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Nietzsche's Debt to Kant's Theory of the Beautiful in *Birth of Tragedy*

Nietzsche describes *Birth of Tragedy* as a contribution to “the science of aesthetics” [BT 1]. In this paper, I will argue that a crucial influence on his emerging views was Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. Nietzsche's early aesthetic views are often attributed to some combination of Schopenhauer's analyses of the plastic arts (inspiring Nietzsche's conception of the Apollinian) and his analysis of music (inspiring Nietzsche's conception of the Dionysian) along with Nietzsche's own original insights into how these combine to form the tragic. As we shall see, the resources of Schopenhauer's aesthetics were unavailable to Nietzsche due to epistemological commitments he had consistently made throughout the period from 1868 to 1874. By contrast, the *Critique of Judgment*, which Nietzsche first encountered in 1868, provided him with all the resources he needed to construct his conceptions of the Apollinian, the Dionysian and the tragic, without running afoul of Kantian epistemological constraints that he had adhered to throughout his early phase, constraints that Schopenhauer had violated.

Nietzsche copied out several passages from the *Critique of Judgment* in 1868, in a fragment titled “On Teleology.” There, he wrestled with the question of how the appearance of intelligent design is possible in Darwinian nature. On Kant's view, nature is only knowable as mechanistic, but the meaning of functional claims involves at least a reference to the notion of intelligent design, and that reference takes us beyond the sphere of appearances. To avoid making biology depend upon claims about things-in-themselves (i. e., the intentions of an unknowable intelligent designer) Kant suggested that functional property claims are best understood as first person reports to the effect that no one could

resist thinking of a particular object but as if designed. Since it might well be true that no one could resist regarding an object but as if designed, without it actually *being* designed, Kantian restrictions of knowledge to appearances are preserved.

All the passages from the *Critique of Judgment* Nietzsche copied out in 1868 are from the “Critique of Teleological Judgment.” Had Nietzsche read the “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment” before penning *Birth of Tragedy* as well? There are no copied quotations from the “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment” prior to 1887, though it is probable enough that Nietzsche had read it as early as 1883, where we see Nietzsche’s first objections to the notion of “disinterested pleasure.”¹ There is also a passage from the “Critique of Teleological Judgment” copied out in 1870-71 which, paraphrased, ultimately finds its way into the first page of *Birth of Tragedy*, thus at least suggesting that Nietzsche had linked the third *Critique* with his views in aesthetics.²

Since there is no direct evidence of a reading of the “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment” before the writing of *Birth of Tragedy*, we must proceed indirectly. Briefly, Schopenhauer’s theory of the plastic arts depends upon his commitment to the existence of Platonic Forms which the spectator intuits by way of the art object. If Nietzsche’s conception of the Apollinian is indebted to Schopenhauer here, Nietzsche needs Platonic Forms and the capacity to intuit them. However, in all of Nietzsche’s writings from 1868

¹“Since Kant, all talk of art, beauty, knowledge, wisdom is messed up [*vermanscht*] and soiled through the concept of ‘disinterestedness’” [KGW VII: 1, p. 251 (1883)]. This passage is the earliest objection to Kant’s aesthetics in the corpus; the first quotations from the “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment” appear in 1887 at KGW VIII: 1, p. 275 (1886-87).

²KGW III: 3, p. 187 (1870-71). Nietzsche paraphrases Kant’s remarks concerning the reciprocal designedness of the sexes for reproduction (*CJ*, Ak. V, p. 425) in “On Teleology” without naming him at KGW I: 4, p. 575 (1868). The point that we must regard the sexes as if designed for each other is repeated at KGW III: 3, p. 157 (1870-71), with Kant named. Then at KGW III: 3, p. 187 (1870-71), Nietzsche compares the tragic as offspring of Apollo and Dionysus with natural procreation by two sexes, and again Kant is named. He repeats the comparison in *BT* 1, without reference to Kant. Here we have an unbroken textual chain from the *Critique of Judgment* to *Birth of Tragedy*.

to 1874, Nietzsche denies that there are Platonic Forms at all, and instead explains the genesis of the notion in terms reminiscent of Kant's transcendental idealist explanation of the genesis of the appearance of biological form in the third *Critique*.

