

Schiller began this essay in 1793, as part of his early study of the subject of the sublime. Together with its companion piece, Of the Sublime, it was first published in August of 1794, in the fourth issue of the New Thalia, and then later, together with the later essay On the Sublime, in the third part of Smaller Prose Writings in May 1801. It is a critical commentary on the writings of Immanuel Kant.

Representation of suffering—as mere suffering—is never the end of art, but, as means to its end, it is extremely important to the same. The ultimate end of art is the representation of the super sensuous, and the tragic art in particular effects this thereby, that it makes sensuous our moral independence of the laws of nature in a state of emotion. Only the resistance, which it expresses to the power of the emotions, makes the free principle in us recognizable; the resistance, however, can be estimated only according to the strength of the attack. Therefore, shall the *intelligence* in man reveal itself as a force independent of nature, so must nature have first demonstrated its entire might before our eyes. The *sensuous being* must profoundly and violently *suffer*; there must be pathos, therewith the being of reason may be able to give notice of his independence and be actively *represented*.

One can never know, whether *self-composure* is an effect of one's moral force, if one has not become convinced, that it is not the effect of insensitivity. It is not art, to become master of feelings, which only lightly and fleetingly sweep the surface of the soul; but to retain one's mental freedom in a storm, which arouses all of sensuous nature, thereto belongs a capacity of resisting that is, above all natural power, infinitely sublime. Therefore, one attains to representation of moral freedom only through the most lively representation of suffering nature, and the tragic hero must first have legitimized himself to us as a feeling being, before we pay homage to him as a being of reason, and believe in the strength of his soul.

Pathos is therefore the first and unrelenting demand upon the tragic artist, and it is permitted him, to carry the representation of suffering so far as it can be done, *without disadvantage to his intimate end*, without oppression of moral freedom. He must, so to speak, give his hero or his reader the whole full load of suffering, because it remains otherwise always problematic, whether his resistance to the same is an act of the soul, something *positive*, and not rather merely something *negative* and a lack.

This latter is the case with the old French tragedy, where we extremely rarely or never receive a glimpse of *suffering nature*, but rather see mostly only the cold, declamatory poet or even the comedian walking on stilts. The frigid tone of declamation suffocates all true nature and their worshiped *decency* makes it altogether completely impossible for the French tragedians, to portray humanity in its truth. *Decency* everywhere, even if it is in its right place, falsifies the expression of nature, and yet art demands this relentlessly. Scarcely can we believe it of a French tragic hero, that he *suffers*, for he expresses himself about the state of his soul as the calmest man, and an incessant regard for the impression which he makes upon another, never permits him to leave nature in its freedom. The kings, princesses, and heroes of Corneille and Voltaire never forget their rank, even in the most violent suffering, and take off their *humanity* far sooner than their *dignity*. They resemble the kings and emperors in the old picture books, who go to bed along with their crowns.

How completely different are the *Greeks*, and those among the moderns, who have composed poetry in their spirit. Never is the Greek ashamed of nature, he leaves sensuousness its full rights and is, nevertheless, certain that he will never be subjugated by it. His deep and correct understanding lets him distinguish the accidental, which bad taste makes into the principal work, from the necessary; everything, however, which is not humanity, is accidental. to man. The Greek artist, who has to represent a Laocoon, a Niobe, a Philoctetes, knows of no princes, no king, and no king's son; he adheres only to the man. For this reason, the wise sculptor casts away the clothing and shows us merely naked figures, although he knows quite well that this was not the case in real life. Clothes are to him something accidental, behind which the necessary may never be placed, and the laws of good manners or of physical need are not the laws of art. The sculptor ought and wishes to show us the *man*, and conceal the garments of the same; therefore he rightly casts them aside.

Just as the Greek sculptor casts off the useless and impeding load of garments, in order to make way for *human nature*, so the Greek poet releases his men from the just as useless and just as impeding compulsion of convenience, and from all frigid laws of good manners, which only make man artificial and conceal his nature. The suffering nature speaks truly, candidly, and deeply, penetrating to our hearts in Homeric poetry and in tragedy: all passions have a free play, and the rule of propriety holds no feeling back. The heroes are just as sensitive as others to the suffering of humanity, and that is just what makes them heroes, that they feel the suffering strongly and intimately, and yet are not thereby overpowered. They love life as ardently as we others, but this sentiment does not so much govern them that they can not give it up, if the duties of honor or of humaneness demand it. Philoctetes fills the Greek stage with his

laments, the enraged Hercules himself does not suppress his pain. Iphigenia, designated for sacrifice, confesses with moving openness that she parts with the light of the sun with pain. Nowhere does the Greek seek his fame in dullness and indifference to suffering, but rather in *endurance* of it with all feeling for the same. The gods of Greece themselves must pay nature a tribute, so soon as the poet wishes to bring them nearer to humanity. The wounded Mars cries out in pain as loudly as ten thousand men, and Venus, scratched by a lance, climbs *weeping* to Olympus and forswears all battles.

This tender sensitivity for suffering, this warm, candid nature, lying here true and open, which moves us so deeply and lively in Greek works of art, is a model of imitation for all artists and a law, which the Greek genius has prescribed for art. The first demand on man *nature* makes always and eternally, which never may be rejected; for man is—before he is something else—a feeling being. The second demand upon him *reason* makes, for he is a rational feeling being, a moral person, and it is duty for such, not to let nature rule over herself, but rather to rule over her. *When first nature's* interest has been served, and when *second reason* has asserted its, only then is it permitted to *good manners*, to make the third demand on man, to impose on him, in the expression both of his feelings and his convictions, regard for society and to appear—as a *civilized* being.

