

SEMEN RESHENIN

Individual Self-Determination
in Friedrich Schiller's
Philosophical Writings



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	7
LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS	8
ABBREVIATIONS	9
INTRODUCTION	10
1. The state of the art	13
2. Schiller as a Kantian	16
2.1. Kant's project of unification	17
2.2. Schiller's philosophy of harmony	18
3. Methodology	23
4. The structure of the dissertation	24
CHAPTER 1. WHY DOES BEAUTY MATTER?	26
1. An objective sensual theory of beauty	27
2. Schiller's deduction of beauty	32
3. Aesthetic normativity in Kant and Schiller	37
4. An objective concept of beauty	43
Conclusion	48
CHAPTER 2. A BEAUTIFUL SOUL	49
1. Kant on moral motivation	50
2. Schiller's theory of virtue	54
3. Kant's response to Schiller	63
4. Harmony as a semblance of equality	66
Conclusion	72
CHAPTER 3. WILL, CHOICE, AND SELF-DETERMINATION	73
1. Self-determination through attention	74
2. The free will as a supra-sensual faculty	78
3. Schiller's analysis of humanity	80
3.1. Three fundamental predispositions to good in Kant	80
3.2. Self and its determinations	83
3.3. The material drive and the formal drive	85
3.4. Reciprocity and the play drive	89
4. Active determinability	93
5. Three stages of the development of individual self-determination	98
5.1. The natural stage	99
5.2. The aesthetic stage	100
5.3. The moral stage	104
Conclusion	105
CHAPTER 4. SAVAGES AND BARBARIANS	106
1. A political framing of the problem of individual self-determination	107
2. Two conditions of choice	109
3. Schiller's savage/barbarian distinction	112
4. Causes of savagery and barbarism	115

5. The savage's lack of reflection	118
6. The barbarian's suppression of feelings	120
6.1. The barbarian's monkish asceticism	121
6.2. The barbarian's flaccidity and cowardice of the heart	122
6.3. The barbarian's depraved character	124
Conclusion	126
CHAPTER 5. AESTHETIC EDUCATION AND FUNCTIONS OF ART	128
1. The general structure of the functions of art	129
2. The didactic function (FA1)	132
3. The harmonizing function (FA2)	133
3.1. Clarification of terms	134
3.2. The liquifying function (FA2a)	136
3.3. The energetic function (FA2b)	140
4. The emancipatory function (FA3)	146
5. The functions of taste	152
5.1. The substitutive (FA4) and the ennobling (FA5) functions	153
5.2. The unifying function (FA6)	156
5.3. The natural dialectic of taste	156
6. The spiritualizing function of resolve (FA6)	159
Conclusion	162
CHAPTER 6. SCHILLER'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY	164
1. An overview of debates on Schiller's political philosophy	164
2. The dynamic state of rights	169
2.1. Equivalence of natural and dynamic states	170
2.2. Misinterpretations of the dynamic state	171
2.3. Moral man's dissatisfaction with the dynamic state	172
3. The ethical state of duty	173
3.1. The ethical state is a republic	174
3.2. The difference between the positions of Schiller and Kant	176
3.3. An engagement condition of the ethical state	178
3.4. On Schiller's liberalism and elitism	184
3.5. Is Schiller a classical or a modern republican?	189
3.6. Schiller on the right of rebellion	192
4. The aesthetic state of semblances	196
4.1. The aesthetic state as a regulative ideal	197
4.2. Practicality of aesthetic obligations	200
4.3. The content of aesthetic obligations	201
Conclusion	204
CONCLUSION	205
REFERENCES	212
SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN	218
CURRICULUM VITAE	224
ELULOOKIRJELDUSES	226

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ABBREVIATIONS

Kant and Schiller's works are identified in quotes by the following abbreviations:

A	Kant, I. <i>Anthropology from a pragmatic Point of View</i>
AF	Kant, I. <i>Anthropology Friedländer 1775–1776</i>
AL	Schiller, F. <i>On the Aesthetic Education of Man</i>
BL	Kant, I. <i>The Blomberg Logic</i>
CP	Schiller, F. <i>Of the Cause of the Pleasure We Derive from Tragic Objects</i>
CPJ	Kant, I. <i>Critique of the Power of Judgment</i>
CPR	Kant, I. <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i>
CPrR	Kant, I. <i>Critique of Practical Reason</i>
E	Kant, I. <i>An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?</i>
FI	Kant, I. <i>First Introduction to the Critique of the Power of Judgment</i>
GD	Schiller, F. <i>On Grace and Dignity</i>
GMM	Kant, I. <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i>
K	Schiller, F. <i>Kallias or Concerning Beauty. Letters to Gottfried Korner</i>
LB	Schiller, F. <i>On the necessary limits in the use of beautiful forms</i>
LtP	Schiller, F. <i>Letters to Prince Frederick Christian von Augustenburg</i>
MM	Kant, I. <i>Metaphysics of Morals</i>
MU	Schiller, F. <i>The Moral Utility of Aesthetic Manners</i>
OtS	Schiller, F. <i>On the Sublime</i>
PP	Kant, I. <i>Toward perpetual Peace</i>
R	Kant, I. <i>Religion within the Boundaries of mere Reason</i>
SMI	Schiller, F. <i>Stage as a Moral Institution</i>
TD	Schiller, F. <i>On the Connection between the Animal and the Spiritual Nature in Man</i>
TP	Kant, I. <i>On the common Saying: That may be correct in Theory, but it is of no use in Practice</i>
UH	Kant, I. <i>Idea for a universal History with a cosmopolitan Aim</i>

INTRODUCTION

Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805) is known mainly as a playwright and poet. However, he was also a philosopher. Schiller's contemporaries in Germany knew this well. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Schiller's close friend, called his philosophical writings the gospel of freedom (Goethe, 1989: 97). Subsequently, many German authors wrote works devoted to Schiller's philosophy and philosophical analysis of his artistic works.¹ For Anglophone scholars, by contrast, Schiller remained for a long time a peripheral figure of little interest. It would be an exaggeration to say that there was no interest at all. Yet, in the first half of the twentieth century, only Emil Wilm's *Philosophy of Schiller in Its Historical Relations* (1912) was a significant, in-depth study of Schiller's philosophy in English. The situation improved somewhat in the 1950s; a number of articles and books appeared,² but by the 1970s interest had waned again. With a few exceptions,³ the lack of interest lasted until the 1990s, and it was only from that point onward that Anglophone scholars turned again to Schiller's philosophy. Frederick Beiser's milestone book, *Schiller as Philosopher. A Re-Examination* (2005), in particular, did much to restore Schiller's reputation as a philosopher among an Anglophone audience. Highlighting Schiller's intellectual debts to Kant, Beiser argues that Schiller retained the rational core of Kant's ethics, but took a decisive step forward in a number of areas. Most importantly, Schiller developed more deeply the connection between aesthetics and ethics, while also preserving the autonomy of both (Beiser 2005: 3–4). According to Beiser, Schiller's most important work *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795, henceforth *Aesthetic Letters*) can best be described as an apology for beauty (Beiser 2005: 120).

This monograph draws on both Goethe's description of Schiller's project as a gospel of freedom and Beiser's description of it as an apology of beauty, suggesting that there is a unifying theme running through Schiller's works that individually taken seem to belong to different disciplinary fields – aesthetics, morality, and politics. This theme is self-determination. Schiller looked for, and demanded, self-determination in the actions of people, in political institutions, in pieces of art, and even in the natural objects.

¹ See, e.g., Kuno Fischer (1868), Carl Tomaschek (1862), Friedrich Ueberweg (1884), Karl Vorlander (1923), Dieter Henrich (1957), and Benno Von Wiese (1959). Schiller's philosophy was also the subject of chapters or sections in German books on the history of philosophy. See, e.g., Friedrich Jodl (1889), Ueberweg (1909), and Vorlander (1911).

² See, e.g., Elizabeth Mary Wilkinson (1955), Leonard Ashley Willoughby (1954), Deric Regin (1965), Eva Schaper (1964), and John Martin Ellis (1969). It is also worth noting Susan Langer (1953), although it is not a book about Schiller's philosophy per se, Langer takes Schiller's philosophy seriously and is deeply influenced by his theory of semblance.

³ See, e.g., Philip J. Kain (1982), Terence M. Holmes (1980), and Jeffrey Barnouw (1980).

First, I argue that there is a link between the gospel of freedom and an apology for beauty in Schiller's philosophy that has been overlooked so far. This link is provided in the closely related concepts of harmony and wholeness. Schiller's theory of beauty as freedom in appearance [*Freiheit in der Erscheinung*] is of primary importance in this regard, for with it he bridged the normative and the perceivable. Schiller pointed out that although freedom as self-determination cannot be demonstrated, the lack of self-determination has quite tangible manifestations which can be roughly summarized as manifestations of disharmony and fragmentation. This takes us to another implication of Schiller's theory of beauty. Beauty is not just a standard by which we judge certain objects, it is also an ideal to which we aspire. The practical character of aesthetic normativity is one of Schiller's most important departures from Kant. Manifestations of disharmony and fragmentation are not simply perceived as aesthetic shortcomings but should motivate a person to eliminate them by ennobling the relevant objects and their relationships. Beauty thus becomes a path to self-determination conceptualized in two regulative ideals: the personal ideal of the beautiful soul and the political ideal of the aesthetic state.

Second, I show that Schiller is not only interested in providing an analysis of self-determination and regulative ideals of the beautiful soul and the aesthetic state, but situates their rise and the capacity to pursue them in human history. He speculates that at some point people possessed an inner harmony that also sustained the social one, but then lost it in the face of modernity. Schiller thus belongs to a long line of thinkers leading from Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Max Weber that characterizes the advent of modernity as disenchantment.⁴ Originally, the world was held together by the gods and magic, which lent it its coherence. Modernity drove them away, thus destroying all ties. The imagery of the world's disenchantment is especially rich and vivid in Schiller's poem *Die Götter Griechenlandes*:

Unbewußt der Freuden, die sie schenket,
 Nie entzückt von ihrer Trefflichkeit,
 Nie gewahr des Armes, der sie lenket,
 Reicher nie durch meine Dankbarkeit,
 Fühllos selbst für ihres Künstlers Ehre,
 Gleich dem toten Schlag der Pendeluhr,
 Dient sie knechtisch dem Gesetz der Schwere,
 Die entgötterte Natur!

Unaware of the pleasures she gives,
 Never enraptured by her own excellence,
 Never aware of the arm that guides her,
 Never enriched by my gratitude,
 Insensate even to her artist's honor,

⁴ On this tradition, see Sonenscher (2020: 17).

Like the deadbeat of the pendulum clock,
She serves slavishly the law of gravity
The undeified nature!

(Schiller 1: 194, my translation)⁵

On the one hand, Schiller argues, socio-economic progress has brought great benefits for humankind, contributing to the development of sciences and culture; on the other hand, it has led to the rise of divisions within humans and in society. Human beings develop different capacities and mental faculties, each of the latter finding its own unique application in the division of labor. But by becoming specialists in a narrow set of fields and by cultivating solely the capacities and mental faculties relevant to these fields, human beings sacrifice their potential in other areas, thereby losing their wholeness. Schiller finds fragmentation and the disharmony of faculties problematic not because they are hindrances to personal happiness and prosperity but, more importantly, because they hinder the individual self-determination of humans. For example, abstract thinkers become prone to coldness, since their specialization involves analytical parsing of impressions into components, while these impressions thrill the soul only when they are whole; and businessmen become prone to narrow-mindedness since their profession forces them to focus always on the same things (see Schiller 20: 325–6, AL 21). Coldness and narrow-mindedness severely limit humans' cognition and motivation and thus their individual self-determination. So, humans in the context of modernity have to acquire inner harmony anew, at least to some extent, if they are to fully exercise their individual self-determination. The lost inner harmony of the enchanted past and the possible inner harmony of modernity are not the same, which means that the inner harmony is to be reinvented in a new socio-historical context. Schiller holds that the aesthetic experience plays a central role in this task. Although Schiller seeks to remain within the Kantian framework, his analysis of the problem of modernity and particular attention to the historicity of self-determination is another step beyond the Kantian orthodoxy. This study provides a detailed reconstruction of the pathologies that Schiller has diagnosed in human history as well as analyses his vision of the ways in which aesthetic education can help restore integrity and inner harmony in the context of modernity.

Third, I seek to prove that Schiller's analysis of self-determination has strong political implications which prove the republican character of Schiller's political thought. Schiller argues that engagement in a common cause cannot be externally coerced, otherwise, it would no longer be a genuine common cause. The engagement in a common cause is possible only on the basis of individual self-determination. This is the distinctive feature of Schiller's Kantian republicanism: it is not the virtue of citizens and the lasting ties between them that is

⁵ I have worked primarily with Schiller's original German texts, although I have consulted English translations extensively. In what follows, I will indicate when my own translations are cited and when I have substantially modified someone else's translation.

primary, but their capacity for individual self-determination, through which they can cultivate virtue and create lasting ties. Thus, the problem of inner harmony has a very important political dimension. Without inner harmony, a person is not fully capable of individual self-determination; and by not being fully capable of individual self-determination, he also proves incapable of participating in political self-determination as a citizen.

In addition, this dissertation attempts to show that Schiller's philosophical ideas are highly relevant to contemporary debates. For example, Schiller's ideas on the importance of the aesthetic in human life and the practicality of aesthetic normativity would merit to be considered in the contemporary discussion about the nature and role of aesthetic obligations.⁶ As I hope to demonstrate, Schiller argues that we have aesthetic obligations to ennoble the world and ourselves. This ennobling involves, but is not limited to, the cultivation of certain psychological attitudes that allow us to harmonize the requirements of the moral law with our own desires. This is also directly related to what Robert Louden has called Kant's impure ethics. A number of valuable studies have explored the mechanisms of motivation in Kantian moral psychology, Kant's theory of virtue, and other empirical aspects of Kantian ethics.⁷ Schiller touches directly on all these topics. Bringing him back into the contemporary Kantian discussions on the role of feeling in moral motivation and moral practice would greatly enrich these discussions. Schiller also has much to say about the role of virtue in morality, so he can contribute to the dialogue between Kantians and virtue ethicists.⁸ Yet, according to my reading, Schiller does not consider the virtue of citizens a necessary condition for the establishment and maintenance of a republic; instead, he emphasizes the individual self-determination of citizens, linking it to the capacity for free choice. The modern debate about the necessary conditions of a republic is far from over, and Schiller has much to add to it. Finally, I note that Schiller's philosophy entails unique versions of animal ethics and environmental ethics, suggesting the protection of animals and nature on aesthetic grounds. Although the dissertation focuses on reconstructing Schiller's own ideas, I will also attempt to show Schiller's relevance for such debates.

1. The state of the art

The most crucial scholarly debate about Schiller's philosophy concerns its inner coherence. Already in the early 1840s Karl Hoffmeister, in his sympathetic but

⁶ For an overview of contemporary debates about the nature and role of aesthetic obligations, see, e.g., John Dyck (2021), Howard Press (1969), Marcia May Muelder Eaton (2008), and Robbie Kubala (2018).

⁷ I will name only a few: Louden (2000: 3–30; and 2011: 50–5), Allen Wood (1999: 21–40, and 193–226), Patrick R. Frierson (2014: 116–67), and Anne Margaret Baxley (2010a).

⁸ On the contemporary debate between Kantians and virtue ethicists see, e.g., *Perfecting Virtue. New Essays on Kantian Ethics and Virtue Ethics* (2011) edited by Lawrence Jost and Julian Wuerth.

still quite critical study, *Schillers Leben, Geistesentwicklung und Werke im Zusammenhang*, noted that Schiller was trying to combine the incompatible, namely beauty and the sublime, grace and dignity, the aesthetic and the ethical, reason and sensibility, freedom and nature, and so on (see Hoffmeister 1888). The problem is not only that Schiller is attempting an impossible synthesis, but also that it is as if he cannot make up his mind about his allegiance. He sometimes says that such a synthesis is not possible, thus sharing the Kantian dualisms, but he also says that all elements are united in beauty, thus taking a monistic stance. This controversial feature of Schiller's argumentation is noted, for example, by Robert Sommer (1892), Bernhard Engel (1908), Wilhelm Böhm (1927), Hans Lutz (1928), Käte Hamburger (1956), Stanley Kerry (1961), William M. Calder (1967), Paul de Man (1996), Steven Martinson (1996), and David W. Pugh (1997). Pugh's position is noteworthy, as he is particularly careful to describe all of Schiller's antithetical statements. He argues that we should not overemphasize Schiller's use of Kantian terminology and that Schiller should be seen primarily as a Neo-Platonic metaphysician who reasoned about the nature of reality. Pugh explains the specificity of Schiller's argumentation not by mere carelessness or philosophical incompetence, but by the fact that Schiller is trying to resolve the metaphysical dilemma of "whether the intelligible world is entirely separate from the sensible world or whether the latter participates in some way in the former" (Pugh 1997: xii). According to Pugh, Schiller shows that the dilemma can be resolved in the world of aesthetic semblance, but this result means only the introduction of a new dualism, now between the world of aesthetic semblance and reality, with the latter retaining the dilemma unresolved. Pugh's metaphysical reading of Schiller has many implications; in particular, it is the basis for Pugh's thesis on Schiller's political quietism. According to this thesis, Schiller in his texts offers aesthetic ways of getting along with political problems rather than political ways to solve them. Political self-determination, in this reading, is entirely relegated to the realm of the illusory.

There is another view of an apparent contradiction in Schiller's philosophy that is particularly characteristic of the neo-Kantian tradition, though not limited to it. One of the first proponents of this view, Theodor Danzel (1848), for example, was a Hegelian. On this view, when Schiller speaks of what seems to be an impossible synthesis of dualisms, he is not making a metaphysical thesis about reality or proposing poetic fiction related to the world of aesthetic semblance but is referring to imperatives and regulative ideals. The most comprehensive non-metaphysical interpretation of Schiller in this spirit was defended by Beiser.⁹ According to Beiser, there are two especially important regulative ideals in Schiller's philosophy. First, there is the ideal of perfect virtue, the beautiful soul in which the requirements of the moral law are in harmony with those of ennobled sensibility, which means that she is capable of

⁹ The importance of imperatives and regulative ideals in Schiller's philosophy has also been noted by, e.g., Wilm (1912), Ernst Cassirer (1924), and Manfred Frank (2018).

following her duty with ease and joy. Second, Schiller also develops an account of the ideal of perfect polity and sociability, an aesthetic state in which all natural beings, that is, not only human beings, and the relations between them are ennobled to the point where each is an equal citizen and never uses the other only as a means. Both these ideals are not fully attainable and merely guide us in the right direction. In this reading, the contradiction attributed to Schiller disappears, since the unattainability of the ideal does not mean that it cannot be approximated, so the ideal is still directly relevant to possible actions and attitudes (Beiser 2005: 111).

I intend to further contribute to the non-metaphysical coherent interpretation of Schiller's philosophy. As mentioned earlier, a central concept around which I build my interpretation of Schiller's philosophy as a whole is self-determination. Following Beiser (2005: 213–37) as well as Samantha Matherne and Nick Riggle (2020) discussing the different kinds of freedom and harmony in Schiller, I aim to provide a detailed delineation of Schiller's different types of state, freedom, and harmony, and their juxtaposition with different aspects of self-determination. I concur with Beiser's reading of the complete unification of reason and sensuality, morality and aesthetics, nature and freedom, and so on, as regulative ideals, but I also draw attention to those Schiller's concepts that suggest only a certain degree of harmony. My aim is to distinguish with clarity when Schiller speaks of unattainable regulative ideals and when he speaks of something more realizable. In particular, I show that, contrary to Beiser (2005: 141–2), we should not equate the unattainable ideal of perfect virtue, that is, a beautiful soul, and the concept of active determinability from the *Aesthetic Letters*. Both involve some inner harmony between the mental faculties of a person, but Schiller describes these two harmonies very differently. A beautiful soul is more properly understood as the result of complete individual self-determination, in which the person transforms herself into a perfect creation. And active determinability is merely a condition of individual self-determination. This reading can be supported by textual evidence. Schiller describes the beautiful soul as “the ideal of perfected humanity” (Schiller 20: 298, GD 161), while in the condition of active determinability, man regains merely “the capacity for humanity [*Vermögen zur Menschheit*]” (Schiller 20: 378, AL 78). In other words, as I show in my dissertation, Schiller did not believe that individual self-determination is possible only under the condition of a perfect and stable harmony of mental faculties, implying complete agreement between the requirements of moral law and those of ennobled sensuality. On the contrary, individual self-determination is a condition of the pursuit of the ideal of the beautiful soul.

Another feature of my contribution is the attention to Schiller's concept of the ethical state. Almost all authors are preoccupied with his concept of the aesthetic state, arguing either that it is fiction (see, e.g., Pugh 1997: 155) or a regulative ideal (see, e.g., Beiser 2005: 164). The ethical state goes virtually unnoticed. I show that unlike the aesthetic state – which I follow Beiser in interpreting as an unattainable regulative ideal – the ethical state is a feasible

political project. This brings me to another debate to which I aim to contribute. I have already mentioned that Pugh sees Schiller as a political quietist, whilst a similar position can also be found in Hans-Georg Gadamer (2004), and Terry Eagleton (1990). Still, most authors believe that Schiller offers some political project.¹⁰ I too adhere to this view, but am going to defend a unique republican interpretation of Schiller, with particular emphasis on the citizens' capacity for individual self-determination as a condition for the establishment and maintenance of the ethical state, which I construe as Schiller's version of a republic. Moreover, as I show, the quietest readings do not fit well with the importance Schiller attaches to the search for an objective criterion of beauty. The objective criterion of beauty implies that without changing some objective facts about the state, we cannot begin to perceive that state as aesthetic. Of course, supporters of quietist readings can simply say that this is yet another example of the incoherence in Schiller's philosophy, but then they would not so much explain Schiller's search for an objective criterion of beauty as they would explain it away.

