

GRASPING THE SPACE OF THE HEART/MIND:
ARTISTIC CREATION AND NATURAL BEAUTY IN THE LATER PHILOSOPHY OF
KITARŌ NISHIDA (1870-1945)

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

İBRAHİM SONER ÖZDEMİR

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

AUGUST 2011

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

Prof. Dr. Meliha Altunışık
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Sol (METU, Phil.) _____

Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam (METU, Phil.) _____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ertuğrul R. Turan (Ankara U. Phil.) _____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hüseyin C. Erkin (Ankara U. Jap. L.) _____

Asst. Prof. Dr. Elif Çırakman (METU, Phil.) _____

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last name : İbrahim Soner, Özdemir

Signature :

ABSTRACT

**GRASPING THE SPACE OF THE HEART/MIND:
ARTISTIC CREATION AND NATURAL BEAUTY IN THE LATER
PHILOSOPHY OF KITARŌ NISHIDA (1870-1945)**

Özdemir, İbrahim Soner

Ph.D., Department of Philosophy

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam

August 2011, 245 pages

In this dissertation, focusing on the problem of “aesthetic form” and its relation to the distinction between natural and artistic beauty, it is argued that the Japanese philosopher Kitarō Nishida’s (1870-1945) later conception of artistic creation provides a different model of the aesthetics of nature in which nature is appreciated as “what it is”. Nishida most fully elaborates his later conception of artistic creation in the “Artistic Creation as an Act of Historical Formation”, published in 1941. In this work Nishida conceives of artistic creation as an act of historical, social “formation”. According to this conception “aesthetic form” as the object of artistic creation, and hence what is relevant to its appreciation, is

determined not only in relation to the historical, social context but also to the natural environment of its creation. Nishida further defines the historical “formation” as the “determination of form”, or the “grasping of space”. And he distinguishes two different types of the “grasping of space”. He suggests that in contrast to the Western arts, which are oriented toward grasping the “space of the things” (*mono no kūkan*), the Eastern arts aim to grasp the “space of the heart/mind” (*kokoro no kūkan*). In the “grasping of the space of the heart/mind”, what is grasped is not the object but the “space in which” (*ni oite aru kūkan*) the self, or the process of perception/creation is located.

Keywords: Kitarō Nishida, Artistic Creation, Natural Beauty, Aesthetic Form

ÖZ

ZİHİN/KALBİN UZAMINI KAVRAMAK:
KITARŌ NISHIDA'NIN (1870-1945) GEÇ DÖNEM FELSEFESİNDE
SANATSAL YARATIM VE DOĞA GÜZELLİĞİ

Özdemir, İbrahim Soner

Doktora, Felsefe Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam

Ağustos 2011, 245 sayfa

Bu çalışmada estetik biçim problemi ve bu problemin doğa ve sanat güzelliği arasındaki ayrımla ilişkisi üzerinde odaklanılarak Japon düşünür Kitarō Nishida'nın (1870-1945) geç dönem sanat yaratımı kavramının doğa estetiğine doğanın ne ise o olarak deneyimlendiği bir yaklaşım sunduğu savunuluyor. Nishida geç dönem sanat yaratımı kavramını en ayrıntılı biçimde 1941 tarihinde yayınlanan "Tarihsel Biçimlenme Eylemi Olarak Sanat Yaratımı" adlı makalesinde ortaya koyuyor. Bu makalede Nishida sanatsal yaratımı tarihsel, toplumsal biçimlenme olarak kavlıyor. Buna göre sanatsal yaratımın nesnesi olarak estetik biçim ve buna bağlı olarak yaratımın estetik değerlendirmesine nelerin uygun biçimde dâhil edileceği sadece

yapıtın ortaya çıktığı tarihsel, toplumsal bağlam tarafından değil aynı zamanda doğal çevre tarafından belirlenir. Nishida ayrıca tarihsel biçimlenmeyi “uzamın kavranması” olarak tanımlarken iki farklı “uzamın kavranması” ayırt eder. Nishida’ya göre “nesnenin uzamı”nı (*mono no kūkan*) kavramaya eğilimli Batı sanatlarının tersine, Doğu sanatları “zihin/kalbin uzam”nı (*kokoro no kūkan*) kavramayı amaçlar. “Zihin/kalbin uzamı”nın kavranmasında kavranılan şey nesne değil benin ya da algı/yaratma sürecinin “içinde olduğu uzam”dır (*ni oite aru kūkan*).

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kitarō Nishida, Sanatsal Yaratım, Doğa Güzelliği, Estetik Biçim

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ÖZ.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
A NOTE ON SOURCES AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	xi
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Nishida, Artistic Creation, and Natural Beauty	1
1.2 The Problem of Aesthetic Form and the Models of the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature	3
1.3 Nishida and German Aesthetic Theory	8
1.4 Overview of Chapters	9
2. AESTHETIC FORM AND THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN NATURAL AND ARTISTIC BEAUTY IN KANT.....	13
2.1 Kant's Definition of Beauty as Free from Determinate Concepts and the Problem of Aesthetic Form	13
2.2 The Form of the Natural Beauty: Nature as Art	21
2.3 The Form of the Artistic Beauty: Art as Nature	44
2.4 Aesthetic Form and Feeling: The Experience of the Ground of Freedom.....	52
2.5 The Reception of Kant's Conception of Aesthetic Form in German Aesthetic Theory in Relation to the Distinction between Natural and Artistic Beauty.....	61

2.5.1	The Idealist Conception of Aesthetic Form: The Sensuous Appearance of the Idea.....	61
2.5.2	The Sensualist Conception of Aesthetic Form: Empathy.....	70
2.5.3	The Formalist Conception of Aesthetic Form: Pure Perception.....	73
2.5.4	The Critique of Kantian Formalism and the Reinterpretation of the Freedom of Natural Beauty in Twentieth Century.....	79
3.	NISHIDA'S CONCEPTION OF ARTISTIC CREATION IN <i>ART AND MORALITY</i>	86
3.1	Nishida's Characterization of the Essence of Beauty and the Problem of Aesthetic Form.....	86
3.2	Nature and Culture: The Space of Objects and the Space of the Self....	91
3.3	Aesthetic Feeling and Freedom: The Inner Unity of the Self.....	101
3.4	Aesthetic Intuition as Artistic Creation: The Theory of Expressive Formation.....	114
3.4.1	Nature as Art: The Union of Empathy and Pure Perception....	115
3.4.2	The Specificity of Nishida's Conception of Artistic Creation and the Problem of Subjectivity.....	119
4.	NISHIDA'S LATER CONCEPTION OF ARTISTIC CREATION AS AN ACT OF HISTORICAL FORMATION.....	127
4.1	The Problem of Aesthetic Form as the Problem of Historical Formation.....	127
4.2	Nishida's Historical Ontology: Contradictory Identity of Natural Environment and Culture.....	135
4.2.1	Action-Intuition.....	137
4.2.2	The Historical Nature: Our Technique is the Technique of Heaven.....	143
4.3	Artistic Creation: The Abstraction of the Historical Life in Artistic Form.....	147

4.4	<i>Dromenon</i> : The Model and Origin of the Contradictory Identity of Natural Environment and Culture in Aesthetic Feeling.....	153
5.	NISHIDA’S CONCEPTION OF ARTISTIC CREATION AND THE AESTHETICS OF NATURE.....	164
5.1	Grasping the Space of Objects.....	164
5.1.1	Riegl’s Theory of Perception: Artistic Form as the Determination of Space.....	164
5.1.2	Different Types of the Determination of Space as Different Types of the Relationship between Art and Nature	170
5.2	Grasping the Space of the Heart/Mind: Dialectical Relationship between Art and Nature.....	175
5.2.1	The Asian Arts and a New Relationship to Nature	177
5.2.2	The Appreciative Difficulty of Japanese Gardens	186
5.3	Grasping the Space of the Heart/Mind as a Model of the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature.....	190
6.	CONCLUSION.....	208
	REFERENCES.....	216
	CURRICULUM VITAE.....	223
	TURKISH SUMMARY.....	224

A NOTE ON SOURCES AND ABBREVIATIONS

References to Kant's works are made by section number and the page number in English translation followed by the pagination in the relevant volume of the standard German edition of Kant's works, *Kant's Gesammelte Schriften*, edited by Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences (Berlin: Georg Reimer and later de Gruyter, 1900-) in square brackets.

Abbreviations:

- CPJ* Kant, Immanuel. 2001. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- CPR* Kant, Immanuel. 1998. *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- AM* Nishida, Kitarō. 1973. *Art and Morality*, trans. David Dilworth and V. H. Viglielmo, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- ACHF* Nishida, Kitarō. 1998. "Rekishiteki Keisei Sayō toshite no Geijutsuteki Sōsaku" (Artistic Creation as an Act of Historical Formation), *Nishida Tetsugaku Senshū 6*, Ken'ichi Iwaki, ed., Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten. (At the time of this dissertation, this work has not been translated into other languages except for a partial translation into German in "Das künstlerische Schaffen als Gestaltungsakt der Geschichte," *Die Philosophie der Kyōto Schule*, trans. Elmar Weinmayr and Ryōsuke Ōhashi (Freiburg: Karl Alber, 1990), 119–37. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the Japanese are by the author.)

CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Nishida, Artistic Creation, and Natural Beauty

This dissertation aims to explore the conceptions of artistic creation and natural beauty in the later philosophy of the Japanese philosopher Kitarō Nishida (1870-1945). Focusing on the problem of “aesthetic form” and its relation to the distinction between natural and artistic beauty, it will be argued that Nishida’s conception of artistic creation provides a different model of the aesthetic appreciation of nature in which nature is appreciated as “what it is”.

Although Nishida refers to the issue of art at several places throughout his philosophical life, he most fully elaborates his views on aesthetics in two major works, *Art and Morality (Geijutsu to Dōtoku)* published in 1923 and *Artistic Creation as an Act of Historical Formation (Rekishiteki Keisei Sayō Toshite no Geijutsuteki Sōsaku)* published in 1941. In both of these works Nishida discusses the problem of aesthetic form as a part of the two main problems of aesthetics, namely, distinguishing the domain of aesthetics from those of the cognitive, the practical, and the religious, and the objectivity of aesthetic judgments. And, to seek out responses to these problems Nishida departs from the standpoint of artistic creation rather than that of aesthetic appreciation, even though in his approach there is no clear distinction between artistic creation and appreciation of beauty. In the first paragraph of *Art and Morality* Nishida states that:

The essence of art must be traced to the creative act of the artist. Indeed, appreciation, too, may be thought to be grounded on a kind of creative act, as the connoisseur also appreciates a work of art through a vicarious participation in the creative act of the artist. The essence of the beautiful must thus be sought in the subjective act, on the one hand, but we cannot help thinking, on the other, that a *beautiful thing* exists objectively for our aesthetic judgments. Even if aesthetic content is not an existential, or existent, quality of a thing, aesthetic content becomes an object of aesthetic feeling in some sense. We shall be able to elucidate the essence of the beautiful by clarifying this objective quality of the aesthetic object (*AM*, 5).

On the other hand, although Nishida starts *Art and Morality* by stating that “there is no one, confronted by a famous work of art or exquisite natural scenery, who is not struck by its beauty” (*AM*, 5), in his discussion on the essence of beauty and artistic creation, the aesthetic appreciation of nature completely dissolves into artistic creation, as in his definition aesthetic intuition is immediately accompanied by the creative activity producing an object distinct from nature. Similarly, in *Artistic Creation as an Act of Historical Formation*, the beauty of nature is not considered as a subject of aesthetic investigation. Moreover, in Nishida’s description,

the object of art, i.e., the artistic beauty is not a form that is prepared merely to give us pleasure as it is generally conceived. In other words, it is not the so-called beautiful form. Beauty is not passive pleasure. Hence, art is not the imitation of nature (*ACHF*, 310).

Consequently, it may be concluded that in Nishida there does not exist an “aesthetics of nature”. As well as being designed to offer solutions to the central problems of aesthetics, however, several aspects of Nishida’s account of artistic creation have important bearings on the aesthetic appreciation of both art and nature. Firstly, his conception of artistic creation redefines the relationship between art and nature, as well as between art and everyday life, and hence the scope of aesthetics: every object and action, whether artificial or natural can be the object of aesthetic intuition. Secondly, it redefines the relationship not only between the creative action

and the produced work, but also between the artist and the appreciator. It also redefines the role of the artist in the creative process both with respect to nature and to cultural background. Finally, it redefines the relationship between the artistic form, the place in which this form exists, and the characteristics of the material. In making these redefinitions, Nishida refers to a distinctive “spontaneity” or a “freedom” that is described by him as an experience of nature as what it really is, without attributing this freedom neither to nature, nor to work of art, nor to artist, nor to appreciator, but to their inseparability.

1.2. The Problem of Aesthetic Form and the Models of the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature

According to Victor Basch the problem of distinguishing the aesthetic from the non-aesthetic, i.e., the sensible pleasure, the cognitive, and the practical constitutes the heart of Kant’s *Critique of the Power of Judgment* and all the secondary problems of aesthetics depend to its solution.¹ Basch suggests that “all the researchers who attempt to detect the nature of beauty since the thinkers of India to the contemporary experimental psychologists” deal with this main problem but “without the possibility of saying that it is elucidated to the point of entailing an anonymous support”.² On the other hand, not only in Kant but also in modern aesthetics from the eighteenth century to the present one of the secondary problems emerges to be as decisive as the demarcation problem in shaping the discussions on the nature of beauty, namely, the objectivity of aesthetic judgments. We find one of

¹ Victor Basch, “Le maître-problème de l’esthétique”, *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l’étranger*, 7-8, 1921, p. 1.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1.

the earliest expressions of this problem in David Hume's "Of the Standard of Taste". According to Hume, aesthetic ideas such as beauty are not qualities in things, but exist in the mind of the beholder, i.e., they are subjective. Aesthetic judgments rest on our feeling of pleasure or displeasure. No doubt everybody has his or her own taste. This means that ideas such as beauty will differ from person to person, age to age, and nation to nation. But, Hume argues that this cannot be the case for the critical judgments on beauty. In his view, although our critical judgments are grounded on a subjective feeling of pleasure or displeasure, they demand some kind of objectivity. He writes:

Whoever would assert an equality of genius and elegance between Ogilby and Milton, or Bunyon and Addison, would be thought to defend no less an extravagance, than if he had maintained a mole-hill to be as high as Teneriffe, or a pond as extensive as the ocean.³

Victor Basch remarks that before the appearance of Kant there were two opposing approaches in dealing with the question of beauty, namely the intellectualism of Leibniz and Baumgarten and the sensualism of Burke. According to Basch, while the former considers "the beautiful as a primarily intellectual exercise, a troubled vision of perfection" the latter sees it "as a feeling of pleasure and pain".⁴ In the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* Kant undertakes to solve the two main problems of aesthetics in a manner that would go beyond this opposition between intellectualism and sensualism. He maintains that even though the judgments of beauty are based on a subjective feeling of pleasure they are necessary,

³ David Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste" in *The Philosophical Works of David Hume, III*, ed. T. H. Green and T. H. Grose (London, 1925), p. 269.

⁴ Victor Basch, *Essai Critique sur l'Esthétique de Kant* (Paris: Vrin, 1927), p. ii; quoted in Ernest K. Mundt, "Three Aspects of German Aesthetic Theory", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 17/3, 1959, p. 288.

universal, and *a priori*. According to Kant's solution, in contrast to the sensual pleasure which is empirical, personal, and private, when we determine something as beautiful we expect that everyone will, or ought to share our feeling of pleasure without waiting their assent or actual response. Kant gives an account of this distinctive feeling of pleasure in finding an object beautiful and its claim for universal validity by appealing to the mental mechanism that is required for cognition in general and the objectivity of empirical knowledge: the agreement of imagination and understanding with each other. But, in Kant's explanation, while the agreement of imagination and understanding in cognition is accomplished in accordance with determinate concepts, in the experience of beauty imagination and understanding are in a "free play," harmoniously cooperating with each other without the employment of concepts. In this way, Kant's theory of the free harmonious play between our mental powers enables him to define judgments of beauty in subjectivist terms without renouncing their claim to universality.

However, although Kant's definition of beauty both provides an answer to the main paradox of aesthetics, namely, the universal validity of aesthetic judgments whose ground is a subjective feeling of pleasure, and gives an account of what distinguishes aesthetic experience from sensual, cognitive, and practical experiences in a manner that transcends the distinction between intellectualist and sensualist conceptions of beauty, his complete separation of the internal sense of beauty from objective qualities, in combination with his distinction between intuition and concepts, results in the problem of aesthetic form, i.e., how to determine the aesthetic object as the correlative of aesthetic experience. If, on the one hand, aesthetic feeling is conceived merely as an internal perception of the agreement of our mental powers

without any reference to the properties of aesthetic object, then beauty becomes a psychological phenomenon. If, on the other hand, beauty has a form that is independent from concepts, then this form requires an explanation because of the distinction between sensibility and concepts. Although, Kant suggests that aesthetic judgment is “free” from determinate concept, but based on an “indeterminate concept”, as he does not provide an explanation of what he means by an “indeterminate concept”, his conception of aesthetic form confronts a central problem, which becomes the source of a number of ambiguities in his aesthetics.

Consequently, in German aesthetic theory subsequent to Kant several attempts from different standpoints are made to disentangle the ambiguities in Kant’s conception of beauty and to resolve the problem of aesthetic form, but in a manner that revitalizes the distinction between intellectualism and sensualism. But, as Kant achieves to define beauty beyond this distinction, different standpoints subsequent to Kant that revitalize it confront with the challenge of providing answers to the central problems of demarcation and objectivity and accompanying difficulties. One of the direct results of these difficulties is the complete separation between the beauty of art and the beauty of nature, which are not entirely distinguished from each other in Kant. The requirement of objectivity pushes the discussions on beauty toward conceptual mediation and as natural beauty is considered as beyond such a mediation, there arises a tendency, starting with Hegel, of relegating natural beauty and reducing aesthetics to the philosophy of art. In contrast to the muteness of nature and subjectivity of our aesthetic responses to it, art works provide us with rules, principles, and categories to ground our aesthetic judgments and to constitute the aesthetic object. Stated differently, in the case of art works, although sometimes open

to controversy, we generally know what and how is to be appreciated aesthetically, i.e., we can determine the boundaries of the aesthetic object, what is involved in it as its parts and what is aesthetically relevant to its appreciation, because they are human products. The historical, social and cultural frameworks in which art works are produced, the institutional setting or the “artworld” they belong, the artistic media and techniques used to create them, and the intentions of the artist help to determine where the work starts and where it ends, what is relevant to its appreciation, and how to appreciate it. In the case of nature we cannot use similar criteria to determine the boundaries of the aesthetic object and how to appreciate it, as nature is not brought about by human intentionality. Nature is the realm of contingency; its forms are in constant change, hence they have different aesthetic properties at different times; they are not set apart from their surroundings; and they provide aesthetic pleasure to our different senses in many different ways.

When towards the last quarter of twentieth century environmental aesthetics starts to discuss anew the aesthetic experience of nature which displays various features that differentiate it from the aesthetic experience of art, but have an equal claim of seriousness and appropriateness, the difficulties exposed by the problem of aesthetic form resurface. Environmental aesthetics particularly and positively focuses on the indeterminate and varying character of nature and our multisensory experience of it. Consequently, different approaches or models of the aesthetic appreciation of nature attempt to provide an answer to the problem of the aesthetic form of nature. As well as indicating what and how is to be appreciated in nature aesthetically, without distorting its indeterminate and varying character and taking into consideration our multisensory experience and diverse understanding of it, these

models are committed to give an account of the two fundamental questions of aesthetics, namely, what distinguishes an aesthetic response to nature from other responses to it, such as sensual pleasure, religious awe, or scientific understanding, and what makes such a response an “appropriate” response. When combined with the separation between nature and human beings, between freedom of natural beauty and the inescapably mediated human world, however, this triple requirement turns the problem of aesthetic form of nature into a kind of dilemma for the models of aesthetic appreciation of nature.

1.3. Nishida and German Aesthetic Theory

Victor Basch classifies post-Kantian positions in German aesthetic theory into three camps according to their interpretation of Kant’s conception of aesthetic form as idealist, formalist, and sensualist.⁵ In both *Art and Morality* and *Artistic Creation as an Act of Historical Formation*, Nishida develops his conception of artistic creation in the framework provided by Kant and in dialogue with all three positions of German aesthetic theory, and attempts to give a synthesis of them through his idea of the identity of artistic action and aesthetic object. In *Art and Morality*, in a manner very similar to idealist position, he describes aesthetic intuition as the internal experience of the unity of the ground of nature, i.e., the free self, which is given through feeling. But, to go beyond the subjective and idealist meaning of the creative act of the artist, and to clarify its objective meaning, Nishida refers to the formalist theories of pure visibility and Konrad Fiedler’s conception of artistic creation as an act of expressive formation. Yet, rather than seeing formalist approach

⁵ Victor Basch, *Essai Critique sur l’Esthétique de Kant*, p. 2.

to aesthetic form as an alternative to sensualist approach of the theories of empathy, Nishida considers pure visibility and empathy as the two inseparable aspects of aesthetic intuition.

In *Artistic Creation as an Act of Historical Formation*, to philosophically ground Fiedler's conception of expressive formation, and to describe artistic creation in more historical and objective terms, Nishida turns to art historical approaches of Alois Riegl and Wilhelm Worringer. But, again, he attempts to provide a synthesis of formalism and sensualism without losing the notion of aesthetic intuition as the internal experience of the ground of nature and freedom.

Consequently, in order to properly understand Nishida's conception of artistic creation, and to evaluate its distinctive character, it is important to elucidate the relationship between his thoughts, Kant's conception of aesthetic form, and different positions in German aesthetic theory.

1.4. Overview of Chapters

In Chapter Two, I will analyze Kant's definition of beauty as independent from determinate concepts and a number of interrelated problems which are central to the discussions on his aesthetic theory. Firstly, as Kant explains the experience of finding an object beautiful and its claim for universal validity through the agreement of our faculties that is required for cognition in general, there arises the question of differentiating between having ordinary cognitive experience and experience of beauty. A second problem concerns Kant's ambiguous distinction between natural and artistic beauty, which is related to his distinction between free and dependent beauty. And thirdly, as Kant's definition of the experience and creation of beauty implies the possibility of intuitive reach to the ideas of reason, there is the question

of whether his aesthetic theory amounts to a violation of the border between sensible intuitions and supersensible realm, between nature and freedom on which his critical philosophy is founded. In order to critically examine Kant's conception of aesthetic form and his distinction between natural and artistic beauty, I will discuss these problems respectively with an attempt to clarify his ambiguous definition of the judgment of beauty as free from determinate concepts but based on an indetermined concept.

In the final part of this chapter, after briefly presenting idealist, formalist, and sensualist interpretation of Kant's conception of aesthetic form in German aesthetic theory in relation to the distinction between natural and artistic beauty, I will sketch the critique of Kantian formalism and psychologistic account of aesthetics and art, as well as the reinterpretation of the freedom of natural beauty in twentieth century.

In Chapter Three, I will analyze how in *Art and Morality* Nishida frames the problem of aesthetic form as the problem of clarification of the "objective quality of the aesthetic object". Nishida's conception of the identity of subjective act and its object and his distinction between "the space of objects" and "the space of the self" occupy the central place in his characterization of the essence of beauty and artistic creation. My aim in this chapter will be not only to argue for the specificity of Nishida's conception of artistic creation but also to show how this conception faces a fundamental difficulty in relation to the problem of aesthetic form that will lead to a shift toward his later views on artistic creation.

In Chapter Four, I will analyze Nishida's later conception of artistic creation as an act of historical formation, which is also defined in an ambiguous manner as an "abstraction" from the historical world of actuality. In this chapter, I will first attempt

to reconstruct and clarify thematically the basic aspects Nishida's theory of the historical world, which is necessary to understand properly his later conception of artistic creation. Then, I will discuss two main questions in relation to this conception: Firstly, what determines the direction of the historical formation, and hence artistic form? Secondly, as Nishida defines the historical world inevitably as a world of "formation", then in what sense artistic creation is an "abstraction" from the historical world of actuality? Nishida attempts to answer these questions by proposing the development of art in primitive societies as the origin and ontological model of the self-formation of the historical world. In the final part of this section, through an analysis of Nishida's interpretation of the development of art in primitive societies I will lay out schematically the basic aspects of his conception of artistic creation as an act of historical formation.

In Chapter Five, I will discuss the implications of Nishida's later conception of artistic creation for the aesthetics of nature. To this aim, I will first consider his differentiation between the grasping of "the space of things" and the grasping of "the space of the heart/mind" in relation to Riegl's theory of perception, Adolf Hildebrand's conception of artistic form, and Worringer's development of Riegl's theory into a classification of the fundamental types of the relationship between art and nature. Then, by giving an overview of Nishida's critical reconstruction of Worringer's classification, and his suggestion that in Asian arts there is a dialectical relationship between art and nature, I will consider an appreciative difficulty in relation to Japanese gardens arising from the dialectical relationship between art and nature as it is discussed in contemporary environmental aesthetics. And finally, after discussing different approaches to the aesthetic appreciation of nature in

contemporary environmental aesthetics with respect to the problem of aesthetic form and evaluating them from Nishida's standpoint, I will argue that Nishida's conception of artistic creation provides a different model of aesthetic appreciation of nature.

CHAPTER - 2
AESTHETIC FORM AND THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN
NATURAL AND ARTISTIC BEAUTY IN KANT

2.1. Kant's Definition of Beauty as Free from Determinate Concepts and the Problem of Aesthetic Form

In the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* Kant maintains that the judgment of beauty is an "aesthetic" judgment which he defines as a judgment "whose *ground* cannot be *other than subjective*" (*CPJ*, §1: 203 [89] emphasizes in the original). According to him, when we say that something is beautiful we determine that in the experience of that thing we feel pleasure or displeasure rather than designating anything about the object or its properties. In his definition in order to find something beautiful we do not need to have a concept of it, i.e., to know what sort of thing it is supposed to be or what it is used for. He claims that the judgment of beauty is not a cognitive judgment; it is neither grounded on concepts nor aimed at them (*CPJ*, First Introduction VII: 223-225 [26-27]; Remark, 229-231 [31-32]; Introduction VII: 190-192 [76-77]; §4: 207 [93]; §5: 209 [94-95]; §8: 214-216 [99-101]; §9: 217-219 [102-104]; §11: 221 [106]; §15: 227- 229 [112-113]; §16: 229-231 [114-116]; 241-242 [125]; §35: 286-289 [167-169]).

On the other hand, Kant distinguishes the judgment of beauty not only from cognitive judgments but also from other kinds of responses involving pleasure. He

contrasts the beautiful with the “agreeable” which he defines as “that which pleases the sense in sensation” (*CPJ*, §3: 206 [91]). In his definition, the agreeable is caused through stimuli, and is concerned with how the “matter” of an object is sensually perceived, with the “quality of sensation”, e.g., the tone of a sound, gentleness of a color, pleasantness of a taste, or charm of a smell (*CPJ*, §14: 224 [109]). Kant holds that, just like the beautiful the agreeable concerns an immediate feeling of pleasure which does not serve for nor need any concept at all and the determination of both of them is “aesthetic”. But, for him, whereas the agreeable is a “material aesthetic judgment” and involves an interest in the existence of the object, the beautiful is a “formal aesthetic judgment;” it consists of a mere “reflection” on the “form” of an object and it is a pure “disinterested” satisfaction, i.e., it is free from any concern for the existence of the object, its having certain properties, its utility, or our possession of it (*CPJ*, §2: 204-205 [90-91]; §14: 223-224 [108-109]; §35: 287 [167]; §38: 289 [170]). Hence, Kant claims that, in contrast to the pleasure in the agreeable which is personal and private, when we determine something as beautiful we expect that everyone will, or ought to share our feeling of pleasure without waiting their assent or actual response. So, in his definition even though the judgment of beauty is non-cognitive, i.e., is not grounded on or aims any concept of the object, and hence cannot be proved by means of determinate rules, or principles, it carries with it an “aesthetic”, or “subjective universal validity” for everyone (*CPJ*, §8: 215-216 [100-101]).

However, although Kant clearly distinguishes judgments of beauty from cognitive judgments, he explains the distinctive feeling of pleasure in finding an object beautiful and its claim for universal validity through the same mental

mechanism that is common to all human beings and that makes possible cognition in general and the objectivity of empirical knowledge: the agreement of imagination and understanding with each other (*CPJ*, §9: 217-219 [102-103]; §38: 290 [170]). But, in Kant's explanation, while the agreement of imagination and understanding in ordinary cognition is accomplished in accordance with determinate concepts, in the experience of beauty imagination and understanding are in a "free play," harmoniously cooperating with each other without the employment of any particular concept (*CPJ*, §9: 217-219 [102-103]; General Remark on the First Section of the Analytic: 240-241 [124-125]). For Kant the necessity in the expectation that everyone will share our feeling of pleasure in the beautiful without grounding our judgment on determinate concepts reveals a special property, a new *a priori* principle of our faculty of cognition, namely the power of judgment's *a priori* principle of "the formal subjective purposiveness of nature" (*CPJ*, §11-12: 221-222 [106-107]).

Kant's theory of the free harmonious play between the cognitive powers of imagination and understanding enables him not only to define judgments of beauty in subjectivist and noncognitivist terms without renouncing their claim to correctness, or appropriateness, but also to integrate aesthetics into his system of critical philosophy which he elaborated in the first two *Critiques*. Kant suggests that the critique of taste, when treated from a transcendental point of view, fills the "the great chasm that separates the supersensible from the appearances" and

provides the mediating concept between the concepts of nature and the concept of freedom, which makes possible the transition from the purely theoretical to the purely practical, from lawfulness in accordance with the former to the final end in accordance with the latter, in the concept of a purposiveness of nature; for thereby is the possibility of the final end, which can become actual only in nature and in accord with its laws, cognized (*CPJ*, Introduction IX: 195-196 [81-82]).

In Kant's thought, to demonstrate the objective reality of concepts of reason, i.e., ideas is impossible, because it is impossible to present sensible intuition adequate to them (*CPJ*, §59: 351 [225]). But, he asserts that by means of the beautiful the power of judgment can provide a "symbolic" presentation of concepts of reason. In this way, he conceives of the beautiful as the "symbol" of the morally good, since for him the universally shareable pleasure in the accord of the freedom of the imagination with the lawfulness of the understanding in the judgment of beauty presents indirectly the universally shareable pleasure in the accord of the freedom of the will with universal laws of reason in the moral judgment (*CPJ*, §59: 354 [228]).

Kant's definition of beauty as independent from determinate concepts, however, introduces a number of interrelated problems which are central to the discussions on his aesthetic theory and whose repercussions have and still affect the debates on what constitutes the aesthetic appreciation of art and the aesthetic appreciation of nature in aesthetic theory in general. The first of these problems concerns the distinction between having ordinary cognitive experience and experience of beauty. Accordingly, if the distinctive pleasure in finding an object beautiful is grounded on the agreement of imagination and understanding with each other, which is also a prerequisite for the possibility of cognition in general, how to avoid, in the absence of specific properties of the objects, the conclusion that anything is, or can be, or even ought to be beautiful if it is known, or merely cognizable, or that everything is equally beautiful? Moreover, as for Kant the judgment of beauty is about the "form" of an object, there is the question of whether it is possible to conceive the "form" of an object independently of how it is

conceptualized. Stated differently, as in Kant's definition the "form" of an object requires "the manifold of appearance to be intuited as ordered in certain relations" (*CPR*, A20/B34 [155-156]) how can this be accomplished without delimiting and individuating objects by means of concepts? The problem of "aesthetic form" is related not only to Kant's distinction between the immediacy of receptive intuition and the mediation of concepts but also to his distinction between the concept of "nature" as the regularity and ordered arrangement of appearances brought into by the understanding (*CPR*, A125 [241]) and the concept of "nature" as the totality of appearances which is beyond the reach of the human faculty of cognition (*CPR*, A418-19/B446 [465-466]; *CPJ*, First Introduction IV: 208-210 [13-14]). This is the first problematic aspect of the distinction between "nature" and "human understanding" in Kant's analysis of the beautiful.

A second problem concerns the "aesthetic form" of works of art and the possibility of the artistic beauty. Throughout his analysis Kant suggests that both nature and human artifice can be the object of the judgment of beauty. And he claims that "whether it is the beauty of nature or of art" the beautiful "*pleases in the mere judging* (neither in sensation nor through a concept)" (*CPJ*, §45: 306 [185] emphasis in the original). However, he ambiguously asserts that "in a product of art one must be aware that it is art, and not nature" (*CPJ*, §45: 306 [185]) and the judging of the beauty of art requires an assessment of it as a work of art, i.e., "a concept must first be the ground of what the thing is supposed to be" (*CPJ*, §48: 311 [190]). Moreover, at different places of his investigation he distinguishes natural beauty from artistic beauty and implies that the former is not only better suited to his definition of the beautiful, which pleases "without any interest" (*CPJ*, 211 [96]), hence "universally

without a concept” (*CPJ*, 219 [104]), and is the “form of the purposiveness of an object without representation of an end” (*CPJ*, 236 [120]), but also morally more significant (*CPJ*, §42: 298-302 [178-181]). Kant states that the purposiveness as the underlying principle of the judgment of beauty “should be considered *unintentional*”, it “can therefore pertain only to nature” (*CPJ*, First Introduction XII: 251 [50]).

Kant’s distinguishing between natural and artistic beauty with respect to the involvement of concepts in the latter is related to his much-discussed distinction between “free” and “dependent (adherent)” beauty, which is, in turn, connected to his distinction between the good and the beautiful. In Kant’s definition the good is “that which pleases by means of reason alone, through the mere concept” (*CPJ*, §4: 207 [92]). Accordingly, to decide whether or not something is good I must first have a concept of it, i.e., I must know what sort of thing the object is supposed to be, whether it fulfills its (internal or external) purposes, or performs its functions satisfactorily (*CPJ*, §4: 207 [93]). Stated differently, the judgment of good is an intellectual judgment; its determining ground is a concept. Kant explains that something can be good for something, i.e., useful, or good in itself, i.e., “qualitatively perfect” example of its own kind, but in either case it involves the “concept of an end”. And, he defines the “qualitative perfection” as “the agreement of the manifold in a thing with its inner determination as an end” (*CPJ*, §15: 226-229 [111-113]). In other words, if the object and its constituent parts are perfectly suitable for their purposes then the object is qualitatively perfect. On the other hand, Kant defines two different forms of beauty: if the determination of something as beautiful does not presuppose a concept of what the object should be, then the judgment is that of a “free beauty;” in contrast, if it presupposes a particular end and

the perfection of the object in accordance with it, then the judgment is that of a “dependent beauty” (*CPJ*, §16: 229 [114]). Now, Kant remarks that as art, by its definition, always presupposes an end, in determining the beauty of art “the perfection of the thing will also have to be taken into account, which is not even the question in the judging of a natural beauty” (*CPJ*, §48: 311-312 [190]). But, since Kant persistently asserts that the beautiful pleases “without a concept,” there arise the questions of whether and in what sense “dependent beauty” is a form of “beauty” and whether it is possible for art to be the object of the judgment of “free” beauty or all judgments of artistic beauty are “dependent.”

A third problem concerns the relation between aesthetics and metaphysics. We can describe this problem as the metaphysical aspect of the more epistemological first problem we mentioned, i.e., the relation between human understanding and nature. Accordingly, the ideas of the purposiveness and unity of nature, and what Kant terms “the supersensible substratum of humanity and of appearances generally” are beyond our cognitive capacity and sensuous relation to the world. In other words, they are not a part of the concept of nature. But, Kant’s construal of the experience and creation of beauty implies the possibility of intuitive reach to such ideas. At a crucial point in his investigation Kant introduces the notion of “aesthetic ideas” and states that:

Beauty (whether it be beauty of nature or of art) can in general be called the *expression* of aesthetic ideas: only in beautiful art this idea must be occasioned by a concept of the object, but in beautiful nature the mere reflection on a given intuition, without a concept of what the object ought to be, is sufficient for arousing and communicating the idea of which that object is considered as the *expression*. (*CPJ*, §51: 320 [197-198], emphases in the original)

And he defines an “aesthetic idea” as: “[T]he 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, which consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible” (*CPJ*, §49: 314 [192]). In his explication such representations of imagination can be called ideas not only because “no concept can be fully adequate to them, as inner intuitions”, but also because “they strive toward something lying beyond the bounds of experience” (*CPJ*, §49: 314 [192]). Thus, although Kant insists on the “regulative” rather than “constitutive” character of the ideas of purposiveness and unity of nature, and explicitly states that “the indeterminate concept of the supersensible substratum of both us and nature,” which is also the ground of the experience of beauty, “can never be elevated and expanded into cognition” (*CPJ*, Introduction II: 175 [63]; §57: 339-341 [215-217]), there is the question of whether his theory of the harmonious play in which imagination “schematizes without a concept” in its freedom (*CPJ*, §35: 287 [167]) and his introduction of the aesthetic ideas as the presentation of concepts of reason imply a violation of the border between sensible intuition and supersensible realm, between nature and freedom on which his whole philosophical system is founded. In addition to this, as for Kant the freedom of imagination in its “schematizing without concepts” not only grounds the experience of natural beauty, but is also, through the mediation of “genius,” the source of artistic beauty, then why he describes natural beauty as morally more significant than artistic beauty?

The answers to these problems require a clarification of Kant’s ambiguous definition of the judgment of beauty as free from determinate concepts but based on an indetermined concept. In the following subsections, in order to critically examine

Kant's conception of aesthetic form and his distinction between natural and artistic beauty, I will discuss these problems respectively with an attempt to such a clarification. My basic aim will be to show that although Kant's preference for natural beauty over artistic beauty seems to be divergent from the subsequent development in Western aesthetics in which art is seen as the paradigm object, the underlying reason for the distinction between two kinds of beauty for both party is identical: Art is a product of human artifice, artworks are designed intentionally for aesthetic appreciation, i.e., they involve a concept of an end, and the aesthetic appreciation of a human artifice includes to determine whether execution of its design satisfies its purpose (*CPJ*, §42: 301 [181], §45: 306-307 [185-186], §48: 311-312 [189-190]).

2.2. The Form of the Natural Beauty: Nature as Art

According to Kant's characterization, the free harmonious play of the cognitive faculties in the experience of beauty is supposed to exhibit a "subjective relation" suited to cognition in general so as to be "valid for everyone and consequently universally communicable, just as any determinate cognition is, which still always rests on that relation as its subjective condition" (*CPJ*, §9: 218 [103]). Kant defines this subjective condition of the possibility of cognition of an object in general as the agreement of the imagination, "which provides the *composition* of the manifold of intuition," and the understanding, "which provides the *unity of the concept* that unifies the representations," with each other (*CPJ*, §9: 217 [102]). But, Kant further states that, this subjective relation is acquired in two different ways in cognitive perceptual experience of objects and in the experience of beauty. Accordingly, both in the ordinary cognitive experience and in the experience of

finding something beautiful the “apprehension of an object by the imagination in relation to the understanding” occurs by means of a procedure that the power of judgment must exercise, i.e., they should agree with each other so as to satisfy the “subjective condition.” But, while in the case of ordinary cognition the power of judgment is “compelled to do so in order to perceive an empirical objective concept,” in the experience of beauty it has to do so merely “in order to perceive that the representation is adequate for harmonious (subjective purposive) activity of the cognitive powers in their freedom” (*CPJ*, §39: 292 [172]). And, Kant states that in perceiving the adequacy of the representation for the free harmonious play of the cognitive faculties, i.e., in the experience of finding something beautiful and claiming the correctness of this judgment, a “mere reflection on the *form* of the given object in intuition” is sufficient and “no determinate concept of the object at all is required nor is one thereby generated, and the judgment itself is not a cognitive judgment” (*CPJ*, First Introduction VII: 221 [23], emphasis added).

In order to properly understand the distinction between cognitive experience and experience of beauty and imagination’s and understanding’s respective roles in these experiences we have to first briefly consider Kant’s critical epistemology. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant maintains that cognitive perceptual experience of objects requires a “synthesis” of the manifold of intuition given to us from the world (*CPR*, A97-111 [228-234]/B129-169 [245-266]). According to Kant, the first thing that is given to us is appearance and if this appearance is combined with consciousness it is called “perception.” But since every appearance that we acquire through the receptivity of our sensibility contains a manifold, and different perceptions are encountered dispersed and separate in the mind there requires a

combination of them. This manifold is synthesized successively as contained in “one representation” in an act of *apprehension* that is accomplished by imagination. Imagination not only takes together the manifold of sensible intuition but also *reproduces* or calls back the preceding perceptions and associates them with succeeding ones. Now, Kant holds that imagination carries out this reproduction in accordance with certain rules or principles so that a representation enters into combination with one representation rather than with any others. These rules or principles make possible the application of the concepts (both *a priori* categories and empirical concepts) of the understanding to experience. And Kant describes this association of representation in imagination in accordance with the rules in virtue of which the concepts of the understanding are applicable to experience as the “subjective ground” of reproduction (*CPR*, A121 [239]). On the other hand, in Kant’s definition the concepts of the understanding “not only make appearances necessarily reproducible, but also determine an object for their intuition,” and an object is “the concept of something in which appearances are necessarily connected” (*CPR*, A108 [233]). So through a third act of synthesis the manifold of intuition taken together by the imagination is related to the concept of an object and *recognition* occurs. In other words, when the synthesis of the imagination in accordance with rules agrees with the concepts of the understanding we experience spatiotemporal objects causally interacting with each other and having determinate empirical features. Kant defines the totality of such objects and the order and regularity in them brought into by means of our synthesizing activity as “nature” (*CPR*, A125 [241])

Since according to Kant's "Copernican turn" in this synthesis the understanding, instead of following the guidance of nature, "legislates *a priori* for nature as an object of sense for a theoretical knowledge of it in a possible experience", the central difficulty emerges as "how *subjective conditions of thinking* should have *objective validity*, i.e., yield conditions of the possibility of all cognition of objects" (*CPR*, A89/B122 [222], emphases in the original). In other words, what is the reason to believe that the "form" acquired by the synthesis of our cognitive faculties has objective counterpart in the outside world? As we have seen, in our cognitive relation with the world the manifold of intuition is first provided by our receptive faculty of sensibility. We experience this given manifold of intuition "as something endowed with form" through spontaneous syntheses of the understanding with *a priori* categories and the "pure forms" of intuition, i.e., space and time. As a pure faculty of synthesis the understanding cannot produce intuitions by itself and manifold of intuition received by sensibility does not have any form of its own. In Kant's famous formulation "thought without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind" (*CPR*, A51/B75 [193-194]). If, however, sheer receptivity of sensibility is blind, i.e., it merely receives the manifold of intuition without bearing or giving it any form and the concepts of the understanding are "entirely unhomogeneous" in comparison with sensible intuitions and "can never be encountered in any intuition" (*CPR*, A137/B176 [271]), then how one decides which concept of the understanding as the law governing the syntheses is applicable to the manifold without getting into a regress of laws for the application of laws. Kant deals with this problem through his doctrine of the "schematism" (*CPR*, A137-147/B176-187 [271-277]). According to Kant's definition, the "schema" is the mediating

representation that makes possible the application of the concepts of the understanding to the empirical sensible intuitions and it is “always only a product of the imagination”. The schema of the imagination is the rule or principle for taking together the manifold of intuition in accordance with the concepts of the understanding (*CPR*, A140-141/B179-180 [273]). In order to stop the regress, however, the schema must find a way to combine the manifold of intuition from within the sensibility, i.e., it must somehow be autonomous from the domination of the understanding. And, although there is nothing “formed” in the given manifold of intuition or nature does not provide any guidance about how it should be formed, and the direct involvement of the concepts of the understanding is blocked the imagination nevertheless is not free in bringing together the manifold of intuition in whatever form it pleases: It has to bring the manifold of intuition together in an accurate form that will conform to the conceptualization of the understanding. This conformity constitutes what Kant calls the “subjective condition” of cognition. But, Kant does not provide us any explication about how the imagination accomplishes such a synthesis or what is the origin of the resulting form and only states that:

the schematism of our understanding with regard to appearances and their mere form is a hidden art in the depths of the human soul, whose true operations we can divine from nature and lay unveiled before our eyes only with difficulty” (*CPR*, A141/B180-1 [273]).

The problem of the regress in the application of rules requires that the imagination is not merely receptive but has some autonomous productivity. But such a productivity of the imagination implies an ambiguity with regard to Kant’s fundamental distinction between passive sensibility and active understanding, immediate intuitions and the mediation of concepts. This ambiguity and the

corresponding problem of whether and how the imagination has an autonomous capacity of synthesis occupies a crucial place both in Kant's own exploration of the cognitive experience and in the debates on his critical epistemology. Many commentators have pointed out that, while in the doctrine of the "threefold synthesis" in the version A of the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant describes the imagination as having an autonomous capacity of synthesis, and thus jeopardizes the distinction between passive sensibility and active understanding, in the version B he subordinates it wholly to the service of the understanding. Heidegger, for example, interprets this change as Kant's realization of a threat by the autonomy of the imagination in the schematization to undermine not only the distinction between sensibility and thought but also the very ground of the objectivity of our knowledge of the world. Referring to Kant's statement in the Introduction of the *Critique of Pure Reason* that "there are two stems of human cognition, which may perhaps arise from a common but to us unknown root, namely sensibility and understanding, through the first the objects are given to us, but through the second of which they are thought" (*CPR*, A15/B29 [152]) Heidegger argues that the power of imagination is the unknown root of sensibility and understanding, and instead of following its lead, which would have forced him to rethink the critical project, "Kant shrank back from this unknown root."¹ Consequently, the main epistemological problems concerning Kant's distinction between sensibility and thought and the ambiguous role of the imagination emerge as follows: If sensible intuitions are blind and do not provide us

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, R. Taft, trans. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 110, quoted in Rebecca Kukla, "Introduction", *Aesthetics and Cognition in Kant's Critical Philosophy*, Rebecca Kukla, ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 20.

guidance about the form and properties of objects, we need an explanation of how the concepts of the understanding are applied and acquired. If the sensible intuitions are posited as already having formed through the concepts of the understanding then we face the difficulty of accounting for an independent outside world and avoiding the threat of subjective idealism. If the schematization of the imagination is proposed as a mediating procedure between unformed manifold of intuition and the concepts of the understanding, then this time we need a grounding explanation of the objectivity of the rules according to which the mediating representation is brought together. In the absence of such an explication our experience of the world becomes capriciously subjective.²

In the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* the ambiguity between sensibility and understanding and the accompanying problems become more apparent. Kant gives now a slightly different definition of the spontaneous actions of the faculty of cognition in which the power of judgment emerges as a self-sufficient transcendental faculty. According to this new definition, the *apprehension* of the manifold of intuition is accomplished by imagination, the *comprehension*, i.e., the synthetic unity of the consciousness of this manifold in the concept of an object is accomplished by understanding, and the *presentation (exhibitio)* of the object corresponding to this concept in intuition is accomplished by the power of judgment (*CPJ*, FI, VII: 220 [23]). Moreover, Kant defines two different ways in which the power of judgment can be performed. Accordingly, when the power of judgment subsumes a given

² For contemporary discussions on the epistemological problems concerning Kant's distinction between sensibility and thought in relation to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, see the articles in *Aesthetics and Cognition in Kant's Critical Philosophy* and Rebecca Kukla's helpful "Introduction".

empirical representation under an already available concept, then it is defined as the “determining power of judgment.” If the concept does not exist prior to the particular case, the power of judgment reflects on the given representation, in accordance with a certain principle, in order to find a concept under which it can be subsumed, then it is defined as the “reflecting power of judgment.” And, Kant defines *to reflect* as “to compare and to hold together given representations either with others or with one’s faculty of cognition, in relation to a concept thereby made possible” (*CPJ*, FI, V: 211 [15]).