The first law of tragic art was representation of suffering nature. The second is representation of the moral resistance to suffering.

Emotion, as emotion, is something indifferent, and the representation of the same, viewed for itself alone, would be without aesthetic value; for, to repeat it once again, nothing that concerns merely sensuous nature, is worthy of representation. Hence, not only all merely relaxing (melting) emotions, but also all the *highest degrees*, of whatever emotion it may be, are beneath the dignity of tragic art.

The melting emotions, the merely tender feelings, belong to the province of the *agreeable*, with which beautiful art has nothing to do. They merely delight the senses through dissolution or relaxation and merely refer to the outer, not to the inner state of man. Many of our romances and tragedies, especially the so-called *dramas* (something between comedy and tragedy), and of the popular family portraits, belong in this class. They merely effect emptying of the tear sac and a voluptuous easing of the vessels; but the spirit comes away empty, and the noble power in man is not at all strengthened thereby. Just so, says Kant, many a person feels himself *edified* by a sermon, wherewith, however, nothing at all has been *built tip* in him. Also the music of the moderns seems preferably to aim only at sensuousness and flatters thereby the prevailing taste, which will be only pleasantly tickled, not affected, not strongly moved, not elevated. Everything *melting* is therefore preferred, and however great the noise is in a concert hall, so everyone becomes suddenly all ears, if a melting passage is performed. An expression of sensuousness, going as far as the animal, appears commonly in all faces, the drunken eyes swim, the open mouth is all desire, a voluptuous trembling seizes the whole body, the breath is quick and weak, in short, all the symptoms of intoxication appear; as clear evidence that the senses revel, the mind, however, or the principle of freedom, becomes prey to the violence of the sensuous impression. All these emotions, I say, are excluded from art by a noble and manly taste, because they please the *senses* alone, with which art has no intercourse.

However, on the other hand, all these degrees of emotion are also excluded, which merely *torment* the sense, without at the same time compensating the mind therefore. They oppress mental freedom through *pain* no less than others through *voluptuousness*, and for this reason can bring about abhorrence only, and no emotion which is worthy of art. Art must delight the mind and be pleasing to freedom. He who is prey to a pain, is merely a tormented animal, no longer a suffering man; for a moral resistance to life is absolutely demanded of man, by which the principle of freedom in him, the intelligence, can alone be made conscious.

For these reasons, those artists and poets who believe they achieve pathos merely through the *sensuous* force of the emotion and the most lively description of suffering understand their art very poorly. They forget that suffering itself can never be the *ultimate* end of the representation, and never the *immediate* source of pleasure, which we perceive in the tragic. The pathetic is only aesthetic, insofar as it is sublime. However, effects, which are merely inferred from a sensuous source and are grounded merely on the affection of the capacity of feeling, are never sublime, no matter how much force they may betray: for everything sublime derives *only* from reason.

A representation of mere passion (both of the voluptuous and the painful), without the representation of the super sensuous power of resistance, is called *common*, the opposite is called *noble*. *Common* and *noble* are concepts, which everywhere that they are employed, show a relation to the share or lack of share of the super sensuous nature of man in an action or in a work. Nothing is *noble*, but what springs *from* reason; everything, which sensuousness produces for itself, is *common*. We say of man, he acts *commonly*, if he merely follows the suggestions of his sensuous instinct; he acts *decently*, if he follows his instinct only with regard to the law; he acts *nobly*, if he follows reason alone, without regard to his

instincts. We call a facial shape *common*, when it by no means makes recognizable the intelligence in man; we call it *expressive*, when the mind determined the features, and *noble*, when a pure mind determined the features. We call a work of architecture common, when it shows us no other than a physical end; we call it noble, when it, independent of all physical ends, is at the same time the representation of ideas.

Good taste therefore, I say, does not allow the representation of emotion, however powerful the mere physical suffering and physical resistance expressed, without making visible at the same time the higher humanity, the presence of a super sensuous capacity—and indeed for the already developed reason, because never is suffering in itself, only the resistance to suffering, pathetic, and worthy of representation. Therefore, all of the absolutely highest degrees of emotion are forbidden to both the artist and the poet; for all oppress the inner resisting force, or rather already presuppose the oppression of the same, because no emotion can attain its absolutely highest degree, so long as the intelligence in man still renders some resistance.

Now arises the question: Where through does the super-sensuous resistance force manifest itself in an emotion? Through nothing other than control or, more generally, through the combating of emotion. I say of *emotion*, for sensuousness can also fight, however, that is no fight with emotion, but rather with the cause, which produces it—no moral, but rather a physical resistance, which the worm also expresses, when one treads on it, and the bull, when one wounds it, without for this reason arousing pathos. That the suffering man give his feelings an expression, that he remove his enemy, that he seek to bring the suffering limb to safety, he has in common with every animal, and already instinct undertakes this, without first inquiring of his will. That is therefore still no act of his humanity, that does not yet mark him as an intelligence. Sensuousness will indeed always combat its enemy, but never itself.

The fight with emotion is, on the contrary, a fight with sensuousness, and therefore presupposes something, which is distinct from sensuousness. Against the object, that makes him suffer, man can defend himself with the help of his understanding and his muscular strength; against suffering itself he has no other weapon than the ideas of reason.