Finally, I contribute to the non-metaphysical coherent interpretation of Schiller's philosophy by showing that Schiller provides specific guidance for resolving some of the dilemmas he discusses. In other words, there is a strict hierarchy in his antithetical statements. Despite my disagreement with Pugh's metaphysical interpretation, I want to note that his detailed description of Schiller's contradictory tendencies to synthesize unification and separation, detachment and engagement, aesthetic harmony and ethical conflict, has greatly helped me to grasp Schiller's approach to resolving dilemmas and convinced me that in some areas the difference between Kant's and Schiller's positions is exaggerated. In particular, it applies to the ideal of a beautiful soul. Anne Margaret Baxley describes the relationship between a beautiful soul's reason and sensibility as an equal partnership (Baxley 2003: 503; 2010b: 86, 118). In my dissertation, I challenge her reading and show that even Schiller's regulative ideals do not suggest a completely equal partnership. As soon as insurmountable dilemmas between the aesthetic and the ethical arise, Schiller, as a true Kantian, demands that they be resolved in favor of the ethical, that is, in favor of reason.

2. Schiller as a Kantian

The relationship of Schiller's ideas to those of Kant is of utmost importance to my study. Self-determination is a Kantian theme, and Schiller was very well aware of this. Beiser (2005) has provided a major contribution to the Schiller scholarship in this respect, having shown the central relevance of Kant for understanding Schiller's conceptual architecture. I aim to expand on his work,

¹⁰ See e.g. Beiser (1992, and 2005), Holmes (1980), David Kaiser (1995), Douglas Moggach (2007, and 2008), Alexander Schmidt (2009), Jeffrey Church (2014), Matherne and Riggle (2020, and 2021).

exploring the precise relationship between Schiller's and Kant's understanding of self-determination. As I intend to show, Schiller not only heavily draws on Kant, but also goes beyond Kant's vision in a number of significant respects. I touch on this subject in one way or another in every chapter of my dissertation. In this section, I will briefly outline how Schiller sought to continue Kant's project.

2.1. Kant's project of unification

There is a wide agreement among scholars that of all Kant's works, it was the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (henceforth *Third Critique*) that influenced Schiller most.¹¹ In what follows, I will provide a brief overview of Kant's project in the *Third Critique*, so as to determine which of Kant's goals in this work resonated with Schiller.

The two main topics of the *Third Critique* are aesthetics and teleology. Kant believes that both aesthetics and teleology involve what he calls reflecting judgments.¹² What does it mean for a judgment to be reflecting? The power of judgment in general is defined by Kant as the faculty "for thinking the particular under the universal" (Kant 5: 179, CPJ 66),¹³ but judgments can be divided into two sets. This division depends on how particulars and universals are connected in a judgment. If we know the universal (concept or principle) in advance, then in the process of judging we simply subsume the particular under the already given universal. In this case, our judgment is determining. But if we do not have a needed universal, then in the process of judging we reflect on the particular and seek to form a new concept or principle under which this particular can be subsumed. In that case, our judgment is reflecting. Kant argues that all reflective judgments involve the reliance on purposiveness which he defines as the "lawfulness of the contingent as such" (Kant 20: 217, FI 20). I will not further elaborate on this complex topic here, but simply point out that Kant's main goal in the *Third Critique* is to identify an a priori principle of the reflecting power of judgment which is somehow able to unite lawfulness and contingency. Following Sebastian Gardner (2016) I characterize Kant's project in the *Third Critique* as the project of unification. This project has different aspects. Among other things, Kant is interested in the architectonic unity of critical philosophy as well as in the taxonomic "systematicity of the body of our scientific concepts and laws itself" (Guyer 2000: xxiv), but these two aspects of Kant's project of unification have little interest for Schiller. Schiller is considerably more interested in what can be called the practical aspect of Kant's

¹¹ See, e.g., Wilm (1912: 91); Scharpe (1991: 119); Frank (2018: 37).

¹² I follow the Cambridge edition of Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* in using the terms 'determining' and 'reflecting' for the translation of 'bestimmend' and 'reflektierend'. On the reasons for the choice of terminology, see Paul Guyer's editorial preface to this edition (Guyer 2000: xlvii).

¹³ In this dissertation, I cite Kant's translations as presented in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*.

project of unification. By the practical aspect I understand Kant's intention to show how laws of freedom (i.e. moral laws) have efficacy in the realm of nature:

Now although there is an incalculable gulf fixed between the domain of the concept of nature, as the sensible, and the domain of the concept of freedom, as the supersensible, so that from the former to the latter (thus by means of the theoretical use of reason) no transition is possible, just as if there were so many different worlds, the first of which can have no influence on the second: yet the latter should have an influence on the former, namely the concept of freedom should make the end that is imposed by its laws real in the sensible world; and nature must consequently also be able to be conceived in such a way that the lawfulness of its form is at least in agreement with the possibility of the ends that are to be realized in it in accordance with the laws of freedom. – Thus there must still be a ground of the unity of the supersensible that grounds nature with that which the concept of freedom contains practically, the concept of which, even if it does not suffice for cognition of it either theoretically or practically, and thus has no proper domain of its own, nevertheless makes possible the transition from the manner of thinking in accordance with the principles of the one to that in accordance with the principles of the other (Kant 5: 175–6, CPJ 63).

Kant develops the practical aspect of unification in his political and historical essays. It can be divided into various related topics: the possibility of normative binding in the realm of nature, the possibility of moral motivation, the possibility of achieving moral ends, etc. But the main goal of the practical project is to establish the possibility that nature around us and within us somehow favors or, at least, allows us to set and pursue, moral ends. To show this possibility Kant turns to teleology and aesthetics. According to Kant, the teleological investigation eventually reveals us the final end of creation – morality; aesthetic judgments of beauty show that we can love something even if we do not have any interest in this object; aesthetic judgments of the sublime reveal to us that we can esteem something even if it is contrary to our interests; and the existence of beautiful objects in nature gives us a hope that nature around us is hospitable to our moral ends. Kant's practical aspect of unification becomes a starting point in Schiller's mature philosophy.

2.2. Schiller's philosophy of harmony

In his works, Schiller develops the two main themes of the *Third Critique* – teleology and aesthetics. Although he is not very interested in biological teleology (i.e. in Kantian consideration of organisms as natural ends),¹⁴ Schiller heavily relies on a variation of Kantian teleology in building his philosophy of

¹⁴ It should be noted, however, that in *Kallias or Concerning Beauty* (henceforth *Kallias*), Schiller develops the notion of nature as the inner principle of a thing's existence, and there are some interesting parallels with Kant's concept of the natural end. But I do not elaborate on this in my dissertation.

history. Like Kant, Schiller believes that an important stage in historical development is the establishment of a state based on universal rational principles, the ethical state. However, this task can only be accomplished if the prospective citizens of the ethical state restore their capacity for humanity which will enable them to reflect on their choices and then freely choose for themselves; otherwise, the task of establishment of the ethical state cannot even be properly set. That is, Schiller addresses the Kantian problem of an incalculable gulf fixed between the domain of nature and the domain of freedom. It is not enough to formulate the right principles and apply them properly to the current situation, as one may recognize that one has a right reason to do something and still be unmoved by this reason. It is necessary to somehow empower the right reasons and principles with motivating force. Until this happens, one's freedom of choice is severely limited. In other words, it is necessary to create a bridge between reason and sensibility, between freedom and nature. How does Schiller propose to achieve this? Schiller follows Kant in believing that freedom itself (as something fully unconditioned) can never be given in experience as an event of the sensual world. But freedom can be experienced indirectly through beauty.¹⁵ Beauty – as Schiller defines it – is freedom in appearance. Through the aesthetic experience of beauty, people can restore their capacity for humanity, so they can establish an ethical state and become its citizens.

But, according to Schiller, the ethical state is not the final point in history. It is a condition for further ethical, political, and aesthetic development of people. If beauty earlier was a means to enable a person to reflect on her choices and then freely choose for herself, now, already free, this person begins to regard beauty not as a means but as an end. As I show in my dissertation, Schiller speaks in his writings of two such ends, construed as ideals. First, a person strives for greater harmony within herself, thereby realizing more and more of her freedoms and gradually transforming herself into a work of art. Schiller calls this ideal of inner harmony a beautiful soul. To become a beautiful soul the person needs to cultivate her virtue, thereby bringing her psychological inclinations into harmony with the requirements of moral law. Second, a person also seeks to achieve ever more genuine sociability and an ever more harmonious interaction with other people and the world. Schiller calls the ideal of outer harmony the aesthetic state. It is achieved through the gradual ennobling of all spheres of human life and the world itself. The ideal of the aesthetic state implies that all natural beings should be regarded as things in themselves, and none of them should be treated merely as a means.

Thus, Schiller's contribution to the Kantian practical project of unification can be divided into four parts. First, Schiller shows how the experience of the beautiful restores the capacity for humanity, producing a connection between principles and feelings and, thus, securing moral motivation. Second, Schiller shows how through individual self-determination, a person contributes to the

¹⁵ This point is not that strange for a Kantian. See, e.g., Guyer (1993: 27–47).

establishment of an ethical state, thus embodying moral principles in political institutions. Third, Schiller offers a further ideal for inner harmonization, the ideal of a beautiful soul, and briefly describes how one should strive for this ideal. Fourth, Schiller lays out a further ideal of outer harmonization, the ideal of the aesthetic state, and proposes what I call an aesthetic imperative which is the basis for genuine and free sociability.

I intend to show that there is a strong conceptual connection between freedom and harmony in Schiller. This connection can be roughly formulated thus: if something lacks harmony in a certain sense, there is a sufficient reason to assume that it also lacks freedom in a certain sense. One can notice the implication that there are different kinds of freedoms and harmonies in Schiller's philosophy. Indeed I do hold such a view, providing evidence for it in the following chapters. Now, I will simply list the different kinds of freedoms and harmonies, explaining also briefly how establishing a connection between them continues and deepens Kant's moral project of unification.

The first kind of freedom in Schiller is moral freedom, a concept that Schiller inherits from Kant. Basically, it is the famous Kantian notion of moral autonomy. Moral autonomy is a property of a rational will, consisting in self-legislation. It means that every rational being with a will, just because she is a rational being with a will, gives universal laws (i.e. the moral law), binding all rational wills including her own. The property of moral autonomy conceptually grounds and explains a person's moral responsibility and imputability. What kind of harmony does it involve? Kant himself answers this question: all maxims compatible with moral law can be universalized without contradiction. "[T]he moral law expresses nothing other than the autonomy of pure practical reason, i.e., freedom; and this [autonomy] is itself the formal condition of all maxims, under which alone they can **harmonize** with the supreme practical law" (Kant 5: 33, CPrR 166, my emphasis). To simplify, we can say that moral freedom involves the **inner harmony of the practical reason** with itself. In all matters relating to moral freedom as such, Schiller simply follows Kant and offers no innovation.¹⁶ His contribution concerns other kinds of freedoms and harmonies.

I have already mentioned the second kind of freedom, which is freedom in appearance. One thing must be emphasized straight away: freedom in appearance is not real freedom, but only its analogy or semblance. According to Schiller's theory of beauty, as presented in *Kallias*, freedom in appearance (or beauty) can be observed in the object only if this object is perceived by us as if it is both self-determined and self-determining. It means, that, on the one hand, the object in question must have a technical form that calls for some explanation or interpretation, but, on the other hand, this call for explanation or inter-

¹⁶ Schiller associates this kind of harmony solely with reason, or more specifically, with the formal drive, as reason's motive force. The formal drive "bring[s] harmony into the diversity of his appearance and affirm[s] his person amidst all change of condition" (Schiller 20: 345–6, AL 42–3).

pretation should not incline us to search for it outside the representation of the object itself. Now to put the same thought in simpler language: Schiller's point is that a beautiful object always challenges our cognitive faculties, i.e. we want to understand and interpret it somehow; but as soon as we try to explain this object by reference to some external entity, we are leaving the realm of aesthetic experience. So, for example, if we say that a poem is written in such a way as to flatter the king, or to teach children the right behavior, we do not consider the poem in terms of aesthetics. And if our reflection on the object stubbornly pushes us to such external explanations, then most likely this object is very far from the ideal of true beauty. Schiller believes that an object is perceived by us as both self-determined and self-determining only if it is characterized by a **harmony between form and matter**. I provide another example to explain this idea. If looking at a monument, the spectators constantly notice that it is essentially just a piece of processed marble, then in this monument matter dominates the form. In other words, the artist was unable to tame the matter of marble to make it imperceptible. If looking at the monument, the spectators constantly notice and cannot abstract from the fact that it is just another object used for the propaganda of some ideas, say, patriotism, then in this monument form dominates over matter, which leaves no room for interpretation or play of the imagination.

The third kind of freedom is anthropological (or holistic) freedom. To some extent, it is an application of the previous kind of freedom to moral matters. Schiller develops an account of anthropological freedom in *On Grace and Dignity* (henceforth *Grace and Dignity*). The basic idea is that we cannot genuinely call a person free who is torn apart by internal conflicts between his rational and sensible self. Even if the person systematically commits the right and rational acts but his behavior makes it clear to us that in the process he constantly overpowers and tortures himself, we intuitively feel that something is wrong with him. We perceive that his rational and sensual selves are in a struggle. This struggle is perceived internally (i.e., by a person himself) as painful self-necessitation, and externally (i.e., by a bystander) as a lack of grace, which reveals that this person is in some way unfree, that is, he lacks anthropological freedom. Schiller's notion of a beautiful soul embodies this kind of freedom. In a beautiful soul, sensibility is ennobled by reason, and reason respects sensibility and endorses its desires for self-expression and happiness when they are in agreement with the moral law. Anthropological freedom involves what I call the **harmony of dispositions**, or harmony in direction. A beautiful soul's mental faculties rarely contradict each other, i.e. they rarely move a person to different directions. The harmony in disposition is self-brought, it is the product of conscious self-cultivation. For this reason, the person who possesses it is, in a sense, a piece of art, or a beautiful soul. In his theory of the beautiful soul, Schiller offers one possible variant of the Kantian theory of virtue and shows how the laws of freedom may become, at least partially, one's nature.

The fourth kind of freedom is freedom of choice. If moral freedom is a legislative aspect of will, then freedom of choice is an executive aspect of will. Schiller conceives of freedom of choice as a capacity for humanity and engages with it in the *Aesthetic Letters*. The capacity for humanity is what makes one's self-determination possible. When someone decides to act in a certain way, he uses this kind of freedom. According to my reading, Schiller believes that each act of choice must involve certain properties. First, the act of choice should involve at least some deliberateness and reflective distance. The choice cannot be fully automatic, i.e. a person must be able to recognize herself in her choice. And, second, the act of choice should involve at least some commitment, i.e. the choice must lead to some relevant change in a person's behavior. So reflective distance and motivational commitment are necessary conditions of choice. But, according to Schiller, too often one of these conditions (or even both) is not met. To explain how this is possible, Schiller develops a complex theory of choice. According to him, the act of choice must be preceded by a certain mental state, which he calls an aesthetic condition. This condition is characterized by active determinability which is caused by the harmony between equally powerful attempts of both reason and sensibility to determine one's will. I call this harmony the **harmony of power**. While considering possible options, a person should be able, on the one hand, to take a reflective distance from them in order to avoid complete automatism, and, on the other hand, he should be able to represent them lively enough to feel motivated. Schiller argues that only when sensibility and reason are reciprocally strained, the resulting harmony provides both reflective distance and motivational commitment needed for the act of choice. The most important feature of Schiller's theory of choice is its historicity. Schiller does not believe that at all times people had the equal capacity to choose, in Schiller's terms, the equal capacity for humanity. According to Schiller, the reciprocal interaction between sensibility and reason presupposes a harmonious development of all human capacities. Therefore, the historical conditions that impede the harmonious development of human capacities are the least favorable for the capacity for humanity. Schiller particularly singles out modernity, characterized by a global division of labor and over-specialization, as a time unfavorable for the capacity for humanity. Schiller's project of aesthetic education is aimed at solving the problem of modernity by restoring to people, through the aesthetic experience of beauty, the lost wholeness of humanity.

Schiller's fifth kind of freedom is republican political freedom. The republican interpretation of Schiller's political philosophy has become very influential in recent years,¹⁷ and I hope to further bolster it with my dissertation. Schiller demonstrates his republican views especially clearly when he introduces the concept of the ethical state. As I intend to show, the ethical state involves the social contract as an act of its establishment and the general will as an instrument of legislation. In the ethical state, citizens actively participate in

¹⁷ See, e.g., Beiser (2005), Church (2014), Moggach (2007, 2008), and Schmidt (2009).

legislation, though not directly but through elected representatives. This way they exercise their political freedom. Republican freedom does not involve a special kind of harmony, but it does require an **active engagement** of citizens in determining the fate of the republic. And such engagement, in Schiller's view, is possible only if the citizens of the republic can exercise their capacity for humanity, in other words, they must be capable of individual self-determination through acts of free choice which in turn requires a harmony of power and an aesthetic condition of active determinability.

Finally, Schiller also talks about the ideal of an aesthetic state, in which "everything – even the serving tool [*dienende Werkzeug*] – is a free citizen who has equal rights with the noblest" (Schiller 20: 412, AL 112). This is largely a development of the ideas of anthropological freedom, which Schiller associates with the beautiful soul. It is not enough for a beautiful soul to be beautiful. She needs to ennoble the whole world, demanding that all natural objects should be regarded as ends in themselves (Schiller 26: 212, K 170). The utopian freedom of an aesthetic state serves only as a regulative ideal. It cannot actually be achieved, and we should not forget its unattainability, as, otherwise, we run the risk of falling into the most dangerous fanaticism [*Schwärmerei*]. Nevertheless, being guided by the regulative ideal of the aesthetic state, we can promote **universal harmony** in all relations between natural beings, be they other humans, animals, artifacts, or nature in general.

3. Methodology

Like any scholarly study of philosophical texts, methodologically, my dissertation relies heavily on textual evidence, arguments, and reconstruction of Schiller's own arguments. The main two principles in my reconstruction are charity and systematicity. When I began to study Schiller's philosophical texts, almost immediately I noticed certain systematicity in them. I do not mean by systematicity anything similar to the grand all-encompassing philosophical projects of Kant or Hegel. What I mean is that, in my opinion, we do more justice to Schiller's texts if we treat them not simply as discourses on disparate topics, but as the interrelated elements of a coherent and complex project and narrative. Schiller's philosophical works complement each other and become noticeably clearer in the light of the others. For example, if we ignore Schiller's understanding of aesthetic normativity as practical, which he defends in *Kallias*, Schiller's concept of the aesthetic state introduced in the *Aesthetic Letters* becomes obscure, which may lead us to erroneous quietist interpretations. As another example, I will note the importance of distinguishing between Schiller's tasks in *Grace and Dignity* and the *Aesthetic Letters*. Only by viewing these works as complementary can we fully distinguish Schiller's theory of virtue in *Grace and Dignity* from his theory of individual self-determination in the *Aesthetic Letters*. Unfortunately, I devoted little attention to Schiller's brilliant essay *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry*. This was mainly due to the fact that the

themes of this essay were slightly beyond the scope of the research I had set for myself in my dissertation. This essay I would especially like to revisit in the future since I believe that its political aspect is still not quite addressed in the literature.

In addition to my allegiance to the principles of charity and systematicity, I was doing my best to be critical and historically accurate. Some of Schiller's own philosophical ideas can only be clarified in a historical context, the chief example, of course, being the French Revolution, to whose sad consequences he refers in the *Aesthetic Letters*. In relation to Schiller, I find particularly important the sensitivity to what Karl Ameriks calls the historical turn (see Ameriks 2006: 273–81). Ameriks associates its beginning with the figure of Karl Leonhard Reinhold, a contemporary of Schiller. Very roughly, the idea is that only by considering philosophical problems historically and reading the previous authors as trying to answer certain challenges left by their predecessors as well as by history itself, it is possible to unite historicity and systematicity. Another aspect of the historical turn is that it involves the shift “from a non-developmental to a developmental conception of reason” (Reichl 2020: 2). We cannot find such a shift in Schiller in full; nevertheless, in the *Aesthetic Letters*, Schiller points out the historicity of individual self-determination and its dependence on natural conditions (Schiller 20: 373–4, AL 73). In introducing a historical dimension to the problem of individual self-determination, Schiller follows a similar path to that of Reinhold. In particular, Reinhold argued for the importance of the historical responsiveness of philosophy to the most basic needs of the age (see Reinhold 2005: 16, 33, 177, and 188). A very similar emphasis on the importance of sensitivity to the needs of our time can be found in Schiller. He claims that “[c]ulture of the capacity for feeling is the more urgent need at this time, not merely because it will enable better insight into life, but because it prompts the improvement of such insight itself” (Schiller 20: 332, AL 28). In this statement, Schiller both criticizes Kant's philosophy, which, by virtue of its form, has proved insufficiently sensitive to the needs of the age, and outlines his own philosophical task. Despite the criticism, Schiller believed that the spirit of Kant's philosophy, unlike its letter, contained the resources necessary to meet the need of the age. In the dissertation, I sought to be sensitive to how the needs of the times guided Schiller in his development of Kant's ideas.

