

*LEBENS*GELASSENHEIT: MEANING AND REFLECTION IN
KANT'S *THIRD CRITIQUE* AND LIFE AFTER HEIDEGGER'S
GELASSENHEIT

A Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

This project seeks to demonstrate human value beyond the modern will in the form of an *Ur*-will, a residue of the will that cannot be attributed to the historic age. By utilizing the seemingly diverse ideas of Heidegger's *Gelassenheit*, an attentive releasement towards death, and Kant's *Lebensgefühl*, a feeling of life engendered by aesthetic and reflective experience, this work shows how a more primordial relation to both the sensible and the supersensible reveals an underlying harmony between humanity and nature. This harmony opens the space for a dual reorientation, between humanity and the thing, and between humanity and our rational ideas that allows for both *Gelassenheit* and the ability to reflect on nature in terms of human value. Establishing the *Ur*-will as an indeterminate tie between the embodied, and sensuous, human and supersensible ideas provides the basis for the possibility of human value existing beyond the modern age and into the 'new beginning' prescribed by Heidegger through *Gelassenheit*.

For Kristine

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Western thought has accustomed us to think that there is a distance between ourselves as individual subjects and the totality of everything else beyond the perimeter of our ego. Whether the boundary stones are placed at the edge of consciousness or are set farther to include corporeal matter into our sense of individuality, a sense of separation persists between what we call 'self' and 'others.' This is what is known as the subject/object orientation, with the individual human standing as a subject over and against which sits an objective world. Arising from this orientation comes the inevitable claim that I, myself, am a subject and everything beyond that boundary is an object that I must view as external and ultimately alien to my being. All phenomena, that which appears, must then be approached, questioned, and challenged by my subjective eye should I wish to determine any meaning or value about the external world. All values then become a result of my reaching out to what appears, since it is the only way I, as an individual distinct from the world around me, can interact with phenomena. However, a certain doubt stirs within the subject's mind after a number of such interactions. Does the meaning gleaned from objective challenging point to something essential about the thing we encounter, or is meaning simply a result of our questioning and have little in terms of actual resemblance to the phenomena?

A startling question indeed, and one that begs to be answered, for it is the root of all human knowledge and things we hold as true. What then comes into consideration is the existence of two kinds of laws. There are laws that we claim are derived empirically

from nature that have nothing to do with our own interest – natural laws. Second, there are laws that are motivated by our human interests, ideas of how we, as humans, would like the world to be. Thus, the final act of severance between what there is and what there ought to be, with nature on one side and humanity on the other. Humanity has now become alienated from nature, the world around us, because what we value and desire is contentious with the very idea that nature has meaning that it can show itself. Such a fierce divide was brought about by the initial assumption that I, the human subject, am irredeemably distinct from the world around me. Though this idea is deeply rooted in not only western philosophy, but also forms the foundation for nearly all modern methods of inquiry, the question must be asked if this orientation toward the natural world is necessary, especially given the results of such a view. Alternatively, it could be stated that nature and human interest, what is and what ought to be, are not as divergent as the subject/object orientation claims them to be. In fact, they may even display a degree of amenability. Amenability is the idea that the natural world outside of embodied human existence is more than what it appears to be, namely at best indifferent to our worldly existence as subjects. The question of nature's amenability to human existence presents a critical problem to any philosophy that seeks to unravel the natural labyrinth while still preserving humanity's ability to make meaningful judgments about the natural world.

Historically, the paths taken have been largely three-fold: remove human meaning from the natural order altogether, an objective approach that seems to limit any form of subjectivity; discard any hope of finding objective knowledge, making human meaning the only value to be found in nature; or, offer a precarious and bifurcated

existence for humanity that places us intellectually in one domain and sensuously in the natural world, driving a wedge between our mental life and our bodily life. The first of such answers advocates a kind of scientific naturalism, where all knowledge is dependent upon the methods and findings of empirical science. Humanity under this view is reducible to the mechanism of nature; and, not unsurprisingly, our cultural, artistic, and social values become anemic in terms of offering a worldview. For any project that seeks to redeem, or at least preserve, the human role in the evaluative process, such a turn would be unsatisfactory to the utmost degree. Therefore, little more attention will be paid to the scientific naturalist view moving forward in this investigation.

Interest in the creation of human value upon our encounter with nature centers on the latter mentioned two of the three historical approaches. On the opposite end of the spectrum from naturalism is the idea that the spring of all value can be found in human activity. An answer such as this may be reminiscent of Nietzsche's will to power and the collapse of theoretical interest into practical use – a view clearly rejected in the works of Martin Heidegger. Thirdly, the route that offers a contentious and bifurcated existence is often attributed to Immanuel Kant due to the firm divide that he holds to exist between the spheres of theoretical nature and the human practical vocation. Undoubtedly, more will be said on both of these stances farther into this study. What is important to note at this point is that all means of solving the apparent alienation between human values and nature have advocated either a dissolution of any found harmony between human-formed meaning and the natural world, either through the primacy of empirical science

or the rejecting any pure interest in the natural world in favor of practical use, or have tried to broker some sort of odd and contentious peace between humanity and the world. Needless to say, the amenability problem remains at issue for any thinker that does not either denigrate human value as superfluous or embrace a kind of radically subjective willing that makes nature there simply in the interest of human projects.

Unfortunately, the amenability problem between humanity and nature is not a phantasm of philosophy that bears no relation to our real-world existence. In short, it is not a problem only for the concern of intellectuals. Alienation, attitudes of displacement, and general feelings of being ill-at-ease stem from our desire to make our lives somehow compatible with the ways of the world and also to make the world agreeable to our own wants and desires. With this concern in mind, philosophy, theology, the humanities, and even the social sciences can be understood as attempts to make sense out of nature that fits human existence and explains human life according to terms that link it to the realm of nature. It is why we are never satisfied with the explanation that we are simply animals acting on instinct or pure self-interest, nor can humanity as a whole stomach the absolute conversion of nature to resources for our various demands. Humankind does not wish to sink into the churning and featureless mass of mechanistic nature, to become one indistinguishable part amongst the many; however, becoming undisputed lords of the earth and utter masters over nature would only further the already strained relation we feel when we witness our own alienation. What we seek, then, through the practice of art, philosophy, the humanities, and theology is an accord between what essentially makes us human and the world in which we find ourselves.

A harmonious accord between humans and nature would have to allow for both the inclination of humanity to judge meaning while still respecting nature's right to show itself to us and exist for itself. Although these conditions seem to be at odds since both humanity and nature are vying to determine meaning when they encounter each other, this is the root of the rapport that is to be built between nature and us. It is to be a harmonious mediation between nature's announcing of itself and humanity's essential ability to participate in evaluation. Furthermore, we must seek a harmony, not an orientation where either nature or the human will legislate over the other. Only an accord can bring the divergent drives of humanity and nature into a relationship that allows for a distinctly human place in the world. Anything short of harmony would likely lead to either nature's primacy over human value, scientific naturalism, or all human interactions with nature being reduced to use, as we will see in the coming discussion of the will. Therefore, the task is to show how it is possible to come home to a place that is essentially ours, where we can dwell as humans within and amongst nature.

Having laid out what I believe to be the main issue arching over this investigation, the claim can be made that what is at stake in this area of thought is how humanity can relate to and find a way through the feelings of alienation and displacement we have towards ourselves and towards nature. At the end of our alienation is a projected homecoming of sorts, though what this might look like is for now unclear; however, sketching out the details of this homecoming will remain central to this project. For Kant, we become aware of this accord and subsequently of our own place in nature

through aesthetic experience. The approach is descriptive with Kant holding that aesthetic experience is simply a part of how we, as humans, live in the world. Heidegger, on the other hand, will claim that our age and the modern way of thinking about beings precludes us from the kind of existence that allows for a homecoming. Despite Kant holding a descriptive solution to the problem of our alienation and Heidegger remaining prescriptive on how we are to move forward, the motif of preparation, the importance of humanity making itself ready and susceptible for finding a place in nature and experiencing a homecoming, is a key similarity that will be further explicated to unite the apparently divergent approaches taken by Kant and Heidegger. What is suggestive in the fact that neither Kant nor Heidegger posits a hierarchy between humanity, encountered nature, and the things themselves, suggests the way forward does not run through any answer that attempts to eradicate or overcome the question altogether; rather, I hold that amenability between humanity and nature requires an understanding and attitude toward the division that does not seek to place the demands of one over the other. The relationship, however, can neither be one between two autonomous domains that act in seclusion from one another, as I will soon explain; instead, the orientation must resemble a harmony between humanity and our world – the particulars of such an accord are another obvious task of this study.

However, it must be stated that the question of this harmonious accord is not one of what *is*, in a hard, determined sense; otherwise, we could simply place our faith in natural and experimental science with the belief that, with enough knowledge extracted from the phenomenon, humanity will eventually prove that it belongs in nature. Kant's

boundaries of theoretical knowledge in the *Critique of Pure Reason* ended that avenue of thought for any who hold value in the *Third Critique*. Heidegger too, although in the 20th Century, saw the practice of science as limited, only one way amongst many that the world and the things themselves can be encountered. Rather, the question of rapport hinges on the human capability to explore possibility as something other than mere phantasm, but exploring possibility without the future promise of bringing it to actuality. For Kant, it is in the indeterminacy of aesthetic judgments and the hints of reason to be found in art and nature; for Heidegger, it lies in the poetic word and humanity's dwelling upon the earth as the way we can glimpse meaning. Aesthetics and art, then, show the latent possibilities of the world, possibilities that require feeling and a certain kind of susceptibility for the human to glimpse. This is why, to use the words of Dennis Schmidt in *Between Word and Image*, "works of art possess the capacity to grip us, to hold our attention, and to promise more than meets the eye."¹ Ultimately, it is this aesthetic moment, the brief pause of the worldly human, which suggests a solution to the chasm between world and us. It is my sincerest wish to think this moment to its fullest, revealing it as a sign of harmony between human and world, and between our feelings towards both life and death.

Showing the possibility of building rapport between humanity and nature that leads to our homecoming in the world hinges upon two critical pieces of terminology – nature and the world. The concept of nature is borrowed from the works of Kant, while worldhood is drawn from Heidegger's thought. It is important at this point to then lay out what this project will take each to mean and point to key similarities that allow

Kantian concerns of nature to enter into conversation with Heideggerian claims about the world. Nature for Kant is inherently tied to the idea of lawfulness in regard to appearances. One of Kant's footnotes in the *Critique of Pure Reason* explains nature by these terms. It states, "'nature' ... is understood [as] the sum total of appearances insofar as these are in thoroughgoing through an inner principle of causality."² From this we can see that nature is appearance in accordance with laws. In contrast to the purely human sphere of freedom, which Kant will claim as the 'unconditioned,' nature is ultimately appearance that is conditioned by laws. Further, as appearance, nature is also what we can approach in our various interests, more about which will be discussed later; however, the important thing to note is that in its immediacy, nature is taken to be something external to us. Heidegger's conception of 'world' can be found in a passage from *Being and Time* in which Heidegger states that the world, "designates the ontologico-existential concept of *worldhood*. Worldhood itself may have as its modes whatever structural wholes and special 'worlds' may have at the time; but it embraces in itself the *a priori* character of worldhood in general."³ Heidegger's immediately unclear terminology aside, what can be taken from these lines is the idea that the world is that in which Dasein always and already finds itself. No one can exist prior to worldhood; rather, it is a space in which humanity necessarily lives and carries out everyday actions.

A way to draw similarities between nature as the totality of appearance in accordance with law and the world as an *a priori* space of existing humans does not appear immediately obvious. What allows for comparison and the further ability to use the two ideas in conjunction is how nature and the world appear to the modern subject.

How each thinker formulates the orientation of contemporary humanity will be further explicated later in this section; yet, it is beneficial to note at this juncture that for the modern subject, both nature and the world appear as something over and against us. Allow me to clarify. We see ourselves as a separate entity, somehow severed from both nature and the world. Nature can be approached with an objective eye and its laws can be discerned by an exterior entity. The world, our space of existence, becomes populated by objects that we come across in our interest and then sink back into a kind of mere matter when we turn our focus to something else. This severance allows for an objective view on everything that we come across. Scientific vistas are opened for us with such a configuration; however, the human relationship with nature and the world is altered at a fundamental level. The question is then is whether or not this separation between human and nature, between human and world, is necessary, or simply one view amongst many. By now it should be clear that this project's stance is that such a stance against nature and the world is not essential. Rather, I hope to discern for a more fundamental relationship by way of a possible accord between humanity and nature.

To support an appeal to a harmonious existence, I will look to both Kant and Heidegger, two thinkers who I believe used amiable approaches in an attempt to solve the amenability problem and bring humanity closer to finding a distinctly human place *within*, not against, the realm of nature. I had mentioned the harmony that can open the possibility for meaningful, human, judgments in the world is one between life and death; and, that should humanity wish to understand this harmony, the path lies through possibility rather than an appeal to certainty and determinacy. Heidegger, as part of the

culmination of his philosophic thought, offered the idea of *Gelassenheit* as a proper attunement between mortal and world that allowed for possibilities. Essentially, however, any releasement toward possibility requires a confrontation with our own mortal possibility, namely death. I intend on using *Gelassenheit* as a launching point for our orientation toward mortality as one side of the essential harmony I hope to disclose. At the other pole of the tension sits Kant's *Third Critique*, the foundations of which rest on a feeling of life. Although it sometimes passes without notice, Rudolph Makkreel points out that the *Critique of Judgment* specifically links feelings of life with aesthetic judgments in that, "when Kant defines the subjective nature of aesthetic judgments, he adds the significant...specification that representations are referred to the subject's feeling of life (*Lebensgefühl*)."⁴ Although a feeling of life and a confrontation with death appear to be opposites, both, I will show, are required to act in a harmonious manner should we still wish to hold onto the idea that humanity is capable of making judgments about the world that are not either simply knowledge or the result of some violence imposed upon nature. Furthermore, this investigation will show that Heidegger's conception of *Gelassenheit* and the task Kant sets forward in the *Third Critique* can only be completed in each other's mutual light. If it pleases the reader, allow me to explain in more depth why I have selected Kant and Heidegger, and why I believe they are not only working to resolve the same problem, but view that the difficulty of meaningful human values in accord with the world can be bridged.

For Kant, the problem can be seen stemming from his topology of the human mind, where three major divisions reside. This first is what Kant designates as the

“territory,” which is the part of the geography where “cognition is possible for us.”⁵ This is contrasted with the domain, where legislative faculties have full jurisdiction. Our experience of the laws of the understanding in relation to nature, then, can only occur in the territory, outside of the understanding’s full jurisdiction. This fact ensures that, to use Angelica Nuzzo’s words from *Ideal Embodiment*, “rules of theoretical knowledge, insofar as they regard concepts of experience and their objects, are empirical and contingent and do not guarantee objective (universal and necessary) cognition.”⁶ Here we see the amenability problem begin to stir within Kant’s critical project. If our experience of nature as humans, which occurs only in the territory between the domains of full legislation, cannot be tied analytically to either the laws of nature or the laws of freedom, what we are left with is potential chaos, or perhaps less dramatically, a fragmented experience of the world where humanity is left to string together the divergent demands of both nature and reason. This leads to a kind of despair as our appearance according to natural laws does not accommodate our moral demands and our moral existence cannot find a place in the natural realm.

Kant’s awareness of this limitation and the seemingly hopeless position in which it placed a worldly humanity is evident by the existence of the *Third Critique*. His work opens with this very depiction of transcendental philosophy in the wake of his previous two critiques, illustrating the problem of meaningfulness for the human in nature. Practical philosophy, the domain of the rational subject, sits opposite of the realm of theoretical nature with an incalculable gulf lying between them. Kant makes it perfectly clear that his project in the *Third Critique* is to offer a way to transverse the gulf through

the faculty of judgment, showing that the practical realm has influence on the domain of nature. A question must be asked, however, as to why Kant thought this project necessary after consistently and convincingly arguing for the separation of the practical use of reason and our faculties for interpreting the manifold of sense data. At the end of the first two critiques, Kant had successfully mapped out the geography of the mind in which all faculties had a place and role guided by reason. He had brought the subject-object orientation to its fullest and clearest fruition with a rational domain on one side and objectified things themselves on the other, with no chance of improper intermingling between the two. Everything available to humanity was object, and humanity the ultimate subject.

Despite this consistent mapping, Kant undertook the project of the *Third Critique* to allow passage across the cleft between theoretical nature and practical reason. This is because Kant foresaw the danger of bifurcated existence and understood that humanity cannot find its place in the world if our moral life were radically alienated from nature. What remained then was to offer a faculty by which the living human subject could interpret their existence in nature. Furthermore, this faculty would have to account for the fact that humans experience nature through corporeality, as living bodies. Therefore, what Kant offers is not a determinate form of judgment, but rather one of reflection. With this brief explanation alone, it is beginning to appear that there is earth upon which the subject can stand beyond the limits of practical reason and theoretical nature. It is upon this ground that humanity must stand to find its place in the world.

Radical alienation between subject and world is not a new concern for philosophy, nor did it end with the work of Kant. 20th Century thinkers have wrestled with this very issue, notable amongst them being Heidegger who, throughout his body of work, confronted the human, first as Dasein and later as mortal, in an attempt to find a way of being-in-the-world that overcame the division inherent in the subject-object orientation. By thinking through existence by equipmentality, anxiety, groundlessness, the will and technology, and the poetic word, Heidegger, despite various changes in his thinking through his career, offers ways in which the human being can be rethought toward a more originary relationship with the world. Heidegger places our being-towards-death and the anxiety that it produces as the ontological feature of human existence. In short, humanity is aware of its own impending non-existence; and, with no essence upon which they can draw, the individual is led to anxiety. Historically, western metaphysics has been, according to Heidegger, an attempt to protect the subject from this groundlessness in the face of death. The advancement of subjective willing then becomes the main theme of his later works – a theme that Heidegger follows until contemporary *Gestell*, en-framing, that leads to the technological will to will.

Ultimately, Heidegger looks to *Gelassenheit*, an active letting-be, as the answer to de-severing Dasein from the thing itself, a severance occasioned by the radical technological way of interacting with the world. Although it is clear that Heidegger examined the works of Kant in his young thought, there is no indication that in his attempt to think through the will via *Gelassenheit* Heidegger revisited Kant in general or the *Third Critique* in particular. Thus, the focus of this thesis is to revisit the *Critique of*

Judgment in light of Heidegger's project of thinking through the will by way of *Gelassenheit*. It is my goal to show that had Heidegger done the same, he would have found an amiable text to his project since Kant, more than a century before publication of *Being and Time*, had attempted to confront radical alienation in a similar manner.