These must therefore be found in the representation, or be awakened through it, where pathos shall occur. Now, however, ideas can not be represented in the proper sense and positively, because nothing can correspond to them in the intuition. However, they can be represented negatively and indirectly, if something is given in the intuition, for which we seek the conditions in *nature* in vain. Even' phenomenon, whose ultimate foundation can not be derived from the world of the senses, is an indirect representation of the super sensuous.

Now how does art succeed thereto, to present something, which is above nature, without helping oneself to supernatural means? What sort of phenomenon must that be, which is accomplished through natural forces (for otherwise were it no phenomenon) and yet can not be derived from physical causes without contradiction? This is the problem; and now how does the artist solve it?

We must remind ourselves, that the phenomena, which can be perceived in a man in the state of emotion, are of two kinds. Either they are such as belong to him merely as animal, and as such merely follow natural law, without his will being able to master them or the independent force in him being able to have an immediate influence thereon. The instinct produces them immediately, and they blindly obey its laws. To this kind belong, for example, the organs of blood circulation, of respiration, and the entire surface of the skin. But also those organs, which are subject to the will, do not always await the decision of the will, but rather the instinct often sets them immediately into motion, there especially, where pain or danger threatens the physical state. So our arm indeed stands under the rule of the will, but when we unknowingly seize something hot, so is the drawing back of the hand certainly not a willful action, but rather the instinct alone accomplishes it. Yes still more. Speech is certainly something, which stands under the rule of the will, and yet instinct can also dispose even of this instrument and the work of the understanding at its pleasure, without first inquiring of the will, as soon as a great pain or only a strong emotion surprises us. Let the most composed stoic once see something most wonderful or unexpectedly terrible; let him stand thereby, when someone slips and is about to fall into an abyss, so will a loud cry, and indeed not simply an unarticulated sound, but rather an entirely distinct word, involuntarily escape him, and *nature* will have acted in him sooner than the *will*. This serves therefore as proof, that there are phenomena in man, which can not be ascribed to his person as intelligence, but merely to his instinct as a natural force.

There is, however, also a *second* type of phenomenon in him, which stands under the influence and under the rule of the will, or which one can at least consider as such, which the will may have been able to *prevent*; for which, therefore, the *person* and not the *instinct* had to be responsible. It belongs to the instinct, to attend to the interest of sensuousness with blind zeal, but it belongs to the person, to limit the instinct through regard for the law. The instinct in itself pays attention to no law, but the person has to take care, that the prescriptions of reason be infringed upon by no action of the instinct. So much is therefore certain,' that instinct alone does not have to determine unconditionally all phenomena in man in an

emotional state, but rather that a limit can be placed upon it through the will of man. If instinct alone determine the phenomena in man, so is nothing more present, that could recollect the *person*, and it is merely a natural being, therefore an animal, which we have before us; for every natural being under the rule of instinct is called an animal. Therefore, if the person shall be represented, so must some phenomena in man be found, which have either been determined in opposition to the instinct, or indeed not through the instinct. Already that they were not determined through the instinct, is sufficient to lead us to a higher source, so soon as we but realize, that the instinct would have determined them absolutely differently, if its power had not been broken.

Now we are able, to address the manner and way in which the super sensuous independent force in man, his moral self, can be brought in emotion into representation.— For this reason, namely, that all the parts which obey only nature, of which the will can dispose either never at all, or at least not under certain circumstances, betray the presence of suffering—those parts, however, which have escaped the *blind* power of the instincts and do not necessarily obey the law of nature, show only a small trace of this suffering or none at all, therefore appear free to a certain degree. In this disharmony now between those features, which are imprinted on the animal nature according to the law of necessity, and between those, which the self-acting mind determines, one discerns the presence of a *super sensuous principle* in man, which can place a limit upon the effects of nature, and is therefore thereby marked as distinct from the same. The merely animal part of man follows the law of nature and may therefore appear oppressed by the power of the emotion. In this part, therefore, the whole strength of suffering manifests itself, and serves, so to speak, as a measure by which the resistance can be estimated; for one can judge the strength of the resistance, or the moral power in man only by the strength of the attack. The more decisive and violent the emotion now expresses itself in the *field of animality*, without, however, being able to assert the same power in the field of humanity, the more this latter becomes known, the more the moral independence of man manifests itself gloriously, the more pathetic is the representation and the more sublime the pathos.¹

In the statues of the ancients one finds this aesthetic principle made clear, but it is difficult to reduce to concepts and express in words the impression which the sensuous living view makes. The group of Laocoon and his children is an approximate measure for that, which the plastic art of the ancients was able to achieve in the pathetic. "Laocoon," Winckelman says in his *History of Art*, "is a nature in the highest pain, made in the image of a man, who seeks to assemble against the same the deliberate strength of the mind; and whilst his suffering swells up the muscles and tightens the nerves, the mind, armed with strength, steps forth on his buoyant brow and the breast rises through oppressed breath and through restraint of the expression of feeling, in order to hold and lock up the pain in itself. The anxious sigh, which he in himself and the breath to himself draws, empties the abdomen and makes the sides hollow, which lets us judge, so to speak, the movement of his bowels. His own suffering, however, seems to him to be less cause for alarm than the pain of his children, who turn their faces to the father and cry for help; for the paternal heart manifests itself in the melancholy eyes and compassion seems to swim in a turbid fragrance in the same. His face is lamenting, but not screaming, his eyes are turned toward higher help. The mouth is full of melancholy, and the sunken lower lip heavy from the same; in the over-drawn upper lip, however, the same is mixed with pain, which with a movement of displeasure, as over an undeserved unworthy suffering, ascends into the nose, makes the same swell, and manifests itself in the enlarged and upwardly drawn nostrils. Under the brow, the strife between pain and resistance, united as in a point, is formed with great truth; for whilst the pain drives the eyebrows into the heights, so the struggle against the same presses the upper eye flesh downward and against the upper eyelid, so that the same is almost entirely covered by the infringing flesh. Nature, which the artist could not beautify, he has sought to show more unfolded, strenuous, and powerful; here, wherein the greatest pain is placed, appears also the greatest beauty. The left side, in which the snake poured out its poison with furious bites, is that which seems to suffer the most intensely through the nearest sensation to the heart. His legs want to rise, in order to escape its evil; no part is at rest, yes, even the chisel strokes contribute to the import of a benumbed skin.