4. The structure of the dissertation

The dissertation generally follows the aforementioned typology of freedom and harmony in Schiller. In Chapter One, I propose my reading of Schiller's *Kallias*. I reconstruct Schiller's theory of beauty to show the conceptual connections he makes between ethics and aesthetics. I will pay particular attention to Schiller's understanding of aesthetic normativity as practical since his most important moral and political concepts are based on it. Chapter Two is devoted to

Schiller's *Grace and Dignity*. I show how Schiller, by applying his theory of beauty to moral matters, constructs a Kantian theory of virtue. I also respond to the criticism that Schiller's theory of virtue rejects the primacy of reason over sensibility in favor of a genuine equal relationship between the two. The next three chapters focus on Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters*. The subject of Chapter Three is Schiller's theory of individual self-determination. I show that Schiller distinguishes between the noumenal and empirical aspects of self-determination and argues that the latter can be hindered by the disharmonious development of a person in the context of modernity. In Chapter Four, I turn to Schiller's distinction between barbarians and savages. I show that for Schiller, progress and the division of labor have made people disharmoniously developed, analyzing in detail both variants of this disharmony, barbarians and savages. In Chapter Five, I offer an analysis of the various functions of art described in Schiller's texts with the specific purpose of showing how aesthetic education should solve the challenge of modernity, restoring people's capacity for individual self-determination. And finally, in Chapter Six, I discuss the political implications of Schiller's philosophy of self-determination. I defend the republican interpretation of an ethical state, arguing that an uncompromised capacity for humanity in citizens is a necessary condition for the establishment and maintenance of the ethical state, whilst showing, at the same time, that the aesthetic state should be understood as a regulative ideal that presupposes an ethical state and calls for ennobling the citizens and the world around them.

CHAPTER 1. WHY DOES BEAUTY MATTER?

Friedrich Schiller's *Kallias or Concerning Beauty* (henceforth *Kallias*) was not destined to be completed. What we now call *Kallias* is actually a set of preparatory sketches that Schiller planned to develop into a full-fledged book comparable in volume to his only novel, *The Ghost-Seer* (about 150 pages). These sketches are seven letters written and sent by Schiller to his friend Christian Gottfried Körner in January/February 1793. According to Schiller's plan, Körner was to help Schiller develop the main ideas for future work, providing a critical view from the outside. Although Schiller never finished the project for a variety of reasons, the main ideas of *Kallias* are crucial to understanding the rest of his philosophy. In this chapter, I show that Schiller's aesthetics presented in *Kallias* grounds his future theory of virtue and the concept of the beautiful soul, his theory of free choice and the concept of the aesthetic condition of determinability, and his political philosophy and the concept of the aesthetic state. I primarily focus on the aspects of Schiller's aesthetics that are important for the other parts of his philosophy touched upon in this dissertation. That is, this chapter is not intended to be a comprehensive coverage of Schiller's aesthetics, its place in the history of aesthetics, its influence on other aestheticians, art critics, artists, and so on.

Some scholars (Schaper 1964, Beiser 2005) hold that Schiller's main task in the *Kallias* is to find an objective principle of taste or an objective concept of beauty. It must be said that Schiller himself repeatedly emphasizes that his task in *Kallias* is "to construct an objective concept of beauty and to legitimate it completely a priori out of the nature of rationality" (Schiller 26: 175, K 145), which provides support to this interpretation. Nevertheless, if we look at *Kallias* in a systematic way in order to establish exactly what contribution this text makes to Schiller's philosophy as a whole, we discover that the objectivity of beauty is only a minor thesis in relation to the more fundamental task Schiller initiates in *Kallias*. This more fundamental task is to answer the very question of why beauty matters. And as part of his answer, Schiller offers a substantially different understanding of aesthetic normativity from that offered by Kant. In an early letter to Körner (March 30, 1789), he says:

man, in whom once the feeling for beauty, for euphony [*Wohlklang*] and symmetry has become active and dominant, cannot rest until he dissolves everything around him into unity, makes all fragments whole, completes everything deficient, or, which amounts to the same thing, until he brings all forms around him closer to perfection (Schiller 25: 238, my translation).¹⁸

¹⁸ It should be noted that in this letter, Schiller does not yet distinguish beauty from perfection. But in *Kallias* he already introduces this distinction and makes it clear that aesthetic normativity calls for beauty and harmony, not perfection in the sense of the Leibnizian-Wolffian philosophy.

Schiller believes that beauty matters because, like morality, it drives us to change the world, making it more beautiful, and, hence, more harmonious, just, and joyful. Our urge for beauty, the play drive, as he calls it, is an expression of the holistic humanity in us. The play drive involves the reciprocal interaction of the rational and sensual within us, and through this interaction alone can we achieve the highest harmony with ourselves and the world. The search for an objective concept of beauty follows by necessity from this overarching task. If we want to make the world more beautiful, there must be some objective properties that make the aesthetic experience of beauty possible; these properties we must sustain, create, and cultivate in the objective world not only around us, but also within us, because as natural embodied beings we are also a part of the objective world. In other words, if beauty has no objective basis, if objects have no properties that allow us to perceive these objects as beautiful, then our urge for beauty, i.e. the play drive, cannot in any conceivable way move us to change the world or ourselves as natural embodied beings.

This understanding of beauty implies that we should look at the world as artists, seeking to enhance or discover the beautiful in it, rather than simply as contemplators, enjoying the beauty that is already there. If for Kant aesthetic normativity concerns only our reflective response to certain kinds of perception and our justified expectation of the same response from others (what Kant calls the subjective universality of aesthetic judgment), for Schiller it involves an active attitude toward the world: beauty is a justified human need, so a person has a justified wish to make the world more beautiful. In this dissertation, I refer to the first kind of normativity as theoretical and the second kind as practical. My main thesis in this chapter is that, unlike Kant, Schiller considers aesthetic normativity to be practical.

I begin this chapter with a brief overview of Schiller's description of his project in *Kallias*. Then I direct my efforts to unpack Schiller's extremely dense deduction of beauty and the classification of different kinds of judgment. In his deduction, Schiller links aesthetic judgments directly to practical reason, thus departing from Kantian orthodoxy, according to which aesthetic judgments are more akin to cognitive judgments than to practical ones. In the third section, I clarify the distinction between theoretical and practical varieties of normativity and show that whereas Kant models aesthetic normativity after theoretical normativity, Schiller takes practical normativity as his model. I briefly discuss the implication of Schiller's theory of beauty that makes his later projects possible. Finally, I turn to Schiller's analysis of beauty and its necessary conditions and show that it is successful enough to substantiate the demands of aesthetic normativity as Schiller understands it.

1. An objective sensual theory of beauty

I begin with a brief overview of Schiller's description of the project in *Kallias*. Officially, as I mentioned earlier, Schiller intends to construct an objective

concept of beauty. What is his motivation behind this project? His classification of possible theories of beauty sheds some light on this question. According to Schiller, there are two main criteria for any theory of beauty. The first criterion is ontological: where exactly is beauty contained? And there are two answers: it is either contained in the objects themselves – then the theory of beauty is objective; or it is contained in the subject’s response to the object – then the theory is subjective. The second criterion is epistemological: which faculty of the mind is involved in the justification of our judgments of taste, or at least which of them is most important in this process? And there are also two answers: it is either reason – then the theory is rational; or it is sensibility – then the theory is sensual.¹⁹ Thus, there are four possible theories of beauty. I will discuss them one by one.

First, there is a subjective sensual theory. Beauty is located in our response to an aesthetic object²⁰ and is perceived by means of sensibility. Schiller mentions Edmund Burke as a representative of this theory. According to Schiller, Burkiens are right in understanding beauty as an unmediated and independent quality but fail to recognize that judgment of beauty is more than “a mere affection of sensibility” (Schiller 26: 176, K 146).

Second, there is an objective rational theory. Beauty is a property of an aesthetic object itself, and we discern it by means of reason. This theory can also be called the perfection theory of beauty, as the main proponents of this theory associate the property sought with perfection. The perfection theory of beauty is closely associated with the Leibnizian-Wolffian philosophy. As its prominent representatives, Schiller mentions Felix Mendelssohn and Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (Schiller 26: 176, K 146). Schiller praises the perfection theory for grasping that beauty involves some kind of purposiveness but berates it for its inability to distinguish the purposiveness of beauty from logical goodness (i.e. perfection). As Guyer notes, it is somewhat unfair of Schiller to classify Wolffians as pure rationalists about beauty, as there is also a strong emotional dimension in their theories (Guyer 2014: 471). However, I think that Schiller may have responded to this by saying that even if we allow that there is an emotional component in the perfection theory of beauty, perfection itself is still a purely rational concept.

Third, there is a subjective rational theory, and Kant is its main proponent. For Kant, the judgment of beauty is a pleasurable sensation produced in

¹⁹ In my presentation of Schiller’s classification, I roughly follow Frederick Beiser (2005: 53–55). Beiser also considers an alternative interpretation of the Schiller classification criteria, according to which the subjective/objective distinction concerns the justification of aesthetic judgments and the sensual/rational distinction concerns the ontological status of beauty. However, Beiser concludes that this interpretation is even more problematic than the one discussed here (see Beiser 2005: 54).

²⁰ In this chapter, I use the term ‘aesthetic object’ to refer to any object about which we can make judgments of taste. I deliberately refrain from using the term ‘beautiful object’ because one of the most important debates in aesthetics at the time was precisely the debate about what exactly the predicate ‘beautiful’ refers to: to the object itself or to our response to it.

response to an aesthetic object. But, unlike Burke, he thinks that this pleasurable sensation is produced not immediately by the empirical intuition of this object, but rather it is an effect of reflection on the object, and this reflection involves what Kant calls the harmonious play of the two faculties of cognition: understanding and imagination (Kant 5: 217, CPJ 102). By qualifying Kant's theory as rational, Schiller downplays the role of the imagination in it. I take it that his point is that every theory in which reason plays a significant role in justifying judgments of taste is already rational, even if the process of justification also involves a quite noticeable contribution from sensibility. Schiller takes Kant's theory as the starting point for his investigations.

Finally, fourth, there ought to be an objective sensual theory of beauty. But, according to Schiller, there is no such a theory yet, and he wants to fill this lacuna. It is rather strange that Schiller chooses Kant's theory as his starting point, given that Kant's theory is the exact opposite of what Schiller allegedly intends to produce. Let us consider what such an objective sensual theory should entail. On the one hand, it should have some similarity with the perfection theory. More precisely, it should claim that the property of beauty refers to the object itself. It is reasonable to assume that this aspect of the intended theory motivates Schiller's task to search for an objective concept of beauty. On the other hand, an objective sensual theory should be similar to Burke's theory in that they both assume that our judgments of taste are justified by our senses alone, or at least that such justification should not involve any strong rational component. Schiller, however, seems to overtly discount the thesis of purely sensual justification at the very beginning of his project when he says that we must "legitimate [an objective concept of beauty] completely a priori **out of the nature of rationality**" (Schiller 26: 175, K 145, my emphasis). His distinction between legitimizing a concept of beauty and being moved by beauty (Schiller 26: 190, K 153) does not help, as he acknowledges that Kant also holds beauty to please without concepts, and still he considers Kant's theory to be rational.

Therefore, I think it is misleading to describe Schiller's theory of beauty as objective sensual. Perhaps, it would be more correct to classify his theory as objective rational, but this class of aesthetic theories in Schiller's classification is already occupied by Wolffians, and Schiller understandably wants to distance his theory from theirs. Moreover, as we shall see further, Schiller argues not so much for beauty being an objective property of an aesthetic object as for the fact that there are quite specific properties in the aesthetic object that make our perception of beauty possible. In other words, Schiller does place beauty in our response to the aesthetic object. Thus, his theory of beauty is still, like Kant's theory, a subjective rational theory.

Let us talk now about why Schiller is not satisfied with Kant's theory of beauty. I mentioned that Schiller criticized Wolffians for not being able to distinguish between two different kinds of purposiveness involved in beauty and perfection respectively. But Kant – says Schiller – understands this distinction. Kant recognizes that there is objective material purposiveness that we may find in artifacts and organisms (Kant 5: 366, CPJ 239). Objective

material purposiveness involves a determinate concept of an object and concerns the normative question: what kind of object ought this object to be? The degree to which the object corresponds to its concept is the degree of its perfection. For example, there is a concept of a screwdriver, and we judge the perfection of any particular screwdriver by whether it fits this concept: whether it can unscrew the screws, how comfortable the handle is for unscrewing the screws, how quickly it wears out in the performance of its functions, and so on. However, Kant believes that when we judge something to be beautiful, we do not rely on objective material purposiveness. There are perfect things that we do not judge to be beautiful, and there are imperfect things that we do judge to be beautiful. Still, our judgments of taste, according to Kant, involve a reference to some kind of purposiveness which he characterizes as subjective formal, or as the form of purposiveness. The main difference between subjective formal purposiveness and objective material purposiveness is that the former does not involve a determinate concept of an object (see Kant 5: 188–91, CPJ 75–7). Kant’s point as I read him is that we understand that an aesthetic object is striving to be something and we are aesthetically pleased by this striving, but we never can give a definite answer to the question of what kind of object this object ought to be and is striving to be. For as soon as we understand what this object ought to be, and is striving to be, we start to judge it either as useful if it is good for something else, or as moral if it is good by itself, but not as beautiful anymore.

On the one hand, Schiller welcomes the distinction between formal and material purposiveness. On the other hand, he does not like the two implications that Kant deduces from this distinction. First, Kant believes that the presence of any determinate concept in our reflection on the object potentially contaminates our judgments of taste (see Kant 5: 229–31, CPJ 114–6). For example, when we judge a horse to be beautiful, we are quite limited in our free play between imagination and understanding, because in our reflection we have to take into account the concept of a horse. And if beauty in any way relies on the concept (that is, on some kind of perfection), then – Kant claims – it is not pure, but fixed beauty. While Kant, in principle, allows that, at least sometimes, we can abstract ourselves from all concepts to, so to say, purify our judgments of taste, he is still committed to the claim that patterned arabesques or clouds have a purer beauty than the most perfect novel. Expectedly, such a thesis does not please Schiller as a prominent poet and playwright.

Second, Kant denies that there can be an objective principle of taste. He understands an objective principle of taste to be a proposition “under the condition of which one could subsume the concept of an object and then by means of an inference conclude that it is beautiful” (Kant, CPJ, 5: 285). Kant argues that the idea of such a principle contradicts both the claim that our judgments of taste do not rely on any determinate concept and our everyday practice: no one can force another person to aesthetically enjoy some object by means of proof alone.

What exactly does Schiller think about these two implications? As for the purity of beauty, while he admits that the presence of concepts can weaken beauty by pointing too clearly to the aesthetic object's design, he argues that this is the task of a true artist: to place his concepts in the material in such a way that no one would notice a trace of unnaturalness. Beauty – says Schiller – has to “overcome the logical nature of its object” (Schiller 26: 176, K 147), in a very similar fashion to how morality has to overcome the power of non-moral incentives. By the logical nature of the object, Schiller means the object's reliance on the concepts. Overcoming something through beauty is possible only if there is something to be overcome, but without such overcoming, there cannot be truly great art. Hence, concepts threaten the purity of beauty only if beauty cannot overcome them; and this overcoming is a condition of truly great art. The notion of overcoming reappears in *On Grace and Dignity* (henceforth *Grace and Dignity*), where it is applied to a beautiful soul. According to Schiller, a beautiful soul is so cultivated and refined that it overcomes its own logical nature, at least in its appearance. It means that a beautiful soul is able to act morally without noticeable self-necessitation. I elaborate on this topic in the second chapter.

Regarding an objective principle of taste, Schiller's position is not easy to reconstruct. At one point he says that beauty is an objective property (Schiller 26: 190, K 153), but more often and more consistently he argues instead that there is “the objective fact about things” (Schiller 26: 199, K 160) which enables them to be perceived as beautiful. As we see later, Schiller does not dispute Kant's thesis that aesthetic judgment is a response to our reflection on an object. So I think that we should either ignore the only instance in which Schiller calls beauty itself an objective property as the sloppiness typical of unfinished and unedited work, or read it in a very loose sense. Schiller's point is rather that there are some properties of objects which ground our aesthetic judgments about these objects. As I said above, it does not seem to me that Schiller's theory is crucially different from Kant's subjective rational theory for it to be classified as its exact opposite. My best guess is that when Schiller describes his theory of beauty as objective, he only asserts that the experience of beauty is not causally independent from quite concrete properties of aesthetic objects; and when he describes it as sensual, he asserts that these properties can be empirically observed.²¹

²¹ Eva Schaper argues that Schiller positions his theory as objective because he wants to formulate it as a theory of beauty in opposition to Kant's and Burke's theories of aesthetic judgments which “are based on a phenomenology of experience, <...> [and] proceed analytically upon that basis” (Schaper 1964: 354). In other words, while Kant and Burke based their theories on an analysis of the phenomenology accompanying aesthetic judgments, Schiller, according to Schaper, intended to begin with a conceptual analysis of beauty. Even if she is right and this was indeed Schiller's intention, he does not fulfill it in *Kallias*. Already in the next letter, in his deduction of beauty, Schiller turns precisely to the analysis of aesthetic judgments and the phenomenology of aesthetic experience. Only later would he begin to conceive of ideal beauty not as something perceived, but as an imperative.

To summarize, Schiller states that he intends to develop a theory of beauty without the flaws of previous theories. He classifies his theory as objective and sensual and advances several theses. I mention just a few of them. First, it is important to distinguish between beauty and perfection. Second, judgments of taste are not a mere affection of sensibility. Third, judgments of taste have something to do with purposiveness. Fourth, there are some objective properties that enable an object in question to be perceived as beautiful. Fifth, concepts threaten the purity of beauty only if beauty cannot overcome them and this overcoming is a condition of truly great art. From Schiller's description of his project, we cannot yet discern the significant implications his theory of beauty has for his conception of aesthetic normativity. Nevertheless, further on, in his attempt to carry out the deduction of beauty, Schiller makes it clear that the objectivity of beauty is only a secondary (though indispensable) thesis in relation to the central thesis about the connection between aesthetic judgments and practical reason.

2. Schiller's deduction of beauty

In this section, I unpack Schiller's deduction of beauty and classification of judgments. Schiller's deduction of beauty is important for understanding his later theories, even though it does not convincingly justify its results. In brief, Schiller, emulating Kant's methodology, tries to deduce beauty, or rather judgments about it, from the architectonics of our mental faculties. While the aforementioned deduction is presented in *Kallias* in a very brief and very dense manner, it is where Schiller reveals that his understanding of aesthetic normativity differs significantly from that of Kant.

Schiller begins with a distinction between three ways of interacting with nature, and by nature he understands appearances, i.e. phenomena. First, we can interact with nature passively; this means that we are determined by it, we experience its effect on us. Second, we can interact with nature actively; this means that we determine its effects, we act. Third, we can interact with nature both actively and passively, which means that we represent nature to ourselves. In Kantian philosophy, activity and passivity are traditionally considered characteristics of reason and sensibility, respectively. Thus, we can see on a conceptual level that, according to Schiller, the representation of nature involves the interaction of these two faculties.

Schiller distinguishes between two ways of representing nature, of which one is more active, and thus closer to action, and the other is more passive and closer – but not equal to – a raw experience. The more active way is observing; we observe [*beobachten*] nature when we are “intentionally directed towards [its] cognition”. The more passive way is watching; we merely watch [*betrachten*] appearances when “we allow things to invite us to represent them” (Schiller 26: 178, K 148). Although Schiller never explains why he introduces this distinction into two types of representing, my best guess is that it is the

basis for his further distinction between the constitutive and regulative use of reason. If that is the case, then Schiller's mere watching is a version of Kant's notion of reflection, as Schiller assumes that reason is used regulatively in teleological and aesthetic judgments, which Kant classifies as reflecting judgments.

Schiller goes on to talk about the formation of representation. He does not contest Kant's Copernican revolution: there are formal conditions of representations that come from the subject's mind and are applied to the raw data provided by sense [*Sinn*]. Schiller defines reason as "the power of connection" (Schiller 26: 179, K 148), which is involved both in the process of forming representations and in further connecting these representations with something else. If it connects representations with other representations for the purpose of cognition, then we can say that it applies the form of theoretical reason; if it connects representations with the will for the purpose of action, then we can say that it applies the form of practical reason. So, according to Schiller, there are two forms of reason – a form of theoretical reason and a form of practical reason – and, correspondingly, two types of material for these forms – representations and actions [*Handlungen*]. Schiller first discusses theoretical reason:

Theoretical reason aims at knowledge. By subsuming a given object under its form, it examines whether knowledge can be got from it, i.e., whether it can be connected with a representation we already have (Schiller 26: 180, K 149).

As noted earlier, according to Schiller, theoretic reason applies its form to representations. Representations can be either immediate (intuitions) or mediated (concepts). Intuitions are received through the senses, concepts are given by reason. Concepts necessarily agree with theoretical reason, as they are its own product. Intuitions can agree with theoretical reason only by chance. If intuitions agree with theoretical reason, then they can be called imitations of concepts. When theoretical reason discovers that a given representation is a concept and, hence, decides that it necessarily agrees with reason's form, we have a constitutive usage of theoretical reason and a **logical judgment**, which expands our knowledge. When theoretical reason discovers that the given representation is an intuition, it still wants to check whether this intuition agrees with reason's form. To do this, theoretical reason "adduces an end of its own devising for the object and decides whether the object is adequate to that end" (Schiller 26: 180, K 150). As a result, we have a regulative usage of theoretical reason and a **teleological judgment**, which by itself does not expand our knowledge but can guide us in our cognition.

Immediately after the examination of theoretical reason, Schiller proposes an argument designed to link aesthetic judgments of taste with practical reason. Schiller claims that logical and teleological judgments fully exhaust the rubric of theoretical reason, so judgments of taste are to be found somewhere else, that is, in the rubric of practical reason, as there is no third option. Basically, the whole argument is based on Schiller's architectonic.

Let us look at practical reason now:

Practical reason <...> has to do only with the determination of the will, with inner actions. <...> The form of practical reason is the immediate relation of the will to the representations of reason, that is, to the exclusion of every external principle of determination; for a will which is not determined purely by the form of practical reason is determined from outside, by what is material and heteronomous (Schiller 26: 181, K 150).