Phenomenology is the method that Heidegger turns toward in order to discern our capability of making value judgments about the world. However for Heidegger, the concern is not whether we can make such judgments, it is about what is revealed in our dealings within the world and how our manner of approach determines this revelation. I hold that, although Kant is seeking to show that we are *capable* of such judgments and Heidegger needs to ask no such question since our technological will has already proven the human ability to extract meaning from nature, essentially both thinkers are directed toward the same problem for similar reasons. Kant's *Third Critique* ultimately argues that we have a faculty of judgment that allows us to draw value from experience even when the laws of the understanding are not *a priori* to experience. In short, Kant is pointing to our feeling of some content beyond what is given to us through natural laws as a ground for his investigation into finding a place in the world for humanity that is not merely subject to mechanical laws. Heidegger's phenomenological method is able to see what is revealed in a natural scientific comportment, an approach similar to the laws provided by the understanding in Kant's critical philosophy. With this in mind, Heidegger's project is to offer a way that discloses what is left masked by demanding a calculated lawfulness from nature. Therefore, both thinkers hold onto the glimpse of the

extra, unlawful, non-cognizable content shining forth from human experience in the world as an opportunity to suggest nature as amenable to human life in the world.

Considering either the incalculable gulf between practical philosophy and theoretical nature, or the willful actions of a severed Dasein against the fear of its own death in this respect brings forward the problem of the radically alienated subject and how this alienation can be navigated. Both Kant and Heidegger in their mature philosophic works saw a troublesome distance between humanity and world. Also, both endeavored to think their way back through their own philosophy to offer the prodigal human a way through their own alienation that would lead to a place in the world for Kant, or a homecoming for Heidegger. Finding a home, a place in the world, and achieving a certain attentive and reflective relationship with the things we encounter is the goal for their late thoughts. Curiously enough, both thinkers turn to aesthetics in art and nature as humanity's guide through the seeming labyrinthine experience of life. For Kant, the beautiful in art and nature suspends our conceptualization of that which we come into contact, thereby allowing the unfettered imagination to playfully engage with our cognitive faculties. Heidegger holds that the revelation engendered by the work of art offers a more originary means of disclosiveness that cannot be attained by technological grasping. Connecting the two thinkers is the idea that through aesthetics humanity is given a glimpse of a more primordial relationship between being and world; and, that this relationship is key to the navigation of the gulf between us and world. An appeal to art and our receptivity to feeling marks the second key similarity that justifies

why my investigation is one of aesthetics – a justification upon which I will now elaborate.

Our living body is the site of our most immediate awareness of the accord between nature and humanity. After all, it is clearly both natural and human. Therefore, an investigation on this harmony must be tied to our feeling of being alive. The question of being-in-the-world and alienation will therefore not be confronted in this work as a political or social issue. Rather, I will attempt to point to its roots as essentially aesthetic, based on feeling in relation to life. While other efforts have endeavored to bridge the gulf between human and world through ideas of community and inclusiveness, Kant's *Third Critique* offers the issue as one of interpreting meaningfulness from our sensuous experience. As illustrated by his desire to demonstrate how the practical realm can impact the will of nature, Kant places the foundation of communicability and a *sensus communis* on our ability as beings that are both rational and worldly to make judgments based on our feelings engendered by our encounter in the world. The importance of this aesthetic turn for Kant can be seen by comparing it to humanity and nature viewed purely in the interest of knowledge.

Unlike judgments grounded in human feeling, judgments in the interest of knowledge, as established in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, subject nature to determinate laws of space and time, thereby restricting how nature can appear. In this view, nature is mechanical and necessarily law-abiding. However, the human picture of the world according to the interest of knowledge has raised, as J.M Bernstein claims, “deep and immediate problems about the meaning and intelligibility of organic phenomena, about

life, hence about human embodiment.”⁷ This construction of the world, one where all beings are placed under the legislation of mechanical laws brings to the fore the question of life – a question that living humanity is the called to answer. Such a reading of nature is not amenable to human experience because our sensuous experience is not completely contained in the application of conceptual laws.

Kant understood that, which is why the *Critique of Judgment*, where he attempts to provide an explication of judgment, our ability to draw meaningful relations between nature and morality, is an aesthetic work – a text centered on human *feeling*. Our encounters within the world stir feelings that ultimately suggest meaningfulness beyond the scope of our conceptual understanding. This feature of our relation to the world has implications towards our understanding of life. Are we to simply be the result of the electronic firing of neurons, metabolism, and cardiopulmonary pressure? Certainly not, I will presume. Taking this answer as essential to the human condition, namely that we believe our lives to be more than that which falls under mechanics, we are left with only a feeling that there is more than what can be said. This is my point of departure for Kant’s critical philosophy: an attempt to show how reflective judgments as laid out in the *Third Critique* can offer a reading of life that engages with the world’s content that supersedes our own ability to cognize it. In short, I take up the problem of amenability between how we feel our place in the world ought to be and the one shown by the realm of nature, with an interest in showing a human way of orientation toward life.

Heidegger’s eventual stance that the radically subjective will is detrimental to a humanity trying to find a meaningful place in the world was a result of his mature

thought. On the path starting at *Being and Time* and moving through all turns of his career, Heidegger toyed with various approaches to solving the amenability problem. Despite these varied directions, however, Heidegger never lost sight of his goal to determine a way of being-in-the-world that allowed the things themselves to reveal something other than what our technological will demands of them. Earlier, it was mentioned that many consider the amenability problem to be essentially political. It comes as little surprise then that during a certain period, Heidegger sought to find a resolution through the idea of *Volk* as a manner of disclosiveness. However, as his thought moved on and he became disenchanted with National Socialism, Heidegger still thought the will as central to ultimately resolving the amenability problem. In his later thoughts on willing, Heidegger turned to aesthetics, especially the work of the poet, as being the only way to imbue experience with human value that is not tied to radical willing. These brief explications provide a basis for the approach of my project. Kant explicitly intends to solve the problem of meaningful human judgments by way of aesthetics, founding our experience of the supersensible in a feeling. Heidegger's path trailed its way through the political and finally arrived at poetic naming and the relationship between human, poetry, and the world. Therefore, I will take up this tradition in my own investigation, establishing my project as essentially aesthetic.

Beyond the fact that both Kant and Heidegger look to aesthetics as a guide for a more originary relationship, to fully argue my point that Kant's aesthetics and teleology in the *Third Critique* offer something harmonious to what Heidegger sought as *Gelassenheit*, Heidegger's progression of the history of western metaphysics as will to

will needs to be explicated. Doing so will show what is truly at stake in regards to technological thinking and *Ge-stell* in relation to the willful subject's relation to being. Also, this historic perspective will show the particular difficulty in thinking *Gelassenheit* as non-willing, rather than simply not willing. Drawing on Heidegger's key texts, in particular *Being and Time* and *Country Path Conversations*, I intend to offer a clear view of the progression from his early works to his later texts. In addition, I will use shorter pieces on aesthetics and poetry, namely "The Origin of the Work of Art" and "What are Poets for?" to demonstrate how Heidegger thinks art, specifically poetry, offers a way of thinking that is not inherently willful.

For Kant, the task will initially be to show how within his greater philosophic system reflective judgments differ from the work of cognition. By sorting through the orientation of the imagination and understanding, it will be asserted that in the very ordering of our transcendental faculties there are signs of subjective willing and a chance to think beyond the will. That will come in the form of reflective judgment. Additionally, the *Third Critique's* overarching theme of unity between the human sphere and the realm of nature will provide hints at how the gap can be tested by the subject and how these hints relate to our interconnection with art and nature. The idea of disinterestedness will also prove valuable going forward and some deal of time and effort will be devoted to its clarification. At its completion, the section devoted solely to Kant will reveal the *Critique of Judgment* as a text that values human life, our connection with morality within the realm of nature, and the very human task of finding a place within the world.

Laid out in this manner, it will be my intent to have shown by the third chapter the problem of technology and the divided subject as addressed by Heidegger and to suggest that Kant, working under similar concerns, offers a way to think *Gelassenheit* that Heidegger might have found had he revisited the *Third Critique*. Kant's aesthetic insight on human feelings of the invigoration of vital forces is a curious mirror to Heidegger's depiction of anxiety toward death. The tension from which could provide an essential step to thinking beyond the will to will that admits, even in the new beginning envisioned by Heidegger, there remain living beings that are naturally interested in life. Utilizing this tension in reference to a kind of *Ur*-willing, it will be shown that there is a way of being interested in life that fits into Heidegger's project on the will and that Kant provides this orientation to our interest in life. Therefore, the turn away from active willing requires a sort of double-sided awareness, toward both interest in life and anxiety toward death. Humanity may then take a vigilant stance toward the will as an originary interest in finite life; and, because of that guarded interest, can navigate their way in a more primal relationship with the world.

¹ Dennis Schmidt, *Between Word and Image* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 8.

² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), A418-19.

³ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John MacQuarrie (New York: Harper Perennial (1962), 93.

⁴ Rudolf Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant: The Hermeneutical Import of the Critique of Judgment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 88.

⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 5:174.

⁶ Angelica Nuzzo, *Ideal Embodiment: Kant's Theory of Sensibility* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 270.

⁷J.M. Bernstein, "Judging Life: From Beauty to Experience, from Kant to Chaim Soutine," *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory* 7 (2000): 158.

CHAPTER II

HEIDEGGER AND THE WILL

Heidegger's disavowal the will marks a turn in the path of thinking about subjectivity and the world. Up until Heidegger, the will had always been taken as an ability of the subject to perceive and represent the world in a suitable manner for the human intellect. Heidegger, however, reframes the question of the will as one of *attunement* rather than a question of a faculty that the human subjects bring to bear upon the world. This attunement that Heidegger uses in reference to the will is one between thinking and acting. But, rather than seeing thought and action as opposed forces within the subject, Heidegger's critique of modernity will claim that modern thinking is willing, or that even when the modern subject merely thinks about the surrounding world, it is activating its power of representation, commanding the world to appear as object that can be examined by the active subject. If there is an attunement to be found between thought and action, the thinking of the modern subject would represent a kind of (dis)attunement¹, where even in thinking, the subject is acting upon objective reality. This broken harmony represented by subjective willing is seen in Heidegger's *Nietzsche Lectures*, in his claims that willing is a command upon the world. Heidegger writes, "Willing itself is mastery over..."¹ Mastery over what? The (dis)attunement of the will is mastery over that which appears, namely anything external to the subject in traditional

¹ I am in debt to Bret Davis for this phrasing of attunement and (dis)attunement in relation to Heidegger's critique of subjective willing.

metaphysics. Therefore, there is no way of thinking the world as anything other than object and humans as anything other than subjects in this (dis)attunement.

This is precisely what Bret Davis explicates as Heidegger's diagnosis, "that the very understanding of the being of beings in terms of 'subjects' and 'objects' is implicated in a particular [fundamental attunement] (*Grundstimmung*)."² From his critique on modern thinking it can be gathered that Heidegger's project, stemming from a rejection of the subject/object orientation, is directed toward finding a more fundamental attunement between the world and humanity. Such a direction can be seen beginning with his key text, *Being and Time*, where Heidegger looks to reconfigure the way things appear to us in terms of our care. When the avenues provided by human care eventually led to ambivalence in terms of the will, Heidegger moved on to contend with the thinker whom he thought brought the metaphysical will to its utmost exemplification – Nietzsche. Finding Nietzsche's will to power to be nothing more than a will to further willing, Heidegger glimpsed that the source of the expansive will to will could be found in what he considered a technological way of directing ourselves toward things we encountered. As a solution to this way of comportment, Heidegger suggested that an attitude of *Gelassenheit*, an attentive letting-be, was to be the way in which the modern humanity might come upon a 'new beginning' beyond the will. Brief as it may be, this explanation of Heidegger's thoughts on the will sketches the arc that this chapter will follow in tracing not only the importance of the will, but also the concerns that brought Heidegger to think in terms of *Gelassenheit* and the questions that remain after its introduction.

What the description above shows is that the problem of the will occupies a central place in all turns of Heidegger's thought. We can also trace the multiple stages of his career in terms of his stance toward the will, as done by Bret Davis in *Heidegger and the Will*, and find the designations 'early Heidegger,' 'middle Heidegger,' and 'late Heidegger' coincide with different orientations between Dasein and the will. Whether it is in *Being and Time* as resoluteness, *Entschlossenheit*, his attempt to think a proper will in the *Nietzsche* lectures, or the idea of *Gelassenheit* as a form of attentive letting-be, Heidegger continuously worked through the problematic of the will as a cornerstone to unlocking a more originary relationship between Dasein and the world. For all periods in Heidegger's philosophy, it is by the way of the will that the world is disclosed to us; and, different orientations of Dasein and the will lead to different manners of disclosiveness and ultimately different relationships between Dasein and being. Therefore, any examination of Heidegger's philosophic thought requires an in-depth explication of the many forms of willing that arise during his various modes of thought.

As early as *Being and Time*, Heidegger was wrestling with the problematic of the will and what exactly it means to attune an active being in the world with things that can reveal themselves. Phenomenology, the method for Heidegger's inquiry, seems to support the existence of willing as an attunement, and it is the phenomenologist's task to properly align the human and the thing itself. But why is this realignment important? Heidegger directs us to the reason behind the need for attunement when he writes, "an entity can show itself from itself... in many ways, depending in each case on the kind of access we have to it."³ As Davis further points out, while writing on the subject of the

will in *Being and Time*, “the task of the phenomenologist is to find the proper attunement and method with which to assist in letting these things show themselves from themselves.”⁴ Here is the ground floor of the Heideggerian project, so to speak. We are Dasein, the kind of being concerned with appearance and meaning – a thing’s being; however, that appearance is determined by how we direct ourselves towards the thing. The subject/object orientation has historically restricted how things can appear to us, namely as severed objects against a subject. Willing and the will can then be enumerated as the action and faculty driving the exclusion of all other manners of disclosiveness. Phenomenology in *Being and Time* is supposed to be a way of examining the roots of the disclosure that Heidegger holds as endemic to western thought and also a way forward from the subject/object orientation. At the very introduction of his seminal work, Heidegger is already deeply concerned with the relation of Dasein and what appears; and, the primary orientation is to be disclosed through phenomenology.

What then needs to be determined is the role of the will in early Heidegger’s conception of phenomenology. Although frustrating, and yet somehow expected, the only answer that *Being and Time* can provide is at best ambivalent, at worst simply nonexistent. Heidegger does not devote a section of the text to willing in particular, but it is possible to pick out certain instances where either willing or an abeyance of the will can be read into the lines. A single sentence offers what Heidegger claims to be the boiled down meaning of phenomenology. He writes, “Thus ‘phenomenology’ means *αποφαινεσθαι τα φαινόμενα* — to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself.”⁵ From the perspective of subjective

willing as a mastery over the external world, the words ‘to let’ suggest a slowing of the will that is perhaps similar to the kind of attunement Heidegger wants to show. An illustration is offered by the following: on the willful side there is a kind of grasping and holding; whereas non-willing indicates a reservation, or letting something be. Therefore, at the very foundation of phenomenology, there must be a kind of letting-be, a space where the thing is allowed to unfold without being determined by the will.

Despite this call for an approach that allows the things to disclose themselves, it cannot be said that *Being and Time* is a text devoted to halting of the subjective will. After all, in it Heidegger claims that Dasein’s orientation toward the world is primarily one of care. While a relationship through care is certainly different from the traditional subject-object relationship that perpetuates a ravine between human and world, it can hardly be considered a non-willing orientation toward the world. This is revealed in Heidegger’s two modes of disclosiveness that an object can have – either being present-at-hand or ready-to-hand. Heidegger explains with the added emphasis, “*Entities...are encountered in a world of involvement (readiness-to-hand) as their kind of Being, and which can thus make themselves known as they are in themselves.*”⁶ Being ready-to-hand means the thing reveals itself in its use towards the various projects of Dasein. For the Heidegger of *Being and Time*, this is the most authentic way of disclosing Being. It is difficult to see how the most authentic way of disclosiveness can be read as anything other than willful because entities that are ready-to-hand make themselves known in relation to our involvement with them. Nor can presence-at-hand, Heidegger’s other mode of disclosing, be the kind of letting-be relationship that the introduction calls for

either. It is best described as an object being there on the periphery, kind of severed subject-object distinction that phenomenology is meant to dissolve.²

The phenomenology of *Being and Time* is suggestive of the will as fundamental attunement between Dasein and the world evidenced by how human involvement signifies the authentic way of being-in-the-world. Therefore, while the metaphysics of subjective willing as a faculty might have been dissolved, the human as Dasein still occupies an active, caring place influencing the appearance of things. Moving beyond this aspect of Heidegger's will requires a further turn in the narrative. The new problem for Heidegger is the will as affectation and passion – Nietzsche. *Being and Time's* sought to remove the subjective will of modernity by means of comportment and the care of Dasein; however, the will guided by care and directed in terms of the various concerns and projects of Dasein leads to the possibility of all disclosure of being as practical use, or in terms of how Dasein can use whatever thing appears before it. This is why the confrontation with Nietzsche is a key turn in Heidegger's thought. It represents a move to solve a problem of the will that the phenomenological apparatus of *Being and Time* could not. While some hold that Heidegger is embracing Nietzsche's will, I contend that the *Nietzsche Lectures* are setting up a problem of the will as it emerges in *Being and Time* to be resolved later through the idea of *Gelassenheit*. It appears to be

² For a full explication on Heidegger's ambivalence toward the will and willing in *Being and Time*, see chapter 2 of Bret Davis' *Heidegger and the Will*. There, he offers four interpretations of resoluteness, *Entschlossenheit*. One is as willful resolve. The second offers a reading that uses the conception of resolution as a way of self-(re)interpretation. A third claims irredeemable ambiguity; and the fourth is a way between all three where resoluteness is a self-interrupting force that willfully halts the will.

characteristic of Heidegger's project to confront and attempt to embrace the problem before being able to think through it. Remaining true to this manner, rather than overcoming will to power, Heidegger thinks through Nietzsche with the will to mastery.