How true and fine is the fight of intelligence with the suffering of sensuous nature developed in this description, and how appropriately the phenomena given, in which are manifested animality and humanity, the compulsion of nature and the freedom of reason! Virgil, as is known, described this same scene in his *Aeneid*, but it did not lie in the plan of the epic poet, to dwell upon the mental state of Laocöon, as the sculptor had to do. In Virgil, the entire narrative is only a hazy work, and the purpose, for which it shall serve him, is sufficiently attained through the mere representation of the physical, without his necessarily having had to let us take a deep look into the soul of the suffering, since he wants to move us not so much with compassion as to penetrate us with terror. The duty of the poet was therefore in this respect merely negative, namely, not to drive the representation of suffering so far, that every expression of humanity or of moral resistance was lost thereby, because, otherwise, indignation and disgust inevitably had to ensue. He preferred therefore to keep to the representation of the *cause* of suffering, and found it good to enlarge in a detailed way on the dreadfulness of both serpents and on the rage with which they attack their battle victims, rather than on the feelings of the same. He only hurries quickly over these, because it had to be his concern to preserve unweakened the presentation of a divine judgment and the impression of terror. Had he, on the contrary, let us know so much of Laocöon's person, as the sculptor, so would the punishing deity no longer have been the hero in the action, but rather the suffering man, and the episode would have lost its purposefulness in respect to the whole. One is acquainted with the Virgilian narrative already from Lessing's excellent commentary. But the purpose, for which Lessing employed it, was merely to make clear the limits of poetic and pictorial representation with this example, not to develop therefrom the concept of the pathetic. To the latter purpose, however, it seems to me no less useful, and may one permit me, to run through it once more in this regard.

Ecce autem gemini Tenedo tranquilla per alta (horresco referens) immensis orbibus angues incumbunt pelago, pariterque ad littora tendunt; Pectora quorum inter fluctus arrecta jubaeque sanguineae exsuperant undas; pars caetera pontum pone legit, sinuatque immensa volumine terga. Fit sonitus spumante salo, jamque arva tenebant, ardentis oculos suffecti sanguine et igni, sibila lambebant linguis vibrantibus ora.

—*Aeneid*, ii. 203-211

Two snakes with endless coils, from Tenedos strike out across the tranquil deep (I shudder to tell what happened), resting on the waters, advancing shoreward side by side; their breasts erect among the waves, their blood-red crests are higher than the breakers. And behind, the rest of them skims on along the sea; their mighty backs are curved in folds. The foaming salt surge is roaring. Now they reach the fields. Their eyes are drenched with blood and fire—they burn. They lick their hissing jaws with quivering tongues.

—translation by Allen Mandelbaum

The first of the three above-cited conditions of the sub- • lime of power is here given: namely, a mighty natural force, which is aimed for destruction and mocks any resistance. That, however, this mighty force may be at the same time *terrible* and the terrible *sublime*, rests upon two different operations of the mind, that is upon two representations, which we self-actively produce in ourselves. Whilst *first* we compare this irresistible natural might with the weak capacity of resistance of the physical man, we recognize it as terrible, and whilst we *secondly* refer it to our will and call into our consciousness the absolute independence of the same from any natural influence, it becomes to us a sublime object. Both of these relations *we*, however, employ; the poet gave us nothing further than an object armed with strong power and striving for expression of the same. If we *tremble* before it, so it occurs simply, because we *think* ourselves or a creature similar to us in combat with the same. If we feel ourselves sublime by this trembling, so is it, because we ourselves are conscious, that we, even as a victim of this power, would have nothing to fear for our free selves, for the autonomy of the determinations of our will. In short, the representation up to here is merely contemplatively sublime.

Diffugimus visu exsanguis, illi agmine certo Laocoonta petunt. . .
—*Aeneid*, ii. 212-213

We scatter at the sight, our blood is gone. They strike a straight line toward Laocoon . . .
Mandelbaum

Now is the mighty *given* at the same time as the terrible, and the contemplatively sublime passes over into the pathetic. We see it actually enter into combat with the impotence of man. Laocoon or we, the difference is only of degree. The sympathetic instinct startles the preservation instinct, monsters dart freely at—us, and all escape is in vain.

Now it depends no longer upon us, whether we want to measure this power with ours and refer it to our existence. This occurs without our contribution in the object itself. Our fear has not, as in the foregoing moment, a merely subjective ground in our mind, but rather an objective ground in the object. For do we at once recognize the whole for a mere fiction of the imaginative power, so do we nevertheless distinguish in this fiction a conception, which is communicated to us from outside, from another one, which we produce self-actively in ourselves.