Schopenhauer had explained the appearance of intelligent design in the structure and functioning of organisms by appealing to the notion of Platonic Forms which somehow serve as organisms' templates. As with mathematical Platonism, ontological inflation inspires epistemological mystery: Schopenhauer must assume that besides the various mental faculties he had already discussed in Book One of *the World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1, there is also a faculty for intuiting Platonic Forms. Having posited this faculty, Schopenhauer goes on to argue that this also explains our capacity to appreciate the plastic arts.³ Beautiful works are beautiful because they participate in the Forms, and we come to know this through intuiting the Forms in them. Thus the truth of a judgment of taste, for Schopenhauer, rests on the correspondence of the judgment to aesthetic properties the art object itself possesses--it is an objectivist theory of taste.

But is this the basis for Nietzsche's notion of the Apollinian? It cannot be if we interpret the notes of 1867-68, *Birth of Tragedy* in 1872 and *Truth and Lie* in 1873 as all of a piece, for throughout this period, Nietzsche rejects the idea of Platonic Forms.⁴ In 1868, we find Nietzsche claiming that the "organism [does] not belong to the thing in itself. The organism is form. If we abstract away the form, it is a multiplicity . . .

³For Schopenhauer's aesthetics of the plastic arts, see *WWR* I, pp. 169-255.

⁴ There are other compelling reasons for seeing the texts from 1868 to 1873 as of a piece. In 1868, Nietzsche argues in one set of notes that Schopenhauer's argument for identifying the Kantian thing-in-itself with the will is invalid, and that the Kantian position, that things-in-themselves are unknowable, is more nearly correct. Nietzsche also argues against the knowability of things-in-themselves in 1874 in *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense*. Did his views temporarily change in *Birth of Tragedy*? Not if we regard references to "the will" in *Birth of Tragedy* as merely Kantian reflective judgments, inspired by his earlier reading of the *Critique of Judgment*.

Organism as a product of our organization” [“On Teleology,” *KGW* I: 4, p. 558 (1868)].

“The concept of the whole however is our work. Here lies the source of the representation of ends. The concept of the whole does not lie in things, but in us. These unities which we call organisms are also only multiplicities. There are in reality no individuals, rather individuals and organisms are nothing but abstractions. Into these unities, made by us, we later transfer the idea of design” [“On Teleology,” *KGW* I: 4, p. 560 (1868)].

In *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense*, where we have Nietzsche’s clearest and most developed account of human subjectivity in his early writings, we also have an explicit repudiation of Platonic Forms. The example he gives is a biological, not a mathematical one, thus suggesting that it is especially *Schopenhauer’s* Platonism he rejects. Instead, Nietzsche proposes, in perfect agreement with his Kant-inspired remarks on organic form in “On Teleology,” that the very existence of organic form in organic phenomena is projected into them by our minds. *Truth and Lie* goes beyond this, claiming that our failure to grasp the mind-dependence of organic form makes us hypostatize this form and fantasize that it could exist independent of our minds and the organic phenomena they produce. This fantasy we then baptize with the term “Platonic Form.”

The concept “leaf” is formed by arbitrarily discarding these individual differences and by forgetting the distinguishing aspects. This awakens the idea that, in addition to the leaves, there exists in nature the “leaf”: the original model according to which all the leaves were perhaps woven, sketched, measured, colored, curled and painted--but by incompetent hands, so that no specimen has turned out to be a correct, trustworthy, and faithful likeness of the original model .

. . . This means that the leaf is the cause of the leaves . . . We obtain the concept, as we do the form, by overlooking what is individual and actual; whereas nature is acquainted with no forms and no concepts, and likewise no species, but only with an X which remains inaccessible and undefinable to us [KGW III: 2, p. 374 (1873)/ TL 1, ellipses mine].