As for the first type of reflection, namely, the comparison of representations with each other, Kant points out that in nature there is a great diversity of forms for which we as yet have no laws or empirical concepts. According to him, in order to find common features in the comparison of natural forms, to bring out among them systematic connection, to be able to classify them into genera and species, and to arrive at more and more general empirical concepts and laws, the reflecting power of judgment has to presuppose a certain higher principle of the appropriateness of nature to our capacity for cognition. Kant describes this higher principle as the concept of “nature as art,” the “technique of nature,” the “formal purposiveness of nature for the power of judgment” with regard to its particular laws (*CPJ*, FI, II: 204 [10]). Andrew Bowie remarks that all three descriptions refer to the Greek sense of *techne*, i.e., the capacity to produce in a purposive way.³ In other words, by this higher principle the power of judgment “heuristically” assumes that nature behaves not merely contingently and mechanically but also in a purposive way, as if it

³Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 27.

produces its forms to fit our cognitive powers. Similarly, Kant states that, in comparing particular forms of nature in accordance with the principle of the purposiveness to acquire general laws and concepts the reflecting power of judgment proceeds “not schematically, but *technically*, not as it were merely mechanically, like an instrument, but *artistically*” (CPJ, FI, V: 214 [17]). By this Kant appears to mean that, as in art the imagination manage to produce a figurative order, a composition of representations in accordance with a rule, which is not yet available. In other words, the power of judgment compares given representations according to a principle to bring them under a general concept that is thereby made possible, and the principle (the schema of a concept as yet to be produced) by which the comparison is made is generated by the same act of comparison. Hence, the acquired concept, the end product is the very rule which governs the synthesis. In this way the principle of the purposiveness suggests a “lawful contingency” of nature, i.e., the suitability of its contingent forms for the power of judgment, which legislates *a priori* for the sake of its own activity, to be able to bring them under an order. The main difficulty with Kant’s account of acquisition of general concepts remains as to how the imagination accomplishes to compose representations in a way that is compatible with the understanding, and hence as objectively valid.⁴

On the other hand, Kant remarkably defines reflection not only as the comparison of given representations with other representations to find general

⁴ For discussions on the formation of empirical concepts in Kant, see Béatrice Longuenesse, *Kant et le Pouvoir de Juger* (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1993), Henry E. Allison, *Kant’s Theory of Taste: A Reading of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Hannah Ginsborg, “Thinking the Particular as Contained under the Universal”, *Aesthetics and Cognition in Kant’s Critical Philosophy*, Rebecca Kukla, ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 35-60.

empirical concepts, but also as the comparison of them “with one’s faculty of cognition, in relation to a concept thereby made possible” (*CPJ*, FI, V: 211 [15]). In the “First Introduction” to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* Kant defines an “aesthetic reflective judgment” as follows:

A merely *reflecting* judgment about a given individual object... *can be aesthetic* if (before its comparison with others is seen), the power of judgment, which has no concept ready for the given intuition, holds the imagination (merely in the apprehension of the object) together with understanding (in the presentation of a concept in general) and perceives a relation of the two faculties of cognition which constitutes the subjective, merely sensitive condition of the objective use of the power of judgment in general (namely the agreement of those two faculties with each other) (*CPJ*, FI, VIII: 223-224 [26], emphases in the original).

Although in the main text Kant does not add much to this definition nor provides a more detailed and fuller exposition of the reflective comparison of given representations with our power of judgment in the experience of beauty, he consistently emphasizes some of its central characteristics: 1) The reflection is on the “form” of a given object. 2) The imagination and the understanding agree with each other, i.e., the form composed by the imagination (*apprehension* of the object’s manifold) is compatible with the conceptualization of the understanding (*presentation* or *unity* of a concept), so that the subjective condition of cognition in general is satisfied. 3) The imagination schematizes in its “freedom” without a concept, i.e., its synthesizing activity is not determined by a concept, although it ought to be compatible with the “lawfulness” of the understanding. 4) The imagination and the understanding reciprocally animate each other and the inner perception of this animation is a distinctive feeling of pleasure that grounds the judgment of beauty. 5) The outcome of the reflection on the form of the given object is not an empirical objective concept or a property of the object, i.e., the judgment of

beauty is not a cognitive judgment and its predicate can never be concept of an object. 6) The mutual agreement of the imagination and the understanding provides the judgment of beauty with a claim for universal validity. 7) The principle with respect to which the reflection is accomplished and hence the concept thereby acquired is the “formal subjective purposiveness of nature for the power of judgment”.

In the aesthetic reflective judgment of beauty the problem of how the imagination composes a form that is compatible with the understanding, so as to satisfy the subjective condition of cognition in general and to claim to be universally valid without a determinate concept becomes much more apparent. As we have seen, according to Kant’s epistemological theory it is not possible to have ordinary cognitive experience of objects without concepts. Several commentators have pointed out that, although the judgments of beauty are not cognitive judgments and their predicates are not concepts of objects, in Kant’s definition the judgments of beauty are individual judgments about particular perceptual objects within particular perceptual situations.⁵ Then there is the ineluctable question about whether and how we perceive an object as “formed” without a concept. The question is directly related to the distinction between immediate sensibility and conceptual mediation and to the question of whether the perceptual content of the experience of beauty can be non-conceptual or it is inevitably conceptual.

⁵See Dieter Henrich, “Kant’s Explanation of Aesthetic Judgment”, *Aesthetic Judgment and the Moral Image of the World: Studies in Kant* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1992), pp. 29-56; Anthony Saville, *Kantian Aesthetics Pursued* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993); Malcolm Budd, “The Pure Judgment of Taste as an Aesthetic Reflective Judgement”, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 41/3, 2001, pp. 247-260; Paul Guyer, “The Harmony of the Faculties Revisited”, *Aesthetics and Cognition in Kant’s Critical Philosophy*, Rebecca Kukla, ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 162-193.

Paul Guyer divides the interpretations of the free harmonious play of the imagination and the understanding into two main classes.⁶ According to the first one, in the free play of the faculties the given manifold of intuition composed by the imagination in the perception of an object “satisfies all the conditions for normal cognition of an object *except for that of the actual application of a determinate concept to the manifold.*”⁷ In other words, in the experience of beauty the manifold of intuition are taken together by the imagination as forming a unity suited to the conceptualization of understanding, but this unity either precedes or does not require the application of a determinate concept. Since Kant describes cognition as equated with the subsumption of a manifold of intuitions under a determinate concept Guyer identifies such interpretation as “precognitive”. On the other hand, in the second class of interpretations the free play of the faculties is described as an experience in which all of the normal conditions for ordinary cognition are satisfied but “only in an indeterminate way”. That is to say, in the experience of beauty, the manifold of intuitions is brought under an “indeterminate concept”, i.e., “open-ended manifold of concepts” so that the mind moves “playfully and enjoyably among different ways of conceiving the same object without allowing or requiring it to settle down on one determinate way of conceiving it”.⁸ In order to specify that according to such interpretations there is a free play among a “multiplicity of possible concepts” Guyer calls them ‘multicognitive’. And after discussing the textual supports for and a variety of problems with each classes of interpretation, Guyer identifies a “deeper

⁶ Paul Guyer, “The Harmony of the Faculties Revisited”, pp. 162-193.

⁷ Ibid., p. 165.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 165-166.

philosophical problem” for both approaches. According to him “the very idea of a state of our cognitive powers that does not involve any determinate concepts is dubious” and this idea is not only incompatible with an ordinary assumption about judgment of taste but also with the most fundamental claims of Kant’s theory of knowledge.⁹ Guyer argues that just like in any other judgments about objects, in judgments of taste also the object “must be identified by means of particular empirical concepts and we must be cognizant of the application of such concepts to them in order to make such judgments”.¹⁰ In Guyer’s account, judgments of beauty are about objects or parts of objects, and as he puts it:

we could not know what the object we are responding to with a pleasurable feeling of beauty, or which object we should attend to in order to confirm for ourselves another’s judgment of beauty, except by using a determinate concept to delimit some portion of our total visual or other experiential field, at or during some particular time, as the object of our attention, response, and aesthetic judgment.¹¹

Guyer further argues that, according to the most fundamental claims of Kant’s theory of knowledge we cannot be conscious of a representation without the application of some determinate concept to it. Referring to Kant’s description of the synthesis of recognition in the concept in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (A104 [231], B137 [249]) Guyer shows that the manifold of intuition brought together by the imagination with the conceptualization of the understanding requires that the manifold is unified in one consciousness, i.e., what Kant calls “the transcendental unity of apperception” which is only possible by the application of a concept to the manifold. But, in Guyer’s account this concept must be a determinate empirical

⁹ Ibid., p.178.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.178.

¹¹ Ibid., p.179.

concept and without the application of such a concept “we can never be conscious of a representation at all, a fortiori a representation of an object, a fortiori of an object of actual or potential aesthetic response and judgment”.¹²

So, Guyer proposes what he calls the “metacognitive” interpretation according to which the harmonious play is construed as a state of mind in which the manifold of intuition composed by the imagination agrees with the unity of a determinate concept of the understanding so that an object is recognized. But in such a state of mind, i.e., in the experience of beauty there is more unity and coherence that is required for the object to be the kind of thing it is, i.e., a unity “that goes beyond whatever is necessary for ordinary cognition”.¹³

Malcolm Budd also argues that even though the judgment of beauty is not a cognitive judgment about the properties of an object, in the experience of beauty the manifold of intuition “is brought under the concept of an object” so as to satisfy the condition of the possibility of cognition in general.¹⁴ But, Budd asserts that although in order to perceive the “form” of an object it is necessary to perceive it under empirical concepts, such as concepts of color, and as a formed matter that constitutes an empirical object, the perceived “form” of an object does not necessarily depend on how it is conceptualized.¹⁵ According to Budd, the perceived form of an object when it is conceptualized “as the kind of thing it is” and that of when it is perceived without having such a concept does not have to be different from each other. In his

¹² Ibid., p.180.

¹³ Ibid., pp.182-183.

¹⁴ Malcolm Budd, “The Pure Judgment of Taste as an Aesthetic Reflective Judgement”, p. 249.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 253-4.

account, the difference between the two perceptions of the object is not a difference between perceptual forms but rather the *interpretation* of what kind of object it is.¹⁶ Accordingly, whether I have a concept of the thing before me, i.e., know what kind of thing it is supposed to be, or not does not change the perceptual content of my experience of the object or its perceptual form. For example, when I get the knowledge that the thing before me is a crustacean, a krill, or a lobster rather than a sea anemone I do not see it in a different form. For Budd, Kant's definition of beauty does not require that the object *should not* be seen as the kind of thing it is. All we have to do is to abstract such knowledge from our determination of the object as beautiful, and such an abstraction does not mean that the perceived form will change.¹⁷

Even though Guyer's and Budd's interpretations differ on the issue of the possibility of unconceptualized perceptual content, they both agree that in the experience of beauty the object should necessarily be individuated by some particular concept. However, although such an interpretation is acceptable with respect to particular individual objects, or part of objects, it is problematic with respect to an "aesthetic form" composed of a multiplicity of objects, or diverse parts. In the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* Kant defines the "form" of sensual objects as "either *shape* or *play*: in the latter case either play of shapes (in space, mime, and dance), or mere play of sensations (in time)" and suggests that the "composition" constitutes the proper object of the judgment of taste (*CPJ*, §14: 225 [110]). Although in the case of particular individual objects the individuation by determinate

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 252.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 253.

concepts does not necessarily affect the perceptual content, in the case of the composition or arrangement of multiplicity of objects or diverse parts, determination of the borders of the composition and what will be involved in it will affect the perceptual content and hence the “aesthetic form”. In his analysis, Kant not only mentions particular beautiful objects but also “the free beauties of nature that surround the observer” (*CPJ*, General Remark on the First Section of the Analytic, 243 [126]; §58: 348 [222]). The perceptual form of nature changes depending on our position, perceptual mode, how we set the boundaries of our perceptual field, what we include in the composition, i.e., how we frame it. It is perfectly possible that a composition of a cluster of crustacean, sands, rocks and waves can be determined as beautiful depending on the frame. A pampas grass that is not beautiful individually can be a part of a beautiful composition with other pampas grasses and the full moon behind.¹⁸ And in the case of nature the determination of the perceptual field can be done in infinitely many ways. The employment of particular empirical concepts such as crustacean, sand, pampas grass, rock, moon, etc., or color concepts may be necessary but not sufficient for perceiving the aesthetic form of such a composition. The distinctive characteristic of nature is that it possesses a certain indeterminacy, diversity and freedom. As George Santayana puts it:

The natural landscape is an indeterminate object: it almost always contains enough diversity to allow the eye a great liberty in selecting, emphasizing

¹⁸ In one place Kant himself depicts such a composition, although he probably would have described this composition as a mixture of the form and the charm of nature: “the bewitchingly beautiful song of the nightingale, in a lonely stand of bushes, on a still summer evening, under the gentle light of the moon” (*CPJ*, §42: 302 [182]).

and in vague emotional stimulus. A landscape to be seen has to be composed... then we feel that landscape is beautiful.¹⁹

Can we think that this freedom peculiar to natural beauty is also operative for Kant's definition of beauty? Does Kant imply such a freedom when he describes beauty as "free" from determinate concepts? When Kant holds that in determining something as beautiful our judgment is independent of determinate concepts of objects, he primarily means that our judgment does not presuppose "a concept of what the object ought to be", i.e., a concept of "the purposiveness to which the composition of the manifold is related" (*CPJ*, §16: 229 [114]). Can we think that the judgment of beauty should also be "free" from particular concepts that determine the form of the object? Such an interpretation would offer a solution to the notorious ambiguity about the distinction between "free" and "dependent beauty" and would explain why dependent beauty is still beauty but that which depends on a concept.²⁰

According to Kant's definition:

There are two kinds of beauty: free beauty (*pulchritude vaga*) or merely adherent beauty (*pulchritude adhaerens*). The first presupposes no concept of what the object ought to be; the second does presuppose such a concept and the perfection of the object in accordance with it. The first are called (self-subsisting) beauties of this or that thing; the latter, as adhering to a concept (conditioned beauty), are ascribed to objects that stand under the concept of a particular end (*CPJ*, §16: 229 [114]).

While Kant's examples of free beauties are flowers, birds, marine crustaceans, designs *à la grecque*, foliage for borders or on wall papers, etc., he

¹⁹ George Santayana, *The Sense of Beauty: Being the Outline of Aesthetic Theory* (New York: Dover Publications Inc, 1953), p. 83, quoted in Allen Carlson, *Aesthetics and Environment: The Appreciation of Nature, Art and Architecture* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 37.

²⁰ James Kirwan remarks that the distinction between free and dependent beauty is generally taken as "one of the more arcane moments" in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* and provides a comprehensive list of different comments on it. See James Kirwan, *The Aesthetic in Kant* (New York: Continuum, 2004), p. 31 and p. 163 note 11.

qualifies the beauty of a human being, of a horse, of a building such as a church, a palace, an arsenal, or a garden house as dependent beauty (*CPJ*, §16: 229-230 [114]). Now, what *determines* the “beauty” of a dependently beautiful object cannot be the concept of a purpose as in that case the judgment would be a judgment of qualitative perfection rather than a judgment of taste. If, however, the judgment of dependent beauty were a combination of a judgment of qualitative perfection with a judgment of taste on free beauty,²¹ then to determine the object as beautiful the mere reflection on the form of the object would be sufficient, i.e., we would not need the concept of the object. Malcolm Budd maintains that when an object is perceived under a certain concept it may be perceived to have a structure and unity it will not be perceived to possess if it is not brought under that concept.²² With his example if the object is a chair “it will be seen to consist of seat, back, legs, and perhaps arms, each part performing a function integral to the object’s purpose, the parts being unified through their essential contributions to the fulfillment of that purpose”.²³ But, according to Budd, Kant’s definition of form is not such a structural unity. Now, let us say that the chair is a beautiful chair and it is qualitatively perfect. If we can determine its beauty without knowing or just by abstracting that it is a chair then our judgment would be a pure judgment of taste rather than a judgment of dependent beauty. It is only if the beauty of the chair “depends” on seeing it as a chair then the notion of “dependent beauty” would make sense. This suggests that in the case of “dependent beauty” such an abstraction is not possible. On the other hand, if we understand dependent beauty

²¹ See, for example, Malcolm Budd, *The Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), pp. 36-39.

²² Malcolm Budd, “The Pure Judgment of Taste as an Aesthetic Reflective Judgement”, p. 252.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

as a “beautiful presentation of a concept”, a definition which is used by Kant for artistic beauty as well, then we can get an explanation why dependent beauty depends, or is “conditioned by” a concept. Kant suggests that to say that “That is a beautiful woman” is just the same as saying that “in her figure nature represents the ends in the feminine physique beautifully,” and for such a judgment “it is necessary to look beyond the mere form to a concept with which object is thought in such a way through a logically conditioned aesthetic judgment” (*CPJ*, §48: 312 [190]). If so, we can conclude that if in determining whether something is beautiful or not we need a particular determinate concept to bring the manifold of intuition under a unity, the judgment would be that of a “dependent beauty”. Thus, the freedom of “free beauty” would signify to be “unconditioned” by such a determinate concept of an object.

Then what determines the boundaries of the aesthetic object, what is involved in it as its parts in the experience of beauty, if not a particular determinate empirical concept? In several places in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* Kant states that the beautiful is “the presentation of an *indeterminate* concept of the understanding” (*CPJ*, §4: 207 [93]; §9: 219 [104]; §23: 244 [128]; §57: 339-40 [215-16]). If the concept unifying the aesthetic form is not some determinate concept, how its unification of the manifold is distinguished by the unity provided by an ordinary empirical concept? Malcolm Budd suggests that the object of aesthetic experience composes “a unity in the sense of forming a unified design or shape or manifold, one in which the parts seem to fit harmoniously together, rather than constituting a mere

aggregate of essentially unrelated items”.²⁴ For example, to unite leaves, petals, stamens in the outer ring, and pistil at the center and recognize them as flower, or to unite a rock cap on another rock cone and recognize them as a fairy chimney, or to unite a particular group of fairy chimneys and recognize the place as the “Love Valley” is not the same as to perceive them as constituting a harmonious unity. And, whenever imagination apprehends such a unity in the free formation of nature we experience the distinctive pleasure of beauty. The object of this unity is nothing but the expression of the singular, indeterminate concept that determines the “aesthetic form”. Thus, in the experience of beauty, even though we perceive the manifold of intuition as having a certain composition and unity, what is at issue is not to relate that unity to the concept of an object, i.e., to recognize a particular object, or objective qualities. Rather in declaring that something is beautiful we are determining the aesthetic order schematized freely by the imagination is in harmony with the understanding through an inner perception of that harmony, i.e., a distinctive feeling of pleasure. Therefore, to recognize a beautiful pattern in a crustacean or in a plant, or a fractal structure of frost crystals formed naturally on cold glass, or a beautiful landscape in a travel advertisement in situ would be a cognitive experience rather than an experience of beauty. Hence, Kant asserts that the beautiful is not a predicate of objects, it is not cognition. The judgment of beauty is a singular judgment about the adequacy of the perceived form to the harmonious play of our cognitive powers rather than relating it to the concept of an object. As Dieter Henrich remarks, in the experience of beauty to relate the figurative order brought about by

²⁴ Malcolm Budd, “The Pure Judgment of Taste as an Aesthetic Reflective Judgement”, p. 257.

the imagination to an ordinary concept of an object or its characteristics would “commit us to the unwelcome conclusion that our reason for using the predicate ‘beautiful’ *dissolves* as soon as a general concept is found that applies to the object in question”.²⁵

If so can the imagination apprehend such a unifying composition everywhere at will and perceive everything as beautiful? What is the origin of this form? According to Kant the origin of the beautiful formations of nature that occasion the playful harmony of our cognitive powers is not nature itself. In Kant’s language the principle of purposiveness that guides the judgment of beauty is not given by nature *a posteriori* by means of the senses, in which case there would not be any difference between the beautiful and the agreeable. On the contrary, this principle is the ground which makes our experience of the beauty of nature possible. However, the *a priori* principle of the power of judgment does not have any constitutive trust on the forms of nature as it is the case with *a priori* principles of the understanding that ground the cognitive experience of the sensible world. If this were the case then the beautiful would not differ from the good.

Then what is the source of the beautiful forms of nature? Why in some products of nature we perceive that our cognitive faculties of the imagination and the understanding are in free harmonious play? According to Kant, the realization that the beauty of natural formations is unnecessary for their own use but as if selected for the harmonious play of our cognitive powers suggests that nature intentionally produces those beauties for us, what he describes as the “realism of the

²⁵ Dieter Henrich, “Kant’s Explanation of Aesthetic Judgment”, p. 43.

purposiveness of nature” (*CPJ*, §58: 347-348 [222]). But, Kant points out that such an idea not only would be an unnecessary multiplication of principles but also contradicts with the fact that nature everywhere produces such formations not intentionally but mechanically. But, although beautiful forms of nature are contingently produced, our experience of them as beautiful is not contingent, i.e., the harmonious play of our cognitive faculties does not come out causally and hence is not a part of the empirical nature. Kant explains the existence of natural beauty by what he calls the “idealism” of the purposiveness of nature that can only be attributed to it by our power of judgment. In other words, natural beauty is the perceiving of the power of judgment of its own lawfulness, i.e., the harmony of the understanding and the imagination, its “subjective” or “supersensible ground” in the contingent formations of nature without the employment of determinate concepts (*CPJ*, §58: 346-51 [221-225]).

Even though the free formations of nature provide an occasion for a perception of our subjective ground and nature shows this tendency everywhere, the lawfulness of contingent nature is not immediately perceivable everywhere. Hence, we do not perceive everything as beautiful. However, Kant acknowledges the possibility of “correcting and broadening our judgments of taste”. As he puts it, we improve our taste not by learning rules and following them in our judgments but by investigating the harmonious play of our cognitive faculties and “laying out the reciprocal subjective purposiveness, [whose] form in a given representation is the beauty of its object” (*CPJ*, §34: 285-286 [166]). If this is the case, this suggests that whenever we can make the lawfulness of contingent nature perceivable by changing our position, our mode of perception, or the “frame” in which we perceive nature, we

can experience nature beautifully. Moreover, if we accept that “dependent beauty” is a genuine form of beauty which is conditioned by a determinate concept, and if the lawfulness of the contingent nature can be made perceivable through a concept, then this means that it is possible for us to experience the beauty of nature “dependently”.

A similar construal can be adapted with respect to the beauty of manmade objects. What is the source of the beauty of an artifact? For Kant manmade objects are produced intentionally in order to fulfill determinate purposes and his analysis suggests that the only possibility for them to be beautiful is to intentionally give them a beautiful form. A utensil, a building, or a garment can be beautiful if we give them intentionally a beautiful form and Kant maintains that we give them such a form because of our “natural tendency to sociability”. In Kant’s example, if someone builds a hut in a desert island he will not give it a beautiful form; rather only in society he does so in order to “communicate his pleasure to others” so as “to be not merely a human being but also, in his own way, a refined human being (the beginning of civilization)” (*CPJ*, §41: 297 [177]). But, we can think that manmade objects also can be seen as beautiful if the lawfulness of natural contingency becomes aesthetically perceivable. For example, if we were to find a way to perceive aesthetically the harmonious composition of the materials of a hut or a utensil without an intentional design for beauty with the surrounding environment and climate, and the effects of the natural forces on their form, this would constitute an occasion for the inner perception of the agreement of our subjective ground. However, although Kant’s theory may be interpreted as allowing natural beauty of manmade objects and conceptual beauty of natural landscape he does not entertain such a possibility.

Kant's aesthetic theory explains the "subjective" but "universally valid" ground of beauty as the inner perception of the agreement of imagination and understanding, i.e., of the supersensible ground in us. But as in the case of his epistemological theory he does not provide any explanation about the origin of this agreement nor he clarifies satisfactorily the objective quality of the aesthetic form and only states that "the great difficulty in solving [this] problem which nature has made so involuted may... serve to excuse some not entirely avoidable obscurity in the solution" (*CPJ*, Preface, 170 [58]).

2.3. The Form of the Artistic Beauty: Art as Nature

In the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* Kant starts his analysis of artistic beauty by maintaining that:

Art is distinguished from *nature* as doing (*facere*) is from acting or producing in general (*agere*), and the product or consequence of the former is distinguished as a *work* (*opus*) from the latter as an effect (*effectus*) (*CPJ*, §43: 303 [182]).

He states that "only production through freedom, i.e., through a capacity for choice that grounds its action, should be called art" and the "form" of an artefact has as its cause the intentional action of the producer (*CPJ*, §43: 303 [182]). Kant defines "art" as intentionally produced works of human beings to distinguish it from the effect of nature, and he states that "every art presupposes rules which first lay the foundation by means of which a product that is to be called artistic is first represented as possible", and "without a preceding rule a product can never be called art" (*CPJ*, §46: 307 [186]). Moreover, Kant distinguishes also the beauty of art from the beauty of nature. He writes:

In order to judge a beauty of nature as such, I do not need first to have a concept of what sort of thing the object is supposed to be, i.e., it is not

necessary for me to know the material purposiveness (the end), but the mere form without knowledge of the end pleases for itself in the judging. But if the object is given as a product of art, and is as such supposed to be declared to be beautiful, then since art always presupposes an end in the cause (and its causality), a concept must first be the ground of what the thing is supposed to be, and since the agreement of the manifold in a thing with its inner determination as an end is the perfection of the thing, in the judging of the beauty of art the perfection of the thing will also have to be taken into account, which is not even a question in the judging of a natural beauty (as such) (*CPJ*, §48: 311 [190]).

However, Kant not only defines the judgment of beauty as free from determinate concepts of objects, i.e., what the thing is supposed to be, but he also asserts that the concept of beautiful art “does not allow the judgment concerning the beauty of its product to be derived from any sort of rule that has a *concept* for its determining ground, and thus has as its ground a concept of how it is possible” (*CPJ*, §46: 307 [186], emphasis in the original). This engenders a paradoxical situation for the “beautiful art”: while beauty, by definition requires being free from determinate concepts and rules, art, by definition, requires rules for its production and concepts in the judging of its beauty. Kant presents his solution to the paradox of the beauty of art by suggesting that “art can only be beautiful if we are aware that it is art and yet it looks to us like nature” (*CPJ*, §45: 306 [185]) and this is possible only if beautiful art is a product of “genius” (*CPJ*, §46: 307 [186]). The definition of beauty necessitates that the purposiveness in the production of the object must be without a determinate purpose. But as art is inevitably intentional, it can only be beautiful if the purposiveness in its production “must nevertheless not seem intentional”, i.e., it must be “regarded as nature” although we are aware of it as art (*CPJ*, §45: 307 [186]). Yet, to regard beautiful art as if it is nature does not mean that it is a mere product of chance. Art is necessarily a production of human intentionality with respect to rules. But, Kant suggests that the rules, which make possible for art to be what it is, are

provided by genius. In Kant's definition genius is the talent, a natural gift, an inborn productive faculty of the artist "*through which* nature gives rule to art" (*CPJ*, §46: 307 [186]). For Kant, the rule provided by genius is not governed by determinate concepts nor can it be learned as particular precepts. As he puts it, genius cannot itself describe discursively "how it brings its product into being, but rather that it gives the rule as *nature*" and does not know himself "how the ideas for it come to him, and also does not have it in his power to think up such things at will or according to a plan, and to communicate to others precepts that would put them in a position to produce similar products" (*CPJ*, §46: 308 [187]).

However, to say that nature gives the rule to art through genius and that art is beautiful to the extent that it seems at the same time to be nature does not clear away the ambiguity concerning the role of the concepts and rules in the creation and appreciation of beauty and its relation to the question of aesthetic form. The persistence of the ambiguity results from Kant's assertion that:

Genius can only provide rich *material* for products of art; its elaboration and *form* require a talent that has been academically trained, in order to make use of it that can stand up to the power of judgment (*CPJ*, §47: 310 [189], emphases in the original).

In Kant's definition the beauty of art is the "beautiful representation of an object", and it is the "form of the presentation of a concept" by means of which the concept is universally communicated (*CPJ*, §48: 312 [191]). But, he states that "to give this form to the product of beautiful art requires merely taste" (*CPJ*, §48: 312 [191]). And according to him there are several ways to give a beautiful form to an artefact. For example, one can produce a beautiful object by imitating the beautiful forms of nature or of art. In Kant's examples, artificial flowers or artfully carved

birds produced to look entirely similar to natural ones, or an imitation of a birdsong which sounds entirely like nature gives an occasion for a genuine experience of beauty with respect to mere reflection on their form (*CPJ*, §42: 299-302 [179-182]). In Kant's description, to give a beautiful form to his product the artist "after he has practiced and corrected it by means of various examples of art or nature, holds up his work, after many, often laborious attempts to satisfy it finds the form that contents him" (*CPJ*, §48: 312 [191]). And for Kant this is accomplished merely through taste by conforming to determinate rules that can be learned by training. However, in Kant's account for an object to have a beautiful form in these ways is not sufficient to be qualified as beautiful art. He states that taste,

is merely a faculty for judging, not a productive faculty; and what is in accordance with it is for that very reason not a work of beautiful art, although it can be a product belonging to a useful and mechanical art or even to science, conforming to determinate rules which can be learned and which must be precisely followed (*CPJ*, §47: 310 [189]).

This suggests that the rules provided by genius (nature in the subject) are not the rules followed to give a beautiful "form" to a work of art. In other words, genius is not a gift of nature to produce beautiful "forms" in art. As for the concept that one has to presuppose in judging the beauty of a work of art, should we understand that they are those rules that are to be followed to give the beautiful form to a work and that the determination of the work as beautiful is the determination of whether the artist successfully uses his talent to embody them in the work, i.e., what is described in contemporary aesthetics as "design appreciation"? Kant's assertion that "in the judging of the beauty of art the perfection of the thing will also have to be taken into account" seems to support such a construal. But, Kant insistently states that the ground of a judgment of beauty is not a conceptual determination and this applies

both to nature and to art. If this is the case, then what does Kant mean when he says that in determining the beauty of a work of art “a concept must first be the ground of what the thing is supposed to be”? Now, Kant crucially asserts that in order to analyze the faculties that constitute genius as the talent required for producing beautiful art, it is necessary to determine the difference between the beauty of nature and the beauty of art. And he identifies this difference as: “A beauty of nature is a *beautiful thing*; the beauty of art is a *beautiful representation* of a thing” (CPJ, §48: 311 [189], emphases in the original). Therefore, a solution to the problem of the ambiguous role of concepts in the creation and appreciation of artistic beauty requires a clarification of what Kant means by a “*beautiful representation* of a thing”.

Now, an imitation of a beautiful object of nature or of art presents us a beautiful form that occasions the harmonious play of our imagination and understanding, and hence our experience of beauty. But, Kant seems to mean something else when he suggests that the beauty of art is a beautiful representation of a thing, since in his account beautiful art goes beyond the imitation of beautiful forms. Art is a talent that produces beautiful representation of things regardless of whether they are beautiful or not by themselves. And to be able to do this, to have merely taste would not suffice. In other words, to produce beautiful art we need more than to have the concept of the object, i.e., to know what the object is supposed to be and to have a taste to give it a beautiful form. For Kant taste is not a productive faculty and it cannot give by itself a beautiful form to an object. He asserts that the “material” required for the beautiful representation of a thing in art is “produced” by

genius. And here we find the key for a clarification of the ambiguous role of concepts in the creation and appreciation of artistic beauty.

According to the basic tenets of Kant's epistemology forms without intuition are empty. In natural beauty the intuitive material is given by nature itself. But in the case of art this intuitive material cannot be provided by a natural object that is already beautiful, since art is something more than imitation, i.e., originality and productivity are its primary characteristics (*CPJ*, §46: 307-308 [186-187]). Then what does it mean that genius produces the "material" for beautiful art? Kant's answer is presented in his doctrine of "aesthetic ideas". He suggests that it is possible that a work can have every quality to give us an occasion for an experience of beauty but it can be without what he calls "spirit". In Kant's description "spirit" is "the animating principle in the mind" and the "material" which this principle uses for "purposively setting the mental powers into motion", i.e., allowing the free harmonious play of imagination and understanding is "the presentation of aesthetic ideas" (*CPJ*, §49: 313-314 [192]). And Kant defines an aesthetic idea as the "representation of the imagination that occasion much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e. concept, to be adequate to it, which consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible" (*CPJ*, §49: 314 [192]). An aesthetic idea is a representation of the imagination associated with a given concept. But the association of a representation with a given concept as an aesthetic idea differs, and in fact goes beyond the association accomplished in ordinary cognition. While in ordinary cognition the intuitive material given by the world in perception is composed by the imagination in accordance with a rule, i.e., the schema, so as to suit to the concept of the understanding, in producing an

aesthetic idea the imagination freely “transforms” the manifold given by nature “into something entirely different, into that which steps beyond nature” (*CPJ*, §49: 314 [192]). So that genius provides the original “material” for the understanding that is required for beautiful art. On the other hand, Kant suggests that these free associations of the imagination do not rest as some disorderly products of a “lawless freedom”, rather as in the case of ordinary cognition they constitute a unity compatible with the understanding. As Kant puts it, genius consists not only in “finding ideas for a given concept” but also “hitting upon the *expression* for these, through which the subjective disposition of the mind that is produced, as an accompaniment of a concept, can be communicated to others” (*CPJ*, §49: 317 [194-195]). In Kant’s definition spirit is the very faculty which apprehends “the rapidly passing play of the imagination” and unifies it into a concept (*CPJ*, §49: 317 [194-195]). By unifying the association of aesthetic idea composed freely by the imagination with a given concept, spirit “creates”, or rather “exposes or expresses” a *new rule*, an exemplary to communicate it universally beyond cognition and discursive association of the understanding (*CPJ*, §49: 317 [195]). In this way, Kant states, “the imagination, in its freedom from all guidance by rules, is nevertheless represented as purposive for the presentation of the given concept (*CPJ*, §49: 317 [195]). He writes:

[T]he unsought and unintentional subjective purposiveness in the free correspondence of the imagination to the lawfulness of the understanding presupposes a proportion and disposition of this faculty that cannot be produced by any following of rules, whether of science or of mechanical imitation, but that only the nature of the subject can produce (*CPJ*, §49: 317-318 [195]).

Accordingly, although art is inevitably a production of human intentionality, its product, owing to the nature in the subject, i.e., genius looks like as a product of nature. This means that, the concept which we have to presuppose in judging the beauty of a work of art is simply a determinate concept of the understanding, or of the reason, that is also the concept of the product as an end. This concept may be, with the examples of Kant, the kingdom of hell, eternity, creation, death, war, envy, love, or simply any object of nature. But, the judgment of beauty is not grounded upon these determinate concepts, or the rules to be followed to give the product a beautiful form.

At this point, however, Kant's distinction between beauty, or taste, and spirit restores the ambiguity concerning the aesthetic form of a work of art. The distinction suggests two possible construals of the aesthetic form of a work of art. According to the first one, in the beauty of art genius provides the material, i.e., aesthetic ideas whose expression constitutes a "new" rule for non-discursively communicating a determinate concept of the understanding and taste gives this material its beautiful form, by means of laborious practice and training, so that the concept (the object) is represented beautifully. According to the second one, however, spirit already by itself unifies the ideas of imagination into a concept through which "the subjective disposition of the mind is produced" and "can be communicated to others". The non-discursive communication of the harmonious relation of the understanding and the imagination is Kant's very definition of beauty. And Kant himself states that "beauty (whether it be beauty of nature or of art) can in general be called the *expression* of aesthetic ideas" (*CPJ*, §51: 320 [197], emphasis in the original). If this is the case, then the aesthetic "form" of a work of art would be nothing but the "indeterminate

concept” unified by spirit as the expression of aesthetic ideas. If so, what is the beautiful “form” of a work of art given by taste? Such a distinction between beauty and spirit in a work of art seems to obliterate the very differentiation between natural and artistic beauty and turns out to be perplexing.

The corresponding ambiguity of whether the aesthetic form is the sensuous expression of the ideas or merely the formal properties of the work of art without the involvement of ideas leads to controversies on and different interpretations of Kant’s conception of the aesthetic “form” of works of art. But aside from that, as in the case of ordinary cognition and experience of natural beauty, in the creation and appreciation of artistic beauty Kant leaves the questions of origin and objectivity, i.e., how imagination accomplishes to compose a representation which is independent of discursive rules but still agrees with the unity of the understanding and hence universally communicable, unresolved.

2.4. Aesthetic Form and Feeling: The Experience of the Ground of Freedom

In the Second Section of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, namely “The Dialectic of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment” Kant gives an explanation of how ideas are distinguished from concepts of the understanding. Accordingly, ideas are ‘representations related to an object in accordance with a certain (subjective or objective) principle’ and these representations can ‘never become a cognition of that object’. And when such representations are related to an intuition in accordance with a subjective principle of the agreement of imagination and understanding with each other they are called aesthetic ideas. An aesthetic idea is an intuition of the imagination for which a determinate concept of the understanding ‘can never be found adequate’. On the other hand, if the representations are related to a concept in

accordance with an objective principle without producing a cognition of the object, they are called ideas of reason. Kant describes an idea of reason as a “*transcendent* concept” to contrast it with a concept of the understanding, which he calls an “immanent concept” that constitutes a cognition of an object in experience (*CPJ*, §57, Remark I: 341-342 [217-218]).

According to Kant’s epistemological theory concepts are empty without corresponding intuition, or as he puts it “to demonstrate the reality of our concepts intuition are always required” (*CPJ*, §59: 351 [225]). In other words, we must be able to produce instances of concepts in intuition, or to use Kant’s crucial terminology to provide a “presentation” (exhibition- *Darstellung*) of them in intuition, and this applies to both application and acquisition of concepts. At §59 of “The Dialectic of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment” Kant clarifies that if the instances of pure concepts of the understanding are presented in intuition, they are called “schemata”, and if the instances are that of empirical concepts then they are called “examples”. But he also asserts that if one demands that the instances of the concepts of reason, i.e., ideas be presented, i.e., their “reality be demonstrated for the sake of theoretical cognition of them, then one desires something impossible, since no intuition adequate to them can be given at all” (*CPJ*, §59: 351 [225]).

As we have seen, in Kant’s critical epistemology we can have the knowledge of the world as it appears to us under the given form by our cognitive faculties. In other words, it is not possible for us to know the world as it is “in itself”. The manifold of intuition given in our sensibility requires a spontaneous synthesis of our cognitive apparatus. Kant maintains that for this synthesis and hence objective cognition to be possible there requires first the continuity of the self-consciousness,

i.e., “the transcendental unity of apperception”. In other words, experience of an object requires a subject that is aware of itself as the subject of the experience: “The *I think* must be able to accompany all my representations... all manifold of intuition has a necessary relation to the *I think* in the same subject in which this manifold is to be encountered” (*CPR*, §16: B131-132 [246]). But, Kant maintains that this synthesis is an act of *spontaneity*, i.e., it does not belong to the sensibility (*CPR*, §16: B132 [246]). That is to say, the unity of self-consciousness is not the same as the unity of empirical objects which are given in sensibility and synthesized by the spontaneous act of our cognitive faculties. The self-consciousness has to be self-caused in order to prevent an infinite regress of conditions. This means that the cognition of objects given in sensibility and the self-consciousness reciprocally conditions each other’s unity. In other words, subject’s self-consciousness is interdependent with the conception of an objective world. As Gilles Deleuze explains:

My representations are mine in so far as they are linked in the unity of a consciousness, in such a way that the ‘I think’ accompanies them. Now, representations are not united in a consciousness in this way unless the manifold that they synthesize is thereby related to the object in general. Doubtless we know only qualified objects (qualified as this or that by a diversity). But the manifold would never be referred to an object if we did not have at our disposal objectivity as a form in general (‘object in general’, ‘object = x’). Where does this form come from? The object in general is the correlate of the ‘I think’ or of the unity of consciousness; it is the expression of the cogito, its formal objectivation. Therefore the real (synthetic) formula of the cogito is: I think myself and in thinking myself, I think the object in general to which I relate a represented diversity.²⁶

But if this is the case, then the unity of the self-consciousness turns out to be a pure logical presupposition that cannot be grounded in objective knowledge. The “transcendental I” as the ground of all appearances is itself cannot be given in

²⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Kant’s Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), pp. 15-16.

intuition. Stated differently, our conceiving of ourselves as unitary consciousness as the synthetic unity of apperception is not a cognition, i.e., we don't have *objective knowledge* of ourselves as unitary consciousness. As Kant's puts it:

In the transcendental synthesis of the manifold of representations in general... hence in the synthetic original unity of apperception, I am conscious of myself not as I appear to myself, nor *as* I am in myself, but only *that* I am. This representation is a thinking, not an *intuiting* (*CPR*, §25: B157 [259]).

Kant situates the self in the supersensible realm not only because of epistemological reasons but also to save the possibility of the moral freedom of human agents. If as conceptualizing subjects we were a part of the objective world then the laws of causal determination would also apply to ourselves. To be able to account for the moral freedom, our selves must be conceived as not being bounded by deterministic laws of nature. By applying the distinction between appearances and thing-in-themselves to the human subjects, Kant situates the human freedom in the supersensible realm, making the will inaccessible to cognition. In other words, "freedom is a mere idea, whose objective reality cannot be represented in any way in accordance with the laws of nature and consequently not in any possible experience".²⁷ Kant writes:

[T]he rational concept of the supersensible substratum of all appearances in general, or even of that on which our power of choice in relation to moral laws must be based, namely the idea of transcendental freedom, is... an indemonstrable concept and idea of reason... because to the former nothing can be given in experience that corresponds to its quality at all, while in the case of the latter no experiential product of that causality attains the degree that the idea of reason prescribes a rule (*CPJ*, §57, Remark I: 343 [218-219]).

²⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 120, quoted in Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetic and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 24.

On the other hand, in “The Dialectic of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment” Kant differentiates two kinds of presentation of concepts in sensible intuition, namely, a “schematic” presentation of a concept of understanding, and a “symbolic” presentation of a concept, or an idea of reason to which no sensible intuition can be adequate. Kant states that in symbolic presentation an intuition is associated with a concept so that the power of judgment proceeds in a way similar to its schematic use, that is to say, as the rule of the composing of the manifold of intuition, but “not of the intuition itself, and thus merely the form of the reflection, not the content, which corresponds to the concept” (*CPJ*, §59: 351 [225]). Symbolic presentation is accomplished by means of analogy, in which the power of judgment first applies the concept to the object of a sensible intuition, and then applies “the mere rule of reflection on that intuition to an entirely different object”. And the first object becomes the symbol of the second one (*CPJ*, §59: 352 [226]). With the example of Kant, in this way “a monarchical state is represented by a body with a soul if it is ruled in accordance with laws internal to the people, but by a mere machine (like a handmill) if it is ruled by a single absolute will” (*CPJ*, §59: 352 [226]).

Now, in this context Kant suggests that aesthetic ideas of imagination in beautiful art provide sensible presentation of concepts of reason, i.e., intellectual ideas and “gives them the appearance of an objective reality (*CPJ*, §49: 314-315 [192-1935]). Similarly, he holds that the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good, i.e., indirectly presents it by means of an analogy between them. Kant cites several aspects of this analogy. For example, the agreement of the freedom of the imagination in judging of the beautiful with the lawfulness of the understanding is analogous to the agreement of the freedom of the will in the moral judgment with the

laws of reason. Similarly, the judgment of beauty is based on a mere reflection on the form of an object and the moral judgment is about the mere forms of practical maxims. And finally, both the beautiful and the morally good represent a feeling of pleasure that involves a claim to be universally valid for everyone (*CPJ*, §42: 301 [180]; §59: 354 [228]). This last aspect is particularly important, since for Kant the “universal communicability of a feeling presupposes a common sense” that is also the “necessary condition of the universal communicability of our cognition” (*CPJ*, §21: 239[123]). As we have seen, the feeling of pleasure in the experience of beauty is the “inner perception” of the agreement of the imagination and the understanding, i.e., the subjective relation that makes the aesthetic judgment “valid for everyone and consequently universally communicable, just as any determinate cognition is, which still always rest on that relation as its subjective condition” (*CPJ*, §9: 218 [103]). According to Kant, if our cognitions and judgments would be objective, i.e., have objective counterpart in the world rather than mere “subjective play” of our cognitive powers then they must be able to be universally communicated. For Kant this means that the mental state, i.e., the agreement of our cognitive powers “must also be capable of being universally communicated” (*CPJ*, §21: 238 [122]). He states, however, that this agreement “cannot be determined except through the feeling (not by concept)” and since the agreement “itself must be capable of being universally communicated, hence also the feeling of it” (*CPJ*, §21: 238-239 [123]). As Andrew Bowie remarks, Kant’s recourse to a universally communicable “feeling” to secure the objectivity of our cognitive and aesthetic judgments crucially reminds his assertion in the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* that the representation of apperception, the *I*, is “nothing more than the feeling of an existence without the

least concept, and is only the representation of that to which all thinking stands in relation”.²⁸ In other words, what is inaccessible to knowledge, but which must be assumed for the very possibility of objective cognition in general and the universal validity of aesthetic judgments becomes accessible in the form of an “immediate feeling” of the subject.

On the other hand, although Kant describes aesthetic ideas as providing sensible presentations of the ideas of reason and asserts that “beauty, whether it be beauty of nature or of art, can in general be called the *expression* of aesthetic ideas” (*CPJ*, §51: 320 [197]), and that only art is “production through freedom, i.e., through a capacity that grounds its actions in reason” (*CPJ*, §43: 303 [182]), he nevertheless sees the beauty of nature as superior to the beauty of art with respect to morality and suggests that the beauty of nature is more closely connected with the ground of freedom than the beauty of art. Now, Kant holds that, as one of the main claims of his analysis of the beautiful, the judgment of beauty must have no interest for its determining ground nor generates one. He defines an interest as the pleasure in the existence of an object (*CPJ*, §2: 204 [90]; §41: 297 [176]). But, he suggests that after determining something as beautiful an interest can be combined with it, i.e., one can find a further pleasure in the existence of the beautiful object. He distinguishes two different kinds of interest in the beautiful, namely, an “empirical interest” as “an inclination that is characteristic of human nature” and an “intellectual interest” as “a property of the will of being determinable *a priori* through reason” (*CPJ*, §41: 296

²⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, trans. Gary Hatfield (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004) p. 86, quoted in Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche*, p. 30.

[176]). According to Kant, an empirical interest in the beautiful emerges only in society as a natural tendency and suitability to communicate our pleasure to others. He disparagingly states that an empirical interest in the beautiful “allows itself to blend in with all the inclinations and passions that achieve their greatest variety and highest level in society” and “could afford only a very ambiguous transition from the agreeable to the good” (*CPJ*, §41: 298 [177-178]). On the other hand, an intellectual interest in the beautiful emerges when one realizes that the feeling for beautiful is closely connected with the moral feeling. In other words, when we recognize the close similarity between our disinterested pleasure that we ascribe universally to everyone in determining something as beautiful, and our moral feeling in determining *a priori* mere forms of practical maxims, i.e., the satisfaction which we make into a law for everyone without grounding our judgment on any interest, we take an immediate intellectual interest in the beautiful object. However, Kant states that such an interest is only occasioned by the beauty of nature rather than the beauty of art: While in the beauty of art there is only an empirical mediate interest related to society, an immediate and intellectual interest in the beauty of nature “is always a mark of a good soul” and “indicates a disposition of the mind that is favorable to the moral feeling” (*CPJ*, §42: 299 [178]). Kant writes:

This preeminence of the beauty of nature over the beauty of art in alone awakening an immediate interest, even the former were to be surpassed by the latter in respect of form, is in agreement with the refined and well-founded thinking of all human beings who have cultivated their moral feeling. If a man who has enough taste to judge about the products of beautiful art with the greatest correctness and refinement gladly leaves the room in which are to be found those beauties that sustain vanity and at best social joys and turns to the beautiful in nature, in order as it were to find here an ecstasy for his spirit in a line of thought that he can never fully develop, then we would consider this choice of his with esteem and presuppose in him a beautiful soul, to which no connoisseur and lover of art

can lay claim on account of the interest that he takes in his objects (*CPJ*, §42: 299-300 [179]).

Then the question is why Kant attributes such a morally significant intellectual interest only to the pleasure in natural beauty? Kant suggests that the reason is easy to explain: The beauty of art is either an imitation of the beauty of nature or intentionally produced for our pleasure. And the pleasure in an intentionally produced human work would “occur immediately by means of taste, but would arouse only a mediate interest in the cause on which it is grounded, namely an art that can interest only through its end and never in itself” (*CPJ*, §42: 301 [181]). On the other hand, the correspondence of the products of nature with our mental faculties is purely unintentional. In fact, this unintentional correspondence is the very ground of our feeling of pleasure and hence constitutes the affinity with the moral feeling. Nature’s beautiful free formations show themselves as if they are produced in accordance with a lawful arrangement for the harmonious accord of our cognitive powers, as “purposiveness without an end”. And, Kant asserts that since we cannot ascribe this purposiveness to nature, i.e., “can never encounter it externally, we naturally seek within ourselves, and indeed in that which constitutes the ultimate end of our existence, namely the moral vocation” (*CPJ*, §42: 301 [181]). In other words, in the beautiful nature the purposiveness in us, the supersensible ground of all our faculties, the accord of the lawfulness with the freedom becomes sensuously available. As Kant puts it in regard to the feeling of pleasure in natural beauty the power of judgment gives the law to itself just like

[the] reason does with regard to the faculty of desire; and it sees itself, both on account of this inner possibility in the subject as well as on account of the outer possibility of a nature that corresponds to it, as related in the subject itself and outside of it, which is neither nature nor freedom, but which is

connected with the ground of the latter, namely the supersensible, in which the theoretical faculty is combined with the practical, in a mutual and unknown way, to form a unity (*CPJ*, §59: 353 [227]).

2.5. The Reception of Kant's Conception of Aesthetic Form in German Aesthetic Theory in Relation to the Distinction between Natural and Artistic Beauty

The ambiguities in Kant's conception of aesthetic form, to which he connects the immediate feeling of pleasure as the ground of the objective validity of aesthetic judgments, not only lead to different interpretations but also shape the very development of German aesthetic thought in nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Victor Basch classifies the interpretations of Kant's conception of aesthetic form as idealist, formalist, and sensualist.²⁹ As the arguments of the main thinkers of these positions constitute the framework in which Nishida discusses the problem of aesthetic form, in the final part of this chapter I will briefly present their views in relation to the distinction between natural and artistic beauty.