Nietzsche's will to power, as confronted by Heidegger, stems from the 'death of metaphysics,' or the assertion that values and meaning found in the world has no metaphysical foundation. In the face of this absence of meaning, Nietzsche claims that all is will and values are for humans to form. For Nietzsche all meaning is the result of our will and our willing is directed toward the enhancement and stabilization of our power. Hence, we are driven by this goal, a will to power. The *Nietzsche Lectures* provide a broad elucidation of what this means, an explanation that not only clarifies the action of the will, but also frames it in terms of meaning. Heidegger notes that the will is tied to "above all an attunement which is so disposed that nothing is foreign to it, nothing too much for it, which is open to everything and ready to tackle anything."⁷ This enthusiasm of the will to go out and confront all that it encounters is possible only if there is no metaphysical meaning beyond what is declared by humanity. Lack of value is not only the cause for anxiety but it also points to the empowerment of our will. Heidegger appropriates this claim that Nietzsche deems fundamental, but will twist it into a symptom of our age, not part of the essence of our being. This is shown in Heidegger's claim that humanity faces anxiety, the "phenomenon of Dasein's fleeing *in the face of itself* and in the face of its authenticity."⁸ Anxiety is no longer a fundamental aspect of our being, but rather a retreat from our authenticity. It is a retreat from what is fundamentally Dasein, namely the awareness of our non-existence. Also, however, it is a

flight from authenticity. For Heidegger, Dasein is represented as groundless and thrown into the world. The idea of groundlessness appears beyond *Being and Time* and remains a central aspect of not simply Heidegger's conception of the will, but also his larger philosophic picture. In the essay, "What are poets for?" Heidegger describes the times as destitute in terms of being and "there fails to appear for the world the ground that grounds it."⁹ This groundlessness, endemic first to Dasein itself and then given over to the modern epoch, is the source of fear and anxiety for the living human. As such, Dasein is called upon to act, or comport itself, in relation to this groundlessness, toward the abyss of our being. Anxiety, then, is the basis for the will beyond which Heidegger seeks to think. Anxiety causes flight, a retreat from awareness of our non-existence and the recognition of no metaphysical foundation to the world. Yet, Dasein is called upon to act, or comport itself, in relation to this groundlessness, toward the abyss of our being.

Security and certainty are not to be found in the abyss of Dasein's groundlessness. Heidegger uses the term 'venture' to illustrate the being of beings. From the connotations of this chosen word we might think of risk, reward, uncertainty, and danger. Therefore, to be implies a danger to the being. Likewise, as Heidegger explains, "That which were... to remain out of danger... would not have been ventured. It would not be in danger if it were shielded."¹⁰ Notice how the difference between the dangers of the venture and perceived safety are not the differences between activity and passivity. To not venture, to avoid the danger of being, the being does not simply disengage with the world; rather, shields itself behind the act of assigning value and meaning against the void. Shielding is an action in the face of groundlessness designed to protect the

endangered being. This orientation of venturing and shielding marks a subtle difference from authenticity and inauthenticity of *Being and Time*. Whereas a case could be made that the authentic, care-full, and resolute Dasein is primarily active and willful is opposed to the inauthentic Dasein, who simply goes along with *das Man*, such distinctions are harder to make in the works of later Heidegger. Venturing may be called a kind of activity; but in comparison to the shielding of non-ventured being, the attitude that is less authentic toward the anxiety of groundlessness appears to be more active and willful, throwing up guards against what is most fundamental to being. It is in this way that the problematic of the will, as conceived by Heidegger, transcends activity and passivity.

Keeping in mind the themes of anxiety, groundlessness, and protection in the face of venturing, we are ready to investigate Heidegger's critical phenomenology of the will to power in an effort to show that Heidegger did not envision an embrace of the will as a fundamental part Dasein, but rather part of the age in which we find ourselves. Shielding the vulnerable being from the abyss can only be done through the process of valuation – reaching beyond the will and securing value to be stored for future encounters. This makes appearance consistent. It is not hard to see how consistency by way of the will is contrasted with *die Wage*,³ hazard or risk. Venturing out from the protection risks what has been grasped and propels the being into groundlessness as opposed to a manufactured grounding of similitude. Now, however, it is not simply the willful being that is determined by the use of the will, but also the things it encounters.

³ See "What are Poets For?" for Heidegger's full etymology on *die Wage*.

These things, rather than able to show themselves, are incorporated into the expansively determining will. This leads to Davis' claim that, "Willing is always a willing out beyond oneself, and therefore must be distinguished... from... the static sense of a solipsistic ego cut off from the world."¹¹ The will reaches out and enhances the power and breadth of its domain by assigning value to the things. It is this activity of evaluation without regard to the thing's own being that leads Heidegger to reconfigure Nietzsche's will to power as an epochal will to will, since all that is being preserved in our activities is the will itself.

Notice here how the human existence has been considerably altered from Dasein in an abyss of meaning when a human-determined value is placed between the 'ego' and the world of things themselves. Most notably is the change from a being-amongst-beings to now a being-against-beings, where the subject has drawn boundaries between themselves and the world. The attitude taken up by the guarded subject is antagonistic, where the world beyond the grasp of their will threatens to sweep away their secure footing and drag the sheltered ego into the abyss. This antagonistic disposition is at root in the subject-object relation between humanity and world. Considered in this manner, three rather startling conclusions emerge about the prevalent understanding of the human psyche over and against the corporeal world: Firstly, that this relationship is caused by anxiety toward existential groundlessness and the subsequent shielding of the ego against the outside world. Secondly, the subject-object relationship is not a simple encapsulation of the timid ego against the dangers of the world, but a radically willing ego that incorporates and secures the things to its own ends; and finally, that our

understanding of the subject and object is not essential to the being of humans in the world. The first of these realizations has already been discussed. The second will be the next point of focus as Heidegger's phenomenology of the will to will and the problematic of technology. The third will be the final aspect of this chapter and will point the way to a conception of *Gelassenheit*.

Willful incorporation of beings by the guarded subject leads to the division of humanity as subjects against a background of objects in addition to the expansion and hardening of the will's territory. However, the question remains as to how this claim leads to Heidegger's claim that the will to power is simply a will to will. The answer lies in exactly what the will wills, which Heidegger's phenomenology shows is nothing more than a continuation of active willing – hence, the will to will. This is not to be taken as a philosophically uninteresting tautology, however; rather, it is an indicative statement about the threat of the endangered subject as it reaches out from behind its protective coverings. Attached to this dynamic willing is the aspect of an unquenchable need for growth – the reaching action mentioned earlier. Security, then, is not the only driving force behind the will. If the will is, as Heidegger claims, a will *to power* and power is a *will to power*,⁴ then instead of a tautology, there appears to be a circular effect upon the willful activities of the subject. Power demands the expansion of the willful domain, but the protective will demands a secure ground upon which to stand. Therefore, although the subject is involved in constant activity, Heidegger, through his

⁴ See the second volume of Heidegger's lectures on Nietzsche.

phenomenology of the will, holds the activity brings about a willful recurrence of the same.

Returning to a more Heideggerian lexicon, the things themselves become objects and the originary Dasein, whom Heidegger claims has the chance to wager themselves for a more originary relationship, becomes “a kind of ‘encapsulat[ed] ego... in the aggressive sense of expanding the territory of the ego to include the world in its field of power.”¹² In short, the subject becomes a lord of the earth; and, the manner in which being is disclosed to the guarded subject is now completely in terms of use and ability to feed the expansion of the will, which can be seen in Heidegger’s interpretation of the Nietzschean ‘estimation of value.’ Heidegger writes, “The essential determination of everything essential is based on ‘value estimations.’ What is essential is conceived *as* essential exclusively with regard to its character as *value*.”¹³ Nietzsche collapsed all value as will to power, a move made possible in the face of a lack of metaphysical meaning. Heidegger appropriates this pronouncement as the diagnosis of our age, claiming that modern values are a result of the expansive will. Heidegger’s fear is that everything, every encounter, is framed in terms of the thing’s use, to use Nietzsche’s words, or its value in terms of securing us against the draft, to speak towards more Heideggerian concerns. Either way, modern human comportment conditions the thing’s appearance to the point where it can no longer show itself. Our comportment that Heidegger claims to pervade all encounters between Dasein and things-in-the-world is technological. The technological comportment therefore becomes a central focus in not

only Heidegger's critique of the modern will, but also vital to understanding how modernity can be thought through to a 'new beginning.'

Heidegger speaks of technology in a very particular manner that reflects the concerns of his phenomenological project as described in the introduction of *Being and Time*. Recall that his explication of phenomenology centered on the *orientation* between that which appears and to whom it appears, and how this orientation affects the thing's disclosiveness. Technology is similar to phenomenology in that what concerns Heidegger is not the *what* of the investigation, an assortment of electronic tools that we normally envision when thinking of technology, but the *how*. In the case of technologic thinking, this would manifest as what is disclosed to us in the technological worldview and how what is disclosed relates to us and the thing itself. Heidegger, knowing the common conception of technology states in his essay "The Question Concerning Technology," "Technology is... therefore no mere means. Technology is a way of revealing."¹⁴ A technological way of comportment reveals what things are to Dasein; the issue, however, is that being comported technologically determines in advance how things appear. Understanding this about technology allow us to examine it in a new way, in hope of opening a new relationship between humanity, technology, and the world.

Making this distinction is vital to Heidegger's project because in the first paragraph of the previously quoted work on technology, Heidegger calls for a free relationship between humanity and technology. He writes, "The relationship will be free if it opens our human existence to the essence of technology. When we can respond to this essence, we shall be able to experience the technological within its own bounds."¹⁵

Therefore, the goal is to get closer to the essence of technology and not simply offer a description of the technological. Getting to this essence, however, requires a fair amount of thought, especially given the prevalence of technological means in modern society. Heidegger points to this difficulty and its inherent danger in writing about the neutrality by which we view the mechanized world. “Regard[ing] it [technology] as something neutral... makes us utterly blind to the essence of technology.”¹⁶ Breaking from the normal way of speaking⁵ about technology and thinking to its essence are vital to the task at hand – confronting technology as a willful means of disclosiveness that dominates the modern view of the world. In order to show how technology discloses and what this means to the human in the world, it was first necessary to elucidate technology as an orientation, it being as more complex than what we normally encounter.

Technology, more than simply the fine-tuned instruments of modernity, is a way of revealing. Heidegger, in his essay “The Question Concerning Technology,” speaks to the very issue of technology as a way of revealing. *Poiēsis* is the term he uses to describe that which reveals. However, *poiēsis* carries a broad meaning that encompasses not only technology, but also fine art and physics as well. Of these ways of revealing, Heidegger says, “they are unifiedly governed by a bringing that brings what presences into appearance.”¹⁷ Difficult language aside, technology is a *poiēsis*, a way that brings the emergent thing into our view. However, Heidegger notes, “the revealing that holds

⁵ Contrast Heidegger’s want to *think* through technology with his description of how we *speak* about it. It is a theme that goes back to *Being and Time* with his discussion on the inauthentic chatter of the other. Conflating technology as a way of disclosiveness with technology as a means to some human end is how the essence of technology was covered and leveled in the first place, which led to the apparent neutrality by which we regard it in modern society.

sway throughout modern technology does not unfold into a bringing-forth in the sense of *poiēsis*.”¹⁸ Instead, modern technology challenges that which it is supposed to reveal. A challenge is a demand upon something, not an occasion for it to show itself. Therefore, what humans gain from challenging is not something essential about the thing, but something technology has imposed upon it. Therefore, the concern is that due to the dominance of technology in the modern era, all revealed value is in reference to technological demand, and not in respect to something essential to the thing itself. Hans Ruin while writing on one of Heidegger’s last written pieces, a greeting to the Heidegger Circle in 1976, summarizes Heidegger’s caution against the technology. It reads, “a world stamped by technology is also a world characterized by a forgetfulness of being.”¹⁹ ⁶ Ruin is pointing to a relationship between technology and its prevalence in ‘stamping’ the modern world. Revelation through technological thinking suggests forgetfulness, namely forgetting that things can disclose themselves in our encounter with them. The forgetfulness is on the human side of the orientation; when we take a technological stance toward things, the things themselves are forgotten and replaced by what appears through technology. Forgetfulness toward the being of beings can only come about if something appears in its stead, something that, in its way of revealing, distracts and blocks Dasein from experiencing a thing’s own meaning, since its value has already been determined technologically beforehand.

Were nothing revealed through technology, it would be an impossible comportment towards the things, since Heidegger has, from the outset of his project in

⁶ This appears in *Radical Phenomenology: Essays in Honor of Martin Heidegger*, ed. John Sallis (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1978).

Being and Time, place Dasein at the center of the unfolding of being. Instead, something very particular is revealed by the technological orientation of the will, and herein lies the danger. Davis writes, “Technology names a highly restrictive way in which beings are revealed, *and concealed*.”²⁰ Turning back for a moment to the description of the phenomenological project, recall that at its roots phenomenology is the way in which the things reveal themselves from within themselves. Immediately, we see that modern technological thinking is a hindrance to that effort. After all, an external restriction on what can be both revealed and concealed blocks the thing itself from unfolding itself from in itself. Heidegger uses the example of modern physics in his essay on technology to demonstrate the effects of technology on the unfolding of nature to the human subject.⁷ He explains that modern physics, and most of modern science for that matter, “is challenged forth by the rule of enframing, which demands that nature be orderable as standing reserve... [and] will never be able to renounce this one thing: that nature report itself in some way or other that is identifiable through calculation and that it remain orderable as a system of information.”²¹ Technology places demands and restrictions on nature’s unfolding, only allowing that which can be reduced to formulation and processed as information to reveal itself. The ordering of nature is how the will to will allows humanity to orient itself toward nature. Rather than being amongst nature, the will demands, due to its insatiable need to expand and secure, that humans take mastership over nature through its systematic ordering as a source of information and

⁷ According to Heidegger, modern physics is technological, but not in the sense usually attributed in our everyday speech. Normally, we think of physics as technological because its practice utilizes electronic mechanisms; however, Heidegger will claim its *technicity* is due to its demands on nature.

energy. Working under the will to will, then, this is the relationship humanity can have with the world. We become both lords and prisoners in our own objective castles, surrounded by tall walls whose boundaries we cannot cross. Nature cannot be touched, only grasped, summoned to our hands, and ordered about for the sake of our projects. This is what technology reveals to us. Concealed, its absence glaring, is any originary relation between the human and the thing itself.

Perhaps it could be argued that Heidegger's conception of the technological will to will is simply a critique of modern science and technology. 'Sure,' the skeptic might say, 'science calls for this kind of orientation because its goals are directed toward empirical knowledge.' They might go on to argue that the technological view can be utilized by science and discarded when we leave that realm of thought. Surely the Rhine, to use Heidegger's example, can be used as a source of hydroelectric power and yet can still be appreciated as the river. Yes, but how? As something to be viewed as other, as separate nature, as something to take pictures of, to be gawked at via social media, as a mere line crossed off on a 'bucket list,' so to speak. What this reveals is that even beyond the fields of modern science, technological thinking precludes things from appearing as what they really are; rather, our comportment predetermines meaning relative to their usefulness. As we shall see in thinking the phenomenology of technology to its fullest extent, even human life is not fully immune from ordering in the service of the advancing will.

This possibility was hinted at earlier when technology's essence was disclosed not as a means, but as a form of revelation based on the orientation of anxious, guarded

subject against its groundlessness existence in the world. Now, the actuality comes to fruition: Our technological thinking causes us to relate to other humans not in accord with what they are, but, like objects, in a manner that predetermines their value in terms of usefulness. Humanity, too, has become a resource. This is the supreme diagnosis of the modern age; yet, Heidegger, perhaps surprisingly, is neither pessimist nor romanticist on the issue despite the tones of both that emerge in his thinking. There is a way through this technological predicament that does not involve a resignation to becoming part of the standing-reserve of energy. The subject takes part in the process of unconcealment. That is, Dasein has a particular role in the disclosiveness of beings. We need only look back as far as the ready-to-hand and present-at-hand distinctions in *Being and Time* to see how human comportment and care occupies a central role in the unfolding of beings. Technology, despite its restrictiveness, is still a way in which things are revealed and concealed within the world. For this to happen, i.e. for technology to take place, there must still remain humans, not mere objects of the standing-reserve, to take up the task of disclosiveness. At the utmost extent of this kind of technological willing, humanity occupies a dual position as being converted partially into standing reserve, but also as the force behind the ordering of resources to maintain the technological will to mastery. It is the inability to be reduced to mere energy sources that Heidegger picks up on as, to use Davis' words, a "'first hint,' and 'echo,' or a 'ringing forth' (*Anklang*) of a more originary correspondence to being."²² In true Heideggerian fashion of thinking through the problem by facing its essence, this echo can only be heard on the precipice of complete abandonment to technology.

Confronting the problematic of the will hinges on a paradox. The will can only be overcome by, paradoxically, willing to not will. Heidegger had this complication in mind when trying to sort out the role of the will beyond modernity. Heidegger sought a third way, one that ran between the active will and passivity, an active way of letting things show themselves – *Gelassenheit*. *Gelassenheit* is what Heidegger designates as the relationship to not overcome the will, but rather to think through it. I draw attention to the distinction between overcoming the will and thinking through it because as is shown in *Country Path Conversations*, to reject willing, or to will the overcoming of the will, is still essentially willful. Therefore, as the conversation points out, the relation between non-willing and the will is essentially ambiguous.⁸ A bit of reflection will clarify why this is so. Struggling against the will in order to abolish it from our thinking is, essentially, a will to non-willing. That is why the project of thinking through the will cannot be solely one of action against some force. Yet, it could be argued that to embrace something akin to fatalism, or Meister Eckhart's releasement toward the divine will, is simply a form of willful deferral or even covert willing.⁹ Neither activity nor passivity seem to offer a viable option in the problematic of the will. Davis speaks of the problem at hand when he writes, "We need to disaccustom ourselves from the contradictory *will* to reach *Gelassenheit*, and yet this disaccustoming itself seems to

⁸ See Martin Heidegger, *Country Path Conversations*, 77-80, for the full line of conversation.

⁹ I draw here on the Nietzschean critique of the asceticism. For a full excursus on the relation of Heidegger, Eckhart, and the will, see chapter 5 of Davis, *On the Way to Gelassenheit*.

require *Gelassenheit*.²³ A troublesome knot that, with any luck, can be at least loosened with some further explication.