The mind loses therefore a part of its freedom, because it receives from outside, what it produced previously through its self-activity. The conception of danger keeps an appearance of objective reality, and the emotion becomes earnest. Were we now nothing but beings of sense, who follow no other than the instinct for preservation, so would we stop here and persist in a state of mere suffering. But something is in us, which takes no part in the affections of sensuous nature and whose activity is directed according to no physical conditions. To the extent that this self-acting principle (the moral predisposition) has been developed in a soul, the suffering nature will be left more or less room and will more or less self-activity remain in the emotion.

In moral souls the terrible (of the imaginative power) passes over quickly and easily into the sublime. So as the imagination loses its freedom, so reason asserts its own; and the mind *only extends itself all the more inward, whilst it finds outward limits*. Knocked out of all entrenchments, which can procure physical protection for the being of sense, we throw ourselves into the impregnable citadel of our moral freedom and win nothing else thereby but an absolute and unending safety, whilst we give up for lost a merely comparative and precarious rampart in the field of the phenomenon. But, precisely because it must have come to this physical distress, before we seek the assistance of our moral nature, so can we purchase this high feeling of freedom not otherwise than with suffering. The common soul merely stops at this suffering and feels in the sublime of pathos no more than the terrible; an independent mind, on the contrary, takes just this suffering as a bridge to the feeling of his most glorious efficacy and knows how to produce from anything terrible something sublime.

Laocoonta petunt, ac primum parva duorum
corpora gnatorum serpens amplexus uterque
implicat. ac iniseros morsu depascitur artus.
—*Aeneid*, ii. 213-215

They strike a straight line toward Laocoon. At first each snake entwines the tiny bodies of his two sons in an embrace, then feasts its fangs on their defenseless limbs.
Mandelbaum

It has a great effect, that the moral man (the father) is attacked sooner than the physical. All emotions are more aesthetical when from a second hand, and no sympathy is stronger, than that we feel for sympathy.

Post ipsum auxilio subeuntem ac tela ferentem corripiunt.

—*Aeneid*, ii. 216-217

Next seize upon Laocoon himself, who nears to help his sons, carrying weapons.

Mandelbaum

Now the moment is here, to place the hero as moral person in our esteem, and the poet seizes this moment. From their description, we are acquainted with all the power and rage of the hostile monsters and know how all resistance is futile. Now were Laocoon merely a common man, so would he perceive his advantage and, like the remaining Trojans, seek his rescue in a rapid flight. But he has a heart in his bosom, and the danger to his children holds him back to his own destruction. Already, this unique trait makes him worthy of our entire compassion. At whatever moment the serpents would like to have seized him, it would have always moved and shaken us. However, that it occurs just in *the* moment, where he becomes worthy of our respect as father, that his demise is presented, so to speak, as the immediate consequence of the fulfilled paternal duty, of the tender concern for his children—this inflames our sympathy to the highest. He is it now, so to speak, himself, who gives himself up to destruction of his free choice, and his death becomes an act of the will.

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In all pathos must therefore the sense through suffering, the mind through freedom, be interested. If it lacks a pathetic representation in an expression of suffering nature, so is it without *aesthetic* force, and our heart remains cold. If it lacks an ethical ground, so can it never be *pathetic* in all sensuous force and will inevitably incense our sentiment. Throughout all freedom of the mind must the suffering man always shine, throughout all suffering of humanity must always the independent or of-independence-capable mind.

In two ways, however, can the independence of the mind in the state of suffering manifest itself. Either *negatively*: if the ethical man does not receive the law from the physical and no causality over the *mind* is permitted to the *state*; or *positively*: if the ethical man *gives* the law to the physical and the mind exercises causality over the state. From the first arises the sublime of *disposition*, from the second the sublime of *action*. A sublime of disposition is any character independent of fate. "A valiant spirit, in combat with adversity," says Seneca, "is an attractive spectacle even for the gods." Such a view the Roman Senate gives us after the disaster at Cannae. Even Milton's Lucifer, when he looks around him self in Hell, his future residence, for the first time, penetrates us, on account of this soul's strength, with a feeling of admiration.

"Hail, horrors, hail.

Infernal world, and thou, profoundest Hell; Receive thy new Possessor: one who brings A mind not to be chang'd by Place or Time. The mind is its own place, and in itself Can make a Heav'n of Hell. . . .

Here at least We shall be free," etc.

The reply of Medea in the tragedy belongs to the same class.

The sublime of disposition causes itself to be *seen*, for it rests upon coexistence; the sublime of action, on the contrary, causes itself only to be *thought*, for it rests upon succession, and the understanding is necessary, in order to derive suffering from a free decision. Therefore, only the first is for the plastic artist, because this one only can represent the coexisting happily; but the poet can extend himself over both. Even when the plastic artist has to represent a sublime *action*, he must transform it into a sublime disposition.

It is demanded of the sublime of action, that the suffering of a man not only have no influence on his moral constitution, but rather concisely, be the work of his moral character. This can be in two kinds of ways. Either immediately and according to the laws of freedom, when it *selects* the suffering out of respect for some duty. The conception of duty determines it in this case as *motive*, and its suffering is an *act of will*. Or immediately and according to the law of necessity, when he morally *atones* for a violated duty. The conception of duty determines it in

this case as *power*, and his suffering is merely an *effect*. An example of the first Regulus gives us, when he, to keep his word, gives himself up to the Carthaginian desire for revenge; he would serve us as an example of the second, when he had broken his word and the consciousness of this guilt had made him miserable. In both cases, the suffering has a moral ground, only with the distinction that in the first case, he shows us his moral character, in the other, merely his determination thereto. In the first case, he appears as a morally great person, in the second, merely as an aesthetically great object.

