition, which feasts itself on appearance, delights itself no longer in that, which it receives, but rather in that, which it makes.

It is well understood, that only aesthetical appearance is being discussed here, which one distinguishes from reality and truth, not the logical, which one confounds with the same--which one consequently loves, because it is appearance, and not, because one holds it to be something better. Only the first is play, since the last is mere deception. To value appearance of the first kind, can never do harm to the truth, because one never runs the danger, of substituting it for the same, which is after all the only way, in which the truth can be injured; to despise it, is to despise all beautiful art in general, whose essence is appearance. However, it sometimes occurs to the understanding, to drive its zeal for reality to such an intolerance and over the entire art of beautiful appearance, because it is mere appearance, to utter a disparaging judgment; but this occurs to the understanding only then, when it recalls the above-mentioned affinity. Of the necessary limits of beautiful appearance I shall take occasion to speak in particular once again.

It is nature herself, which lifts man aloft from reality to appearance, whilst she endowed him with two senses, which lead him merely through appearance to cognition of the real. In the eye and the ear the pressing matter is already rolled away from the senses, and the object removes itself from us, which we directly touch in the animal senses. What we see through the eyes is different from that, which we *feel*; for the understanding springs forth beyond the light to the objects. The object of tact is a force, which we endure; the object of the eyes and the ears is a form, which we create. So long as man is still a savage, he enjoys merely with the senses of feeling, which the senses of appearance merely serve in this period. He elevates

himself to seeing either not at all, or he is certainly not satisfied with the same. So soon as he begins, to enjoy with the eye, and seeing acquires a self-dependent value for him, so is he also already aesthetically free, and the play instinct hath unfolded.

Immediately, just as the play instinct is aroused, which finds pleasure in appearance, the imitative formative instinct will also follow, which treats appearance as something self-dependent. So soon as man is once come so far, to distinguish appearance from reality, form from body, so is he also able, to separate the one from the other; for he hath already done that, in that he distinguishes them. The capacity for imitative art is therefore generally given with the capacity for form; the urge to the same rests upon another predisposition, of which I need not treat here. How early or how late the aesthetical instinct of art should develop, will depend merely upon the degree of love, with which man is able, to dwell on mere appearance.

Since every real existence derives from nature, as a foreign power, but all appearance originally comes from man, as conceiving subject, so he merely makes use of his absolute proprietary right, when he takes the appearance back from the essence and deals with the same according to his own laws. With unbounded freedom he can, what nature divided, join together, so soon as he can merely think of it together, and divide, what nature knitted together, so soon as he can but separate it in his understanding. Nothing need be holy to him here but his own law, so soon as he merely observes the boundary, which separates *his* province from the existence of things or the province of nature.

This human right to rule he practices in the *art of appearance*, and the more strictly he here distinguishes the mine and thine from one another, the more carefully he divides the form from the being, and the more self-dependence he knows to give the same, the more he will not merely enlarge the realm of beauty, but rather preserve even the boundaries of truth; for he cannot purify appearance of reality, without at the same time setting reality free from appearance.

But he possesses this sovereign right absolutely only in the *world of appearance*, in the unsubstantial realm of conceptual power, and only, so long as he conscientiously abstains in theory, from affirming the existence thereof, and so long as he in practice renounces, imparting existence thereby. You see herefrom, that the poet in a like manner steps outside his boundaries, when he attributes existence to his ideal, and when he aims at a definite existence thereby. For he cannot otherwise realize both, than in that he either steps beyond his poetic right, encroaches through the ideal upon the province of experience and presumes to determine real existence through the mere possibility, or in that he gives up his poetic right, lets experience encroach upon the province of the ideal and confines possibility to the conditions of reality.

Only insofar as he is *upright* (expressly renounces all claim to reality), and only insofar as he is *self-dependent* (dispenses with all assistance), is the appearance aesthetical. So soon as it is false and simulates reality, and so soon as it is impure and in need of reality for its effect, it is nothing but a degraded instrument for material ends and can prove nothing for the freedom of the mind. Moreover, it is not at all necessary, that the object, in which we find the beautiful appearance, be without reality, if only our judgment thereover pays no regard to this reality; for insofar as it pays regard to this, it is not aesthetical. A living womanly beauty will please us no doubt just as well and yet a little better than an equally beautiful, merely painted one; but insofar as she pleases us better than the last, she pleases no longer as self-dependent appearance, she pleases no longer the pure aesthetical feeling, even the living may please this latter only as appearance, even the real only as idea; but certainly it requires a still far higher degree of beautiful culture, to perceive in the living itself only the pure appearance, than to do without life in the appearance.