Caution is needed to avoid the tempting conclusion that countering the active will requires that humanity detach itself from beings and restrain our inclinations to determine value. This is not what Heidegger had in mind when speaking of *Gelassenheit*. It is not a passive, inactive waiting that illustrates our way of being that is to free us from the will; instead, it is an attentive letting-be that characterizes *Gelassenheit*. In correspondence with beings, there is a middle-voice that is neither silence nor a demand. We are not to simply take all appearance as meaning, nor are we to determine value before any encounter. Instead, the best picture that can be offered is one akin to conversation where meaning is exchanged, questioned, and opened for debate. Conversation cannot occur in either extremes of pure demanding or utter silence. Dialogue, speaking, communing with the things themselves is more originary than the willful pursuit of technology or its passive opposite. It also allows for human activity within the world, but simply a different kind than what is required by technology. ‘Language speaks’ (*die Sprache spricht*) as a line from Heidegger is an exemplar of such a relation. Language and nature speak to humanity where values can be found, but there is an opportunity to speak back, to converse, to offer a human answer. Conversation, taken as a reciprocal speaking and listening, is the kind of originary relationship that Heidegger seems to suggest. However, it is not a dialogue that would mimic the kind of speech that humans have with each other on an everyday basis; but rather, we would find a new means of communion between the things themselves and humanity, and

further also between humans. This suggestion will come back into play with Heidegger's discussion of the poet.

We begin to have a sense of what Heidegger is suggesting in his turn away from the will. The world reveals itself to us in this more originary relationship and we are there to answer back to its revealing. Perhaps it is not surprising that, opposed to the revealing offered by technology, works of art are said to disclose truth in an originary and special manner. It is this turn to art, not aesthetics in its traditional usage, as we are warned by Heidegger, which may provide some illustration of how a modern, technological, epoch can begin to see things beyond their mere standing-reserve and witness the opening of a world from itself.¹⁰ As Jonathan Dronsfield writes in his essay on Heidegger and the work of art, "The work... is to open up a world of beings such as to show things in their emergence."²⁴ A space is opened up within the artwork that allows humans to see a new world of beings, again and for the first time. Art is a means of disclosiveness that is not ordered by use or subject to the will. In fact, Heidegger makes a particular point to avoid such confusions that might result in thinking that art opens the world of the artist for the viewer. He insists that the artist is largely inconsequential to the work of art, claiming that the artist, "destroys itself in the creative process for the world to emerge."²⁵ There is little of the subjective technological will in the revealing of art. Instead, humanity is set before a world in which new disclosiveness

¹⁰ Heidegger prefers the use of "the work of art" rather than "aesthetics." For Heidegger, aesthetics represents a willful appropriation of art to extract the idea of beauty from the work itself. "Aesthetics" then becomes a science for the art industry to move and store "beautiful" works for proper display. My use of the term will reflect this usage.

can occur. Perhaps this is why Heidegger turns to works of art, and even more so to the poetic word, in his later thoughts on thinking through the will. It is because works of art and the poetic word are an encounter that attempts to halt even the modern will to mastery. Although “art industry,” Heidegger warns us, is dangerous to the opening of the new world, the work of art remains the closest exemplar to this originary relationship that we have in the face of the technological will.

What is called upon in the age of radical concealment and ordering of the things themselves as standing-reserve, is a relationship that runs up against and checks the will, one that may be similar to the relationship described in our dealings with the work of art. The question remains of whether or not the will is to remain beyond Heidegger’s ‘new beginning.’ Let us reframe the question of will by looking at what is at stake should, if such things were possible, any form of willing be stripped from the human subject. Perhaps the most audacious manifestations of willfulness are claims that place humanity as the measure of the world, the ultimate arbiter of value and judgment. Tradition, values, morals, and customs are part of subjective existence in the world. Their totality illustrates human activity and interest throughout history. Does *Gelassenheit* then call for a radical reassessment of customs and an immobilization of our human capacity to assign value and hold to traditions? While there is definite hermeneutical import in a reevaluation of values and meaning, *Gelassenheit* in some instances may seem to suggest that humanity can no longer assert tradition or build culture without the leave of the things themselves. It is not a matter of simply *wanting* to hold on to our ability to develop culturally and determine ourselves as people, but can we even do otherwise?

Can we decide, so to speak, to allow nature and the things themselves to establish human values and enter into the scaffolding of our culture?

The answer resides, albeit partially, in the function of the poet in an age of radical non-disclosiveness. Returning to the source of technology and the need for a turn toward *Gelassenheit*, we are reminded that it was groundlessness in the face of the abyss that brought about the need for protection and a severance of the subject from the world of objects. To think beyond the will would require not only releasing the barrier between humanity and the world, but also entering into an unguarded relationship with the groundless draft. After all, simply letting down the shield does not show active engagement with existential groundlessness. This is why Heidegger, in his attempt to offer an orientation beyond the bounds of will, delved into poetry and the relation between the poet and the things themselves. As shown in his aesthetics, the unfolding of the things in art is other than the restrictive disclosiveness in terms of technology; and it is the poet that exemplifies this relation best amongst humanity. Heidegger looks to the poets as “the most mortal amongst mortals... the most daring... the most ventured,” to offer a full way of thinking through the will.²⁶ They are the most mortal, daring, and ventured because they face their mortality, their existential safety as the wager, to achieve a more originary relationship with the things themselves.

Heidegger offers us precious little beyond this, leaving readers to piece together the rest based on the body of his philosophic work. Poets offer a certain comportment towards the things themselves that is a form of waiting appropriate with *Gelassenheit*; however, Heidegger only looks to poetry in destitute times. Unless the new beginning

offered is also to be destitute, this orientation seems lacking. Humans will engage with the world and can do so in a non-technological manner, as evidenced by the work of art. But in our freedom to encounter things-in-the-world, every experience as described by our attentive waiting seems to become radically new. Rather than in technology, where nothing is essentially new, there is nothing saved in the non-willing orientation. It seems that the human is once again at an impasse, with radical grounding on one end and extreme forgetfulness on the other. There can only be one answer that goes beyond despair – the will must, in some form and fashion, remain. It is the means by which we enter into meaningful relations with objects of the world. Rampant subjectivity led to the will to will, but for humanity to be the site of disclosiveness, for us to take part in the unfolding of truth, we must retain an aspect of our will, despite the danger of slipping back into subjectivity.

Then, there is no ultimate resolution, only a tension that demands to be understood. Davis picks up on this tension in noting that, “the revealing of ek-sistence already essentially involves a tendency toward concealment, because it always reveals beings in a particular way.”²⁷ In our encounter with beings, willful or otherwise, there is always that which is revealed and that which is concealed. Beings are never fully revealed in any single disclosing. Therefore at the moment of revealing, there is a drifting away from the originary encounter and toward that which is revealed in our involvement with the being itself. Humanity, even free from the grip of the will to will, is always at a distance from the full being of beings. In “The Essence of Truth” Heidegger speaks of this essential relationship. He writes, “Man errs. Man does not

merely stray into errancy. He is always astray in errancy.’²⁸ As we have seen throughout this chapter, this errancy brought about by the forgetfulness of the originary encounter is taken to its extreme in the epoch of technology; yet, there is no way to dissolve this estrangement from being, even in the ‘new beginning.’ The task then becomes thinking through the tension between the freedom toward beings that is achieved through our attentive letting-be of them through *Gelassenheit* and the essential forgetfulness of our involvement with the beings.

This is the project left unfinished by the late works of Heidegger, one that he had started in the introduction of his seminal work *Being and Time*. Phenomenology as the way in which things reveal themselves from themselves and its relation to the will occupied a foundational place in Heidegger’s philosophy during all turns of his thought and all engagements with philosophy. Through a career of thought, we are left with *Gelassenheit*, as the answer to the technological will to will. While it possibly represents a viable means to think through the modern age, it leaves unanswered our relation to the will beyond the ‘new beginning’ and those post-Heidegger are left with the charge of thinking past Heidegger for an answer. Certain facets of the will appear to be indelibly situated within our engagement with beings-in-the-world; and as such, humanity appears to always be capable of falling back into radical subjectivity. Therefore, to think beyond Heidegger requires grappling with the existent will in terms of the tension between freedom of engagement and forgetfulness of the very same engagement.

Gelassenheit is a leap from the technological epoch, but a leap to where? Can such a question be rightfully asked, expecting an answer? Given the danger of the will,

and the ever-present possibility of falling back into an orientation towards the world guided by the will, I believe this question must be asked. The answer, however, cannot be determinate. Rather, the leap suggested through *Gelassenheit* will land us in a sort of tension, where a particular harmony must be found. That harmony was hinted at earlier, as one between freedom of existence and forgetting in insistence. At its root, amazingly enough, is not simply our engagement toward beings-in-the-world, but the entire human comportment to life on one hand, and death on the other. Heidegger has already challenged humanity to face its non-existence in the draft with the example of the poet, as a daring, groundless, letting-be in the face of death. With that in mind, what then remains is how are we challenged to live.

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol. 1, *The Will to Power as Art*, trans. David Farrell Krell, (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 41.

² Bret W. Davis, *Heidegger and the Will: On the Way to Gelassenheit* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 8.

³ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John MacQuarrie (New York: Harper Perennial (1962), 51/28.

⁴ Davis, *On the Way to Gelassenheit*, 27.

⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 58/34.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 120/87.

⁷ Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Vol. 1*, 100.

⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 229/184.

⁹ Martin Heidegger, "What are Poets for?," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 92.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹¹ Davis, *On the Way to Gelassenheit*, 149.

¹² *Ibid.*, 150.

¹³ Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, "Volume 3: The Will to Power as Knowledge and as Metaphysics," trans. Stambaugh, Krell, and Capuzzi, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1987), 57.

¹⁴ Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell, (London: Harper Perennial, 1993), 318.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 311.

¹⁶ Ibid., 312.

¹⁷ Ibid., 317.

¹⁸ Ibid., 320.

¹⁹ Hans Ruin, "Ge-stell: Enframing as the Essence of Technology," in *Martin Heidegger: Key Concepts*, ed. Bret W. Davis (Durham: Acumen, 2010), 183.

²⁰ Davis, *On the Way to Gelassenheit*, 173.

²¹ Heidegger, "Question Concerning Technology," 328.

²² Davis, *On the Way to Gelassenheit*, 181.

²³ Bret Davis, "Will and *Gelassenheit*", in *Martin Heidegger: Key Concepts*, ed. Bret Davis (Durham: Acumen, 2010), 175.

²⁴ Jonathan Dronsfield, "The Work of Art," in *Martin Heidegger: Key Concepts*, ed. Bret Davis (Durham: Acumen, 2010), 132.

²⁵ Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Harper Perennial, 1993), 166.

²⁶ Heidegger, "What are Poets For?," 118.

²⁷ Davis, *On the Way to Gelassenheit*, 284.

²⁸ Martin Heidegger, "The Essence of Truth," in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 196/150.

CHAPTER III

KANT, IMAGINATION, AND LIFE

Gelassenheit, as a response to modern willing, showed how humanity could direct itself towards awareness of its own death. As helpful as this might be to thinking through the will, it only accounts for one concern that stirs humanity. Beyond death, it is not controversial to claim that humans are also interested in life, in particular, our own lives and how they can be enriched. If we are to live as humans, meaning we take part in the assignment of values and find meaning in the world, we must have some awareness of our own lives as also having value. Finding meaning in life against a world that seems, at best, indifferent to human existence is not a new concern for philosophy, nor is it the first time that feelings of liveliness are suggested as a cornerstone for human edification against the natural world. Feelings of life were a point of focus for 19th Century philosophy coming out of Kant's *Third Critique*. Romanticists keyed into the invigoration of life to show the need for aesthetics and culture, holding that the advancement of the quality of human life was the goal of history and civilization. Not incidentally, this was also the age of philosophy that witnessed the greatest expansion of the role of the will in human activity – a tradition of the will stretching from Fichte, Schelling, and onto Hegel, a trajectory that eventually brought about Nietzsche's complete embrace of the will and Heidegger's subsequent attempts to rethink this aspect of human existence. Historically then, feelings of life and its enrichment are tied to the expansion of the will.

My project seeks to think backwards to Kant's *Third Critique* in an attempt to find a way of both thinking and feeling life that does not involve an expansion of the will to the size at which it appears after Kant. Doing so will require a reinvestigation of the *Third Critique*, not as an attempt to synthesize Kant's theoretical and practical philosophy, but as a work that displays an overall harmony between the two spheres of human activity whose goal is to find for humanity a place in the world, despite the apparent rift between our practical purposes and the realm of nature. What I will argue then is that feelings of life indicate an overarching harmony between the divergent theoretical and practical domains; and that very feeling that brings about an awareness of life can be felt and acted upon without the advancement of the will. Based on the introduction that Kant offers to his work on aesthetics and teleology, such an interpretation does not seem at odds with his intent. In fact, Kant's *Third Critique*, if offered as an attempt to bridge the theoretical and practical domains, can do so through feelings of life.

To demonstrate my central claim that a feeling of life is both vital to finding a place in the world for humanity and that this feeling can be achieved without an expansion of the will beyond its essential bounds will first require a brief explication of Kant's determinate judgments, both theoretical and practical. This will allow a background by which we can compare reflective judgments and aptly show how aesthetic reflective judgments do not seek to determine that which appears, but can still make claims whose value extends beyond mere subjectivity. During this discussion, the importance of the orientation of the faculties will come to the foreground, in particular

the activities of the imagination. It will be shown that the faculty of the imagination plays a key role in differentiating between judgments whose focus is determinate knowledge and reflective judgments that, in free play, open possibilities rather than determine objects of experience. Once the imagination emerges as an important feature of this investigation, the path lies open for the introduction of aesthetic ideas, which expand our concepts and offer the possibility of reflection on the supersensible. Finally, with the play of the imagination and aesthetic ideas in hand, we can begin to explicate how a feeling of life can emerge from aesthetic experience and how this feeling does not require the advancement of the will. Further, it will be demonstrated that this feeling does not reduce humanity to simply one living thing amongst others. Rather, this feeling of life and our interaction with the phenomena is distinctly human; and, through it humanity expands its ability to assign value beyond determinate concepts and the mechanical laws of nature. Pointing back to the introduction of this project, the ultimate goal is to show how our awareness of life points to a harmony between our practical needs and nature by grounding our judgments in the vehicle of life, the human body.

Kant's critical philosophy is ultimately directed toward finding the boundaries of what humans can know by way of our faculties and guided by our interests. For example, the *First Critique* attempts to illustrate the line at which our theoretical interest, interest in the world of experience, must stop should we wish to avoid falling into hopeless contradictions. These boundaries, as is shown by Gilles Deleuze's *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, are the result of an underlying orientation of our distinctly human faculties: the understanding, reason, and the imagination. Briefly defined, the

imagination provides a schema, or a reading of nature, that, save for particular circumstances which will be enumerated later, assists the functions of either the understanding or reason. The understanding is our ability to take representations given through the schema and place them under concepts, to group empirically divergent appearances under overarching categories. Reason is the faculty by which humanity can think ideas that are beyond experience, freedom and God being two prime examples. What is important to note is that whether the interest is theoretical, practical, or the kind of disinterested interest found in aesthetic judgments, each interest represents a distinct orientation of our faculties, which then bears upon human interaction with what appears. Attending to these configurations then becomes a vital aspect of this investigation because appearance in the theoretical interest will be distinct from what ought to be in the practical sense, and these two determinations are dissimilar to the kind of ideas suggested by reflective judgment. Therefore, time will be given to clearly examine these orientations before any further discussion.

Beginning with the *First Critique*, then, we will use judgments of the speculative interest, which yield knowledge, as the starting point. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant points to an old, yet philosophically relevant, problem between pure concepts of the understanding and empirical intuitions, namely that “pure concepts of the understanding... can never be encountered in any intuition.”¹ His concern here is no trifle; it is the possibility for application of the pure concepts of the understanding to our empirical apprehensions. Since the pure concepts of the understanding, as noted above, are not found in any empirical or sensible intuition, there must be some third thing

present in our dealings with the world in addition to our concepts and intuitions. Kant enumerates the role of this third player “which must stand in homogeneity with the category on one hand and the appearance on the other, and makes possible the application of the former to the latter.”² This third piece requisite for applying concept to intuition is what Kant will call the transcendental schema, which therefore introduces into this study the faculty of the imagination.

We cannot think of the schema as a mere ordering of sense data into an image that we can then interpret and apply concepts of the understanding. That would be a vast understatement of the schema’s function and the role of the imagination in determinate judgments. Kant writes, “The schema is in itself always only a product of the imagination; but since the synthesis of [the imagination] has as its aim... only the unity in the determination of sensibility, the schema is to be distinguished from an image.”³ Therefore, taking the synthesized manifold of intuition, the imagination, and only the imagination, *schematizes*, in which it takes the rules determined by these concepts and structures the particulars of our experience empirical objects to form a determinate nature that can be read, acting ultimately as a mediating force between the essentially inhomogeneous concepts and sensible intuitions. In short, according to Rudolf Makkreel, “The task of the imagination is to mediate between the conceptual universality and the empirical particularity of sensible intuition.”⁴ Here we see the basic structure of determinate judgments, with due interest in the role of the imagination as providing the schema and acting as a third player in the application of concepts to experience.

It might seem here that this is what we are looking for from the imagination in offering itself as a mediating power between what we bring to bear, namely the concepts of the understanding, with empirical objects. However, this would presuppose that the imagination can freely schematize without the legislation of the understanding lording over its activity, which is explicitly not the case. Left out from the above illustration is the feature of Kant's transcendental philosophy that presupposes differing orientations of three faculties, namely understanding, reason, and imagination. Knowledge is *legislative*, in that within judgments of the speculative interest, a faculty legislates. In terms of the will, speculative interest demonstrates the understanding's appropriation of not only the imagination, but of our access to empirical objects. We can see the will active in placing the appearance of nature under our own concepts, concepts that are not provided by the things themselves. In fact, in terms of the purely speculative interest there is no access we have to the things in nature without these concepts, making knowledge strictly determined before our full cognition of it. Deleuze, although not intentionally pointing to the kind of willfulness Heidegger sought to think through, offers some clarification on my point in stating that the understanding, "constitutes the laws to which all phenomena are subject from the point of view of their form."⁵ These forms are concepts and are brought to bear on sensible intuition as a matter of fact in human cognition. While the imagination is the only faculty capable of schematization, of mediating between objective concepts and empirical objects, it only does so "only when the understanding presides, or has legislative power."⁶ While the imagination schematizes, as it has been explained thus far has only been under the legislation of the

understanding, in which appropriates experience under a determinate concept in the service of knowledge.