This last distinction is important for the tragic art, and therefore deserves a more precise discussion.

A sublime object, merely in the aesthetical estimation, that man already is, who explains to us the dignity of the human determination through his *state*, even supposing, that we should not find this determination realized in his *person*. He becomes sublime in the moral estimation then, only when he behaves at the same time as a person according to this determination, if our respect bears not only on his capacity, but rather on the use of this capacity, if dignity is due not only to his predisposition, but rather to his actual behavior. It is entirely something different, if we turn our attention in our judgment to the moral capacity generally and to the possibility of an absolute freedom of the will, or if to the use of this capacity and to the reality of this absolute freedom of the will.

It is something entirely different, I say, and this difference lies, not perchance, in the judged objects only, rather it lies in the different manner of judgment. The same object can displease us in the moral estimation and be very attractive to us in the aesthetical. But even if it affords us satisfaction in both instances of judgment, so it produces this effect on both in an entirely different manner. It becomes not morally satisfying, by the fact that it is aesthetically useful, and not aesthetically useful by the fact that it satisfies morally. I think, for example, of the self-sacrifice of Leonidas at Thermopylae. Judged morally, this action is a representation to me of the moral law, performed in total contradiction to instinct; judged aesthetically, it is a representation to me of the moral capacity, independent of every compulsion of instinct. This action *satisfies* my moral sense (reason); it *delights* my aesthetical sense (the imaginative power).

For this difference of my feelings in respect to the same objects I give the following ground.

As our being is divided into two principles or natures, so are our feelings also, according to these, divided into two entirely different kinds. As beings of reason, we feel approbation or disapproval; as sensuous beings, we feel pleasure or displeasure. Both feelings, of approbation and pleasure, are grounded upon a satisfaction; the former on satisfaction of a *claim*, for reason merely *demand*s, but does not need; the latter on satisfaction of a *desire*, for sense only *needs*, and can not demand. Both, the demands of reason and the needs of the senses, relate to one another as necessity to need; they are therefore both contained under the concept of necessity; only with the difference, that the necessity of reason takes place without condition, the necessity of the senses only under conditions. For both, however, the satisfaction is contingent. Every feeling, both of pleasure and of approbation, is therefore ultimately grounded upon agreement of the contingent with the necessary. If the necessary be an imperative, so will be the approbation, if it be a need, so will the feeling be pleasure; both in so much the stronger degree, as the satisfaction is contingent.

Now, with every moral judgment there is an underlying requirement of reason, that it be made morally, and there exists an unconditional necessity, that we wish what is right. However, since the will is free, so is it (physically) contingent, whether we really do it. Now, if we actually do it, so this agreement of the contingent in the use of freedom with the imperative of reason receives approval or approbation, and indeed in so much higher degree, as the antagonism of the inclinations made *this* use of freedom more contingent and more doubtful.

On the contrary, with the aesthetical estimation, the object is referred to the *need of the imaginative power*, which can not *command*, only *desire*, that the contingent may agree with its interest. The interest of the imaginative power is however: to maintain itself in *play free of laws*. To this propensity for unboundedness, the moral obligation of the will, through which its object is assigned to it in the strictest way, is not in the least favorable; and since the moral obligation of the will is the object of the moral judgment, so one easily sees, that to judge in this way the imaginative power could not find profit. But a moral obligation of the will can be conceived only under the assumption of an absolute independence of the same from the compulsion of natural instincts; the *possibility* of morality, therefore, postulates freedom and consequently agrees herein with the interest of imagination in the most perfect manner. However, since imagination can not so prescribe through its need, as reason prescribes through its imperative to the will of the individual, so the capacity of freedom, referred to imagination, is something contingent and therefore, as agreement of contingency with the (conditionally) necessary, must awaken pleasure. If we therefore judge that act of Leonidas *morally*, so we consider it from a point of view, wherein its contingency strikes us in the eyes less than its necessity. If we, on the contrary, judge it *aesthetically*, so we consider it from a standpoint, wherein we imagine its necessity less than its contingency. It is the *duty* of every will, so to act, as soon as it is