In whichever individual men of entire people one finds the upright and self-dependent

appearance, there one may infer intellect and taste and every thereto-related excellence--there will one see the ideal, that governs real life, honor triumph over possession, thought over pleasure, the dream of immortality over existence. There the public voice will be the only terrible one, and an olive wreath will be honored more highly than a purple robe. Only impotence and perversity have recourse to false and needy appearance, and individual men as well as entire peoples, who either "lend reality assistance by means of appearance or the (aesthetical) appearance by means of reality"--both are often combined--show at the same time their moral unworthiness and their aesthetical incapacity.

To the question, "how far may appearance exist in the moral world?" the answer is therefore so short and concise as this: insofar as it is aesthetical appearance, i.e. , appearance, which neither wants to replace reality nor needs to be replaced by the same. The aesthetical appearance can never become dangerous to the truth of morals, and where one finds it otherwise, there it may be shown without difficulty, that the appearance was not aesthetical. Only a stranger in fashionable society, for example, will consider assurances of politeness, which is a universal form, as signs of personal affection and, when he is disappointed, complain about dissimulation. But also only a bungler in fashionable society will, in order to be polite, call falsehood to his aid and flatter, in order to be pleasing. The first still lacks the sense for self-dependent appearance, hence he can give meaning to the same only by means of truth; the second lacks reality, and he would fain compensate for it by means of appearance.

Nothing is more common, than to hear from certain trivial critics of the age the complaint, that all solidity be lost from the world and that being be neglected for appearance. Although I by no means feel called upon, to justify the age against this reproach, so it follows sufficiently even from the wide extent, which these stern moralizers give their accusation, that they reproach the age not merely for the false, but also for upright appearance; and even the exceptions, which they make by chance in favor of beauty, concern more the needy than the self--dependent appearance. They do not merely attack the deceptive cosmetic, which conceals the truth, which presumes to substitute itself for reality; they also become overzealous against the beneficent appearance, which fills up the emptiness and cloaks the misery, also against the ideal, which ennobles a vulgar reality. The falsity of manners rightly offends their strict sense of truth; but too bad, that they class even politeness also with this falsity. It displeases them, that external empty glitter so often obscures true merit; but it grieves them no less, that one also demands appearance from merit and doth not exempt the inner content from pleasing form. They miss the hearty, robust and solid of former times, but they would also like to see reestablished the awkward and coarse of early manners, the ponderous of ancient forms and the former Gothic superabundance. They show through judgments of this kind a respect for *matter in itself*, which is not worthy of humanity, which ought on the contrary to treasure matter only insofar, as it is able to receive form and to enlarge the realm of ideas. The taste of the century need not therefore listen much to such voices, if only it stands steadfast otherwise before a better court. Not that we place a value upon aesthetical appearance (we do this for a long time not sufficiently), but rather that we have not yet brought it to pure appearance, that we have not yet sufficiently separated existence from phenomenon and thereby secured the boundaries of both forever, it is this, for which a rigorous judge of beauty can reproach us. This reproach we shall deserve so long as we cannot enjoy the beautiful of living nature, without coveting it, can not admire the beautiful of imitative art, without asking for an end--so long as we still do not concede to conceptual power its own absolute legislation and show it its dignity, through the respect, which we show its works.

Twenty-seventh Letter

You need fear nothing for reality and truth, if the high conception, which I advanced in the

previous letter of the aesthetical appearance, should become universal. It will not become universal, so long as man is still uneducated enough, to be able to make a misuse thereof; and became it universal, so this could only be effected through a culture, which at once made every misuse impossible. To strive after self-dependent appearance, demands greater capacity for abstraction, more freedom of the heart, more energy of the will, than man needs, in order to confine himself to reality, and must have this latter already behind himself, if he wishes to arrive at the former. How badly is he therefore advised, if he wished to enter upon the road to the ideal, in order to spare himself the road to reality! From appearance, as it is here understood, we should therefore not have much to fear for reality; but so much the more might there be to fear from reality for appearance. Chained to the material, man hath for a long time allowed this latter merely to serve his aims, ere he conceded to it its own personality in the art of the ideal. For the last, it requires a total revolution in his whole mode of feeling, without which he would not find himself even once *upon the road* to the ideal. Where we therefore discover traces of a disinterested free estimation of pure appearance, there can we infer such an upheaval of his nature and the real beginning of humanity in him. But traces of this kind are actually found already in the first raw attempts, which he makes towards *beautification* of his existence, makes even at the risk, that he should spoil it thereby according to its sensuous content. So as he but commences at all, to prefer form to matter and to risk reality for appearance (which he must however recognize therefor), so is his animal sphere opened, and he finds himself upon a course, which doth not end.