2.5.1. The Idealist Conception of Aesthetic Form: The Sensuous Appearance of the Idea

According to Basch, idealist position conceives the beautiful as bridging "the gap between finite reality of a world governed by cause and effect, and the infinite freedom of thought which was remained the essential condition of man's dignity".³⁰ The philosophers of German Idealism adopt and develop Kant's conceptualization of the beautiful as the mediating concept between deterministic nature and moral

²⁹ Victor Basch, *Essai Critique sur l'Esthétique de Kant*, p. 2.

³⁰ Quoted in Ernest K. Mundt, "Three Aspects of German Aesthetic Theory", p. 289.

freedom, which makes possible intuitive reach to the ideas of reason, as well as his account of the purposiveness of nature locating the final end and ultimate meaning of existence in human freedom. They particularly focus on Kant's theory of the "transcendental unity of apperception" and take this unity as the starting point not only of developing an entire system of transcendental idealism but also of grounding the objectivity of aesthetic form. However, they conceive of the creation and appreciation of artistic beauty rather than nature as the paradigm object of aesthetic freedom.

Even though J. G. Fichte did not particularly write on the problems of aesthetics, his concept of the free act of the "pure subject" in which feeling and intuition are synthetically united with each other became very influential on the development of the German aesthetic theory. In his "Doctrine of Scientific Knowledge" (*Wissenschaftslehre*) Fichte argues that although Kant's refutation of the possibility of "intellectual intuition" with regard to the sensuous awareness of external objects is legitimate, it is contradictory in relation to the theory of the synthetic unity of apperception. He writes:

Kant rejected intellectual intuition, but he defined the concept of intuition in such a way that intuitions could only be sensible; and therefore he said that these sensible intuitions cannot be intellectual. Against those... who claimed to intuit the I as a thing, or against those who believe they can intuit an immediate revelation within themselves, Kant is correct. What is intuited in sensible intuition is fixed, passive and ordinarily in space; but all that is intuited in our intellectual intuition is an acting. Kant too had such an intuition, but he did not reflect upon it. Indeed, his entire philosophy is a product of this intuition; for he maintains that necessary representations are products of the acting of a rational being and are not passively received... Kant recognizes that self-consciousness occurs, i.e., a consciousness of the act of intuiting within time. How could he have arrived at such a

recognition? Only by means of an intuition- and such an intuition is certainly intellectual.³¹

Accordingly, in order to overcome the problems concerning the distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself, as well as the “knowledge” of the transcendental subject, which Kant situates in the supersensible realm as the ground of both nature and freedom, Fichte appeals to the Kantian “spontaneity” of the subjective act (both theoretical and practical) and the accompanying “feeling”, i.e., the immediate presence of the I to itself. He starts first by asking “as the I’s consciousness is a consciousness of free activity how the I become conscious of its own activity?”³² Following Kant, Fichte suggests that this consciousness of the I is given through a “feeling” of a unity: “What is felt is the feeling subject: I feel myself”.³³ However, a feeling is not an immediate object of intuition, it is not a thing, it is a “state of the I”. What is intuited is not the intuiting subject but an object, which fixes the activity of the subject, but appears as being outside of it. In other words, “a feeling appears to be inseparably connected with an object, and it cannot be felt without being related to an object”.³⁴ So, Fichte asks a second question, which according to him reveals the distinctive character of the *Wissenschaftslehre*: “How the content of feeling can become the object of an act of intuition or comprehension”, i.e., “how does the I manage to go outside of itself?”³⁵ In complete conformity with Kant, but by eliminating the concept of the thing-in-itself as the cause of appearances

³¹ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Foundations of Transcendental Philosophy (Wissenschaftslehre) Nova Methodo (1796/99)*, ed. and trans. Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 115.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 187.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 189-190.

and the problematic distinction between sensible intuitions and concepts, Fichte finds the answer in the “productive imagination, which is simultaneously *free* and constrained by *laws*”: “The entire sensible world is produced by the productive imagination, in accordance with its own specific laws.”³⁶ In Fichte’s explanation, although feeling and intuition are comprised in one and the same free act of the subject, and their “objects” is the same from the philosophical point of view, objects of intuition appear as outside of ourselves since for the I itself these are two different objects as a result of I’s being considered in two different ways:

[T]he intuition is the same as what is felt; but insofar as this is an object of intuition it does not remain something merely felt, but instead becomes something intuited, something ‘seen’, something that is not referred to the I... In intuition something hovers immediately before me. I do not ask whence it comes; the object simply happens to be there. This is how the object appears within the act of intuiting, but this act of intuiting does not appear within consciousness and, for this reason, when viewed from ordinary standpoint, the object can be said to be immediately present.³⁷

To recapitulate, we feel ourselves as unitary subjects. Such a feeling is present as a result of our discovery of ourselves to be limited. And from this limitation we conclude the existence of something outside of us which limits us. This whole process, however, occurs immediately. But, since our own act of intuiting, i.e., our own productivity does not appear within consciousness, we are convinced by the immediate presence of the things outside us. Fichte describes this spontaneous coexistence of intuition and feeling in the free activity of the subject as a *Tathandlung*, a fact-act, i.e., an act which, at the same time, is a product. And he claims that as this action of what he calls the “pure I” is both conceptual and intuitive

³⁶ Ibid., p. 189.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 196.

it can be described as an “intellectual intuition”, which, in this way, constitutes the very ground of self-knowledge and freedom of the subject as agent. It is important to note, however, that in Fichte intellectual intuition is clearly distinguished from sensible intuition, i.e., it does not appear immediately and is only “thought of in the indicated act of thinking”:

Intellectual intuition is what is highest in a finite being, but even a philosopher is able to accomplish this act of intellectual intuition only by means of abstraction and reflection. We are not acquainted with intellectual intuition through sensible intuition; instead we have to proceed by means of pure thinking and philosophizing.³⁸

Although Fichte gets out of the difficulties resulting from Kant’s concept of the thing-in-itself and his distinction between the sensible intuition and concepts in a consistent manner, as R. G. Collingwood remarks in *The Idea of Nature*, his assertion that the imagination produces the external world out of its own activity abolishes the very problem of nature instead of solving it.³⁹ On the other hand, Schelling critically develops Fichte’s ideas that combine Kant’s conception of the unity of transcendental apperception and the subjective ground of all our faculties, i.e., freedom (of productive imagination) in accordance with laws (of understanding) together in the spontaneous activity of the pure I. But, Schelling attributes this spontaneous activity to nature and he describes “aesthetic intuition” as “intellectual intuition which has become objective”, and hence plainly removes the border between the sensible intuition and concepts.⁴⁰ However, although he transfers the

³⁸ Ibid., p. 291. For Fichte’s account of “subjectivity” in relation to Kant and German aesthetic theory see also Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche*, pp. 69-101.

³⁹ R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 120.

⁴⁰ F. W. J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism (1800)*, trans. Peter Heath (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), p. 131.

productive spontaneity of the pure subject to nature, in his aesthetics, which draws heavily on Kant's conception of genius, he concentrates on the beauty of art rather than that of nature.

Andrew Bowie points out that in Schelling what is required is "a way of coming to terms with the apparent division in the I between nature and reflection, receptivity and spontaneity, which he thinks can be transcended in the work of art".⁴¹ Schelling conceptualizes nature as an infinite productivity whose limitations were natural products. But, as for him nature is an infinite productivity it is "something absolutely formless which cannot be represented anywhere as determinate material".⁴² Therefore, he claims that although finite, "real" products in nature, which are dealt with by science, can be the object of theoretical knowledge, the infinite productivity of nature is beyond conceptual understanding. Furthermore, in Schelling's account the infinite productivity of nature is "identical" with the infinite productive action at work in human thought, whose "ideal" world is investigated by the philosophy of spirit. So, for Schelling two fundamental questions, which are inherited from Kant, emerge as: 1) How are the "real" world of nature outside us, and the "ideal" world of the concepts brought forth by the absolute principle, i.e., the infinite productivity of nature? 2) As we do not have cognitive access to the absolute principle, how to provide a warranted explanation for it? Schelling attempts to provide an answer to these questions by influentially suggesting that there is an "unconscious" element having a history within the working of the absolute principle. As we have seen, for Fichte the productivity of the subject does not appear within

⁴¹ Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche*, p. 112.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 106.

consciousness, since it immediately becomes intuition of an object. Now, Schelling asserts that this productivity must be attributed to the “unconscious nature” in and outside us, rather than the conscious will. In other words, by limiting itself, the activity of the “unconscious nature” spontaneously brings about consciousness and nature as its two identical aspects viewed from different perspectives. In this way, in one absolute principle, which is “neither the objective nor the subjective, but the absolutely identical”, Schelling is able to distinguish the “unconscious” productivity in nature and in us from the “conscious” productivity of the human intellect and will. Yet, like Fichte, Schelling suggests that, as it is absolutely identical, i.e., its activity spontaneously limits itself in finite products, the absolute principle “cannot be grasped or communicated through description, nor through concepts” but “can only be intuited” in an “intellectual” rather than sensory intuition.⁴³ Nevertheless, in contrast to Fichte, Schelling further states that in aesthetic intuition in art the intellectual intuition of the absolute principle “becomes objective” as a second intuition:

The work of art merely reflects to me what is otherwise not reflected by anything, namely the absolutely identical which has already divided itself even in the self. Hence, that which the philosopher allows to be divided even in the primary act of consciousness, and which would otherwise be inaccessible to any intuition, comes, through the miracle of art, to be radiated back from the products thereof.⁴⁴

In artistic creation the conscious, purposeful, even rule bounded activities of the artist are brought into harmony with the unconscious spring of his or her genius. Consequently, Schelling claims, the work of art as the product of artistic creation,

⁴³ Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), p. 229.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 229-30.

i.e., aesthetic intuition as intellectual intuition, verges “on the one side upon the product of nature, and on the other upon the product of freedom” and unites “in itself characteristics of both”.⁴⁵ And, according to Schelling, since aesthetic intuition in art provides us with immediate intellectual intuition that becomes objective, art turns out to be:

the only and eternal organ and document of philosophy, which ever and again continues to speak to us of what philosophy cannot depict in external form, namely the unconscious element in acting and producing, and its original identity. Art is paramount to the philosopher, precisely because it opens up to him, as it were, the holy of holies, where burns in eternal and original unity, as if in a single flame, that which in nature and history is rent asunder, and in life and action, no less than in thought must forever fly apart.⁴⁶

Hegel, on the other hand, like Schelling and other idealist philosophers, following Kant’s lead in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, characterizes beauty as the “pure appearance of the Idea to sense”⁴⁷, but unlike Kant, he repudiates that there is “immediate” pleasure in the mere reflection on the forms of nature. Consequently, again like Schelling, Hegel gives prominence to artistic beauty by asserting that while natural beauty is imperfect, artistic beauty is perfect and “the one reality adequate to the Idea of beauty”. He writes:

The beauty of art is beauty born of the spirit and born again, and the higher the spirit and its productions stand above nature and its phenomena, the higher too is the beauty of art above that of nature. Indeed, considered formally, even a useless notion that enters a man’s head is higher than any product of nature, because in such a notion spirituality and freedom are always present.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 219.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 231.

⁴⁷ G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 111.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 2.

In Hegel's account "unmediated" nature remains mute, i.e., "indifferent, not free and self-conscious in itself", and natural beauty "appears only as a reflection of the beauty that belongs to spirit".⁴⁹ Thus, Hegel argues that only through the "mediation" of art, nature advances to its final end. And, in this sense, in contrast to Kant and Schelling who emphasize the immediacy in the experience of beauty which is beyond the reach of determinate concepts, Hegel argues for the essential role of the mediation of concepts in the truth of art. In fact, for Hegel that which necessitates the beauty of art is the very deficiencies of immediate reality which makes the task of art to be "firmly established in art's having a calling to display the appearance of life, and especially of spiritual animation in its freedom... and to make the external correspond with its concept".⁵⁰ Hegel's rejection of the immediacy of aesthetic pleasure is directly related to his situating of the truth of the self-consciousness in its articulation in the concept, rather than in the immediate presence of the I to itself. For Hegel, just like the truth of the self-consciousness, the truth of artworks, as well as that of the aesthetic pleasure itself, develops in a general "concept" through which it is articulated in a historical and social context. In Hegel's view, the very particularity of aesthetic form, which, for Kant and Schelling, cannot be subsumed under determinate concepts but still claims to be universally valid, and the accompanying feeling of pleasure as the immediate inner perception of this claim, have to be surpassed so that to reach its concept. But, this means that as soon as the aesthetic form as the sensuous appearance of the Idea reaches its concept, art terminates its task and is supplanted by pure thought, i.e., philosophy. As Hegel puts it, it is

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 152.

precisely at its highest stage art comes to an end by transcending itself and “forsakes the element of reconciled embodiment of the spirit in sensuous form and passes over from the poetry of imagination to the prose of thought”.⁵¹

2.5.2. The Sensualist Conception of Aesthetic Form: Empathy

In his “Three Aspects of German Aesthetic Theory” Ernest K. Mundt examines the development of the sensualist interpretation of Kant’s conception of aesthetic form by tracing the concept of “empathy” (*Einfühlung*) as it passes from Robert Vischer and Theodor Lipps to Wilhelm Worringer.⁵² In his dissertation entitled *Über das Optische Formgefühl* (On the Optical Sense of Form), published in 1873, Vischer coins the term *Einfühlung* and suggests that we have an ability “to impute our own shape to an objective shape” and to *project* our feelings and personal life into the objects we see.⁵³ He argues that “the inanimate form is capable of experiencing our individual life, as... another human being (a non-I) is capable of experiencing it”.⁵⁴ For Vischer such a fusion of subject and object, of the seer and the seen originates from a “pantheistic urge” toward union not only with other human beings but also the whole world surrounding us.⁵⁵ In Vischer’s account the desire to bring out this process of union through the projection of feeling constitutes the origin

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 89.

⁵² Ernest K. Mundt, “Three Aspects of German Aesthetic Theory”, pp. 287-310.

⁵³ For a partial translation of Vischer’s dissertation see “On the Optical Sense of Form: A Contribution to Aesthetics”, *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikononou (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994).

⁵⁴ Moshe Barasch, *Theories of Art: From Impressionism to Kandinsky* (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), p. 104. Barasch explains that the term *Einfühlung* (feeling-in) derives from *Fühlen* (feel) or *Gefühl* (emotion), the meaning of the Greek *empathia*, from which the English “empathy” is derived by the American psychologist E. B. Titchener (pp. 104, 114).

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 104.

of artistic creation. Accordingly, for Vischer, the totality of the emotional experience of the artist becomes the “content” of the work of art which is nothing but the “humanity that has become an object”.⁵⁶

On the other hand, Theodor Lipps develops the concept of empathy on a Kantian-Fichtean notion of the apperceptive activity of the self. Lipps maintains that every object of perception, even a simple line, is presented to us through our apperceptive activity, i.e., “demands” to be grasped internally. As Lipps puts it, “every sensuous object, in so far as it exists for me, is always the product of two components, of that which is sensuously given and of my apperceptive activity.”⁵⁷ And to say that we grasp an object internally through apperceptive activity means that the object is demarcated from its surrounding. On the other hand, in line with Kantian philosophy Lipps holds that the essential nature of the activity of our self is its spontaneity. And according to him, as long as the demand of the object accords with the spontaneity of our self we are “free” and feel pleasure. Lipps defines this accord between the self and the object as “empathy”. For him such a feeling of pleasure constitutes the experience of beauty. And in this sense he describes aesthetic pleasure as “objectified self-pleasure”.⁵⁸

In *Abstraction and Empathy* Worringer borrows the concept of empathy from Lipps, but by drawing on Aloïs Riegl’s concept of *Kuntswollen* (translated alternately as “artistic volition”, “artistic will”, “will to art”, or “art drive”) he critically develops Lipps’s Kantian-Fichtean concept and argues that the art of

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 105.

⁵⁷ Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstarction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style*, Michael Bullock, trans. (New York: International Universities Press, 1967), p. 5.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 5.

different historical ages and nations cannot be explained merely through the concept of empathy. Accordingly, Worringer postulates two different fundamental attitudes or impulses for artistic creation, which arise out of a psychic state in which human beings find themselves in relation to the phenomena of the external world. Worringer describes this psychic state as the “feeling about the world”, or the “world-feeling” (*Weltgefühl*). And he maintains that the world-feeling is disclosed “in the constitution of the absolute will to art, and bears outward fruit in the work of art, to be exact in the style of the latter”.⁵⁹ The urge for “empathy”, according to Worringer’s definition, refers to a desire to identify oneself with the environment, to see his or her feelings in nature, to “enjoy oneself in sensuous objects” due to a happy, harmonious relationship of confidence between human being and the phenomena of the external world. In Worringer’s account such an identification with nature through feeling results in naturalistic art as in the case of classical Greek art, Roman art, and the art of Renaissance.⁶⁰ For Worringer, the urge for “abstraction”, in contrast, arises out of a “great inner unrest inspired in man by the phenomena of the outside world”, an “immense spiritual dread of space”, resulting in abstract form in art as in the case of primitive art, Egyptian art, and modern art. “Tormented by the entangled inter-relationship and flux of the phenomena of the outer world”, Worringer claims, the primitive people:

were dominated by an immense need for tranquility. The happiness they sought from art ... [consists] in the possibility of taking the individual thing of the external world out of its arbitrariness and seeming fortuitousness, of eternalizing it by approximation to abstract forms, and in this manner, of finding a point of tranquility and a refuge from appearances. Their most

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 13 (translation modified).

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 15.

powerful urge was so to speak, to wrest the object of the external world out of its natural context, out of the unending flux of being, to purify it all its dependence upon life, i.e., of everything about it that was arbitrary, to render it necessary and irrefragable, to approximate it to its absolute value.⁶¹

In this manner, deriving, through the intermediary of Lipps and Riegl, from Fichte's conception of the free act of the subject in which feeling and object of intuition are synthetically united with each other, Worringer provides an entirely "subjectivist" interpretation of Kant's conception of aesthetic form "which no longer takes the aesthetic object as the starting point of its investigations, but proceeds from the behaviour of the contemplating subject".⁶² However, although Worringer relates the will to art and the resulting aesthetic form to the "feeling about the world", he clearly distinguishes natural beauty from artistic beauty and suggests that:

The specific laws of art have, in principle, nothing to do with the aesthetics of natural beauty. It is therefore not a matter of, for example, analysing the conditions under which a landscape appears beautiful, but of an analysis of the conditions under which the representation of this landscape becomes a work of art.⁶³

2.5.3. The Formalist Conception of Aesthetic Form: Pure Perception

Ernest K. Mundt starts the formalist interpretation of Kant's conception of aesthetic form from the works of Johann Friedrich Herbart in which he finds the germ of the concept of "pure visibility" that is "detached" from the ordinary world of cognition.⁶⁴ According to Mundt, while Robert Zimmermann "adds an element of introversion" to the formalism of Herbart, the concept of "pure visibility" reaches its

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 21-22.

⁶² Ibid., p. 3.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 3.

⁶⁴ Ernest K. Mundt, "Three Aspects of German Aesthetic Theory", pp. 290-291.

culmination in the works of Konrad Fiedler.⁶⁵ Mundt quotes Henry Schaefer-Simmern who suggests in the introduction to his English translation of Fiedler's first published book *Über die Beurteilung von Werken Bildender Kunst* (On Judging Works of Visual Arts, 1876), that Fiedler went beyond Kant in "establishing the perceptual, artistic cognition of the world as a separate and autonomous mental process (the scientific-conceptual one being the other)".⁶⁶ In *Über den Ursprung der Künstlerischen Tätigkeit* (On the Origin of Artistic Activity, 1887) Fiedler conceives of the relationship between subject and object, or the self and the world as a process of "expressive formation".⁶⁷ In a Fichtean manner, he holds that our mental acts are expressive formative, i.e., the world of reality necessarily appears to us through "expressive formation". And in his definition, rather than being the statement or deposition of an independent external world, "expression" is the "final stage" of the process of mental formation activity. "Our faculty of knowledge is not confronted by an external world which is wholly independent of us, like an object in a mirror", Fiedler writes, "rather what we term the exterior world is in fact the eternally changing result of our own mental activity, continually recreated anew from out of itself".⁶⁸ Following Kantian structure, Fiedler maintains that we are connected with the world through sensation which continuously provides us with the material for our mental activities. But, for Fiedler our mind works as a constant process of

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 291.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 296.

⁶⁷ Konrad Fiedler, "Über den Ursprung der Künstlerischen Tätigkeit", *Konrad Fiedlers Schriften über Kunst*, ed. Hermann Konnerth (Münich: R. Piper and Co., 1913), pp. 183-367.

⁶⁸ Konrad Fiedler, "Modern Naturalism and Artistic Truth", *Art in Theory, 1815-1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Charles Harrison and Paul Wood with Jason Gaiger, ed. (Oxford, UK; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1998), p. 701.

transformation and change. In other words, the material provided by sensation is brought together in our mind in infinite combinations as an infinite row of objects. Hence, we are confronted with a world that is confused, fleeting, and undeveloped as “our whole stock of reality consists of perceptions and imaginations presenting not a state but a coming and going, a becoming and a fading away”.⁶⁹ On the other hand, in Fiedler’s description, through expressive formative activity our mind develops “from confusion to clarity, from the indefiniteness of the interior procedure to the exactitude of the external expression”.⁷⁰ Accordingly, Fiedler holds that language, for example, is the final stage of thinking process, rather than being the symbol, or sign of thought. Stated differently, through the progression of language our consciousness gets a new content. And in this way we are confronted with a world that attains a new form. In this sense, in Fiedler’s account, language is not merely the expression of the world but its form. Furthermore, by denying that the world of reality is external to an interior world which is immediately accessible to us Fiedler describes “expressive formation” as “bodily formation”. That is to say, through linguistic conceptualization, infinitely mobile conscious phenomena take form in the body. Fiedler writes:

If we want to maintain that language can signify something real independently of its linguistic form, that could be made the subject of thought and recognition- then we shall be able to do this only (1) by remaining naïve realists who accept reality as given without seeing that they have to recognize it first, and (2) by admitting body and mind to be independent parts of human nature related by subordination. If we want to be serious, however, about the insight that we can never own anything real except as the result of a process the scene of which is laid within

⁶⁹ Konrad Fiedler, “Über den Ursprung der Künstlerischen Tätigkeit”, p. 237, quoted in Ernest K. Mundt, “Three Aspects of German Aesthetic Theory”, p. 298.

⁷⁰ Konrad Fiedler, “Über den Ursprung der Künstlerischen Tätigkeit”, p. 323, quoted in Moshe Barasch, *Theories of Art: From Impressionism to Kandinsky*, p. 130.

ourselves... and if we are convinced that... the mental result and its expression as noticed by the senses cannot be two separate things... then we can only take language to be the form in which we own reality and not as a means of denotation.⁷¹

In similar manner, Fiedler argues that in scientific, abstract cognition we appropriate appearances provided by perceptions and imaginations for ourselves “by transferring them into conceptual Gestalt-formations”, i.e., “from sensuous to nonsensuous, from visible to invisible, from perception to abstraction”.⁷² In this way, through conceptual thinking we achieve a mental mastery of the world. However, for Fiedler infinitely multiple content of perceptual experiences available to us and infinite possibilities for the visual comprehension of the world cannot be exhausted by linguistic expression or scientific conceptualization. Moreover, Fiedler holds that from the standpoint of “concrete” or “pure visuality”, perception of the world that is formed through language is incomplete, i.e., distorted by abstract concepts. In everyday life we are inclined to abstract cognition for practical purposes and “forced to give an account of our memory image of the object of everyday use. Rarely do visual conceptions mature to a stage of independent clarity”.⁷³ Yet, according to Fiedler, pure visual perception has the ability to form a world that is completely different from the conceptually formed world, i.e., it has its own expressive formative progression. Fiedler describes the world formed through the activity of the “pure visual perception” as the world of artistic consciousness and artistic creation. Moreover, in complying with Kant’s definition of beauty, Fiedler distinguishes the

⁷¹ Konrad Fiedler, “Über den Ursprung der Künstlerischen Tätigkeit”, pp. 194-195, quoted in Ernest K. Mundt, “Three Aspects of German Aesthetic Theory”, p. 297.

⁷² Konrad Fiedler, “On Judging Works of Visual Art”, *Nineteenth Century Theories of Art*, Joshua C. Taylor ed. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1987), p. 517.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 520.

artistic form as the outcome of the pure visual perception not only from linguistic or conceptual forms but also from sensation and sensual pleasure. As he puts it “only he who is able to hold onto his perceptual experiences in spite of both sensation and abstraction proves his artistic calling”.⁷⁴ When the associations of the conceptually formed world and every sensation are cut off, and consciousness wholly concentrated on visual perception, i.e., when all conceptual knowledge and sensation is subtracted from the perceived, we break with the world of cognitive objects and enter into the world of pure visual perceptual formation. In other words, we develop our incomplete and confused perceptual experiences into a clear and complete artistic conception of the world. As in the case of language, which is the bodily expression of thinking process, artistic creation is nothing but the bodily expression of this process in the artistic image, or the work of art. And, again reminding Kant’s distinction between imagination’s restriction by understanding in conceptual cognition and its freedom in aesthetic experience, and his conceptualization of aesthetic form as “purposiveness without purpose”, Fiedler asserts that while ordinary perceptual activity serves some explicit purpose, and hence is limited and not free, the pure visual formation of the artist is “from the beginning an impartial, free activity, which serves no purpose beyond itself and which ends in that purpose”.⁷⁵ Moreover, Fiedler relates this free activity directly to the personality of the artist. The artist creates artistic form freely as an immediate expression of his or

⁷⁴ Konrad Fiedler, “On Judging Works of Visual Art”, p. 520. Here it is important to note that, although Fiedler clearly rejects the idea that artistic consciousness is based on the feeling of pleasure, or the idea that art is related to aesthetic sensation, or beauty, he uses the terms “aesthetic” and “beauty” as “sensual pleasure”, and thus his conception of artistic form entirely accords with Kant’s definition of beauty as an “aesthetic” judgment distinct from concepts and sensual pleasure.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 522.

her artistic consciousness as independent from purposes, categories and rules, and arbitrary feelings and emotions. Similarly, as artist creates the artistic form “for that which does not yet in any way exist for the human mind” and “has nothing to do with forms are found ready-made prior to its activity”, Fiedler rejects the idea of art as imitation of nature.⁷⁶ However, in Fiedler, as in Kant, even though the artistic form created subjectively as free formation, independent of concepts, sensations and already existing forms of nature, it is nevertheless as true and final as scientific cognition, because their origin and existence is based on an “immediate mastery of the visible world by a peculiar power of the human mind” whose activity is not “fortuitous, but necessary”:

Artistic form is the immediate and sole expression of [the artistic] consciousness... The artistic expression is much more immediate and necessary and at the same time exclusive. A work of art is not an expression of something which can exist just as well without this expression... [it is] the artistic consciousness itself as it reaches its highest possible development in the single instance of one individual... In a work of art the Gestalt forming activity finds its way to external completion. The substance of such a work is nothing else than the Gestalt-formation itself.⁷⁷

Finally, Fiedler conceives the appreciation of works of art from the same standpoint of artistic consciousness. In other words, as in the case of artistic creation, in the appreciation of works of art Fiedler rejects both sensual pleasures and concepts as they obstruct the development of pure artistic perception. Consequently, according to Fiedler, a sound evaluation or a sure judgment of works of art is grounded neither on the aesthetic pleasures or emotions of the appreciator, nor on the subject matter or ideas represented in the work, nor on the knowledge or categories related to the

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 524-25.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 527-28.

historical, cultural, social context in which the work is created, but on an artistic understanding of the work in purely perceptual terms, which is nothing but the reconstitution of the pure visual form of the artist.

2.5.4. The Critique of Kantian Formalism and the Reinterpretation of the Freedom of Natural Beauty in Twentieth Century

Kant's delineation of the experience of beauty through the harmonious play of imagination and understanding provides an answer to the central paradox of aesthetics, i.e., universal validity of aesthetic judgments whose ground is a subjective feeling of pleasure. But in Kant the problem of aesthetic form, i.e., the objective counterpart of aesthetic experience, and the difficulties resulting from the distinction between intuition and thought remain largely unresolved. Furthermore, Kant's definitions of the experience of beauty as an "immediate" pleasure and the artistic creation as the activity of "genius", both of which are construed as detached from the socio-historical world, together with his notion of "disinterestedness" lead to an excessive formalism as well as a psychologistic account of aesthetics and art, and consequently became the focus of criticism in the twentieth century. Following the lead of 18th and 19th century criticisms and restitutions of Kantian idealism, particularly that of Hegel, the immediate meaningfulness of aesthetic experience and the validity of appealing to a self-contained subjective ground as a basis for appropriateness and universal communicability are questioned. Immediate consciousness is seen as depending on outside conditions, like unconscious process, historical, cultural context, language, social institutions, and body. It is argued that descriptions, as well as contents, of all experiences, including aesthetic experience are constructed, or mediated by the terms, categories, and belief systems implicit in

language and ways of life. But apart from these points the “freedom” in the experience of (natural as well as artistic) beauty from determined concepts and theoretical categories is retained under different guises. Although both artistic and natural beauty are ultimately conditioned by the cultural and social forces, their experience is seen as to be able to provide a critical stance, and to release the subject from the controlling mediation of culture, discursive ties, and process of “subjectivization.” Martin Heidegger, for example, in the epilogue of his classical essay on the origin of the work of art, denounces the role of the immediacy of aesthetic experience in art by asserting that:

The way in which man experiences art is supposed to give information about its essence. Lived experience is the source that is standard not only for art appreciation and enjoyment but also for artistic creation. Everything is experience. Yet perhaps lived experience is the element in which art dies.⁷⁸

In Heidegger’s view art is not a general category that collects works of art together, but rather the essence and origin of all works of art. According to him, however, this essence is a distinctive event of disclosure of Being, or happening of truth, which transcends both psychologistic subjectivism and scientific conceptualization. Similarly, following Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer denounces the view that sees art as an autonomous sphere detached from everyday reality, what he calls the “abstraction of aesthetic consciousness.” In describing Kant’s *Critique of the Power of Judgment* as the beginning of the “radical subjectivization of the aesthetic” in modern Western thought Gadamer argues that:

The pantheon of art is not a timeless present that presents itself to a pure aesthetic consciousness, but the act of a mind and spirit that has collected and gathered itself historically. ... Since we meet the artwork in the world

⁷⁸ Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art”, *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell, (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), p. 204.

and encounter a world in the individual artwork, the work of art is not some alien universe into which we are magically transported for a time. ... For this reason, we must adopt a standpoint in relation to art and the beautiful that does not pretend to immediacy but corresponds to the historical nature of the human condition. The appeal to immediacy, to the instantaneous flash of genius, to the significance of "experiences" (*Erlebnisse*), cannot withstand the claim of human existence to continuity and unity of self-understanding. The binding quality of the experience (*Erfahrung*) of art must not be disintegrated by aesthetic consciousness.⁷⁹

In his hermeneutical approach Gadamer attempts to overcome the abstraction of aesthetic consciousness by suggesting that aesthetic experience is to be open to the "work's truth content" rather than to impose subject's meaning onto the work. Such an experience, according to Gadamer, includes "understanding" and exceeds the immediacy of aesthetic consciousness.

In the mean time, Theodor Adorno approaches the problem of aesthetic form and the immediacy of aesthetic experience from a dialectical point of view. He claims that the contemporary aesthetics should go beyond the controversy between Kant, whose "concept of what is pleasing according to its form is retrograde to aesthetic experience and cannot be restored" and Hegel, whose "theory of content is too crude".⁸⁰ According to Adorno, the problem of aesthetic form lies in the fact that it can be constituted "neither from concepts nor from aconceptual experience", and he finds a way out of this paradox in what he calls a "dialectical aesthetics": "The only possibility for aesthetics beyond this miserable alternative", he argues, "is the philosophical insight that fact and concept are not polar opposites but mediated reciprocally in one another".⁸¹ Adorno maintains that the supposed immediacy in

⁷⁹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London, New York: Continuum, 2004), pp. 83-84.

⁸⁰ Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, Trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), p. 355.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 343.

aesthetic experience “itself depends on what goes beyond pure immediacy”.⁸² In his account, the elements of a work of art come together and compose its aesthetic form as a whole in accordance with the laws related to those of the society in which it is produced. He writes:

Social forces of production, as well as relations of production, return in artworks as mere forms divested of their facticity because artistic labor is social labor; moreover, they are always the product of this labor. In artworks, the forces of production are not in themselves different from social productive forces except by their constitutive absenting from real society. Scarcely anything is done or produced in artworks that does not have its model, however latently, in social production. The binding force of artworks, beyond the jurisdiction of their immanence, originates in this affinity.⁸³

Accordingly, Adorno claims that aesthetic form is not constituted in the immediate experience of the subject but in an “already developed language of art”.⁸⁴ However, although immediate experience is not the ultimate ground of aesthetic form and the supposed immediate experience itself depends on what goes beyond pure immediacy, Adorno conceives lived experiences of the subject as indispensable for art. Consequently, he suggests that the ideal perception of the works of art “would be that in which what is mediated becomes immediate”.⁸⁵ In other words, in an appropriate aesthetic appreciation of art conceptual and experiential elements would determine each other in a reciprocal manner.

Similarly, Adorno argues that natural beauty, which is supposed to be ahistorical by definition, is “at its core historical”. Periods when nature confronts man overpoweringly and is seen as an immediate object of action as in agricultural

⁸² Ibid., p. 338.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 236.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 353.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 238.

work, he remarks, allow no room for appreciation for natural beauty.⁸⁶ Reminding Worringer's description of the human beings' urge for abstraction and empathy in relation to the world-feeling, Adorno claims that the terrifying image of untamed nature that is not actually mastered explains "the strange predilection of earlier centuries for symmetrical arrangements of nature".⁸⁷ According to him, on the other hand, the progress of civilization and the subject's consciousness of freedom result in the disappearance of the fear of nature, which in turn brings about, through the subject's projection of itself onto nature, the delight in the natural beauty and the irregular and unschematic.⁸⁸ Yet, for Adorno the subject's consciousness of freedom is not the only condition for the emergence of aesthetic appreciation of nature. He maintains that "what appears untamed in nature and remote from history, belongs... to a historical phase in which the social web is so densely woven that the living fear death by suffocation".⁸⁹ In other words, the subject's unfreedom and powerlessness created by the "subjectification" of everything, including experience itself, through scientific conceptualization, technical domination of nature, and bourgeois commodification become the motive power behind the delight in and search for the untamed nature. In complete accordance with Kantian definition, Adorno distinguishes "natural beauty" from "nature as empirical reality", i.e., the world of phenomena. Redefining the concept of *mimesis*, and inferring mediation from the relation of nature to art rather than that of art to nature, Adorno describes natural

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 65.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 65.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 65.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 65.

beauty as appearance (*Schein*), in the sense that it is conceptually indeterminate, or antithetical to definition: “what is beautiful flashes up in nature only to disappear in the instant one tries to grasp it”.⁹⁰ For Adorno, this essential indefinability, or freedom from the determination of concepts, i.e., being beyond human conceptualization and understanding as a form of artifactualization, constitutes the very definition of natural beauty. “Whoever wishes to define the conceptual invariants of natural beauty”, he claims, “would make himself as ridiculous as Husserl did when he reports that while ambulating he perceived the green freshness of the lawn”.⁹¹ For Adorno, although natural beauty itself is mediated through society, it remains as the allegory of “what exists beyond bourgeois society, its labor, and its commodities”.⁹² In an age of total mediatedness where everything experienced is culturally preformed, however, whenever natural beauty attempts to disguise this very mediatedness as immediacy, it “is transformed into a caricature of itself”:

The unmediated experience of nature, its critical edge blunted and subsumed to the exchange relation such as it is represented in the phase ‘tourist industry’, become insignificantly neutral and apologetic, and nature became a nature reserve and an alibi.⁹³

Adorno maintains that this eloquence of nature, which is easily “damaged by the objectivation”, and its “mute language”, which escapes from fixed concept, is not merely the peculiar characteristic of natural beauty, but “the substance of beauty itself”. Consequently, reconstituting Hegelian dialectics, in which the conceptual

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 72.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 70.

⁹² Ibid., p. 69.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 68.

indeterminacy of natural beauty is conceived as its very deficiency resulting in its sublation in art, Adorno maintains that “reflection on natural beauty is irrevocably requisite to the theory of art”.⁹⁴ And in this sense, he asserts that “art does not imitate nature, nor even individual instances of natural beauty, but natural beauty as such”.⁹⁵ In other words, in art the evanescent beauty of nature, which constitutes its insufficiency for Hegel, is “objectified and summoned to duration” and hence is determined into a “concept”, but “not as something conceptual in itself”, i.e., “not like a concept in discursive logic”.⁹⁶ In this way, through the problem of aesthetic form, or what he calls “the pain in the face of beauty”,⁹⁷ Adorno argues for both the dialectical otherness of natural and artistic beauty, and the problematic quality of any attempt to make a clear distinction between them.

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 76, 62.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 72.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 73.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 73.

CHAPTER - 3

NISHIDA'S CONCEPTION OF ARTISTIC CREATION IN *ART AND MORALITY*

3.1. Nishida's Characterization of the Essence of Beauty and the Problem of Aesthetic Form

Nishida's discussions on the essence of beauty in *Art and Morality* almost entirely comply with the framework provided by Kant in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. In fact, even in "An Explanation of Beauty", one of the earliest philosophical articles of Nishida's career published in 1900, he defines beauty and the accompanying feeling of pleasure in Kantian terms by stating that: "The sense of beauty is pleasure detached from the ego. It is a pleasure of the moment, when one forgets one's own interest such as advantage and disadvantage, gain and loss".¹ Moreover, in this article, Nishida follows Kant's differentiation of the experience of beauty from both sensual pleasure and theoretical cognition, and claims that "beauty is truth, that is something that comes into existence in an ideal reality", which is different from "logical truth and ideals".² In the beginning of *Art and Morality*, Nishida repeats Kantian definition of the identifying features of the beautiful. Accordingly, beauty, whether artistic or natural, is not an "existential, or existent,

¹ Kitarō Nishida, "An Explanation of Beauty", *Monumenta Nipponica*, 42/2, 1987, p. 216.

² *Ibid.*, p. 216.

quality of a thing”, but “a quality endowed by human subjectivity” (AM, 5). But, for Nishida, as for Kant, rather than being merely subjective, beauty has an “objectivity possessing universal validity” (AM, 6). And, again like Kant, Nishida seeks out the objective quality and universal validity of beauty in a distinctive “feeling”. Moreover, he maintains that in order to understand the essence of the beautiful we must clarify the synthetic act of the subject which “must be something like an act of ‘reflective judgment’, as Kant calls it, a transcendental act in a dimension beyond the realm of cognitive objects” (AM, 7). In other words, for Nishida the beautiful is the content, or the objective correlate, of the act of the subject, the condition of whose union is concrete feeling (AM, 14). And, as for Kant, for Nishida this feeling is directly related to the “freedom” of the subjective act of synthesis that is beyond the reach of theoretical knowledge.

However, Nishida critically asserts that to explain, in the manner of Kant, the distinctive character of aesthetic feeling and universal validity of its object by appealing to “the universal quality of the subjective act” and “the structure of our subjectivity in general” amounts to a clarification of “aesthetic object” as merely “aesthetic feeling” and “subjective qualities”, which is nothing but a “psychological explanation” (AM, 6). And, in Nishida’s account such a psychological explanation “cannot avoid being heteronomous” with respect to the explanation of the “objective quality” of the object of beauty. In this way, Nishida identifies the problem of aesthetic form in Kantian aesthetics and describes it as the problem of clarification of the “objective quality of the aesthetic object”. He writes:

The essence of the beautiful must be sought in the subjective act, on the one hand, but we cannot help thinking, on the other, that a *beautiful thing* exists objectively for our aesthetic judgments. Even if aesthetic content is not an

existential, or existent, quality of a thing, aesthetic content becomes an object of aesthetic feeling in some sense. We shall be able to elucidate the essence of the beautiful by clarifying this objective quality of the aesthetic object (*AM*, 5).

In Kant, another dimension of the problem of aesthetic form was the ambiguity concerning the form of artistic beauty, or what we have described as the ambiguity in the distinction between spirit and taste. Accordingly, if beauty is to be explained with recourse to the harmonious disposition of our cognitive faculties, or in Nishida's terms "the structure of our subjectivity in general", then there is the question of how this mental state gains form in the work of art. Nishida seeks out to clarify both of these dimensions of the problem of aesthetic form, i.e., the beautiful form as the objective counterpart of our subjectivity in general, and the constitution of the beautiful form in art, in the "creative activity of the artist". In other words, in Nishida's account not only the creation but also the appreciation of beauty must be sought in the creative act of the artist. "Appreciation, too, may be thought to be grounded on a kind of creative act", he claims, "as the connoisseur also appreciates a work of art through a vicarious participation in the creative act of artist" (*AM*, 5). Moreover, for Nishida natural beauty also become an aesthetic object "when we project our subjectivity upon it" (*AM*, 49). Reminding Kant, Nishida suggests that in natural beauty "we are no longer considering nature but a kind of work of art" (*AM*, 49), but in contrast to Kant, in his arguments the aesthetic appreciation of nature tends to dissolve entirely into artistic creation.

The question of whether and how Nishida's conception of artistic intuition as the feeling of the unity of free synthesizing activity of the subject, whose content is beauty and which is the ground not only of aesthetic judgment but also of cognition

in general, differs from Kant's description of beauty as the inner feeling of the free harmonious disposition of our cognitive faculties, which is also the subjective ground of cognition in general, constitutes one of the central points in the discussions on Nishida's views on art and aesthetics. Some commentators, like Robert Wilkinson, see the differences of Nishida's conception of aesthetic experience in *Art and Morality* with Kantian aesthetics as marking a view of experience that is "simply incommensurable with which informs the mainstream of western thought".³ Wilkinson argues that, even though Nishida's view gets close to some western analogues, especially Romantic and Idealist conceptions, "for reasons deep in metaphysics there must remain a final difference between an aesthetic based on Nishida's premises and any based on Aristotelian, individualist assumptions".⁴ Meanwhile, in her dissertation Britta Stadelmann-Boutry, while acknowledging the influences of the Asian sources on Nishida's thought, analyses his conception of artistic creation in *Art and Morality* in relation to Kant's characterization of beauty and Fiedler's theory of art as expressive formation.⁵ Stadelmann-Boutry remarks that Nishida's double reference to both Kant and Fiedler creates a tension throughout the text between "an approach to art that situates the creative force of art in the bodily activity of the artist and that is mainly immanent and non-metaphysic", on the one hand, and "a Platonic conception that sees beauty metaphysically as an ideal, which

³ Robert Wilkinson, "Nishida, Aesthetics, and the Limits of Cultural Synthesis", *Intercultural Aesthetics: A Worldview Perspective*, A. Van den Braembussche, Heinz Kimmerle, Nicole Note, ed. (Dordrecht, London: Springer, 2009), p. 69.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁵ Britta Stadelmann-Boutry, *La Création Artistique chez Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945) à Travers ses Lectures de Fiedler et de Kant dans son Texte "Art et morale" ("Geijutsu to Dōtoku)" de 1923*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis presented at the University of Geneva, Switzerland, 2003.

is coupled with the good and the true, detached from corporeal reality”, on the other.⁶ Accordingly, while pointing out that in *Art and Morality* the theories of beauty and artistic creation are neither opposed, nor presented as contradictories, she formulates the main question of the text as to know “how Nishida reconciles the divergence of these two theories”, that is, “how he brings beauty back into immanence, on the one hand, and how he links artistic creation to a transcendent dimension, on the other”.⁷ On the other hand, in his editorial commentary to the sixth volume of the *Selected Works of Nishida Philosophy* devoted to Nishida’s articles on art and aesthetics, Ken’ichi Iwaki suggests that Nishida’s conception of artistic experience “moves within the magnetic field of Eastern and Western languages” and hence it “would be impossible to understand this concept by approaching it from one side only”.⁸

As Nishida describes his work as an endeavor to consider various questions fundamental to different fields of human thought by framing them from the standpoint of his own philosophy,⁹ in this chapter I will attempt to analyze how in *Art and Morality* Nishida frames the problem of aesthetic form as the problem of clarification of the “objective quality of the aesthetic object”. Such an analysis would reveal not only the specificity of Nishida’s conception of artistic creation but also how this conception faces a fundamental difficulty in relation to the problem of aesthetic form that will lead to a shift toward his later views on artistic creation.

⁶ Ibid., p. 7.

⁷ Ibid., p. 8.

⁸ Ken’ichi Iwaki, “Nishida Kitarō and Art”, *A History of Modern Japanese Aesthetics*, ed. Michael F. Marra (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001), p. 261.

⁹ Kitarō Nishida, *Last Writings: Nothingness and the Religious Worldview*, trans. David A. Dilworth (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1987), p. 125.

3.2. Nature and Culture: The Space of Objects and the Space of the Self

Nishida's conception of what an act of the subject is lies at the heart of his characterization of the essence of beauty, which he seeks out in the creative act of the artist. Following Franz Brentano, Nishida holds that "a mental act and its object possess an inseparable relation as two aspects of one intentional experience" (*AM*, 6). To describe this unity of mental act and its object, or content, Nishida gives the example of color perception. In visual perception of color, we distinguish one particular color from other colors, for example red from blue. Similarly, we recognize infinite shades of colors within one particular color. Now, according to Nishida, for colors to be distinguished from each other, there must be a unity of them, a unity that is, for example, "both red and blue and at the same time must be thought to be neither red nor blue" (*AM*, 9). And, in Nishida's definition, it is exactly this unity that is the act of color perception. In other words, the particular color, e.g. red, is the content, and the unity of different colors and their shades through which colors distinguish themselves is the a priori act of perception. And, Nishida maintains that "every concrete experience possesses the two inseparable aspects of content and act in this way" (*AM*, 9). Hence, Nishida conceives of various mental acts, such as sensation, representation, memory, imagination, and thinking on the basis of this fundamental identity of act and its object. Accordingly, representation, for example, is the synthesis of particular acts of sensation. But, rather than being a mere union of sensation, it has its own autonomous content, which is a particular perceptual object in space and time. Again, as in the act of sensation, the act of perception and its object constitute an inseparable unity. As Nishida puts it, if we think that time and space are the a priori of the act of perception, "this a priori on the

exterior constructs a world of perceptual objects, while at the same time, on the interior it becomes the act of perception” (AM, 13). Similarly, the act of thinking takes representation as its material and constitutes, through synthesis, its own autonomous content.

To indicate the relation between act and its object Nishida frequently appeals to the Sino-Japanese connective *soku*, whose usage he will systematically develop in his later periods to construct his own logic. In Japanese, *soku*, which is variously translated into English as “sive”, “qua”, “and yet not”, and “and at the same time”, means: 1) to be adhered to each other; 2) to appear immediately at the same place and time; 3) in Buddhism, it refers to the non-discrimination or non-differentiation between two conflicting things exactly as they are; and 4) “That is to say”, “i.e.”.¹⁰ Accordingly, Nishida states that “mental phenomena are established”, in the structure of “meaning *and at the same time* reality” and the internal relationship between objects constitutes the basis of mental phenomena (AM, 10). Nishida further formulates this intrinsic reversibility of act and object with recourse to Fichte’s concept of *Tathandlung* and using the language of phenomenology. He writes:

As reality there is only one act (*Tathandlung*), which includes the object within act. From the standpoint of the object, the noetic act can be considered to be an internal relation of the noematic object; but from the standpoint of the noetic act, the noematic object is nothing more than the internal determination of the act itself. Its infinitely determining direction can be considered to be the subjective act, and its infinitely determined direction can be considered to be the objective world of objects (AM, 49).

And, Nishida claims that “our empirical world is the infinite synthesis of this kind of experiential content” while our selves are “an indefinite synthesis of these

¹⁰ See, *Kōjien* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2007). For a short account of different interpretations on the meaning of *soku*, and “logic of *soku*” in Nishida and the Kyoto School, see Nicholas John Jones, “The Logic of Soku in the Kyoto School”, *Philosophy East and West*, 54/ 3, 2004, pp. 302-321.

kinds of acts” (*AM*, 10). In other words, mental acts are nothing but the “internal relationship between objects”, whose synthesis constitutes the empirical world, and the self is the synthetic unity in which these acts come together. So, for Nishida, the self and the world are the two inseparable aspects of the reciprocal differentiation between objects.