a free will; however, the fact that there is a freedom of the will, which makes it possible so to act, is *A favor* of nature in regard to that capacity, to which freedom is a need. If the moral sense—reason—therefore judge a virtuous action, so is the approval the highest that can ensue, because reason can never find *more* and seldom *as much*, as it demands. On the contrary, if the aesthetic sense, the imaginative power, judge the same action, so does a positive pleasure ensue, because the imaginative power can never demand unanimity with its needs and therefore must be found surprised by the real satisfaction of the same, as by a happy accident. That Leonidas *actually made* this heroic resolution, we approve; that he *could* make it, thereat do we exult and are we delighted. The distinction between both kinds of judgment strikes the eyes still more clearly, if one takes an action as the basis, in respect to which the moral and the aesthetical judgment turn out differently. Let me take the self-immolation of Perigrinnus Proteus at Olympia. Judged morally, I can not give this action approbation, insofar as I find impure motives active thereby, for the sake of which the *duty* of self-preservation is set aside, judged aesthetically, however, this action pleases me, and indeed it pleases me precisely, because it is evidence of a capacity of the will, to resist even the mightiest of all instincts, the instinct of self-preservation. Whether it was a pure moral sentiment or whether it was merely a more powerful sensuous inducement, which oppressed the self-preservation instinct in the schwiirmer Peregrin, thereto I do not pay attention in the aesthetical estimation, where I abandon the individual, abstract from the relation of *Ins* will to the law of the will, and think of the human will in general, as a capacity of the species, in relation to all the power of nature. In the moral estimation, one has seen, self-preservation would be presented as a *duty*, therefore its violation offended; in the aesthetical estimation, on the contrary, it would be regarded as an *interest*, therefore its disregard pleased. In the latter kind of judgment is the operation therefore directly opposite, to that we perform in the first. There we place the sensuously limited individual and the pathologically affectable will opposite to the absolute law of the will and the infinite duty of the mind, here, on the contrary, we place the absolute *capacity* of the will and the infinite *power* of the mind opposite to the compulsion of nature and the limits of sensuousness. For this reason, the aesthetical judgment leaves us free, and elevates and inspires us, because already through the mere capacity to will absolutely, already through the mere predisposition to morality, we prove to have evident advantage over sensuousness, because already through the mere possibility to renounce the compulsion of nature, our need for freedom is flattered. Therefore, the moral judgment limits us and humbles us, because in every particular act of the will compared with the absolute law of the will, we find ourselves more or less at a disadvantage, and through the restriction of the will to a single manner of determination, which duty absolutely demands, the instinct for freedom of imagination is contradicted. There, we swing upward from the real to the possible, and from the individual to the species; here, on the contrary, we climb down from the possible to the real, lock up the species in the limits of the individual; no wonder, therefore, we enlarge ourselves with the aesthetical judgment, with the moral, on the contrary, feel narrowed and bound."

From all of this results then, that the moral and the aesthetical judgment, far from supporting one another, rather stand in the way of one another, because they give two entirely different directions to the mind; for the lawfulness, which reason demands as moral judge, does not exist with the unboundedness, which the imaginative power desires as aesthetical judge. Therefore, an object will be precisely so much the less fit to an aesthetical use, as it is qualified for a moral one; and if the poet had nevertheless to select it, so will he do well, to treat it so, that the attention of our reason is not drawn to the *rules* of the will, but rather of our imagination to the *capacity* of the will. For his own sake, the poet must enter upon this path, for with our freedom is his realm at an end. Only so long as we look outside ourselves, are we *his*; he has lost us, as soon as we grasp into our own bosom. This happens inevitably, however, as soon as an object is no longer *regarded by us as a phenomenon*, but rather *judges over us as law*.

Even from the expressions of the most sublime virtue the poet can use nothing for *his* purpose, but that which in the same belongs to *force*. He does not trouble himself about the direction of the force. The poet, even if he places the most perfect moral model before our eyes, has no other end *and may have no other*, than to delight us through the contemplation of the same. Now, however, nothing can delight us, except what improves our subject, and nothing can delight us intellectually, except that which elevates our intellectual capacity. But how can the dutifulness of another improve our subject and augment our intellectual force? That he *really* fulfills his duty, rests upon an accidental use, which he makes of his freedom and which, for that very reason, can prove nothing for *us*. It is merely the *capacity* for a similar dutifulness, which we share with him, and whilst we also perceive in his capacity that of ours, we feel our intellectual force elevated. It is therefore merely the conceived possibility of an absolutely free will, whereby the actual exercise of the same pleases our aesthetical sense.

Still more will one be convinced thereof, when one considers, how little the poetic force of the impression, which moral characters and actions make upon us, depends on their *historical reality*. Our pleasure in ideal characters loses nothing through the recollection, that they are poetic fictions, for it is the *poetic*, not the historical truth, upon which all

aesthetical effect is grounded. The poetic truth does not exist in that something has actually occurred, but rather in that it could occur, therefore in the inner possibility of the matter. The aesthetical force must therefore already lie in the conceived possibility.

Even in real occurrences of historical persons the existence is not the poetic, but rather the capacity which has become known through its existence. The circumstance, that these persons actually lived and that these occurrences actually happened, can indeed very often increase our pleasure, but with a foreign addition, which is much more disadvantageous than conducive to the poetic impression. One has long thought to render a service to the poetry of our fatherland, when one recommended the treatment of national topics to poets. Thereby, it was said, Greek poetry became so overpowering to the heart, because it painted native scenes and eternalized native deeds. It is not to deny, that the poetry of the ancients, on account of this circumstance, accomplished effects of which the modern poetry can not boast—but do these effects belong to art and the poet? Woe to the Greek artistic genius, if it had nothing farther over the genius of the modern than this accidental advantage, and woe to the Greek artistic taste, if it first had to have been won through these historical connections in their works! Only a barbaric taste uses the prickle of private interest, in order to be enticed to beauty, and only the bungler borrows from matter a force, which he despairs to place in the form. Poetry should take its path not through the cold region of the memory, should never make learning into its interpreter, never self-interest into its intercessor. It should strike the heart, because it flows from the heart, and not aim at the citizen in the man, but rather at the man in the citizen.

It is fortunate, that the true genius does not give much heed to the pointers, which one sourly imparts to him, out of better opinion than competence; otherwise Sulzer and his successors would have given a very ambiguous form to German poetry. To educate man morally and to inflame national feeling in the citizen, is indeed a very honorable mission for the poet; and the Muses know it best, how closely the arts of the sublime and beautiful may cohere therewith. But what poetry quite excellently accomplishes indirectly, it would attain directly only very badly. Poetry never carries out a particular transaction in man, and one could select no more clumsy instrument, in order to see a particular mission, a detail, well cared for. Its sphere of activity is the totality of human nature, and merely, insofar as it influences the character, can it have influence upon its particular effects. Poetry can become to man, what love is to the hero. It can neither advise him, nor strike for him, nor otherwise do work for him; but it can educate him as a hero, it can summon him to deeds and to all that he should be, equip him with strength.