According to Schiller, practical reason applies its form to actions, and there are two types of actions: free actions and unfree actions or natural effects. Free actions are prescribed by pure practical reason. Natural effects are determined by natural laws. While free actions necessarily agree with the form of practical reason, as they are its own product, natural effects can agree with practical reason only by chance. If natural effects agree with practical reason, then they can be called imitations of free actions.²² When practical reason applies its form to free action, it merely recognizes that a will is determined by the mere form and this act is what it ought to be, i.e. it is autonomous. So we have a constitutive usage of practical reason and a **moral judgment**. When practical reason applies its form to some object which is not a free act, then it lends – but only regulatively – the object a power to determine itself (i.e. a will) and examines the object under the form of that will. If “[r]eason says of the object that it is whether it is *what* it is, through *its pure will*, that is, through its self-determining power” (Schiller 26: 182, K 151), then we have a regulative usage of practical reason and an **aesthetic judgment**.

After outlining the classification of judgments Schiller tries to justify the assignment of aesthetic judgments under the rubric of practical reason. He calls attention to the broadly Kantian claim that the form of practical reason is pure self-determination. Practical reason demands acts of will to exist only through the form of practical reason, i.e. to be autonomous. If a rational being is to exercise self-determination, he ought to act on the basis of reason alone, as the self of a rational being is reason. Next Schiller proposes an analogy for practical reason’s treatment of natural effects. Practical reason wishes (although not demands) that natural effects be through themselves and appear autonomous. If a merely natural being is to show self-determination, it must act from its pure nature, as the self of a merely natural being – says Schiller – is its nature. When a merely natural being shows self-determination, practical reason ascribes to this event similarity to freedom. It must be stressed that “*freedom as such can never be given to the senses and nothing can be free other than what is supra-sensible [übersinnliche]*” (Schiller 26: 182, K 151), so the object is merely perceived to be free, but is not really free in a Kantian sense. It merely exhibits freedom, or autonomy, in our perception. According to Schiller, this “analogy of an appearance with the form of pure will or freedom is beauty” (Schiller 26:

²² For Schiller, imitations of concepts and imitations of free actions are subsets of a more general set of imitations (analoga) of reason.

183, K 152). This is where the deduction of beauty ends, and we get Schiller’s famous definition of beauty as “nothing less than **freedom in appearance**” (Schiller 26: 182, K 152, my emphasis).

To finish this section, I am going to give a very brief and rough summary of what I think Schiller is doing in his deduction. He considers reason to be the power of connection and distinguishes between two forms of possible connections: theoretical (for cognition) and practical (for action/effect). Then he distinguishes between two modes of making connections: constitutive and regulative. Finally, based on these two criteria (forms of connections and modes of connecting), he proposes a classification of judgments. There are constitutive theoretical judgments which are logical; regulative theoretical judgments which are teleological; constitutive practical judgments which are moral; and regulative practical judgments which are aesthetic:

Forms of connections

		Theoretical	Practical
Modes of connecting	Constitutive	Logical judgment	Moral judgment
	Regulative	Teleological judgment	Aesthetic judgment

Based on the claim that aesthetic and moral judgments are under the same rubric of practical reason, Schiller extends the well-known moral principle of autonomy to aesthetic judgments with one important caveat: natural objects are not demanded to be truly free, they are merely wished to appear as such. In the aesthetic evaluation of natural objects, we make the regulative assumption that they have agency, that they have a kind of personality, and on the basis of that assumption we regard their effects as acts.

Even if we are sympathetic to Schiller’s architectonics, which allows exactly four types of judgments, grouped in a particular way, we still have no good reason to believe that regulative practical judgments and aesthetic judgments are one and the same. And since it is on this identity that Schiller’s deduction of beauty is based, we have also no good reason to believe that beauty is indeed

freedom in appearance.²³ In this sense, I find Schiller's argumentation rather flawed and unconvincing. Nevertheless, his conclusions are interesting and important both in themselves and as a foundation of his later views.

In short, I see the intrinsic significance of Schiller's conclusions in the explicit linking of the aesthetic and the practical within the Kantian framework. However, to my mind, in order to build a more convincing version of Schillerian philosophy, if one undertakes such a task, argumentation linking aesthetic judgments to practical reason would have to be significantly revised. Hints as to how this might be done can already be found in Schiller himself. His thesis that practical reason regulatively lends the aesthetic object the power to define itself (i.e., the will) can be read as a peculiar development of Kant's claim that although the judgment of beauty is not mediated by any determinate concept, it "is still based on some, although indeterminate concept". Whereas Kant considers this concept to be "the supersensible substratum of appearances" (Kant 5: 341, CPJ 216), Schiller seems to think of it as a concept of free will, as something that is not determined by anything external to it, and so, in a sense, it is an indeterminate concept. To a large extent, this corresponds to the phenomenology of aesthetic judgment implied by Kant's description of judgments of taste: the aesthetic object seems purposeful to us, but we cannot pinpoint a determinate concept; instead, imagination and understanding are in a state of free play, we cannot unambiguously specify what the aesthetic object ought to be because we perceive it, according to Schiller, as something capable of determining itself what it ought to be. Additionally, the reading of the indeterminate concept involved in aesthetic judgments as a concept of free will makes clearer Kant's idea that beauty is a symbol of morality; for according to Schiller, in the beautiful we perceive an analogy to the free, that is, to the moral.

Tying aesthetic judgments to practical reason has two important implications. First, Schiller elaborates, on a conceptual level, how exactly aesthetic experience can be a bridge between sensibility and reason, between nature and freedom. If aesthetic judgments are formally similar to moral judgments, even if they apply to quite different objects, they can prepare humans for morality.²⁴ Second, if our judgments about aesthetic objects involve a regulative assumption of them as persons possessing free will, then in these judgments we perceive aesthetic objects as having a kind of moral standing, let us call it aesthetic standing. Normative claims then are not only concerned with how we ought to perceive aesthetic objects or what we are justified to expect from other people's perception of those objects; normative claims become practical

²³ Beiser reaches a similar conclusion regarding the success of Schiller's deduction of beauty (see Beiser 2005: 58–62). Beiser notes, however, that at least in other places Schiller provides grounds for regarding aesthetic judgment as belonging to the domain of reason, namely, Schiller contends that we must give reasons for aesthetic judgment. But this is still insufficient to place aesthetic judgments specifically within practical reason and to extend the principle of autonomy to them.

²⁴ I discuss the role of aesthetic experience in preparing people for moral and political life in Chapter Five.

prescriptions: they tell us how we ought and ought not to act toward those objects. And here Schiller takes a decisive step away from Kant. I discuss the differences in their approaches to aesthetic normativity in the next section.

3. Aesthetic normativity in Kant and Schiller

Before going further, I want to dwell on the distinction between theoretical and practical varieties of normativity. I should note at once that this distinction is technical, and in the form I use it, we will not find it in either Schiller or Kant. Nevertheless, I believe that this distinction helps us to identify the difference between their approaches to aesthetic normativity. As Stephen Darwall notes, we say that something has normativity “when it entails that some action, attitude or mental state of some other kind is justified, an action one ought to do or a state one ought to be in” (Darwall 2001). Kant prefers the broader term ‘necessity’, but he often employs it in a similar vein. This can be seen, in particular, in his definition of duty as “the necessity of an action from respect for law” (Kant 4: 400, GMM 55). Kant does not speak here of the natural necessity of cause and effect to which all natural beings are subject, but of a normative necessity that is significant only for reasoning and reflecting beings.

Let me begin with the most famous kind of normativity in Kant, namely moral normativity. To give one example, according to the moral law, I always ought to pay my debts. That I always ought to pay my debts does not mean that I will definitely pay all my debts. But it does mean that if I am honest with myself, then I realize that this is the way it ought to be, that debts ought to be paid. I may not be happy about this, but at the same time I cannot help but feel respect towards the source of this demand, the moral law which I autonomously legislate for myself; and my respect towards the moral law moves me to act accordingly. Kant associates moral normativity with the absence of contradiction (see Kant 4: 424, GMM 75). The maxim of not paying one’s debts is internally contradictory because it is incompatible with its own universalization. In a world where everyone refuses to pay his debts, the very institution of debt would not exist, and thus no one would be able to borrow anything in the first place. Thus, the maxim not to pay my debts includes two incompatible moments: on the one hand, this maxim presupposes the existence of the institution of debt because it is necessary for my purposes; on the other hand, this maxim is an aspiration for a world in which this institution cannot exist.

The connection between normativity and the absence of contradiction is even more pronounced in theoretical cases. Kant says of logical necessity that it is “nothing but the necessity of holding-to-be-true according to the logical laws of the understanding and of reason” (Kant 24: 148, BL 116). A person who believes in the truth of the premises of a valid argument must also believe in the truth of its conclusion, otherwise, he contradicts himself. Say, if one believes that humans are mortal and that Socrates is human, then one ought also to believe that Socrates is mortal. Again, this does not mean that any person

always meets the demands of normativity. There are plenty of people who believe the premises of some valid argument while denying its conclusion, but they can be rightly judged to be irrational.

These two examples roughly illustrate the difference I am trying to capture with my distinction between practical and theoretical varieties of normativity. In the Socrates argument example, normativity demands a person to form an adequate belief about what is. In the debt example, normativity demands the person to do the right thing and avoid doing wrong things. Normativity in the former case concerns the set of beliefs one recognizes as true and has only indirect relevance to action. Of course, often purely theoretical beliefs have an enormous effect on our actions. This is particularly true of beliefs concerning possible means of satisfying our desires. Nevertheless, these beliefs themselves are not practical, that is, they do not motivate us to act unless we have the corresponding desires. Things are quite different in the debt case, as normativity in it is directly concerned with acting or forbidding action, rather than simply forming an adequate belief about what is. The normativity characteristic of the first case I call theoretical; the normativity characteristic of the second case I call practical. To some extent, this is a rather arbitrary distinction. One could, for example, point to the Kantian primacy of practical reason and argue that even the formation of adequate beliefs is an action, and thus dictated by normativity, which can properly be called practical. That said, I believe that the difference between action and belief formation is fairly straightforward at the pre-theoretical level. And this difference is useful in illuminating the views of Kant and Schiller on aesthetic normativity. The main question here is whether aesthetic normativity is more akin to the theoretical or practical kind of normativity. As we shall see, Kant and Schiller have different opinions on that.

The most obvious answer to the question of whether Kant considers aesthetic normativity to be theoretical or practical is that he considers it to be neither; it is *sui generis*. And the key here is that, according to Kant, aesthetic judgments, unlike theoretical and moral judgments, are not mediated by a determinate concept, nor do they have an objective necessity, but only a subjective one. Theoretical and moral judgments can be communicated through concepts. Arguably, anyone with a reliable description of the situation, an understanding of relevant concepts, and the necessary knowledge can make a theoretical or moral judgment without direct acquaintance with the situation. In the case of aesthetic judgments, this is impossible. I can give a friend a detailed retelling of a movie and tell him what concepts I, or even the director of the movie, associate with it, but no matter how thorough and meticulous I am, it will never be enough for my friend to make a genuine aesthetic judgment about the movie. For such a judgment it is necessary for him to acquaint himself with the movie directly, to experience it in the first person. And this need for first-person experience is explained by the fact that aesthetic predicates, according to Kant, are not objective. They are not referring to the aesthetic object itself, but to the relation of its representation to our cognitive faculties.

And yet, even though Kant distinguishes the normativity of aesthetic judgments from the normativity of theoretical judgments, he clearly models aesthetic normativity in the likeness of theoretical normativity. I will give three pieces of evidence to support my point. First, as I mentioned above, theoretical normativity deals primarily with the formation of adequate beliefs about what is, not about what ought to be. The same is true for aesthetic judgments. When I say that a movie is aesthetically valuable or beautiful, I do not mean that the movie ought to become beautiful; instead, I speak of it as a *fait accompli*: it is already beautiful. Although, according to Kant's reasoning, it would be a mistake to regard beauty as a predicate belonging to the movie itself, aesthetic judgments are formally quite like theoretical judgments, even if they are mediated by first-person experience rather than by any determinate concept. Second, aesthetic judgments, as Kant conceptualizes them, involve the interaction of the same faculties as in theoretical judgments, namely understanding, and imagination, the crucial difference being that their interaction is not mediated by any determinate concept, but consists in a free play evoked by their relation to the representation of the aesthetic object. This is a very important point, for Kant connects the communicability of aesthetic judgments with common sense which also explains the universal communicability of our cognitive judgments. Third, Kant emphasizes the impracticality of aesthetic judgments:

[aesthetic] pleasure is also **in no way practical**, neither like that from the pathological ground of agreeableness nor like that from the intellectual ground of the represented good. <...> it has a causality in itself, namely that of maintaining the state of the representation of the mind and the occupation of the cognitive powers **without a further aim** (Kant 5: 222, CPJ 107, my emphasis).

I admit that this quote does not so much confirm that Kant models aesthetic normativity on theoretical normativity than that he separates it from the practical: aesthetic judgments do not move us to change the world, at most they move us to continue our contemplation of aesthetic objects. Together, however, these three pieces of evidence – namely (i) the emphasis on what the world is or how we ought to perceive it rather than on what the world ought to be; (ii) the analogy in the interaction of cognitive faculties in theoretical and aesthetic judgments; and (iii) the impracticality of aesthetic judgments per se – show that aesthetic normativity in Kant is, so-to-say, quasi-theoretical. The fundamental difference between theoretical normativity and aesthetic normativity is that the former represents an objective necessity based on the mediation by a determinate concept, while the latter represents only a subjective necessity based on common sense.

There are three things related to aesthetic normativity that Kant says explicitly. First, we cannot have an obligation to feel enjoyment (Kant 5: 209fn*, CPJ 94fn*), including an aesthetic one. In Kant's view, the very idea of such an obligation is absurd, because feeling is passive, that is, it is not directly

governed by the will. Thus, the very idea that aesthetic normativity consists in exercising a proper sensual response to an aesthetic object is not compatible with Kantianism.

Second, if we do make aesthetic judgments, they “lay claim to necessity and say <...> that everyone **ought** to so judge” (Kant 20: 239, FI 39, bold Kant’s). In other words, we are justified in expecting others to agree with us. In this sense, our judgments of taste are fundamentally different from statements about preferences. If I judge a movie to be beautiful, I am justified in expecting the other person to agree with me, although I am not able to force someone to agree with me by means of rational discourse. Perhaps this is where we can find a hint of the connection between normativity and the absence of contradiction. It would be a contradiction to think that this aesthetic object is beautiful only for you because this would be a denial of common sense on which the communicability of our cognitive judgments is based.

Third, it follows from the justified expectation of agreement in aesthetic judgments that we demand that others have taste. When others disagree with someone else’s judgment of taste, that person “denies that they have taste, though he nevertheless requires that they ought to have it” (Kant 5: 213, CPJ 98). Arguably, it is this third aspect of Kant’s aesthetic normativity that comes closest to the practical requirement. The demand for a taste that other people impose on us is justified, just as our analogous demand on them is justified. In other words, it is not absurd to say that we are obliged to cultivate taste, and precisely on aesthetic grounds, not just on moral ones, although there are moral grounds too, relating to our imperfect duty toward ourselves to cultivate our talents. It is here that the distance between Kant and Schiller in their understanding of aesthetic normativity turns out to be the smallest.

Let us now turn to Schiller’s understanding of aesthetic normativity. As I demonstrated in the previous section, Schiller directly links aesthetic judgments with practical reason. He models aesthetic normativity by analogy with the normativity of morality:

Reason **demand**s imperatively of acts of will, or moral acts, that they exist through the pure form of reason; reason can only **wish** [*wünschen*] (not demand) that natural effects be through themselves, that they show autonomy (Schiller 26: 182, K 151, my emphasis (bold)).

According to Schiller, we, as sensual-rational beings, have a justified wish that natural effects show autonomy, in other words, a wish that natural effects be perceived by us as if they were the product of the free will of the corresponding natural objects. What exactly does Schiller mean when he says that reason only wishes for natural effects to show autonomy? One explanation might be that he is referring to the Kantian distinction between wish and desire, in which only the latter implies the use of force to produce an object. In other words, a wish has no practical consequences. I do not support this reading for two reasons. First, I am not sure that Schiller was familiar with this distinction, for in the

published works, as far as I know, it first appears in the *Doctrine of Right*, which was published only in 1797. The second reason is more significant: such a reading is simply inconsistent with what Schiller goes on to say about aesthetic normativity, for he clearly believes that it has practical consequences, that is, it motivates people to act. My own view is that Schiller makes a distinction between demands and wishes of reason in order to emphasize that the normative power of the former is greater. Demands must always be met, and wishes only when they can be reconciled with demands.²⁵

Jörg Noller (unpublished draft article) suggests that aesthetic normativity in Schiller should be seen as based on its own imperative. I fully support this reading and think that Schiller even gives us a clue as to how to formulate it:

Beauty, or rather taste, regards all things as *ends in themselves* and absolutely does not tolerate that one serves the other as a means or bears the yoke. In the aesthetic world, every natural being is a free citizen who has equal rights with the noblest, and may not even be forced *for the sake of the whole*, but must absolutely consent to everything (Schiller 26: 212, K 170).

Basically, Schiller extends Kant's *Formula of Humanity* to all natural beings: so act that you treat every natural being always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means. I am not going to detail all the implications of Schiller's aesthetic imperative in this chapter, as the following chapters are devoted to this. Here I merely point out the general idea. According to Schiller, judgments of taste do not simply imply a justified expectation that others agree with those judgments and justified demand that others ought to have taste; judgments of taste presuppose that natural beings, considered aesthetically, have claims of their own that we must respect. And awareness of these claims moves us in a similar manner as awareness of the demands of the moral law. By natural beings, Schiller means any spatiotemporal object or phenomenon. Thus, for example, he says that even in relation to our own clothing we have an aesthetic obligation:

In this aesthetic world, which is quite different from the most perfect Platonic republic, even the gown I wear on my body demands respect for its freedom from me, much like a humble servant who demands that I never let on that he is *servicing* me. In exchange, it promises to use its freedom in such a way that it will not curtail my own freedom; and if both keep their word, the world will say that I am well dressed (Schiller 26: 212, K 170).

Since human beings are not only persons but also embodied sensual beings, we also have aesthetic obligations to each other in addition to moral ones. This is true with respect to ourselves as well, that is, each of us has aesthetic obligations to themselves. Aesthetic obligations sometimes move us to do the same

²⁵ In the chapters that follow, especially Chapter Two, I provide evidence in defense of this reading.

things that moral law requires of us. In this case, aesthetic normativity can either substitute or ennoble moral normativity. Schiller gives two illustrative examples in the essay *The Moral Utility of Aesthetic Manners* (see Schiller 21: 32–3, MU 124–5). I discuss them in more detail in Chapter Five, but their gist is that aesthetic considerations can deter a person from committing a dishonorable act and, beyond that, provide even more inspiration for moral feats. Let me give my own brief examples. Aesthetic normativity substitutes practical normativity if, say, a man decides to keep his word because it is a beautiful act; he does not care that it is his duty, he is not interested in the form of his maxim, he is directly motivated by the beautiful appearance of his act. His act is only legal, not moral, but already this may be beneficial for the society in which he lives, as it creates social conditions for the maintenance, development, and fostering of true morality in its members.

Aesthetic normativity ennobles practical normativity if, say, a person who is fully aware of her duty, does not hesitate for a moment to help her neighbor, even if it involves a noticeable hardship for herself. Her act is not only moral but also beautiful. In *Kallias*, Schiller tells a variation of the *Parable of the Good Samaritan* to illustrate the concept of moral beauty. A robbed and wounded man is on the street in the bitter cold, and different people pass by. Schiller is considering five scenarios in total. In all these scenarios there were people willing to help; several were willing to have it cost them something; some were willing to overcome their self-interest; one of them acted out of pure moral interest. But only the last traveler acted without even considering the action and disregarding the cost. He “fulfilled his duty with the ease of someone acting out of mere instinct” (Schiller 26: 198, K159). Moral action is ennobled by beauty if and only if the autonomy of pure practical reason coincides with the autonomy of appearance. The ennobling aspect of aesthetic normativity is especially important for Schiller’s theory of virtue and his concept of a beautiful soul, discussed in the next chapter. A man ought to become a beautiful soul, not only because it is his aesthetic obligation toward others, but, more importantly, because it is his aesthetic obligation toward himself. Only by bringing his sensibility and reason into harmony, thus ennobling his actions with grace, can he follow the precepts of the moral law without the constant feeling of violence done to his sensibility.

Let me sum up the main ideas of this section. Schiller departs significantly from Kant’s understanding of aesthetic normativity. Kant models aesthetic normativity on theoretical normativity. He holds that we are justified in expecting the same aesthetic response to an aesthetic object that we had, and in demanding that others have a taste. The justification for this is based on common sense as a condition for the communicability of cognitive judgments. Schiller models aesthetic normativity along the lines of moral normativity. According to Schiller, as sensual-rational beings, we have a justified wish for all natural effects to look like free acts, and for all natural objects to receive equal rights and respect, which, from a moral point of view, only persons can claim. When the demands of aesthetic normativity are incompatible with the

demands of moral normativity, the latter takes precedence. According to Schiller, aesthetic normativity motivates us to change the world and ourselves to meet its requirements. The relationship between people and the world, the relationship among people, and even each person's relationship with herself as an embodied sensual-rational being must be ennobled to become beautiful. The question arises, what does it mean for a relationship to be beautiful? I have already hinted a bit that this involves respecting and contributing to the demonstration of the freedom of all natural beings. But it is still extremely vague. I speculate that Schiller understood this, and it was at least a partial motivation for his search for the objective foundations of beauty. If we aspire to make the world more beautiful, then beauty must have some objective basis. Otherwise, our aspiration cannot be practical, for we do not know even approximately how it can be realized. Let us turn to this question now.