If theoretical interest is willful in that it subsumes empirical intuitions under concepts brought to experience by our distinctly human faculties, perhaps practical interest, whose interest cannot represent phenomena at all, can demonstrate a slowing of the will. Practical reason gives us ethical dictums that compel us to treat humanity as an end in itself, to not think of other humans in terms of their use. So far, this is promising in that it seems to stem our will's inclination to reduce other rational beings; however, where pure reason presided over empirical intuitions, Deleuze states, "Practical reason legislates over the thing in itself."⁷ There is still a faculty that applies its own laws to an external world, this time it is reason legislating over the noumenal realm. Unlike speculative reason, where the will stamps itself upon representations, practical reason represents an autonomous will that seeks to exemplify itself by bringing its laws to bear upon nature itself. The problem, however, is that nature appears to be guided by its own laws. Hence, the will's need for free and rational beings to bring reason's supersensible laws to the sensuous world. With contradictions looming, we can once again turn to a point made by Deleuze. He writes, "The practical interest is such that the relation of the representation to an object does not form a piece of knowledge, but designates something to be realized."⁸ The will seeks to realize itself as a possibility in the sensible world and thereby drives the legislation of the laws of reason. As we can see with Kant's ultimate illustration of the will, the 'Kingdom of Ends,' where all is in

accord with the will and nature's influence upon humanity is brought to heel, marching lock step with reason's lawfulness.

As intriguing, and perhaps tantalizing, as this prospect may be, we may exploit the benefit of history to see why solving the problematic of the will requires stepping back to Kant's critical system. Philosophers thinking after Kant took the will exemplifying itself in the practical interest and thought it through to its end, where the task of humanity was to bring the will as shown in the laws of practical reason to bear upon the natural world. This resulted in a primacy of the practical interest over our theoretical pursuits, where nature began to be for the sake of human law and eventually human value in accord with the will. As we will see in Chapter III, the terminus for this line of thought is Nietzsche's final collapse of the divide between theoretical and practical interest, claiming that all meaning is practical and all values are determined in reference to human use. This is precisely what Heidegger sought to think through; therefore, we cannot turn to practical reason as a basis for thinking non-willingly.

Keeping in mind the goal of showing how Kant's critical philosophy can offer a non-willing orientation towards life, our faculties' orientation in the speculative interest yields knowledge of the mechanics of life while practical interest leads to a primacy of the human will over nature. Knowledge, given in the first of these configurations brings forward an understanding of life that is subject to calculation and the demands of mechanical laws, since our encounter with living things in this manner would be schematized and subsumed under a concept of the understanding. Giving way to the will, however, results in the dominance of the practical over nature, which is no closer to

solving the problem than thinking in terms of mechanical nature. What theoretical and practical orientations have in common is that the imagination was under legislation by one of the other two faculties. Moving forward, then, we will see that subsuming the imagination under either the understanding in the speculative interest or reason in the practical interest are not the only ways the faculties can interact. What this implies is that not all human actions are guided by the legislative orientation of our faculties and we can exist in the world beyond mere determining judgments. The full description of such an existence is the next turn in this study.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the role of the imagination as a mediating force was done only at the behest of the understanding, which applied the schemata provided by the imagination under a concept in the interest of knowledge. In the practical interest, we saw legislative reason as the will exemplifying itself in rational beings. Moving to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, the imagination is found to have a significantly different orientation toward the faculties of understanding and reason. Whereas in the *First Critique* the imagination was given the sole task of schematization, Kant suggests this new activity of the imagination by distinguishing its activity judgments of the beautiful when he writes, “No concept of any end for which the manifold should serve the given object... the imagination, which is as it were at play in the observation of the shape, would merely be restricted.”⁹ It is evident here that a very different relationship between the imagination and understanding exists in the judgments covered in the *Third Critique*, one that fits Kant’s above description in terms of play. Without the imagination subsumed under either the understanding or reason, we can look for an

orientation between the transcendental faculties that is not determinate in judging, but rather a free and harmonious accord between them. We can find this harmony in aesthetic judgments of which Kant notes, “no concept... can determine the judgment of taste, because it is an aesthetic judgment... which thus does not concern any **concept**.”¹⁰ Recall that in judgments of knowledge, the understanding subsumed the imagination to apply an objective concept to the synthesized manifold. However, in judgments of the beautiful, the purposiveness is not objective, like an empirical aesthetic judgment where the object is pleasing to the senses; rather, it is subjective where the viewer delights in its existence, but such delight cannot be attributed to either our senses or some determinate property of the object. By finding no concept to attribute to our judgment of taste, the understanding finds itself unable to legislate a rule. Indeed, there is no law to be found at all making an experience of this kind something quite different from what we have discussed earlier.

Encountering a situation where our powers of cognition, namely the imagination and understanding, cannot fall into their usual orientation and form cognitions excites in them something novel. Kant marks this distinction by saying, “The powers of cognition that are set into play by this representation are hereby in a *free play*, since no determinate concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition.”¹¹ By suggesting that there is an orientation of the faculties that does not result in determinate knowledge of nature or our practical duty, Kant is opening the way for something indeterminate, perhaps interpretation, in his critical system, but something that we *feel* rather than know in some determinate fashion. Free play suggests the possibility of more present in our

dealings with representations than the laws and concepts of the understanding can legislate. Otherwise, there would be no phenomena that slips free of all concepts of the understanding and unfetters the imagination in this manner. Moving forward, therefore, it will be key to keep in mind that thinking beyond the established bounds of reason and the understanding is brought about by feelings and not objective determinations. Hence, the turn to aesthetic judgments, which allow for reflection on these feelings, rather than reliance on simply our speculative and practical interest.

The question may arise as to whether the kind of judgment just offered is really entirely different from determinate judgments of reason or the understanding. After all, it could be claimed that in aesthetic judgments, we simply trade one legislator for another; where understanding and reason has their legislative turn, now the imagination takes its seat at the top of the orientation and casts its laws down upon the other two faculties. However, to make such a claim is to fail to understand exactly what Kant means by an *aesthetic* judgment. He makes explicitly clear the determining ground for aesthetic judgments of taste when he writes, “Now if the determining ground of the judgment... is to be conceived of merely subjectively... it can be nothing other than the state of mind that is encountered.”¹² The determining ground, then, for an aesthetic judgment of this kind is not any concept or law of the imagination, if such things could exist. Rather, it is a feeling produced by the activities of our faculties. This is key to removing the legislative aspect from our judgments that determines them for this or that purpose. Aesthetic judgments are indeterminate in that no law is applied and subjective in that their grounding is based on our feeling, rather than a property of the object. We

now see how these judgments are quite different from those described in the *First Critique*. A judgment of beauty, as stated by Deleuze, “does not represent an objective accord of the faculties... but a pure subjective harmony where imagination and understanding are exercised spontaneously, each on its own account.”¹³ Therefore, the suggestion that judgments of taste can be distinguished merely in terms of which faculty legislates is wholly incorrect. What we have is a radically different kind of judgment, whose key features are subjectivity and indeterminacy, key features that are owed to the unique free harmony that occurs between the faculties of representation, the imagination and the understanding. Harmonious and free play is what then leads Makkreel to claim, “The subjective agreement between the imagination and the understanding in an aesthetic judgment is not based on subordination of one to the other, but involves the free coordination and mutual play of the two faculties.”¹⁴ We will then continue to fully explore the results of this harmony in relation to the experience and feeling of life in the world.

So, at the root of our feelings of aesthetic pleasure there is harmonious play between our faculties, which is not otherwise present in cognition. As its basis then, aesthetic pleasure and play rest on an accord between faculties. Kant claims as much in his description of pleasure in a judgment of taste as resulting from “a free play, since no determinate concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition.”¹⁵ The understanding is unable to determine a concept; however, as we have noted, this is not to say that the imagination then moves to legislate over the understanding. Aesthetic judgments are subjective, based on feeling, and therefore cannot involve the use of objective laws.

Perhaps this contrast between the determining interaction and that of free play is best shown in Makkreel's statement, "the play of the imagination and the understanding is one of 'accord' or 'attunement.'"¹⁶ Contrast the depiction of a free accord with subjection under law and we begin to see the room which free play affords our judgments.

However, the question remains as to how the accord or attunement of imagination and understanding can be enumerated and what these particular aspects of the imagination action in free play effect the freedom and indeterminacy of our judgments. Kant is clear on four distinguishing traits that shape aesthetic judgments of this type. First, "**Taste** is the faculty for judging an object or a kind of representation through a satisfaction... **without any interest.**"¹⁷ Earlier, it was noted how judgments of knowledge or morality subsume the activity of the imagination under their law. This configuration of the imagination under reason in practical judgments and the understanding in theoretical judgments was done in the practical and theoretical *interest*, respectively. Since judgments of taste are *disinterested*, we can claim that no such legislation occurs and the imagination is released into its own free and spontaneous play. Second, though judgments of taste are said to please universally, and are therefore not claims of mere sensuous pleasure, "The universality of the satisfaction is represented... only as subjective."¹⁸ This claim upon judgments of taste, in addition to Kant's third statement on them, that "no concept of the good, can determine the judgment of taste," show that the purposiveness of the beautiful cannot be directed at an object, or a particular property within the object.¹⁹ In making a judgment of taste, then,

we make no claim upon the object in the world, but rather about ourselves in terms of the pleasure we feel in the form of imagination's free play. The fourth demand of subjective validity indicates that pleasure is not merely individual to the subject, but points to a larger union between subjects. This unifying aspect of aesthetic judgment is something all subjects share – involvement in human life – and point humanity toward a special way of reflecting upon being alive.

Exactly why feelings of life are a consequence of free and spontaneous play between the imagination and the understanding goes back to the functions of each faculty. Recall that in judgments of the speculative interest, the imagination acted as a mediator between sensuous experience and the concepts through schematization. Under the legislation of the understanding, the imagination seeks to give the concepts an objective meaning. As Makkreel explains, “the schemata realize the categorical forms by anticipating possible objects of experience while at the same time they restrict them by selecting what type of empirical concepts are eligible to be applied to such objects.”²⁰ Using this as a template, we can then take this set of actions and apply them in the light of free play. What is lost in reflective judgments is the definite category by which to apply to the object of experience. In the *First Critique*, the imagination would apply a concept and provide a reading of the experience for our speculative interest, or in the interest of knowledge. Now, however, there is no concept to provide a determined reading and no interest to which that reading must submit. The imagination in aesthetic judgments, because of its freedom from concepts is able to play with the possibilities that would otherwise be cast off in providing a reading for the theoretical and practical

interest. But, because the imagination is not itself capable of forming its own laws, it still conforms to the laws of the understanding, but does so without being subsumed by the understanding. Therefore, “the ‘free conformity’ of the aesthetic imagination to the laws of the understanding means that the imagination may not violate the categorical framework of the understanding, although it may explicate possibilities left open by that framework.”²¹ Here we have an illustration of free play where the understanding provides the rules of engagement between ourselves and the objects that slip from determinate cognition. The understanding offers a horizon of what could possibly appear, but there is no guarantee what will appear within the bounds of reality. Pleasure, then, is our imagination playing within these bounds and what is revealed may surprise us or instill a sense of wonderment. No matter the outcome, for outcomes are exactly what do not matter in these events, what is expressed is beyond the mere object of experience. As Makkreel notes, “This abundance of undeveloped material associated with a concept is the intuitive content that can no longer be subsumed under the concept,” a statement that indicates there is content beyond our pure empirical existence.²² These expressions that transcend the empirical object and are at play for the imagination are *aesthetic ideas*, an abundance of meaning that cannot be captured by normal, empirical cognition.

Looking at life beyond the mechanism given by nature, we see imagination’s free play capable of moving our conception of life away from the merely mechanical processes that are revealed in determinate judgments of nature. Reflection on transcendental ideas distinguishes our encounter with feelings of life from knowledge of

life in that we can, and indeed ought to, look beyond simply the actions and mechanics of our own lives to feel enlivened. The spontaneous play of the imagination and understanding open new corridors by which the human in the world can experience life. This is done because aesthetic judgments, as it has been demonstrated, are not based on an objective property of the represented object, but our own feelings produced in our interactions with it. Furthermore, because no concept or law can be applied to the object of aesthetic taste, we are left to reflect on and not determine the purpose of the beautiful thing itself. Therefore, to utilize a particularly Kantian example, even though the purely mechanical processes of crystalline formations has objectively nothing to do with human experience on earth, its simple existence as something beautiful to be encountered suggests that there is more to it than that which can be determined by our speculative investigations. The 'more' here is suggestive of aesthetic ideas because the 'more' must come from a part of our existence that transcends sense.

Life beyond mechanism is an aesthetic idea; however, Kant introduces aesthetic ideas as suggestive of a way between the practical and theoretical domains. If feelings of life beyond natural laws can be thought with this goal in mind, it is important then to see how aesthetic ideas in general are to serve as bridge. Beginning with the phenomenology of aesthetic ideas, Kant states that an aesthetic idea is a "representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e., **concept**, to be adequate to it... or can make intelligible."²³ What is immediately striking about the experience that brings about our thought of aesthetic ideas is that it causes us to think, but not at all in a manner that displays any

kind of speculative interest. The feeling of free play that causes reflection on aesthetic ideas simply halts our cognition of the world, leaving only an abundance of thought for the human to indeterminately hold. This reflective hold that the aesthetic ideas have on us is a result of the indeterminate free play of the imagination. Now, not only can we envision the play of the transcendental faculties in reflective judgments, but also the thoughtfulness carried in aesthetic ideas and their effect on human experience offers a phenomenological weight to Kantian aesthetics, a tug that Kant himself must have been aware. The play of faculties as lively experience by way of aesthetic ideas suggests that the ideas of reason can be brought down from on high and allowed into worldly human life without antimony.

However, Kant is not so eager to unfetter our aesthetic experience from objective concepts either. Rather than offer aesthetic ideas as something completely separate from objective concepts, Kant's aesthetics remains coherent in terms of his whole critical system by keeping the apparently divergent fields of cognition and ideas that, by definition, are not suitable to any experience in relation to each other. Evidence of the holistic system can be found in that Kant makes explicit that the imagination, which supplies aesthetic ideas, is not a creative power unto itself. In short, no matter how much thought is occasioned by reflective judgments, there is no creation *ex nihilo*. Instead, as Makkreel points out, "the imagination is still seen to be working with the material supplied by nature."²⁴ The imagination, no matter its power, is still reliant on the senses for the material of its activities. However, instead of determining the sense material in terms of a definite concept, the spontaneous imagination and aesthetic ideas occasion the

play of possibilities within the bounds of that material. Therefore, we can see aesthetic ideas as not a creative force within the worldly human, but rather as a transformative force in the face of the over abundance of meaning.¹¹

The transformative aspect of the imagination, indelibly linked to the concepts of the understanding,¹² can now be seen in their effect upon our transcendental concepts. Because aesthetic ideas express not a concept, but the possible content of an experience beyond the concept, they occasion the chance for us to compare the concepts of our understanding. Symbolism is the most obvious occurrence of comparing two concepts whose cognitive content are not related. Using an example from the *Third Critique*, we can look at the instance of Jupiter symbolized as an eagle carrying a lightening bolt. The concepts of eagle or lightening, in their objective content, have no relation with the idea of a god; however, looking beyond objective content allows us to reflect on the aesthetic attributes of the eagle and lightening bolt to draw a comparison between them as objects of experience and the essentially non-empirical god. Here appears a two-fold aspect of

¹¹ In *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant*, Makkreel draws a distinction between creative and transformative capabilities by contrasting *Urbildung* and *Umbildung*. *Urbildung* would be the purely novel use of the imagination that Kant is trying to avoid attributing to the power of the genius. Kant's own use of transformation (*bildung um*) further supports Makkreel's point of the claim that the imagination in aesthetic experience is transformative, which counters charges that the *Third Critique* is not coherent in terms of Kant's overall critical work.

¹² Ultimately, the question is settled by Kant's elevation of communicability over the work of the genius. The work of the imagination with aesthetic ideas must have sense experience as its material, the use of aesthetic ideas that lies closest to the understanding must be praised over those that seek to deceive it. Play of the imagination under free conformity to the laws of the understanding is the standard for artistic pursuits since it is neither determined nor completely cast off from our faculties of representation. If ex nihilo creativity can be done under the laws of the understanding at all, would require deception to form something completely new.

the transformative powers of aesthetic ideas. One, as seen with the case of symbolism, humanity is able to stretch concepts beyond objectivity through reflection.

Although, in addition to the extension, aesthetic ideas, to use Makkreel's words, "are suggestive in a way that shows the limits of these concepts."²⁵ Aesthetic ideas are an occasion for the human in the world to reflect upon intuitive content that goes beyond the concepts of the understanding. Understanding, then, is unable itself to provide concepts capable of encompassing all of our worldly experience. This is the vital role of aesthetic ideas in demonstrating more for life than simply the mechanical processes of nature. Our feeling of human life with a place in the world cannot be found simply in the concepts of the understanding. Rather, the role aesthetic ideas play is "to enliven what would otherwise be abstract rational ideas, i.e., make them meaningful in relation to experience."²⁶ Recall that the imagination, whether functioning in determinate or indeterminate judgments, always provides a reading of experience. What we are seeking in this investigation is a reading of experience that offers humanity a place in the world that is not mechanistic, but life affirming. Our concepts of the understanding, we have seen, are not up to the task of providing a reading that goes beyond theoretical nature. Humanity's hope for human life in the natural order then must be transcendent of nature. Indeed this is what Kant was trying to find in his moral project; and, it was this desire that brought about the *Third Critique* as an attempt to show how the moral realm can be brought to that of theoretical nature. Reflective judgments give us access to signs or hints, given via aesthetic ideas, that there is a side of humanity that transcends the mechanism of nature. But, it must be kept in mind that it is in nature itself that we find

occasions to access to these ideas. Therefore, the human cannot be severed from nature, even though our existence in the world contains something beyond its realm. Human life then requires we understand this tension between nature and our supersensible pull, and seek out its harmony in order to do as Kant intended and provide a bridge between the natural and practical realms.