Again, the consistency between the notes before and after *Birth of Tragedy* is striking. The implications of this account of Platonic Forms leave Schopenhauer's entire analysis of the plastic arts in ruins. Surely Nietzsche could not have undercut the very possibility of a Schopenhauerian aesthetics with one hand and then helped himself to it with the other? Rather, we should assume that Nietzsche, like Schopenhauer, linked questions of aesthetic form to those of biological form. Since Nietzsche was committed to the notion that biological form is *projected* into experience, it is hard to imagine him having any other view but that aesthetic form is projected into experience as well. This is consistent with Nietzsche's association of the Apollinian with dreaming [see *BT* 1]. In dreams images and their forms are freely produced by the imagination without even the constraint of data.

If this is correct, then it becomes very plausible to suppose that Nietzsche's conception of the Apollinian further develops *Kant's* conception of the beautiful. Kant had rejected the idea that aesthetic judgments could be objectively valid by conforming to objects which really possess aesthetic properties. But the contrasting subjectivist view, that aesthetic judgments were nothing more than subjective reports on the pleasure an individual happens to experience in the face of an object, seemed to undercut the possibility of standards of correctness for aesthetic judgments altogether.

Nonetheless, Kant's analysis begins with the simple fact that beauty elicits pleasure. Once other means of generating pleasure (satisfying preferences, discovering order in nature, obeying the moral law) have been removed, all that remains is the pleasurable effect objects have on us by virtue of the mind's own transcendental structure: that we synthesize data under forms of intuition and the categories to produce experience and well-formed, meaningful judgments about it. But having this structure is a necessary condition of the possibility of experience. All experiencers who confront the objects in question, by virtue of being experiencers, will feel pleasure. This is because those who would be justified in dissenting would be only non-experiencers, and there cannot be dissenting non-experiencers. Therefore the judgment "this object, by virtue of its apparent design, necessarily produces pleasure in experiencers" is intersubjectively valid. And this is all that saying "this object is beautiful" comes to for Kant. Of course, this account of intersubjective validity depends crucially upon his account in the first *Critique* of the cognition of empirical objects.

Kant speaks of a "free play" between the understanding and the imagination, a "harmony of the faculties," which gives rise to this aesthetic pleasure. This relationship resembles, but is significantly different from, the one that obtains when the understanding legislates to the imagination in ordinary human experience [*CJ*, Ak. V, p. 287]. We could say that aesthetic experience is analogous to a process of what Kant calls "recognition" gone wrong [*CPR*, A 103-110]. Each faculty is doing its job, but when it comes time to plug in the relevant expressions to complete the representation of the object, these expressions are missing. It is as if they were "on the tip of one's tongue." This does not mean that categorical elements or empirical concepts are entirely absent, but that they are

unable to play their normal role in generating complete experiences and thoughts. The process of experience-generation culminates in a penultimate stage in which the object is ready to be “recognized” and subsumed under some class. In ordinary cases, this happens readily enough, and the result is a “determinative judgment” about the object. In the aesthetic case, however, no class concept is readily available to subsume the object under. Metaphorically speaking, the mind scans the object, in response to intimations of patternedness in it, seeking its unifying design. This design, once grasped, should yield the concept under which the object is to be subsumed. But this attempt fails, with the consequence that judgment cannot be made. If that were all, then a faculty would have failed to discharge its function, and the result would be pain, not pleasure. However, the persistent intimation of unifying design, however elusive, holds the faculty of judgment in suspense, preventing it from abandoning the object as an uninterpretable chaos [*CJ*, Ak. V, pp. 220-21, 279]. Rather, the faculty of judgment reflects on its own state and judges that it can’t help but feel that there is a unifying design to the object.⁵ This judgment may very well be true, even if the mystery of the object persists. But in having produced the reflective judgment, the faculty of judgment has discharged its function of producing judgments, and thus in satisfying its aim, produces a feeling of pleasure [*CJ*, Ak. V, p. 218]. As in Kant’s theories generally, this “processing” takes place off stage, unconsciously. What we as experiencers are conscious of is finding an object beautiful