Not content with that alone, which satisfies nature and which need requires, he demands superfluity; in the beginning, indeed, merely a superfluity *of matter*, in order to conceal from desire its boundaries, in order to secure enjoyment beyond the present need; but soon a superfluity *in the matter*, an aesthetical supplement, in order to satisfy the formal instinct too, in order to expand the enjoyment beyond every need. Whilst he merely gathers provisions for a future use and enjoys the same in advance in the imagination, so he indeed steps beyond the present moment, but without stepping altogether beyond time; he enjoys *more*, but he doth not enjoy *differently*. But whilst he at the same time draws the form into his enjoyment and attends to the forms of the objects, which satisfy his desires, he hath not merely enhanced his enjoyment in extent and degree, but also ennobled it in kind.

No doubt nature hath also given even the reasonless more than the necessaries and strewn into the dark animal life a shimmer of freedom. When no hunger gnaws the lion and no beast of prey challenges to battle, so idle strength creates for itself an object; with courageous roaring he fills the resounding desert; in purposeless display his exuberant power enjoys itself. With joyous life the insect swarms in the sunbeam; also it is surely not the cry of desire, which we hear in the melodious song of the singing bird. Undeniably there is freedom in these movements, but not freedom from need in general, merely from a definite, from an external need. The animal *labors,* when a deficiency is the motive of its activity, and it *plays*, when the richness of its power is this motive, when the superfluous life stimulates itself to activity. Even in inanimate nature such a luxury of powers and a laxity of determination are shown, which in that material sense one could very well call play. The tree sprouts innumerable buds, which perish undeveloped, and spreads out far more roots, branches and leaves for nourishment, than are used for the preservation of its individual and its species. What it gives back from its lavish fullness, unused and unenjoyed, to the elements, the living may feast upon in joyous movement. Thus nature gives us even in her material realm a prelude of the unlimited, and even here removes *in part* the fetters, which she casts away entirely in the realm of form. From the constraint of need or *physical earnestness*, she passes through the constraint of the superfluous, or the *physical play*, to aesthetical play, and before she elevates herself to the high freedom of the beautiful above the fetters of every end, she already approaches this independence, at least from a distance, in the *free movement*, which is

itself end and means.

Like the bodily organs, so conceptual power also hath in man its free movement and its material play, in which it, without any reference to form, merely enjoys its arbitrary power and lack of fetters. Insofar as nothing of form is yet mixed at all in these plays of phantasy and an unconstrained succession of images makes up the entire charm of the same, they belong, although they can belong to man alone, merely to his animal life, and merely prove his liberation from every external sensuous constraint, without allowing the inference as yet of a self-dependent forming power in him.[1]

From this play of *the free succession of ideas*, which is still wholly of a material kind, and accounts for itself by mere laws of nature, conceptual power finally makes the spring to aesthetical play in the attempt at a *free form*. One must call it a spring, because an entirely new force leaps into action here; for here, for the first time, the law-giving mind is mixed with the actions of a blind instinct, subjects the arbitrary process of the power of conception to its immutable eternal unity, imposes its self-dependence on the changeable and its infinity on the sensuous. But so long as raw nature is still too powerful, which knows no other law, than to hasten forth restlessly from alteration to alteration, she will strive against that necessity by her unsteady caprice, that steadiness by her unrest, that self-dependence by her need, that sublime simplicity by her insatiability. The aesthetical play instinct will therefore still be scarcely recognizable in its first attempts, since the sensuous intervenes incessantly with its capricious temper and its savage desires. Hence we see the raw taste first seize the new and surprising, the many-colored, adventurous and bizarre, the vehement and savage, and fly before nothing so much as before simplicity and calm. He fashions grotesque forms, loves rash transitions, exuberant forms, dazzling contrasts, glaring lights, a pathetic song. In this epoch beautiful is to him merely, what excites him, what gives him material--but excites to self-acting resistance, but gives material *for a possible forming*, for otherwise it would not be the beautiful even for him. With the form of his judgment, therefore, a remarkable alteration hath taken place; he seeks these objects not, because they give him something to endure, but rather because they give him something to treat; they please him not, because they meet a need, but rather because they satisfy a law, which, although still softly, speaks in his breast.