The aesthetical force, wherewith the sublime of sentiment and action seizes us, rests therefore in no way upon the interest of reason, that it *be done* rightly, but rather upon the interest of the imaginative power, that it *be possible* to do rightly, i.e., that no feeling, however powerful it may be, should be able to oppress the freedom of the mind. This possibility lies, however, in every strong expression of freedom and force of will, and anywhere the poet merely meets these, there has he found a suitable subject for his representation. For *his* interest it is the same, from which class of characters, the bad or the good, he wishes to take his heroes, since the same measure of force, which is necessary for the good, very often can be required for consistency in the evil. How much more in aesthetical judgment do we attend to the force than to the direction of the force, how much more to freedom than to lawfulness, becomes already sufficiently evident therefrom, that we prefer to see force and freedom expressed at the cost of lawfulness, than lawfulness observed at the cost of force and freedom. As soon as cases occur, namely, where the moral law is coupled with impulses which threaten to carry away the will by their power, so the character gains aesthetically, if it can resist these impulses. A vicious person begins to interest us, as soon as he must risk his happiness and life, in order to put through his bad will; a virtuous person, on the contrary, loses our attention in the same proportion, as his happiness itself obliges his good behavior. Vengeance, for example, is incontestibly an ignoble and even base emotion. Nevertheless, it becomes aesthetic, as soon as it costs those who practice it, a painful sacrifice. Medea, whilst she murders her children, aims at Jason's heart with this action, but at the same time, she delivers a painful stroke to her own, and her vengeance becomes aesthetically sublime, as soon as we see the tender mother.

The aesthetical judgment contains more truth herein, than one ordinarily believes. The vices, which bespeak the strength of the will, evidently announce a greater predisposition for truly moral freedom than the virtues, which borrow a support from inclination, because it costs the consistent villain only a single triumph over himself, a single reversal of his maxims, in order to turn to the good all the consistency and dexterity of the will, which he lavished on the evil. Whence else can it come, that we thrust half-good characters from us with dislike and often follow the altogether wicked with shuddering admiration? Incontestibly the reason is, that in regard to the former, we give up even the possibility of the absolutely free will, and, on the contrary, in regard to the latter, perceive in every expression, that he can raise himself up to the whole dignity of humanity through a single act.

In the aesthetical judgment we are therefore not interested for morality in itself, but rather for freedom alone, and the

former can please our imaginative power only insofar as it makes the latter visible. It is therefore evident confusion of boundaries, when one demands moral purposefulness in aesthetic things and, in order to extend the realm of reason, wishes to displace the imaginative power from its rightful domain. Either one will have to subjugate it entirely, and then all aesthetic effect has come to an end; or it will share its rule with reason, and then will not much indeed have been gained for morality. Whilst one pursues two different ends, one will run the danger of missing both. One will fetter the freedom of imagination through moral lawfulness and destroy the necessity of reason through the caprice of the imaginative power.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

i. Under the province of animality, I understand the whole system of those phenomena in man, which stand under the blind force of natural instinct and are completely explainable without the presupposition of freedom of the will; under the *province of humanity*, however, those which receive their laws from freedom. Now *is* emotion in the province of animality *lacking* in a representation, so does it leave us cold; on the contrary, *does* it *govern* in the province of humanity, so it disgusts us and makes us indignant. In the province of animality, the emotion must always remain *unresolved*, otherwise the pathetic is missing; first in the province of humanity can the resolution be found. A suffering person, presented lamenting and weeping, will therefore move only weakly, for laments and tears resolve the pain already in the province of animality. Far more strongly does obstinate pain seize us, where we find no help in *nature*, but rather must take our refuge in something that lies beyond all nature; and precisely in this *reference to the supersensuous* lies pathos and tragic force. 2. This resolution, I remember incidentally, also explains to us the difference of aesthetic impression, which the Kantian conception of duty is wont to make on its different judges. A not-to-be-sneezed-at part of the public finds this conception of duty very humiliating; another finds it infinitely elevating for the heart. Both are right, and the reason for this contradiction lies merely in the difference of the standpoint, from which both view these objects. To do his bare duty, is certainly nothing great, and insofar as the best that we are able to perform, is nothing as fulfillment, and yet defective fulfillment is our duty, nothing inspiring lies in the highest virtue. But to do his duty nevertheless truly and persistently in all the limits of sensuous nature and to follow invariably the sacred law of the spirit in the fetters of matter, this is elevating to be sure, and worthy of admiration. Compared with the spiritual world, of course, nothing meritorious is in our virtue, and however much we would let it cost us, we will always *be good-for-nothing slaves*; compared with the world of sense, it is, on the contrary, an all the more sublime object. Insofar as we therefore judge the actions morally and refer them to the law of morals, we shall have little reason to be proud of our morality; insofar as we, however, look to the possibility of these actions and refer the capacity of our mind, that lies as the basis of them, to the world of phenomena, that is, insofar as we judge aesthetically, a certain self-reliance is permitted us, yes, it is even necessary, because we discover a principle in ourselves, that is great and infinite beyond all comparison.