⁵This interpretation suggests that aesthetic experience happens by accident in cognitive contexts. But are we more likely to have an aesthetic experience after a day of frustration at the laboratory than when we are in the museum? While I do think that aesthetic experiences can take us by surprise in this way, another way to bring about aesthetic experience would be to take recognition “offline” by a gentle act of will. Refusal to recognize could be Kant’s version of what it is to *adopt* an aesthetic stance toward an object. Similarly, institutional settings like museums may be aesthetic settings, not by social fiat (as the post-Dadaist “institutional theory of art” would have it) but rather because these institutions uphold certain norms, perhaps including the norm “no ‘recognizing in a concept’ encouraged here.”

and judging that this is so. An analysis of what judging something beautiful *means* (the Analytic of the Beautiful), coupled with an explanatory theory of how the mind produces such judgments yields the above account.

Though Kant and Nietzsche may share the notion of projecting design-like form into experience, one might argue that this at most makes Nietzsche an aesthetic *subjectivist*. Aesthetic subjectivism is such a common view that its alleged presence in Nietzsche would scarcely need explaining. What is distinctive about Kant's aesthetics is his attempt to salvage an intersubjective validity to claims of taste despite the absence of objective aesthetic properties.

Does Nietzsche even have any interest in the epistemological dimension of aesthetics, in justifying the validity of claims of taste? If Nietzsche was a pure subjectivist about aesthetic value, it is difficult to see how art could possess the importance *Birth of Tragedy* claims for it. Schopenhauer's dogmatic-Platonic means of securing the objectivity of judgments of taste is unavailable to Nietzsche. Having painted himself into this corner, Nietzsche *should* have availed himself of a Kantian analysis of the beautiful, because there is no alternative.

How does this sit with the common view of Nietzsche as a champion of "perspectivism" and creative self-expression? First, "perspectivism" is really an issue for the late Nietzsche only. *Birth of Tragedy* wears its commitment to uniform standards of beauty on its sleeve. Second, throughout *Birth of Tragedy*, we see Nietzsche characterize the artist, not as expressing a personal, subjective experience, but as a vehicle through which a "primordial unity" [*Ur-Eine*] operates. That Nietzsche is *explicitly* concerned with vindicating the intersubjective validity of aesthetic judgments, however, only

becomes evident in his analysis of lyric poetry.

Modern aesthetics, by way of interpretation, could only add that here the first “objective” artist confronts the first “subjective” artist. But this interpretation helps us little, because *we know the subjective artist only as the poor artist*, and throughout the entire range of art we demand first of all the conquest of the subjective . . . indeed, we find it impossible to believe in any truly artistic production, however insignificant, if it is without objectivity, without pure contemplation devoid of interest [*BT 5*, ellipses and emphasis mine].⁶

Nietzsche cannot regard aesthetic judgments as *objective* because this would commit him to independent aesthetic properties, and he has argued against this. But if he regarded aesthetic judgments as subjective, lyric poetry, an exemplar of subjective self-expression, would not be a counter-example requiring a special analysis. Nietzsche’s conception of the Apollinian is thus neither subjective nor objective. If it is not intersubjective, it is nothing. Therefore, Nietzsche’s conception of the Apollinian was most likely inspired by a reading of Kant’s “Analytic of the Beautiful.”