Soon he is no longer content therewith, that things please him; he wishes to please himself, at first indeed only through that, which is *his,* finally through that, which is *he*. What he possesses, what he produces, may no longer bear upon it merely the traces of servitude, the anxious form of its purpose; besides the service, for which it is there, it must at the same time reflect the gifted understanding, which thought it, the loving hand, which realized it, the serene and free mind, which selected and established it. Now the ancient German searches for more brilliant animal pelts, more magnificent antlers, more elegant drinking horns, and the Caledonian selects the nicest shells for his festivals. Even weapons may now no longer be mere objects of terror, but rather also of pleasure, and the artistic baldrick will not be less observed than the deadly edge of the sword. Not content, to bring an aesthetical superfluity into the necessary, the freer play instinct finally tears itself entirely free of the fetters of necessity, and the beautiful becomes for itself alone an object of its striving. He *adorns* himself. Free delight is numbered among his needs, and the unnecessary is soon the best part of his joys.

Just as the form gradually approaches him from outside, in his dwelling, his household utensils, his clothing, so it finally begins, to take possession of him himself and in the beginning to transform merely the outer, finally, also the inner man. The lawless spring of joy turns to dance, the formless gesture to a graceful, harmonious miming, the confused tones of sensation unfold themselves, begin to obey measure and bend themselves to song. When the Trojan army with piercing cries storms like a flock of cranes across the battle field, so the Greek approaches the same calmly and with noble strides. There we see merely the arrogance

of blind force, here the victory of form and the simple majesty of the law.

A more beautiful necessity now links the sexes together, and the sympathy of the heart helps to preserve the union, that desire only peevishly and changeably knits. Released from its gloomy fetters, the calmer eye apprehends the form, the soul looks into the soul, and out of a self-seeking exchange of pleasure grows a generous interchange of affection. Desire extends and elevates itself to love, just as humanity unfolds in its object, and the base advantage over sense is distained, in order to gain by fighting a nobler victory over the will. The need to please subjects the mighty to the delicate tribunal of taste; he can steal pleasure, but love must be a gift. For this higher prize he can only contend through form, not through matter. He must cease, to touch upon feeling as force, and to confront the understanding as a phenomenon. He must allow freedom, because he wishes to please freedom. Just as beauty resolves the conflict of natures in its simplest and purest example, in the eternal opposition of the sexes, so she resolves it--or at least aims thither, to resolve it also in the complicated totality of society and after the model of a free union, which she knits there between manly force and womanly mildness, to reconcile everything gentle and violent in the moral world. Now weakness becomes holy, and untamed strength dishonors; the injustice of nature is corrected through the generosity of chivalrous practices. He whom no force may frighten, the gracious blush of shame disarms, and tears stifle a revenge, which no blood could quench. Even hatred pays heed to the tender voice of honor, the sword of the conqueror spares the disarmed enemy, and a hospitable hearth smokes for the stranger on the dreaded coast, where only murder formerly received him.

In the midst of the terrible realm of force and in the midst of the holy realm of law, the aesthetical forming instinct builds unobserved, a third, joyous realm of play and of appearance, wherein it takes away from man the fetters of all circumstances and sets him free from everything, which is called constraint, not only in the physical but also in the moral.

If in the *dynamic* state of rights man encounters man as force and restricts his actions--if he opposes him in the *ethical* state of duty with the majesty of law and fetters his will, so he may appear to him in the sphere of beautiful society, in the *aesthetical* state, only as form, confront him only as object of free play. *To give freedom through freedom* is the fundamental law of this realm.