Two interrelated questions arise about Nishida’s description of the inseparable relation between act and its object: How do mental acts, and hence their objects constitute a unity, i.e., how they are individuated as one self, on the one hand, and as the world of cognitive objects on the other? And how and why we distinguish object and act, and correspondingly objective and subjective worlds from each other? To answer the first question, Nishida follows Kant’s argument concerning the necessity of the synthetic unity of apperception, according to which for the synthesis of our mental acts and hence objective cognition to be possible there requires first the continuity of the self-consciousness, and proposes that apart from the experience of self-consciousness, i.e., the “consciousness of the unity of subjectivity and objectivity, there is nothing but the movement of things” (*AM*, 128). And, he describes consciousness as “the immediate synthesis of act and act” (*AM*, 14). But, in the manner of Fichte, Nishida reconstitutes Kant’s necessary unity of apperception, or self-consciousness, as a free synthetic act that brings particular mental acts together and defines this “act underlying every act and the a priori underlying every a priori” as the “free” or “true self” (*AM*, 10). As it will become more obvious in subsequent parts of this chapter, here it is crucial to understand what Nishida has in mind in describing the “act underlying all acts” as “free”. He unambiguously claims that by “free” he means “what transcends nature or what transcends natural

causality” (*AM*, 37). Accordingly, our mental acts of synthesis, which are “not reducible to mere bodily movements”, have a spontaneous, internal, even impulsive unity in which, for example, the act of sensation “moves directly from sensation to sensation” (*AM*, 6-7; 13). Nishida’s assertions suggest that the synthesis of sensory acts in perception is also a spontaneous act: “all our perceptions are impulsive” (*AM*, 13). But, Nishida claims that such particular acts, which are “the unity of infinite contents” with respect to their contents, cannot be described as free for “the content of a finite, determined act is a mere world of possible relationships” (*AM*, 10). Even though “perception is established on a free, personal basis as a phenomenon of consciousness and cannot merely be explained as a natural phenomenon”, he writes, “the person cannot be said to be entirely free in the horizon of perception. For its creativity is simply impulsive” (*AM*, 37). According to him, in recollection and imagination the freedom of the act becomes gradually clearer, but even in these acts “the person cannot be said to have truly attained the realm of freedom” (*AM*, 37). He claims that imagination is “freedom vis-à-vis nature but cannot be said to have truly attained the realm of freedom” (*AM*, 37). In contrast to such particular acts, the content of the free self as the act underlying all acts is not possible relationships between objects, but spontaneous acts themselves (*AM*, 10). In other words, the unity of the free self is the “internal unity of infinite acts”, which constitutes an “indefinite series of acts” (*AM*, 9-10). But, this means that in the case of the unity of the self there is an indefinite process, since “the internal union of act and its object implies the indefinite development and advance of this experience itself” (*AM*, 9). In this sense, Nishida describes the self as “free” and “creative”, and asserts that the depth of our self is an “infinitely unattainable depth” (*AM*, 11). He writes:

Only in the act of self-consciousness does the act entirely transcend the objective world and create an objective world in itself, and only then does it truly stand in the concrete horizon of the act underlying all acts. The natural world is included within it and simply constitutes one aspect of it (*AM*, 37).

Stated differently, our free self as the act underlying all acts, which is given through the experience of self-consciousness, constitutes the foundation of all our experiences of objects, but as it is an infinite process, i.e., infinitely free and creative, it cannot be conceived as an objective content, and thereby stands outside the realm of nature. Nishida defines the infinitely developmental direction of our free self as “the will” and asserts that:

The true will cannot be reflected upon or determined, for that which can be determined is no longer the will... As Fichte states, the practical self is the basis of the theoretical self. What the senses attest to is established through the unity of the absolute will. For a man without volitional experience there is no reality (*AM*, 49).

Here we also find Nishida’s definition of “rationality” as differentiated from the world of nature, but constituting its transcendental ground. Accordingly, while the will is the infinitely developmental direction of our true self as the act underlying all acts, our rationality constitutes the direction of its determination (*AM*, 186). In this way, Nishida describes our rationality not only as the negative side of the absolute will, but also in direct relation to our personality which plays an essential role in his conception of artistic creation. He states that rationality is not “on the same level as visual and aural perception. It is the most basic act underlying all acts and constitutes the very core of the personality” (*AM*, 12). In other words, in Nishida’s account, our particular acts of cognition are made possible by the determination of the infinitely dynamic will as our rationality.

As for the second question, i.e., the distinction between objective and subjective worlds, Nishida’s answer seems to be based on a fundamental tension

between, what he calls, the “discriminatory” or “intellectual” direction that determines particular (objective) contents and the “volitional” or “constitutive” direction as “a continuity of pure acts”, which is given as self-consciousness (*AM*, 189-190). Nishida articulates this tension in different levels and with respect to different standpoints. He states that:

Various meanings and dimensions obtain even in regard to the opposition and fusion of subjectivity and objectivity. Every opposition between subjectivity and objectivity appears in the form of disunity of act and object, while the union of subject and object is the becoming of a pure act in the structure of ‘object and at the same time act’ and ‘act and at the same time object’ (*AM*, 158, translation is modified).

Accordingly, on the level of particular perceptual acts, “a world established on a finite union of acts” emerges as “a world of mere cognitive objects” as it “lacks the self-awareness of the acts” (*AM*, 11). In other words, we perceive visually a particular color, for example, but do not have the consciousness of the continuity of different colors; or we distinguish one sensation from another sensation, but do not have the consciousness of the totality that synthesizes and unifies them. To be more precise and to avoid misunderstandings, here Nishida’s assertion that particular perceptual content “lacks the self-awareness of the acts” must be taken to mean that the content is conceived as separate from the act as an “intellectual content”, for in Nishida’s definition the consciousness of the unity is the condition of possibility of all particular objective contents. Similarly, on the level of the self, which is the synthesis of noetic acts, we make a distinction between object and act as a result of our reflection on our self. That is to say, when we reflect on our self we objectify it as an “unchanging identity that transcends its various acts” and attribute these acts to

it as center, while conceiving the objects as transcending “entirely the determined act of the self” (*AM*, 9-10). In Nishida’s explanation, in this standpoint:

we simultaneously possess a purely objective world constructed from the union of the content of infinite acts and a subjective world that takes the union itself of acts as objects. The free self, which is this unity of knowledge and action, can objectify itself; the former becomes the world of natural phenomena, and the latter, the world of the phenomena of consciousness. The natural world, which is established on the basis of the synthesis of infinite acts, is a world of cognitive objects (*AM*, 11).

In the same manner, in the standpoint of intellectual reflection, in contrast to the sensory act, the world of thought exhibits the opposition between objective and subjective worlds (*AM*, 13). “What we nowadays term the world of reality”, Nishida points out, “is the world of thinking, and the will is the central maintaining force of this real world” (*AM*, 13). And finally, in the standpoint in which our selves are the self-determinations of the absolute will, “our perceptual acts are a part, but not the totality, of the transcendental act wherein color distinguishes itself” (*AM*, 11). Accordingly, as no particular self can experience “the totality of color”, “the system of the totality of color, which is the content of the transcendental perceptual act” emerges as “an objective world that stands over against us” and in this way the distinctions between subject and object, and mind and matter arise (*AM*, 11). As we will see, however, definition of the relationship between the absolute will and our particular selves, or rationality as its determination becomes a crucial issue for Nishida that confronts him with some of the fundamental difficulties that occupy Kant and German Idealism.

On the other hand, Nishida not only discusses different dimensions in which the opposition of subjectivity and objectivity arises, but also introduces, in a rather confusing manner, the idea of their fusion beyond the unity of object and act in mere

perception. He maintains that the absolute will as the act underlying all acts possesses not only the natural phenomena as its objective world, and the world of phenomena of consciousness as its subjective world but also “its own objective world” as “the world of the unity of subject and object”. And he defines this world of the unity of subject and object as the “world of cultural phenomena” (*AM*, 12-13). Accordingly, in contrast to the world of nature, in which content appears as an object of judgment, i.e., as separate from subjective act, for it “stands on the basis of either of one act or a finite union of acts”, the world of cultural phenomena is the objective world of the immediate internal unity between acts, that is the will itself (*AM*, 12). In Nishida’s explanation the world of cultural phenomena is the world of the “realization of values”, by which he means that the subjective ground, i.e., the unity of acts as the personal content, is included within the object itself (*AM*, 12). Simply stated, rather than being merely a “thing”, an object of the world of culture gains its meaning in the horizon of our rationality. In such a world, with the language of Nishida, there exists the structure of “value and at the same time reality”. Moreover, in cultural phenomena the ground through which we see nature and our lives also reveals itself. In other words, in cultural phenomena the world appears concretely as the content of our rationality rather than an objective world of nature for we do not make a separation between act and content. In Nishida’s account, the objective world of nature appears as standing over against us because no single self can experience the totality of nature, which is the content of the transcendental self. But, as soon as we become conscious of the inner continuity between acts, the world of nature turns out to be the content of our free self. As Nishida puts it, the nearer our self approaches the standpoint of the transcendental self “the more the objective world

belongs to the unity of the self. Herein arises the world of cultural phenomena” (*AM*, 12).

For Nishida, art, philosophy, morality, and religion belong to the world of culture in which not only the object includes personal content as the core of our rationality, but also we become conscious of the inner unity between acts behind the world of cognitive objects. In this sense, Nishida states that what is meant by culture is not the “taking of nature as the means of the self”, but “the seeing of nature within the self” (*AM*, 12). Or, as he expresses more clearly, “culture is the discovery of the self in the very depths of nature” (*AM*, 12). And, on the basis of this fundamental definition of the world of culture as the world of the unity of subject and object, or the self and nature, Nishida conceives of the relationship and differentiation between art, morality, philosophy, and religion. Accordingly, while philosophy is the act of finding personal content at the ground of objective knowledge, in morality our actions themselves becomes directly the content of our free will (*AM*, 94). In the same manner, for Nishida aesthetic intuition originates by exposing personal content at the ground of sensation, perception, or even imagination. He defines the world of aesthetic intuition as the world of “pure perception” with regard to which we move “immediately”, i.e., without the intervention of reflection, from one perception to another, and thereby unite internally with the ground that makes particular perceptions possible (*AM*, 13). Nishida writes:

When there is immediate synthesis in the personal horizon- the horizon of absolute will, as pure act in which colors distinguish themselves, that is in the intentionality of pure visual perception- colors suddenly come to life; they become living colors in themselves- that is aesthetic objects (*AM*, 15).

Nishida's descriptions in *Art and Morality* with regard to the important question of whether and how experiential content is distinguished from reflective or "intellectual" content and how he conceives of the relationship between sensory and representational content of a perception and its conceptual content are not entirely clear. But, he clearly distinguishes the content of aesthetic intuition from not only conceptual content but also sensory and representational content. Aesthetic intuition is not a perceptual experience, but it is neither a mental state. Here confusion arises because in Nishida's definition, aesthetic intuition is an intuition in which we unite internally with the ground of perception, i.e., the unity between perceptual acts that cannot be given as a particular "content". To remove the confusion Nishida defines aesthetic intuition as a peculiar kind of "act" which "moves from the world of mere cognitive objects to the world of volitional objects" and "changes from a passive and abstract state into an active and concrete one" (*AM*, 22). Now, as every act is inevitably a concrete object in the actual world, according to Nishida's description, the beautiful is nothing but the content or objective correlate, of this act through which we unite internally with the ground of perceptual experience. For Nishida this act is the creative act of the artist whose content is the work of art as an object of the world of culture.

From such a description of aesthetic intuition Nishida provides his critique of the Kantian distinction between form and content in beauty, as well as the main idea of his response to the problem of aesthetic form. Accordingly, Nishida acknowledges that the Kantian conception of purely formal beauty, which is exemplified by a unity of a manifold, or a symmetry, is independent from any "intellectual content". "Content in such a sense", he claims, "is unrelated to aesthetic value and is

accidental” (*AM*, 185). With his examples, in the plastic arts not only “the conceptual content of the image of Madonna or of the Greek goddess Venus” but also visual perception of color is “entirely external” to the beauty of art (*AM*, 185). But, Nishida further argues that “aesthetic content” is to be distinguished from “intellectual content” in the above sense. In his definition “aesthetic content” is “the expression of pure internal life”, i.e., “the content of our pure rational life”, which is the content of our self as the inner unity between acts (*AM*, 185). Consequently, Nishida maintains that, as every intuition, including the aesthetic ones is necessarily grounded on this inner unity, “there is no distinction between formal beauty and beauty that has content within the beautiful” (*AM*, 185). Stated differently, the “space” of aesthetic intuition is not the space of representational meaning, but it is neither the “perceptual” or “formal space” occupied by the objects of cognition. It is rather the “space of the self” “that continues to function internally as the unifying force of perception itself”, i.e., the space constructed by the immediate synthesis of pure perception in which we move impulsively from one perception to another (*AM*, 19; 13). In this sense, Nishida holds that in art the external world becomes the expression of the self. But, as Nishida defines the “true reality” as the infinite continuity of acts in which “the knower and the known are one”, he claims that in artistic intuition, which is immediately artistic creation, we “look at the form of things as they are” beyond the reflective distinction between subjectivity and objectivity (*AM*, 100).

3.3. Aesthetic Feeling and Freedom: The Inner Unity of the Self

One of the essential ideas of Nishida in *Art and Morality* is that the immediate synthesis between acts is given in “feeling”, and hence the objective world, i.e., the content of “feeling” becomes the objective world of art. In Nishida’s

definition feeling is not “just one aspect of mental phenomena”, nor it is “mere happiness or unhappiness devoid of content”, but, rather, it is “the fundamental condition for the establishment of consciousness”, i.e., the inner unity established between acts (*AM*, 14-15). Here, once again, we see Nishida’s appeal, via Fichte, to the Kantian link between the synthetic unity of apperception and feeling. Furthermore, in a manner reminding Kant’s conceiving of the harmonious disposition of our cognitive faculties as the condition of not only the experience of beauty but also objective cognition in general, Nishida asserts that:

Knowledge exists within feeling... for the synthesis of intellectual content in the world of cognitive objects becomes possible on the basis of the union of act and act. That which creates new intellectual content is not knowledge, but feeling (*AM*, 15).

Similarly, Nishida argues for the appropriateness, or correctness of both cognitive judgment and judgment of beauty, which is “always subjective and individual”, from the standpoint of feeling that includes the claim for universal validity within itself. He writes:

Every phenomenon of consciousness that immanently includes its object must be regarded as including a requirement of universal validity. This requirement of universal validity, which transcends space and time, is a *sine qua non* for the establishment of consciousness. The factual existence of such a requirement presupposes the existence of a transindividual consciousness (*AM*, 8-9).

Nishida further agrees with Kant that feeling, which is the ground both of objective cognition in general and the experience of beauty, cannot be accessed through objective knowledge. He asks: “we cannot see seeing and cannot hear hearing. What does the dynamic content of self-generative, self-developmental experience mean, and in what sense we know it?” (*AM*, 122). With an attempt to overcome Kant’s problematic conception of the thing-in-itself and the distinction

between sensuous intuition and knowledge, however, Nishida seeks an answer to this question through intermingled references to Fichte, Hegel, and Bergson. First of all, following Fichte, Nishida maintains that our spontaneous mental acts themselves, i.e., reciprocal differentiations between empirical objects, cannot be objectified, since as soon as we reflect on the act “its content enters into the world of cognitive objects and nothing at all remains as the content of the act” (*AM*, 15). But, for Nishida in the pre-reflective experience the act and its object, feeling and intuition constitute an interrelated polarity and inseparable unity. As we have seen, drawing upon Fichte, Nishida describes the dynamic unity between acts and their objects as the free self whose indefinitely developmental direction, in which one act directly gives birth to another, is the will, and infinitely determining direction is our rationality. And according to Nishida, we experience this fundamental unity of experience internally as feeling. As he puts it:

The self-identity of ‘I am I’ is the foundation of all knowledge; when experience becomes a phenomenon of consciousness by virtue of being an internal continuity. The fundamental fact of consciousness of the statement ‘I am’ must be prior even to ‘pure ego’ as the legislator of nature. Before Kant’s ‘I think’ there must be Fichte’s ‘I act’. Thinking also is one kind of activity of the ego. The ego is not an act, but must be an infinite continuity of acts. The ‘I am’ signifies an infinite continuity of acts. Seen from this standpoint everything is unified as something moving (*AM*, 126).

On the other hand, pursuing German Idealism’s interpretation of Kant’s conception of reflective judgment and its metaphysical implications, Nishida describes the dynamic unity of the free self as a “universal” having a “teleological unity” and attributes to its content a “freedom” that is “spiritual in essence”:

The horizon of the act underlying all acts is the horizon of free will, which we can experience internally and the reality that is established as the content of such an act can be considered to be free in its essence. By *free* I mean what transcends nature or what transcends natural causality. This is the

reason that I have termed a spiritual phenomenon an act without underlying substance- that is, it is the unity of the act itself (*AM*, 37).

As we have seen, in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* Kant introduces the distinction between reflective judgment and determinative judgment as the two ways in which the power of judgment subsumes the particular as contained within the universal. When a given particular is subsumed under a given universal, judgment is determinative. When the particular is given first and the universal under which it can be subsumed is found through reflection on the given particular, judgment is reflective. Kant further defines to reflect as “to compare and to hold together given representations either with others or with one’s faculty of cognition, in relation to a concept thereby made possible” (*CPJ*, FI, V: 211 [15]). By comparing representations with each other we generate, for example, empirical concepts, or discover more general concepts in empirical nature. And as the comparison is made not “schematically” with respect to a given concept, but with respect to the very concept that is discovered in the process, Kant describes it “teleologically” as the “nature as art,” the “technique of nature,” or the “formal purposiveness of nature for the power of judgment” with regard to its particular laws. Here, it is important to note that, Kant describes the teleological principle “heuristically”, i.e., as a “regulative” idea, albeit some of his assertions suggest that it is “constitutive”.¹¹ Similarly, since the judgment of beauty is also grounded on the same principle of the purposiveness of nature, Kant asserts that in natural beauty we see nature “technically”, i.e., as art. But, according to Kant in the experience of beauty, instead

¹¹ For a discussion on Kant’s ambiguous stance with respect to whether the idea of the purposiveness of nature is constitutive or regulative, see Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetic and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche*, especially, pp. 32-41.

of comparing particular representations with each other, we compare the given representation with our power of judgment, i.e., check, through the existence of feeling of pleasure, whether the representation is suitable to induce a harmonious agreement of imagination and understanding. On the other hand, for Kant the output of the harmonious agreement of our mental acts is not an objective concept, or a predicate of the object. As the agreement is achieved without a given concept, however, there emerges an ambiguity concerning the form corresponding to the harmonious agreement of our mental acts. If, on the one hand, aesthetic feeling is conceived merely as an internal perception of such an agreement of the mental acts without any reference to the properties of the aesthetic object, then beauty becomes a psychological phenomenon. If, on the other hand, beauty has a form independent from determinate concepts, then this form requires an explanation because of the distinction between sensible intuitions and intellectual concepts. Although, Kant suggests that aesthetic reflective judgment is “free” from determinate concept, but based on an “indeterminate concept”, as he does not provide a compelling explanation of what he means by an “indeterminate concept”, his conception of aesthetic form faces a central problem, which is the source of the several ambiguities in his aesthetics.

Remarking this difficulty in Kant’s aesthetic reflective judgment, Nishida argues that if the universal that is the foundation of the act of reflective judgment and the universal that is the foundation of unity in the act of determinative judgment are the same, then we cannot clarify the content of beauty, i.e., aesthetic form (*AM*, 68). Moreover, according to Nishida, in such a case “the notion of teleological unity” that is the principle on which reflective judgment is found, also becomes meaningless

(AM, 68). To resolve this difficulty, Nishida focuses on Kant's conception of reflection as the comparison of the particular with respect to the agreement of our mental acts. He claims that:

If cognition, in the strict sense, subsumes the particular within the universal, then the content of the particular that appears in the standpoint of Kant's reflective judgment cannot be sought within the pure, objective content of consciousness. It must be sought within the content of the act underlying all acts. It is not the content of judgment, but the relationship between acts of judgment (AM, 70).

As with Kant, Nishida also defines the inner perception of the unity of our mental acts independent from objective concepts as aesthetic feeling. But, by taking the "immediate" inner unity between acts in place of the free harmonious agreement of imagination and understanding, and describing it as a "concrete universal" rather than an "indeterminate concept", Nishida attempts a first step in resolving the problem of aesthetic form.

Nishida inherits the idea of "concrete universal" from Hegel. In the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, Hegel makes a distinction between "abstract universals" that are "arrived at by neglecting the particular features which distinguish the different colors, plants, and animals from each other, and by retaining those common to them all", and "concrete universals" that he describes as "the universal of the notion".¹² According to Hegel's description, rather than being "a mere sum of features common to several things confronted by a particular, which enjoys an existence of its own", the universal of the notion is "self-particularizing or self-specifying and with undimmed clearness finds itself at home in its antithesis".¹³

¹² G. W. F. Hegel, *The Logic of Hegel*, trans. William Wallace (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 292.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

In other words, as in Kant's reflective judgment in which representations combined together technically, i.e., with respect to a concept thereby made possible, in concrete universal the parts compose a whole according to a principle which is the universal itself. But, while Kant's sees the process as the power of judgment's presupposition that nature itself "specifies" in accordance with the concept of purposiveness of nature, Hegel describes it, in the manner of Fichte, as a "self-differentiation" or "self-realization" of the concrete whole into particulars. That is, in Hegel, concrete universal is neither a classification of separate representations, nor a combination of them, but a "self-differentiation" of the whole into parts while maintaining self-identity. In this sense, Hegel maintains that concrete universal "involves mediation, but the mediation lies within itself", i.e., "the notion is what is mediated through itself and with itself".¹⁴ In other words, concrete universal includes its own principle of development or purposiveness in itself.

In section 55 of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, where Hegel discusses Kant's conception of the reflective power of judgment, he explicitly states the correspondence of his notion of concrete universal, or the Idea with Kant's principle of the purposiveness of nature. He asserts that, as "the capital feature" of the work, in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* Kant gives "a representation and a name, if not an intellectual expression, to the Idea".¹⁵ He further explains that "such a representation, as the Intuitive Understanding, or an inner adoption, suggests a universal which is at the same time apprehended as essentially a concrete unity".¹⁶

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 294.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 112.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 112.

Accordingly, for Hegel, as Kant's followers soon remark, his principle of the purposiveness in living nature and beauty, where thought and sensation become one, provides "a way to escape from the abstract and separatist understanding".¹⁷ Hegel points out that, since in Kant's conception of reflective judgment the purposiveness of nature, and hence the harmony of natural necessity and freedom, is "conceived as realized" in the particularity of the work of art and the individual living organism, Kant puts before us "the Idea, comprehensive even in its content".¹⁸ According to Hegel, however, by making the principle of purposiveness a regulative idea or an "ought to be" Kant's arguments result in the "disjunction of the notion from reality", i.e., concept from intuition, or universal from particular, instead of the actual realization of the concrete universal as the ultimate end. Nevertheless, Hegel asserts, Kant's idea of reflective judgment, in which the senses and the intuition see the Idea realized "in the present reality of living organisms and of the beautiful in Art" is "well adopted to lead the mind on to grasp and think the concrete Idea".¹⁹

In section 166 of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, reworking Fichte's conception of reflection, Hegel further describes the relationship between universal, particular and individual, which are the three 'moments' of concrete universal, as the "negative identity" of the notion with itself.²⁰ Accordingly, for example, the copula "is" that connects the individual and universal in a judgment, "springs from the nature of the notion, to be self-identical even in parting with its

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 112.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 112.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 112-13.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 291-92.

own” and “the individual and universal are *its* constituents, and therefore characters which cannot be isolated”.²¹

Drawing upon Hegel, Nishida describes the concrete universal as “the internal development of the unifier” in which “the universal is included within the particular” (*AM*, 44). And, through the mediation of Hegel’s logic, he develops his Fichtean notion of reflection into a conception of knowledge that “particularizes its own content and arrives at particular from the universal” (*AM*, 97). As we have seen, in Nishida’s definition, an act is not a capacity of a substantial agent independent from objects. Rather, it is nothing but the reciprocal differentiation between objects. In other words, the act is contained within particular objects, and thus cannot be objectified. Conversely, without the unity in the act, a particular object cannot be differentiated from another. As Nishida puts it, unity without clear differentiation “is not true unity; it is nothing more than a mixture”, while in differentiation “synthetic unity must always be presupposed” and becomes the goal of differentiation (*AM*, 44). If we return to the example of color, black and white are discriminated from one another, since they constitute a unity which is the visual act. But, if “we try to determine the color of the visual act itself that discriminates black from white, we can only fall into contradiction” (*AM*, 44). Broadly construed, Nishida develops his ontological account of experience upon this basic logical structure. The “contradictory identity” of the act and its objects becomes most acute in the act underlying all acts, i.e., our free self. Nishida writes:

The state of the pure union of act and act is an infinite unrest and logical contradiction... That which causes two experiential contents to be

²¹ Ibid., p. 298.

contradictory is the concrete universal, which is the synthetic whole- the unifier itself. Contradiction arises from the objectification of the act. Contradiction arises because the act attempts to project itself into the objective world of the self (*AM*, 70).

Accordingly, in contrast to the standpoint of knowledge in which the particular is subsumed within the universal, in the standpoint of concrete reality, i.e., in the contradictory identity of the self and its world, the universal is contained within the particular; it is “the means of development of the particular” (*AM*, 44).

Since the teleological unity of acts on which the objective world is grounded constitutes a unique horizon in which the universal is particularized, Nishida further describes it as “the flow of personality” (*AM*, 45). Referring to Kant’s transcendental ego, which is a universal, impersonal self, Nishida argues that “the self that is no one’s self is not a self”:

The self which we are conscious in self-identity is the very act in which the self reflects upon itself... Recognition of past experience as the experience of self also becomes possible in such a standpoint of unity (*AM*, 125).

To emphasize the more “personal” and “open” quality of the inner unity of our acts than Hegel’s concrete universal which signifies an “organically unified” but closed and impersonal entity, Nishida turns to Bergson’s concepts of “motion”, “pure duration”, and creative “flow of life”, all of which refers to an internally unified single continuity. Accordingly, when we move our hand from point A to point B, for example, it is one inseparable act or motion when it is seen internally, but a mechanical synthesis of infinite number of points when it is seen externally. In Nishida’s description, the unity of acts in the horizon of the free self constitutes such an inseparable internal continuity. And he restates his definition of the teleological unity of reflective judgment in which the universal is contained within the particular

in a Bergsonian manner. Accordingly, he describes the unity of acts in reflective judgment as a unity of “time that is flowing”, rather than a unity of “time that has flowed” (AM, 71). It is one inseparable activity of the internal development of personal content. Nishida illustrates how personal content as the content of the unity of acts is given in a concrete feeling by referring to Bergson’s discussions on the immediate personal quality of consciousness. In *Time and Free Will: an Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* Bergson states that:

I smell a rose and immediately confused recollections of childhood come back to my memory. In truth, these recollections have not been called up by the perfume of the rose: I breathe them in with the very scent; it means all that to me. To others it will smell differently.²²

In the same manner, Nishida holds that in feeling, our memories of the past and our present sensations constitute an immediate internal unity. Through the “associations of the past”, Nishida writes,

we touch, in the depths of the consciousness of the present, the flow of a profound consciousness that has transcend the present. In the flow of this consciousness the past still lives, even now, as a pure act. As we enter into this flow we generate profound, pure consciousness in ourselves; we create a greater life (AM, 18).

Although in describing the internal unity of feeling Nishida uses the term “the associations of the past” and finds the ground of our personality in the continuity of consciousness, he explicitly rejects any idea that invokes association and memory in establishing what selfhood consists in. For Nishida, in contrast to “passive” association and recollection, in “active” feeling we do not connect two, or more, distinct objects or events into each other, nor we project our feeling into objective world. The content of feeling as the unity of acts is not, for example, an association

²² Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: an Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, F. L. Pogson, trans., (New York: Cosimo Inc., 2009), p. 161.

between a golden orange and an Italian sky, or between the smell of the rose and memories of the past. For Nishida, such associative connections would be reflective, or “intellectual”, connections. Rather, in feeling we “immediately” see an Italian sky “within” a golden orange, or we smell memories of the past “within” the rose (*AM*, 18). In this way, Nishida maintains that the unity of acts as the ground of all our experience, i.e., the concrete universal contained in the particular, is given in concrete feeling as the consciousness of an inner personal continuity.

And, as we have mentioned, Nishida further describes the feeling of the “immediate internal unity of acts” as “aesthetic intuition” (*AM*, 19). He claims that, “Pure feeling is pure consciousness and not that there is a special artistic consciousness or feeling within feeling. Pure feeling, pure consciousness, is always aesthetic” (*AM*, 15). Moreover, he maintains that the content of the immediate internal unity of acts constitutes an “objective world”, namely, the world of “aesthetic objects” that is different from the world of cognitive objects. In other words, objectively unattainable ground of our experience, i.e., the self-consciousness as the immediate inner unity of acts becomes available as “aesthetic object”. At this point, Nishida’s definition of “aesthetic intuition” seems to converge very much to the German Idealist interpretation of Kant’s conception of aesthetic experience, where “the transcendental ground of nature and freedom” becomes sensuously available. And, like Schelling and Hegel, Nishida also suggests that the immediate unity of acts finds its “expression” in the content of artistic creation, rather than natural beauty.

Consequently, Nishida’s conception of aesthetic intuition faces a series of problems, mainly inherited from Kantian aesthetics. Firstly, if feeling, rather than

being just one aspect of consciousness of mental phenomena, is the “fundamental condition” of the internal unity of acts, hence of all our experience, and pure feeling is always aesthetic, then whether and how Nishida avoids the conclusion that the content of every experience is aesthetic? Several of Nishida’s assertions make it clear that he holds the idea that everything is beautiful. He writes, for example, that:

In this standpoint there is nothing that is not beautiful. As Arthur Symonds states, everyone sees beauty in the human breast, but not in the shoulder blade; everyone sees beauty in the Alps at dawn, but few see beauty in a stagnant marsh. However, these are nothing more than forms of the same essential beauty... As the objective world of pure will there is nothing whatever that is not beautiful. Even vulgar and ugly things we can discover profound beauty as expressions of human life (*AM*, 15-16, 162).

A second question is that, if every experience inevitably has a particular content and the free self, i.e., the unity of all acts, is contained as a concrete universal in this particular content, what is an “aesthetic content”, or “aesthetic object” that has a meaning different from the particular content of ordinary experience, and how it is distinguished from it? Stated differently, what is the difference between “pure” experience and ordinary experience? If ordinary experience is “impure” as a result of being adulterated by reflection or “incomplete” by being the content of finite unity of acts, and hence lacks feeling, then the requirement of self-consciousness as the ground of experience is being lost. If, on the other hand, in ordinary experience the ground is always contained in the particular content and we achieve “aesthetic” feeling by “purifying” the experience from conceptual associations and reflections, then this would simply amount to a return to ordinary experience which is already “pure”. Similarly, if we define “purity” of feeling by appealing to the “immediacy” of the connection between acts and thereby make a distinction between “immediate” aesthetic experience and “mediated” ordinary experience, then this would contradict

with Nishida's very definition of the relationship between the ground and its content according to which the "embracing" is contained in the "embraced", that is, the synthesis of unity is made possible by the differentiation of content and vice versa, and hence immediacy is contained within the mediation. Moreover, such a distinction between "purity" and "impurity", or "immediacy" and "mediation" makes the content of ordinary experience as "qualifiedly" real and thereby reinvents the distinction between appearance and reality. If by "pure", however, Nishida has in mind an act without particular content, how such an act is possible given that, by definition, an act is nothing but the internal relationship between objective contents. Then, in what sense Nishida suggests that in aesthetic intuition, whose object has a different meaning from cognitive object, "content that is inexpressible in the form of perception", i.e., the immediate unity between acts as the ground of our selves finds its "expression"? (*AM*, 23)

The answer to these questions necessitates a further clarification of Nishida's conception of the relationship and differentiation between the immediate unity of acts and particular objective content, freedom and determinacy, culture and nature, or the world of rationality and the world of physical objects, as well as an adequate presentation of his conception of artistic creation as an act of "expressive formation".

3.4. Aesthetic Intuition as Artistic Creation: The Theory of Expressive Formation

In order to provide an answer to the question of how the content that is inexpressible in ordinary experience finds an "expression" or "form" in artistic intuition Nishida appeals to Fiedler's theory of "expressive formation". In Fiedler's theory, Nishida finds also a plausible conception of the relationship, or more

appropriately the oneness of mind and body in action. Nishida pays attention to Fiedler's conception of the relationship between subject and object as an expressive formation not only in his middle period and as a part of his discussion of artistic creation, but almost throughout his career and with respect to his philosophy in general. In fact, with the influence of Nishida, Fiedler's theory becomes very influential on the works of the philosophers of the Kyoto School "first in the field of philosophy and then in aesthetics".²³ However, there is a subtle incongruity between Nishida's description of artistic creation and Fiedler's theory of expressive formation. In the rest of this chapter, by analyzing Nishida's theory of artistic creation and his conception of natural beauty, I will argue that the subtle incongruity with Fiedler not only reveals the specificity of Nishida's aesthetics but also a basic difficulty with respect to the problem of aesthetic form.

3.4.1. Nature as Art: The Union of Empathy and Pure Perception

In Nishida's recapitulation, according to Fiedler's theory of expression our mental acts "do not stop as events within the mind" but develop into objective, or bodily expressions (*AM*, 23). Accordingly, expressive movements are not external signs of mental phenomena but are "states of their development and completion", and therefore, the mental acts, the expressive movement, and the resulting expression constitute internally one single act (*AM*, 24). In this way, language, for example, is an expressive development of thought rather than being a symbol, or sign of it: "Thought perfects itself through language" (*AM*, 24). Nishida further points out that,

²³ Ken'ichi Iwaki, "The Logic of Visual Perception: Ueda Jūzo", *A History of Modern Japanese Aesthetics*, ed. Michael F. Marra (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), pp. 287-88. Iwaki remarks that the name of Fiedler first appeared in Nishida's diary the year after the publication of *An Inquiry into the Good*- June 16, 1912, *ibid.*, p. 291, n. 7.

in Fiedler's account we are not confronted by an external world which is independent of us, rather "reality is constituted by the images that are the expressions of the results that we have constructed" (*AM*, 23). As we have seen, for Fiedler our stream of consciousness consists of "perceptions and imaginations presenting a coming and going, a becoming and a fading away".²⁴ On the other hand, in Fiedler's description, through expressive formative activity our mind develops from confusion and indefiniteness of infinite stream of consciousness to the clarity and the exactitude of the external expression. This is first of all accomplished by linguistic conceptualization. According to Fiedler, however, infinitely multiple content of perceptual experiences available to us cannot be exhausted by linguistic conceptualization. Our different perceptual acts possess their own process of expressive development, and hence their own world of expression. For example, in visual perception when the conceptual associations are broken off and the conceptually formed world of cognitive objects dissolves, we enter into the world of pure visual perceptual formation. And when this happens pure visual perception "naturally moves our body and develops into a kind of expressive movement" (*AM*, 24). In other words, our perceptual organs not only provide us with sensations and perceptions but also move our bodily organs such as our hands, and through their movements pure perceptual acts are developed into external expressions. Fiedler defines such an expressive movement as the "creative act of the artist" by which we develop our incomplete and confused perceptual experiences into a clear and complete artistic conception of the world.

²⁴ Konrad Fiedler, "Über den Ursprung der Künstlerischen Tätigkeit", p. 237, quoted in Ernest K. Mundt, "Three Aspects of German Aesthetic Theory", p. 298.

On the basis of his reading of Fiedler's theory of expressive formation, Nishida defines the relationship between immediate unity of our mental acts in pure perception and its content, i.e., the aesthetic object, as a movement of expressive formation that is one single continuous act internally (*AM*, 23-24). Like Fiedler, Nishida maintains that when our acts immediately unite with each other, this act of unification is spontaneously accompanied by its own "muscular sensation" that produces movement in the whole body. According to him, such an act, which is the creative act of the artist, is a "personal act in the experiential horizon of the act underlying all acts", i.e., it is the "one flow of life" in which "both the artist and his work become one inseparable" act of expressive formation (*AM*, 26). Nishida further agrees with Fiedler that "our ordinary visual world is incomplete as a visual world" and is "restricted by our objective worlds", that is, by the world of linguistic or intellectual conceptualization (*AM*, 26). To quote him at some length:

The visual act, which is part of the flow of the *élan vital*, demands infinite development as the basic act underlying all acts. Here the hand of the artist assists at those places where the eye is unable to function. Fiedler also states that the hand, taking over after the work of the eye is finished, causes further development. At this time, the hand becomes one with the eye; the entire body becomes the eye, as it were. The world of visual perception that has been perfected in this way is the objective world of art. Sculpture and painting are realities that have been disclosed by the eyes and hands of the artist becoming one. Thus, when the sculptor is sculpting and when the painter is painting, each becomes a process of seeing only. Plotinus states that nature does not create by seeing, but, rather, that nature's seeing is creation. In this way the artist becomes nature itself (*AM*, 26-27).

This passage particularly makes clear the sense in which Nishida describes the world of artistic intuition as constituting an objective world that is distinct from the objective world of nature, i.e., the world of cognitive objects. And, it is also here we find Nishida's synthesis of Fiedler's formalism with the concept of empathy (*Einfühlung*). Accordingly, rather than being a mere "projection of feeling into

things”, or connecting ourselves through “internal imitation” with an external object that is distinct from us, empathy is the immediate, internal union of sensory contents with each other as one single continuity (*AM*, 21-22). In other words, in Nishida’s definition, empathy is the “expression” of our feeling of the immediate internal unity of our own self into an objective content. In this way, the “myriad things surge with life, and nature is seen “wholly as an expression of the self” (*AM*, 26, 45, 49, 79). As Nishida puts it, the empathetic projection of feeling into the objective world which constitutes the origin of the creative activity of artist does not mean “the superimposition of some new unity upon the objective world, but it rather means returning to the concrete whole. It is the return of the prodigal son to his father” (*AM*, 46). Thus, from the standpoint of empathy, rather than standing against the self, indeterminacy, incomprehensibility, diversity, or freedom of vast nature is our own vast personality and freedom (*AM*, 49). Referring to Shelley’s poem “The Skylark”, which he composed through the “heightened feeling he gained at hearing the cry of a skylark as he wandered among the hedges in which fireflies were gathered on a summer evening”, Nishida states that “when we view nature in the standpoint of artistic intuition, the spirit that we see behind nature is directly the spirit of the self” (*AM*, 80). According to Nishida such heightened feeling we gain from the beauties of nature is precisely the essence of the artist himself and also “the substance of a profounder nature” (*AM*, 81).

This means, however, that in Nishida’s synthesis of pure perception and empathy, the aesthetic appreciation of nature completely dissolves into artistic creation, as “aesthetic intuition” is immediately accompanied by expressive formation producing an object distinct from nature. Accordingly, for Nishida,

contemplation of the beauties of nature, or an aesthetic appreciation of nature “as nature” would be merely an “intellectual act”, for intuition of aesthetic content, in which act itself directly becomes objective is “not passive but active” (*AM*, 20). As

Nishida explains:

artistic intuition is not mere intuition; it is intuitive content that has been disclosed through expressive movement. Artistic creation... is a productive seeing... The intuition of the artist is an act of formation... Its demand is not a fact of the natural world; rather the reality of the natural world is based on it (*AM*, 27-28).

But, in combination with Nishida’s definition of the total freedom of our rationality as the determination of the act underlying all acts from perceptual and reflective content of experience, by such a complete differentiation of the world of nature and the world of aesthetic object the sense in which Nishida asserts that in artistic intuition “we see things as they are” or “we look at the form of things as they are” (*AM*, 100) seems to become blurred. Furthermore, Nishida’s reference to Fiedler is rather misleading, as in contrast to Fiedler’s theory according to which we are presented with a confused and indefinite stream of consciousness, in Nishida’s conception the content of experience is already distinguished from other objective contents. Indeed, this discrimination is Nishida’s very definition of what a mental act is.

3.4.2. The Specificity of Nishida’s Conception of Artistic Creation and the Problem of Subjectivity

Then, in what sense Nishida claims that in artistic intuition, or pure perception, there is a “development and completion” of the ordinary perceptual experience? In Fiedler we are provided with a confused and indefinite data of sensation and perception, and therefore this material can be brought together in

different ways in objective cognition, or linguistic conceptualization, and in pure visual perception. And, it is in this sense that in Fiedler ordinary cognition is incomplete. But, however much the perceptual material and expressive form constitute the inseparable parts of a continuous process, such a conception cannot escape reinviting the Kantian distinction between receptivity and conceptualization, on the one hand, and subjectivism, on the other. But, in Nishida there is no such distinction between sheer presynthesized sensual material and synthesized content. In other words, according to Nishida's characterization, the content of experience is inevitably a cognitive object, albeit his assertions are not always clear on this point. Unlike Fiedler, Nishida describes the "completion" of ordinary cognitive experience as the seeing of the personal ground, i.e., the self as the immediate unity of acts behind the cognitive content itself, rather than constructing an entirely different object through an entirely independent act. As Nishida writes in reference to Lipps's concept of the "demand of object":

When what is considered to be its object is impersonal, we see the world of knowledge outside; but when the object itself is personal, we can think that the demand of the object and the act of the self are one. At such a time things dissolve into the self and become infinite strata of acts within, for even the world of things is only an object of thinking that is one plane of personal acts. Just as a photographer moves back a bit to include a broader scene within his lens, so, too, are we able to include the world of things within the acts of the self by entering infinitely within the self (*AM*, 86).

Remarking the discord between Nishida's conception of artistic creation and that of Fiedler, Ken'ichi Iwaki argues that "Nishida was unable to properly understand the most radical aspect of Fiedler's theory: The transformation of reality by means of expression".²⁵ However, Nishida appeals to Fiedler's theory of

²⁵ Ken'ichi Iwaki, "Nishida Kitarō and Art", p. 273.

expression as he thinks that it clarifies the “objective meaning” of the creative act of the artist that goes beyond its “subjective meaning” (*AM*, 24). As we will see in subsequent chapters, rather than misunderstanding Fiedler, in his later work on artistic creation Nishida attempts to further eliminate the subjective quality of Fiedler’s theory of expressive formation.

Now, as every perceptual act has an objective content, and all of our “intentional actions” would be “impure” or “incomplete” as long as they include what may be called a “deliberate” consciousness and reflection rather than a “pure” consciousness, then the only way for a “free” activity of the artist as Nishida describes it to be possible, is that it must be an “act without content”, i.e., a “non-act”, or more appropriately a “pure act”. Only in such a paradoxical act without content the artist can unite internally with the act underlying all acts, i.e., becomes “purely” conscious of his or her own free self. And, only in this way the immediate “expression” of this act can constitute a “new content”, i.e., the aesthetic object that thereby includes the act underlying all acts, i.e., the personal content in it.

Nishida provides an explication of how such an act is possible by describing a peculiar kind of artistic “unconsciousness” as a response to the crucial question of “if the aesthetic feeling is the feeling of the true self... and its objective world is... the truly concrete reality, then what is the relationship between the world of the beautiful and the so-called real world” (*AM*, 31). Nishida defines two kinds of unconsciousness. The first one refers to an “instinctive behavior in which we are wholly unconscious of the object” (*AM*, 72). On the other hand, the second one refers to a “consciousness that has been canceled out”, in which objective content of the act or “representation” is blocked by the performance of the action (*AM*, 31). According

to Nishida, when we enter into such a kind of unconsciousness “the act loses its content and becomes merely an action” (AM, 31). Or, more appropriately, in such an action we “internalize action” by uniting with the immediate unity of acts at the ground of the self (AM, 31-32). And, Nishida suggests that the “content” of this kind of “unconscious” action is the content of artistic consciousness: “The content of the will appears at the point where this content directly touches the real world, the field of action” (AM, 32). In Nishida’s description such an action, or artistic consciousness, is not a “mere mechanical habit”, but rather acquired through artistic discipline (AM, 32). For Nishida, artistic discipline is “the purification of physical movement” through which “even those things outside the body” becomes “the direct expressions of the life of the self” (AM, 206). With the example of Nishida, when a painter works on his painting he does not follow “conceptual judgment”, his action is not a “merely spontaneous movement”, but “must have the self-awareness of power” that is not “reflective self-awareness, but self-awareness in action” (AM, 32). Nishida defines such a self-awareness in action as “style” (AM, 32). In other words, Nishida combines “freedom” and “discipline” in a conception of artistic creation that is achieved by inhibiting all intentional actions and reflections, and in this way uniting internally with the ground of the self. But, according to Nishida, when things are viewed aesthetically in such an action, one “abandons the self” and “conforms to objectivity itself”, i.e., sees things in the horizon of pure will “as they are” (AM, 101, 165). At this point, the specificity of Nishida’s conception of artistic creation manifests itself: in contradistinction to Kantian and Idealist conceptions, for Nishida beauty is not appearance (*Schein*) but concrete reality “as it is”. Rejecting the view

that conceives the feeling of beauty as a “phenomenal feeling” (*Scheingefühl*), he asserts that:

Consciousness is the internal development of content itself, and the unity of such development of content is the self. The content of its unity is the content of feeling. Our true self must always include objective content. Lipps states that the self of aesthetic appreciation is ideal (*ideelles*). But there is no self which is not ideal. Because the self is ideal, it is real. Aesthetic feeling is precisely the truly real feeling (*reales Gefühl*). A spiritual phenomenon is meaning and at the same time reality and hence is established by the category of actuality (*Aktualität*). The reason that we think of aesthetic feeling as phenomenal feeling is that we objectified the self. At such a time, true feeling has already been lost (*AM*, 30, translation is modified).

To sum up, Nishida distinguishes the phenomena of culture and nature. But, instead of seeing them as two incommensurable realms, he describes the phenomena of culture as revealing the a priori ground of nature. Accordingly, for Nishida in the content of artistic creation, i.e., aesthetic form, the a priori of natural form becomes objective. However, although Nishida conceives of the relationship between culture and nature, subjectivity and objectivity as a reciprocal relation standing on the free self as a concrete universal, by defining the immediate internal unity of acts as completely free from particular objective contents, his conception of artistic creation faces the essential question that Kant left unresolved: what is the origin of the unity between our mental acts, and hence aesthetic form? Nishida explains the immediate internal unity between acts with recourse to the creative nature of the free will in the manner of Fichte and Schelling (*AM*, 20). And, thus his account as well is subject to the charge of subjectivism and idealism. Even though Nishida warns against the objectification of the self as separate from the world, if the unity between acts as the determining ground of all our experiences is seen as the self-determination of an entirely “free” personal self, then we get into subjectivism. Or, if our rationality as

the determination of the free will is seen as totally differentiated from nature, and hence objectified, then we end up with, what might be called, cultural idealism. If, on the other hand, the agency of self-determination attributed to the absolute will as an entity other than the self, then we end up with metaphysical dogmatism.²⁶

In his later works, Nishida himself detects the inherent subjectivism in his formulation of the development of experience with an appeal to Fichte, Bergson, and Fiedler. Rejecting Fichte's voluntarism as "dogmatic", for example, he claims that one cannot avoid subjectivism fundamentally in the notion of *Tathandlung*.²⁷ Similarly, although he concedes that Bergson's position is close to his own, he nevertheless points out that in Bergson's philosophy, which remains as a world of "inner subjectivity", "there is no objectivity" and "adequate concept of space".²⁸ And, with regard to Fiedler, Nishida asserts that since he conceives of expressive formation merely from the position of conscious self his theory of artistic creation remains inevitably subjectivist (*ACHF*, 262). As Yoko Arisaka remarks, in order to elaborate his fundamental idea of starting not from subjectivity nor from objectivity, but from the standpoint prior to subject and object without relying on the psychologistic notion of consciousness, but retaining the language of "self-determination" and "expressive development" as basic aspect of reality, Nishida "shifted to a different model, based on the concept of *basho* ('place': also translated

²⁶ For a discussion of the problematic aspects of Nishida's conception of the free self as the principle of reality, see Yoko Arisaka, *Space and History: Philosophy and Imperialism in Nishida and Watsuji*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis presented at the University of California, Riverside, 1996, pp. 48-51.

²⁷ Iwao Koyama, *Nishida Tetsugaku* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1935), p. 1.

²⁸ Kitarō Nishida, "The Historical Body", *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy: Selected Documents*, trans. and ed., David A. Dilworth, Valdo H. Viglielmo and Augustin Jacinto Zavala (Wesport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1998), p. 50.

as ‘chora’ or ‘topos’).²⁹ This change of direction emerges in *From the Actor to the Seer (Hataraku Mono kara Miru Mono he)* published in 1927, in whose preface Nishida states that “I turned from a Fichtean voluntarism to a kind of intuitionism”.³⁰ Referring to Ryōsuke Ōhashi’s *The World of Nishida’s Philosophy: Or a Turn in Philosophy (Nishida Tetsugaku no Sekai: Aruiwa Tetsugaku no Tenkai)*, where he describes this “turn” as a “topological turn”, Arisaka points out that “the shift refocuses the analysis from the standpoint of the self (experience, consciousness) to its ‘placed’ context, i.e., the ‘world’ of experience through which the self exists, thereby foregrounding the spatial contextualization of existence”.³¹

In his works after 1927, Nishida increasingly emphasizes the reciprocal determination of rationality, or culture, and natural environment standing on the “place of nothingness” as the concrete universal. And, starting with the articles written in 1931 and 1932, he gradually develops his philosophy of the self-determination of the world into a systematic philosophy of history.³² In his final essay “Concerning my Logic” Nishida asserts that “as the result of my cogitations over many long years, I think that I have been able to clarify the form of thinking- that is, the logic- of the historical formative act from the standpoint of the historically active self itself”.³³ Consequently, in *Artistic Creation as an Act of Historical*

²⁹ Yoko Arisaka, *Space and History: Philosophy and Imperialism in Nishida and Watsuji*, p. 50.

³⁰ Kitarō Nishida, *Nishida Kitarō Zenshū 1-19* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1987-1989), pp. 4-5.

³¹ Yoko Arisaka, *ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

³² For an exposition of the development of Nishida’s philosophy of history in his later works, see Woo-Sung Huh, “The Philosophy of History in the ‘later’ Nishida: A Philosophical Turn”, *Philosophy East and West*, 40/3, 1990, pp. 343-374.