It is on Nietzsche’s phenomenology of the tragic that his early claim to have set himself apart from Schopenhauer is thought to rest.⁷ However, it is often thought that

⁶In a footnote to his translation of this passage, Kaufmann, predictably, traces this claim to Schopenhauer, not Kant [p. 48, fn. 2]. It is true that Schopenhauer takes the notion of disinterested pleasure from Kant. Kant means by this “pleasure not due to preference-satisfaction,” a notion he then uses to secure the intersubjective validity of judgments of taste. Schopenhauer thinks he has no need to shore up the epistemological credentials of aesthetic judgments. Kant, however, would have found his reliance on Platonic Forms and our intuition of them entirely objectionable. Misunderstanding Kant, Schopenhauer then transforms the notion of disinterested pleasure into the notion of “quieting of the will,” as if the plastic arts invariably had an *anaesthetic* effect. Nietzsche transparently opposes this claim about the arts. Though Nietzsche uses Kantian and Schopenhauerian formulae interchangeably here, his concern is with the *epistemological* credentials of an aesthetic judgment. This is a problem, given the idiosyncrasy of experience that lyric poetry expresses.

⁷Note that the above already has impact on our interpretation of Nietzsche’s account of the tragic affect, since the tragic for Nietzsche is a synthesis of the Apollinian and Dionysian.

Nietzsche's conception of the Dionysian is inspired by Schopenhauer's explanation of the aesthetic effect of music in terms of its relation to the will as thing-in-itself. Yet Nietzsche is as skeptical of Schopenhauer's identification of the thing-in-itself with the will from the late 1860s to the mid-1870s as he is of the notion of Platonic Forms. This suggests that the key to the Dionysian, and hence the tragic, may lie, not with Schopenhauer's analysis of music, but with Kant's analysis of dynamical sublime.

For Schopenhauer, representations of tragic episodes reveal humanity's basic condition, given the nature of the will and the destructive and pointless way that it expresses itself.⁸ Tragedy, then, simply shows us the empirical facts about the impossibility of attaining ordinary happiness. This induces in us resigned weariness anticipating the "denial of the will" upon which salvation depends.

Here, we must be quite careful, however, to note the limited role Schopenhauer's metaphysics plays in his account of tragedy. Schopenhauer classes tragedy as a type of poetry, one among many *plastic* arts. He ascribes its effects to its presentation of the Platonic Form of human nature. The theory of the will only explains why human life is disappointing. The aesthetic effects of tragedy depend not, as in music, on some aesthetic mechanism essentially involving the metaphysics of the will. Instead, tragedy reports the simple fact that we suffer, and the more contentious claim that there is no way around this. The metaphysics of the will serves to explain why human beings suffer, but not why we take pleasure in tragedy. The pervasiveness of suffering can be adduced without recourse to metaphysics. Unlike Aristotle, Hegel or Nietzsche, Schopenhauer does not explain tragic affect at all. The question "why does tragic suffering in an artistic frame

⁸WWR I, pp. 252-55.

please us when ordinary suffering outside the artistic frame does not” does not interest Schopenhauer. Given his account, the effects of tragedy ought to be more efficiently produced by watching crime reports or natural disasters on the nightly news. Being a victim oneself would be still more efficient. Tragedy, like life, is just plain unpleasant, but at least it promotes resignation.⁹

Yet if we turn instead to Kant’s analysis of the dynamical sublime, we can see that it already resembles Nietzsche’s account of tragedy as “the *sublime* as the artistic taming of the horrible” [BT 7, emphasis Nietzsche’s]. Recall that the dynamical sublime is an experience in which we are exposed to events and images which would be dangerous if real. The effect of pleasure is due, in the first instance, to the presence of the artistic frame, which neutralizes the danger. In Nietzsche’s account of the tragic, there must also be an artistic frame. This is why the tragic involves the Apollinian as the representational form that the Dionysian experience must take. The Dionysian must be presented as a human character of beautiful form and also as the circumstances destroying her. This artistic frame of formal representation transforms staged events from dangers to objects of contemplation.