Feeling enlivened is how we become aware of this tense harmony between nature and the supersensible because it both affirms our being part of nature and having access to something beyond experience. However, discussing pleasure and using our feeling of it as an anchor for humanity in the world is problematic simply because there are many ways we can receive this feeling, each with its own ground.¹³ The most obvious is sensuous pleasure, or the kind of gratification that humanity, as member of the animal kingdom, shares with other animals. While this is certainly subjective, it cannot be claimed as disinterested; and therefore, it is not free. On the other hand, satisfaction in the good is not a pleasure that is in the relationship of subject to object; rather, it involves the comparison of object to object. Pleasures of this kind are neither subjective as they are based on an objective concept, nor are they disinterested since the object's existence is required for its relation to occur among other objects. Rodolphe Gasché notes the particular nature of pleasures that are both disinterested and indeterminate in that they are “not merely an effect – an aesthetic manifestation of

¹³ Zeldin's essay, "Pleasure, Life, and Mother-Wit" provides clear distinctions of the various forms of possible pleasure in Kant's critical philosophy. Though there is one immediate divide, namely between aesthetic and intellectual (rational) pleasure, Zeldin further subdivides them into four distinct forms of pleasure: two forms of aesthetic pleasure (gratification and formal pleasure) and two intellectual pleasures (formal-intellectual satisfaction and moral).

awareness – it is intimately tied up with taste as a state of mind in which powers freely become attuned to one another...as pleasure itself.”²⁷ With this said, it can be seen that the pleasure is the free and harmonious attunement of our faculties, the very kind of play that suggests aesthetic ideas.

The final explication of the feeling of life that can bring awareness of human existence that is both beyond mechanism and yet still within nature relies on the pleasure that is both subjective, but in free conformity with the laws – that our finite, contingent, and *corporeal* human life in the world can freely conform to the moral law. Pleasure offers a glimpse that these two realms are connected in a meaningful way for humanity, in both the pleasure of the beautiful for a given particular, or the negative pleasure in the sublime. Our awareness of existence beyond mechanical laws is occasioned by the faculties’ harmonious accord without interest or concept. Therefore, the pleasure felt in our bodies resulting from this free play is not linked to anything sensuous or objective, rather our own mental movements, which, as we have discussed, are involved with providing a sensible interpretation of the ideas of reason, are the cause of the feeling of life we experience. Keeping in mind that the goal of the *Third Critique* is to find a way of feeling that the practical realm impacts the realm of theoretical nature, the site of this glimpsed awareness is the human body, alive in the world. Thus, to use Mary-Barbara Zeldin’s phrasing, we “can have no pleasure, no feeling of life, unless the mind is related to bodily organs”.²⁸ Any attempt to draw a feeling of life from our experience can only be done with due respect to our embodied state; otherwise, as stated by Kant, “life without the feeling of the corporeal organ is merely consciousness of one’s existence,

but not a feeling of well- or ill-being, i.e., the promotion or inhibition of the powers of life.”²⁹ Our relation to life is *aesthetic*, essentially tied to *feeling*. Consciousness of our existence does not satisfy reason’s need to find sensible suggestions of the supersensible in empirical experience. Consciousness of existence is nothing other than awareness of what we are empirically, a body existing in nature that is subject to mechanical laws. It is by way of the living human body in the world that the feeling of life makes possible the demands of reason that nature has a place for humanity not merely as a cog, so to speak, but as an end in itself.

One more objection arises with this reading of life in the *Third Critique*. Our pleasure, recall, must be disinterested; however, it seems as though our feeling of life is necessarily interested in the advancement of our own lives. Perhaps with a little added nuance the objection can be tempered to meet Kant’s criteria. Aesthetic judgments heighten the viewer’s awareness of their own life by suggesting that their existence transcends the merely mechanical and affords them the chance to find a place in the world without sacrificing the needs of reason. This phenomenon says nothing about the object that brought about the feeling of a fullness of life. Makkreel points to this feature when he writes, “While the disinterestedness of aesthetic pleasure involves an indifference to the existence of the object judged, it does not require me...to be indifferent to my own existence.”³⁰ Human existence, viewed aesthetically as part of *living* nature, cannot be fully placed under any concept. Thus, we are not interested in anything that has empirical objectivity. Instead, we are moved by an idea of reason suggested by our feelings and receptivity to the supersensible. This clarification can also

explain why our feeling of the furtherance of life cannot be reduced to mere biological survival. The continuance of our body and species is determinate and guided by the laws of nature. More pointedly, such a vocation for humanity does not offer an existence beyond the machine of nature. Rather, to clarify and dissolve the above objection, I suggest that our feeling of life is not one interested in its animal continuance, but in its distinctly human enrichment. Such a reading makes our feelings of life disinterested in the object, because we are looking toward our own fulfillment as humans, but it also keeps the judgment indeterminate since there is no law for the enrichment of life.

It has been my goal in Chapter III to offer a reading of Kant's *Third Critique* that answers the question of life left to us after disclosing problem of human value in the modern age. We are justified in using our faculty of reflective judgment to glean a view of human life that is not restricted merely to the laws of nature, which is all we would be offered in the theoretical interest. However, our reading of life is not simply generated *ex nihilo*, since even the free and harmonious play of our understanding is still subject to sensuous experience, thereby tying the aesthetic ideas that offer hints of reason impacting the natural world to the human body. Such a restriction is not to our detriment though, since we become aware of our supersensible faculties through pleasure in the beautiful and the negative pleasure of the sublime. Without the human body, we would only be capable of knowing that we exist, but find no delight in that fact. In short, the human body provides the opportunity for ideas of reason to make themselves visible as hints in nature, signs that are left for humanity to find in our encounters within the world. These signs as attributed to ideas of reason, which cannot without the aid of

human feelings have any sensible content, help in crossing the gulf that Kant indicates at the end of his critical system. Human life and our inherent interest in it provide the faculties for reading the ciphers of nature and allow us to make meaningful connections between the theoretical and practical realms – connections that eluded any form of determinate judgment, and left humanity severed from both nature and their practical vocation.

An awareness of life that does not determine nature in terms of our will but one that rather seeks to unify our inclinations toward the supersensible and undeniable existence as part of nature is what I wish to carry forward from this chapter. Aesthetic judgments, as offered by Kant's *Third Critique*, offer a smaller and more essential human will, one that is grounded in essential aspects of human existence rather than conditions of the modern age. Aesthetic judgments still contain interest, desire, and the capacity to think in terms of value; therefore, these judgments hold residues of the will. What will be vital in the next phase of this investigation is showing how this residual willing found in Kantian aesthetics is not only compatible with Heidegger's conception of *Gelassenheit*, but how it also allows for a more complete picture of human existence beyond the modern age. Should it find a place next to *Gelassenheit*'s releasement toward death, aesthetic feelings of life and its enrichment will allow for human value and meaning assignment to continue even after the expansive, technological will has been thought to its completion.

¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), A137.

² *Ibid.*, A138.

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- ³ Ibid., A140.
- ⁴ Rudolf Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant: The Hermeneutical Import of the Critique of Judgment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 30.
- ⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1984), 17.
- ⁶ Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, 18.
- ⁷ Ibid., 31.
- ⁸ Ibid., 44.
- ⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 5:230.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., 5:221.
- ¹¹ Ibid., 5:217. My emphasis added.
- ¹² Ibid., 5:217.
- ¹³ Deleuze, *Critical Philosophy*, 49.
- ¹⁴ Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant*, 47.
- ¹⁵ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 5:217.
- ¹⁶ Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant*, 61-62.
- ¹⁷ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 5:211.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., 5:213.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., 5:221.
- ²⁰ Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant*, 41.
- ²¹ Ibid., 47.
- ²² Ibid., 121.
- ²³ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 5:314.
- ²⁴ Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant*, 120.
- ²⁵ Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant*, 121.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 121.
- ²⁷ Rodolphe Gasché, "Transcendentality, in Play," in *Kant's Aesthetics*, ed. Herman Parret (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 305.
- ²⁸ Mary-Barbara Zeldin, "Pleasure, Life, and Mother-Wit," in *Freedom and the Critical Undertaking: Essays on Kant's Later Critiques*, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International), 125.
- ²⁹ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 5:278.
- ³⁰ Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant*, 92.

CHAPTER IV

LEBENSGELASSENHEIT AND THE UR-WILL

Up to this point in the investigation we have been able to trace Heidegger's work on the will following his initial disavowal of modern metaphysics in an attempt to find a more original way of being, namely one that allows things to appear undetermined by the will and modern technology. This more original way of being involves humanity twisting free from, yet not actively overcoming, our modern technological worldview that seeks to en-frame all beings in terms of their ability to be stored and used at the command of the modern subject. Although it has already been discussed, it is worth mentioning again that humanity, even when given over to rampant forgetfulness of the things themselves for the sake of their storage and use, cannot be completely appropriated by technology. This emphasizes the uniqueness of the human position as the only being capable of disclosing the being of beings. To put it briefly, humans are always at the site of the discovery of being. Humanity's essence in this respect fends off the inclination toward pessimism given Heidegger's bleak diagnosis of the age; in fact, Heidegger himself, even while claiming our epoch to be one of extreme forgetfulness of our own essence as the place where being is disclosed, holds that a move towards rehabilitation remains possible. *Gelassenheit*, existing neither passively nor actively, is the proper comportment towards things in the absence of meaning left after rejecting modern metaphysics in which humankind faces its own nonexistence, or its death. This move towards *Gelassenheit* is for Heidegger the 'new beginning' that will bring humanity back into accord with the things themselves.

As promising as this may sound we have seen that there are important questions that remain unanswered by the thoughts of later Heidegger. The question of particular concern relates back to the key focus point of this investigation – the relationship between humanity and nature in terms of value and meaning. Heidegger is ultimately unclear on the role we, as humans within the world, play in creating, holding, and finally discarding values attributed to beings we encounter. To aid in contending with this unanswered question, I brought forward aesthetic ideas as conceived by Kant in the *Third Critique*. Kant's aesthetics represents an indeterminate and non-conceptual manner in which the human in the world can interact and decipher meaning from nature without subjugating it to willful ordering or manipulation. Furthermore, while *Gelassenheit* in Heidegger's later thought is approached from humanity's encounter with our own death, the phenomenology of beauty as laid out by Kant focuses on feelings of liveliness and human invigoration. And so we have laid out the pieces of the fundamental (dis)attunement characteristic of our age as diagnosed by Heidegger, which he sought to realign in a 'new beginning' for humanity. At one pole there are the things themselves as encountered in nature, with which we are to engage, but whose meaning we are not to anticipate or cling. On the other end there is living humanity who essentially interacts with the things at the site of meaning and is also essentially forgetful of the original event of meaning giving. Any harmony to be struck between these poles will require accommodating both, yet never one to the detriment of the other.

Showing how life as seen from Kant's aesthetics provides an answer to the problem of human meaning and value left in the wake of *Gelassenheit* will require

revisiting the tradition beyond which Heidegger sought to think, namely one with firm roots in both Platonism and Nietzsche. Doing this will not only shed light upon why Heidegger missed the opportunity to utilize Kant's critical framework, in particular the features expressed in the *Third Critique*, but it will also fully reveal that the question of amenability and the accord between humanity and nature is one to be solved by looking at Heidegger's conception of the relation between art and truth. With the arena set up in such a manner, it will be possible to glimpse the problems of the will that remain even beyond the rejection of the will to power which stand in the way of fully illustrating the role of humanity comported with *Gelassenheit*. Only then can the previous enumeration of Kant's aesthetics come to the fore as a viable solution to our stated questions of finding meaning and harmony for humanity without the modern will. By the end of this chapter, it will be shown that the kind of accord that Heidegger looked for as a way to realign the (dis)attunement he saw in the modern era can be more fully depicted through the addition of indeterminate conceptions and invigorating feelings of Kantian aesthetics in relation to human interest in life set in relation to anxiety towards death in the face of our existential nonexistence. This harmony, which I will name *Lebensgelassenheit*, will adequately illustrate both the living aspect of human existence and the letting-be that humanity must achieve to free itself from the technological will.

Understanding why Heidegger perhaps could have, but ultimately did not, look to nonpurposive conceptual indeterminacy as an avenue to fully illustrate *Gelassenheit* has its roots deep in the tradition out of which he thought and hoped to think to its end, namely 'western metaphysics.' The boundary markers of such an amorphous

designation are naturally thorny and wrought with contention, but it suffices for this study to name where Heidegger figured them to be, since this sheds light on the tradition from which he thought himself to be twisting free. Heidegger makes it clear where western metaphysics ends by naming Nietzsche the last metaphysician with the claim that all metaphysics is will to power.¹⁴ Therefore, if we are to gain any insight as to the concerns that Heidegger himself may have had when attempting to formulate *Gelassenheit*, we will have to start at the end of metaphysics and its stance on life, art, and the accord between humanity and nature. As a launching point for further questioning into the tradition Heidegger sought to think through, let us look at a line penned by Nietzsche. It reads, “Very early in my life I took the question of the relation of *art to truth* seriously: and even now I stand in holy dread in the face of this discordance.”¹⁵ Western metaphysics at its end implies a discord between art and truth, one that apparently is enough to bring dread to anyone who takes it seriously. This is a significant statement in a number of ways. First, it clearly designates a noteworthy relationship between art and truth; rather than holding the two separate as distinct activities or means of comportment, they are held in necessary relation. Second, it ties this relationship back to the feeling of dread discussed earlier, which, as you may recall, is the feeling that leads to technological will to will and ultimately the ‘new beginning,’ as envisioned by Heidegger.

¹⁴ A more comprehensive and in-depth account of this can be found in Chapter II.

¹⁵ This line is taken from one of Nietzsche’s meditations. It is discussed in *Nietzsche*, Vol. 1, pg. 142.

Third, and perhaps most important for this investigation, is the claim that the relation between art and truth is one of discord. Allow me to take a moment and address a concern that may come to mind. Discord appears to be the opposite of accord. How then could a discordant relationship be helpful to our task of finding a harmonious place for humanity with nature? Simply put, discord and accord hold a far more essential relationship to each other than one of mere opposites. Heidegger also picks up on this difference when speaking of distance and discordance. He writes, “Discordance is the opening of a gap between two things that are severed.”¹ Certainly this does not mean that all distance is discord, as in there is no discord between the pens and books on my desk even though there is space between them. Rather, the important concept in the above description is severance, implying that where there was once unity or a form of being-togetherness, there is now a gap. Heidegger pushes this idea further when he states, “opposition springs from the divergence of what once converged...precisely by being apart they enter into the supreme of belonging together.”² So discordance is neither simply space nor is it a breaking apart of two things that were previously together. We would not say that a river has somehow sown discord by coursing between two hills. Instead, discord has the essential trait of revealing through separation and holding apart what was once together. With this in mind, it takes only a little thought to see how remarkably close discord and accord actually are in their essence. Nothing can be in accord with itself, nor can anything have discordance with itself. Such claims seem odd, or at the very least in need of clarification, which usually reveals a hidden duality.

Both accord and discord therefore hold related things at a distance; and, through this distance there is revelation.

One other important attribute of discordant and accordant relationships needs to be mentioned before further examination of art and truth can begin. Neither accord nor discord can occur when one side is subjugated or subordinated under the other.

Heidegger picks up on this facet of the relationship when he states, “any two things that are supposed to be able to enter into discordance must be balanced against one another, be... of the same necessity and rank.”³ Since we are looking to use Heidegger’s conception of *Gelassenheit* as a framework for a more complete accord between humanity and nature, this is a vital distinction to keep in mind. Any solution that is offered in response to the human role of value assignment in *Gelassenheit* must not be founded upon distinctions such as ‘above’ or ‘below,’ or any other tiered relationship that can be conceived. That is precisely what the ‘new beginning’ is trying to shed. Instead, the goal must be to bring the discord that Heidegger saw at the end of metaphysics into a harmonious relationship.

The qualities that make a relationship either discordant or accordant will come into play later in this chapter; however, it was necessary to set them out before hand in order to lay a clear path for inquiry. Returning to the particular discord with which Heidegger contended, the dreadful one Nietzsche saw between art and truth, it becomes clear that art and truth at the end of western metaphysics are more subtly related than previously thought. If they are in discord with each other, then the traditional conception of art as semblance of truth cannot be the entire story. Art as mere earthly semblance

would place it as subordinate or ‘below’ truth, which would preclude their association from any kind of discord. We are left with the task of rethinking the relationship between art and truth – the discord that Heidegger will seek to bring into proper attunement by renouncing western metaphysics as the will to will. Fully explicating how this relation can be brought into harmony will require a clear view into what Heidegger takes art and truth to be at the end of metaphysics and how his interpretation of these ideas taken from Nietzsche will ultimately lead to the center of this investigation – the problem of life and human value beyond the modern will.

It is important to note before looking further into the ideas of art, truth, and discord at the end of western metaphysics that this investigation’s scope is limited to Heidegger’s interpretation. This route was chosen because the reading of Nietzsche that Heidegger offers not only speaks to the problems that he sees himself in a position to solve; but also, the connections that Heidegger makes while thinking through the discord between art and truth impacts the solution at which he eventually arrives, *Gelassenheit*. More on this will certainly be said later; however, it was an important point to make before moving forward and picking through Heidegger’s thoughts on Nietzsche and western metaphysics as a whole.

Discussing the relationship between art and truth first requires that we set up what we mean when we speak of art and when we speak of truth. More to the point, we need to determine what Heidegger took Nietzsche to mean when he spoke of the discordance that never ceased to fill him with dread. With the relation of art and truth in mind, Heidegger takes Nietzsche to be working on a traditional connection in

philosophy, one between semblance (art) and objective knowledge (truth). He writes, “the relation of art and truth that is here in question, the one which arouses dread, must be conceived as the relation of art and scientific knowledge, and correlatively the relation of beauty and truth.”⁴ Here we can hear echoes of Platonism with knowledge and truth related to something super-sensuous, beyond the reach of our human condition. Below that ascendant realm sits the world of sense, in which art must necessarily operate as a facsimile, or to use the Greek term *mimesis*. This, however, cannot be the kind of relationship that Heidegger sought to bring into accord because, as we have already seen, this is not a discordant relationship; rather, it is simply one of distance. Nor can Platonism simply be turned on its head, so to speak, to achieve the kind of discord that can then be thought to attunement. Were such an inversion executed, “the sensuous becomes being proper, i.e., the true, i.e., truth. The true is the sensuous.”⁵ However, Nietzsche is neither a positivist, nor does Heidegger make this claim. The point here is that reaching a clear view of the problem requires far more than a simple overturning of the tradition. Rather, Heidegger’s thoughts on Nietzsche’s work involve thinking something more fundamental to both art and truth.