³³ Kitarō Nishida, “Concerning my Logic”, *Last Writings: Nothingness and the Religious Worldview*, trans. David A. Dilworth (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1987), p. 125.

Formation, reconstituting his own theory of artistic creation from the standpoint of the theory of history, Nishida reformulates the problem of aesthetic form as a problem of “historical formation”.

CHAPTER - 4

NISHIDA'S LATER CONCEPTION OF ARTISTIC CREATION AS AN ACT OF HISTORICAL FORMATION

4.1. The Problem of Aesthetic Form as the Problem of Historical Formation

In *Artistic Creation as an Act of Historical Formation* Nishida starts his analysis of artistic creation by referring to Ernst Meumann's classification of the general outline of various methodological approaches and diverse standpoints in contemporary aesthetics in *Einführung in die Ästhetik der Gegenwart* (An Introduction to Contemporary Aesthetics) (1908). After subsuming the territories of investigation of aesthetics under four headings as the problem of artistic appreciation, the theory of artistic creation, the study of the works of art, and the artistic culture, Meumann defines the fundamental problem of aesthetics as the demarcation problem, i.e., the differentiation of human beings' aesthetic attitude toward the world from their theoretical and practical attitudes (*ACHF*, 260). Basically agreeing with Meumann's classification, Nishida maintains that the demarcation problem as the fundamental problem of aesthetics is not separate from the problem of "form" (*ACHF*, 315). But, for Nishida the "artistic attitude of human beings toward the world" and different territories of investigation of aesthetics must be conceived from the standpoint of the "philosophy of history" (*ACHF*, 260; 273). He suggests that like any field of inquiry that is considered as a part of the "study of

cultures”, artistic creation also must be conceived as an act of historical, social formation (*ACHF*, 260).

In his historical approach Nishida retains not only the fundamental idea of Fiedler’s theory of expressive formation, but also the Kantian aspects of *Art and Morality*. As in *Art and Morality*, in *Artistic Creation as an Act of Historical Formation*, Nishida describes artistic creation as a “subjective” determination of form that opposes the “objective”, or “conceptual”, determination of scientific knowledge. And, for him in the determination of aesthetic form “feeling” plays a central role. But, Nishida now claims that the beautiful form as the object of artistic creation must be the “expression of historical life”, rather than the expression of the free will (*ACHF*, 304). And, in a way very reminiscent of Kant’s definition of beauty as “the technique of nature”, and his conception of “genius” as an inborn productive faculty of the artist “through which nature gives rule to art”, Nishida maintains that in artistic creation “our technique is the technique of Heaven (*Ten*)” (*ACHF*, 275, 302).

As we have discussed, Kant’s conception of beauty not only provides an answer to the main paradox of aesthetics, namely, the universal validity of aesthetic judgments whose ground is a subjective feeling of pleasure, but also gives an account of what distinguishes aesthetic experience from sensual, cognitive, and practical experiences. But, Kant’s complete separation of the internal sense of beauty from objective qualities, in combination with his distinction between intuition and concepts, results in the problem of aesthetic form, i.e., how to determine the aesthetic object as the correlative of aesthetic experience. Moreover, his description of the appreciation and creation of beauty respectively as an “immediate” pleasure and the

activity of “genius”, both of which conceived as detached from the socio-historical world lead to an excessive formalism, on the one hand, and a psychologistic account of aesthetics and art, on the other.

As in *Art and Morality*, in *Artistic Creation as an Act of Historical Formation* Nishida conceives the determination of aesthetic object in non-conceptualist terms, and grants a distinctive role to feeling and immediacy, but with an attempt to provide a critique of the psychologism in Kantian aesthetics by appealing to Fiedler’s theory of expressive formation. Repeating his earlier views, he asserts that “it is impossible to understand the objective meaning of art in this world, and hence to grasp its essence” from the point of view of conscious self by seeing it merely as an act of imagination or a passive pleasure (*ACHF*, 260, 310-311). However, although Fiedler’s theory of artistic creation, in which mind and external world constitute a continuity through the body, provides Nishida with an effective means to deal with the difficulties resulting from the distinction between intuition and thought, it makes the problem of what determines artistic form even more deeper. Stated differently, in the absence of an independent world and concepts, the world of artistic creation becomes purely “subjective”. Leaving aside the questions concerning the common public world that is formed conceptually through language, i.e., what Nishida calls the “world of logos”, without the involvement of something external to mind the world of artistic creation seems to be doomed to end in solipsism. Nishida concedes that Fiedler’s theory remains inherently subjective as it conceives of expressive formation act merely from the standpoint of conscious self (*ACHF*, 262).

To formulate artistic creation as an act of expressive formation in more historical and objective terms, Nishida turns to Alois Riegl's concept of the *Kunstwollen*. According to Nishida, Riegl is the first thinker who conceived artistic creation as an act of "historical formation" (*ACHF*, 262). In the *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament, (Stilfragen)* (1893), against the mechanistic, materialist conception of the work of art of Gottfried Semper and his followers, according to which artistic form is determined by the use of raw materials, technique, and function, Riegl presents a teleological approach by recognizing artistic form as the result of an a priori, defined, and purposeful *Kunstwollen*. For Riegl, the use of raw material, function, and technique do not have the "positive role attributed to them by Semper's theory but rather restraining, negative ones: they are, so to say, the coefficients of friction within the entire product".¹ "All art history presents itself as a continuous struggle with material," Riegl writes, "it is not the tool which is determined by the technique- but the artistically creative idea that strives to expand its creative realm and increase its formal potential".² Although the expression of the *Kunstwollen* seems to suggest the subjective will of the individual artist, it rather refers to an objective, collective, and transindividual desire that is shared by the entire culture and embodied in the form, or style, of all the artistic production of a particular historical period.³ In the final part of the *Late Roman Art Industry (Die Spätromisch Kunstindustrie)* (1901), Riegl states that the *Kunstwollen* of a historical

¹ Alois Riegl, *Late Roman Art Industry*, Rolf Winkes, trans. (Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider, 1985), p. 9.

² Alois Riegl, *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament*, Evelyn Kain, trans. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 33.

³ See Hans Sedlmayr, "Quintessence of Riegl's Thought", *Framing Formalism: Riegl's Work* (Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 2001), p. 16.

period is “practically identical with other major forms of expression of the human *Wollen* during the same period”.⁴ According to Riegl, the character of this *Wollen* is “always determined by what may be termed the conception of the world at a given time [*Weltanschauung*] (in the widest sense of the term), not only in religion, philosophy, science, but also in general government and law”.⁵

Nishida is interested with Riegl’s concept of the *Kunstwollen* not only because of its historical, collective character, but also because of the idea of the perceptual relation of human beings to the surrounding world behind it. According to Riegl, all human *Wollen* is “directed toward self-satisfaction in relation to the surrounding environment”, that is, it wants to interpret it “as much as possible according to its own drive”.⁶ Consequently, developing Fiedler’s conception of pure perception in a historical, cultural manner, Riegl suggests that:

Creative *Kunstwollen* regulates the relation between man and objects as we perceive them with our sense; this is how we always give shape and color to things (just as we visualize things with the *Kunstwollen* in poetry). Yet man is not just a being perceiving exclusively with his sense (passive), but also a longing (active) being. Consequently, man wants to interpret the world as it can most easily be done in accordance with his inner drive (which may change with nation, location and time).⁷

Remarkably referring to *Late Roman Art Industry* where Riegl describes the problem of artistic form as a problem of “space” and identifies the change in artistic form in different historical periods and cultures as a change in the “sense of space”, that is, in the mode of grasping objects in relation to space, Nishida maintains that wherever there is a delimitation of space there is already an artistic volition operating

⁴ Alois Riegl, *Late Roman Art Industry*, p. 231.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

⁶ Alois Riegl, *Late Roman Art Industry*, p. 231.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

toward formative arts (*ACHF*, 299). As we will discuss more in detail in the next chapter, the definition of the formative art as the “determination of space” constitutes one of the central aspects of Nishida’s theory of artistic creation.

Nishida further develops Riegl’s concept of the *Kunstwollen* and the corresponding idea of artistic form by drawing on Worringer’s concept of “abstraction”. As we have briefly seen, in *Abstraction and Empathy* Worringer borrows Lipps’s concept of “empathy”, but following Riegl, he argues that the art of different historical ages and nations cannot be explained merely through “empathy”. In opposition to the drive for empathy, which arises out of a happy, harmonious relationship of confidence between human being and the phenomena of the external world, Worringer proposes the drive for abstraction, which arises out of a spiritual fear of “space”. In Worringer’s description, against this fear of the ever changing flux of phenomena, human beings take refuge in the abstract forms in art. Accordingly, Worringer maintains that the most powerful urge of primitive societies was “to wrest the object of the external world out of its natural context, out of the unending flux of being, to purify it all its dependence upon life”.⁸

Almost entirely agreeing with him, Nishida suggests that Worringer’s conception of “abstraction” should be developed more thoroughly and taken as “the fundamental starting point of aesthetics” (*ACHF*, 63). In Nishida’s view all artistic productions, including the naturalist art of empathy, should be explained by means of the concept of “abstraction” as a “salvation” from the dynamic flux of the actual world. He claims that such an approach provides a way to rescue the concept of

⁸ Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy*, pp. 21-22.

empathy from the “standpoint of psychologism” (*ACHF*, 63). Yet, as the subtitle of his book implies, Worringer defines his analysis of the drives of empathy and abstraction as a “psychology of the need for art, of the need for style”.⁹ Moreover, in contrast to Riegl who describes a number of ultimate, basic categories that determine all different directions and particular empirical forms of the *Kunstwollen*, Nishida asserts that “the direction of the artistic volition must be infinitely multiple” (*ACHF*, 314). In his seminal essay on Riegl’s theory, Hans Sedlmayr remarks that with the historical questions concerning the direction of the *Kunstwollen*, such as “does the historical process, or certain periods within it, contain a unified direction, an inner tendency, an inner meaningful necessity?” or “is the actual direction in which it runs merely the result of components working blindly together?” that we enter the sphere of the historical problem of artistic form.¹⁰ And, according to Sedlmayr,

these are not questions that can be resolved purely empirically. They are questions stemming from a theory of the essential and necessary movement of the art drive, and further, of objective spirit. They are questions concerning the *historical dynamic of art*, a historical theoretical discipline.¹¹

Despite his emphasis on the historically and culturally changing nature of the *Kunstwollen*, however, Riegl’s theory has been often criticized, by more empirically inclined writers, for being unhistorical, formalist, and metaphysical without taking account of the effect of cultural context and function on artistic form. Ernst Gombrich, for example, argues that “the ‘diachronic’ unity of stylistic developments” which Riegl demonstrates in *Problems of Style* “brilliantly survived the test of observation”, but “the ‘synchronic’ unity of style in any one period is

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁰ Hans Sedlmayr, “Quintessence of Riegl’s Thought”, p. 23.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

much closer to a metaphysical postulate. It is doubtful whether it can be tested at all”.¹² Gombrich further condemns Riegl’s theory “as nothing less than a thoroughly unhistorical aestheticism”.¹³ Similarly, Meyer Schapiro criticizes the works of several scholars influenced by Riegl’s concept of the *Kunstwollen* as being “palmistry or numerology, not science” for they “tend to isolate forms from historical conditions of their development, to propel them by mythical, racial-psychological constants, or to give them an independent self-evident career”, and suggests that Riegl’s “motivation of the process and his explanation of its shifts in time and space are vague and often fantastic”.¹⁴ And, Richard Woodfield argues that Riegl and the formalist writers following Fiedler “failed to take account of the conventionality of the artistic image”, which can be understood by appealing to “the cultural context of artistic practice”.¹⁵

Nishida also points out that, even though both Riegl and Worringer conceive of the artistic volition from the standpoint of historical formation act, in their theories the problem of artistic form as “the problem of self-formation of the historical world” has been left unresolved (*ACHF*, 263). He points out that there is no form that is separate from function, and function, in turn, cannot be understood without its relation to the surrounding environment (*ACHF*, 261). Consequently, two main questions about Nishida’s conception of artistic creation as an act of historical

¹² Ernst Gombrich, “Sense of Order”, *The Essential Gombrich*, R. Woodfield, ed. (London: Phaidon Press, 1996), p. 257, quoted in Richard Woodfield, “Reading Riegl’s *Kunst-Industrie*”, *Framing Formalism: Riegl’s Work* (Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 2001), p. 66.

¹³ Richard Woodfield, “Reading Riegl’s *Kunst-Industrie*”, p. 73.

¹⁴ Meyer Schapiro, *Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist, and Society* (New York: George Braziller, 1994), pp. 78-79, quoted in Richard Woodfield, “Reading Riegl’s *Kunst-Industrie*”, p. 65.

¹⁵ Richard Woodfield, “Reading Riegl’s *Kunst-Industrie*”, p. 75.

formation immediately reveal themselves as: What determines the direction of the historical formation, and hence artistic form? And, as Nishida defines the historical world inevitably as a world of “formation”, then in what sense artistic creation is an “abstraction” from the historical world of actuality, which constitutes the basis of artistic production for every historical age and culture? Nishida attempts to answer these questions by reconstituting his earlier theory of the creative activity of artist, which for him provides a way to conceive artistic form beyond subject-object opposition, as the self-formation of the historical world on which subject-object opposition is grounded, and by proposing the development of art in primitive societies as the origin and ontological model of the self-formation of the historical world.

4.2. Nishida’s Historical Ontology: Contradictory Identity of Natural Environment and Culture

To examine Nishida’s later conception of artistic creation it is first necessary to understand the basic aspects of his theory of the historical world which he elaborated in the last quarter of his philosophical life. In his historical ontology Nishida redefines the unity of act and object in historical terms. As we have seen, by describing action and its content as the two contradictory directions of the same ontological unity, i.e. experience, Nishida takes a first step in overcoming the difficulties resulting from Kant’s distinction between passive sensibility and active thought, receptive intuition and intellectual concept. In Kant, what is given in intuition is defined as “immediate” particularity to be subsumed under general concepts through whose “mediation” subject relates to objects. This creates not only a gap that Kant attempts to bridge with recourse to the intermediary of the schema of

imagination, but also the problematic conception of the thing-in-itself as the unconceptualizable source of the spatio-temporal objects. The problems stemming from the distinction between immediacy of intuition and mediation of concepts become especially apparent in Kant's definition of aesthetic reflective judgment where imagination schematizes without determinate concepts and lead to the ambiguities concerning aesthetic form. By reconstituting Kant's aesthetic reflective judgment as a concrete universal in which "mediation is involved in the immediacy of the particular" Nishida further attempts to clarify the "objective quality of the aesthetic object". But, his own definition of the act underlying all acts as totally free from nature ends up with subjectivism. In order to get rid of such a subjectivism, Nishida reformulates the reciprocal relationship between act and object by emphasizing both its determinative and infinitely dynamic directions. Stated more precisely, he redefines the ontological unity of act and object not as an interrelation, nor as a combination, but rather as an "identity of absolute contradictories", which he calls an "action-intuition" (*ACHF*, 325).

According to Nishida's basic idea, for an object, or objective content, to be distinguished from other objects, or objective contents, there must be a unity in which they come together. Act is such a unity in which an object is differentiated from others. Without unity differentiation is not possible, and conversely without differentiation there cannot be a unity. In Nishida's account, the relation between unity and differentiation is not a relation where the particular is subsumed within the "logical" universal. While conceiving the relation in which act and object become universal and particular respectively as an "identity of absolute contradictories", Nishida defines the concrete universal on which such a differentiation is grounded as

the “place of nothingness”, or the “historical world”. In other words, for Nishida rather than being a “logical determination”, the reciprocal determination of act and object is a “topological determination”, which is a “historical formation” (*ACHF*, 276).

4.2.1. Action-Intuition

In his historical ontology Nishida describes not only the contradictory identity of our mental acts and their objective contents, but also that of our practical actions and their products. Accordingly, by the historical world Nishida primarily means the world of our concrete “productive actions”, including both our mental acts and physical and social activities. He asserts that “the real world in which we are living is the world in which we are acting as active subjects” and “our activities involve us in making things”.¹⁶ By our actions we produce something or some changes in the world. In other words, rather than being merely subjective, our productive actions have objective counterparts in the world. With Nishida’s examples, to build a house, to write an article or a poem, or to make a political action are all productive activities producing ‘an objective thing, something that exists in the public domain’. According to Nishida, as a public thing the produced object acts on its creator as well as other people. Stated differently, not only the object has a real existence and a life of its own in the world but also acts on and changes us. In Nishida’s description the historical world is the real world in which “we make things

¹⁶ Kitarō Nishida, “The Historical Body,” *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy: Selected Documents*, trans. and ed., David A. Dilworth, Valdo H. Viglielmo and Augustin Jacinto Zavala (Wesport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1998), p. 38.

and we are made by things”, i.e., in a mutual transaction “we are made by making”.¹⁷

To define this mutual transaction in productive activity Nishida appeals to the Greek term *poiesis*. He explains:

The word *poiesis* can be rendered as “production”, but in that case I fear it will be understood subjectively- as something man-made or artificial. That, too, is a form of *poiesis*, of course; but what I am trying to express here has a deeper and broader objective meaning. The creations of nature are kinds of *poiesis*. In Greek, *poiesis* can refer to building a house; and as the word “poem” indicates, poetry, too, is a kind of *poiesis*.¹⁸

Nishida holds that such a productive activity must necessarily be a bodily activity: “there can be no production that is not ‘bodily’... without our body, our self does not exist”.¹⁹ The body is the mediator, or rather the “place” of the transaction between the producer and the produced. For Nishida, the body is first of all a functional body, i.e., it is defined through its function. But, the function in turn is defined through its relation to the environment. Borrowing from Benjamin Franklin, Nishida defines human beings as *homo faber*, i.e., as “tool-making animals” and he states that the human body attains its definition from its various functions. He writes:

Our body is a part of the historical world, and the productive work it achieves in its involvement with the world comes to be decided from what work it produces... the body is functional in the transactional sense... already involving the body’s active involvement in the world.²⁰

In Nishida’s account not only the things we make with hand but also sensation, perception, imagination, language, thinking, and even seeing a dream and having an emotion are bodily activities producing real objective changes in the historical world. Here we find Nishida’s restatement of his conception of the

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 40-41.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 72, note 2.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 42.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 46-47.

relationship between the self and the world as an “expressive formation”. Accordingly, our mental acts are the inner differentiation of objective contents, and in this sense objects are expressions of our formative acts. Nishida maintains that, as the contradictory identity of the act and object, our body stands on the place where there is the structure of “from the object to the act” (*ACHF*, 306). Our body is both active and expressive, that is, when it is seen from the standpoint of content, the inner differentiation of objects can be considered as expression; and when it is seen from the standpoint of their unity that makes the differentiation possible they can be considered as formative acts. As Nishida puts it:

Conscious act is never entirely separate from the body... At every point our bodies are mental, and our mind is corporeal. In this sense, our acts are expressive. As it is said with respect to the consciousness that its essence is to be intentional, there is no conscious act that is not expressive. Fiedler says that expression is the final stage in the development of conscious act. But the conscious act is expressive in the very root of its emergence (*ACHF*, 306).

To further emphasize the bodily expressive essence of our mental acts, Nishida suggests that not only the content of visual and aural perception, but also the content of sense perception like pain is expressive having objective existence in the public world (*ACHF*, 308). Accordingly, by referring to both behaviorism and “topological psychology” of Kurt Lewin, Nishida considers the reality of our self as grounded “not merely on biological bodily existence, nor on intellectual existence”, but on the “oneness of mind and body in action” (*ACHF*, 279-280, 325). Stated differently, the human functional productive activity starts neither from the physical world, i.e., the environment, nor from the individual consciousness, i.e., the subject. It is a dynamic relation between subjectivity and objectivity as “action-intuition”.

According to Nishida's characterization, action-intuition is not an instinct of our animal body, which, for him, is non-dialectical.²¹ Nishida differentiates action-intuition from ordinary perception as well. In Nishida's account perception in ordinary sense "sees unilaterally and spatially by dismissing the concrete historical reality".²² Here, by concrete historical reality Nishida means the reciprocal determination of objective content and the formative act of the subject. Accordingly, in the historical world there is no mere "given". With the language of Nishida, "that which is given is that which is created," and inversely, "that which is created creates that which creates".²³ In asserting that "the given must be created" Nishida seems to signify that the object is "grasped" or "formed" specifically by the subject. But this does not mean that the environment merely "formed" by the subject: "If this was the case, the environment would not exist".²⁴ The environment is not merely formed by the subject because the subject itself is "formed" by the environment. In other words, our very selves which are operative in shaping the content of experience are shaped by those contents in time. Such a world in which the subject and the environment reciprocally form each other is what Nishida describes as the world that determines itself as the identity of self contradictories. And, Nishida maintains that, not only perception, but also all kind of conceptualization, including scientific knowledge and artistic intuition, are grounded on the infinitely dynamic, or concretely historical, content of action-intuition.

²¹ Kitarō Nishida, "*Kōiteki Chokkan*" (Action-Intuition), *Nishida Kitarō Zenshū 1-19*, p. 541.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 553.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 551.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 545.

To further illustrate the reciprocal determination of the subject and the environment, Nishida compares and contrasts action-intuition with Plotinus's and Bergson's conceptions of intuition, on the one hand, and the Kantian conception of the relationship between intuition and thought, on the other. Accordingly, rather than being merely passive reception, or an ecstatic state, intuition is an infinite movement as Plotinus and Bergson conceive it. But, Nishida critically adds that what he calls action-intuition is comparable neither to Plotinus's intuition, nor to Bergson's pure duration. Nishida's dissatisfaction with Plotinus and Bergson derives from the lack of "objective" or "spatial" direction in their account of intuition. In contrast to their conception of intuition, action-intuition is both objective and subjective, or spatial and temporal at the same time. In this sense, Nishida claims that action-intuition consists in a standpoint of knowledge that is "extremely real" and that forms the ground of all empirical knowledge. That is, for Nishida the standpoint of action-intuition is a "standpoint of knowledge that is empirical, all too empirical".²⁵

As for the Kantian epistemology, Nishida argues that when knowledge is conceived as constituted by the form of the knowing subject, and the "given" is conceived merely as a sheer sensuous material, or potential, there is no way to connect intuition and knowledge to each other.²⁶ But, for Nishida to know is at the same time to act, and in order for action to be possible it must have a "support", which is the "real world grasped by action-intuition".²⁷ Simply construed, the content of action-intuition is always grasped clearly as "formed", not as chaotic, nor as sheer

²⁵ Ibid., p. 541.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 541, 557-58.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 558.

presynthesized sensuous material. The “form” is made possible by the unity of the subject, which in turn is “formed” by the internal relation between forms themselves. As Nishida puts it, our action would not arise if the ground of the world were the mere presynthesized “given”: “The substratum of the historical world must be that which forms while being entirely that which is formed”.²⁸ In this sense, Nishida maintains that the historical world always contains the structure of “from form to form” (*ACHF*, 276). According to Nishida, when it is seen from the standpoint of the epistemological distinction between passive sensibility and active knowledge, such an action-intuition preceding the subject-object division can be conceived merely as an empty idea or as something mystical.²⁹ But for Nishida, just the opposite is the case: “intuition, separated from action, is either merely an abstract idea, or merely an illusion”.³⁰ Nishida writes:

If we consider that subjectivity and objectivity are first separate and opposed before things arise from their mutual interaction- or again if we say that mind and matter are entirely different and are absolutely separate and opposed- then the one side cannot be related to the other side. Contrary to this, the world is a living world, and in one aspect it moves itself.³¹

This is the point where Nishida clearly opposes “concrete” and wholly “empirical” action-intuition with the “intellectual intuition” of Schelling (*ACHF*, 326). And, for Nishida the standpoint of the Kantian epistemology must be

²⁸ Ibid., p. 558.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 541.

³⁰ Kitarō Nishida, *Intelligibility and the Philosophy of Nothingness*, trans. Robert Schinzinger (Tokyo: Maruzen Co. Ltd, 1958), p. 208.

³¹ Nishida, “The Historical Body”, p. 48.

established on such a self-moving historical world as the “place” of the contradictory identity of “the making and the made” in action-intuition.³²

4.2.2. The Historical Nature: Our Technique is the Technique of Heaven

According to Nishida such a self-moving historical world is a dialectical world, which he calls the “dialectical universal”. And, through this new concept Nishida restructures his interpretation of Kant’s reflective judgment. Nishida now describes the self-determining historical world, instead of the free will, as “creative”, by which he means that it is historically changing through the mutual production of the subject and the object. The historical world is a constant movement in time, but it is also a world in which there are concretely produced objects. That is, the historical world is not only temporal “flowing from the infinite past to the future”, but also spatial. As Nishida puts it, the historical world “is both the created and the creating world, and thus that which is made becomes that which makes, in other words, there is a real production in time and space”.³³ Nishida refers to the created, or the spatial pole alternatively as “environment”, “objectivity”, “that which is transcendent”, or “*noema*”, and to the creating, or the temporal pole as “bodily subject” (*shutai*), “subjectivity”, “that which is immanent”, or “*noesis*”. And he frequently describes the dialectical relation between the temporal and spatial poles as a “continuity of discontinuities”. Accordingly, the historical world, in which the bodily subject and environment mutually forms each other, is a world that cannot carry its own identity on itself. With the language of Nishida, in the historical world “that which is immanent inevitably carries itself on that which is transcendent. Everything that is

³² Kitarō Nishida, “*Kōiteki Chokkan*”, p. 342.

³³ Nishida, “The Historical Body”, p. 50.

brought forth has to be perished. Conversely, that which is transcendent is not merely transcendent, but has to be immanent in every point” (*ACHF*, 274). Stated differently, the historical world “expressively” forms itself in the intersection of its spatial and temporal poles, i.e., the environment and the bodily subject.

In this sense, Nishida maintains that our individual productive activities are nothing but the self-expressions, or monads of the creative historical world. That is, we are a part of the historical world with our bodies and bodily productions, including our language, thoughts, desires, and dreams, etc. We make things and are made by things. In this sense, rather than being merely physical or biological, our bodies are “historical bodies”, i.e., they are formed historically in their mutual interactions with the objects of their activities in the historical world. Nishida claims that if the bodily self is not conceived as a part of the creative process, “everything degenerates into mere subjectivity, the mere consciousness, the merely abstract- or, at the opposite pole, the merely physical. And this is the destruction of man”.³⁴

Nishida extends his dialectics between the subject and the object in the historical world to the relation between the individual and the society. He maintains that as an “extension of the body in the widest sense” human society also is “a historical body possessing bodily characteristic”.³⁵ Like the individual the society is both the creative and created. The society is formed through interacting creative individuals and their historical bodily activities through the use of language and tools and the society in turn becomes the basis from which individual create things.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 51.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 51.

Similarly, the society and its environment mutually determine each other in a dialectic of the identity of the absolute contradictories.

In order to differentiate his dialectics of the identity of absolute contradictories from what he calls the “the logic of objects”, or “the logic of judgment”, i.e., substance and attributes, Nishida appeals to his construal of Hegel’s concrete universal as “one and at the same time many” logic. He claims that from the standpoint of the logic of objects “the active individual can be abstractly conceived of as a one among the many of the world”, that is to say “as a being in itself and then attribute its activities to it- that is we can treat it as the grammatical subject of its predicates”.³⁶ But according to his theory of the historical world, the activities of the individual “already entails its involvement with its environment” and “this involvement cannot be properly rendered as the attributes possessed by the thing itself”.³⁷ The creative individuals as the self-expressions, or perspectives of the historical world are co-originating and interactive reciprocally determining each other, rather than existing side by side as windowless monads of Leibniz. For Nishida “there is no individual that enters into no relation at all; the mere isolated individual has no meaning”.³⁸ However, individuals as individuals neither lose their identities nor they are particulars of an abstract universal. In Nishida’s description the individual and the universal are two contradictory directions or poles of the self-determining historical world. Accordingly,

³⁶ Kitarō Nishida, “The World as Identity of Absolute Contradiction”, *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy: Selected Documents*, trans. and ed., David A. Dilworth, Valdo H. Vigieliemo and Augustin Jacinto Zavala (Wesport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1998), p. 68.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

the individual is always individual by the universal negating itself and that the universal is always universal by the individual negating itself. There is never mere relativity, but identity in difference through mutual contradiction.³⁹

The historical world is created by the mutual interactions of individuals and while at the same time creating them. And, it is this very process which is defined by Nishida as the self-determination of the historical world itself. Nishida further describes the historical world as “the historical nature”:

Our formation activities are series of technique of the historical nature... In order that the historical world is really considered dialectically, nature and history must be considered as a whole. It is necessary that nature is historical-societal, and that historical society is natural.⁴⁰

Nishida’s use of “technique” is mainly Kantian. As we have discussed, in Kant “technique” refers to imagination’s synthesis of representations in accordance with a rule that is not yet available. The main difficulty with Kant’s account of reflective judgment is to give an explication of how imagination accomplishes to compose a “form” that claims to be objectively valid without the guidance of an external world or already existing concepts. While conceiving the relationship between the particular and the general in more Hegelian manner as the contradictory identity of the absolute contradictories, Nishida attributes the technique to the historical world as the real agent of formation act. He writes:

In the past the technique is conceived merely from the standpoint of the subject. But our own self, which is thought as the producer of the thing, is itself arises from the world of history. Our own action must be a historical event in the historical world. As well as being determined in every point as the self-determination of the absolute present, the world of historical actuality carries in itself infinite possibilities in the form of contradictory identity as the coexistence of past and future. As long as... the self is

³⁹ Ibid., p. 64.

⁴⁰ Quoted and translated in Ken-ichi Sasaki, *Aesthetics on Non-Western Principles. Version 0.5*, (Maasstrich: Jan Van Eyck Akademie, 1998), p. 38.

conceived as enfolded, the action of our self can be conceived as the self-determination of the world... The technique of the human being is the technique of Heaven (*ACHF*, 275-276).

To sum up, for Nishida the self-determination of the historical world is completely made up of the freedom of the productive transactions of its individuals, and the “place” is the whole sum of transactions that creates the historical world itself. For this place as the open ended totality of the transactions between culture and environment cannot come out in the world as a form, Nishida defines it as the “place of nothingness”.

4.3. Artistic Creation: The Abstraction of the Historical Life in Artistic Form

In describing artistic creation as an act of historical formation Nishida almost entirely retains the structure that he established in *Art and Morality*. Accordingly, he maintains that the essence of aesthetic object should be clarified from the creative activity of the artist. And, as in *Art and Morality*, in defining the creative activity of the artist he appeals to Fiedler’s theory of expressive formation. In fact, in his recapitulation of Fiedler’s theory he repeats almost the same words that he uses in *Art and Morality*. Briefly stated, Nishida remarks that, according to Fiedler’s theory the world of reality is not external to an interior world which is immediately accessible to us. Through linguistic conceptualization, infinitely mobile conscious phenomena take form in the body. In this sense, expressive formation is a bodily formation. As Nishida puts it: “language is the body of the thought” (*ACHF*, 317). Moreover, as language is an expression common to all of the senses, the public world of reality is formed through language (*ACHF*, 262, 304-305). However, according to Fiedler’s theory the visual perception of the world that is formed through language is incomplete, i.e., distorted by concepts (*ACHF*, 262, 305). Moreover, infinitely

multiple content of consciousness cannot be exhausted by linguistic expression. Extending Fiedler's pure visual perception to other senses, Nishida maintains that each organ of sense explores the world in its peculiar way, i.e., it has its own formative progression. So each organ of sense has the ability to form a world that is completely different from the conceptually formed world. For example, when associations of the conceptually formed world are cut off and consciousness wholly concentrates on visual perception, i.e., when all conceptual knowledge is subtracted from the perceived and in this way "when the whole body becomes the eye", we break with the world of objects and enter into the world of pure visual perceptual formation and accomplish the incomplete visual image. Following Fiedler, Nishida defines the world formed in this way as the world of artistic creation (*ACHF*, 262, 292, 305). In other words, artistic creation is the receiving form in bodily expression of the infinitely moving stream of consciousness through the progression of pure visual perception. And, Nishida states that in artistic creation "we get into the active visual perceptual condition from the passive visual perceptual condition. We find the possibility of accomplishing what can only be received by the eye" (*ACHF*, 305).

On the other hand, in *Artistic Creation as an Act of Historical Formation*, Nishida's references to Japanese arts in relation to his interpretation of Fiedler become more explicit. For example, he describes expressive formation act as the "act of crystallization of our consciousness" and compares it to the "flowering and bearing fruit" (*kajitsu*) of a plant (*ACHF*, 262). In Japanese the word *kajitsu* is composed of the characters of "flower" and "fruit". The latter character also means "reality". And in the theory of Japanese poetry *kajitsu* refers to "expression" or "content of thought". Heart/mind-flower relationship is also a central notion of other

fields of Japanese arts such as the *Nō* theater.⁴¹ And as in *Art and Morality*, Nishida describes expressive formation by referring to another important notion of Japanese arts, namely, the “oneness of mind and body in action” (*shinjin ichinyo*) (*ACHF*, 295, 315).

In *Artistic Creation as an Act of Historical Formation* Nishida defines the world of nature and the world of culture, including artistic creation, as the two aspects of the infinitely dynamic historical world, rather than the free self. As we have seen, according to Nishida’s historical ontology, all formations in the historical world take place “technically”, or with Nishida’s language, in the structure of “from the formed to the forming”. This means that in the historical world there is a constant composition of “forms” in space and constant decomposition of them in time. Now, Nishida maintains that while to conceive the historical world “in the direction of its spatial determination” is to conceive it “objectively”, or “transcendently”, to conceive it “in the direction of its temporal determination” is to conceive it “subjectively”, or “immanently” (*ACHF*, 290-293, 303, 312-313, 321, 331-332). And, Nishida describes the standpoint in which the historical world of actuality is transcended in the objective direction as the standpoint of science. In his description, the world of science is the world of “intellectual determination; it is the world of natural law” (*ACHF*, 293). Scientific knowledge conceptualizes the world from the standpoint of the “transcendental Ego” (*ACHF*, 291). In other words, in the standpoint of science the “identity of the subject” is negated and seen as a mere particular of the general (*ACHF*, 292-293). In scientific knowledge, as Nishida puts

⁴¹ For heart/mind- flower relationship see, Toshihiko and Toyo Izutsu, *The Theory of Beauty in the Classical Aesthetics of Japan* (The Hague, Boston, London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1981).

it, “the subject is absorbed in the environment” (*ACHF*, 293). Stated simply, the object, and hence the natural environment as the totality of objective contents, is seen as totally free from the subjective act of synthesis which moves infinitely as the ground of the objective world. Conversely, Nishida describes the standpoint in which the historical world of actuality is transcended in the subjective direction as the standpoint of artistic creation. In this standpoint, the world of natural environment is seen immanently in every point (*ACHF*, 291). In other words, in artistic creation the “identity of the environment” is negated (*ACHF*, 291). In Nishida’s language, in artistic creation the conceptual thought is negated and “the environment is absorbed in the subject” (*ACHF*, 308). As in *Art and Morality*, Nishida suggests that by cutting off all conceptual associations, the artist grasps the world “internally” through “feeling” as an uninterrupted pure continuity of subjective acts (*ACHF*, 291, 308). With the terminology of Nishida’s historical ontology, in artistic creation the world is grasped subjectively from the standpoint of *poiesis* (*ACHF*, 290).

However, in Nishida’s historical ontology *poiesis* means to produce an object. In other words, intuition is contradictorily identical with action. So, Nishida faces the same question of how artistic intuition that transcends all objective contents is possible given that intuition is immediately action. And, he repeats his earlier answer, that is, in artistic creation action does not vanish, nor becomes merely “non-action”, rather it becomes its own “acme” (*ACHF*, 295). In this sense, Nishida warns against confusing artistic intuition with mental image (*ACHF*, 295).

Nishida further clarifies what he means by the grasping of the world subjectively in the standpoint of artistic creation by referring to Aristotle’s theory of perception. Summarizing from Beare’s *Greek Theories of Elementary Cognition*,

Nishida explains that in Aristotle, being a form of change, sensation is conceived as a kind of movement (*kinesis*), where movement is understood as a movement from latency to actuality, from material to form (*eidos*). And, Aristotle defines sensation as the reception of sensational form by eliminating the material. In the same manner, he conceives of the intellect (*nous*) as the form of forms, and *aisthesis* as the form of sensational forms. Accordingly, Aristotle defines the synthetic faculty of sense, which holds the form that is common to all particular sensations, as the *sensus communis* (*koine aisthesis*).⁴² And, Nishida states that what he calls as the standpoint of artistic intuition, in which the world is seen wholly immanently, may be described as the standpoint of Aristotle's *sensus communis* (*ACHF*, 318).

One of the most significant modifications in *Artistic Creation as an Act of Historical Formation* is that, instead of defining artistic creation as the act through which the ground of objective world appears in artistic form, Nishida describes both conceptual knowledge and artistic creation as an “abstraction” from the historical world of actuality. In Nishida's historical ontology, the two directions of the historical world cannot carry their own identities on themselves, i.e., the objective and subjective directions reciprocally determine each other. In this sense, Nishida describes the historical world as infinitely dynamic, or creative. Accordingly, Nishida defines “abstraction” as the standpoint in which the infinitely dynamic world is seen statically (*ACHF*, 303). And, in the manner of Schopenhauer and Worringer, he claims that such an “abstraction” from the infinitely dynamic world is a “salvation” from the world of actuality (*ACHF*, 303, 312). He remarks that, generally

⁴² John I. Beare, *Greek Theories of Elementary Cognition: From Alcmaeon to Aristotle* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1906), pp. 250-251.

the standpoint of thought, or conceptual knowledge, in which the historical world is seen as spontaneous existence, is conceived as abstraction. But, for him, just like we consider diverse categories and contents of knowledge, there must be diverse categories and contents of art through which the historical world of actuality is seen immediately from the standpoint of our subjectivity (*ACHF*, 303).

The crucial idea is that, according to Nishida's re-elaboration what determines the artistic form is the self-determination of the historical world rather than the free will as completely detached from the world of actuality. Stated differently, artistic creation is the "abstraction" of the historical world in artistic form. Simply construed, in Nishida's description in the historical world there is nothing "unformed" or "unsynthesized". The form, on the other hand, is not independent from the act that realizes it, and hence its function: "There is no form that is separate from function" (*ACHF*, 260). But, the function, in turn, cannot be conceived without its relation with the environment. This is the sense in which Nishida describes the self-formation of the historical world as the reciprocal determination of act and object, or bodily subject and environment, or culture and nature. Artistic creation is the expression of the historical world by the artist in a subjective, historical bodily manner. But, this is at the same time a historical, social expression. Therefore, it is also a non-conceptual "expression" of the relationship with natural environment. In Nishida's description, the "beautiful" is the "form of the historical life", "it is the paradigm of our historical life reflected on the historical surface" (*ACHF*, 304). The "historical surface" of the historical world is the direction in which the world is seen from the standpoint of *poiesis*, and in this sense it is a subjective "abstraction" from the historical world of actuality.

By replacing the free will with the self-determination of the historical world, Nishida not only counters the charge of subjectivism, but also puts forward an empirical aesthetics, rather than a metaphysical or idealist aesthetics. Accordingly, in Nishida's conception what determines aesthetic form is the cultural, societal, historical context. In other words, aesthetic form cannot be conceived solely in formal terms, but should be understood in relation to its function. Yet, for Nishida the cultural, societal, historical context is not independent from its relation with the environment. "Society is generally conceived in abstraction from the historical ground", Nishida remarks, "but, it must be considered as a historical formation act" (*ACHF*, 261). According to Nishida, the historical world is the "place" in which culture and natural environment reciprocally determine each other. Consequently, aesthetic form is determined not only with respect to cultural, societal context, but also with respect to the natural environment of its creation. This is the hallmark of Nishida's later conception of artistic creation. And, he elaborates, in more concrete terms, how culture and natural environment mutually determine each other by focusing on the development of art in primitive societies.

4.4. *Dromenon*: The Model and Origin of the Contradictory Identity of Natural Environment and Culture in Aesthetic Feeling

Nishida presents both a model and the ontological structure of the "self-formation of the historical world" through an analysis of the development of art in primitive societies. Referring to Jane Harrison's *Ancient Art and Ritual*, Nishida suggests that in ancient times art and ritual emerge from the same human impulse (*ACHF*, 264). According to Nishida's recapitulation, in primitive societies rather than being prayer, ritual is the expression of intense wishes or emotions. Archaic

man reenacts the emotions of his encounter with the phenomena of nature or of some remotely performed actions, such as war, prey, or migration in ritual dance. What is reenacted is not the representation of the event but the emotions felt therein, and thus, although it involves imitation, it is something more than imitation. Besides, rather than being personal, emotions are felt collectively. In the course of time, through the effects of several factors and periodical repetition this reenactment of collective feelings in ritual action is condensed in a fixed form. For Nishida the origin of artistic form lies in such an abstraction. He finds an expression of such an abstraction in the antique Greek notion of *dromenon*, “a thing done” or “something acted”. According to Harrison’s definition *dromenon* is “not simply a thing done, not even a thing excitedly and socially done... It is a thing re-done or pre-done, a thing enacted or represented”.⁴³ Through an analysis of Nishida’s interpretation of *dromenon* as the origin of artistic form we can lay out schematically the basic aspects of his conception of artistic creation as an act of historical formation.

1. The mutual formation of the phenomena of nature and feeling

Dromenon is the reproduction of feelings aroused by the phenomena of nature and life such as changes of seasons, the movements of the sun, the moon and the stars, the growth and maturation of crops, the climate phenomena, birth, and death, etc., in a sacred ritual. But rather than being a mere imitation this reproduction is identification with the event through intense feeling. In Nishida’s account the relationship between feeling and the phenomena of nature is not a causal interaction. In other words, it is not an arousal of a feeling by an “external”, independent

⁴³ Jane Harrison, *Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1912), p. 43.

phenomenon, nor it is the “construction” of the phenomenon through “internal” feeling. In Nishida’s language, the phenomena of nature and feeling constitute an “identity of absolute contradictories”. As Nishida puts it, the historical world starts “neither from the physical world, nor from the mental world. The subject and the environment mutually form each other. The historical world starts from the contradictory identity of the subject and the environment” (*ACHF*, 276). For Nishida, on the other hand, rather than being irrational or merely confused as it is thought in intellectualist psychology that focused on the individual consciousness, feelings are “determined” or even “rational”. Here, Nishida reformulates his definition of rationality and personality by maintaining that: “In the historical world reason must be historically creative as the contradictory identity of the maker and the made. In the historical society, individual person emerges in a historically operative manner” (*ACHF*, 287). In Nishida’s language, such a determination of feelings is a “topological determination”. And, referring to Kurt Lewin’s equation, $B=f(P, E)$, i.e., Behavior is a function of the Person and his or her Environment, Nishida argues that, all mental phenomena must be conceived as the mutual determination of the subject and the environment, i.e., from the standpoint of the “topological psychology” (*ACHF*, 279-280).

Nishida further asserts that the relationship between human being and nature is not “disinterested”. Accordingly, archaic people do not contemplate the beauties of spring or autumn disinterestedly; for them these are merely the times when their food comes and goes out. With Nishida’s example, rather than contemplating the beauties of the Nile, the people of ancient Egypt interested with its fluctuations which control their food. So Nishida maintains that: “We cannot understand a

people's ritual by detaching it from the climate and the environment. We cannot understand the rite of Osiris without relating it to the fluctuations of the Nile" (*ACHF*, 284). According to Nishida, this is also the case for artistic creation. We cannot understand the "form" of a building, song, dance, or an ornamental design without relating it to the feelings, events, natural and social environment, or climate in which it is produced, in other words without situating it in a "place". Referring to Bruno Taut, Nishida writes that: "the Parthenon with its balance and contour catches the calm and serene climate of Greece; Ise Jingu reveals the humid and rainy climate of Japan" (*ACHF*, 313-314).

2. The immediacy of feeling and action-expression

Dromenon means "something acted, an action".⁴⁴ The ethnologist and archaeologist Leo Frobenius points out that "the reality of the natural rhythm of genesis and extinction has seized hold of [man's] consciousness, and this, inevitably and by reflex action, leads him to represent his emotion in an act".⁴⁵ The ritual act is an immediate expression of feeling. In *dromenon* what is reenacted is not a mere mimetic copy of some remotely enacted action. Feeling is "actually reproduced in the action" rather than being "shown figuratively". Its function, as Johan Huizinga remarks, is to "help out of the action", i.e., to help the worshipper to "participate in the sacred happening itself".⁴⁶ *Dromenon* is neither a mere representation of the cause of emotions nor is it a mere expression of them. It is rather the ritual reenactment of feeling that constitutes a "contradictory identity" with the phenomena

⁴⁴ Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 14.

⁴⁵ Quoted in Huizinga, *ibid.*, p. 16.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

of nature or life. “In primitive people it is immediately from perception to action”, Nishida claims, “but in the course of rational progress vacancy of reflection has started to intervene and perception turned out to be conscious representation” (*ACHF*, 265). In describing the immediacy of feeling and action-expression Nishida refers to behaviorism, Gestalt psychology, and James-Lange Theory of Emotion. Accordingly, he claims that “the consciousness of the individual self cannot be understood merely from the standpoint of the individual self” (*ACHF*, 279). Moreover, the mental phenomena must be conceived not atomistically but as an integral *gestalt*, in which the whole changes with the changes in the parts (*ACHF*, 279). Nishida writes,

We are not crying from sorrow but we feel sorrow because we cry, we do not tremble from fear but we are afraid because we tremble. In the basis of emotions there must be historical formation... Without emotion there is no action. Merely from the standpoint of abstract logic action does not exist. Kant’s moral action is also from the respect to law (*ACHF*, 280).

Thus, for Nishida feeling is action rather than contemplation. And as being action, feeling is in the infinitely dynamic present, i.e., it is determined in the historical world.

3. Collectivity

Dromenon is not merely action, nor is it merely an intense emotional action. For example, to eat with an intense emotion would not be a ritual act. It is not either merely a collective action but the ritual reenactment of the transindividual feelings of a collective action. According to Nishida “since emotion is determined through a historical formation act it must also be societal. It is neither individual nor private” (*ACHF*, 281). Several commentators have seen the collective ritual act as the starting

point of all societal order and social institutions.⁴⁷ Nishida remarks that according to the modern anthropology the savage people were not free from all societal restrictions as Rousseau envisaged, rather they were confined from all sides not only in social relations but also in religion, medicine, production, and technology. And for him, the origin of this organization is to be found in *dromenon*: “*Dromenon* is the primitive process of not only the Greek society but also the social constitution as such” (*ACHF*, 282). And Nishida asserts that rather than being completed, the emergence and development of society is still in progress today. He writes,

The historical society always emerges from the contradictory identity of the whole and the individuals... If there is no tradition then there is no society. Tradition is what T. S. Eliot calls the sensation of history. The world of reality always consists of the conflict between the formation of tradition and environment (*ACHF*, 301).

In Nishida’s description the sensation of history is the existence of the past in the present, or the co-presence of the past and the future in the “eternal present” (*ACHF*, 325). Reflecting the nationalist tones of his time, Nishida claims that there is inevitably society or nation on the basis of the individual act: “To act on the substratum of society is to act on the substratum of the history of a nation; it must be to act traditionally” (*ACHF*, 325). And, in Nishida’s definition artistic creation is “historical, social action”, while the beautiful as the object of artistic creation is the “form of the historical life” (*ACHF*, 304). “Art” he writes “is neither play, nor enjoyment, nor imitation; it is the expression of the historical life” (*ACHF*, 300).

⁴⁷ Huizinga, *ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

4. Abstraction

According to Nishida's narration, through periodical repetition *dromenon* becomes sacred *dromenon*, i.e., ritual. The expressive action of collectively felt emotions is abstracted as a mental image by means of periodical repetition. At the beginning everybody dance together. In the course of time, the expression of collective emotions centers on the leader of the ritual act and gradually the dancer and the seer, the god and the prayer are separated from each other. The repetition of the actions of the leader every year results in the abstraction of the expression of collective emotions. And in this way the personified spirits of nature or gods emerge. Nishida suggests that in the background of the genesis of the phenomenon of personification there is such an abstraction of collective emotions (*ACHF*, 267-268, 278, 283). In Nishida's words, gods are nothing but the "expressive mental image" of intense emotions or "action depicted in the heart/mind" (*ACHF*, 266).

In Nishida's account, the origin of "artistic form" also should be sought out in such an abstraction. He refers to Aristotle's *Poetica*, where Aristotle suggests that the tragedy starts from the leaders of the Dithyramb.⁴⁸ Dithyramb is a hymn that is sung in accompaniment of dances in the spring festivals of Dionysus. In the rite the leaders sing the hymn and the chorus follows him by singing the reprises. According to Nishida, this is the beginning of the abstraction process in which the actor and the seer is separated from each other. When the expression of collective emotions is wholly separated from the actor and fixed in the form of an external object, the process comes to an end with the emergence of the work of art. In a crucial passage

⁴⁸ Aristotle, *Poetics with Tractatus Coislinianus, Reconstruction of Poetics II and the Fragments of the On Poets*, Richard Janko, trans. (Cambridge: Hackett, 1987), p. 6.

where “artistic intuition” appears to refer ambiguously to both artistic creation and appreciation Nishida writes:

When the actor disappears and everybody becomes the seer artistic intuition emerges... The art work is that which separates the artist from the appreciator. Here art can be conceived as merely appreciation. *Dromenon* is the stereotype of our actions; it is the paradigm of the historical societal action... The work of art is the form of the life reflected on the object; it is the form that is ‘seen’ (this is style) (*ACHF*, 294).