Furthermore, the dynamical sublime, like all aesthetic experiences for Kant, is ultimately pleasurable. Kant’s explanation for the peculiarly stern but thrilling quality of that pleasure was that hostile images which leave us unharmed put us into a state analogous to the state we are in when reason overcomes moral temptation. This in turn

⁹It is a commonplace that Schopenhauer’s theory is flawed by its inadequate account of tragic affect, this being Nietzsche’s central objection to it. The most unsatisfying aspect of his theory is that, despite his refusal to reduce tragedies to morality plays, the importance of tragedy for him is ultimately *didactic*: the right course of action is to give up acting. This confusion of moral with aesthetic aims seems entirely to be expected, given Schopenhauer’s dogmatic-Platonic account of aesthetic experience.

reminds us that as moral agents, we are not merely vulnerable phenomenal beings, but that we are also, as noumenal beings, ultimately indestructible. This is because the moral law demands the practical conclusion that we are free, and this is only possible if we are also noumenal. Thus scenes of destruction, paradoxically, evoke our own invulnerability.

Kant himself does not go beyond associating the dynamical sublime with our experience of nature, with its “bold, overhanging and, as it were, threatening rocks, thunderclouds piling up in the sky and moving about accompanied by lightening and thunderclaps, volcanoes with all their destructive power, hurricanes with all the devastation they leave behind, the boundless ocean heaved up, the high waterfall of a mighty river” [CJ, Ak. V, p. 261]. However some of his brief remarks on the sublime might very well have suggested to Nietzsche that *human activities and interactions could be sublime as well*. This would set the stage for interpreting tragic affect as a species of the dynamical sublime.

Even war has something sublime about it if it is carried on in an orderly way and with respect for the sanctity of the citizens’ rights. At the same time it makes the way of thinking of a people that carries it on in this way all the more sublime in proportion to the number of dangers in the face of which it courageously stood its ground. [CJ, Ak. V, pp. 262-63].

The passage from the dynamical sublime to the Nietzschean tragic, however, must take us through several intermediate stages.

First, human activities must be substituted for natural forces. It is no coincidence that so much of the plot material of tragic drama involves war and its side-effects. It is in organized destructiveness that human beings most closely approximate the

destructiveness of nature. Second, the neutralized danger the spectator feels must be displaced onto a represented figure--the tragic protagonist. Instead of framed images that, if real, would endanger the spectator, as with painted thunderstorms, the spectator identifies with the protagonist, who, within the frame, absorbs all the danger. Displacement now does the work of neutralizing the danger, but the tension between danger and its neutralization is itself intensified, as the spectator has a proxy inside the frame. Third, the protagonist must be synthesized by the spectator as a beautiful form; this is the *Apollinian* element that Nietzsche claims is essential to tragedy. It is here that Nietzsche's theory *is* in debt to Schopenhauer's remarks about tragedy presenting the Platonic Form of Humanity. We need not suppose that the experience involves intuiting Forms, any more than dreaming, to which Nietzsche often likens the Apollinian, involves contact with a dream world. The experience of the protagonist as satisfying to our taste, on a Kantian analysis, does not require any such ontological inflation.¹⁰

Naturally, our response to the destructiveness of the tragic cannot be precisely modeled on the account Kant gives of the dynamical sublime. There appears to be nothing in Nietzsche's theory corresponding to the role Kant gives to practical reason. In Kant's account, the combination of an image of danger, with the frame which neutralizes the danger, produces a state in us analogous to the overcoming of moral temptation. This reminds us that we are not only phenomenal but (because we are potentially moral), we are also noumenal beings, invulnerable to the vicissitudes of phenomenal life.

¹⁰Nietzsche often seems to think that a tragedy is more satisfying if the beautiful form and the destructive force are the same character, as in, e.g., *Oedipus Rex*. However the locus of destruction can be partially displaced away from the beautiful form, as it is in *Othello*. Othello's destructiveness is dependent upon the destructiveness of Iago. In *Richard III*, our response to the protagonist approximates pure revulsion, while the beautiful forms, if any, must be sought in his eloquence or his victims. As this last suggestion regarding eloquence makes clear, the notion of form here is potentially a quite broad one.