4. An objective concept of beauty

In this section, I am going to discuss Schiller's concept of beauty in more detail. As Schiller states, his intention in *Kallias* is to construct an objective concept of beauty. In the first section, I proposed to read it not as an intention to prove that beauty is an objective property of the aesthetic object, but as an intention to show that there are empirically observable properties in the aesthetic object that make it possible to perceive that object as beautiful. If my reading is correct, Schiller, following Kant, does not consider beauty a property of an aesthetic object itself, but of the relation of its representation to our cognitive faculties. In the second section, I traced how Schiller, through his transcendental deduction, arrived at a definition of beauty as freedom in appearance. This definition serves as the starting point for the discussion in this section.

To begin with, in his definition of beauty, Schiller is not talking about appearances in the technical Kantian sense. That is, he is not talking about spatio-temporal objects which are accessible to our senses. Their very definability by space and time tells us unequivocally that we will find no freedom in them, but only a natural necessity. However, Schiller insists that while there is no freedom in the spatio-temporal sensual world, there can be

a form in the sense-world which appears merely through itself, [this form] is an *exhibition of freedom*; and an exhibition of an idea is something which is connected with intuition in such a way that they share one rule of knowledge.

Freedom in appearance is thus nothing but the self-determination of a thing insofar as it is available to intuition (Schiller 26: 192, K 154).

Since freedom in appearance, according to Schiller, is beauty, we can conclude that beauty is the self-determination of a thing insofar as it is available to intuition.

Schiller draws attention to the fact that a free moral act is based solely on the form of the universality of its maxim and excludes the influence of any external

purpose or matter in general. Continuing the analogy between aesthetic and moral normativity, he claims that an object is perceived in the sensual world as self-determined and self-determining only if we do not detect any influence of external purpose or matter on its form. To put it differently, the more we notice some external determination of an object's form by physical powers or by intelligible purposes, the less we are inclined to perceive this object as self-determined and self-determining and judge it to be beautiful. From the aesthetic perspective – says Schiller – the only thing that is important is whether an object is perceived to be what it is through itself or not. To make a pure judgment of taste, we must absolutely “abstract from it the intrinsic (practical or theoretical) worth of the beautiful object, out of what matter it is formed and what purpose it might serve” (Schiller 26: 192, K 154). And, of course, there are objects whose practical or theoretical worth is easy to abstract, and there are objects whose practical or theoretical worth is almost impossible to abstract. The latter are likely to be very poor candidates for being perceived as beautiful. It does not mean, however, that good candidates for being perceived as beautiful are not purposeful or determined by external rules. All mere natural objects exist through another and for another, they do not have genuine autonomy.

How can such an abstract concept as freedom in appearance be available to our intuition? What does it even mean to perceive or experience freedom in appearance? According to Kant, genuine positive freedom can never even be perceived in the sensual world, and no intuition is adequate to it. But negative freedom – as a lack of external determination – can be perceived. Schiller offers, so to say, an apophatic method of perceiving freedom: the quality of not-being-determined-from-the-outside is a negative representation of the quality of being-determined-from-the-inside. While we never can perceive freedom in the sensual world, we definitely can perceive its lack, for example, any apparent external coercion of the object to some effect is immediately perceived as a lack of freedom. If, however, we do not perceive the obvious lack of freedom, we perceive freedom in appearance. This also applies to the form of the object. Of course, if we have an urge to find the grounds of the object's form, then we are doomed to find something external to this object's nature:

Thus a form appears as free as soon as we are *neither able nor inclined* to search for its ground outside it. <...> A form is therefore beautiful only <...> if it *demands no explanation*, or if it *explains itself without a concept* (Schiller 26: 193–4, K 155).

Every concept – as a product of reason – is external to an object, so every form whose possibility presupposes a concept displays heteronomy in appearance. Schiller gives examples of strict regularity and usefulness: any object that exhibits some regularity or utility refers us to its potential function or even to its designer, thus this object is perceived not as self-determined and self-determining, but as dependent on its potential function or on the intent of its

designer; this dependency makes it less likely that we would judge this object beautiful. Moral purposes also result in heteronomy in appearance, so they “are best hidden, and must appear to come from the nature of the thing completely freely and without force, if their beauty is not to be lost” (Schiller 26: 194, K 156). If the object’s form is determined by the pure practical reason, this object is the product, rather than an analogy of freedom, and only the latter is beautiful. “This is why moral conduct, if it is not at once related to taste, will always appear to be heteronomous” (Schiller 26: 195, K 156).²⁶

Therefore, the form of an aesthetic object meant to be perceived as beautiful must not refer us to a ground outside of it. Or, at the very least, we should be able to abstract from this reference. But this, according to Schiller, is not enough. The aesthetic object must somehow invite us to notice that its form is not externally determined, otherwise, the representation of being-determined-from-the-inside becomes too contingent, in other words, we might miss it. The representation of determination in general is what ought to invite us to notice the lack of external determination. Thus, only an object that displays some kind of purposive structure (Schiller uses Kant’s term ‘technique’) can be perceived as self-determined and self-determining:

Only the technical form of an object compels the understanding to search out the ground of an effect and the relationship between determining and determined; and insofar as this form awakens a need to ask about the ground for determination, the negation of the *being-determined-from-the-outside* necessarily leads to the representation of *being-determined-from-the-inside* or freedom (Schiller 26: 202, K 162).

Thus, we get two conditions of beauty. First, the object must have a perceivable technical form. Second, this form should be perceived as natural to this object. The first condition shows that the object has purposiveness; the second condition prevents us from attributing this purposiveness to something external, but only to the object’s nature which Schiller defines as “*the inner necessity of form*” (Schiller 26: 207, K 166). As a result, we perceive this object as having an agency of its own, as if it has some ends that it has set for itself. Schiller insists that only the second condition is the proper condition of beauty. The technical form is the condition not of beauty itself, but of the representation of freedom, or – as he puts it – it is “only the mediating condition of beauty” (Schiller 26: 209, K 168).²⁷

²⁶ I discuss how, according to Schiller, to relate moral conduct to taste in the next chapter.

²⁷ Douglas Moggach in his review rightly drew my attention to the fact that, despite Schiller’s criticism of Wolffians, Schiller does not entirely abandon the idea of perfection. In a modified and considerably developed post-Kantian form, this idea still plays a significant role in Schiller’s aesthetics and ethics and his understanding of self-determination in general. In this particular case, both the technical form and the inner necessity of form refer to different aspects of the idea of perfection, which is no longer understood teleologically, but deontologically. Aesthetic normativity demands perfection of form as a condition of representation of beauty and the natural necessity of this form as a condition of beauty itself.

To make it clearer and more tangible, Schiller illustrates his analysis with examples. In particular, he places a great emphasis on the visible overcoming of gravity as a manifestation of independence from the forces of nature. Thus, he speaks of birds in the flight that they are “the happiest depiction of matter dominated by form, of power overcoming weight” (Schiller, 26: 205, K 164). His other example concerns a pot. Nothing in the pot should refer too obviously to the purpose for which the pot was created. For example, the handle of the pot refers to this purpose, so “if the pot is to be beautiful, its handle must spring from it so unforced and freely that one forgets its purpose [*Bestimmung*]” (Schiller 26: 212, K 170). The objects we judge beautiful, according to Schiller, express their own nature, and not something imposed from the outside. And since nature, understood as the inner necessity of form, varies from object to object, each has its own way of appearing free, that is, of being beautiful:

A birch, a pine, a poplar are beautiful if they grow straight up, while an oak is beautiful if it bends; the reason for this is that the latter bends naturally if it is left to itself, while the former all grow straight up. If the oak grows straight up and the birch bends, neither are considered beautiful, since the direction they grow reveals foreign influence, heteronomy (Schiller, 26: 213, K 171).

Unfortunately, Schiller does not give a detailed description of how a beautiful novel, for example, should be perceived. But, in general, we can assume that it should be perceived as natural as possible and as if it had written itself, rather than being the work of its author. It should provoke us to different interpretations, but it should never be exhausted by any such interpretation, otherwise, it would cease to be perceived as free. In Schiller’s aesthetics, the idea of the inexhaustibility of art is already fully apparent. Any absolute unambiguity is repugnant to art. For example, he claims that didactic art [*didaktische Kunst*] and passionate art [*leidenschaftliche Kunst*] (Schiller is referring thereby to art which aims to incite one particular passion and nothing else) are self-contradictory concepts, for “nothing conflicts with the concept of beauty more than ascribing a specific tendency to the mind [*Gemüth*]” (Schiller 20: 382, AL 82).

The biggest problem with Schiller’s objective concept of beauty is that he still has not gotten to the object. The two conditions of beauty he proposes refer not to the object, but to our perception of that object. As Beiser (see 2008: 73) notes, the most charitable reading of Schiller’s theory of beauty is that we read these conditions phenomenologically as “a fact for our senses” (Schiller, 26: 210, K 168–9). But the question remains whether such phenomenological conditions are sufficient to establish an objective concept of beauty. Of course, we can assume that these phenomenological facts for our senses are necessitated by quite specific empirical properties of objects, but we still cannot instantiate these properties of objects conceptually. In a later letter (October, 25th, 1794) to

In later chapters, I will address the concept of post-Kantian perfectionism and Moggach’s criticism in more detail. For the detailed discussion of the post-Kantian perfectionism, see *Perfektionismus der Autonomie* (2020) edited by D. Moggach, N. Mooren, and M. Quante.

his friend Körner, Schiller directly rejects the objectivity of beauty in the sense of belonging to an object as its property and says that “[b]eauty is an effect of the imagination, or if you will, an object of it”, thereby giving even more evidence for a phenomenological reading of his criteria of beauty. Nevertheless, Schiller continues to insist on the objectivity of beauty, but in a new way that fits perfectly with his practical interpretation of aesthetic normativity. He believes that “[t]he beautiful is not a concept of experience, but rather an imperative. It is certainly objective, but only as a necessary task for sensual-rational nature” (Schiller 27: 70). In other words, objective beauty is what we should all strive for. Whereas the beauty which we may really perceive is always subjective and non-ideal.

That said, I argue that Schiller fumbled for some negative criteria that tell us what we must avoid if we are to create or maintain beauty. We must avoid any perceived coercion and violence, we must avoid any overt subordination of the object in question to forces or purposes external to it. I am not sure how much these guidelines are helpful to an artist, although at the very least they warn him against lapsing into the didacticism, propaganda, and emotional one-dimensionality that Schiller regards as essentially foreign to genuine art. More importantly, even such general negative guidelines are enough to provide a foundation for the concepts of a beautiful soul and the aesthetic state. It is difficult to understand how exactly one must change the world in order to facilitate the demonstration of freedom of all natural objects, but it is much easier to understand what one must stop doing in order not to interfere with their demonstration of freedom. We can describe this task in terms of harmonization, as Schiller does.

To sum up, in this section, I have outlined some of Schiller’s considerations of the concept of beauty as freedom in appearance. According to this concept, we judge that an aesthetic object is beautiful if we perceive it as self-determined and self-determining. We perceive an aesthetic object as self-determined and self-determining if, on the one hand, we perceive in it a purposive structure, that is, a technical form, but, on the other hand, we perceive this technical form as coming from its own nature, not as being imposed from outside. I do not think that Schiller fully succeeds in establishing an objective concept of beauty since we have not yet gotten beyond our perception of objects. Nevertheless, I think that his analysis of beauty is sufficient to substantiate the practical demands of aesthetic normativity. We may still not know exactly what needs to be done to make the world more beautiful, but Schiller’s analysis of beauty gives us at least a rough direction. It is an extremely difficult task that cannot be solved purely on a conceptual level, whereas it no longer seems entirely impractical and unguided.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed some key ideas from Schiller's *Kallias* in order to show that, unlike Kant, Schiller considers aesthetic normativity to be practical. I have shown how, in his transcendental deduction of beauty, Schiller links aesthetic judgments with practical reason and defines beauty as freedom in appearance. I have argued that Schiller departs largely from Kant in his understanding of aesthetic normativity. In Schiller's view, beauty is an imperative that motivates us to change the world and ourselves in order to achieve the most harmonious state in which there is no place for any perceived violence or coercion. I have also pointed out that although his project to establish an objective concept of beauty cannot be called entirely successful, Schiller, in his *de facto* phenomenological analysis of the aesthetic experience of beauty, specifies at least negative criteria for beauty that are already sufficient to make our pursuit of beauty meaningful and practical. Schiller's understanding of aesthetic normativity makes possible his concepts of the beautiful soul and the aesthetic state as artistic projects, the pursuit of which is a justified wish of us as beings who are both rational and sensual. Moreover, by emphasizing the practicality of the aesthetic, Schiller also sets the stage for his theory of freedom of choice, according to which it is through the aesthetic experience of the beautiful that man first enters an aesthetic condition of active determinability, in which he becomes able to combine a reflective distance toward the world with a motivational commitment to the right reasons. I talk about all this in the following chapters, starting with Schiller's theory of virtue and the concept of a beautiful soul.

CHAPTER 2. A BEAUTIFUL SOUL

This chapter concerns Friedrich Schiller's theory of virtue which is presented in his essay *On Grace and Dignity* (henceforth *Grace and Dignity*). As many scholars correctly point out (Pugh 1997: 249; Beiser 2005: 80; Deligiorgi 2012: 145), Schiller's theory of virtue is an application of his theory of beauty developed in *Kallias Briefe* (henceforth *Kallias*) to morality. According to Schiller, a virtuous person – a beautiful soul – is characterized by harmony between reason and sensibility. Such harmony has external and internal manifestations. Internally, it transforms the way a person phenomenologically perceives moral law: it is no longer an unknown positive law for her, but an internalized principle which she can easily and joyfully follow. Externally, this harmony can be perceived as grace, a special aesthetic quality of the moral act of a beautiful soul.

Schiller's theory is notable for at least two reasons. First, it is important historically, because it is likely to have had a significant impact on Kant's doctrine of virtue (see Beiser 2005: 3 and 181; Baxley 2003: 500fn12, Allison 2020: 489). Second, Schiller's theory represents an intriguing possibility in the development of Kantian ethics. Unlike Kant, Schiller places great emphasis on what can be called human wholeness. He believes that sensibility and happiness are important not only in terms of morality and justice, but also on their own aesthetic grounds. So Schiller's specific perspective on virtue as wholeness may make his theory especially attractive to those who are interested in developing a Kantian ethics of character and conception of human flourishing. However, this very feature of the theory also makes it potentially problematic from the Kantian point of view.

There is still an ongoing debate about whether Schiller's theory of virtue is really compatible with Kantian ethics or not. Some authors think that, from an orthodox Kantian perspective, Schiller puts too much trust into sensibility and allows it too much power. For example, Katerina Deligiorgi notes that the act of a beautiful soul "elides the reflective aspect of Kant's account of morality" (2005: 147–8). Anne Margaret Baxley notably describes the relationship between a beautiful soul's reason and sensibility as an equal partnership (2003: 503; 2010a: 86, 118) and brings attention to the fact that Schiller sometimes seems to claim that a beautiful soul abandons herself to inclinations (2003: 504fn17). Even Kant himself casts a doubt on the compatibility of his ethics with Schiller's theory, when he states that "the concept of duty includes unconditional necessitation, to which gracefulness stands in direct contradiction" (Kant 6: 23fn†, R 72fn†). The problem can be summed up as follows (let us call this the Incompatibility Argument):

P1. according to Kantian ethics, morality involves the sustained control of reason over sensibility;

P2. according to Schiller's theory of virtue, a virtuous person is characterized by harmony between reason and sensibility;

- P3. harmony between reason and sensibility is not compatible with sustained control of reason over sensibility;
C. Schiller's theory of virtue is not compatible with Kantian ethics.

Premises P1 and P2 are very plausible. But the truth of P3 depends on how we understand the harmony between mental faculties. Baxley (2003, 2010a, 2010b) offers the most consistent and convincing defense of P3, she interprets harmony between mental faculties as the equal partnership between reason and sensibility. As there can be no hierarchy between two equals, neither of them can have the sustained control over the other. I will call this interpretation the Equality Reading. Baxley goes further and argues that the real reason behind the disagreement between Kant and Schiller is the fundamental difference in their views on human nature. More specifically, Schiller does not take seriously Kant's doctrine of radical evil, according to which all finite non-holy beings have an innate and indispensable propensity to violate the moral law.

In this chapter, I reconstruct Schiller's theory of virtue with the intention of challenging the Equality Reading and the third premise of the Incompatibility Argument. I show that both Kant and Schiller (at least in *Grace and Dignity*) fully recognize the priority of reason. The difference between their positions is more subtle. Whereas Kant holds that sensibility must be overtly subordinated to reason, Schiller believes that there should be a semblance of an equal partnership between reason and sensibility, provided that the latter is sufficiently ennobled.

The structure of the chapter is as follows: in the first section, I give a primer on the relevant parts of Kant's account of moral motivation in order to provide the necessary background for the following discussion on Schiller. In the second section, I reconstruct Schiller's theory of virtue. I focus on Schiller's claims directly connected to moral philosophy and psychology, and show what views on human nature are implied by Schiller's theory. In the third section, I discuss Kant's immediate answer to Schiller's essay and present my considerations on why Kant calls Schiller's definition of virtue contradictory. Lastly, in the fourth section, I reject the Equality Reading, propose an alternative interpretation of Schiller's preferred mode of interaction between reason and sensibility and respond to a possible objection.

1. Kant on moral motivation

In the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (henceforth *Groundwork*), Kant aims to seek out the foundational principle of morality. He starts his project by analyzing the commonsense ideas about morality and makes a bold statement that “[i]t is impossible to think of anything at all in the world, or indeed even beyond it, that could be considered good without limitation except a **good will**” (Kant 4: 393, GMM 49). This means that only a good will is an unconditional and intrinsic good, whereas all other things – talents of the mind,

qualities of temperament, gifts of fortune, and happiness – can be good only conditionally. For example, high intelligence and a capacity for calm reflection are commonly valued as objectively good qualities, and they definitely can be conducive to the moral life. The problem is that if they belong to an evil person, then these qualities will make him “not only far more dangerous, but also immediately more abominable in our eyes than he would have been held without [them]” (Kant 4: 394, GMM 50). Thus, if a person lacks a good will, these qualities on their own cannot make him even slightly better.

The good will is good not because of its possible consequences, but “only through its willing” (Kant 4: 394, GMM 50). In order to extricate this unique mode of willing Kant introduces the concept of duty which “contains that of a good will, though under certain subjective limitations and hindrances” (Kant 4: 397, GMM 52). By limitations and hindrances he means our sensibility, which constantly motivates us to do something incompatible with the demands of the moral law. As rational beings we are bound by the moral law, but because we are also sensual beings this binding takes the form of a necessitation: “*duty is the necessity of an action from respect for law*” (Kant 4: 400, GMM 55). It is not natural for us to follow the moral law; we need to necessitate ourselves to follow it.

It may seem too radical, as there is a strong shared intuition that at least sometimes we do morally good things without any noticeable necessitation. As I see it, Kant’s point is not that we are always supposed to experience this necessitation phenomenologically when we are acting from duty, but rather that the way in which duty motivates us is completely different from the way in which we are motivated by an inclination. In particular, there is an important distinction between acts done from duty and acts which are only in conformity with duty. Kant claims that only the former have a genuine moral worth and illustrates this claim with several examples. One of these examples involves a person who is psychologically inclined to be beneficent whenever he can. It is impossible to say whether this person is beneficent from duty or only from inclination. But suppose that some strong grief extinguished all sympathetic inclinations in him; if in these circumstances he continues to be beneficent whenever he can, then he clearly does so from duty (Kant 4: 398, GMM 53–4). Let us now consider the two kinds of motivation in detail.

What happens with a sympathetically attuned benefactor, i.e. with a person who is moved merely by “sympathy with the fate of others” (Kant 4: 398, GMM 53)? He cognizes that his help may make a needy person happier (or at least less unhappy). He is apt to derive pleasure or pain from others’ pleasure or pain respectively. His thought that he can help is pleasurable itself, either instinctively (if it is purely natural sympathy) or due to the fact that he has had a previous pleasurable experience of helping others (if it is acquired sympathy). This feeling of pleasure gives rise to a desire to commit a beneficent act.

Now let us compare it with motivation by duty. The important difference is that feelings of pleasure or pain cannot be involved in motivation by duty. Kant stresses that if in order to make law a sufficient determining ground of the will

we need to presuppose some feeling, then our action will contain only legality, not morality (see Kant 5: 71, CPrR 198). Instead, duty binds a person as an imperative (Kant 4: 401fn*, GMM 56fn*). A dutiful benefactor cognizes that there are needy people and that he is able to help them. The object of cognition here is the fact that a certain moral principle can be applied to a current situation. The very consciousness of the moral law humiliates the benefactor. This humiliation can be painful, as it shows him that his private desires and preferences are insignificant in the face of the demands of moral law. As a result, he acts not because he wants to, but because he recognizes that he ought to and cannot help but respect the moral law. It should be said, however, that the benefactor feels respect for the moral law even if he does not act as it prescribes, because what humiliates him as a positive determining ground is an object of respect (see Kant 5: 74, CPrR 200). For Kant, this aspect is very important: consciousness of the moral law moderates our self-love and strikes down our self-conceit, so we inevitably experience it as “practical *necessitation*, that is, determination to actions however *reluctantly* they may be done” (Kant 5:80, CPrR 205). But we should not think of respect for the moral law solely in negative terms. There is also a positive aspect to it: the consciousness of the moral law “lets us discover the sublimity of our own supersensible existence” (Kant 5: 88, CPrR 211), in other words, through respect the benefactor realizes that he is more than just a phenomenal being deterministically guided by his inclinations. And if he actually decides to do as duty prescribes, he will also experience contentment with himself based on his independence from the inclinations (see Kant 5: 117, CPrR 234). Yet it is very important to distinguish respect from any feelings of pleasure or pain involved in determining the will by empirical grounds, as respect “does not precede the lawgiving of practical reason but is instead produced only by it and indeed as a constraint” (Kant 5: 92, CPrR 213) or necessitation. That being said, it should be stressed that Kant allows and even endorses the idea that a person’s awareness of her actions being consistent with or contrary to duty can cause her to feel pleasure or pain respectively (see Kant 6: 399, MM 528). The crucial point is that a person can perceive such pleasure or pain only after having been motivated by duty, so pleasure and pain are not involved in motivation itself.