Here we also read Nishida’s definition of beauty: The beautiful is “the standard form of the historical life”; it is the abstraction of “the paradigm of historical life seen in the eternal present” (*ACHF*, 304, 310). In this manner, Nishida’s theory attempts to respond to the problem of aesthetic form, i.e., the objective counterpart of aesthetic experience in the world, from a historical, societal standpoint. As we have discussed, when aesthetic form is conceived from an idealistic standpoint as the sensuous appearance of the Idea, in other words, as the harmonious accord of the compositional act of imagination with the conceptualization of understanding, whose claim to appropriateness is justified by “the supersensible ground of ourselves and nature”, the result is the detachment of the appreciation and creation of beauty from the historical world. The main question for idealistic aesthetics is that if “objectivity” is made possible by the “concepts” of understanding, and if the experience of beauty and artistic creation is grounded on the activity of imagination in its “freedom” from concepts, then what is the origin of the universally shareable “immediacy” of imagination? Imagination’s ambiguous position between the sheer receptivity of intuition and active thought leads any attempt to solve the problem to a deadlock. From the standpoint of his historical

ontology, Nishida suggests that, as the sensuous appearance of the Idea, in the beautiful “seeing is contradictorily identical to acting”:

Idea is the original formal paradigm of our actions... Art is always based on the urge for abstraction. We cannot conceive of the urge for art without a purposive concept at its background. Kant’s formal beauty also is not truly disinterested from the purposiveness of judgment... Artistic creation emerges from the historical formation act. Essentially, the historical societal action is like *dromenon* in the form of the identity of absolute contradictories (ACHF, 310-311).

In this sense, Nishida transfers the “immediacy” of the Kantian ahistorical act of imagination in the aesthetic experience to a historical ontological foundation.⁴⁹ In other words, in Nishida’s theory of artistic creation “immediacy” turns out to be, what is described as “cultural immediacy”. As Andrew Feenberg remarks, “cultural immediacy” “involves refining the web of associations to a universally shared remainder”.⁵⁰ In Feenberg’s example, in haiku the natural world is poetically articulated “in all its rich emotional and historical associations without distinguishing a purely material content from the contributions of culture and the subject”.⁵¹ But, it is important to note that in Nishida culture is not “abstracted” from its relation with the natural environment. Thus, Nishida’s historical ontology should not be considered as a form of cultural constructivism.

5. The historical world as the real agent of artistic creation

In *dromenon* what determine the form of ritual action are neither the phenomena of nature, nor the expression of intense emotions, nor the rules imposed

⁴⁹ For a comparison of Nishida’s notion of “immediacy” with Heidegger’s concept of “clearing” (*Lichtung*) see, Andrew Feenberg, “Experience and Culture: Nishida’s Path ‘To the Things Themselves’”, *Philosophy East and West*, 49/1, 1999, pp. 28-44.

⁵⁰ Andrew Feenberg, “The Problem of Modernity in the Philosophy of Nishida”, *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, and the Question of Nationalism*, James Heisig and John Maraldo, eds. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994), pp. 155-156.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

from without. In Nishida's language "the self-formation of the historical world is the determination of 'place' rather than being a grammatical subjective process" (*ACHF*, 273). Nishida suggests that the genesis of the personification and artistic form from the leaders of the Dithyramb cannot merely be the result of periodical repetition. He maintains that artistic form emerges from the deepening of various causes in an historical operative manner. The actions of the leaders of the Dithyramb should have certain "individual" qualities that separate them from the others. Yet, their individuality is at the same time shaped in the expressive action of the collective emotions.

In this way, the form of the ritual act emerges as the result of the mutual determination of the individual and the community, of the community and the environment. Not only in artistic creation, but also in aesthetic appreciation, the individual inevitably acts from the first person standpoint and from this standpoint he or she participates to the formation of the historical reality. But the action of the individual, in turn, is formed socio-historically. Nishida defines this formation action whose real agent is the historical world as the "technique" of Heaven (*ACHF*, 275). In Nishida's description such a historical formation act, in which the past and the future coexist in the absolute present, "is neither mechanical, nor teleological; it is neither from many to one, nor from one to many. Therefore the world in which form determines form itself... must be technical" (*ACHF*, 275). In this sense, Nishida's conception of abstraction as the "self determination of the absolute present" approximates to Kant's "schema" of imagination. On the other hand, Nishida defines the "technique of Heaven" as the "dialectical reason" (*ACHF*, 287). For Nishida, however, this "dialectical reason" is different from the Hegelian reason: "the

progress of history is not a gradual rationalization... This is the thinking of a world that is centered on the European culture” (*ACHF*, 288). He maintains that in order to conceive the progress of history “it is necessary to think by returning to the hotbed of the historical world of *dromenon*” (*ACHF*, 288). Consequently, for Nishida, the historical formation starts from the determination of “form by form itself” and in this sense “everything that appears in this world has to be *dromena* rather than phenomena” (*ACHF*, 284).

CHAPTER - 5
NISHIDA'S CONCEPTION OF ARTISTIC CREATION AND
THE AESTHETICS OF NATURE

5.1. Grasping the Space of Objects

At the end of the third section of *Artistic Creation as an Act of Historical Formation*, as a part of his discussion of the problem of artistic form, Nishida makes a differentiation between the directions of the artistic volitions of Eastern and Western arts. Accordingly, in contrast to Western arts which are oriented toward grasping the space of things, Eastern arts try to grasp the space of the heart/mind (*ACHF*, 315). In defining the “grasping of space” in art, Nishida primarily refers to Riegl’s theory of perception, as well as to Adolf Hildebrand’s conception of artistic form. And, his discussion on the difference of the artistic volition of Eastern and Western arts is based on Worringer’s development of Riegl’s theory into fundamental types of the relationship between art and nature. However, although Nishida’s references constitute the main body of his argument, they are densely compacted. Therefore, to understand his argument, it is first necessary to expound his references to the basic aspects of Riegl’s, Hildebrand’s, and Worringer’s views.

5.1.1. Riegl’s Theory of Perception: Artistic Form as the Determination of Space

Riegl’s theory of perception is grounded on the theories of pure visibility and corresponding formalism that grow up in late nineteenth century, especially that of

Konrad Fiedler.¹ As we have seen, according to Fiedler, the confused, fleeting, and undeveloped material provided by sensation is synthesized in two different ways by linguistic conceptualization and pure perception in art. Thus, Fiedler conceives of artistic activity as a creative formative process rather than an imitation of nature. Fiedler's friend and the source of many of his insights, the sculptor Adolf von Hildebrand develops Fiedler's ideas in his *Problem of Form in Painting and Sculpture* (*Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst*) published in 1893. Hildebrand maintains that there is a "definite relation between three-dimensional objective form, i.e., an object in Nature, and its appearance psychologically as a visual perception", and this relation lies at the heart of the problem of artistic form.² In his account, rather than seeing nature from a single point, or conceive it with the eye only, we experience it "as something always changing, always in motion, to be taken in by all our senses at once".³ Likewise, we are not merely static spectators, but move through our environment and react to its phenomena in indefinitely many ways. For example, in visual perception "one and the same object may produce many different visual appearances according as it is viewed from different positions under different circumstances".⁴ But this does not mean that we are in total confusion or randomness with respect to the "embarrassing richness which nature affords" on us. In Hildebrand's account, through our "general ideas of space and form" we conceive

¹ For the development of the theories of pure visibility and formalism in late nineteenth century and their connection to Riegl's theory of perception, see Richard Woodfield, "Reading Riegl's *Kunst-Industrie*", especially pp. 52-56, Ernest K. Mundt, "Three Aspects of German Aesthetic Theory", and Moshe Barasch, *Theories of Art: From Impressionism to Kandinsky*, pp. 122-171.

² Adolf Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form in Painting and Sculpture*, M. Meyer and R. M. Ogden, trans. (New York: G. E. Stechert & Co., 1907), p. 17.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

of the reality of things as well as the “coherence and unity of Nature”, and in this way realize our “orientation in the outer world”.⁵ Hildebrand further suggests that our ideas of space and form depend on two basic faculties, or different uses, of our eyes, namely, the visual and the kinesthetic, and “vast experience of relations” existing between them.⁶ While by the visual use of our eyes Hildebrand means our view “from a distance” through which we see objects at one glance, by their kinesthetic, or tactile, use he means a much closer view where, instead of a complete picture, we have several partial pictures that we “connect together by a swift succession of eye movements”.⁷ And, for Hildebrand the purpose of artistic activity consists in the creation of a spatial perception, or a “sense of space”, by harmoniously combining the effects of these two functions of seeing and touching in a static artistic representation on the pictorial plane. Stated differently, the artist attempts to grasp the ideas of space and form, through which we perceive objects in a coherent manner, but which are not given to us “immediately and self-evidently by Nature”, as much as clearly in artistic form. And, in this sense, as Nishida remarks, for Hildebrand the subject matter of formative beautiful arts is to capture three-dimensionality in two-dimensional surface as an artistic form by removing what is troublesome for the eye in actual nature, i.e., by freeing nature of “change and chance” (*ACHF*, 299).⁸ Hildebrand writes:

The artist watches Nature in her eternal change with this end in view. By eliminating all the weak and ineffective aspects he comes at length into an

⁵ Ibid., pp. 17, 44, 52.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 21-24, 34.

⁷ Ibid., p. 22.

⁸ Ibid., p. 45.

advantageous position toward Nature and her effects. And by this process of elimination he is enabled to infuse into his image the force which makes it valuable in comparison with nature.⁹

Consequently, rejecting the view that sees art as a mere imitation of nature, Hildebrand clearly differentiates art from nature and suggests that “coherence and unity” in artistic form is “quite distinct from the coherence and unity of Nature”.¹⁰

With a hasty look, Riegl’s theory of perception in relation to artistic creation may appear as opposing with both Fiedler’s and Hildebrand’s views, as Riegl maintains that in our artistic productions we are “inextricably bound to models in both organic and inorganic nature”, and in this respect the view that “human artistic creation has never been anything but naturalistic” is correct.¹¹ He unambiguously states that:

The ancient Egyptian who tried to represent object in their strictly ‘objective’ appearance means to be as ‘naturalistic’ as one could imagine. The Greek, however, felt his own to be especially ‘naturalistic’ when he compared his with them. And could the master of the portraits of Constantine with its lively expression of the eyes not have felt that he was a greater ‘naturalist’ than, for example, the master of the portrait of Pericles? Yet all three would have, in the most modern sense, taken ‘naturalism’ for something purely unnatural. Indeed, each style of art strives for a true representation of nature and nothing else and each has indeed its own perception of nature in that he views a very particular phenomenon of it.¹²

But, it is important to remark that Riegl conceives of naturalism in art as a “contest with nature”, rather than an imitation of nature. For Riegl, a truly illusionistic replication or imitation of “nature as it really is” is not only undesirable but also inconceivable. In complete agreement with Fiedler and Hildebrand, Riegl

⁹ Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 52.

¹¹ Alois Riegl, *Historical Grammar of the Visual Arts*, Jacqueline E. Jung, trans. (New York: Zone Books, 2004), p. 298.

¹² Riegl, *Late Roman Art Industry*, p. 226, note 117.

claims that in art “man re-creates nature as he would like it to be and as it indeed exists in his mind”.¹³ In Riegl’s account, behind all artistic production there is the human striving for happiness and desire for harmony, which is “constantly disrupted and threatened by things and phenomena of nature that exists in a state of perpetual struggle, both with one another and with humanity”.¹⁴ “If nature were really the way it appears in the individual senses”, Riegl claims, “man could never be able to attain harmony”.¹⁵ Accordingly, for Riegl, the purpose of all artistic creation is to free ourselves from “nature’s perpetual instability” and to give an order to its random occurrences and apparent chaos: “man’s view of nature urges him to create for himself a sense of harmonious comfort”.¹⁶

Riegl further maintains that such a comforting view that we create in our minds affects our relationship not only with the phenomena of nature but also with each other, as well as all our productive activities. Riegl describes this ordering, or “improvement”, of natural and cultural appearances with the aim of gaining a sense of harmonious comfort as “worldview”:

Visual art... is but one cultural phenomenon among many. In the final analysis, its development derives from the same factor that derives the entire progress of human culture: the worldview of man, as expression of his need for comfort and contentment.¹⁷

As we have mentioned, one of the basic characteristics of Riegl’s thought is that worldviews differ for different historical periods and for different peoples.

¹³ Aloïs Riegl, *Historical Grammar of the Visual Arts*, p. 299.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

Developing Hildebrand's idea of visual and tactile perceptions of nature more thoroughly in a historical manner, Riegl distinguishes different historical periods of artistic formation corresponding to different senses of space. He identifies the changes in the sense of space, or in the direction of the *Kunstwollen*, through the "formal" examination of artistic productions, i.e., by detecting fundamental ideas of space and form that are on the ground of these artistic forms, rather than relating these forms to their functions, usages, social or historical contexts, symbolism, or iconography. At different places, Riegl sets out four different conceptions of space, or manner of perceiving nature that determines four different types of artistic form, or style. Accordingly, in the Egyptian and archaic Greek world, the emphasis is on the "material individuality of objects" that are inseparable parts of a "tactile plane suggested by the sense of touch":

The ancient's sense perception found external objects to be confusing and mixed; by means of the visual arts they took individual objects and represented them as clearly as finished unity. The ultimate goal of the visual arts during all of antiquity thus was the representation of objects as clear material entities.¹⁸

In classical Greek period, on the other hand, the objects are seen with a "normal sight", that is, the eyes moves not too closely, nor too far away, but rather to the middle "so that the uninterrupted tactile connection of the parts are no longer visible".¹⁹ Thirdly, in Riegl's categorization the late Roman world is characterized by a "distant view" through which the space is recognized as a cubic material quantity, rather than an infinite deep space between material objects. Stated differently, objects were placed in relation to each other, and space is grasped as the rhythm of the

¹⁸ Riegl, *Late Roman Art Industry*, p. 21.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

distance between independent material entities.²⁰ Finally, in modern world, the background is perceived to be “a section out of infinite space”.²¹ According to Riegl, to free itself from the interested three-dimensional space, modern art attempts to grasp the infinite depth of space by recognizing it “as an unlimited shapeless quantity”.²² In other words, in modern art the emphasis is put on the nature of what Riegl’s calls the “free space” rather than the self contained thing themselves in space. As Nishida puts it, in contrast to the flattening of space in late Roman art, modern art “spatializes” the space, i.e., transforms it into a “free space” (*ACHF*, 300).

5.1.2. Different Types of the Determination of Space as Different Types of the Relationship between Art and Nature

In his *Form Problems of the Gothic (Formprobleme der Gotik)* (1910) Worringer simplifies Riegl’s historical classification of different conceptions of space into fundamental types of the relationship between art and nature in historical development as primitive, classical, and Oriental. Worringer starts his analysis by arguing that, rather than being in an initial harmony and intimacy with nature, primitive people are confused by the chaos, or incoherence, of the phenomenal world and live in a vague mental fear which is only gradually dispersed through development of mental orientation. The perceptual images that they receive from the phenomenal world are “fluctuating and untrustworthy”, and this creates an instinctive awareness of the “limitations of human knowledge” and “nature’s unfathomableness”, as well as an experience of an “absolute dualism of man and

²⁰ Ibid., p. 43.

²¹ Ibid., p. 65.

²² Ibid., p. 43.

surrounding world”.²³ In Worringer’s account, primitive people’s fear with regard to the phenomena of nature urges them to search out some “invariables” that would save them from “chaotic confusion of the impressions of mind and sense”, and out of this search language, art, and religion arise.²⁴ Since for primitive people artistic production is a way of escaping from the arbitrariness and transience of life they seek in lifeless, inorganic, and abstract lines and geometrical forms some permanent stability. Accordingly, primitive man

extracts from the uninterrupted flux of events individual objects of the outer world, trying to get hold of them by fixing them in perceptible form. He frees them from their disquieting juxtaposition, from their lost condition in space. He reduces their changing manner of appearance to the characteristic and recurrent features. He translates these features into his abstract language of line, assimilates them to his ornament, and in this way makes them absolute and invariable.²⁵

Worringer describes both abstract quality of the art and religion of primitive people as transcendent, as something absolutely above this world.

In Worringer’s narration as “man gradually familiarizes himself more and more with the order of the world” the incoherence of sense impressions “resolves into an arrangement of logical events” and “chaos becomes cosmos”.²⁶ Accordingly, not only instinctive awareness of the limitations of human knowledge and nature’s unfathomableness, but also fear of space and dualism of man and nature vanish. With the “increasing security of his knowledge” classical man makes himself “the measure of all things” and starts to see the world from an anthropocentric standpoint: “He no

²³ Wilhelm Worringer, *Form Problems of the Gothic* (New York: G. E. Stechert & Co., 1920), pp. 28-29.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

longer looks at the world as something strange, unapproachable, mysteriously great, but as the living supplement of his own ego".²⁷ This leads to an intimate relationship of confidence between man and nature, and artistic drive for abstraction gives way to empathy. As religions of classical period, in which transcendent God that stands above the world becomes anthropomorphized and "incorporated into the mundane", classical art celebrates the immanence in the unity of man and nature. Worringer finds the origin of the basic characteristics of the European sense of beauty and the aesthetic approach to art in classical period. Accordingly, as classical man seeks out the law and order of the world through science and philosophy, art gives up its religious, or scientific, role and becomes a free play and luxurious joy in life. And, a sense of the "beauty of the living, of the pleasing rhythm of the organic ", an empathetic projection of man's own feeling onto objective world replaces the lifeless abstraction: "Empathy opens up to Classical man the enjoyment of perception".²⁸

Worringer introduces Oriental art as the third type of the relationship between art and nature in historical development. After deconstructing the European idea of progress as "fiction", he describes the standpoint of Oriental art as the standpoint of "instinctive knowledge" against "intellectual knowledge". In this sense, Oriental art stands closer to primitive art than classical art. But, Worringer points out that, while both of them have the "same dread of the world, the same need of deliverance", with Oriental man, rather than being a preliminary stage in the development toward intellectual knowledge, this is a "final phase, superior to all development, not prior, but superior, to intelligence":

²⁷ Ibid., p. 35.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 39.

The dualism of the Oriental stands above intelligence. He is no longer confused and tormented by this dualism, but he feels it to be a sublime fate, and silent and passive, he submits to the great impenetrable mystery of being. His fear is raised to respect, his resignation has become religion. To him life is no longer confused and distressing madness, but it is holy, because it is rooted in depths and is inaccessible to man and allows him to feel his own nothingness. For this sense of his nullity elevates him, because it gives life its greatness.²⁹

In Worringer's account, this unbridgeable dualism of all being, i.e., the problem of appearance and of the unfathomable depth of nature, and corresponding transcendent and metaphysical quality of Oriental worldview is reflected in their artistic productions. Accordingly, Oriental art displays the tension between the world of appearance and the metaphysical higher reality behind all phenomena. Like in primitive art, in Oriental art the lines are abstract, inflexible, and expressionless, the emphasis is on the surface rather than the deep space, and there is a redemptive quality, i.e., it "expresses no joyous approval of apparent vitality, but wholly appertains to that other domain which look beyond the time and chance of life toward a higher order that is rid of all false impressions and sense deceptions".³⁰ But, Worringer remarks that there is a clear difference between "dull fetishism" of primitive art and "profound mysticism" of Oriental art.³¹

Following Riegl, Worringer adds a fourth type of the relationship between art and nature, namely the Gothic. According to Worringer, the form of Gothic art stands in between the organic style of classical art and the abstract, geometrical style of the primitive art. The transcendent character of primitive art that is conditioned by the need of redemption and the dualism between man and nature gradually

²⁹ Ibid., p. 41.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 42.

³¹ Ibid., p. 42.

disappears in historical development. Worringer claims that the standpoint of Gothic worldview is neither transcendent, nor immanent but just in between the two. The dualism of man and nature neither prevails as in primitive art, nor is refined into reverence as in Oriental art, nor is overcome through knowledge and leaves its place into a harmonious, joyful unity, as in classical art. The Gothic man, Worringer argues, “continues to struggle against the inevitability of dualism and seeks to overcome it by unnatural exaltation of feeling”.³² Consequently, in the hybrid style of Gothic art, although the “non-actual” and abstract quality continues to prevail, the “actual” receives more emphasis. In other words, in contrast to abstract, lifeless, and expressionless quality of primitive and Oriental artistic forms that seek redemption from the ever-changing actuality of the phenomenal world, the form of Gothic art is full of expression and vitality. By means of this vitality, and what Worringer describes as an “unnatural exaltation” of the actual through feeling, the Gothic artist “aspires to a world above the actual, above the sensuous”, that is, seeks to make the actual world “transcendent” by turning the “raw chaos” into an “artful refined chaos”.³³ With more concrete example of Worringer, in contrast to the Greek architect who “approaches his material, the stone, with a certain sensuousness” and “lets the material speak in its own right”, the Gothic architect

approaches the stone with a desire for purely spiritual expression, that is, with structural intentions which are conceived artistically and independently of the stone, and for which the stone amounts to no more than external and unprivileged means of realization. The result is an abstract system of construction in which the stone plays only a practical, not an artistic role... In short, out of the stone as mass, with its heaviness, comes a bare structural framework of stone... The contrast between the organism of classical

³² Ibid., p. 68.

³³ Ibid., p. 69.

architecture and the system of Gothic architecture becomes the contrast between a living, breathing body and a skeleton.³⁴

To sum up, in the Gothic art the actuality of natural material becomes the expression of the non-actual or super-natural. In this sense, Worringer states that Gothic art “spiritualizes” the material, in spite of material itself, i.e., it denies its materiality by “dematerializing” it.³⁵ In other words, in the very actuality of the world, creating an exalted activity and expressiveness, Gothic art elevates to the non-sensuous, or more precisely, to the super-sensuous, the spiritual, the transcendent.

5.2. Grasping the Space of the Heart/Mind: Dialectical Relationship between Art and Nature

Referring to the definition of art as the determination of space in Riegl’s theory, Nishida’s differentiation between the grasping of the space of objects in Western arts and the grasping of the space of the heart/mind in Eastern arts immediately evokes his earlier distinction between the space of objects and the space of the self in *Art and Morality*. Hence, there emerges a dual ambiguity concerning the demarcation of artistic intuition from cognitive experience. Accordingly, if artistic intuition is defined as the grasping of the space of the heart/mind, as in *Art and Morality*, then artistic volition of Western arts dissolves into cognitive experience. On the other hand, when artistic intuition is defined as the grasping of the space of the heart/mind as in Eastern arts, as in this case artistic intuition aims to grasp the space in which subject and environment reciprocally determine each other, which is already the space of our ordinary experience, there is the question of

³⁴ Ibid., p. 85.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 84-85.

whether and how artistic intuition is distinguished from ordinary cognitive experience. Nishida attempts to respond both of these questions by refining his position in *Art and Morality* which proposes a synthesis of pure perception and empathy, as well as a peculiar kind of artistic action through which the artist unites internally with the space of the reciprocal determination of self and nature. And, from the standpoint in which artistic intuition is distinguished from ordinary cognitive experience, he provides a critical reconstruction of Worringer's classification of different types of the relationship between art and nature. Moreover, by referring to Max Dvorák's "Art History as the History of Ideas" (*Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte*), where Dvorák describes "the return to nature and the sensible world both formally as well as objectively" in Medieval art as a "new relationship to nature", Nishida suggests that in Eastern arts there is a "new relationship to nature" that is different from both Classical art and what Dvorák describes as "the new relationship to nature" (*ACHF*, 335).³⁶ However, once again, Nishida's discussion on the Eastern art's relationship to nature is composed of unacknowledged quotations from Asian sources, as well as densely compacted references to Worringer's classification. Therefore, to understand what Nishida means when he suggests that there is a new relationship to nature in Eastern arts, it is necessary to decipher Nishida's allusions to Asian sources, and to clarify their relation to Worringer's classification. In the first part of this section, I will attempt to provide such a clarification. And, in the second part, from the standpoint of Nishida, in which the

³⁶ For Dvorák's definition of "the new relationship to nature", see Max Dvorák, "The New Relationship to Nature" in *Modern Perspectives in Western Art History: An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Writings on the Visual Arts*, W. Eugene Kleinbauer, ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), pp. 397-412.

relationship between art and nature defined as a dialectical relationship, I will consider an appreciative difficulty in relation to Japanese gardens arising from the dialectical relationship between art and nature as it is discussed in contemporary environmental aesthetics.

5.2.1. The Asian Arts and a New Relationship to Nature

According to Nishida, the space that is determined in art, as it is described by Riegl, must be the “artistic space” rather than the space of objects. Thus, Worringer’s concept of “abstraction” from the world of actuality, as a direct development of Riegl’s idea, must include “empathy”, i.e., the projection of the self into the objective world, as long as it is considered as “artistic”. In this sense, Nishida states that we can conceive of abstraction and empathy as the “two conflicting directions of art impulse” (*ACHF*, 313). By this Nishida first of all appears to mean that, artistic intuition attempts to grasp the a priori of spatial form, rather than perceptual objects in space themselves, and this reading is entirely compatible with Riegl’s, as well as Hildebrand’s essential ideas. In addition, rather than committing to a total separation between empathy and abstraction, i.e., between a sensualist and formalist conception of aesthetic form that is a direct ramification of the distinction between passive sensibility and active thought, Nishida conceives them as the contradictorily identical poles of artistic intuition.

On the one hand, this is a reconstitution of Nishida’s earlier conception of artistic intuition as the union of object and subject in aesthetic feeling from the standpoint of action-intuition. But, on the other hand, it reveals clearly the emphasis on the objective pole that is absent in Nishida’s earlier conception. Stated differently, in Nishida’s reconstitution the urge for abstraction, or the sense of space, is not

independent from the natural environment of its realization. That is, the ideas of space and form that shape our perception of objects grow out of the reciprocal determination of our subjectivity and natural environment. As Nishida puts it:

As the contradictory identity of subject and environment, artistic style changes depending on the people and its environment. The Greek people shape the style of the Greek art in the environment of the Greek people. The Egyptian people shape the style of the Egyptian art in the environment of the Egyptian people. The Japanese people shape the style of the Japanese art in the environment of the Japanese people (*ACHF*, 313-314).

This is neither cultural constructivism, nor geographical, or climatological, determinism, but rather, with the language of Nishida, “topological determinism”. As different people living in similar climatological conditions can create entirely different artistic styles, the individuals of the same culture living in different geographical locations can have different artistic volitions. In this sense, Nishida holds that “the direction of the artistic volition must be infinitely multiple” (*ACHF*, 314).

From the standpoint in which artistic intuition is conceived as the contradictory identity of culture and natural environment, Nishida critically evaluates Worringer’s classification of different types of the relationship between art and nature in historical development. Accordingly, Nishida argues that, there is something inaccurate in conceiving the relationship between human beings and nature as a relationship of opposition, and then describing the art of different historical periods and nations with respect to their relationship with nature as transcendent or immanent, religious-mystical or intellectual (*ACHF*, 232). In Nishida’s dialectical conception, human beings and nature oppose with each other as the contradictorily identical subjective and environmental poles of the historical

world (*ACHF*, 332). And, as we have seen, he describes the subjective pole as the immanent direction and the environmental pole as the transcendent direction. He holds that, starting from the classical period, Western arts, as well as religions, develop towards transcendental pole. With Nishida's example, by proceeding from the leader of the ritual in transcendent direction it is arrived at the anthropomorphism of the gods of Olympus, and at the extreme pole of this direction there is the transcendent God of Christianity. On the other hand, according to Nishida Eastern arts develop neither in the transcendent direction of primitive art, as Worringer argues, nor in the immanent direction of classical Greek art; it stands in between these two directions as Gothic art, albeit developing in a direction just opposite to it (*ACHF*, 333-334). By suggesting that Eastern arts, like Gothic art, stands in between the transcendent and immanent directions, Nishida first of all means that both Eastern arts and Gothic art have a "this-worldly" quality turning towards the vitality of actuality in contrast to the geometrical, lifeless, other-worldly quality of primitive art. Both of them celebrate the perpetual movement in the relationship between form and matter rather than a static form. In this sense, Nishida describes them as "spiritual" (*ACHF*, 334). But, according to Nishida, the approaches of Eastern arts and Gothic art toward actuality are in completely opposite directions. Gothic art aims to transcend the actual world in the very vitality of actuality. With Worringer's description, in Gothic art the actuality of natural material becomes the expression of the transcendent in spite of the material itself. In contrast, Eastern arts aim to grasp the perpetual movement of actuality from form to form by staying in this world. In Nishida's words, the spirituality of Eastern arts "folds heaven and earth in a black tea

bowl, rather than seeing the expression of infinite life in the Gothic tower” (*ACHF*, 334).

The question is that, what does such a “this-worldly” quality of Eastern arts and their tendency to celebrate actuality mean? Nishida primarily remarks that the “this-worldly” quality of Eastern arts is different from the intimately harmonious relationship and empathetic unification with nature in classical Greek art (*ACHF*, 334). In Nishida’s description Eastern arts’ relationship to nature is a dialectical relationship, rather than a harmonious one. In this dialectical relationship the terms designate conflicting directions, but in Nishida’s peculiar definition, i.e., as the identity of absolute contradictories. In other words, rather than seeing subjective feelings in the organic forms of nature and reflecting this harmonious unity in artistic form as in classical Greek art, Eastern arts focus on the continuity of discontinuity from form to form, i.e., the reciprocal determination of culture and environment. In this sense, Nishida claims that in contrast to Greek art in which matter is inevitably assimilated into form, in Eastern arts matter and form are contradictorily identical to each other (*ACHF*, 334-335). In Nishida’s logic the contradictory identity of matter and form entails a third party that makes their unification possible. This third party is the place in which matter and form reciprocally determine each other, i.e., the place of nothingness. In this sense, in Nishida’s description the artistic volition of Eastern arts aims to grasp the space of the heart/mind, the space in which we are, the space of absolute nothingness: “Our self exists in the historical space” (*ACHF*, 335).

But, if the actual world always moves from form to form and the place of nothingness as the ground of this movement cannot ever be grasped as a form although it determines transactions, then how Eastern arts attempt to grasp what is

ungraspable, i.e., the infinitely bottomless space? In answering this question Nishida, once again, appeals to his conception of artistic creation in which the artist unites internally with the ground of the actual world, but references in this conception to Asian sources, which are implicit in *Art and Morality*, now become explicit, albeit in extremely brief, hermetic, or simply anecdotal manner.

Firstly, in comparing and contrasting the “this-worldly” character of Eastern arts and Gothic art, Nishida states that, the tea ceremony “folds heaven and earth in a black tea bowl. It is ‘the ordinary heart/mind and at the same time the way” (*heijō shin soku dō*) (*ACHF*, 334). Nishida takes the expression “the ordinary heart/mind and at the same time the way” from the Zen master Nan-ch’üan. In Nishida’s use the expression signifies that by grasping its “own bottomless depth” the subject realizes its own historical actuality, i.e., that its individual actions is the self-determination of the historical world. Nishida provides his own commentary in the following words:

That is why the Zen master Nan-ch’üan teaches that ‘the ordinary heart/mind and at the same time the way’. The Zen master Lin-chi makes the same point when he says, ‘The Buddha-dharma does not have a special place to apply effort; it is only the ordinary and everyday- relieving oneself, donning clothes, eating rice, lying down when tired’. It would be a great mistake to understand these shrewd sayings as referring to a condition of detachment and indifference. They refer, rather, to a condition of total actualization of self: ‘Each step I take, my life’s blood pours out’.³⁷

Simply construed, through artistic discipline we realize the historical character, and hence the freedom of our own actions. But, by freedom Nishida does not mean the freedom of our own intentional actions, but rather a freedom that is

³⁷ Kitarō Nishida, *Last Writings: Nothingness and the Religious Worldview*, David A. Dilworth, trans. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1987), p. 90 (translation modified).

already always there but that is beyond our own conscious efforts. In Nishida's explication, freedom of our ordinary and everyday actions means that:

There is nothing at all that determines the self at the very ground of the self- nothing instinctive in the direction of the grammatical subject, nothing rational in the direction of the transcendental predicate. The self is bottomless. There is only what Zen calls the commonplace and conventional- 'the ordinary heart/mind and at the same time the way'.³⁸

Nishida further illustrates the character of freedom in Eastern arts by a second brief reference to the Buddhist tradition: "The lines of Eastern painting is not organic as in classical Greek art, neither is it like Gothic art, nor is it in the style of Egyptian art. It is 'Buddha and at the same time the heart/mind'. It is 'like the natural process of things as they are' (*jinenhōniteki*)" (*ACHF*, 335).³⁹ Nishida quotes the expression 'the natural process of things as they are' (*jinenhōni*) from Gotoku Shinran, the founder of the "True Pure Land" (*Jōdo Shin-shu*) sect of Japanese Buddhism. In a short letter entitled "Concerning *Jinenhōni*" (*Jinenhōni no koto*) that appears in the collection *Lamp for the Latter Ages* (*Mattōshō*), Shinran himself provides an explanation of the meaning of the expression as:

Ji means 'of itself'- not through the practitioner's calculation. It signifies being made so. *Nen* means 'to be made so'- it is not through the practitioner's calculation; it is through the working of the Tathagata's Vow. *Hōni* signifies being made so through the working of the Tathagata's Vow. It is the working of the Vow where there is no room for calculation on the part of the practitioner... *Jinen* signifies being made so from the beginning... Supreme Buddha is formless, and because of being formless is called *jinen*. Buddha, when appearing with form, is not called supreme nirvana.⁴⁰

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 110-111 (translation modified).

³⁹ In *Last Writings: Nothingness and the Religious Worldview*, David A. Dilworth translates the phrase *Jinenhōni* as "the effortless acceptance of the grace of Amida". Here I used Michael F. Marra's translation that appears in Ken'ichi Iwaki, "Nishida Kitarō and Art", *A History of Modern Japanese Aesthetics*, p. 279.

⁴⁰ *The Collected Works of Shinran*, <http://www.shinranworks.com/letters/mattosho5.htm> (accessed May 15, 2011).

At several places, Nishida refers to Shinran's use of the expression 'the natural process of things as they are' (*jinenhōni*) mainly in the context of the freedom and creativity of our individual actions as the self-determination of the historical world. Moreover, in this expression he finds a clear statement of his own idea of the "historical nature". According to him, "effortless, spontaneous living", or "natural process", or, "nature as it is" (*Jinen*) that appear in this expression signifies that we are always enfolded by the historical nature, rather than "the usual sense of living 'naturally'", i.e., "nature" as conceived from the standpoint of objective determination.⁴¹ He asserts that the freedom in such a naturalness "arises from a perspective that is diametrically opposed to the prevailing concept of freedom in Modern Western culture" as the latter is an "abstract freedom, something merely Euclidian".⁴² In his article entitled "On Modernization and Tradition in Japan" Keiji Nishitani discusses the freedom, or spontaneity, indicated in this sense of "nature" (*jinen*) through a semantic analysis of the word. Accordingly, the characters that compose *jinen* (also read as *shizen*, which is a more common pronunciation in modern Japanese corresponding to "nature") can be read as *onozukara shikari*, "being so of itself", "being what it is of itself". With Nishitani's example this means that something like water "realizes itself in a given place as water the being of which is of itself", that is, "no power from outside forced it to be what it is... it is what it is

⁴¹ Kitarō Nishida, *Last Writings: Nothingness and the Religious Worldview*, p. 107.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 111-112.

of its own accord”.⁴³ Nishitani further explains that here “of its own accord” (*hitorideni*) corresponds to the first character of the word *jinen*, i.e., *ji* (or *shi*), which also appears in the word *jiko*, “self”, and has both the meaning of “of itself” (*onozukara*) and “for itself” (*mizukara*), and in this sense:

Water presents itself as water ‘of itself.’ Water presents itself not forced by any power or will, but presents itself ‘spontaneously,’ but not spontaneously in the sense that it presents itself of its own ‘will’. It is ‘of itself’ and does not bear the character of ‘will.’ Neither does it bear the character of ‘subject of action’.⁴⁴

As well as reading Shinran’s phrase as an expression of our freedom as the self-determination of the historical world, Nishida also stresses the ordinary everyday quality of this freedom that is reflected in different aspects of Japanese culture and in different aesthetic ideals such as *yūgen* (beauty of depth and mystery), and *sabi* (beauty of loneliness and oldness (rust), i.e., the effect of time).⁴⁵

And, to further exemplify the “this-worldly” quality of the grasping of the space of the heart/mind in Eastern arts and its relation to ordinary, everyday experience Nishida quotes the expression “the supple heart/mind” (*jūnanshin*), which appears in several scriptures of Mahayana Buddhism, such as “Ornament of the Mahayana Sutras” (*Daijō-shōgen-kyōron*) and “The Treatise on the Ten Stages Sutra” (*jujūkyō*). “The supple heart/mind” refers to a flexible and humble attitude toward the world, an attempt to see and accept things and ideas “as they are” without

⁴³ Keiji Nishitani, “On Modernization and Tradition in Japan”, *Modernization and tradition in Japan*, ed. Yasushi Kuyama and Nobuo Kobayashi (Osaka: International Institute for Japan Studies, 1969), p. 89.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 89. For the meanings of the expression *jinenhōni* in Shinran and a philosophical discussion on it as “freedom”, see Richard K. Swingle, “Freedom as *Jinenhōni*: An Ontological Interpretation”, *Kenkyū Ronshū Kansai GaikokugoDaigaku*, 78, 2003, pp. 75-92.

⁴⁵ Kitarō Nishida, *Last Writings: Nothingness and the Religious Worldview*, p. 112.

distorting them by imposing our own intentions and concepts.⁴⁶ Nishida remarkably uses the expression “the supple heart/mind” to emphasize the empirical character of his conception of artistic intuition and to differentiate it from a mystical state of mind. According to him, on the ground of Eastern arts there is the idea of action with a realization of the identity of actuality and reality by becoming a supple heart/mind and this realization converges with the scientific spirit that seeks out the truth (*ACHF*, 336).

And, finally, Nishida illustrates the grasping of the space of the heart/mind by referring to his own description of the origin and model of the self-determination of the historical world. Accordingly, Eastern arts and religions deepen in the ritual standpoint in the opposite direction to the development of gods and artistic object from the leader of the ritual dance. In Nishida’s words, the hotbed of gods, that is, the historical space in which the subject and the environment determine each other becomes itself the god, and also the artistic form: “The God is absolute nothingness, it is absolute emptiness” (*ACHF*, 316). In other words, Nishida describes a conception of artistic creation in which the differentiation between the artist and the appreciator, the object of art and artistic creation/intuition, nature and art disappears, or more appropriately their contradictory identity is realized through participatory action. This seems to be the sense in which Nishida suggests that in the tea ceremony our self is assimilated into the absolute nothingness and in the line of Eastern

⁴⁶ For a short account of the meanings of the expression “the supple heart/mind” in Buddhist tradition, see, Kengo Terao, “The Significance of Karmanyata in Yogacara Buddhism”, *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, 58/ 1, 2009, pp. 272-275.

painting the action reveals the object as it is, and becomes the self-expression of the historical world.

5.2.2. Appreciative Difficulty of Japanese Gardens

In his article entitled “On the Aesthetic Appreciation of Japanese Gardens” Allen Carlson discusses on a specific aesthetic issue concerning Japanese gardens that present itself as a “paradox”.⁴⁷ According to Carlson, we do not have particular difficulty or confusion when we appreciate aesthetically pure art or pristine nature. Japanese gardens are neither pure art nor pristine nature, but rather typical examples of “things ‘between’ art and nature, paradigm cases of the meeting and mixing of the artificial and the natural”.⁴⁸ But, Carlson suggests that while the cases of intermixing of art and nature are generally difficult and confusing to appreciate aesthetically, Japanese gardens induce a state of calm and serene contemplation without any difficulty. In order to identify more clearly the difficulty of the cases of intermixing of art and nature Carlson refers to Donald Crawford’s article entitled “Nature and Art: Some Dialectical Relationship”, where Crawford distinguishes between harmonious and dialectical relationships between art and nature. In Crawford’s description in harmonious relationships either “nature provides the model for artistic composition”, as in the case of classical and neoclassical aesthetics, or art provides “the model for an aesthetics of nature, and from the aesthetic standpoint nature is following art”, as in the “aesthetic appreciation of scenery for its pictorial or

⁴⁷ Allen Carlson, “On the Aesthetic Appreciation of Japanese Gardens”, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 37/1, 1997, pp. 47-56.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

compositional values”.⁴⁹ According to Crawford, in contrast to the harmonious relationships between art and nature, in dialectical relationships art and nature “interact” and their interaction is “a determining factor in the constitution of the object of appreciation”, i.e., what we describe as aesthetic form.⁵⁰ Crawford gives as examples of dialectical relationship between art and nature, the contemporary environmental sculpture, such as the works of Dennis Oppenheim, Michael Heizer, and Christo Javacheff, and different kinds of ruins, which become an object of aesthetic appreciation as a product of the interaction between the forces of nature and human products. And, Crawford suggests that, as a product of a dialectic between nature and art, the object of aesthetic appreciation in these examples is “quite complex and goes well beyond the perceived physical object” and its experience “incorporates time past and time future into present awareness, but without either the natural or the artifactual losing their identities”.⁵¹

Carlson argues that behind the appreciative difficulty of the cases in which art and nature get into a dialectical relationship without losing their identities lays the differences in the nature of the natural and artificial and the fact that “because of their different natures, each of the natural and artificial lends itself to different kinds of appreciation”.⁵² And, as in such cases of dialectical relationship they retain their identities the constituted object of appreciation is difficult to appreciate aesthetically. For Carlson the difference between the aesthetic appreciation of nature and art is

⁴⁹ Donald Crawford, “Nature and Art: Some Dialectical Relationships”, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 42/ 1, 1983, p. 49.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁵² Allen Carlson, “On the Aesthetic Appreciation of Japanese Gardens”, p. 50.

essentially arises from the fact that, in the aesthetic appreciation appropriate for the artificial there is a “dimension of critical judgment”, for it is seen “as designed”, “as something which could have been otherwise”.⁵³ In contrast, the aesthetic appreciation of nature is beyond critical judgment, nature is what it is; it cannot be otherwise. Carlson suggests that there are several ways to solve the appreciative problem of the cases of dialectical relationship between art and nature. But, essentially, the problem is solved by following either “the lead of art or the lead of nature”.⁵⁴ According to Carlson, Japanese artists solve the problem of difficult appreciation of dialectical relationship between art and nature by following the lead of nature. But, they do not accomplish this by making the artificial inconspicuous. Japanese gardens do not look like nature; they are “highly artefactualized”. Carlson proposes that Japanese artists achieve “a look of natural inevitability”, i.e., a “look of something that could not have been otherwise” through a kind of “idealization aimed at isolating and revealing the essential”.⁵⁵ In other words, by creating “an ideal version of nature which emphasizes the essential” through highly artificial means, Japanese gardens attain the look of “it could not have been otherwise” just as in nature, and hence critical judgment does not arise in a disturbing manner.

Although Carlson’s evaluations of Japanese gardens is basically convincing, his suggestion that in Japanese gardens critical judgment does not arise is arguable. Our awareness that these gardens are artifacts will lead to a “critical” approval of the designer who achieves to create such an artifact that induces in us a “calm, serene

⁵³ Ibid., p. 51.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 51.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 52-54.

contemplative state, marked by feelings of well-being". Carlson acknowledges the idea that Japanese aesthetic appreciation "presupposes a unity of man and nature, of the artificial and the natural, and not the separation of the two that characterizes Western aesthetic appreciation", and therefore it is possible to consider what he calls the appreciative difficulty of Japanese gardens as a "quandary" generated "by attempting cross-cultural aesthetics".⁵⁶ Indeed, it will be noticed that Carlson's descriptions of Japanese artists' achievements entirely comply with Kant's definition of artistic creation and idealist aesthetics in general. When we examine the issue of Japanese gardens from Nishida's standpoint, the idea that in Japanese gardens there is "a kind of idealization aimed at isolating and revealing the essential of nature" can be seen as an example of an orientation toward grasping the space of objects. Moreover, it can be seen as a case in which the natural and the cultural are clearly separated from each other. On the other hand, when the dialectical relationship between the artificial and the natural in Japanese gardens is conceived as a dialectical relationship as it is defined by Nishida, i.e., as an identity of absolute contradictories, the resultant object lends itself to an appreciation in which the natural world is articulated in all its rich emotional and historical associations without distinguishing a purely natural content from the artificial and cultural. In Nishida's conception of artistic creation the look of inevitability, i.e., the look of something that could not have been otherwise is explained as a peculiar kind of freedom that is beyond conscious intent of the artist and achieved through discipline and conventional styles. When the artist acts in such a freedom, which is described by Nishida with an appeal

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 55, note 16.

to several expressions of Buddhist tradition, his or her action is realized as the self-determination of the historical world, and both this action and the object, which are contradictorily identical, reveal themselves “as they are”, that is, in Carlson’s words, the essence of nature reveals itself and we “look on Beauty bare”.⁵⁷ But, the beauty bare that we look on is not the beauty of nature as a material object completely separate from human subjectivity, but the beauty of the historical nature, including the qualities of the materials, effects of the time and the elements, the meanings attributed to them by culture, and their perpetual movement “from form to form”.

5.3. Grasping the Space of the Heart/Mind as a Model of the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature

Commentators classify different standpoints in contemporary aesthetics of nature with respect to their responses to the problem of aesthetic form into three main groups as formalist, conceptualist (or cognitivist), and non-conceptualist (or non-cognitivist).⁵⁸ This classification immediately brings to mind the pre-Kantian distinction between the two opposing approaches in dealing with the question of beauty, namely, intellectualism and sensualism, and three different schools of thought interpreting Kant’s conception of form in three different ways, namely, idealism (meaning/knowledge), sensualism (empathy/engagement), and formalism (pure visibility/detachment).⁵⁹ Moreover, different points of view concerning the aesthetic appreciation of nature from which these standpoints have developed bear significant parallels to different conceptions of the sense of space, or of the

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 53.

⁵⁸ See Allen Carlson and Arnold Berleant, ed., *The Aesthetics of Natural Environments* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004).

⁵⁹ See Ernest K. Mundt, “Three Aspects of German Aesthetic Theory”.

relationship between art and nature as they are defined in German aesthetic theory. In this section, I will first discuss different approaches to the aesthetic appreciation of nature in contemporary environmental aesthetics with respect to the problem of aesthetic form and evaluate them from Nishida's standpoint, in which, while the grasping of the space of objects and the grasping of the space of the heart/mind are distinguished from each other, a synthesis of formalism and empathy, knowledge and emotion, detachment and engagement is proposed. And finally, by means of some concrete examples from Japanese arts, I will argue that Nishida's conception of artistic creation, where the space in which the artificial and the natural reciprocally determine each other is grasped, provides a different model of aesthetic appreciation of nature.

In his essay entitled "Appreciation and Natural Environment" Allen Carlson presents one of the clearest statements of the problem of aesthetic form in contemporary research on the aesthetics of nature. According to Carlson, in case of art "we know 'what' to appreciate aesthetically", as, first, "we can distinguish a work and its parts from that which is not it nor a part of it", and, second, "we can distinguish its aesthetically relevant aspects from its aspects without such relevance".⁶⁰ Similarly, referring to Paul Ziff's conception, he maintains that we know "how" to appreciate a work of art as we know what "acts of aspection" to perform concerning different works, that is, whether to contemplate or to scan, from near or at a distance, to listen or to touch, to stay static or to move in and around the

⁶⁰ Allen Carlson, "Appreciation and the Natural Environment," in *The Aesthetics of Natural Environments*, ed. Allen Carlson and Arnold Berleant (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004), p. 63.

work, and so on.⁶¹ For Carlson, in the case of art we have such “knowledge of what and how to aesthetically appreciate” because artworks are our own creations. Stated differently, the aesthetic form of artworks is determined by the “full knowledge of their real nature” provided by art history and art criticism, that is, through cultural, societal, and historical categories.⁶² But, in the case of natural objects, phenomena and environments there emerges the problem of what determines their aesthetic form, i.e., what and how is to be aesthetically appreciated in them, as they are not the products of our own intentional actions. In contrast to artworks, nature has an indeterminate and varying character, its objects and phenomena are not separated from their environment, and we experience it not as a static spectator but through active involvement in it and with our different senses, as well as with our diverse conceptions.⁶³ This gives rise to different models of the aesthetic appreciation of nature that attempt to provide an answer to the problem of aesthetic form of nature. As well as indicating what and how is to be appreciated in nature aesthetically, without distorting its indeterminate and varying character and taking into consideration our multisensory experience and diverse understanding of it, these models are committed to give an account of the two fundamental questions of aesthetics, namely, what distinguishes an aesthetic response to nature from other responses to it, such as sensual pleasure, religious awe, or scientific understanding, and what makes such a response an “appropriate” response. When combined with the

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 63.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 64-65. See also Allen Carlson, “Nature, Aesthetic Judgment, and Objectivity”, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 40/1, 1981.