There is, however, an implied ethic in *Birth of Tragedy*:

If we conceive of it at all as imperative and mandatory, this apotheosis of individuation knows but one law--the individual, i.e., the delimiting of the boundaries of the individual, measure in the Hellenic sense. *Apollo, as ethical deity*, exacts measure of his disciples, and, to be able to maintain it, he requires self-knowledge. And so, side by side with the aesthetic necessity for beauty, there occur the demands "know thyself" and "nothing in excess"; consequently overweening pride and excess are regarded as the truly hostile demons of the non-Apollinian age... [BT 4].

Nietzsche shows no interest in Kantian ethics in his early phase, and almost all his discussions of it subsequently are hostile. However, Nietzsche had already entertained the idea that the Dionysian human being is "no longer artist, [but rather] has become a work of art..." [BT 1]. If we identify the Apollinian with Kantian beauty, section four implies that ethics is a matter of an imperative to give form to oneself.¹¹ Given what we have already seen of Kant's and Nietzsche's aesthetics, this claim need not have the disturbingly arbitrary implications it would have for most current readers. For the standards would be those of Hellenic taste, vindicated by appeal to intersubjectively valid

¹¹I am assuming that what early Nietzsche takes here to be ethics for the Greeks would be for Nietzsche ethics simpliciter. The ethics I am attributing to early Nietzsche is, in essence, Nehamas' account of Nietzsche's ethics, early and late; see Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985, pp. 142-234. My disagreement with Nehamas' aestheticism is that I find it most clearly expressed and committed to only in the early writings. Since Nietzsche is here committed to intersubjectively valid standards of taste, such a form of aestheticism proves to involve a notion of constraining social norms.

Of course, such an ethics may still seem entirely unsatisfactory from a modern perspective. It would have to trace any requirements not to harm others to a prior requirement to self-restraint merely for the sake of giving the self a certain structure. We may not find such a view acceptable. Nietzsche is in good company, however, since this is also Plato's derivation of the prohibition against interpersonal harm in the *Republic*.

standards. Kant himself speaks of intersubjectively valid standards as creating a community of feeling, a *sensus communis*, which parallels or anticipates the standards of a moral community. Rather than reinforcing reason's determinative moral standards, reflective judgments about the design of an agent's character, based on the pleasure this design gives to impartial spectators, would *replace* determinative judgments of practical reason. Conduct would be judged by its attractiveness, rather than by its conformity to objective rules.¹²

However that may be, it is clear from the passage above that this activity of giving form to one's own character involves imposing constraints on one's desires. This, in turn, is sufficient to give Nietzsche access to a conception of the dynamical sublime resembling Kant's, up to a point. When confronted with images of danger, our faculty of desire is initially mobilized to flee in terror, but for the aesthetic frame that neutralizes the danger and assures us of our safety. This feeling of standing fast against temptation produces an aesthetic state paralleling what we experience when we give form to our conduct in accord with intersubjectively valid standards. Such giving form also requires us to stand fast in the midst of temptation. Thus would a Nietzschean dynamical sublime bring us into awareness of our own power of self-restraint.

The Nietzschean tragic could very well be a variation on Kant's dynamical sublime. Instead of the form-dissolving power of nature, we see the form-dissolving power of destructive human activities. Human beings are both the agents of the

¹²This analysis raises interesting questions about the role of agent intentions in ethical judgment; though the concept of intentional action would be involved, just as it is in other reflective judgments, the attribution of intention would drop out of ethical judgment, to be replaced by what the judge can't help but feel was the "as if" intention. There are areas of moral judgment, however, where this may not be far from what we do (two possible examples are judgments of culpable negligence and judgments of general character).

destruction and the exemplars of the beautiful forms being destroyed. This in turn leads to an invigorating awareness of our own capacity to give form to our own characters. Should this interpretation be made plausible, the possibility must be broached that Nietzsche's debt to the *Critique of Judgment* was even more extensive than previously realized, and that "the cadaverous perfume of Schopenhauer sticks only to a few formulas." [EH, "Books," BT:1].

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