According to Kant, our inclinations cannot be reliable grounds for morality because they are contingent. This contingency is twofold. First, the presence of an inclination is contingent. Some of us have it, others do not. Today we are sympathetic to others, tomorrow something bad happens to us and we are not able to feel sympathy anymore. Second, even when acts from an inclination are in conformity with duty, this conformity is also only contingent. It is easy to imagine a situation in which sympathy leads us to acts inconsistent with the demands of the moral law.²⁸ Therefore, the beneficent act of the sympathetic

²⁸ See, e.g., Barbara Herman’s famous scenario (1993: 4) in which our sympathy towards a man struggling with a heavy burden on the street moves us to help him without realizing that we are actually assisting a theft.

benefactor does not express his good will, if it is motivated merely by sympathy. This act only shows that the benefactor has a certain inclination, and it is only a happy coincidence that this act is in conformity with duty.

One of the most important questions for Kantian ethics is whether there can be a benefactor who is both sympathetic and dutiful, provided that both duty alone and sympathy alone would be sufficient for moving him to be beneficent. The claim that sympathy for people prevents the benefactor from being moral seems very implausible and counterintuitive. Fortunately, Kantians do not need to accept it. A number of scholars have argued – on varying grounds – that Kant’s examples about moral worth in *Groundwork* are not an illustration of the necessary lack of moral worth of the sympathetic benefactor’s actions, but rather an illustration of the special epistemological value of an action committed against inclinations.²⁹

The stimuli of sensibility and the requirements of moral law – Kant uses the term ‘incentives’ to denote both – are not instantaneous motives, i.e. they do not immediately turn into actions. A person must first decide to act according to one of these incentives. Or, more technically speaking, she must first incorporate one of these incentives into maxim (see Kant 6: 24, R 73).³⁰ But no amount of introspection can help us know for sure which maxim we have incorporated. If we are honest with ourselves, we will always suspect that perhaps we did the right thing only because we especially like the people affected by our action or because we wanted to show off to them and so on. What Kant wants is to isolate moral motivation in its purest form, so he asks us to consider an absolutely artificial scenario in which there is no other plausible explanation for the actions of the benefactor, except that he did his duty just because it is duty. This example is not meant to show that we should strive for the same situation as the unfortunate benefactor. Nor is it meant to show that sympathy necessarily interferes with the performance of the duty. A benefactor may well feel sympathy to others; it is important only that sympathy should not be a determining reason for his action.

In a brief but very insightful analysis, Schiller interprets Kant’s examples in exactly the same way as described above: “In order to be completely certain that inclination did not exercise its influence as well, we prefer to visualize it in conflict rather than in agreement with the law of reason because it can too easily happen that its intercession alone gives that law power over the will” (Schiller 20: 282, GD 149). But Schiller offers something more than just a charitable and attentive reading of Kant. He believes that Kant’s examples – if they are read incorrectly – are dangerously misleading, and to remedy their possible harm, it is necessary to supplement Kant’s theory of moral action with a theory of moral character or virtue. In other words, it is not enough to show that a benefactor can be both sympathetic and dutiful. Rather, what must be shown is that this

²⁹ On the epistemological value of an action committed against inclinations see, e.g., Herman (1993: 1–22), Christine Korsgaard (1996: 55–67).

³⁰ See Henry E. Allison (1990: 35–52) for a classic discussion of the Incorporation Thesis.

would be the best version of a benefactor: “the ethical perfection of the human being can only become clear precisely because of the part played by the inclination in moral actions. The human being is not destined to perform individual ethical actions but to be an ethical being” (Schiller 20: 283, GD 149). How, according to Schiller, a human being can be an ethical being is discussed in the next section.

2. Schiller’s theory of virtue

In this section I reconstruct Schiller’s theory of virtue, in particular his accounts of grace and dignity as they are presented in *Grace and Dignity*. I begin with a brief discussion of how *Grace and Dignity* builds on Schiller’s previous work. In *Kallias*, Schiller defines beauty as “freedom in appearance” (Schiller 26: 182, K 152).³¹ What does this mean? Schiller relies on a Kantian understanding of freedom as self-determination and fully agrees with Kant that there can be no real self-determination in the phenomenal world: *freedom as such can never be given to the senses and nothing can be free other than what is supra-sensible [übersinnliche]*” (Schiller 26: 182, K 151). So Schiller does not attribute real freedom to beautiful things as phenomena. Instead, he understands beauty as an imitation or analogy of freedom (see Schiller 26: 179–80, K 149). A beautiful thing – says Schiller – appears to us “as self-determined” (Schiller 26: 199, K 160). We notice some kind of purposive structure in it (Schiller uses Kant’s term ‘technique’), but we cannot, and do not want to, immediately fully identify the author or the purpose of this structure. An object looks as if it has created its purposive structure itself, rather than as if this purposive structure was created by a human being or the unstoppable laws of nature. Of course, this cannot be true, as every work of art is created by rational beings, and every beautiful natural object is created by nature. But Schiller does not make any constitutive claim here, he talks only about how a beautiful thing is experienced by us through our perception: it must fascinate us; it must provoke us to try to understand it; it must provide space for interpretation; it must never be entirely explained by reference to the author and his intentions, cultural context, or the material from which it is made; something else must always remain in it. And this something else which both requires and resists full explanation, this charming willfulness of a beautiful thing, is freedom in appearance.

It should be noted that Schiller uses this definition exclusively in *Kallias*,³² which was not published until 1847, long after Schiller’s death. I believe this is

³¹ I discuss Schiller’s theory of beauty in detail in Chapter One.

³² One apparent exception can be found in a footnote to the twenty-third *Aesthetic Letter*: “Beauty, however, is the only possible manifestation [*Ausdruck*] of freedom in appearance” (Schiller 20: 286fn*, AL 87fn*). This is, however, quite a different definition that does not refer to freedom in appearance, but only to freedom’s manifestation in appearance. In other words, in this footnote, Schiller emphasizes the phenomenological character of beauty: beauty is not an appearance, but the way an appearance can manifest itself in our experience.

because Schiller realized that his terminology was not compatible with transcendental idealism, according to which all appearances are spatiotemporal and governed by deterministic laws, and therefore cannot contain freedom. In *Grace and Dignity* Schiller introduces a new term, semblance [*Schein*], with which he describes not objects qua phenomena or nomena, but our perception of them. For example, he says that the moral imperative has a “semblance of an alien and positive law” (Schiller 20: 286, GD 151, my translation). Schiller gives a much more detailed account of semblances in the *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (henceforth *Aesthetic Letters*) (see Schiller 20: 399–403, AL 100–3).³³ If an appearance is a thing for us, then semblance is how we phenomenologically perceive this thing.³⁴ Through semblances the thing becomes “a fact for our senses” (Schiller, 26: 210, K 169). Given this later change in terminology, it would be more correct to define beauty not as freedom in appearance, but as freedom in semblance or, perhaps, as a semblance of freedom. For the remainder of the chapter, I will stick to the latter version of the definition.

It is also important to note that Schiller distinguishes between logical and aesthetic semblances (see Schiller 20: 399–400, AL 100–1fn†). The effect of logical semblances is based on the fact that the person perceiving them does not realize that what she perceives is not entirely real. A mirage in the desert, for example, is a logical semblance; it may please us only until we realize that it is a deception and that we are not getting water that we hoped for.³⁵ Aesthetic semblances, on the contrary, are loved and valued precisely because they are semblances, that is, they are distinguished from reality, but loved and valued all the same.³⁶ Beauty is an aesthetic semblance.

Schiller mentions some more specific features of beauty as a semblance of freedom. Firstly, he speaks about a certain lightness of a beautiful object: it seems to overcome gravity (see Schiller 26: 203–5, K 163–5). For Schiller, the feeling of lightness is a particular case of how we can experience the independence of a

³³ I cannot help but express regret that many translators of Schiller still translate both ‘*Erscheinung*’ and ‘*Schein*’ as ‘appearance,’ thus hiding Schiller’s progress in the ability to make subtle but very significant conceptual distinctions from the English-speaking reader.

³⁴ A phenomenological reading of Schiller’s theory of beauty is favored, e.g., by Frederick Beiser (2008: 72–4). See also Susanne Langer (1953) for a modern and highly influential theory of art built on Schiller’s concept of semblance.

³⁵ Of course, it is possible to imagine that a person realizes that a mirage in the desert is only a mirage, and still he rejoices in it as something beautiful. But in this unlikely case, there is simply a transition from the logical semblance to the aesthetic one.

³⁶ Cf. Kant’s distinction between illusion and deception: “Illusion [*Täuschung*] is that delusion which persists although we know at the same time that the supposed object is not real,” while “deception of the senses exists when, as soon as one knows how the object is constituted, the illusion also immediately ceases” (Kant 7: 149–50, A 261–2). Kant used a similar distinction in his lectures on anthropology as early as 1775–76: “All semblance [*Schein*] is first an illusion, if it can harmonize with the cognition of truth. However, all semblance is deception as soon as it does not agree with the cognition of truth” (Kant 25: 502, AF 73).

beautiful object from the dictates of the laws of nature. But at the same time, secondly, Schiller talks about the importance of naturalness: beautiful birches, pines, and poplars, usually grow straight up, whereas a beautiful oak bends. He contrasts the nature of the object “with all that is different from [it], what is **regarded** as merely coincidental and can be abstracted without negating its essence” (Schiller 26: 203, K 163, my emphasis). So as we see, a beautiful object should somehow unite independence from external nature with determination through its own internal nature. Thirdly, this internal nature should involve some purposefulness (technique), but without any direct and exhaustive reference to a purpose or creator of the object. In other words, a beautiful object should be perceived by us as rule-governed, but these rules should feel like they are its own, and not that of an external creator.

These three features explain Schiller’s point that beauty is very difficult to combine with morality. Moral purposes are external to nature, they directly refer to pure practical reason as their legislator, and they are presented as absolutely necessary. Coercion – even if it is reason’s coercion – is always perceived as something insulting and embarrassing: “a moral action would be a beautiful action only if it appears as an immediate outcome of nature” (Schiller 26: 198, K 159). The only way to attain moral beauty is to ennoble our inner nature, to make the purposes of pure practical reason its purposes. And at the same time we must somehow perceive these moral purposes not as imposed on our nature, but as belonging to it as its own. “Our sensory nature must thus appear free, where morality is concerned, although it is really not free, and it must appear as if nature were merely fulfilling the commission of our drives by subjugating itself to the mastery of the pure will, at the expense of its own drives” (Schiller 26: 198, K 159). As we can see, this discussion deals with a topic similar to the discussion of moral motivation in the previous section: namely, how we can reconcile the rationality of morality with our inclinations. But what is interesting is that Schiller is trying to answer this question from a very different perspective: his concern is not the destructive effect of sensibility on morality, but rather the destructive effect of morality on sensibility, or to be more precise, on beauty.

In *Grace and Dignity*, Schiller develops the concept of moral beauty into a full-fledged theory of virtue. He argues that although morality is difficult to unite with beauty, this unity should be pursued on both aesthetic and moral grounds. And the only way to achieve this unity is to secure the best mode of interaction between reason and sensibility. How, according to Schiller, may reason and sensibility interact with each other? There are three possibilities: reason may suppress sensibility; sensibility may suppress reason; and reason and sensibility may be in harmony. Let us look now how the mode of interaction between mental faculties influences the moral worth of our acts.

M1. If sensibility suppresses reason, then an act cannot have any moral worth even if it complies with the demands of duty. Schiller uses political metaphors

to describe different modes of interaction between reason and sensibility and M1 reminds him of *a wild ochlocracy* (Schiller 20: 282, GD 148). Anyone who puts his inclinations and happiness above the requirements of moral law exemplifies M1.

M2. If reason suppresses sensibility, then the act is done from duty. It is a paradigm Kantian example of a moral act. According to Schiller, M2 is akin to *a monarchy*, as reason is a sole ruler here (Schiller 20: 281, GD 148). It should be noted that Kant himself uses a somewhat similar metaphor to describe this mode of interaction; he calls M2 “autocracy of practical reason” (Kant 6: 383, MM 515).

M3. If reason and sensibility are in harmony, then “the actions <...> are not themselves ethical, but the character as a whole is so” (Schiller 20: 287, GD 152). Schiller calls a person whose mental faculties are in such perfect harmony **a beautiful soul** and compares this harmony with *a liberal government* (Schiller 20: 278–9, GD 146). It is very important that Schiller does not really contrast a liberal government with a monarchy, but considers the former to be a subtype of the latter. I believe that Baxley’s Equality Reading does not pay enough attention to this fact.

The distinction between M1 and M2 roughly corresponds to the afore-discussed Kantian distinction between two types of motivation. Schiller thinks that Kant is too focused on making a clear distinction between M1 and M2 and does not explore the possibility of harmony between mental faculties, i.e. M3. However, according to Schiller, there are at least four reasons why we should prefer M3 to M2:

1. We are not only rational, but also sensual beings. Schiller thinks that this fact about human nature is a good reason to not sacrifice one part of the self in favour of the other. Sensibility “does want to *have a voice* in the ethical elections” (Schiller 20: 282, GD 149). And although the misguided operations of sensibility may violate the purity of the will, Schiller also notes that “[t]he will has a more direct connection with the powers of emotion, in any case, than with those of understanding” (Schiller 20: 286, GD 152). This connection is a significant feature of Schiller’s theory of the will and provides motivation for his theory of virtue: sensibility is the first to try to define the will, and a person who has absolutely no trust in her sensibility is less likely to command our respect.
2. The connection between will and sensibility also implies that in extreme situations crude sensibility may determine the will directly, without the mediation of choice.³⁷ It means that M2 is potentially unstable, as it involves unending struggle between reason and sensibility. “The enemy

³⁷ Schiller discusses this problem more comprehensively in the *Aesthetic Letters*, where he examines how freedom as the capacity for choice “can be promoted and inhibited by natural means” (Schiller 20: 373, AL 73).

who has merely been laid low can get up again, but the one who is reconciled has been truly overcome” (Schiller 20: 284, GD 150). So it is prudentially better to reconcile opposing parties.³⁸

3. M3 is characterized by a greater degree of freedom than M2, as the very experience of disharmony between mental faculties tells us that our freedom is somehow restricted. “Only in the service of a beautiful soul can nature possess freedom and at the same time preserve its form” (Schiller 20: 288, GD 153). One could also say that M3 allows for a higher level of successful self-determination, as it does not involve the alienation of our sensual part. Schiller elaborates on this topic in the *Aesthetic Letters*.
4. Only harmony between reason and sensibility demonstrates the maturity of a moral character. Why does Schiller think so? The act itself cannot say anything about the moral character of the one who acts. Even if a person’s character is corrupted, there is still a possibility for her to do the right thing in any situation, just because she possesses free will. In *Grace and Dignity*, Schiller defines the will as a suprasensual faculty [*übersinnliches Vermögen*] which, despite its connections with sensibility and understanding, “is not so subject either to the law of nature or to that of reason that it does not have complete freedom to choose whether to follow the one or the other” (Schiller 20: 290, GD 155).³⁹ Thus, the moral act of an immoral person “is the effect of the decision and the purpose but not of the person and the character” (Schiller 20: 268, GD 137).

So only harmony between mental faculties (M3) proves that this particular person not just acts morally, but is a genuine moral being. How can we distinguish M3 from M2? It is here the concept of *grace* comes into play. Schiller draws attention to the specific actions, gestures, and manners which he calls sympathetic [*sympathetische*] movements (Schiller 20: 266, GD 135). Sympathetic movements themselves are not intentional [*willkürlich*], but they

³⁸ Deligiorgi interprets this objection to M2 as the motivational problem: morality which is unsupported by inclinations is motivationally inefficient. She thinks that this objection can be convincing only if Schiller rejects the central Kantian thesis that pure reason can be practical, in other words, that reason alone (without any influence of inclination) can motivate a person (see Deligiorgi 2005: 144–5; and Deligiorgi 2006: 3–4). I do not agree with Deligiorgi and think that she proves too much. Even from an orthodox Kantian position, it is obvious that moral life is easier for those who have mastered their inclinations. Schiller’s objection does not need to be read as completely defeating M2. The only thing he wants to show here is that M3 makes moral life easier and more sustainable.

³⁹ Schiller’s understanding of the executive aspect of the will, that is, freedom of choice, is closer to Reinhold (see Reinhold 2008: 198–200) than to Kant, who in *Metaphysics of Morals* explicitly refuses to define the capacity of choice in terms of choosing according to, or against, the moral law: “Only freedom in relation to the internal lawgiving of reason is really a capacity; the possibility of deviating from it is an incapacity” (Kant 6: 227, MM 381).

accompany intentional moral acts.⁴⁰ Sympathetic movements may give us information about the moral character of a person; that is why Schiller also calls them expressive [*sprechend*] or mimic [*mimisch*] movements (Schiller 20: 271, GD 140). While a person's act itself does not say much about her moral character, the sympathetic movements may do so. A person can follow her duty with joy, and it can be read from her sympathetic movements, e.g., from her face expression, posture, unconscious gestures, etc. Alternatively, she can do it reluctantly, and once again the sympathetic movements which accompany her act will give her away. In other words, the moral character of a person is not expressed through her moral acts themselves, but is revealed in the way in which they are performed.⁴¹ When one's acts are graceful, they are performed with ease, naturalness and joy and it can be read from one's sympathetic movements. The beautiful soul does not need to force her sensual nature to comply with reason's dictates, as it already acts in accordance with them from an inclination. Grace is the expression of the beautiful soul; it shows that reason and sensibility are in harmony, i.e. that inclinations harmonize with the moral law.

Schiller describes "ethical perfection" specifically in terms of the role "played by the inclination in moral actions" (Schiller 20: 283, GD 149). I agree with Douglas Moggach (2020) that Schiller invokes the idea of perfection but through the post-Kantian lens. In discussing the beautiful soul, Schiller clearly appeals to a sense of perfection in terms of perfectibility, that is, the realization of some implicit potential. But in doing so, Schiller does not regard ethical perfection as something preordained or authoritatively imposable. He emphasizes that ethical perfection is the result of the personal realization of freedom. Thus, one essential aspect of Schiller's concept of the beautiful soul is that harmonious inclinations are not innate. It is not a matter of pure luck that a person has been born with them, but they are the product of intentional cultivation. Only in the latter case the presence of harmonious inclinations proves the genuine goodness of a person's character, because only this way they also show that her will is good. Basically, Schiller talks here about virtue which he controversially defines as "an inclination for duty" (Schiller 20: 283, GD 149). A beautiful soul behaves gracefully because her virtuousness makes

⁴⁰ David Pugh (1997: 265) makes a good point that it is better to consider sympathetic movements as a middle class between intentional and unintentional movements. Sympathetic movements are not directly produced by a will as intentional movements, but they also are not the product of mere animal nature as unintentional movements. Schiller calls sympathetic movements expressive exactly because they express something more than just our animal nature. They are signs of our self-cultivation, and in that sense they can be regarded as indirectly intentional. On the connection between the will and sympathetic movements, see also Jeffrey Gauthier (1997: 533).

⁴¹ Schiller recognizes that certain people can master their body movements to such an extent that they can control even sympathetic movements. Even more, Schiller expects it from a good actor (Schiller 20: 269–70fn*, GD 138fn*). But it does not disprove his theory, as in this case these movements are directly intentional, while proper sympathetic movements are not.

fulfilling duty easy, natural and joyful. Does that mean that a beautiful soul is bound by the moral law in a way free of any necessitation? If it is so, then Schiller's theory of moral character is in clear contradiction with Kant's theory of a moral act. However, I do not think that this is the right interpretation of Schiller's view. The more charitable way to interpret it is to say that a beautiful soul *usually* does not feel, phenomenologically speaking, any necessitation, but the necessitation is still there. Moreover, there are cases in which necessitation becomes phenomenologically noticeable even to a beautiful soul. This brings us to Schiller's concept of *dignity*.

There are certain situations in which it is just humanly impossible to carry out one's duty with ease and joy, i.e. to behave gracefully. A human being still has to feel whatever nature wants him to feel. "In this regard, humans are exactly the same as animals, and the most strong-willed Stoic feels hunger just as acutely and loathes it just as strongly as the worm at his feet" (Schiller 20: 290, GD 155). What makes a person essentially different from an animal, however, is her ability to break free from the chains of natural causality. "Animals *must* strive to free themselves from pain; humans can decide to hold on to it" (Schiller 20: 290, GD 155). While a person cannot choose what to feel, she chooses how to react to this feeling. But this choice concerns only her intentional movements, whereas her unintentional movements are still revealing what this person feels. Schiller fully acknowledges that no amount of self-cultivation will help us to perform all our duties with grace. A tortured prisoner, perhaps, may find some sublime strength in himself to not betray his friends, but it would be ridiculous to expect an expression of joy and ease from him during torture. However, when this prisoner suppresses his sensual nature by reason, he acts with dignity. Dignity is also expressed by sympathetic movements, but in this case they tell us not about joy and ease, but about a fierce struggle between reason and sensibility, in which reason prevails.