The dynamic state can merely make society possible, in that it tames nature through nature; the ethical state can merely make it (morally) necessary, in that it subjects the individual will to the universal; the aesthetical state alone can make it real, because it fulfills the will of the whole through the nature of the individual. If need compels man into society and reason implants social principles in him, so can beauty alone impart to him a *social character*. Taste alone brings harmony into society, because it establishes harmony in the individual. All other forms of conception divide man, because they are exclusively based either upon the sensuous or the intellectual part of his being; only the beautiful conception makes a whole of him, because both his natures must accord thereto. All other forms of communication divide society, because they relate exclusively either to the private receptiveness or to the private skill of individual members, therefore to the distinctive, between man and man; only beautiful communication unites society, because it relates to what is held in common by all. We enjoy the joys of the senses merely as individuals, without the species, which dwells in us, taking part therein; therefore we cannot extend our sensuous joys into universal, because we cannot make our individuality universal. The joys of cognition we enjoy merely as species, and in that we carefully remove every trace of individuality from our judgment; we cannot therefore make our rational joys universal, because we cannot exclude the traces of individuality from the judgment of others as from that of our own. We enjoy alone the beautiful as individual and at the same time as species, i.e., as *representatives* of the species. Sensuous good can make only *one* happy, since it is based upon appropriation, which

always implies an exclusion; it can also make this *one* only one-sidedly happy, because the personality doth not participate therein. The absolute good can only secure happiness under conditions, which are not to be universally assumed; for truth is the only reward of renunciation and only a pure heart believes in pure will. Beauty alone makes all the world happy, and every being forgets its limitations, so long as it experiences her magic.

No superiority, no absolute power is tolerated, as far as taste rules and the realm of beautiful appearance is spread. This realm stretches upwards, to where reason governs with unconditioned necessity and all matter ceases; it stretches downwards, to where the natural instinct rules with blind coercion and form doth not yet begin; indeed, even upon these outermost boundaries, where the lawgiving power is taken from it, taste still doth not allow its executing power to be torn away. Unsocial desire must renounce its selfishness and the pleasurable, which otherwise only entices the senses, cast the net of grace also over minds. The stern voice of necessity, duty, must change its reproaching formula, which only resistance justifies, and honor willing nature through a nobler confidence. Out of the mysteries of science taste leads knowledge under the open sky of common sense and transforms the property of the schools into a common good of the entire human society. In its province even the most powerful genius must give up its highness and descend familiarly to the comprehension of a child. Force must let itself be bound by the Graces, and the defiant lion obey the rein of love. Therefor it spreads out its softening veil over physical need, which in its naked form offends the dignity of free spirits, and conceals from us the dishonoring relationship with matter in a lovely delusion of freedom. Bewinged by it, even fawning mercenary art swings up from the dust, and the fetters of bondage fall, touched by its wand, from the lifeless as from the living. In the aesthetical state everything--even the subservient tool is a free citizen, who hath equal rights with the noblest, and the understanding, which bends the suffering mass violently to its ends, must here ask it for its assent. Here, therefore, in the realm of aesthetical appearance, the ideal of equality is fulfilled, which the schwaermer so gladly would see realized in reality also; and if it is true, that the beautiful tone matures earliest and most completely near the throne, so must one also recognize here the good dispensation, which often only seems to restrict man in reality, in order to impel him into an ideal world.

But doth such a state of beautiful appearance even exist, and where is it to be found? As a need, it exists in every finely-tuned soul, as a reality, one might indeed only find it, like the pure church and the pure republic, in a few select circles, where not the mindless imitation of foreign manners, but rather one's own beautiful nature guides conduct, where man passes through the most complicated circumstances with bold simplicity and calm innocence and needs neither, to impair others freedom, in order to maintain his own, nor to cast away his dignity, in order to display grace.

Notes

1. The majority of games, which are in vogue in common life, rest either entirely upon this feeling of a free succession of ideas, or at any rate, borrow their greatest charm from the same. But so little as it proves in itself a higher nature, and as willingly as the most flaccid souls are wont to yield to this free stream of images, yet this very independence of fantasy from external impressions is at least the negative condition of its creative capacity. Only in that it tears itself free from reality, doth the forming power elevate itself to the ideal, and before the imagination can act in its productive quality according to its own law, it must have already made itself free from foreign laws in its reproductive process. Of course there is still a very large step to make, from mere lawlessness to a self-dependent inner legislation, and an entirely new power, the capacity for ideas, must be blended here into the play--but this power can now be developed also with greater ease, since the senses

do not counteract it and the indeterminate borders, at least negatively, on the infinite.