⁶³ Allen Carlson, “Appreciation and the Natural Environment,” pp. 64-73. See also Malcolm Budd, *The Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature*, pp. 1-23, 90-111.

separation between nature and human beings, however, this triple requirement turns the problem of aesthetic form of nature into a kind of dilemma for the models of aesthetic appreciation of nature.

To start with, what is described in the literature as the “object model” maintains that to be able to appreciate nature aesthetically, we should extract, actually or contemplatively, natural objects clearly from their surroundings, i.e., from the uninterrupted flux of actual nature, and focus on their formal properties, such as their shapes, texture, patterns, and colors, as well as on their possible expressive qualities, just as in our appreciation of a sculpture.⁶⁴ Similarly on the “landscape model”, nature is aesthetically appreciated as if it is a landscape painting, “seeing it as a two-dimensional scene and again focusing largely on formal properties”.⁶⁵ The main problem with the formalist models of aesthetic appreciation of nature is that, they distort not only the true character of nature by detaching the object from its natural environment or flattening it into a two-dimensional scenery, but also our proper experience of it by turning us merely a stationary and contemplative spectator. Moreover, even though it may seem harmless to appreciate aesthetically such formal properties of natural objects, they cannot fully capture “expressive properties” of nature, and hence its aesthetic value appropriately. With Carlson’s example, someone “who has only perceptual sensibility may be able to see the balance of a mountain landscape” may fail “to feel the determination and the tenacity expressed by the trees which grow on the mountain slopes” or “the majesty and power of the mountain

⁶⁴ See Allen Carlson, “Appreciation and the Natural Environment”, pp. 64-65; Malcolm Budd, *The Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature*, pp. 112-114, 130-131.

⁶⁵ Allen Carlson, “Nature: Contemporary Thought,” in *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, ed. Michael Kelly (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 346.

range itself”.⁶⁶ Carlson further argues that the formalist models fail to give an account of the “loss of aesthetic value” to the natural environment caused by various human intrusions. For example,

the relevant natural environment may have certain expressive qualities due to its apparent or actual remoteness, but the expression of these qualities may be inhibited by the presence of the power line, or the power line may itself have certain expressive qualities which, unlike its formal qualities, do not ‘fit’ with the expressive qualities of the natural environment.⁶⁷

On the other hand, Carlson’s own answer to the question of what and how is to be aesthetically appreciated in the natural environment displays a significant parallel between his views and the formalism of German aesthetic theory.

Accordingly, in a manner similar to Hildebrand and Riegl, Carlson maintains that:

We cannot appreciate everything; there must be limits and emphases in our aesthetic appreciation of nature as there are in our appreciation of art. Without such limits and emphases our experience of the natural environment would only be a ‘a meld of physical sensations’ without any meaning or significance. It would be what William James calls a ‘blooming, buzzing confusion,’ which truly substitutes ‘confusion for order’... Such experience would be too far removed from our aesthetic appreciation of art to merit the label ‘aesthetic’ or even the label ‘appreciation’.⁶⁸

And, again like Hildebrand and Riegl, Carlson suggests that our common sense/scientific categories of nature “give us the appropriate foci of aesthetic significance and the appropriate boundaries of the setting so that our experience becomes one of aesthetic appreciation”, rather than an indeterminate, confused, or meaningless meld of physical sensations.⁶⁹ As it considers nature as an aesthetic object as “natural” and as an “environment” rather than an object or landscape,

⁶⁶ Allen Carlson, “On the Possibility of Quantifying Scenic Beauty,” *Landscape Planning*, 4/2, 1977, p. 152.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁶⁸ Allen Carlson, “Appreciation and the Natural Environment”, pp. 70-71.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

Carlson calls such a model “natural environmental model”, which is also described as a scientific, conceptualist, or cognitivist approach to the aesthetic appreciation of nature.

Carlson’s conceptualist natural environmental model immediately faces the question of distinguishing an “aesthetic” appreciation from a merely cognitive and intellectual one. One of the reasons that Kant defines beauty as free from determinate concept is the difficulty, or impossibility, of explaining any “transition from concepts to the feeling of pleasure” (except in pure practical law) (*CPJ*, §6: 97 [211]). As Malcolm Budd remarks, although scientific knowledge can enhance our appreciation of nature, the natural environmental model has to provide an explication of what distinguishes “aesthetically relevant and irrelevant or essential and inessential knowledge of nature”.⁷⁰ In many paradigmatic cases of our aesthetic appreciation of nature, such as aesthetically appreciating a flower, a flying bird, the sunset, or a cascading waterfall, it is not necessary to have any particular scientific knowledge. Therefore, without an account of what determines aesthetically relevant knowledge, and how such knowledge induces an “aesthetic” experience rather than a merely “conceptual” one, natural environmental model seems to confront the charge of intellectualism, as well as failing to realize its ambition of determining “appropriateness”.

A number of approaches emphasize the non-conceptual, emotional aspect of appreciating nature aesthetically as either as a supplement or as a criticism to the natural environmental model. For example, in his “arousal model”, Noël Carroll

⁷⁰ Malcolm Budd, *The Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature*, p. 137.

argues that in several cases we appreciate nature aesthetically “by opening ourselves to its stimulus, and to being put in a certain emotional state by attending to its aspects”, that is, by “being moved or emotionally aroused by nature”.⁷¹ And, according to Carroll, although such common appreciative responses to nature are not, or at least not always, guided by scientific knowledge, they have a genuine claim to be appropriate, i.e., to be objectively correct.⁷² Carroll further points out that, even though our experiences of being emotionally moved by nature do not involve categories of knowledge, they have a “pretheoretical” but cognitive dimension, and he seeks out to provide an account of “how we isolate certain aspects of nature” in such experiences, and why these aspects of nature are appropriate aspects to focus on, i.e., have a claim for objectivity, in this cognitive dimension.⁷³ In a manner reminding the aesthetic theories of empathy, Carroll suggests that, because of our common human nature, perceptual abilities, and information processing shaped in “our long-term evolution as animals”, certain features of nature, such as the grandeur of a waterfall, openness of a vista, enclosure and softness of an arbor, etc., draw our attention instinctively toward them and induce in us emotional responses. In this sense, without denying the fact that our emotional responses to nature may be shaped by culture, Carroll maintains that some relevant dimensions of our emotional experiences of nature have the quality of being “culture-free”.⁷⁴ And for him, this

⁷¹ Noël Carroll, “On Being Moved by Nature: Between Religion and Natural History”, in *Landscape, Natural Beauty and the Arts*, ed. Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 245.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 245.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 252-253.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

does not amount to “impose emotional gestalt upon indeterminate nature” in order to be able to appreciate it aesthetically; rather it is a “selective attention” to nature that makes our experience “emotionally appropriate”, but free from not only common sense/scientific knowledge but also cultural categories.⁷⁵

The basic problem with the arousal model is that it does not provide an explanation of what makes such an emotional response to nature an “aesthetic” response. On one side, if it is totally free from cultural and common sense/scientific categories, then there requires a way to demarcate it from other sensual responses. On the other side, it is not clear that how our selective emotional gestalt or cognitive dimension of our emotions is distinguished from our common sense knowledge. Remarking that the difference between the arousal model and the natural environmental model is only a difference in degree, Carlson suggests that both models “track the same kind of appreciation of nature, although the arousal model focuses on the more common sense, less cognitively rich end of the continuum”.⁷⁶

While the arousal model seeks out to give an account of the emotional aspect of our aesthetic experience of nature without giving up “cognitive” and “objective” quality of such experiences, in his “engagement model” Arnold Berleant rejects both of them as distorting the real nature of our experience of nature, which involves “total engagement, a sensory immersion in the natural world” that reaches an “experience of unity of nature and human”.⁷⁷ In a manner similar to Hildebrand’s

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 251-252.

⁷⁶ Allen Carlson, “Nature: Contemporary Thought”, p. 347.

⁷⁷ Arnold Berleant, “The Aesthetics of Art and Nature”, in *Landscape, Natural Beauty and the Arts*, ed. Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 236-237.

distinction between a view “from a distance” through which we see individual objects at one glance and a kinesthetic view through which we experience space and objects as inseparable parts of a unitary continuum, Berleant distinguishes between the distancing and disinterested view of cognition and the “lived” experience of the indeterminate continuity of nature by being and acting in it. According to Berleant, what lay behind not only the problem of aesthetic form but also the distinction between nature and culture, the natural and cultural sciences, and the aesthetic appreciation of nature and art is the distortion of the lived experience of nature in favor of cognition and objectification of it. He suggest that, the distinction between natural and cultural sciences gives a false representation of the fact that art, “as one of the domains of culture, does no better than emulate the scientific model by adopting its conventions of objectification, distancing, and disinterested (i.e., contemplative) regard”.⁷⁸ In Berleant’s account, in both creation and appreciation of beauty, “the convenient Cartesianism of western tradition” detaches the object and contemplates it disinterestedly from a distance to save us from the boundless expanse of nature that surrounds and overwhelms us.⁷⁹ He argues that the distinction between nature and culture which is grounded on the premise of objectification is not only inadequate to explain arts but also “misrepresents nature”:

We are beginning to realize that natural world is no independent sphere but in itself a cultural artifact. Not only is nature affected pervasively by human action; our very conception of nature has emerged historically, differing widely from one cultural tradition to another. What we mean by nature, our beliefs about wilderness, the recognition of landscape, our very sense of environment have all made an historical appearance and have been understood differently at different times and places. No wonder that an

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 233.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 235.

aesthetics that aspires like sciences to universality has difficulty accommodating nature.⁸⁰

Berleant finds a clue for identifying an aesthetic appreciation in which we unite internally with the seamless continuity of nature (and culture), and which will apply to both art and nature in Kant's idea of the sublime. In Berleant's reading, in contrast to the "disengagement" in the experience of the beautiful, in the sublime "the capacity of the natural world exceeds our powers of framing and control", and does not permit disinterested contemplation and objectification, and hence encourages "an experience of continuity, assimilation and engagement".⁸¹ By suggesting that in such an experience of engagement induced by the boundlessness of natural world that surround us we may grasp "the true proportion of the nature-human relation", Berleant presents a critique of cognitivism. He argues that the reason that the material world is beyond the capacities of the human mind is neither only "the limits of our present knowledge", nor only "the essentially anthropomorphic character of that knowledge so that we can never go beyond the character and boundaries of our cognitive process", but rather that our cognitive relation with the objects and phenomena of nature "is not the exclusive relation or even highest one we can achieve".⁸² For Berleant, the proper response to the "ultimately ungraspable breath of nature" is the feeling that we are not separate from nature, a sense of "awe mixed with humility" from the "mystery" that is "part of the essential poetry of the natural world".⁸³

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 234.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 234-235.

⁸² Ibid., p. 236.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 236.

Berleant's "engagement model" of aesthetic appreciation of both nature and art faces a central difficulty exactly at the point where he rejects the cognitive and objectifying relationship with nature. First of all, there is the question of how an experience of unity that is completely separated from cognition, or what Nishida describes as the "objective" pole, saves itself from turning into a total confusion. Berleant's model converges very much towards Nishida's earlier conception of aesthetic intuition that is beyond the subject-object separation and in which the unity of culture and nature experienced internally. Consequently, just like Nishida's earlier conception Berleant's "engagement model" of aesthetic appreciation confronts the charge of subjectivism and cultural idealism in its attempt to discard the subject-object separation. Similarly, by integrating aesthetic experience into the real nature of the lived experience in which there is no distinction between human and nature, it fails to give an account of what makes this experience particularly "aesthetic", and hence demarcate it from other kinds of experiences.

In contrast to Berleant, who considers the boundlessness of nature which cannot be framed by anthropocentric cognitive experience as the real character of the experience of nature in which human unites with nature, Stan Godlovitch sees in this very boundlessness the mark of an unbridgeable dualism between human and nature. In his "mystery model" of nature appreciation, Godlovitch carries Kant's conception of beauty as disinterested and free from determinate concept to its logical extreme and revitalizes Kant's cosmological idea of "nature as a whole" which is entirely beyond our cognitive experience as a thing-in-itself. Any experience of nature inevitably sees it from a particular, human-centered perspective, and hence gives an interventionist, fragmented view of nature. Godlovitch remarks that, although natural

environmental model that is based on scientific knowledge seeks to attain a relative objectivity and impersonality by distancing our appreciation from immediate, sensual response, and in this way provides a more “holistic stance” than formalist approaches, it nevertheless “imposes a different kind of frame”:

Science de-mystifies nature by categorizing, quantifying, and patterning it. Under those frameworks, science makes intelligible the nature it divides, conquers, and creates in theory. So the object is still ours in a way; a complex artifact hewn out of the cryptic morass.⁸⁴

According to Godlovitch a “frame-free”, “acentric” *perspective* through which we can “move behind the manifold of perception” and “confront nature as a whole” is possible only by respecting “the ineluctable” in nature, by admitting that nature is “categorically other than us, a nature of which we never were a part”.⁸⁵ Consequently, the only way we achieve an acentric aesthetic attitude is through “a sense of mystery” about nature, of appreciative incomprehension, of being outside, of not belonging, i.e., through an aesthetic aloofness: “Nature is aloof, and in this aloofness we come, not so much to understand or revere, as to attempt to mirror or match, and thus grasp without capture”.⁸⁶

The central difficulty which mystery model immediately faces is that, if nature as a whole is inevitably beyond not only our arbitrary sensorial experiences and affections but also our any kind of scientific or cultural categories, then it is not clear how we can appreciate something that is essentially alien to us, and wholly transcends our partial existence. By means of such an absolute dualism between

⁸⁴ Stan Godlovitch, “Icebreakers: Environmentalism and Natural Aesthetics”, in *The Aesthetics of Natural Environments*, ed. Allen Carlson and Arnold Berleant (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004), p. 117.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

nature and human, in Godlovitch's mystery model the problem of aesthetic form arrives at its ultimate point and leaves the boundaries of "aesthetics" altogether. This is exactly the point where Hegel downgrades the beauty of nature which remains defectively mute without human mediation. In the face of the double demand of "objectivity" and "objectification", the attempts to give an account of the aesthetic appreciation of nature without distorting its indeterminateness or freedom arrive at an impasse. Conceding the fact that "the more removed, the more separate, something is from humankind and its artifactualization, the more problematic is its aesthetic appreciation", Allen Carlson asserts that "some degree of artifactualization is necessary for aesthetic appreciation" and such an artifactualization is provided by "human conceptualization and understanding of nature itself".⁸⁷ But, then, as natural environmental model fails to provide the criteria that will determine "appropriate" categories in appreciating nature aesthetically, a whole set of cultural categories and meanings we attribute to nature through myths, religion, folklore, historical events, and art would claim a right to determine the foci of aesthetic appreciation of nature, i.e., to "mediate nature" to be able to appreciate it aesthetically. This means that, as Thomas Heyd puts it, "aesthetic appreciation of nature is and should be guided by a great variety of stories from a diversity of walks of life and cultures because these enrich our capacity to aesthetically appreciate nature".⁸⁸ But, such a complete mediation seems to amount to leave the ambitions of both "objectivity" and accommodating nature's indeterminate character.

⁸⁷ Allen Carlson, "Nature: Contemporary Thought", p. 348.

⁸⁸ Thomas Heyd, "Aesthetic Appreciation and the Many Stories about Nature", in *The Aesthetics of Natural Environments*, ed. Allen Carlson and Arnold Berleant (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004), p. 279.

Malcolm Budd describes the search for a model that will determine what is to be appreciated and how is to be appreciated when we appreciate nature aesthetically as “a chimerical quest”, because according to him “there is no counterpart problem about what and how to appreciate in nature”.⁸⁹ Like Carlson, Budd distinguishes the aesthetic appreciation of nature from the aesthetic appreciation of art by suggesting that whereas artworks are products of our own intentionality, a work of human artifice, nature is not an artefact. And while in the case of artworks the fact that they are the products of human intentionality imposes certain constraints on what and how is to be appreciated aesthetically, in the case of nature there are no such constraints. Budd defines an “aesthetic response” through a reformulation, with several amendments, of Kant’s idea of disinterestedness. Accordingly,

A response is aesthetic in so far as the response is directed at the experienced properties of an item, the nature and arrangement of its elements or the interrelationships among its parts or aspects, and it involves a positive or negative reaction to the item not as satisfying a desire for the existence or non-existence of some state of affairs in which the item figure, but considered ‘in itself’ (in abstraction from any personal relation that might obtain between subject and object), so what governs the response is whether the object is intrinsically rewarding or displeasing to experience in itself.⁹⁰

In the case of art some qualities of an artwork and our certain ways of experiencing it may be disqualified as inappropriate, i.e., not a part of the aesthetic form, for example, the effect of time on a classical Greek sculpture, or a Renaissance painting, or representational allusions of a suprematist work, or a drop of sweat on the brow of the player on the stage because of the spotlights, etc., even though these qualities may give us some aesthetic satisfaction. In contrast, in the case of nature

⁸⁹ Malcolm Budd, *The Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature*, p. 147.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

there is no way of disqualifying an aesthetic response to its certain qualities as inappropriate. A natural item or event may seem to have no aesthetic value at a certain time, with a certain mode of experiencing it, but may seem to have some at some other times and with the same, or other, modes of experiencing it. Consequently, Budd suggests that the answer to the question of what and how is to be appreciated in nature is “whatever is available in nature for aesthetic appreciation” “in whatever manner or manners it is possible to appreciate it aesthetically”.⁹¹ And, in the manner of Kant and Adorno, Budd defines this “multifaceted indefiniteness” as “the freedom that is integral to the aesthetic appreciation of nature... a freedom which is one aspects of nature’s distinctive aesthetic appeal”.⁹²

However, as Budd disentangles the rather ambiguous relationship between art and nature in Kant and clearly distinguishes the aesthetic appreciation of nature from that of art by means of human intentionality, in his approach the problem of aesthetic form emerges as the problem of whether we can always draw such clear boundaries between art and nature, i.e., what Allen Carlson describes as “the appreciative difficulty” of cases of the dialectical interaction between art and nature. And, as Donald Crawford’s and Arnold Berleant’s discussions show, such cases of the dialectical interaction between art and nature pervade ubiquitously both in art and in nature, rather than being rare and aberrant.

From Nishida’s standpoint, the problem of aesthetic form with respect to nature, i.e., what and how is to be aesthetically appreciated in nature in contemporary research on the aesthetics of nature may be seen as the problem of grasping the

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 147.

⁹² Ibid., p. 148.

“space of objects”. Although different models essentially agree on the “freedom”, or the “infinite depth”, of the space of objects, they diverge on the issue of whether it is possible to “grasp” such a space aesthetically in an appropriate manner. Moreover, the distinction between the natural world and human beings, on the one hand, and between common sense/scientific, or cultural, categories and emotions on the other, as well as the question of what constitutes an “aesthetic” response emerge as the main aspects of the problem. Nishida’s later conception of artistic creation provides an account of the freedom of the natural world on an account of the creativity of the reciprocal determination of the subject and the environment. According to Nishida, the infinite depth of the space of objects is at the same time the infinite depth of the space of the heart/mind, and the problem of aesthetic form remains unresolved with a one-sided attempt to grasp the space of objects only. In his words, the true salvation must be sought out in an attempt to grasp the space of the heart/mind (*ACHF*, 315). In contrast to the standpoint in which the subject is assimilated into the environment, i.e., the object of aesthetic appreciation is reduced to an impersonal, detached materiality, Nishida, like Berleant, defines an “aesthetic” response as the experience of the unity of the natural world and ourselves by being and acting in it. But, the space of the heart/mind is not the subjective space in opposition to the objective space; it is the historical space in which we exist. Stated differently, rather than assimilating cognition, or objective content entirely into an inner experience of unity, as in his earlier conception and in Berleant’s engagement model, in his later conception Nishida describes what it is to experience something aesthetically as the grasping of the reciprocal determination between the subjective and objective directions. And, in this sense he conceives of aesthetic qualities as the product of the

dialectical relationship between the subject and the environment, the artificial and the natural, i.e., as the expressions of the perpetual and creative self-determination of the historical world. From such a standpoint, there seems to be no way of separating what comes from the particular material aspects of nature, from the potentialities we were born with, from their mutual determination in our long-term evolution as animals, or from our cultural upbringing. Consequently, Nishida does not make a distinction between emotions and common sense/scientific, or cultural, categories, and hence is capable of answering one of the basic difficulties of the problem of aesthetic form. And, finally, from Nishida's standpoint, what determines the "appropriate" foci of aesthetic significance is neither solely the common sense/scientific knowledge, nor solely the cultural, societal categories, nor solely emotions, nor solely the natural world, including our own natural capabilities, but rather their mutual formation. As Nishida puts it, "beauty is the justness of style", which is "the projection of the paradigm of our actions to the historical surface" (*ACHF*, 310). In other words, the self determination of the historical world itself guides our framing of the environment so that we avoid imposing our own conscious, self-centered intends, and aesthetically appreciate nature "as it is" in an attitude of synthesis, or contradictory identity, of disinterestedness and engagement. Furthermore, in the grasping of the space of the heart/mind, the self-determination of the historical world itself becomes the "foci" of aesthetic appreciation.

To give a concrete example from the Japanese arts, in the tea ceremony there is the participatory action instead of a distinction between the artist, the appreciator, and the artwork. First of all, rather than contemplating an object detached from its surroundings and from him or herself, the participant appreciates with his or her

several different senses the space in which he or she is, the garden, the tea house, the scroll or the flower arrangement in the alcove, the tea bowl, the tea, the conversation, the sounds, lights, tastes, and so on, without distinguishing purely material qualities from the contributions of culture and the subject. Secondly, the tea ceremony is a form of art in which the participant performs actions that are not different from the actions of ordinary everyday life, such as boiling water, drinking tea, and having a conversation. However, in his or her appreciative and creative actions the participator does not have an intentional, or self-centered, freedom. On the contrary, these actions follow highly stylized, strictly fixed forms of behavior or rules. Moreover, several techniques such as the size, shape, and placement of the stepping stones on the garden path leading to the tea house are specially designed to orient and shape the participant's actions and perceptual field. However, such constraints encourage rather than conflict with an experience from the first-person standpoint, and "effortless", "spontaneous", and "natural" actions. The tea ceremony is an art form in which the conscious intends and desires are assimilated into the "space" of the ceremony and the participant becomes aware of the reality of his or her own actual actions in a particular, "once in a lifetime" (*ichigo ichie*) event.⁹³

⁹³ For a short discussion on the art of tea in relation to aesthetic appreciation, see Yuriko Saito, "Japanese Aesthetics: Historical Overview," in *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, ed. Michael Kelly (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 546.

CHAPTER - 6

CONCLUSION

In the preface to the 1937 edition of *An Inquiry into the Good* (*Zen no Kenkyū*) (1911), which Nishida defines as the first book that germinates the world gathering his thought together, and where he introduced the concept of “pure experience” as a direct experience “in which there is as yet neither subject nor object, and knowledge and its object are completely united”, he provides a general outline of the development of his philosophical thought. Accordingly, the standpoint of “pure experience” articulated in *An Inquiry into the Good* develops, through the mediation of Fichte’s act, into the standpoint of the “absolute will”, and later, through the mediation of Greek philosophy, into the notion of “place”, concretizes further as the “dialectical universal”, which in turn is given immediacy as the standpoint of the “action-intuition”, and finally becomes “the world of historical reality”: “The world of action-intuition, the world of *poiesis* itself is none other than the world of pure experience”.¹ In his final essay written just a few days before his death, Nishida further states that by means of his logic he endeavored to consider various questions fundamental to different fields of human thought, and expresses his conviction that he “succeeded in framing questions that have never been properly framed from the

¹ Kitarō Nishida, *Zen no Kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1977), pp. 3-4.

standpoint of previous logics”.² And, at another place, Nishida describes his own philosophical task and contribution to contemporary philosophy as to link our ordinary, everyday experience, which is an immediate experience prior to subject-object distinction, and the world that is conceived of in logical form, and to conceive them as completely one: “If what is articulated in logical form is separated from everyday experience it will be of no use”.³ In “philosophizing from the basis of our everyday experience” and in considering various philosophical problems through his logic, Nishida constructs his arguments by means of references to different philosophical ideas, and confrontation between different standpoints, as well as constant reformulations of his own thought. Moreover, in confronting divergent standpoints, he attempts to provide a synthesis in which these standpoints are considered as different directions of a unity, rather than merely refuting or sublating them.

Nishida’s two major studies on art and aesthetics perfectly reflect the essential characteristics of his philosophical work as a whole. In *Art and Morality* of his middle period, Nishida attempts to consider the problem of aesthetic form as the problem of clarification of the “objective quality of the aesthetic object”, and seeks out to give an answer through an analysis of the creative action of the artist and the objective content as the two inseparable aspects of aesthetic experience. Furthermore, he attempts to provide a synthesis of the standpoints of pure visibility and empathy. However, although he emphasizes the idea that subject and object,

² Kitarō Nishida, “Concerning my Logic”, *Last Writings: Nothingness and the Religious Worldview*, trans. David A. Dilworth (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1987), p. 125.

³ Kitarō Nishida, “The Historical Body”, pp. 37-38.

culture and nature, our rationality and the physical world constitute an inseparable unity, and should not be considered abstractly as distinct, his formulation of the ground of this unity with recourse to the free will, to Fichte's concept of act, and to Bergson's conception of consciousness ends up with subjectivism and idealism. The divergence between Nishida's original idea of the unity of act and object and a subjectivist and idealist standpoint becomes particularly clear in the incongruity between his conception of artistic creation and that of Fiedler, to which he refers as the basic source clarifying the objective meaning of creative action.

In *Artistic Creation as an Act of Historical Formation*, Nishida attempts to further clarify the "objective quality of the aesthetic object" by removing the subjectivist and idealist aspects of his middle period by means of his logic of the contradictory identity of action and intuition in the historical world. As well as giving an account of the "objective quality of the aesthetic object" through a reformulation of his conception of artistic creation as an act of historical formation, Nishida's later articulation of the reciprocal determination of the subject and the environment, culture and nature has important bearings on the aesthetic appreciation of both art and nature. Firstly, Nishida's later conception of artistic creation enables him to elaborate a more empiricist conception of art and beauty that takes account of the cultural context and the conventionality of the artistic form. Secondly, according to this conception, the aesthetic form as the object of artistic creation, and hence what is relevant to its appreciation are determined not only in relation to the historical, cultural, societal context, but also to the natural environment of its creation. And finally, he conceives of aesthetic qualities of both art and nature as the product of the dialectical relationship between the subject and the environment, the

artificial and the natural, i.e., as the expressions of the perpetual and creative self-determination of the historical world. Moreover, as Nishida does not make a distinction between emotions and cultural categories, and provides a synthesis of disinterestedness and engagement, his standpoint may be thought to be capable of answering some of the basic difficulties in the problem of aesthetic form with respect to the natural world.

Consequently, an analysis of Nishida's works on art and aesthetics not only reveals the unity and development of his philosophy, but also concretizes the meaning of the "turn" in his thought. Moreover, it also displays how Nishida succeeds in actualizing his ambition to contribute contemporary philosophy by means of the standpoint of his logic, which is intended to be compatible with the standpoint of science.

However, Nishida's description of his own philosophy, in several other works of his later period as well as in *Artistic Creation as an Act of Historical Formation*, as a contribution to the world philosophy which takes its source from the Eastern traditions of thought, his frequent opposition of the Eastern standpoint with the Western standpoint with an explicit conviction that the former is more inclusive, and his discussions on the peculiar character of Japanese culture, lead several commentators to associate his later works with the nationalism of the late 1930s and early 1940s. Particularly, his views on art and nature are considered among the examples of the discursive practices that construct the notion of "Japanese uniqueness" through the language and concepts of Western philosophy. Accordingly, the ideas of the traditional Japanese love of nature, and the intimate, harmonious relationship between Japanese art and nature are said to be grounded on and shaped

by the concept of nature that have been imported from the West.⁴ Similarly, aesthetics as the systematic study of art and beauty have also been imported from the West along with the other fields of academic thinking during the “period of enlightenment” (*bunmei kaika*). Michael F. Marra, who is the editor of the first comprehensive collections of essays on modern Japanese aesthetics, suggests that whenever we speak of “Japanese taste,” or of a “Japanese sense of beauty” and “apply the notion of aesthetics to premodern Japan, we are actually referring to a fairly modern construct called ‘aesthetics’ whose wide popularity in Japan is directly related to its ability to produce images of what we call ‘Japan’”.⁵ Marra further argues that Japanese philosophers are confronted with “the paradox of voicing what they felt to be at the core of their subjectivity- the specificity of a local culture, a local art- by relying on a supremely alien language: the Western language of aesthetics”.⁶

Indeed, there are several significant parallels between Nishida’s views on art and beauty and Kantian aesthetics. Kant’s conception of aesthetic experience, where “the transcendental ground of nature and freedom” becomes sensuously available,

⁴ See Kinya Nishi, “Poieshisuteki Tenkai: Kyōtogakuhani yoru ‘Geijutsu’ to ‘Shizen’ no Gensetsu Hensei,” in *Geijutsu/Kattō no Genba: Kindai Nihon Geijutsu Shisno Kontekusuto*, ed. Ken-ichi Iwaki, (Tokyo: Koyo Shobo, 2002), pp. 241-256. For discussions on Nishida’s relation to nationalism in the late 1930s and early 1940s, see James Heisig, John C. Maraldo (eds), *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, and the Question of Nationalism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1995). For the ideological meanings of the concept of nature in modern Japan, see also Julia Adeney Thomas, *Reconfiguring Modernity: Concept of Nature in Japanese Political Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), and Stefan Tanaka, “Nature- the Naturalization of Experience as National”, *Japanese Hermeneutics: Current Debates on Aesthetics and Interpretation*, ed., Michele Marra, (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002), pp. 127- 141.

⁵ Michele Marra, “Introduction,” in *Modern Japanese Aesthetics: A Reader*, ed. Michele Marra (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), p. 1.

⁶ Michael F. Marra, “Introduction”, in *A History of Modern Japanese Aesthetics*, ed. Michael F. Marra (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001), p. 2.

which is further developed by the German Idealism, his definition of beauty as the “technique of nature”, his idea that nature gives rule to art through genius, and his consideration of art as natural, and nature as artistic almost entirely comply with the general framework in which Nishida discusses the essence of beauty and artistic creation. Yet, when they are analyzed more closely, it appears that Nishida’s views have crucial differences with not only those of Kant, but also with those of the thinkers of German aesthetic theory such as Fiedler, Riegl, and Worringer to whom Nishida appeals to ground his account of the artistic form. These differences concentrate mainly around Nishida’s idea of the reciprocal determination between culture and nature, subject and environment. Accordingly, in Nishida’s approach the problem of aesthetic form and the question of the distinction between the beauty of art and the beauty of nature are proved to be directly connected to the more fundamental problem of subjectivity. Through an analysis of human experience as the contradictory identity of action and objective content, Nishida reconsiders the connection between human self-consciousness and intentional action in one side, and nature and other human beings in the other in a seminal manner.

Nishida’s followers such as Juzō Ueda (1886-1973), Shinichi Hisamatsu (1889-1980), Keiji Nishitani (1900-1990), and Ryōsuke Ōhashi (b.1944-), who are generally referred as the members of the “Kyoto School,” further develop Nishida’s views on art and aesthetics, as well as providing detailed analyses of the characteristics of the Japanese arts on the basis of the framework supplied by Nishida. In *The Structure of the Cut: The Japanese Sense of Beauty and the Contemporary World* (*Kire no Kōzō: Nihonbi to Gendai Sekai*) Ōhashi maintains that:

In European aesthetics the beauty of nature and the beauty of art conflict in every point. Sometimes the beauty of nature has ascendancy, as in Kant's aesthetics, sometimes the beauty of art becomes the object of aesthetic investigation, as in Hegel's aesthetics. We can say that the ultimate reason of the conflict between both sides... can be found in the placement of artistic technique and natural existence in the oppositional schema of subject and object from the beginning. If this is the case, it is possible to assert that the traditional opposition between the beauty of nature and the beauty of art shares the same root as the problem of modernity, i.e., the opposition between the natural world and technology.⁷

Drawing upon Nishida's distinction between the space of objects and the space of the heart/mind, and his conception of the freedom in artistic creation as *jinen*, Ōhashi analyzes the Japanese arts as the place of the intermixing of the natural and artistic beauty. Moreover, he suggests that such a conception of artistic creation in which nature, which is generally taken in material terms as a mere object, is considered as the "inner moment" (*naiteki keiki*) of human existence may provide a new approach to the contemporary aesthetics of nature, and referring to another philosopher affiliated with the Kyoto School, Tetsurō Watsuji, he describes such an approach to the aesthetics of nature as the "aesthetics of *fūdo*".⁸ The Japanese word *fūdo*, which is composed of the characters "wind" and "earth" and literally means climate, both natural and cultural, refers to the reciprocal determination between nature and humans. The direct connection between Nishida's conception of artistic creation and Ōhashi's account of the intermixing of the natural and artistic beauty in the Japanese arts and his "aesthetics of *fūdo*" display an uninterrupted continuity in the aesthetics of the Kyoto School from Nishida to Ōhashi. Although the role of this peculiar understanding of nature in the aesthetics of the Kyoto School has been

⁷ Ryōsuke Ōhashi, *Kire no Kōzō: Nihonbi to Gendai Sekai* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1986), p. 288.

⁸ Ryōsuke Ōhashi, *Bi no Yukue* (Kyoto: Toeisha, 2007), pp. 265-288.

discussed to some extent from the political point of view, it is an issue that is still not sufficiently explored in philosophical aesthetics.

In the contemporary world where the distinctions between nature and humans gradually become dim both in the sciences and in the arts, Nishida's views on the relationality between individual and society, and between society and environment, and the corresponding conception of freedom offer important contribution in the direction of the contemporary research on aesthetic appreciation of both art and nature and provides an open "space" in which we can rethink our relationship with the rest of the beings.

REFERENCES

- Adorno, Theodor W. 1997. *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Allison, Henry E. 2001. *Kant's Theory of Taste: a Reading of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Arisaka, Yoko. 1996. *Space and History: Philosophy and Imperialism in Nishida and Watsuji*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis presented at the University of California, Riverside.
- Aristotle. 1987. *Poetics with Tractatus Coislinianus, Reconstruction of Poetics II and the Fragments of the On Poets*, trans. Richard Janko, Cambridge: Hackett.
- Barasch, Moshe. 2000. *Theories of Art: From Impressionism to Kandinsky*, New York and London: Routledge.
- Basch, Victor. 1921. "Le maître-problème de l'esthétique," *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'étranger*, 7/8, 1-26.
- Basch, Victor. 1927. *Essai Critique sur l'Esthétique de Kant*, Paris: Vrin.
- Bergson, Henri. 2009. *Time and Free Will: an Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. F. L. Pogson, New York: Cosimo Inc.
- Berleant, Arnold. 1993. "The Aesthetics of Art and Nature," *Landscape, Natural Beauty and the Arts*, ed. Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 228-243.
- Bowie, Andrew. 2003. *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Budd, Malcolm. 2001. "The Pure Judgement of Taste as an Aesthetic Reflective Judgement," *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 41/3, 247-60.
- Budd, Malcolm. 2002. *The Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Carlson, Allen. 1977. "On the Possibility of Quantifying Scenic Beauty," *Landscape Planning*, 4/2, 131-172.
- Carlson, Allen. 1981. "Nature, Aesthetic Judgment, and Objectivity," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 40/1, 1981, 64-65.
- Carlson, Allen. 1997. "On the Aesthetic Appreciation of Japanese Gardens," *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 37/1, 47-55.
- Carlson, Allen. 1998. "Nature: Contemporary Thought," *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, ed. Michael Kelly, New York: Oxford University Press, 346-349.
- Carlson, Allen. 2000. *Aesthetics and Environment: The Appreciation of Nature, Art and Architecture*, New York: Routledge.
- Carlson, Allen. 2004. "Appreciation and the Natural Environment," *The Aesthetics of Natural Environments*, ed. Allen Carlson and Arnold Berleant, Ontario: Broadview Press, 63-75.
- Carlson, Allen, Arnold Berleant, ed. 2004. *The Aesthetics of Natural Environments*, Toronto: Broadview Press.
- Carroll, Noël. 1993. "On Being Moved by Nature: Between Religion and Natural History," *Landscape, Natural Beauty and the Arts*, ed. Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 244-266.
- Collingwood, R. G. 1960. *The Idea of Nature*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Crawford, Donald. 1983. "Nature and Art: Some Dialectical Relationships," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 42/1, 49-58.
- Deleuze, Gilles. 1984. *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Dvorák, Max. 1989. "The New Relationship to Nature," *Modern Perspectives in Western Art History: An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Writings on the Visual Arts*, ed. W. Eugene Kleinbauer, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 397-412.
- Feenberg, Andrew. 1994. "The Problem of Modernity in the Philosophy of Nishida," *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, and the Question of Nationalism*, ed. James Heisig and John Maraldo, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 151-173.
- Feenberg, Andrew. 1999. "Experience and Culture: Nishida's Path 'To the Things Themselves'," *Philosophy East and West*, 49/1, 28-44.

- Fichte, Johann Gottlieb. 1992. *Foundations of Transcendental Philosophy (Wissenschaftslehre) Nova Methodo (1796/99)*, ed. and trans. Daniel Breazeale, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Fiedler, Konrad. 1913. "Über den Ursprung der Künstlerischen Tätigkeit," *Konrad Fiedlers Schriften über Kunst*, ed. Hermann Konnerth, Munich: R. Piper and Co., 183-367.
- Fiedler, Konrad. 1987. "On Judging Works of Visual Art," *Nineteenth Century Theories of Art*, ed. Joshua C. Taylor, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 514-529.
- Fiedler, Konrad. 1998. "Modern Naturalism and Artistic Truth," *Art in Theory, 1815-1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood with Jason Gaiger, Oxford, UK, Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 698-702.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 2004. *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer, Donald G. Marshall, London, New York: Continuum.
- Ginsborg, Hannah. 2006. "Thinking the Particular as Contained under the Universal," *Aesthetics and Cognition in Kant's Critical Philosophy*, ed. Rebecca Kukla, New York: Cambridge University Press, 35-60.
- Godlovitch, Stan. 2004. "Icebreakers: Environmentalism and Natural Aesthetics," *The Aesthetics of Natural Environments*, ed. Allen Carlson and Arnold Berleant, Ontario: Broadview Press, 108-126.
- Guyer, Paul. 2006. "The Harmony of the Faculties Revisited," *Aesthetics and Cognition in Kant's Critical Philosophy*, ed. Rebecca Kukla, New York: Cambridge University Press, 162-193.
- Harrison, Jane Ellen. 1912. *Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Harrison, Jane Ellen. 1913. *Ancient Art and Ritual*, London: Williams and Norgate.
- Hegel, G. W. F. 1959. *The Logic of Hegel*, trans. William Wallace, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hegel, G. W. F. 1975. *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Heidegger, Martin. 1990. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. R. Taft, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

- Heidegger, Martin. 1993. "The Origin of the Work of Art," *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell, San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 143-212.
- Heisig, James, John C. Maraldo. ed. 1995. *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, and the Question of Nationalism*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press
- Henrich, Dieter. 1992. "Kant's Explanation of Aesthetic Judgment," *Aesthetic Judgment and the Moral Image of the World*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 29-56.
- Heyd, Thomas. 2004. "Aesthetic Appreciation and the Many Stories about Nature," *The Aesthetics of Natural Environments*, ed. Allen Carlson and Arnold Berleant, Ontario: Broadview Press, 269-282.
- Hildebrand, Adolf. 1907. *The Problem of Form in Painting and Sculpture*, trans. M. Meyer and R. M. Ogden, New York: G. E. Stechert & Co.
- Huh, Woo-Sung. 1990. "The Philosophy of History in the 'later' Nishida: A Philosophical Turn," *Philosophy East and West*, 40/3, 343-374.
- Huizinga, Johan. 1980. *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*, London, Boston and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Hume, David. 1925. "Of the Standard of Taste," *The Philosophical Works of David Hume, III*, ed. T. H. Green and T. H. Grose, London: Longman, 266-284.
- Iwaki, Ken'ichi. 2001. "Nishida Kitarō and Art," *A History of Modern Japanese Aesthetics*, ed. Michael F. Marra, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 259-284.
- Iwaki, Ken'ichi. 2001. "The Logic of Visual Perception: Ueda Jūzo," *A History of Modern Japanese Aesthetics*, ed. Michael F. Marra, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 285-317.
- Izutsu, Toshihiko and Toyo. 1981. *The Theory of Beauty in the Classical Aesthetics of Japan*, The Hague, Boston, London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Jones, Nicholaos John. 2004. "The Logic of *Soku* in the Kyoto School," *Philosophy East and West*, 54/3, 302-321.
- Kant, Immanuel. 1998. *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer, Allen W. Wood, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, Immanuel. 2001. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer, Eric Matthews, New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Kant, Immanuel. 2004. *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, trans. Gary Hatfield, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kirwan, James. 2004. *The Aesthetic in Kant*, New York: Continuum.
- Koyama, Iwao. 1935. *Nishida Tetsugaku*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Kukla, Rebecca, ed. 2006. *Aesthetics and Cognition in Kant's Critical Philosophy*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Longuenesse, Béatrice. 1993. *Kant et le Pouvoir de Juger*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Marra, Michele. ed. 1999. *Modern Japanese Aesthetics: A Reader*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Marra, Michael. ed. 2001. *A History of Modern Japanese Aesthetics*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Mundt, Ernest K. 1959. "Three Aspects of German Aesthetic Theory," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 17/3, 287-310.
- Nishi, Kinya. 2002. "Poieshisuteki Tenkai: Kyōtogakuhani yoru 'Geijutsu' to 'Shizen' no Gensetsu Hensei" (The Turn of *Poiesis*: Formation of the Discourse of "Art" and "Nature" in the Kyoto School), *Geijutsu/Kattō no Genba: Kindai Nihon Geijutsu Shisō no Kontekusuto* (Art/ The Field of Conflict: The Context of the Thinking on Art in Contemporary Japan), ed. Ken'ichi Iwaki, Tokyo: Koyo Shobo, 241-256.
- Nishida, Kitarō. 1973. *Art and Morality*, trans. David Dilworth and V. H. Viglielmo, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Nishida, Kitarō. 1977. *Zen no Kenkyū*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Nishida, Kitarō. 1987a. "An Explanation of Beauty," trans. Steve Odin, *Monumenta Nipponica*, 42/2, 215-217.
- Nishida, Kitarō. 1987b. *Last Writings: Nothingness and the Religious Worldview*, trans. David A. Dilworth, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Nishida, Kitarō. 1987c. *Intuition and Reflection in Self Consciousness*, trans. V. H. Viglielmo, Takeuchi Toshinori, Joseph S. O'Leary, Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Nishida, Kitarō. 1987-1989. *Nishida Kitarō Zenshū 1-19* (The Complete Works of Nishida Kitarō 1-19), Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.

- Nishida, Kitarō. 1990a. *An Inquiry into the Good*, trans. Masao Abe, Christopher Ives, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Nishida, Kitarō. 1990b. “Das künstlerische Schaffen als Gestaltungsakt der Geschichte,” *Die Philosophie der Kyōto Schule*, trans. Elmar Weinmayr and Ryōsuke Ōhashi, Freiburg: Karl Alber, 119–37.
- Nishida, Kitarō. 1998a. *Nishida Tetsugaku Senshū 6* (Selected Works of Nishida Philosophy, vol. 6), Kenichi Iwaki, ed., Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Nishida, Kitarō. 1998b. “The Historical Body,” *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy: Selected Documents*, trans. and ed. David A. Dilworth, Valdo H. Viglielmo, Augustin Jacinto Zavala, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 37-53.
- Nishida, Kitarō. 1998c. “The World as Identity of Absolute Contradiction,” *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy: Selected Documents*, trans. and ed. David A. Dilworth, Valdo H. Viglielmo, Augustin Jacinto Zavala, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 54-72.
- Nishitani, Keiji. 1969. “On Modernization and Tradition in Japan,” *Modernization and tradition in Japan*, ed. Yasushi Kuyama and Nobuo Kobayashi Osaka: International Institute for Japan Studies, 69-72.
- Ōhashi, Ryōsuke. 1986. *Kire no Kōzō: Nihonbi to Gendai Sekai* (The Structure of the Cut: The Japanese Sense of Beauty and the Contemporary World), Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha.
- Ōhashi, Ryōsuke. 1995. *Nishida Tetsugaku no Sekai: Aruiwa Tetsugaku no Tenkai* (The World of Nishida’s Philosophy: Or a Turn in Philosophy), Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo.
- Ōhashi, Ryōsuke. 2007. *Bi no Yukue* (Whereabouts of the Beauty), Kyoto: Toeisha
- Riegl, Alois. 1985. *Late Roman Art Industry*, trans. Rolf Winkes, Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider.
- Riegl, Alois. 1992. *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament*, trans. Evelyn Kain, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Riegl, Alois. 2004. *Historical Grammar of the Visual Arts*, trans. Jacqueline E. Jung, New York: Zone Books.
- Saito, Yuriko. 1998. “Japanese Aesthetics: Historical Overview,” *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, ed. Michael Kelly, New York: Oxford University Press, 545-553.

- Santayana, George. 1953. *The Sense of Beauty: Being the Outline of Aesthetic Theory*, New York: Dover Publications Inc.
- Sasaki, Ken-ichi. 1998. *Aesthetics on Non-Western Principles. Version 0.5*, Maasstrich: Jan Van Eyck Akademie.
- Saville, Anthony. 1993. *Kantian Aesthetics Pursued*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Schelling, F. W. J. 1978. *System of Transcendental Idealism (1800)*, trans. Peter Heath, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.
- Sedlmayr, Hans. 2001. "Quintessence of Riegl's Thought," *Framing Formalism: Riegl's Work*, Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 11-31.
- Stadelmann-Boutry, Britta. 2003. *La Création Artistique chez Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945) à Travers ses Lectures de Fiedler et de Kant dans son Texte "Art et morale" ("Geijutsu to Dōtoku") de 1923*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis presented at the University of Geneva, Switzerland.
- Tanaka, Stefan. 2002. "Nature- the Naturalization of Experience as National," *Japanese Hermeneutics: Current Debates on Aesthetics and Interpretation*, ed., Michele Marra, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 127- 141.
- Thomas, Julia Adeney. 2002. *Reconfiguring Modernity: Concept of Nature in Japanese Political Ideology*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Vischer, Robert. 1994. "On the Optical Sense of Form: A Contribution to Aesthetics," *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou, Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities.
- Wilkinson, Robert. 2009. "Nishida, Aesthetics, and the Limits of Cultural Synthesis," *Intercultural Aesthetics: A Worldview Perspective*, ed., Antoon Van den Braembussche, Heinz Kimmerle, Nicole Note, Springer, 69-86.
- Woodfield, Richard. 2001. "Reading Riegl's *Kunst-Industrie*," *Framing Formalism: Riegl's Work*, Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 49-79.
- Worringer, Wilhelm. 1920. *Form Problems of the Gothic*, New York: G. E. Stechert & Co.
- Worringer, Wilhelm. 1967. *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style*, trans. Michael Bullock, New York: International Universities Press.

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Özdemir, İbrahim Soner
Date and Place of Birth: 18. 03. 1974, Erzurum
Phone: +90 312 336 34 82
email: ibrahimsonerozdemir@yahoo.com.tr

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
Ph.D	METU Philosophy	2011
MS	Hacettepe U. History of Art	2002
BS	METU Civil Engineering	1999
High School	Ankara Anadolu High School	1992

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2011- Present	Bilkent University	Part-time Instructor
2005-2007	Osaka University	Research Fellow

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Adequate French and Japanese

PUBLICATIONS

1. Ozdemir, İbrahim Soner, “*Tasarım* and Design: Reflections on a Semantic Gap,” *Words for Design III: Comparative Etymology and Terminology of Design and its Equivalents*, Ed. Haruhiko Fujita, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Osaka, Japan, 52-59. (2010)
2. Ozdemir, İbrahim Soner, “Design Words of Turkey: A Concise History of Turkish Modernization”, *Words for Design II: Comparative Etymology and Terminology of Design and its Equivalents*, Ed. Haruhiko Fujita, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Osaka, Japan, 80-86. (2009)

AWARDS

Monbukagakusho (Japanese Government Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) Ph.D. Research Scholarship, Osaka University, School of Letters, Osaka, Japan

TURKISH SUMMARY

Bu tez Japon filozof Kitarō Nishida'nın (1870-1945) geç dönem yapıtlarındaki sanatsal yaratım ve doğa güzelliği kavramlarını incelemeyi amaçlıyor. Estetik biçim problemine ve bu problemin doğa ve sanat güzelliği arasındaki ayrımla ilişkisine odaklanılarak Nishida'nın sanatsal yaratım kavramının doğa estetiğine doğanın neyse o olarak deneyimlendiği bir model sunduğu savunuluyor.