To put it simply, sympathetic movements disclose which mode of interaction between mental faculties is operating at the moment.⁴² And this disclosure is two-fold. First, it has an external (aesthetic) dimension: sympathetic movements make moral acts appear beautiful if there is harmony between mental faculties, or sublime if there is an inner struggle. Second, there is also an internal (psychological) dimension: inner harmony results in willful and joyful moral conduct, an inner struggle – in excruciating necessitation to act according to moral law. How should we understand the harmony between mental faculties? It could be called the harmony of dispositions.⁴³ The point is that reason and

⁴² Strangely enough, there is little to none discussion in the Anglophone secondary literature on why exactly Schiller calls these movements sympathetic. Most likely, he has in mind some kind of internal sympathy or communication between sentiments and movements. Since the sympathetic movements are connected to a moral sentiment, they are able to express it. In a sense, they are symptoms or signs of this sentiment. For a discussion of the concept of sympathy in the eighteenth century, see Ryan Hanley (2015).

⁴³ It should not be conflated with a misleadingly similar concept of harmony which is prominently employed in Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters*. The latter would be more correctly

sensibility should move us in the same direction, as in the case with a benefactor who is both dutiful and sympathetic to others.

Some authors think that there is a contradiction in that grace, which is characterized by ease and naturalness, is to be obtained by cultivation. Pugh (1997: 267–9) notes Schiller’s emphasis that grace should be nature, not art. Deligiorgi (2006: 8–12) claims that grace should involve an element of passivity and effortlessness. They also mention Schiller’s disdain towards imitated grace: he says that he does “not care for actors who have labored to produce grace at the dressing table, regardless of how successful their imitation may be” (Schiller 20: 269fn*, GD 138fn*). But in this passage Schiller criticizes not the cultivation of virtue, but the imitation of sympathetic movements themselves. In other words, he disdains those who just imitate a smile or a gait or some other habitual movement of a virtuous person without trying to become virtuous. What is really necessary to imitate and cultivate is not the external manifestations of grace and dignity, but their internal causes: “there is only one path, imitation of the attitudes whose expression [grace and dignity] are” (Schiller 20: 306, GD 168). As soon as a person achieves inner harmony, nature will do everything else regarding its external manifestation. This is why grace includes an element of passivity: all active work is already finished within a person. What makes it even clearer that Schiller considers grace to be a product of cultivation is his intention to distinguish it “from a *good heart* or from *virtue born of temperament*” (Schiller 20: 294, GD 158).

Sympathetic movements can sometimes be misleading. But genuine dignity and genuine grace verify each other (see Schiller 20: 300, GD 163). On the one hand, what we take for dignity can easily be a dullness of sensibility. Then, perhaps, there is no real self-control involved, and a person just acts in conformity with duty by accident. And even if it is not the case of insensibility and there is a real struggle within this person, there is no guarantee that this struggle is between reason and sensibility, and not between two different inclinations. But if we know that this person usually acts with grace, i.e. commits morally good acts with ease and joy, then there are good grounds to believe that in this particular case she acted with genuine dignity, as the grace of her previous acts proves that she is not insensible and her consistency in committing good acts – no matter whether it is possible to do them with grace or not – proves that her good acts are not contingent, but prescribed by reason.

characterized as harmony of power. Harmony of power does not mean that reason and sensibility cooperate, but that they are equally powerful and limit the pretensions of each other. I discuss the concept of harmony of power in the future chapters. But, just to give a glimpse, Schiller uses this concept to characterize a special mental state in which a person must be in order to make a choice. For a similar distinction, see Samantha Matherne and Nick Riggle (2020: 11fn20). Matherne and Riggle make a distinction between the reciprocity we achieve through the wholeness of character which roughly corresponds to the harmony of dispositions and the reciprocity we achieve in play which roughly corresponds to the harmony of power. For a rich discussion on Schiller’s concepts of choice and individual freedom, see Jörg Noller (2020) and Beiser (2005: 228–52).

On the other hand, it is also difficult to distinguish a person who is just lucky to be born with a good heart, i.e. with good inclinations, from a beautiful soul who has consciously cultivated such inclinations. It slightly resembles a similar issue with moral worth which Kant illustrated with the example of a sympathetically attuned benefactor discussed in the first section. And, actually, Schiller proposes a similar solution. If a person continues to commit good acts even when it is not possible to do so with joy and ease, then it is very likely that previously she demonstrated genuine grace. Hence we can be sure that a person is a beautiful soul, if she does “everything with grace that can be carried out within humanity, and everything with dignity that requires going beyond humanity” (Schiller 20: 298, GD 162).

Finally, let us discuss what views on human nature are implied by Schiller’s theory. If we focus purely on the discussion of grace, it would seem to us that Schiller deviates from Kant very strongly, as the concept of a beautiful soul seems to presuppose overly optimistic understanding of human nature: a person may achieve such a level of perfection, that she does not ever need to struggle with herself in order to do the right thing. In Kantian terms, this means that a finite rational will may become a holy will through self-cultivation, which strongly contradicts Kantian anthropology. However, this is an incorrect interpretation of Schiller’s views, which becomes obvious as soon as we turn to his discussion of dignity. In the second part of his essay, Schiller acknowledges that it is not humanly possible to maintain harmony between reason and sensibility in all situations. And dignity, “as an expression of that opposition between the two, makes visible either the particular limits of the subject or those of mankind in general” (Schiller 20: 298, GD 161).

While Baxley recognizes that Schiller does not believe in the possibility of achieving holiness, she still insists that his views on human nature are fundamentally different from those of Kant (see Baxley 2010a: 115–20). Her position is that Schiller does not take seriously what Kant calls a propensity to evil. According to Kant, all finite non-holy beings have an innate and indispensable propensity to violate the moral law, i.e. to prioritize objects or actions to which they are inclined over the universal moral demands. That is why Kant, according to Baxley, cannot agree with Schiller’s theory of virtue: it implies too high a degree of trust in sensibility, unacceptable for a human being. Baxley’s suggestion seems plausible and partly consistent with what Schiller himself says about the doctrine of radical evil in *Kallias*. Schiller writes that one of Kant’s “first principles gives rise to a feeling of indignation ... [f]or [Kant] claims that the human heart has a propensity towards evil ... which ought not be confused with the temptations of the senses”. But then Schiller with obvious regret adds that “one can find no objection against [Kant’s] proofs [about radical evil], as much as one would like to” (Schiller 26: 219, K 175). In other words, Schiller definitely does not like the doctrine of evil, but it is not so clear that he disagrees with it or does not take it seriously. More importantly, even if his views on human nature strongly differ from those of Kant, it is not obvious that this difference is relevant for this particular case. According to Baxley, the

difference in views on human nature explains why Schiller believes in the possibility of an equal partnership between mental faculties, and Kant does not. But as I show in the final section, there are serious reasons to doubt the correctness of the Equality Reading. However, before that we need to discuss what Kant himself saw as problematic in Schiller's theory, and whether Kant's own position confirms Baxley's interpretation.

3. Kant's response to Schiller

In this section, I discuss Kant's immediate answer to Schiller's essay and present my considerations on why Kant calls Schiller's definition of virtue contradictory. We can find Kant's answer in a footnote that appears in the second edition of Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1794). Interestingly enough, Kant admits the possibility that at least part of his disagreement with Schiller is purely verbal. Kant says that he and Schiller are "at one upon the most important principles", so they can come to agreement in others as well "if only [they] can make [themselves] clear to one another". But then Kant immediately adds that he cannot associate grace "with the concept of duty" because "of the dignity of the idea of duty", i.e. this concept "includes unconditional necessitation, to which [grace] stands in direct contradiction". However, he notes that virtue, which he defines as "the firmly grounded disposition to fulfil one's duty strictly", is very "beneficent in its consequences", "[h]ence the glorious picture of humanity, as portrayed in the figure of virtue, does allow the attendance of the graces". Kant finishes his footnote by agreeing with Schiller that it is better to fulfill duty with joy and ease, than be "weighed down by fear and dejected", because only the former is "the sign of genuineness in virtuous disposition" (Kant 6: 23fn†, R 72–3fn†).

Now I am going to examine Kant's points in detail. Firstly, although Kant allows that there can be something graceful about virtue, he seems to understand grace very differently from Schiller. Kant agrees that it is preferable to fulfill duty with ease and joy, but he does not associate these feelings with grace. When he talks about the gracefulness of virtue, his point is rather that virtue tends to please us (i.e. it tends to be perceived as graceful), and he tries to explain it by an appeal to virtue's beneficial consequences. One can even argue that Kant regards grace as a consequentialist decoration of virtue: although maximizing happiness is not the basis of morality, it often comes about as its graceful consequence.

Secondly, Kant's understanding of dignity is also noticeably different from Schiller's. For Schiller, dignity is characterized by self-struggle, which he associates with a situation of tragedy.⁴⁴ When a person acts with dignity, she has to overcome herself and this overcoming is phenomenologically obvious to

⁴⁴ See, e.g., Schiller (20: 295–7, GD 159–60). For a more detailed discussion on how Schiller's concept of dignity is connected with the situation of tragedy, see Beiser (2005: 114–5, also 190–2).

her and painful. Kant also thinks that dignity involves unconditional necessitation, but he does not agree with Schiller that this necessitation is to be phenomenologically perceived as painful or tragic. Sometimes it can be quite painful, but if a person is virtuous, i.e. if she has cultivated self-mastery, then she has such a great level of control over sensibility that this necessitation can be experienced as something natural. Moreover, this necessitation “rouses a *feeling of the sublimity* of our own vocation” (Kant 6: 23fn†, R 73fn†). The sublime, according to Kant, always involves both painful and pleasurable feelings, or, more precisely, it involves “a pleasure which is possible only by means of a displeasure” (Kant 5: 260, CPJ 143). While it is painful for a person to overcome herself, there is also a lot of pleasure coming from the fact that she is able to overcome herself. She feels her inner worth and realizes that she is more than just a biological organism. In Kantian terms, she feels self-approbation. And if a person is virtuous in Kant’s sense, then an initial painful feeling may become phenomenologically less obvious or, perhaps, almost unnoticeable, and only a pleasure remains to be felt. Hence, one may fulfill one’s duty with joy without being graceful in Schiller’s sense.

Thirdly and finally, Kant’s definition of virtue has little in common with Schiller’s. Schiller defines virtue as “an inclination for duty” (Schiller 20: 283, GD 149); Kant – as “the firmly grounded disposition to fulfill one’s duty strictly” (Kant 6: 23fn†, R 72fn†). Kant emphasizes the strictness of duty, he does not want duty to be associated with something based on a sense of pleasure, that is, with inclination. Moreover, he overtly says that Schiller’s definition is contradictory, as grace cannot be combined with unconditional necessitation. This last point of Kant’s I want to discuss in particular. It is important to note that Schiller’s definition can be read in two different ways. One way is to understand virtue as an inclination for the very same act which is prescribed by duty. The other way to read this definition is literal. Then virtue is to be understood as an inclination for duty itself, i.e. an inclination not for a particular moral act (for instance, an inclination to help those in need, or an inclination to be honest), but rather an inclination for good acts as such. The most convincing textual evidence in favor of the second interpretation is that Schiller explicitly says that there is only one virtue. “*Virtue* is prescribed for [a good soul], rather than *virtues*” (Schiller 20: 283, GD 149). However, there are also good reasons to discard the literal interpretation. I touch upon them below. In the following I discuss two possible versions why Kant calls this definition contradictory. Ultimately, I show that when Kant calls it contradictory, he means the literal interpretation of this definition.

Baxley proposes an **anthropological reading** (Baxley 2010a: 110). This reading relies on the non-literal interpretation of the definition. Hence, virtue is to be understood as an inclination for the action prescribed by duty, rather than as an inclination for duty itself. What makes this definition contradictory? Baxley argues that a virtue defined this way is just something impossible within the framework of Kant’s moral psychology and anthropology. As I have already mentioned in a previous section, one of Kant’s main assumptions about human

nature is that human beings tend to prioritize non-moral incentives over demands of the moral law (Kant 6: 36, R 82–3). The very idea that a person is able to become so virtuous that she can follow the moral law – even if only at her best moments – without any necessitation does not fit with Kant’s anthropology. However, Baxley’s reading only explains why such a virtue is impossible, but it does not follow from this that Schiller’s definition is contradictory. That is why I think that when Kant calls Schiller’s definition of virtue contradictory, he means something else.

The alternative reading can be called **the conditionality reading**. It relies on the literal interpretation of the definition, meaning that virtue is to be understood not as an inclination for the same thing which is motivated by duty, but as an inclination for duty itself. So why does this definition contain a contradiction? The whole meaning of Kant’s concept of duty is that it shows how a human being can possess a good will. A good will is the only thing which is good unconditionally. The literal interpretation of Schiller’s definition makes duty conditional on inclination, as it implies that in order to be better motivated by duty we need to be inclined to it. *Nota bene*, not inclined for what duty prescribes (that would be compatible with Kant’s moral philosophy and psychology), but inclined to duty itself. “If the determination of the will takes place ... by means of a feeling, of whatever kind, that has to be presupposed in order for the law to become a sufficient determining ground of the will ..., then the action will contain legality indeed but not morality” (Kant 5: 71, CPrR 198). The point is that inclination – which necessarily involves feeling of pleasure or pain – cannot precede duty in a motivational chain. It is possible that there are two different parallel motivational chains. And one of them involves inclination and another – duty. And there are also duties to cultivate inclinations, so duty sometimes precedes inclination in one and the same motivational chain. But if inclination precedes duty in one and the same motivational chain, then by definition it is not duty anymore. To put it simply, Schiller’s definition understood literally assumes that there is a motivational chain in which inclination precedes duty. But it is both impossible and contradictory, because duty by definition is unconditional, nothing can precede it. Hence, Schiller’s main contradiction is that he disposes of the most important component of the concept of duty – its unconditionality.⁴⁵ This reading fully conforms with Kant’s insistence that the concept of duty “includes **unconditional** necessitation, to which [grace] stands in direct contradiction” (Kant 6: 23fn†, R 72, my emphasis).

However, it is unlikely that Schiller himself would encourage the literal reading of his definition. And it seems that Kant also suspected that this definition should not be read literally, hence he assumed that at least partially his disagreement with Schiller is purely verbal. There is one very strong reason why we should not read Schiller’s definition literally. As I have already stated, for Schiller the preferred mode of interaction between reason and sensibility is

⁴⁵ For a somewhat similar analysis, see Gauthier (1997: 528–530).

harmony between them, i.e. M3. And if this harmony is not possible, then the second best option is dignity which means that sensibility should be subordinated to reason, i.e. M2. But the literal reading of Schiller's definition does not conform to either M3 or M2. If we understand virtue as an inclination for duty itself, we effectively give sensibility more priority than reason (by making the latter conditional on the former). It is rather reminiscent of the mode of interaction M1, in which sensibility suppresses reason. Hence, it cannot be the right reading of Schiller as he considers M1 to be the worst option.⁴⁶

When Kant was writing his answer to Schiller, he had not worked out his positive understanding of virtue yet. It may be argued that since then his views began to develop into the same direction as Schiller's. In the *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797) Kant acknowledges several functions of virtue. First, he often regards virtue as a form of continence or self-mastery (Kant 6: 394, MM 524–5; and 6: 405, MM 533–4). Self-mastery helps a person to struggle against inclinations which prevent her from fulfilling her duty. Second, Kant also says that “virtue is always *in progress*” (Kant 6: 409, MM 537) and “is neither armed for all situations nor adequately secured against the changes that new temptations could bring about” (Kant 6: 384, MM 516). So, being virtuous is an ongoing process which involves constant self-regulation and self-checking. Third, Kant also has a positive understanding of virtue: a person ought to cultivate inclinations which are helpful for living the moral life (see Kant 6: 217, MM 372). For instance, Kant regards love of human beings (philanthropy) to be morally desirable and considers the cultivation of this love to be a wide duty (see Kant 6: 450, MM 569–70).⁴⁷

Nevertheless Baxley argues that there is still a crucial difference between Kant's and Schiller's understanding of virtue. Kant holds that virtue assists us by giving reason more control over our sensibility; whereas, Schiller holds – according to Baxley – that virtue basically makes control over sensibility superfluous (at least at the best moments). Now I am going to show that, contrary to the Equality Reading, this does not mean that reason should ever loosen its control.

4. Harmony as a semblance of equality

In this section I propose my interpretation of Schiller's preferred mode of interaction between reason and sensibility. Schiller says that mental faculties ought to be in harmony. I argue that this harmony should be understood not as a genuinely equal partnership between reason and sensibility, but rather as a semblance of such a partnership.

⁴⁶ For a drastically different interpretation and defense of the literal reading, see Reed Winegar (2013: 292–5).

⁴⁷ For a detailed and rich analysis of Kant's theory of virtue and its comparison with Schiller's theory, see Baxley (2010a, esp. 124–7).

I start with a brief recap of the Equality Reading, keeping in mind what has been said in previous sections. According to Baxley, a beautiful soul's sensibility is so ennobled that it becomes reason's equal partner. This means that there is a high level of trust between mental faculties, which is reflected in the elimination of the sustained control of reason over sensibility. The very idea that such trust is possible indicates that Schiller's views on human nature are very different from Kant's. Specifically, Schiller rejects Kant's doctrine of evil. The Equality Reading is a defense of the most dubious premise (P3) in the Incompatibility Argument:

- P1. according to Kantian ethics, morality involves the sustained control of reason over sensibility;
- P2. according to Schiller's theory of virtue, a virtuous person is characterized by harmony between reason and sensibility;
- P3. harmony between reason and sensibility is not compatible with sustained control of reason over sensibility;
- C. Schiller's theory of virtue is not compatible with Kantian ethics.

Earlier I argued that Kant does not ground his criticism of Schiller's theory on the anthropological implications of the Equality Reading. His concern is not so much the supposed equality between the mental faculties or Schiller's denial of the doctrine of evil, as the inconsistency of Schiller's definition of virtue. However, the fact that Kant criticized Schiller on other grounds does not mean that the Equality Reading is wrong.

What evidence of the correctness of her reading does Baxley provide? Her evidence can be roughly divided into two parts. First, she quotes passages in which Schiller seems to suggest that a beautiful soul does not need the control of reason. Second, she indicates the significance of Schiller's political metaphor: he likens the harmony between mental faculties with the liberal form of government. Now, let us consider both of these pieces of evidence in turn.

I must admit at once that *Grace and Dignity* has passages that support the Equality Reading. For example, Schiller says that a beautiful soul "can leave affect to guide the will without hesitation and is never in danger of standing in contradiction of its decisions" (Schiller 20: 287, GD 152) and that she "trusts [the voice of the instinct] with a **certain assurance** [*gewisse Sicherheit*] without danger of being misled by it" (Schiller 20: 287, GD 152, my translation and emphasis). I, however, want to draw attention to the fact that Schiller never says that a beautiful soul leaves the will to be guided by affect, but only that she **can** or, more precisely, is allowed to do it [*dürfen*]. Schiller very cautiously chooses words when he writes about trust. He does not qualify it as full or blind, but only as having a certain assurance. I take these quotes to mean not that a beautiful soul should fully trust her instincts, but that she ought to ennoble her sensibility to such an extent that such trust would be possible. My little remarks here can hardly be a decisive argument against the Equality Reading, but I think that if we interpret these quotes of Schiller in such a moderate way, they are more consistent with his other statements.

In particular, Schiller says that a beautiful soul “carries out humankind’s most exacting duties with such ease that they might simply be the actions of [her] inner instinct, and the most heroic sacrifice that it exacts from natural impulse appears to the eye as a free operation of this impulse” (Schiller 20: 287, GD 152). In this passage it is quite clear that a beautiful soul’s actions are not produced by her inner instinct, but only appear as such. Moreover, Schiller reveals that even within a beautiful soul sensibility has to make sacrifices, although we cannot detect them from without. With greater clarity, Schiller makes similar points in *Kallias*: “[o]ur sensory nature must thus appear free, where morality is concerned, although it is really not free, and it must appear as if nature were merely fulfilling the commission of our drives by subjugating itself to the mastery of the pure will, at the expense of its own drives” (Schiller 26: 198, K159). Although sensibility is to be ennobled to the highest degree, it will never be granted genuine freedom. The only freedom that she is entitled to claim is a semblance of freedom which is merely an imitation or analogy of genuine freedom.

Baxley’s second evidence is Schiller’s political metaphor of the liberal form of government. According to Baxley, “Schiller believes that sensibility has certain rights that ought to be respected. As a result, he wants a liberal personal constitution (a democracy), which grants initiative to sensibility (the governed)” (Baxley 2010a: 120). I already hinted at the problem with this evidence in the second section. Schiller does not understand the liberal government (at least in *Grace and Dignity*) as democracy. His liberal government does not involve either an election of the head or participation of citizens in legislative activities. Schiller describes it as a special case of a monarchy: in the liberal government “although everything proceeds in accordance with the will of one person, the individual citizen can still persuade himself that he is living according to his own lights and simply following his inclinations” (Schiller 20: 278, GD 145–146). Schiller does not say that this individual citizen **truly** lives according to his inclinations, only that he can convince himself of that.⁴⁸

As can be seen, in all these passages the emphasis is on semblances. All decisions are still made and controlled by reason, but sensibility, if it is worthy of it, i.e. sufficiently ennobled, is allowed by reason to proceed with the semblance of equality. In *Grace and Dignity* we can find several metaphors of the graceful concession of reason. Reason allows “nature, which depends on it, to remain nature” (Schiller 20: 264, GD 133). Grace itself is just “a *favor* granted to the sensuous by the ethical” (Schiller 20: 278, GD 145, italics Schiller’s). Reason gracefully allows sensibility not to feel the necessitation, thus making grace possible. But is this partnership between reason and sensibility truly equal? Do equals make graceful concessions to each other? I do not think so. Reason is not an equal of sensibility in Schiller’s theory of virtue. In order to achieve harmony sensibility must be ennobled by reason to meet its

⁴⁸ See also a very enlightening discussion of Schiller’s political analogy in Pugh (1997: 158–61, also 259).

high standards, whereas reason only has to make a small concession, i.e. only to allow a semblance of equality. And even this semblance can be taken back at any moment.