Looking to the first of the two discordant ideas, art, two important phrases can be taken from Heidegger’s lectures on Nietzsche. The first is in relation to value, wherein “art is the distinctive countermovement to nihilism.”⁶ Put in a manner that values brevity to the utmost, nihilism is the idea that all values are *meaningless*, which is not to be confused with the idea that all values are *groundless*. Since this investigation seeks to redeem life and human value beyond the modern will, any clear countermeasure against

nihilism is of immediate interest. If art is opposed to nihilism, then it must be engaged in value formation. Heidegger picks up on this essential feature of Nietzschean art and adapts the claim to his own lexicon when he writes, “art places the whole of Dasein in decision and keeps it there.”⁷ Being, because of an essential feature in art, is brought into question. A question of being is ultimately one of meaning and art opens the way for new values to be assigned. Notice, however, that art only brings beings into question, but does not answer, nor does it preserve answers. How then can simply an occasion for inquiry be the countermovement to nihilism? Simple, art makes nihilistic claims impossible. By occasioning the question of meaning, there then appears the possibility for value. With such possibilities at hand, there can be no claim that values are impossible. It is as Heidegger says, “the essence of the beautiful... makes possible the recovery and preservation of the view upon Being, which devolves from the most immediate fleeting appearances and which can easily vanish into oblivion.”⁸ Art and its related beauty permit reflection that is necessary for the kind of human value assignments that Nietzsche brings forward as a guard against nihilism in the absence of metaphysical value. Therefore, we can claim that art plays a central role in the formation of values in the metaphysics that Heidegger is trying to think through; and that is the reason we will keep our eyes on art as a possible solution to human meaning beyond *Gelassenheit*.

Art, as Heidegger’s lectures on Nietzsche tell us, is the ground for the question of human value. It holds us in a place of decision; however, for human action in terms of values and meaning, the creation of value is only part of the picture. To shed some light

on what Heidegger claims a complete picture of value formation looks like for modern metaphysics, we can return to a quote from Davis' work on the will. Davis writes, "the freedom of ek-sistence... is always complimented and countered by an in-sistence which holds fast to beings, turning its back on the opening which allows them to presence in the first place."⁹ Art then is responsible for bringing humanity to the place where values can be made; however, once those values are assigned, humankind has a tendency to hold onto them, to insist, and forget the original occasion that made such a value possible. This occasion for creation and subsequent forgetting and holding-onto action makes up the value formation action that Heidegger describes in the work of Nietzsche. What remains then is to reveal what this existential holding-onto is for modern metaphysics. Answering that question is as simple as looking back to the discordance that since his youth had filled Nietzsche with dread, the discord between art and truth.

Naturally, talk of truth in philosophy is a tangled web on the best of days; however, some explication as to what Heidegger means by truth in his Nietzsche lectures would be invaluable going forward. Looking to a few lines where Heidegger himself works through an explanation of truth, we can begin to see a few things about the second side of the discordant relationship. He poses the question, "What does 'in truth' mean here? Answer: what is in truth known."¹⁰ Immediately the familiar link between truth and knowledge comes into play given Heidegger's answer. Then, he goes on to further demonstrate this connection by adding, "The true is established as something true in, by, and for knowledge alone. Truth is proper to the realm of knowledge."¹¹ It is of no small help to remind ourselves that knowledge and truth, by

virtue of the relation onto which Heidegger will hold, in western metaphysics are given the venerable distinction as being what something *is* in *actuality*. Furthermore, as Heidegger notes, “the openedness of Being, truth, can only be nonsensuous illumination, since... Being is nonsensuous.”¹² With such claims in mind, we can begin to move toward a more complete description of metaphysical truth as envisioned by Heidegger. If truth is what something is, and knowledge of such things belongs to an unchanging realm that transcends human sensuous existence, then truth, once grasped as knowledge, is incapable of change. A thing’s true Being cannot change in such a manner. To sum up truth in this manner Heidegger writes, “what is true... signifies what is re-presented as constant, what has been fixated as being.”¹³ Keeping in mind the essence of art in the twilight of modern metaphysics, the opening for the creation of value, not only does the role of truth become clear, but also the nature of its discord with art. Truth fixes values as metaphysical constants given over from being that is beyond human sense. Therefore, truth as knowledge of Being, allows humanity to grasp, hold onto, and finally carry meaning into all other interactions with the things, thereby affecting the structure of the world.

Having laid out art and truth in their relation to human meaning and value assignment, how the two are in a discordant relationship comes into view. Rather than taking the traditional stance of truth overriding anything contrary that may be revealed by art, Heidegger’s Nietzsche places both the creation of value and the holding of those values on an equal metaphysical level. Both arrive at the site of the unfolding of being, art with the aim to occasion new meaning and truth with an arsenal of preserved

knowledge. Here is where the relation is most originary; and here is where art and truth come into a discordant opposition. Both have a claim to the assertion of value. Whether to create or preserve becomes the fundamental question of the relationship. Such a weighty question is brought into the light if we follow one more line of inquiry – the role of life in Heidegger’s reading of Nietzsche.

According to Heidegger’s reading of Nietzsche, art and truth are in discord at the site of value formation; however, given all of this discussion about values at the end of metaphysics, it would be well advised to clarify exactly what Heidegger takes Nietzsche to mean when he speaks of ‘value.’ Thankfully, and perhaps a little surprisingly, Heidegger is very forthcoming on the question. In his lectures on Nietzsche he states, “Value for Nietzsche means a condition of life, a condition of life’s being ‘alive’.”¹⁴ Value then is indelibly linked to an essential feature of life, namely its being alive. However, it is important to note that the Nietzschean use of ‘alive’ is not to be taken in a biological sense, which would indicate something akin to all value being for the sake of our survival; instead, value plays a more nuanced role in conditioning life as suggested by Heidegger’s subsequent claim, “As a condition of life, value must therefore be thought as that which supports, furthers, and awakens the *enhancement* of life.”¹⁵ Meanings formed by art and held by truth are not to be conceived as merely autonomous and competing functions of the subject. They are in fact directed in the service of life and its enhancement, not simple preservation.

There does not appear to be any kind of discord if both art and truth are working in the service of life as providing and preserving values for its enhancement. Discord

arises when the human faces the world of things lacking inherent values of their own. Two familiar terms rise to the surface when speaking about encountering the things and having to form value from meaninglessness – chaos and schema. Chaos, we can recall from Chapter II, is the existential abyss that is encountered when values given over to us by morals, traditions, and the like are examined and fall away. Either values are then created as a ground or humanity is left to float in the inherent lack of meaning. Schema, on the other hand, takes the rules given to us by concepts and applies them to the sensuous data we encounter within the world and provides the human subject a decipherable reading. Or, as Heidegger points out, “Schematizing is discussed as imposing a certain measure of ‘regularity’ and certain ‘forms’.”¹⁶ Ultimately, it is a kind of mediator between concepts and our senses. This chaos is essential for Nietzsche, not to mention all existential philosophy. However, the problem materializes precisely because truth as knowledge demands a schema; otherwise, it could not hold onto meaning in the absence of any kind of regularity or form. Therefore, we are led to the discord in terms of life due to the practical need to schematize chaos. Heidegger writes, “Nietzsche’s view...implies at the same time the emergence of the abyss of ‘life,’ of life’s essential contradictions, not as...something to be negated, but as what is to be affirmed.”¹⁷ Knowledge cannot affirm contradictions, as evidenced by the most basic rules of our logic; however, life has a demand to affirm them. Yet, knowledge has become the primary arbiter of what is actual, despite being unable to answer to the demands that, according to Heidegger, Nietzsche claims of life. Art as the maker of value has no such difficulties, but is denied its place because of the emphasis on truth as

knowledge of the unchangeable and knowledge as fixed meaning. Thus, the discordant relationship that Heidegger sees Nietzsche diagnose, and a discord that has definite roots in the subjective will to will.

With the evaluative roles of art and truth set out in such a manner and life defined in its capacity for enhancement, it becomes apparent as to why Heidegger, in his work on thinking through the technological modern will to will, saw the Nietzschean conception of life as something to be rejected. In it we see the two primary actions of the subjective will at work in the world. Art would be the reaching out and grasping of meaning, while truth as knowledge holds and solidifies meaning. Even with this in mind, it is not the goal of this study to suggest that either of these activities should be halted; rather, working through Heidegger's thoughts on the 'last metaphysician' brings to the fore why he perhaps overlooked modern philosophies of life. After all, it is his stance that metaphysics led to this conception of life as enhancement that needs to be thought through should humanity hope to find a way back to non-technological thinking.

Two relationships dealing with humanity and meaning seem to emerge at the forefront of our concerns with life, values, and non-willing. Imminently clear is the link between the worldly human and the encountered things. This is the supposed site of value formation and is worth thinking through once more given the previous elucidation on Heidegger's views of the end of metaphysics. The second relationship, however, is subtler, and all the more important for that reason – the enduring pull that humanity feels toward the supersensible. In the face of modern metaphysics, Heidegger sought to reorient humanity in terms of our encounters with things in the world, finally offering

Gelassenheit as an attentive, yet non-expectant, way of comportment in which things could show themselves to us. Heidegger took supersensible truth, the kind endemic to western metaphysics, as seen from his lectures on Nietzsche, to be the source of knowledge calcification, the hardening of values as ‘truth.’ This calcification caused human values to become unresponsive to our dealings with the world; further, it forced the things-in-the-world to conform to our obdurate calculations. Modern technological thinking was only the natural move from such an orientation. Therefore, we can understand why Heidegger, to unyoke humanity from this kind of thinking, retreated from our attachment to the supersensible. However, this move, as sympathetic as we may find ourselves to be towards it, was heavy-handed in its treatment. Keep in mind that none of this is to call for a return to the supersensible as envisioned by Heidegger’s Nietzsche; rather, what is needed is a reorientation between humanity and the realm beyond our senses. Remarkably, however, this does not require any more of an overhaul of contemporary thought than what Heidegger himself trumpets in his later works. The necessary rehabilitation of humanity’s connection with the supersensible is, as I will now demonstrate, already available in Kant’s aesthetics.

For Kant there are two spheres that lie outside of our empirical existence, making any claim of reorientation toward the supersensible a two-part project. First, there are the things themselves to which we have no experiential access, the objects of theoretical knowledge. Second, there is the supersensible in terms of our practical vocation, namely the ideas of freedom as offered by reason. As indicated in the Introduction to his *Third Critique*, Kant holds that text’s value to be in its ability to provide some way of

traversing the gap between the two realms that our experience cannot grasp. What Kant offers in *Critique of the Power of Judgment* is a double reconfiguration of the relationship between, on one hand, humanity and the things come across in nature, and a second realignment in terms of the connection between humans and our feelings of the supersensible. Both, are not only amicable to Heidegger's goal of thinking through and ultimately twisting free from modern technological thinking, but also aid in the completion of a human place within the world beyond the will.

Beginning with humanity and the things encountered in the world, it must be shown that the relationship given in Kantian aesthetics is not one where meaning is assigned to the object as 'truth' to be preserved in all future activities with that thing and things of its ilk. Such an interaction is obviously the kind that characterizes modern technological thinking and is therefore to be avoided. An immediate answer comes to mind as to how Kant's aesthetic judgments avoid this particular designation. In the First Introduction of the *Third Critique*, Kant writes, "By the designation 'aesthetic judgment about an object' ... what is understood in the judgment is not the determination of the object but the subject and its feeling."¹⁸ Aesthetic judgments make no truth claim upon the object; and thus, there is nothing onto which humanity can hold and carry beyond and into future experience. Instead, what the human has from a judgment of this kind is a feeling of pleasure in relation to that one, individual, object in the world. More important to human life is a feature of aesthetic pleasure enumerated by Makkreel. He explains, "Aesthetic pleasure heightens the sense of my existence, furthers my feeling of being alive, and is therefore significant. While... aesthetic pleasure involves an

indifference to the existence of the object judged, it does not require me, the judging subject, to be indifferent to my own existence.”¹⁹ Here, we see the emphasis shift from a true proposition about object to the life and enlivening feeling of the judging subject. What is carried forward after such an encounter is not knowledge of a property of the object, which Kant makes explicitly clear; instead, it is a feeling of invigoration that a human feels in relation to his or her own existence.

There emerges no practical demand to schematize the feelings of life into something fixed and enduring, as Heidegger suggests of metaphysics in his Nietzsche lectures. Oddly enough, the only imperative that exists in aesthetic judgments is not between human and object, but between human and human, evidenced by Kant’s claim, “if he [or she] pronounces something is beautiful, then he [or she] expects the very same satisfaction of others.”²⁰ Here we can first see the first reconfiguration that Kant’s aesthetics engenders, that the claims of aesthetic judgments are not truth claims imposed upon objects by a value-assigning subject. The individual crystal formation, to use Kant’s example, does not solidify in terms of value because nothing ‘true’ has been claimed about it itself. What there is, however, is an empirically disinterested encounter with an individual object, followed by a feeling of life’s quickening, and finally an imperative *between humans themselves* that can be carried forward from the experience.

Before moving on, I would like to call to attention the claims made in the Nietzsche lectures in terms of schema and the role of the imagination in aesthetic judgments. Recall that truth as retainable knowledge of things demands order and stability be ‘stamped’ upon the ‘chaos,’ otherwise described as what we encounter or

what first comes forward in our dealings with the world. The action of knowledge leaving its stamp is given the evocative designation of ‘schematizing,’ and not without historic and conceptual consideration for that particular word. As offered by the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the faculty of imagination is responsible for schematizing, or providing a reading, of the empirical world that can then be brought under concepts. In judgments of either theoretical or practical interest, the imagination is subsumed under the understanding or reason respectively, allowing for legislation by the dominant faculty. Given the schematizing role of the imagination in Kant’s first two critiques, it is not surprising that Heidegger’s Nietzsche, collapsing the theoretical and practical divide altogether, will claim, “practical behavior, the *praxis* of life... is the attitude from which the knowing mode of behavior arises and is determined.”²¹ This claims imagination’s work of providing a schema for encountered things always serves the practical interest and is directed at bringing the ideas of reason into nature. Certainly there is an inherent argument here between Kant and Nietzsche over the collapse of the practical and theoretical divide which makes all interest practical in its aftermath; however, even in lieu of resolving such a debate, a rather critical point can be brought forward. Yes, only the imagination can provide a schema; but the imagination does not only schematize under the legislation of another faculty – it can also play. Deleuze’s piece on the faculties of critical philosophy tells us that in beautiful judgments there, “is an accord between the imagination as free and understanding as indeterminate.”²² There is then an alternative orientation between the schematizing imagination, reason, and understanding

that is not accounted for in Heidegger's lectures on Nietzsche, the one brought forward in aesthetic judgments.

Remarkably, for all the space given to the discussion of life at the twilight of modern metaphysics and the use of terms that are indicative to Kant's critical philosophy, Kantian aesthetic judgments are not considered as a counter argument to the conception of life as will to power and ultimately will to will. It is not as though aesthetic pleasure and feelings of life are presented in a disjointed manner, as the two are indelibly linked in the *Third Critique*. Makkreel points emphasizes the bond between life and aesthetic feelings with his statements, "The play of the imagination in the judgment of beauty serves to intensify the activity of our mental life in general;" further, he writes, "Aesthetic harmony is the feeling of life at its purest."²³ Despite perhaps being overlooked, there can be little doubt as to the importance of aesthetic pleasure and the imagination to our feelings of human life. Yet, life, as taken by Heidegger at the end of western metaphysics, is the discordant creation of values through art and truth clinging to meaning through the stabilization of the encountered chaos. Heidegger, in thinking through this modern willing toward *Gelassenheit*, sees both the creation and holding of value as essential to the technological worldview.

We have already seen how aesthetic judgments are different from claims of truth in that they are individual and do not demand other objects of its kind to conform to our claims. What then of art and its ability to pull new meaning from the chaos? Kant only discusses aesthetic imagination in terms of its creative power in the form of genius; however, the powers that Kant assigns to the genius are exceptionally limited. On the

source of the artist's power to create value, Kant writes, "the author of a product that he owes to his genius does not know himself how the ideas for it came to him, and also does not have it in his power to think up such things at will or according to plan."²⁴ In short, genius' creative power is limited to representing ideas given over by nature, thereby making the artist a cipher of value, far from a creator in the effect that Heidegger finds in Nietzsche. What this limitation shows is that the values gleaned from our reflections on beauty are not related to value in the *ex nihilo* manner suggested by the Nietzsche lectures. Instead, human values arising from beauty are the result of reflection. Makkreel describes the ideas that humanity gleans from reflective judgments of this kind, claiming that they are "not rigidly prescribed by reason but are adaptive to the content of their subject matter. They provide no a priori determinant rules for interpretation, but indeterminate guidelines."²⁵ Aesthetic pleasures that engender feelings that enliven humanity are tied to neither the radical creation of value nor the solidifying of meaning against the surge of chaos. Instead, human invigoration comes from reflection and the play of possibility when encountering beautiful objects. This is the reorientation between human and encountered object that the *Third Critique* offers. Human interest in life can be redefined in terms of our own imaginative reflective play with objects. Reconfiguring the interaction of humanity and things-in-the-world in this manner escapes the criticisms that Heidegger levies against modern technological willing and allows for the worldly human to still play a role in value-formation. Our relationship becomes one of possibilities that enliven interest in life and encourage

humanity to interact with the world aesthetically, not in the interest of knowledge or securing ourselves against the chaos, but rather for the simple pleasure it evokes.

The lively and imaginative play of possibilities that reflective judgments offer to humanity point to a more fundamental harmony that Heidegger views as discordant in our modern epoch. Here I speak of the simultaneous pull that humankind feels towards the sensible and the supersensible. In his lectures on Nietzsche, Heidegger traces the history of western metaphysics under the arching theme of supersensible superiority in terms of truth; further, Heidegger formulates the end of metaphysics by diagramming Nietzsche's reversal of this hierarchy, claiming that all metaphysical, or non-sensuous, value is derived from practical use in the sensible realm. It is a tidy picture to be sure; but the question remains as to whether or not the Kantian harmony, which places humanity between the unknowable things themselves and the supersensible ideas of reason, truly fits the broad Heideggerian description of western metaphysics. The *Third Critique* does contain Kant's key statement that, "the latter [freedom as the supersensible] **should** have influence on the former [nature as sensible], namely the concept of freedom should make the end that is imposed by its laws real in the sensible world."²⁶ Although this claim appears to suggest a supersensible hegemony the like of which Heidegger wants to eventually reject in humanity's 'new beginning' free from the will, upon closer analysis, the relation between the supersensible and nature can be harmonized in a way distinct from the tradition of willful western metaphysics.