Nishida felsefe kariyeri boyunca sanat konusuna çeşitli yerlerde değinmekle birlikte estetik üzerine düşüncelerini en ayrıntılı biçimde iki temel yapıtında ele almıştır. Bunlardan ilki 1923 yılında yayımlanan *Sanat ve Ahlak (Geijutsu to Dōtoku)*, ikincisi ise 1941 yılında yayımlanan *Tarihsel Biçimlenme Eylemi Olarak Sanatsal Yaratım*'dır (*Rekishiteki Keisei Sayō Toshite no Geijutsuteki Sōsaku*). Her iki yapıtta da Nishida estetik biçim problemini estetiğin başlıca iki problemi olan estetiğin bilgisel, ahlaki ve dinsel alanlardan ayrılması ve estetik yargıların nesnelliği problemleriyle bağlantı içinde tartışır. Ve bu problemlere cevap bulma yolunda Nishida estetik beğenin bakış açısı yerine sanatsal yaratımın bakış açısından yola çıkar, her ne kadar Nishida'nın yaklaşımında estetik beğeni ve sanatsal yaratım arasında kesin bir ayrım olmasa da.

Nishida hem *Sanat ve Ahlak*'ta hem de *Tarihsel Biçimlenme Eylemi Olarak Sanatsal Yaratım*'da sanatsal yaratım kavramını Kant'ın sunduğu çerçevede ve Alman estetik kuramındaki çeşitli bakış açılarıyla diyalog içinde geliştirirken,

sanatsal eylem ve estetik nesnenin özdeşliği kavrayışı aracılığıyla bu bakış açılarının bir sentezini sunmaya girişir. *Sanat ve Ahlak*'ta idealist bakış açısına çok benzer bir yaklaşımla estetik sezgiyi doğanın üzerinde durduğu zeminin birliğinin, yani özgür benin bir his aracılığıyla verilen içsel deneyimi olarak tanımlar. Bununla birlikte Nishida sanatçının yaratıcı eyleminin öznel ve idealist anlamının ötesine geçmek ve bu eylemin nesnel anlamını açıklamak için biçimci kuramların saf algı kavramına ve Konrad Fiedler'in ifade sel eylem olarak sanat yaratımı kavrayışına başvurur. Ancak, Nishida estetik biçime biçimci yaklaşımı özdeşleyim kuramlarının duyumsalcı yaklaşımlarına alternatif olarak görmek yerine saf algı ve özdeşleyimi estetik sezginin birbirinden ayıramayan iki yönü olarak görür.

Tarihsel Biçimlenme Eylemi Olarak Sanatsal Yaratım'da Nishida Fiedler'in ifade sel eylem kavrayışını felsefi olarak temellendirmek ve sanatsal yaratımı daha tarihsel ve nesnel terimlerle tanımlamak için Aloïs Riegl ve Wilhelm Worringer'in sanat tarihsel yaklaşımlarına döner. Ama yine doğanın ve özgürlüğün üzerine kurulduğu zeminin içsel deneyimi olarak estetik sezgi anlayışını kaybetmeksizin biçimcilik ve duyumsalcılığın bir sentezini sunmayı amaçlar.

Bunun sonucu olarak, Nishida'nın sanatsal yaratım kavramını doğru biçimde anlamak ve bu kavramın özgül niteliğini değerlendirmek için, Nishida'nın düşünceleriyle Kant'ın estetik biçim kavrayışı ve bu kavrayışın Alman estetik kuramındaki farklı yorumları arasındaki ilişkinin aydınlatılması gerekmektedir. Bu tezin başlıca amaçlarından biri bu ilişkinin açığa kavuşturulmasıdır.

Yargı Yetisinin Eleştirisi'nde Kant estetiğın başlıca iki problemini anlıkçılıkla duyumsalcılık arasındaki ayrımın ötesine geçecek biçimde çözmeye girişir. Kant, güzel yargısının öznel bir haz deneyimi üzerine temellenmekle birlikte zorunlu,

evrensel ve a priori olduğunu ileri sürer. Kant'ın çözümüne göre deneye dayalı ve kişisel olan duyumsal hazzın tersine, bir şeyin güzel olduğunu belirttiğimizde herkesin bizim yaşadığımız haz deneyimini paylaşacağını ya da paylaşması gerektiğini düşünürüz ve bunu onların bilfiil tepkilerini ya da onaylarını beklemeden yaparız. Kant bir şeyi güzel bulduğumuzda yaşadığımız bu kendine özgü hazzı ve bu hazzı herkesin paylaşacağı beklentimizi, dolayısıyla güzel yargımızın evrensel geçerliliğini genel olarak bilişsel deneyimimiz ve deneye dayalı bilginin nesnelliği için gerekli olan zihinsel bir mekanizmaya başvurarak açıklar: İmgelemin ve anlığın birbirleriyle uyumu. Ama Kant'ın açıklamasında bilme deneyiminde imgelem ve anlığın uyumu belirlenimli kavramlara göre gerçekleştirilirken, güzel deneyiminde imgelem ve anlık kavramlar olmaksızın birbirleriyle uyumlu bir şekilde birlikte çalıştıkları özgür bir oyun içine girerler. Bu şekilde zihinsel yetilerimizin özgür uyumlu oyunu kuramı Kant'ın güzel yargısını evrensellik talebinden vazgeçmeden öznel terimlerle açıklamasını mümkün kılar.

Öte yandan, her ne kadar Kant'ın güzel tanımını hem estetiğin temel paradoksu olan öznel bir haz hissine dayanan estetik yargıların evrensel geçerliliği sorununa, hem de estetik deneyimin duyusal, bilişsel ve ahlaki deneyimlerden ayrılması sorununa güzelin anlıkçı ve duyumsalcı kavranılışları arasındaki ayrımın ötesinde bir cevap sunsa da, güzelin içsel deneyiminin nesnel niteliklerden bütünüyle ayrılması, sezgi ve kavram arasındaki ayrımla birleşerek estetik biçim problemini, yani estetik deneyimin bağlantısı olarak estetik nesnenin nasıl belirleneceği sorusunu ortaya çıkarır. Bir yanda, eğer estetik his estetik nesnenin özelliklerine hiçbir göndermede bulunmayan, zihinsel yetilerimizin uyumunun içsel algısı olarak kavranırsa güzel deneyimi psikolojik bir görüngü olur. Öbür yanda, eğer güzel kavramlardan bağımsız

bir biçime sahipse, duyumsama ve kavramlar arasındaki ayrım nedeniyle bu biçimin açıklanması gerekliliği ortaya çıkar. Her ne kadar Kant estetik yargıların belirlenimli kavramlardan özgür olmakla birlikte belirlenimsiz bir kavram üzerinde temellendiğini söylese de, onun estetik biçim kavrayışı estetiğindeki bir dizi belirsizliğin de kaynağı olan temel bir sorunla karşılaşır.

Bunun sonucunda, Kant sonrası Alman estetik kuramında farklı bakış açılarından çeşitli yaklaşımlar Kant'ın güzel kavramındaki belirsizlikleri giderme ve estetik biçim problemini çözme yönünde bir çaba içine girerken anlıkçılık ve duyumsalcılık arasındaki ayrımı yeniden canlandırırlar. Ama Kant güzeli bu ayrımın ötesinde tanımlamayı başardığından, bu ayrımı yeniden canlandıran Kant sonrası yaklaşımlar estetik olanın duyumsal, bilgisel ve ahlaki olandan ayrılması ve nesnellik problemlerine ve bunlara eşlik eden zorluklara cevap bulma durumuyla karşılaşır. Bu zorlukların doğrudan sonuçlarından biri Kant'ta henüz birbirlerinden bütünüyle ayrılmamış olan doğa ve sanat güzelliğinin tamamen birbirinden ayrılmasıdır. Nesnellik talebi güzel üzerine tartışmaları kavramsal aracılık yönüne iter ve doğa güzelliği böyle bir aracılığın ötesinde düşünüldüğünden, Hegel'le başlayan bir süreçte doğa güzelliğinin sanat güzelliğinden daha aşağı görülüp geri plana itilmesi ve bunun da ötesinde estetiğin sanat felsefesine indirgenmesi yönünde bir eğilim ortaya çıkar. Doğa güzelliğinin dilsizliğine ve bizim ona gösterdiğimiz tepkilerin öznel niteliğine karşıt olarak sanat yapıtları estetik yargılarımızı temellendirmemizi ve estetik nesneyi oluşturmamızı sağlayacak kurallar, ilkeler ve kategoriler sunarlar. Başka bir ifadeyle söylenecek olursa, sanat yapıtları söz konusu olduğunda, her ne kadar zaman zaman tartışmalı olsa da, genellikle neyin nasıl takdir edileceğini biliriz; yani estetik nesnenin sınırlarını, onun bir parçası olarak nelerin estetik biçime dâhil

edileceğini ve onun estetik takdirinde nelerin uygun ve yerinde olduğunu belirleyebiliriz, çünkü sanat yapıtları insan yapımıdır. Sanat yapıtlarının üretildiği tarihsel, sosyal ve kültürel çerçeve, onların içinde bulunduğu kurumsal durum ya da sanat dünyası, onları üretmek için kullanılan teknik ve araçlar ve ayrıca sanatçının niyetleri, yapıtın nerede başlayıp nerede bittiğini, yapıtın takdirinde nelerin uygun olduğunu ve onun ne şekilde değerlendirilmesi gerektiğini belirlemeye yardım eder. Doğa söz konusu olduğunda estetik nesnenin sınırları ve nasıl takdir edileceği benzer ölçütler kullanarak belirlenemez, çünkü doğa insan amaçlılığıyla üretilmemiştir. Doğa olumsuzluk alanıdır; doğanın biçimleri sürekli değişim halindedir ve dolayısıyla farklı zamanlarda farklı estetik özelliklere sahiptir; bu biçimler çevrelerinden yalıtılmamışlardır ve farklı duyularımıza çok farklı şekillerde estetik tatmin verirler.

Yirminci yüzyılın son çeyreğinde çevre estetiği sanatın estetik deneyiminden farklı özellikler gösteren ama en az onun kadar ciddilik ve uygunluk talep eden doğanın estetik deneyimini yeniden tartışmaya başladığında estetik biçim probleminin ortaya çıkardığı zorluklar tekrar su yüzüne çıkar. Çevre estetiği özellikle ve olumlu bir şekilde doğanın belirlenemez ve değişken niteliğine ve bizim doğayı çoklu algılama biçimimize dikkatini çevirir. Bunun sonucu olarak doğanın estetik takdirine çeşitli yaklaşımlar ya da modeller doğanın estetik biçimi problemine çözüm sunmaya çalışırlar. Bu modeller doğanın belirlenemez ve değişken niteliğini ve bizim doğayı çoklu algılama ve farklı anlama biçimlerimizi göz ardı etmeksizin doğanın estetik olarak nasıl takdir edileceğini belirtmenin yanı sıra estetiğin başlıca iki sorununa, yani doğaya gösterdiğimiz estetik tepkinin duyumsal haz, dinsel huşu ya da bilimsel anlama gibi başka tepkilerden nasıl ayrılacağı ve böyle bir tepkiyi uygun bir tepki yapanın ne olduğu sorularına da cevap vermeyi amaçlarlar. Ama bu üçlü

gereklilik insan ve doğa, doğa güzelliğinin özgürlüğü ve kaçınılmaz olarak dolayımlanmış insan dünyası arasındaki ayrımla birleştiğinde doğanın estetik takdiri modelleri için doğanın estetik biçimi problemini bir açmaza dönüştürür.

İkinci Bölüm’de Kant’ın belirlenimli kavramlardan bağımsız güzel tanımı ve Kant’ın estetik kuramıyla ilgili tartışmaların merkezinde yer alan birbiriyle ilişkili bir dizi problem ele alınıyor. İlk olarak, Kant bir şeyi güzel bulma deneyimini ve güzel yargısının evrensel geçerlilik talebini genel olarak bilme için de gerekli olan yetilerimizin uyumuyla açıkladığından sıradan bilme deneyimiyle güzel deneyiminin birbirlerinden nasıl ayırt edileceği sorusu ortaya çıkar. İkinci bir problem Kant’ın özgür ve bağımlı güzellik ayrımıyla ilişkili olan doğa güzelliği ve sanat güzelliği arasında yaptığı belirsiz ayrıma ilişkin ortaya çıkar. Ve üçüncü olarak Kant’ın güzelin deneyimlenmesi ve yaratımı tanımları aklın idelerine duyusal olarak ulaşmanın mümkün olabileceğini ima ettiği için, onun estetik kuramının eleştirel felsefenin temelinde yer alan duyusal sezgiler ve duyular ötesi alan, doğa ve özgürlük arasındaki ayrımın ihlal edilmesi anlamına gelip gelmediği sorusu ortaya çıkar. Tezin ikinci bölümünde Kant’ın estetik biçim kavrayışını ve doğa güzelliği ve sanat güzelliği arasında yaptığı ayrımı eleştirel bir şekilde ele almak ve güzel yargısının belirlenimli kavramlardan özgür ama belirlenimsiz bir kavram üzerinde temellendiğini öne sürdüğü belirsiz tanımını açıklığa kavuşturmak amacıyla bu üç problem sırasıyla tartışılıyor.

Bu bölümün sonunda önce Kant’ın estetik biçim kavrayışının Alman estetik kuramındaki idealist, biçimci ve duyumsalcı yorumları doğa güzelliği ve sanat güzelliği arasındaki ayrımla ilişkili olarak kısaca sunuluyor. Daha sonra Kantçı biçimciliğe ve estetiğin ve sanatın psikolojistik açıklamalarına yirminci yüzyılda

yapılan temel eleştiriler ve doğa güzelliğindeki özgürlüğün yeni yorumları ana hatlarıyla tartışılıyor.

Kant bir şeye güzel dediğimizde söz konusu olanın nesnenin algısıyla, ne tür bir şey olduğuyla ya da herhangi bir özelliğiyle ilgili olmadığını, bir şeye güzel demekle aslında o nesneyi deneyimlediğimizde bir haz hissettiğimizi belirttiğimizi söyler. Kant'a göre bu haz, örneğin bir şeyin tadında ya da kokusunda olduğu gibi, herkese göre değişebilen bir hoşlanma değildir. Güzel yargısı “öznel” bir hazın belirtilmesi olduğu halde sanki nesnenin bir özelliğiymişçesine herkesin paylaşacağı bir yargı olma iddiası taşır. Kant bunu mümkün kılanın doğanın ve sanatın kimi nesnelere zihinsel yetilerimizi, yani hayal gücümüzü ve anlama yetimizi, uyumlu bir oyun içine sokması olduğunu belirtir. Kant'ın açıklamasında bu uyum zihnimizin doğayı algılamamızı ve bilgisel faaliyetlerimizi de mümkün kılan yapısından kaynaklanır. Bu yapı tüm insanlarda ortak olduğundan, güzel yargısı nesnenin bir özelliğiyle değil de zihinsel yetilerimizin özgür oyununa eşlik eden “öznel” haz hissimizle ilgili olduğu halde herkes için geçerli olmayı talep eder.

Öte yandan, Kant'ın eleştirel felsefesinde doğa belli bir biçime sahip olarak deneyimlediğimiz fenomenler dünyasıdır. Deneyimimizde duyarlılığımızın aldığı dağınık ve çeşitli duysal veriler anlama yetimizin kavramlarıyla düzen kazanıp biçime sahip olurlar. Doğa dünyasının bize belli bir biçime sahip görünmesi, anlama yetimizin bu görünmeyle eş zamanlı olarak ve kendiliğinden çalışan etkinliğiyle mümkündür. Her iki taraf, yani duysal veriler ve kavramlar olmadan fenomenal doğanın deneyimi ve bilgisi mümkün değildir. Kant'ın ünlü sözleriyle, “görüş kavramlar boş, kavramsız görüşler kördür.” Böylece, Kant için doğa kavramı bize zaman ve mekân içinde belli bir biçime sahip olarak görünen, birbirleriyle zorunlu

olarak nedensel etkileşim içinde bulunan nesnelerin mekanik, maddi dünyasıdır ve bilimsel bilgi de ancak bize görüldüğü şekliyle bu zorunluluklar dünyasıyla, olduğundan başka türlü olamayan doğayla sınırlıdır. Kant'a göre bu sınırın ötesi, yani duyulur olanın ötesi doğa bilimlerinin değil metafiziğin alanıdır. Numenal dünyanın, yani kendinde şeylerin dünyasının bilimsel anlamda bilgisine sahip olamayız. Bununla birlikte deneyimi mümkün kılan saf kavramların kendisini de deneyimleyemeyiz. Kendiliğinden etkinliğiyle deneyimi ve bilgiyi mümkün kılan *transcendental* ben doğa dünyasının bir parçası değildir. Benzer şekilde temel niteliği özgürlük olan istenç de mekanik doğa dünyasında değil, duyulur ötesi alanda yer alır. Kant'ın sözleriyle “doğa kavramı”yla “özgürlük kavramı”nı birbirinden ayıran “büyük bir uçurum” vardır. Bu şekilde insanın öz bilincinin ve özgür eylemde bulunma yeteneğinin doğanın geri kalanından ayrıldığı ikili bir yapı ortaya çıkar. Ama Kant *Yargı Yetisinin Eleştirisi*'nde doğa ve sanat güzelliği deneyimiyle bu uçurum üzerine köprü kurmanın yollarını arar. Bir bütün olarak ve belli bir amaca göre işleyen, niyetleri olan bir doğa düşüncesi duyulur olanın ötesindedir, ancak akla aittir, dolayısıyla bilimsel bilginin dışındadır. Ama doğa güzelliği deneyiminde doğayı anlama yetisinin kavramları altında nedensel olarak belirlenmiş şekilde değil, sanki bir amaca göre işliyormuş, bir tasarımışçasına görürüz. Sanki doğa bizim zihinsel yetilerimizi özgür bir oyun içine sokmak için okyanusun dibine varıncaya kadar güzelliklerle doludur. Kant böyle bir amaçlılığı “doğanın tekniği” olarak tanımlar. Çünkü doğa burada “mekanik” olarak değil, “teknik” olarak, yani sanki bir niyeti gerçekleştiren “sanat”mış gibi hareket etmektedir. Ama bu sadece bir “sanki”dir, doğanın bir niyeti, bir kastı, bir amacı olamaz. Dolayısıyla, Kant'ın sözleriyle, “doğa sanki sanatmış gibi görünüyorsa güzeldir.” Bu anlamda doğa

güzelliđi, Kant'ın ifadesiyle, doğanın, niyet ya da amaç olmaksızın, (bizim yetilerimize uygun olma) “amaçlılıđıdır”. Başka bir ifadeyle söylenecek olursa, doğa güzelliđi, doğanın henüz belirsiz olan, daha anlama yetisinin kavramlarıyla düzen kazanmamış “düzenini”, hayal gücümüzün “özgür” ama anlama yetisiyle uyumlu faaliyetiyle deneyimlememizdir. O halde, doğa güzelliđinde söz konusu olan doğa fenomenal doğa deđildir, duyulur içinde kendini gösteren, güzelliđiyle ışıldayan akılla kavranabilir doğadır.

Öte yandan, sanat “sanki” deđil, gerçekten bir amaca göre gerçekleştirilen bir faaliyettir. Güzel sanatların amacı diđer sanatlardan farklı olarak “güzel”i, yani hayal gücümüzün ve anlama yetimizin özgür oyununu ve ona eşlik eden hazzı yaratmaktır. Ama bu amaçlılık zaten baştan belli olduğundan sanatın Kant'ın tanımladığı şekliyle güzel olması, yani amaçlı olmayan bir “amaçlılıđa” sahip olması mümkün görünmemektedir. Kant için güzelin örnek nesnesi doğadır. Yine de Kant sanatın da güzel olabileceđini düşünür. Ama Kant'ın ifadesiyle “sanat ancak aynı zamanda doğaymış gibi görünüyorsa güzeldir.” Yani sanat, sanatçının amaçlılıđı, seçilmiş kuralları izlemekten bütünüyle özgürmüş, sanki bir doğa ürünüymüş, ama yine de bir düzene uyuyormuş, başka türlü olamazmış gibi göründüğünde güzeldir. Her sanat sanat olmak için belli kurallara sahip olmalıdır. Ama sanat güzelliđi kavramın belirlediđi kurallar takip edilerek üretilemez. Kant'a göre sanata izleyeceđi kuralları, uyacađı düzeni kavramlar deđil “deha” aracılıđıyla doğa verir: Sanatsal deha doğa vergisidir. Bu anlamda deha akılla kavranabilir doğanın (kavramlardan) “özgür düzenini” paylaşır. Böylece hem doğa güzelliđinde hem sanat güzelliđinde duyulur ötesi olanın, idelerin alanında olan bir “düzenin” ve “özgürlüğün” duyulur içinde görünmesi mümkün olur. Kant için bu özgürlük insan öznesinin özgürlüğüdür.

Böylece, sembolik bir anlamda, doğa bilimlerine kapalı olan insanın öz bilincinin ve istencinin “yasa” koyan özgürlüğü doğa ve sanat güzelliğiyle duyulur olarak ulaşılabilir hale gelir.

Üçüncü bölümde *Sanat ve Ahlak*'ta Nishida'nın estetik biçim problemini “estetik nesnenin nesnel niteliği”nin açıklanması problemi olarak ele aldığı düşüncesi savunuluyor. Nishida'nın öznel edim ve bu edimin nesnesinin özdeşliği kavrayışı ve “nesnelerin uzamı” ve “benin uzamı” ayrımı onun güzelin ve sanatsal yaratımın özü tanımlarının merkezinde yer alıyor. Bu bölümde yalnızca Nishida'nın sanatsal yaratım kavramının özgül niteliği değil aynı zamanda bu kavramın Nishida'yı sanatsal yaratımla ilgili sonraki düşüncelerinde bir değişikliğe götürecektir estetik biçim problemiyle ilgili temel bir zorlukla karşılaştığı gösteriliyor.

Sanat ve Ahlak'ta Nishida saf algı ve özdeşleşimin bir sentezini sunmayı amaçlıyor. Ama Nishida her ne kadar özne ve nesnenin, insan ussallığı ve fiziksel dünyanın birbirinden ayrılmaz bir birlik oluşturduğunu vurgulasa da, onun bu birliğin zeminini özgür istence, Fichte'nin edim kavramına ve Bergson'un bilinç kavrayışına başvurarak formüle etmesi öznellik ve idealizmle sonuçlanır. Nishida'nın temel aldığı eylem ve nesnenin özdeşliği düşüncesi ve öznelci ve idealist bir bakış açısı arasındaki ayrılık özellikle Nishida'nın sanatsal yaratım kavrayışıyla yaratım eyleminin nesnel niteliğini açıklamak için başlıca kaynak olarak başvurduğu Fiedler'in sanatsal yaratım kavrayışı arasındaki uyumsuzlukta açığa çıkar.

Daha geç dönem yapıtlarında Nishida deneyimin gelişimini Fichte, Bergson ve Fiedler'e başvurarak formüle edilmesinde öznelci yanlar olduğunu kabul eder. Örneğin Fichte'nin istenççiliğini dogmatik olarak reddederken *Tathandlung* kavramıyla temel olarak öznelcilikten kurtulmanın mümkün olmadığını söyler.

Benzer şekilde, Nishida her ne kadar Bergson'un bakış açısının kendi bakış açısına yakın olduğunu kabul etse de Bergson'un felsefesinde nesnellik ve uygun bir uzam kavramı olmadığı için onun düşüncesinin bir içsel öznellik olarak kaldığını savunur. Ve Fiedler'le ilgili olarak Nishida Fiedler'in ifadesel eylemi sadece bilinçli öznenin bakış açısından kavradığı için onun sanatsal yaratım kuramının kaçınılmaz olarak öznelci kaldığını iddia eder. Nishida deneyimi öznellikten ya da nesnellikten yola çıkarak açıklamak yerine özne ve nesne ayrımının öncesine giderek açıklama yönündeki temel düşüncesini psikolojistik bir bilinç kavramına dayanmaksızın ama öz-belirlenim ve ifadesel gelişim terimlerinden vazgeçmeden formüle etmek için "yer" (*basho*) kavramını temel alan farklı bir model yönünde düşüncelerini değiştirir. Ve 1927'den sonraki yapıtlarında Nishida giderek daha çok ussallık ya da kültür ve doğal çevre arasındaki karşılıklı belirlemeyi vurgular. Ve 1931 ve 1932'den başlayarak dünyanın kendini belirlemesi düşüncesini sistematik bir tarih felsefesi şeklinde geliştirir.

Dördüncü bölümde Nishida'nın sanatsal yaratımı tarihsel biçimlenme eylemi olarak gören geç dönem düşünceleri inceleniyor. Nishida geç döneminde sanatsal yaratımı bir yandan da belirsiz bir biçimde tarihsel dünyadan soyutlama olarak tanımlıyor. Bu bölümde öncelikle Nishida'nın geç dönem sanatsal yaratım kavrayışını doğru biçimde anlamak için gerekli olan Nishida'nın tarihsel dünya kuramının temel yönleri tematik olarak yeniden oluşturulup açıklanıyor. Daha sonra bu kavrayışla ilişkili olan iki soru tartışılıyor: İlk olarak tarihsel biçimlenmenin yönünü, dolayısıyla estetik biçimi neyin belirlediği sorusu. İkinci olarak Nishida tarihsel dünyayı kaçınılmaz olarak biçimlenme dünyası olarak tanımladığından, sanatsal yaratımın ne anlamda tarihsel dünyadan soyutlama olduğu sorusu. Nishida

bu soruları ilkel toplumlarda sanatın gelişimini tarihsel dünyanın kendini biçimlendirmesinin kökeni ve ontolojik modeli olarak sunarak cevaplamaya çalışıyor. Bu bölümün sonunda Nishida'nın ilkel toplumlarda sanatın gelişimiyle ilgili yorumları analiz edilerek onun tarihsel biçimlenme eylemi olarak sanatsal yaratım kavrayışının başlıca yönleri şematik olarak düzenleniyor.

Tarihsel Biçimlenme Eylemi Olarak Sanatsal Yaratım'da Nishida eylem ve sezginin çelişik özdeşliği mantığı aracılığıyla orta dönemdeki öznelci ve idealist yönleri ortadan kaldırarak estetik nesnenin nesnel niteliğini daha da açık bir hale getirmeye çalışıyor. Nishida'nın geç dönemde geliştirdiği özne ve çevrenin, kültür ve doğanın karşılıklı olarak birbirlerini belirlemesi düşüncesi estetik nesnenin nesnel niteliğini açıklamanın yanı sıra hem sanatın hem de doğanın estetik takdiri açısından önemli sonuçlar ortaya koyuyor. İlk olarak Nishida'nın geç dönem sanatsal yaratım kavrayışı onun kültürel bağlamı ve sanatsal biçimin konvansiyonelliğini hesaba katan daha ampirist bir sanat ve güzel kavrayışı tanımlamasını sağlıyor. İkinci olarak bu kavrayışa göre sanatsal yaratımın nesnesi olan estetik biçim, dolayısıyla bu biçimin estetik takdirine neyin uygun olduğu yalnızca tarihsel, kültürel, toplumsal bağlam tarafından değil aynı zamanda içinde yaratıldığı doğal çevre tarafından da belirleniyor. Ve son olarak Nishida hem sanatın hem doğanın estetik niteliklerini özne ve çevrenin, yapay olan ve doğal olanın diyalektik ilişkilerinin ürünü, yani tarihsel dünya sürekli ve yaratıcı kendini belirlemesinin ifadeleri olarak kavlıyor. Ayrıca Nishida duygular ve kültürel kategoriler arasında bir ayırım yapmadığı ve ilgiden yalıtılmışlığın ve birbiri içine geçmenin bir sentezini sunduğu için onun bakış açısı doğayla bağlantılı olarak estetik biçim problemiyle karşılaşılan çeşitli zorlukların üstesinden gelebiliyor.

Beşinci bölümde Nishida'nın geç dönem sanatsal yaratım kavrayışının doğa estetiği açısından sonuçları tartışılıyor. Bu amaçla, öncelikle Nishida'nın “nesnenin uzamının kavranması” ve “zihin/kalbin uzamının kavranması” arasında yaptığı ayrım Riegl'in algı kuramı, Hildebrand'ın sanatsal biçim kavrayışı ve Worringer'ın Riegl'in kuramını sanat ve doğa arasındaki temel ilişki biçimleri sınıflandırması olarak geliştirmesiyle bağlantılı olarak inceleniyor. Daha sonra Nishida'nın Worringer'ın sınıflandırmasını eleştirel bir biçimde yeniden yorumlayışı ve Asya sanatlarında doğa ve sanat arasında diyalektik bir ilişki olduğu düşüncesi aracılığıyla çağdaş çevre estetiğinde tartışıldığı şekliyle Japon bahçelerinde doğa ve sanat arasındaki diyalektik ilişkiden kaynaklanan bir estetik takdir güçlüğü ele alınıyor. Ve son olarak çağdaş çevre estetiğinde doğanın estetik takdirine farklı yaklaşımlar ya da modeller estetik biçim problemiyle ilişkili olarak tartışıldıktan ve Nishida'nın bakış açısından değerlendirildikten sonra, Nishida'nın sanatsal yaratım kavrayışının farklı bir doğanın estetik takdiri modeli sunduğu savunuluyor.

Nishida, her ne kadar kariyeri boyunca düşünceleri önemli değişikliklere uğrasa da, kendi felsefesinin temelinde sıradan, gündelik deneyimimiz olduğunu söylemektedir. Nishida'ya göre gündelik deneyimimizde özne ve nesne ayrımı yoktur. Özne ve nesne deneyim üzerine düşünmenin sonucu ortaya çıkan ve bir anlamda somut, gündelik deneyimin içine sonradan yerleştirdiğimiz soyut kavramlardır. Üzerine düşünceyle başka şeyler eklenmemiş gündelik deneyimimiz doğa bilimleri de dâhil olmak üzere var olan her şeyin temelidir. Buna göre öz bilinç ve onun kendiliğindenliği ne fenomenal deneyimin bir nesnesi olmak (materyalizm), ne de ondan ayrı bir düzeyde yer almak (idealizm) durumundadır. Öz bilinç gündelik deneyimin kendiliğindenliğinin birinci elden farkına varılmasıdır. Nishida bu farkına

varmayı anlatmak için Japoncada günlük konuşma dilinde kullanılan *jikaku* kelimesini seçer. *Jikaku* bir yandan insanın kendi özünü fark etmesi, kendi yaradılışının bilincine varmasıdır. Ama *jikaku* kelimesi bir yandan da bu farkına varmanın pek de insanın kişisel bir başarısı olmadığını, öngörülebilir bulunma ya da üstüne düşünme olmadan, kendiliğinden ortaya çıkıverdiğini ima eder. İnsan eyleminin kendiliğindenliği de tam olarak aynı yerde bulunur; insanı dünyanın geri kalanından ayıran bir özgür eylemde bulunma becerisi değildir; maddi dünyanın bir parçası olmak ya da başka bir düzeyde yer almak zorunda da değildir. Nishida'nın sözleriyle eylemde bulunma üretici bir etkileşimdir, üretimde öznellik nesnellik olur ve nesnelere yapar; ama yaparı meydana getiren de yapılan şeydir. Bu nedenle öznellik ve nesnelliğin birbirinden ayrılıp karşılaştırıldığı bir çerçeveden, üretici eylemin ne anlama geldiğini yeterli bir şekilde ifade etmek mümkün değildir.

Nishida'nın geç dönem yapıtlarında “çelişkili özdeşlik” (*mujunteki jiko dōitsu*) terimiyle tanımladığı kendi mantığı, her ne kadar diyalektik kelimesini belli bir süre kullanmış olsa da, senteze götüren diyalektik bir mantık değildir. Nishida bu mantık içinde sık sık Japoncadaki Çince kaynaklı *soku* bağlayıcı fiiline başvurur. *Soku* iki şeyin birbirine yapışık olması, aynı yerde ve zamanda biri varsa diğersinin derhal ortaya çıkması anlamlarına gelir. Budist terminoloji içinde birbiriyle çelişen iki şeyin oldukları haliyle birbirine eş olup, aralarında ayrım olmamasını ifade eder. Nishida'ya göre gerçeklik dünyası her zaman geleneğin biçimlendirmesi ve doğal çevre arasındaki mücadeledir. Bu tarafların her ikisi de çelişkili bir özdeşlik içinde karşılıklı olarak birbirlerini oluşturduğu sürece gerçek dünya vardır, dünya her noktasında birbiriyle çelişen bu iki kutbu taşır. Bu mantık içinde düşünüldüğünde doğa ve insanı, doğal olanı ve insan yapımı olanı, doğa güzelliğini ve sanat

güzelliğini, sanatsal yaratımı ve güzelin deneyimini birbirinden ayırmak ya da birbirleri içinde eritmek mümkün değildir. Estetik deneyim, hem yaratıcı hem izleyici açısından, karşıtların özdeşlik içinde bir arada olduğu gündelik deneyimin birinci elden bilincine varıldığı çeşitli örneklerden biridir. Başka bir deyişle, nesnenin güzelliği onun gündelik algısıyla tam olarak aynı yerde bulunur. Nishida'ya göre Asya sanatı “nesnenin uzamı”nı (*mono no kūkan*) kavramaya eğilimli Batı sanatının tersine “zihin/kalbin uzamı”nı (*kokoro no kūkan*) kavramaya çalışır. Bu uzam benin dışında ya da karşısında olmayıp, “benin içinde bulunduğu uzamdır”. Ama bu Nishida'nın tanımında “zihin/kalbin uzamı”nın “nesnel”in karşıtı olarak “öznel” olduğu anlamına gelmez. Nishida için “zihin/kalbin uzamı” “tarihsel uzam”dır, başka bir deyişle bizim benimiz tarihsel uzamda yer alır. Her ne kadar Nishida “tarihsel uzamda” insan ve doğanın, özne ve çevrenin karşılıklı olarak birbirilerini etkileyen ve belirleyen ilişkisinin “metafizik geri planı” ve “mantığı” üzerinde ayrıntılı olarak durmuşsa da, Japon sanatlarında “zihin/kalbin uzamının kavranması”nın somut ifadelerine yalnızca birkaç örnekte değinir. Bu örneklerde Nishida “doğayla iç içe olan” Japon sanatının tinselliğinin “pişmiş topraktan siyah çay kâsesinde gökleri ve yeri sarıp sarmaladığını”, onda “sıradan, gündelik zihin/kalbin sanat yoluyla bir ve aynı olduğunu (*heijōshin soku dō*)” söylemektedir. Nishida'ya göre bu tinsellik “doğayla bir, kendiliğinden nasılsa öyle olan (*jinen hōniteki*)” Doğu'nun mürekkep resminin çizgisinde ifadesini bulur. Bu anlamda, böyle bir sanatta yapıtı üreten “özne değil doğadır (*ten*)”. Nishida'nın sözleriyle: “*Poiesis* denilen şey benin nesneyi yapmasıdır. Bütünüyle öznedir. Ama nesne basitçe ben öznesi tarafından yapılıyor değildir. Bir tarihsel zemin olmak zorundadır. Yapan öznenin kendisi zaten çoktan tarihsel dünyanın öz çelişkisinden ortaya çıkar.

Ancak tarihsel dünyanın çelişkili özdeşliği içinde bizim nesnel bir şekilde nesneyi yapmamız mümkündür. Aksini düşünmek gündüz düşüden öteye geçmez. Bizim tekniğimiz doğanın (*ten*) tekniği olmak zorundadır. Kendi beninin tekniğini tüketip kendi benini unuttuğun yerde, sanatsal yaratım ortaya çıkar”.

Çevre estetiğinin önde gelen isimlerinden Kanadalı felsefeci Allen Carlson Japon bahçeleriyle ilgili bir makalesinde bu bahçelerin estetik deneyimiyle ilgili bir çelişkiden söz eder. Carlson’a göre el değmemiş doğayı ve saf sanatı estetik olarak değerlendirirken özel bir zorluk yaşamayız. Japon bahçeleri ne el değmemiş doğa ne de saf sanattırlar, insan yapımı ve doğal olanın birbiri içine girmesinin tipik örneklerini oluştururlar. Ama insan yapımı olanla doğanın birbiri içine geçtiği durumların estetik deneyimi genellikle bir tür rahatsızlık içerirken, Japon bahçelerinin estetik deneyimi hiç bir rahatsızlık duygusu yaratmadan insanı dingin ve huzurlu bir seyre götürür. Carlson’un Japon bahçe sanatçılarının sanat ve doğanın diyalektik ilişkisinin yarattığı estetik deneyim zorluğunu nasıl aştığı sorusuna verdiği yanıt şöyledir: Doğal olan ve insan yapımı olanın doğaları farklıdır ve bu farklılık nedeniyle kendilerini farklı nitelikte estetik deneyimlere açarlar. İnsan yapımı ürünlerin estetik deneyiminde eleştirel bir yargı vardır, zira bu ürünler tasarlanmıştır, başka türlü olmaları mümkündür. Oysa doğanın estetik deneyimi eleştirel yargının ötesindedir, doğa nasılsa öyledir, olduğundan başka türlü olması mümkün değildir. Carlson’a göre Japon bahçeleri doğa ve sanatın diyalektik olarak iç içe girdiği durumların estetik deneyimindeki zorluğu doğayı izleyerek aşar. Ama bunu insan yapımı olanı dikkat çekmeyecek niteliğe indirerek yapmaz. Japon bahçeleri doğa gibi görünmez. Japon bahçe sanatçıları doğanın özünü açığa çıkarmayı amaçlayan bir idealleştirilmiş doğa yaratırlar. Böylece, tıpkı el değmemiş doğada olduğu gibi, başka

türlü olamazmış görüntüsüne ulaşrlar ve eleştirel yargı rahatsız edecek şekilde ortaya çıkmaz.

Carlson'un değerlendirmeleri genel olarak ikna edici olmakla birlikte Japon bahçelerinin estetik deneyiminde eleştirel yargının ortaya çıkmadığı düşüncesi tartışmaya açıktır. Carlson'un Japon bahçeleriyle ilgili düşüncelerinin Kant'ın sanat güzelliği tanımıyla tamı tamına uyduğu fark edilecektir. Böylece Carlson'un değerlendirmeleri bir anlamda Japon sanatını estetiğin diliyle Batılılaştırmanın örneğini oluşturmaktadır. Burada sorunun Batı estetiğinin sanat ve doğa arasında yaptığı ayrımı Japon sanatına taşımaktan kaynaklandığını düşünebiliriz. Konuyu Nishida'nın bakış açısından ele aldığımızda Japon bahçelerinde doğanın özünü açığa çıkarmayı amaçlayan bir idealleştirme olduğu düşüncesi nesnenin uzamını kavrama eğiliminin bir örneği olarak görülebilir. Ayrıca böyle bir düşüncede doğal olan ve kültürel olan açık olarak birbirinden ayrılmaktadır. Öte yandan, Japon bahçelerinde insan yapımı olanla doğal olan arasındaki ilişki Nishida'nın tanımladığı şekilde bir diyalektik ilişki olarak, yani mutlak çelişkili özdeşlik olarak düşünülürse, ortaya çıkan estetik nesne kendini doğa dünyasının bütün duygusal ve tarihsel çağrışımlarıyla birlikte ifade edildiği ve saf doğal içeriğin insan yapımı ve kültürel olandan ayrılmadığı bir estetik takdire açar. Nishida'nın sanatsal yaratım kavrayışında başka türlü olamazmış görüntüsü sanatçının niyetlerinin ötesinde olan ve disiplin ve gelenek içinde yerleşmiş üsluplar aracılığıyla ulaşılan kendine özgü bir özgürlük anlayışıyla açıklanır. Sanatçı Nishida'nın Budist gelenekten çeşitli göndermelerle ifade ettiği böyle bir özgürlük içinde sanatsal eylemde bulunduğunda eylemleri tarihsel dünyanın kendini belirlemesi olarak gerçekleştirilir ve birbirleriyle

çelişik özdeşlik içinde olan yaratma eylemi ve nesne kendilerini neyse o olarak gösterir.

Nishida'nın bakış açısından çağdaş çevre estetiğindeki çeşitli yaklaşımlarda doğa söz konusu olduğunda estetik biçim problemi ya da doğada estetik olarak neyin nasıl takdir edileceği sorusu “nesnenin uzamının kavranması” problemi olarak görülebilir. Her ne kadar farklı modeller nesnenin uzamının “özgürlüğü” ya da “sonsuz derinliği” konusunda hemfikir olsalar bile bu uzamın estetik olarak uygun bir şekilde kavranmasının mümkün olup olmadığı sorusuna yanıtlarında birbirlerinden ayrılırlar. Ayrıca, bir yanda doğa dünyası ve insan arasındaki ayırım, diğer yanda bilimsel ya da kültürel kategoriler ve duygular arasındaki ayırım ve “estetik” bir tepkiyi neyin belirlediği sorusu başlıca problemler olarak ortaya çıkar. Nishida'nın geç dönem sanatsal yaratım kavrayışı doğa dünyasının özgürlüğünü özne ve çevrenin birbirlerini karşılıklı olarak belirlemesinin yaratıcı niteliği düşüncesiyle açıklar. Nishida'ya göre nesnenin uzamının sonsuz derinliği aynı zamanda zihin/kalbin uzamının sonsuz derinliğidir ve estetik biçim problemi sadece tek yönlü bir şekilde nesnenin uzamını kavramaya çalışarak çözülemez. Öznenin çevre içinde eritildiği, yani estetik takdirin nesnesinin kişisel olmayan, yalıtılmış maddeselliğe indirildiği bakış açısının tersine Nishida “estetik” tepkiyi kendimizin içinde olup eylediğimiz doğa dünyasıyla birliğinin deneyimlenmesi olarak tanımlar. Ama zihin/kalbin uzamı nesnel uzamın karşıtı olan öznel uzam değildir; içinde olduğumuz tarihsel uzamdır. Başka bir ifadeyle söylenecek olursa Nishida geç dönem düşüncesinde bilmeyi ya da nesnel içeriği doğayla insanın birliğinin içsel deneyimi içinde eritmek yerine bir şeyin estetik olarak deneyimlenmesini öznel ve nesnel yönlerin birbirlerini karşılıklı olarak belirlemesinin kavranması olarak tanımlar. Ve

bu anlamda, estetik nitelikleri özne ve çevrenin, insan yapımı olan ve doğal olanın diyalektik ilişkisinin ürünleri, yani tarihsel dünyanın sürekli ve yaratıcı kendini belirlemesinin ifadeleri olarak görür. Böyle bir bakış açısından doğanın belli maddi yanlarından gelenleri, doğuştan sahip olduğumuz becerilerden ya da kültürel yetişmemizden gelenlerden ayırmak mümkün değildir. Dolayısıyla Nishida kültürel kategoriler ve duygular arasında ayırım yapmaz ve estetik biçim probleminin başlıca zorluklarına cevap verir. Ve son olarak, Nishida'nın bakış açısından estetik anlamın uygun odak noktası ne sadece bilimsel bilgi, ne sadece kültürel, toplumsal kategoriler, ne sadece duygular, ne de sadece doğa dünyasıdır; bunların karşılıklı olarak birbirlerini biçimlendirmesidir. Başka bir deyişle, bizzat tarihsel dünyanın kendini biçimlendirmesi doğal çevreyi çerçeve içine almamıza rehberlik eder ve böylece kendi bilinçli, ben-merkezci niyetlerimizi dayatmamızı önleyerek ilgiden yalıtılmışlığın ve birbiri içine geçmenin sentezini ya da çelişik özdeşliğini içeren bir tavır içinde doğayı estetik bir şekilde neyse o olarak deneyimlememizi sağlar.

Sonuç olarak, Nishida'nın sanat ve estetik üzerine yapıtları sadece onun felsefesinin birliğini ve gelişimini göstermekle kalmaz aynı zamanda onun düşüncesindeki “dönüş”ün anlamını somutlaştırır. Ayrıca, Nishida'nın bilimin bakış açısıyla uyumlu bir şekilde kendi mantığının bakış açısından çağdaş felsefeye katkıda bulunma tutkusunu nasıl gerçekleştirdiğini de gösterir.

Öte yandan, Nishida'nın *Tarihsel Biçimlenme Eylemi Olarak Sanatsal Yaratım*'in yanı sıra bir seri başka geç dönem yapıtında kendi felsefesini dünya felsefesine kaynağını Doğu düşünce geleneklerinden alan bir katkı olarak tanımlaması, sık sık Doğu'nun bakış açısıyla Batı'nın bakış açısını bunlardan ilkinin daha kapsayıcı olduğu yönünde açık bir inançla karşılaştırması ve Japon kültürünün

kendine özgü niteliğiyle ilgili tartışmaları çeşitli araştırmacıların Nishida'nın geç dönem yapıtlarını 1930'larda ve 1940'ların ilk yarısında yükselen Japon milliyetçiliğiyle ilişkilendirmesine neden olmuştur. Özellikle sanat ve doğa üzerine düşünceleri Batı felsefesinin dili ve kavramları kullanılarak "Japon'a özgü" olanın kurulduğu söylemsel etkinliklerin örnekleri arasında sayılmıştır. Buna göre Japon ulusal kimliğinin oluşumunda önemli rol oynayan geleneksel doğa sevgisi ve Japon kültürünün çeşitli görünüşlerinde ifade edildiği söylenen doğa güzelliği Batı'dan ithal edilmiş bir doğa kavramı ve güzellik anlayışı üzerinde şekillenmiştir. Çağdaş Japoncada doğa anlamına gelen *shizen* kelimesi Batı dillerindeki *nature-natur-natura* anlamında ilk olarak Meiji döneminde (1868-1912) kullanılmaya başlayan bir çeviri kelimesidir. O dönemden önce Japoncada dağların, nehirlerin, ağaçların, doğa olaylarının ve doğal çevreyi oluşturan canlıların genel adını ifade eden tek bir kelime yoktu. Benzer şekilde sanat ve güzel üzerine düşünmenin bilimi olarak estetik de akademik bilginin diğer alanlarıyla birlikte "aydınlanma döneminde" (*bunmei kaika*) Batı'dan ithal edilmiştir. Modern Japon estetiğiyle ilgili Batı dillerindeki ilk kapsamlı derlemeleri hazırlayan Michael Marra'ya göre "Japon güzellik anlayışı"ndan bahsettiğimiz ve estetik kavramını modern öncesi Japonya'ya uyarladığımız her seferinde "Japonya'daki popülerliği doğrudan 'Japonya' dediğimiz imajları üretme yeteneğiyle ilişkili olan modern bir kurgudan" bahsetmiş oluruz. Marra Japon estetikçilerin kendi öznelliklerinin özü olarak hissettikleri şeyi, yani yerel bir kültürün, yerel bir sanatın kendine özgü niteliğini ifade etmek için bütünüyle yabancı bir dile, Batı estetiğinin diline başvurmak gibi bir çelişkiyle karşılaştıklarını belirtmektedir.

Gerçekten de, Kant estetiği ile Nishida'nın sanat ve güzellik üzerine düşünceleri arasında dikkat çekici benzerlikler bulunmaktadır. Kant'ın, Alman estetik geleneği tarafından da benimsenecek olan, güzelde duyulur ötesi olanın, yani doğanın amaçlılığının, yasayla dolu olumsuzluğunun, hatta insanın özbilincinin ve istencinin yasa koyan özgürlüğünün deneyimlenmesi düşüncesi, güzeli "doğanın tekniği" olarak tanımlaması, sanata niyetlerden özgür kurallılığını deha aracılığıyla "doğa"nın verdiğini söylemesi ve sanat güzelliğini doğa güzelliğiyle birleştirmesi, Nishida'nın sanat ve doğa güzelliğini ele aldığı genel çerçeveye bire bir uyuyor görünmektedir. Ama daha yakından bakıldığında Nishida'nın düşünceleriyle sadece Kant estetiği arasında değil aynı zamanda Nishida'nın estetik biçim açıklamasının temelini oluşturmak için başvurduğu Alman estetik kuramının Fiedler, Riegl ve Worringer gibi düşünürlerinin bakış açıları arsında da önemli farklılıklar olduğu görülmektedir. Bu farklılıklar temelde Nishida'nın kültür ve doğanın, özne ve çevrenin birbirlerini karşılıklı olarak belirlemesi düşüncesi çevresinde yoğunlaşırlar. Buna göre, Nishida'nın estetik biçim problemine ve sanat güzelliği ve doğa güzelliği arasındaki ayırım sorusuna yaklaşımının doğrudan daha temel öznellik problemiyle ilişkili olduğu ortaya çıkar. Nishida insan deneyimini eylem ve nesnel içeriğin çelişik özdeşliği olarak kavrayarak bir yanda insanın öz-bilincinin ve niyetli eylemlerinin ilişkisini diğer yanda insanın doğa ve diğer insanlarla ilişkisini yeni ufuklar açan bir şekilde yeniden düşünür.

Juzō Ueda (1886-1973), Shinichi Hisamatsu (1889-1980), Keiji Nishitani (1900-1990) ve Ryōsuke Ōhashi gibi Kyoto Okulu filozofları Japon sanatlarında sanatsal olanla gündelik olanın ne anlamda bir ve aynı olduğunu, sanat yaratımında ve estetik deneyimde doğa ve sanatın çelişkili özdeşliğinin, başka bir deyişle insanın

kendi öz doğasının, bilincine varılmasının niteliğini, Nishida'nın oluşturduğu çerçeve içinde daha ayrıntılı bir şekilde ele alırlar. Nishida'nın estetik biçim ve doğa ve sanat güzelliği ilişkisi anlayışı aynı zamanda Kyoto Okulu estetiğinde Nishida'dan Ōhashi'ye uzanan bir devamlılık olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.