Pivotal to this harmonious reconfiguration is that the supersensible ideas of freedom do not connect with the human directed in speculative interest; or, to be clearer,

it is not the nature as a mechanism that opens itself to the influence of the ideas of reason. What the supersensible does come across is the reflective human who, because of the indeterminate play of the imagination, is capable of moving within possibilities, not simply establishing determinate knowledge. Here is the ultimate value of feelings of life stirring within the human, or *Lebensgefühl*. It is preparatory in that it allows for a new relationship with the supersensible that offers us a path away from entering into a discord with nature. Without *Lebensgefühl*, humanity is not prepared to enter into play with the supersensible, thereby running the risk of placing it above nature as the arbiter of truth, evident by a historic survey of metaphysics in the west. Angelica Nuzzo picks up on this foundational aspect to feelings of life in claims they, “make an experience of our belonging to living nature possible.”²⁷ Notice how humanity, oriented in terms of *Lebensgefühl* is not simply part of mechanistic nature, but *living* nature. As Kant demonstrates in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, determinations between nature as mechanism and the supersensible are not possible. Living nature, however, opens such a dialogue. Nuzzo brings the full potential of this orientation to fruition when she writes, “The accordance between nature and freedom cannot be objectively known and does not need to be practically postulated. It is, instead simply and directly *felt* in the moment in which we gain a reflected feeling of ourselves as living part of nature.”²⁸ There is no hierarchy between worlds established when humanity, stirred by the pleasure of being a member of living nature, enters into a dialogue with the supersensible realm. There are only feelings brought about through reflection on how ideas of reason can be present or represented in nature. No objective knowledge is grasped and held and there is no

practical use for such thoughts, as they cannot be determined. Humanity, in its new orientation toward ideas beyond the senses, *feels* its own place in living nature, suggests that it has a home here in the world, and can play with the things as they appear without demanding new metaphysical values, or adherence therein, from their emergence.

Human feelings of liveliness result from the free and indeterminate play of imagination and understanding. This particular pleasure brings about a double reorientation for humanity, namely our dealings with things on one end and our relation with the supersensible on the other. Life through aesthetic pleasure encourages the worldly human to play with the possibilities that things in their emergence offer, where meaning is cultivated through engagement, not generated by human practical use or stamped upon the object itself. Play with possible meaning through reflective judgment, and encouraged by *Lebensgefühl*, is a way humanity can still participate in the disclosing of value without activating the modern will. Furthermore, feelings of life also represent a new orientation for humanity toward the supersensible. Rather than collapse the world beyond our senses as modern metaphysics, Kantian aesthetic experience suggests a way to move beyond the supremacy of the supersensible while still retaining a basic human instinct of value formation. Our awareness of life as connected to living nature, as more than simply a piece of mechanistic nature, prepares us to not only come into contact with the ideas of reason, but also to feel the possibility of those ideas having influence on the natural world in which we find ourselves. The danger is, as we have seen, to engage the ideas of reason in our practical interest and bring them to bear upon the encountered world. The human with *Lebensgefühl*, however, is oriented otherwise and capable of

thinking in terms of possibility, not simply determinate knowledge for the preservation of life against mechanistic nature.

Values brought about by human orientation within the world are ultimately the primary focus of this investigation. In the way described above, human meaning takes on quite a different form from what was described by Heidegger in the Nietzsche Lectures. Feelings of life and humanity's understandable interest in our own lives, far from the *ex nihilo* generative power or willful stamping Heidegger places at the end of metaphysics, are meant to signal a new harmony between humanity and the things and humanity and the supersensible. This new configuration points to the possibility that human interest in our own lives can not only remain in *Gelassenheit*, but plays a vital role in the exchange between human and thing-in-the-world. Therefore, aesthetic pleasure and feelings of *Lebensgefühl*, as set out by Kant in the *Third Critique*, help to provide a more complete picture of the human role in value formation in thinking beyond the will. Human meaning and value then rests on aesthetic experience; and, as a tenuous safeguard from a fall back into modern willing, humanity has its feelings of fullness of life.

Feelings of life and its enrichment, therefore, offer the harmonious counter balance to the anxiety towards death that Heidegger sees as essential to human dealings within the world. However, where Heidegger saw the enhancement of life as the protective source of the modern technological worldview, the particular Kantian orientation that brings about interest in life is actually a step away from willful engagement in that it neither carries experience forward as knowledge, nor does it

demand supersensible coherence upon the sensible world, both of which Heidegger directly rejects in his diagnosis of modern thought. Play and possibility replaces the simultaneous active grasping and holding of the age that concerned Heidegger. There is active engagement with the emerging things in the form of play; but play in Kantian aesthetics does not promise continued adherence to what is discovered. It is individual in terms of the thing come across and indeterminate in relation to the supersensible realm. Therefore, the key components of the active, willing, modern subject are dissolved without expunging the possibility of humanity offering its own value from the encounter.

The concluding paragraphs in chapter one of this project referenced Davis' idea of the *Ur-will*, an a-historical, and essentially human component of the will that he indicated would remain even after the modern will had been thought through by way of *Gelassenheit*. Human interest towards life as it emerges in Kant's aesthetics is what I would like to present as the *Ur-will*. Not only have feelings of *Lebensgefühl* been shown to avoid the criticisms of the modern will in terms of expansion and ossification of value by means of a double reconfiguration, but our own interest in life as something essentially human also passes the phenomenological test. We, as humans, in our everyday dealings, are the kind of beings who care about the kind of life we live. This claim is compelling in its utter obviousness. Further, while it may be possible to imagine a human existence that is not interested in its own life, we must ask the palpable question – would that be the kind of life we, as humans, would want? A noncontroversial answer to this question would be, 'No, not if there is another way,' and

that is precisely what this investigation brings to the discussion of humanity beyond the modern will, another way of thinking human life that can remain even beyond the modern age.

A sketch of humanity under what I would like to call *Lebensgelassenheit*, living-letting-be, can be offered as the concluding remarks to this work. *Lebensgelassenheit* has a two-fold connotation that points to the value of such an orientation. First, and more immanently clear, is the importance that feelings of life play in a more comprehensive view of Heidegger's *Gelassenheit*, a view that now allows for human value to have a definite place beyond the technological will. Also though, the idea of living-letting-be suggests that such a way of being can be *lived*. The importance of this feature cannot be overstated. Heidegger offers a manner of comportment that directs us towards our inherent lack of metaphysical meaning and the ultimate possibility towards our own nonexistence, our inevitable death. However, how we are supposed to live in relation to human value is not clear even though fundamental play with meaning is part of what humans are essentially. The addition of living to letting-be harmoniously places the opposite poles of human interest toward meaning and letting the things show themselves. With this orientation the worldly human can engage playfully with the individual thing as it is encountered, while still respecting the thing's individual emergence since no knowledge claims need to be carried forward from the interaction.

But what of the danger presented by the *Ur-will*? After all, the will remains present at the site of engagement in the form of *Lebensgefühl* and it still retains its ability to impact the unfolding of the thing by way of human value formation. This cannot be

avoided and speaks on an even deeper level to the Heideggerian concept of accord. Recall that Heidegger indicated that the (dis)attunement between truth and art could only have resulted from a previous harmony that was knocked into discord. The harmonious relationship offered in *Lebensgelassenheit* holds the same risk of falling back into the (dis)attunement that brought about the technological worldview. All that can be offered is vigilance, an awareness of the attunement that allows humanity to think beyond the modern will and into harmonious accord between our feelings of life and the ultimate groundlessness of human existence. Such an accord can be forgotten and every venture into play, every wager, carries with it the possibility of loss. This admission, far from materializing as a complication, only strengthens the idea that *Lebensgelassenheit*, as based off of Kantian aesthetics, is amicable to the Heideggerian project. Where there is danger of falling back into the rampant will also resides salvation in the form of a tense harmony between anxiety towards death and metaphysical groundlessness on one side, while on the other side rests feelings of life and its enrichment that lead to harmonious and playful accord between things in their emergence and humanity in the world.

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, "Volume 1: The Will to Power as Art," trans. David Farrell Krell (Harper Collins: San Francisco, 1979), 189.

² Ibid., 189.

³ Ibid., 189.

⁴ Ibid., 153.

⁵ Ibid., 154.

⁶ Ibid., 73.

⁷ Ibid., 125

⁸ Ibid., 197.

⁹ Bret W. Davis, *Heidegger and the Will: On the Way to Gelassenheit* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 284.

¹⁰ Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, "Vol. 1," 149.

¹¹ Ibid., 149.

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- ¹² Ibid., 198.
- ¹³ Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, "Volume 3: The Will to Power as Knowledge and as Metaphysics," trans. Stambaugh, Krell, and Capuzzi, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1987), 125.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., 15.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 15-16. Italics added for emphasis.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., 70.
- ¹⁷ Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, "Vol. 1," 212.
- ¹⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 20:223.
- ¹⁹ Rudolf Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant: The Hermeneutical Import of the Critique of Judgment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 92.
- ²⁰ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 5:212.
- ²¹ Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, "Vol. 3," 72.
- ²² Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1984), 49.
- ²³ Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant*, 92.
- ²⁴ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 5:308.
- ²⁵ Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant*, 112.
- ²⁶ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 5:176.
- ²⁷ Angelica Nuzzo, *Ideal Embodiment: Kant's Theory of Sensibility* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 277.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 277.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Finding a way to think through the problem of the will was a cornerstone of the Heideggerian project from as early as *Being and Time*, though Heidegger's engagement with Nietzsche, and into his later thought that culminated with the idea of *Gelassenheit*. We have seen that willing as a human activity received an ambivalent treatment in *Being and Time*. On one hand, when Heidegger spelt out the method of phenomenology, there was an emphasis on letting the things show themselves to us, rather than the actions of the subject attaching meaning to whatever objects they might come across. However, the distinctions of presence-at-hand and readiness-to-hand suggested that all worldhood and disclosiveness was based on human projects and our comportment in terms of care. Then, we saw Heidegger contend with Nietzsche, whom he called 'the last metaphysician.' Taking Nietzsche's idea of the will to power to ultimately be simply a will to will, Heidegger's project became to think through the modern conception of the will towards a 'new beginning.'

A major obstacle to that goal was the technological worldview that permeated western thinking to the point that most people could no longer notice its influence. The phenomenological analysis of technological thinking revealed an extreme forgetfulness of authentic disclosure between Dasein and the things themselves. This was a symptom of a greater problem for humanity stemming from an anxious awareness of the lack of meaning of human life. In short, the modern human was aware that there was no essential meaning or value present in our lives. Frightened, the modern subject would

then act to protect itself by creating meaning through its encounters with objects and hold to those meanings as truths. The simultaneous creation of value and holding to truth as knowledge formed a technological grounding for our existence that was based on usefulness and expansive interest. Diagnosing the problem, Heidegger claimed that our technological thinking had already determined objects in terms of their use before we even encountered them. Fearful that such an orientation toward the world would lead, and indeed already had led, to the partial reduction of human life to mere ‘standing reserve,’ where humans were seen as resources and founts of energy to be harnessed for the next expansive project of the cybernetic world.

Gelassenheit, an active letting-be, was for Heidegger to represent the new way of comportment, where the human was no longer being-against-objects but rather found a way of existing amongst the things themselves in a way that was not willful. Rather than force meaning upon things encountered in the world, humanity was to exist alongside them and not cling to whatever meaning was offered to us. Ultimately, this was to force humanity face our own lack of meaning and embrace our fate of nonexistence. Engaging the things in this manner was likened to a wager, since entering the abyss of meaning meant risking all values that we had up to this point stored away as truth. *Gelassenheit* represented for humanity a way of being beyond the modern will that put us in conversation with the things themselves and allowed for a more original relationship with the world. The question arose however, about the kind of lives humans were to live after Heidegger’s ‘new beginning.’ Distinctly human forms of value – culture, tradition, and customs – were not given a clear place in terms of *Gelassenheit*. While the

hermeneutic benefit of questioning such institutions was not in question, the concern was far broader and extended to perhaps the most essential of human activities. How was humanity to create their own meaning and find a place in the world in terms of *Gelassenheit*? To find an answer to this concern, the investigation turned to Kantian aesthetics as explained in the *Third Critique*. Focus centered on redeeming human values even after the modern, technological will had been disavowed.

Looking to the particular orientations of the faculties, it was shown that the relation between the understanding and the imagination in free play offered an interesting opportunity to glimpse human judgment that was not legislative upon the world. As opposed to theoretical judgments where the will exerts influence upon nature in the form of providing a reading that is intelligible to human senses, or practical judgments where the will legislates upon itself, aesthetic judgments of the beautiful were found to be disinterested in terms of theoretical and practical demands and indeterminate in relation to conceptualizing experience. What this offered was an instance of free play, where the imagination and understanding enter into a suggestive, not legislative, relationship. Free play upon the emergence of beauty in nature provided the chance to not only expand our concepts when encountering nature, but also introduced pleasurable feelings of liveliness. These feelings were linked to the supersensible idea that humanity has a place in the world that transcends mere mechanistic nature. In short, while there can be no experiential evidence that humanity is more than a mere cog in the machine of the natural world, we can think as though we are by way of reflection upon beauty in nature.

An awareness of ourselves as part of living nature, rather than mechanistic nature, prepares humanity for a new relationship with nature and the supersensible. Invigorated by the pleasurable feelings of life's fullness as part of living nature, humanity need not stand against nature and the emergent things themselves and dictate truths; instead, *Lebensgefühl* provides a place for humans to reflect on being part of the living natural world, thereby stunting the frightened need to create a ground out of anxiety towards death. The relation between human and thing in the world becomes one of possibility where no truth claim is carried forward into new engagements. All that is retained is a feeling of life's enrichment and the idea of belonging to nature. Our relation to the supersensible was also shown to be reconfigured by means of lively play and the pleasure it stirs. In this way, *Lebensgefühl* was claimed to be preparatory for a non-willing interaction with the ideas of reason. Rather than stamp rational ideas upon mechanistic nature, something that Kant denies is even possible, the human as a part of living nature facilitates the possibility of the two divergent realms interacting. There is no determinate evidence found that can be held as truth after such an encounter; rather, the human is left to reflect on the possibilities of the supersensible's impact on the sensible world.

This relationship between human, nature, and the supersensible realm was brought forward to illustrate a new way of being in the world that was not willful but still offered the possibility of human value even after Heidegger's 'new beginning.' Humanity can still acquiesce to the tug that we feel toward the supersensible, but it can only do so with an understanding of its place in living nature. Value and meaning can be

suggested through this activity; however, because it is simply the play of possibility, there is no calcification of truth that can form an unnatural grounding in the abyss of meaning. Unless, of course, humanity forget once again their primal relationship with both nature and the supersensible is indeterminate and merely suggestive. This is the danger of the *Ur-will* that remains even after the supposed turn toward *Gelassenheit*. Vigilance and an awareness of the tense harmony this investigation has described is the only protection that can be offered to keep humanity from falling back into something akin to modern technicity. Despite the dangers of such an orientation, it has been shown that Kant's aesthetics in terms of free play and the *Lebensgefühl* such an activity engenders, are not only amicable to the Heideggerian conception of *Gelassenheit*, but also helps to offer a more complete picture of how the human is supposed to live and participate in future evaluations of nature and the things themselves. I have offered the neologism *Lebensgelassenheit* to represent this full illustration because of its dual connotations. First, that life and human interest therein is essential to any existence, even those outside of the modern technological worldview. Second, that *Lebensgefühl* as a living-letting-be is capable of just that – being lived. It places feelings of life and anxiety toward death in a harmonious accord that allows for what is essentially human, namely our ability to find meaning and search for a place in the world, to continue beyond modern willing and into the 'new beginning.'

Although this project provided answers in terms of what human activity might look like in light of Heidegger's *Gelassenheit*, several points surfaced during the course of the investigation that I believe indicate further avenues for research on this topic. The

first has to do with the conception of the will and its place in modern thinking. Heidegger's analysis of modern technicity and the will to will was used exclusively in this work. While the reasons for doing so are obvious given the scope of the project, it would be a worthwhile endeavor to look farther back into German Idealism to see the will as a faculty emerge into the philosophic corpus. Further, there was extensive discussion in this project on the relationship between Nietzsche and the will; however, all such conversation was seen through the lens of Heidegger's interpretation. Looking to the will in German Idealism and then onward into Nietzsche would not only provide further historical grounding for the problematic of the will as worked through by Heidegger, but it would also strengthen the sentiment that *Lebensgelassenheit* offers a way of solving a rather engrained problem for philosophy.

Second, an interesting thought arose out of Chapter IV of this work. I mentioned that the only imperative tied to reflective judgments was the one that occurred between humans in a community. Kant assigns intersubjective validity to judgments of beauty, meaning that every human can be expected to agree when one person claims that something is beautiful. The idea that an interpersonal demand avoids being willful in that it shifts the responsibility of adherence to the judgment from the object to another subject directs the conversation to an aesthetic community and the communicability of beauty. This investigation only offered a depiction of individual existence of *Lebensgelassenheit*; however, community after the 'new beginning' was hinted at as playing an important role in its grounding. In subsequent projects relating to the issue of human value after *Gelassenheit*, it would be fruitful to work out how community might

exist beyond the technological will, a community of, to use Dennis Schmidt's terminology, 'lyrical and ethical' subjects.*

These further areas of investigation show that the topic I have discussed is conceptually interesting and relevant to contemporary work on both Kant and Heidegger. Working with *Lebensgelassenheit* in terms of an aesthetic community of lively humans interested in life and capable of letting things show themselves in their emergence may provide another dimension of this idea that bridges into Kant's social-political writings, his work on history, and further into his practical philosophy. For now, however, we have a sketch of humanity as aware of their place within living nature, stirred by the pleasure of life's fullness, and capable of playful interaction at the site of disclosiveness. This activity of the *Ur*-will with the things themselves indicates a harmonious accord between human and world that was forgotten in the modern worldview. It is through this activity of essential human willing that humanity finds what both Heidegger and Kant sought to find at the end of their philosophic projects, an exclusively human place in nature and a homecoming to that place where we can dwell as humans in the world.

* From Dennis Schmidt, *Lyrical and Ethical Subjects*, Albany: SUNY Press, 2005.

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