In his discussion of dignity, Schiller overtly acknowledges that no amount of self-cultivation will help us to perform all our duties with grace. And when grace is not humanly possible, reason should immediately expose its own supremacy. This partnership can be rather compared to relations between a teacher and a pupil. Usually a good teacher tries to treat his pupil respectfully and there may sometimes even be a semblance of full equality between them. But if there is any necessity, the teacher immediately reminds his pupil about the real structure of their relations. In the same fashion reason may delegate or entrust some of its functions to sensibility, but “it will take [them] back the moment that instinct tries to abuse its power” (Schiller 20: 294, GD 158). Thus, the harmonious relationship between the mental faculties is more properly understood not as if they are equal, but rather that if they maintain their proper boundaries, and as long as sensibility conforms to these boundaries, reason does sensibility a favor and does not interfere with its work; in other words, reason is still a supervisor in these relations. If we adhere to my reading, then the main difference between Schiller’s harmony (M3) and Kant’s dignity (M2) is not that in the former reason and sensibility are equal and in the latter sensibility is subordinate to reason, but rather that Kant believes that the subordination of sensibility to reason must be very clear and acute, whereas Schiller thinks that this subordination should be respectfully concealed whenever it is possible.

Now I want to consider a possible objection to my reading. The gist of the objection is that my reading is only valid from the narrow moral perspective from which we determine moral justification for action, whereas Schiller, in *Grace and Dignity* and, especially, in the *Aesthetic Letters*, is interested in a full anthropological perspective: he considers how the mental faculties of the ideal man, i.e. the beautiful soul, should relate to each other. And for this broader perspective the Equality Reading is more accurate, since reason and sensibility of the ideal man ought to be equal partners. To begin with, I strongly agree that an anthropological perspective is essential to Schiller. Nevertheless, I do not believe my reading contradicts such an anthropological perspective. My response to the objection is divided into two parts. First, I show that while the anthropological perspective for Schiller is definitely holistic, it does not make this perspective broader than the moral one. Second, I argue that the normativity of the anthropological perspective is aesthetic, which means that its demands are not concerned with objects, be they phenomena or noumena, but with our perception of them, that is, with semblances.

What do I mean when I say that the anthropological perspective is holistic? I mean that it is characterized by a view of a person not simply as a rational being whose sensibility is only a hindrance, but as a sensual-rational being whose ennobled sensibility may also have justified claims. It would be wrong to regard the justified claims of ennobled sensibility as purely sensual and non-rational, because, according to Schiller, practical reason in its regulative application

wishes (*wünschen*) these claims to be met: “[r]eason **demands imperatively** of *acts of will*, or moral acts, that they exist through the pure form of reason; reason can only **wish** (not demand) that *natural effects* be *through themselves*, that they show autonomy” (Schiller 26: 182, K 151, my emphasis (bold)). A beautiful soul does indeed represent the ideal of a more complete person: a person who can bring the purely rational demands of moral law and the aesthetic demands of ennobled sensibility into harmony. But is this always possible? Schiller clearly thinks it is not always possible, and he specifically describes this possibility in terms of the boundaries of humanity: a beautiful soul does “everything with grace that can be carried out **within humanity**, and everything with dignity that requires going **beyond humanity**” (Schiller 20: 298, GD 162, my emphasis). In other words, Schiller does not believe that the anthropological perspective is broader than the moral one. On the contrary, the anthropological perspective has strictly delineated boundaries beyond which no grace is possible, and the beautiful soul is left only to submit with dignity to the requirements of the moral law. And it is not just a matter of the moral justification of individual actions, because Schiller, like Kant, is aware of the aesthetic value of dignity, which must be interpreted not in terms of beauty, but in terms of sublimity. The beautiful soul is not just beautifully graceful in its best moments, it also displays sublime dignity in its most difficult moments. What is essential is that in the dilemma between beautiful joyful action and morally right action, the beautiful soul always chooses the latter. And this choice shows clearly that even in the beautiful soul reason remains sensibility’s master. The aforementioned Schiller’s distinction between demands and wishes of reason provides additional evidence. Whereas moral normativity consists of the demands of reason, aesthetic normativity consists merely of the wishes of reason. It is obvious from the very choice of terms that, according to Schiller, moral normativity takes precedence over aesthetic normativity.

But let us focus on the best moments of the beautiful soul when it remains within the boundaries of humanity. Would it not be correct to say that, at least in these moments, reason and sensibility ought to be equal partners from an anthropological perspective? In a certain sense, it is so. We have an aesthetic obligation to such equality: “In the aesthetic world, every natural being is a free citizen who has equal rights with the noblest, and may not even be forced *for the sake of the whole*, but must absolutely *consent* to everything” (Schiller 26: 212, K 170). This also applies to people as sensual beings, that is, to rights of sensibility. Yet what, exactly, do aesthetic obligations concern, according to Schiller? This is a very difficult question, which I touch on here only a little bit. In the *Aesthetic Letters*, Schiller elaborates on aesthetic obligations during his discussion of the aesthetic state (see Schiller 20: 409–12, AL 109–112). Aesthetic normativity concerns only semblances. Thus, the aesthetic obligation that reason and sensibility should be equal partners means only that we should perceive, both internally and externally, their relationship as an equal partnership. In other words, there must be a semblance of an equal partnership between them, but we have no obligation for there to be a true equal partnership between

them. Before moving on, I would like to guard against the false conclusion that the aesthetic obligations in Schiller's philosophy have absolutely no implications for things as phenomena. This is not the case, and Schiller makes this quite clear when he says that there should be "the objective fact about things which enables them to appear free" and which is "the very same which enables them, if it is present at all, to appear beautiful, and if it is not present, destroys their beauty" (Schiller 26: 199, K 160). In other words, we really must change something about ourselves to make possible a semblance of an equal partnership between reason and sensibility. Schiller talks about this at length in *Grace and Dignity*: we must ennoble ourselves, we need to cultivate virtue in order to become beautiful souls. But because Schiller remains largely faithful to Kantianism and holds that "*nothing can be free other than what is supra-sensible*" (Schiller 26: 183, K 151), no amount of ennobling can make sensibility genuinely free, and thus equal to reason, and to demand this is the worst kind of moral fanaticism. Therefore, even from an anthropological perspective, "**the ideal of equality**, which a fanatic [*Schwärmer*] would so gladly like to see realized in its essence, is fulfilled [only] in **the realm of aesthetic semblances**" (Schiller 20: 412, AL 112, my translation and emphasis).

Having answered the objection, and shown that Schiller's harmony involves merely the semblance of equality, I want to reflect a little on how exactly Schiller's harmony is felt. He uses the very abstract language of faculty psychology, so his reasoning is very difficult to understand at a more down-to-earth level. However, Schiller's continuous references to trust and wholeness slightly clarify the matter. A person whose reason completely and openly dominates over sensibility wants to consciously control every moment of her life. This attitude results in her self-distrust. She tends to be unhappy, as she is in the constant struggle with herself. We can all be such people sometimes. I bring another analogy which I think reflects Schiller's idea well. A person who has just recently started driving may not trust his body at all. Driving will bring him only suffering. Moreover, his mistrust of himself may even make driving more dangerous. For example, being constantly tense, he may react too sharply to some sudden event on the road and perform the wrong action. Only after getting used to driving, can he start to trust himself and get joy from driving. Arguably, his rational control is not only not reduced, but even, on the contrary, strengthened. Similarly, a beautiful soul is a person who, as a result of long moral practice, has transformed morality into her second nature and acquired ease and joy.

What are the implications of my reading of Schiller's theory of virtue for the Incompatibility Argument? Harmony as a mere semblance of equality does not threaten the control of reason over sensibility. Thus, premise P3 is shown to be false, and the Incompatibility Argument fails. However, even if we understand harmony as a semblance of equality, Kant would still rather treat it with suspicion. The semblance of an equal partnership is too similar to self-deception. While reason does not really renounce its authority, there is still a risk that reason may miss the moment when it is necessary to expose its

supremacy. On the other hand, it may be argued that the semblance of an equal partnership is better than a constant reminder of reason's authority, because this semblance is more respectful and less provoking to sensibility. This may be an important reason to maintain such a semblance, for "as long as the ethical spirit still employs *force*, the natural impulse has to respond to it with *strength*" (Schiller 20: 284, GD 150).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented Schiller's theory of moral character from his essay *On Grace and Dignity* with the intention of challenging Baxley's Equality Reading and the Incompatibility Argument. According to Schiller, a person can and ought to – in so far as it is humanly possible – harmonize duty (reason) and her inclinations (sensibility) through self-cultivation, thus becoming a beautiful soul. A beautiful soul is characterized by virtue which Schiller defines as an inclination for duty. I have shown that Kant calls Schiller's definition of virtue contradictory, because on a literal reading this definition assumes that an inclination may causally precede duty, whereas for Kant duty is unconditional. However, I have also given grounds for discarding the literal reading of Schiller's definition of virtue: the literal reading contradicts Schiller's conviction that the worst mode of interaction between reason and sensibility is the suppression of the former by the latter. I have shown that the main disagreement between Schiller and Kant is about the preferable mode of interaction between reason and sensibility. They have more in common than is assumed in the Equality Reading, and both recognize the priority of reason. Kant thinks that sensibility must be overtly subordinated to reason; Schiller thinks that there should be a semblance of an equal partnership between reason and sensibility. Finally, I have shown that harmony, as Schiller understands it, is compatible with the control of reason over the sensibility, thus refuting the Incompatibility Argument. I think that Schiller's position and argumentation can fruitfully contribute to the debate between virtue ethicists and Kantians for at least two reasons. First, Schiller's emphasis on the importance of a person's wholeness hints at a concept of flourishing that is richer than what can be found in Kant's own writings. Second, Schiller's theory gives the conceptual grounds which may allow reason to delegate or entrust some of its functions to sensibility. Whether such a delegation might conceal the threat of self-deception remains to be discussed.

CHAPTER 3. WILL, CHOICE, AND SELF-DETERMINATION

In the essay *On Grace and Dignity* (henceforth *Grace and Dignity*), Schiller speaks of the ideal of a beautiful soul to which he believes every person should aspire. I described this ideal in detail in Chapter Two. While Schiller raised the question of the complete attainability of the ideal of a beautiful soul, he did not inquire into the conditions for an intentional pursuit of this ideal. His task in *Grace and Dignity* was to show that harmony between reason and sensibility characteristic of the beautiful soul is aesthetically and morally preferable to the unrestricted dominance of reason, but he did not really consider what makes a person capable of moving toward such harmony. This should not be considered an omission; the ideal described in *Grace and Dignity* can be regarded as an ideal even if its complete fulfillment is not possible. It is sufficient that it is possible to progress toward this ideal. The possibility of an intentional pursuit of an ideal, both personal (a beautiful soul) and political (an aesthetic state), becomes the main theme of Schiller's latest philosophical phase. The remaining four chapters of the dissertation are focussed on it.

The problem of an intentional pursuit of something is primarily a problem of self-determination and choice. One must be capable of self-determination through acts of choice in order to intentionally set oneself an ideal and begin to strive for it. The concept of self-determination is a central concept in Schiller's philosophy. He regards self-determination as the source of everything normative, that is, of everything logical, aesthetic, and moral. Self-determination also plays a crucial role in his theories of the ethical state and the aesthetic state. It is Kant's interest in self-determination, according to Schiller himself, that makes Kant's philosophy so relatable to him: "It is certain that no mortal has spoken a greater word than this Kantian word, which also encapsulates his whole philosophy: determine yourself from within yourself" (Schiller 26: 191, K 153). Nevertheless, Schiller's interest in self-determination had arisen even before he was philosophically engaged with Kant. Already in his undergraduate dissertations, which deal with the mind-body problem, Schiller is looking for the conceptual space for freedom in a deterministic world. Therefore, it would be fair to say that his encounter with Kant did not so much change the direction of his inquiry concerning self-determination as it gave him new, more powerful philosophical tools.

In this chapter, I show that Schiller distinguishes two aspects of self-determination. First, he identifies the noumenal aspect: the capacity for self-determination is predicated on a human being because the human being as a person possesses the free will. Schiller does not say much about this aspect, which is not surprising, since any discussion of it threatens to go completely beyond the limits of possible cognition. He pays much more attention to the second, phenomenal and historical aspect of self-determination. Schiller argues that self-determination as an effect of nature has specific empirical conditions, without the fulfillment of which a person simply cannot manifest his free will

through acts of choice. These conditions concern the interaction of two basic psychological drives on which all human activity is based. To determine himself through an act of choice, the person must first balance the demands of these drives, thereby creating the condition of indeterminacy and, at the same time, of determinability.

The most important consequence of the empirical nature of self-determination as a capacity for choice or – to use Schiller’s own term – capacity for humanity is its historicity. Schiller argues that the capacity for humanity does not apply equally to every person, but depends on levels of development, varying from epoch to epoch, from nation to nation, from class to class, from individual to individual. One corollary of this is that self-determination can be inhibited or advanced by empirical interventions. In this chapter, I also suggest the hypothesis that Schiller’s analysis of humanity both builds on, and challenges, Kant’s account of the three predispositions to good as presented in the *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (henceforth *Religion*). Schiller’s major innovation is that he views the predisposition to humanity (one of the three predispositions to good in Kant) not as a separate predisposition, but as the composite result of the interactions of the other two predispositions.

The structure of the chapter is as follows: first, I talk very briefly about Schiller’s understanding of self-determination during the pre-Kantian period, drawing on Schiller’s concept of attention from his first student dissertation; then I turn to the noumenal aspect of self-determination in Schiller, its most detailed overview he offers in *Grace and Dignity*; in the third section, I try to sort out Schiller’s analysis of humanity from the *Letters Upon The Aesthetic Education of Man* (henceforth *Aesthetic Letters*), for this analysis contains the key to understanding freedom as an effect of nature – namely, the concept of reciprocity between the rational and the sensual, I also advance the hypothesis that Schiller’s analysis of humanity involves a revision of Kant’s theory of the three predispositions to good; the fourth section is devoted to the discussion of the moments of determination, or, more precisely, of the structure of each particular judgment; and the last section is an examination of Schiller’s three historical stages of the development of self-determination.

1. Self-determination through attention

Schiller’s earliest treatment of self-determination occurs as early as his first student dissertation *Philosophy of Physiology* (1779). The main topic of this work is the relation between the physical and the spiritual. In discussing the interaction of body and mind, Schiller criticizes monistic theories as well as Malebranche’s occasionalism and Leibniz’s pre-established harmony (see Schiller 20: 12–13). In addition to attacking classical theories, in his dissertation Schiller also debates with life scientists of his day, in particular Albrecht von Haller and Charles Bonnet. Schiller’s harsh remarks about Haller and Bonnet were one of the main reasons why his first dissertation was rejected (see Sharpe

1991: 57; Neubauer 1982: 282, Reill 2005: 150). It must be said, however, that young Schiller is working along the same lines; he is trying to find a dualistic solution, without fully rejecting the mechanism, but avoiding what he considered to be the errors of other theories. At this point Schiller can be characterized as a proponent of interactionist dualism. That is, he believes in the existence of two substances – matter and consciousness – and in the possibility of real and two-sided interaction between them. Schiller turns to the theme of self-determination as he sees in determinism, which he acknowledges in both substances, a challenge to freedom of choice. According to Schiller’s theory, “if the sequence of the material ideas is determined by the mechanism of the thinking organ [*das Denkorgan*], the understanding – by the material ideas [*materielle Ideen*], and the will – by the understanding, it would thus follow that, ultimately, the will is determined mechanically” (Schiller 20: 26). By a material idea Schiller means here any idea received through experience or derived from such an idea through the mechanism of the thinking organ which governs the process of the material association, that is, leads us from one material idea to another. It seems to follow from this theory that every action we take can ultimately be reduced to a completely deterministic explanation which shows how from one idea by the mechanism of association the understanding moves to another and so on until it finally reaches the idea that determines our will and moves us to act. Arguably, there is no room for freedom of choice in this theory, because the mechanical explanation of the act seems to be completely exhaustive.

To find room for freedom of choice Schiller introduces into his theory the concept of attention [*Aufmerksamkeit*]. Through attention the soul [*Seele*] “can make the material ideas stronger and adhere to them at will [*Willkür*], and thus it also makes the spiritual ideas stronger. <...> So it has control [*Macht*] over the strength of the motives [*Beweggründe*], indeed, it is itself what produces motives” (Schiller 20: 26). In other words, the will can be understood in two ways: as the indeterminate capacity to control via attention the strength of motives; or as the determinate producer of motives:

The first will, which determines my attention, is the free one; the last, which determines the action, is a slave of the understanding; freedom, therefore, lies not in my choosing what my understanding has recognized to be best (for this is an eternal law), but in my choosing what my understanding can determine to be best (Schiller 20: 27).

Some influence of Leibniz’s philosophy may be discerned here.⁴⁹ In Leibniz’s *Nouveaux essais sur l’entendement humain* we can find the concept of attention and the distinction between the two concepts of freedom. Leibniz defines attention thus: “when the ideas that offer themselves <...> are taken notice of, and, as it were, registered in the memory, it is attention” (Leibniz 1996: 160); if

⁴⁹ I am indebted to Jörg Noller, who in a personal correspondence pointed out to me the possible connection of Schiller’s ideas with Leibniz and La Mettrie.

attention is directed “to what is within us” then it is reflection (Leibniz 1996: 51). In the *Principles of Nature and Grace, Based on Reason*, Leibniz defines the reflective knowledge of one’s internal states as apperception or consciousness (see Leibniz 1989: 208). Apperception sets humans apart from the rest of the animals, which are only capable of perceptions but not of conscious reflection on them. Through apperception, a human being is able “to formulate a conception of the self” (Look 2020).

As for the two kinds of freedom, Leibniz associates freedom with will [*la liberté de vouloir*] in one sense with perfection and understanding [*entendement*], and in the other sense with arbitrariness and the bare will [*la volonté nue*]. Freedom to will in the first sense is exercised only by those who are akin to the wise man of Stoics can control their passions, and can be fully enjoyed only by God who is devoid of passions; such freedom “pertains strictly to our understanding” (Leibniz 1996: 175). Freedom in the second sense refers to the free will rather than to understanding, and “consists in the view that the strongest reasons or impressions which the understanding presents to the will do not prevent the act of the will from being contingent, and do not confer upon it an absolute or (so to speak) metaphysical necessity” (Leibniz 1996: 175).

Like Leibniz, Schiller, too, distinguishes two concepts of will, one of which he associates with understanding and the other with choice. In Schiller’s concept of attention one can also see a continuity with Leibniz’s concept of apperception. But, unlike Leibniz, young Schiller directly connected the regular acts of attention with choice: the soul determines our decision solely through attention to ideas and corresponding motives. The more immediate source of the notion of attention as a faculty which can weaken or intensify ideas was the very Haller (see Haller 1788: 428) whom Schiller criticized. Another influence may have been Julian Offray de La Mettrie with his *Histoire Naturelle de l’Âme* in which he linked the feeling of freedom with attention, and proclaimed attention a necessary condition of all research and, therefore, “the mother of all sciences” (La Mettrie 1954: 107).⁵⁰ It is worth noting, however, that La Mettrie was a materialist and a determinist, while Schiller eagerly wanted to avoid both these positions. That said, even the young Schiller was not a proponent of absolute indeterminism, since the range of choice in his early theory was strictly limited to the set of ideas and motives that a person already had. In other words, motives cannot arise out of nowhere, they are produced by understanding, through experience and the mechanical laws of association; the soul, through attention, can only reinforce an already existing motive.

Schiller also acknowledges the role of the regular acts of attention in forming stable dispositions of character, although in the first dissertation he assesses this role rather negatively. Schiller notes that if attention is too often directed to the same idea, this idea will eventually become steadily very vivid and powerful. As a result,

⁵⁰ Schiller studied the texts of La Mettrie at *Karlschule* (see Beiser 2005: 16) and may even used him as a model for *Die Räuber*’s antagonist Franz Moor (see Neubauer 1982: 284).

there can be people who do good or evil mechanically. In the beginning they did it freely, *morally*, because their *attention was still undetermined*. Now, however, the idea is the most vivid even without attention; it captivates the soul to itself, it rules over the understanding and will (Schiller 20: 27, my emphasis).

Schiller conceptually connects moral and free action and considers the undetermined attention to be a necessary condition of them. Those who do allegedly good things, provided they do it automatically, are not committing moral actions: “*All morality of man* has its ground in attention, i.e. in the active influence of the soul on the material ideas in the thinking organ” (Schiller 20: 27, my emphasis). This implies that the predetermination of attention makes a moral action impossible. By the predetermination of attention I mean here a self-produced incapacity to give attention to available ideas at will. This incapacity affects not only the possibility of moral action, but also reasoning in general. By making certain ideas excessively and steadily strong we make our understanding “always active [*immer thätiger*]”, and while “correct understanding can produce the most correct memory [*Gedächtniß*], <...> an *always active* understanding can destroy it by overstressing it” (Schiller 20: 28, my emphasis).

Schiller’s early theory of free will has features of both compatibilism and incompatibilism. The production of motives fits completely within the deterministic picture of the world, but the activity of the soul to reinforce them seemingly involves going beyond determinism. At the same time, the very capacity of attention, by means of which the soul reinforces motives, is subject to mechanical distortion. In other words, although attention itself cannot be described mechanically, since it must be undetermined, the dysfunction of attention is described in mechanical and deterministic terms.⁵¹

Some ideas from the first dissertation retain their significance even in Schiller’s later philosophical works. I list the most relevant bits for the purposes of this chapter. First, Schiller associates the process of choice with a certain condition, i.e. indeterminate attention, which is a clear precursor of his later concept of the aesthetic condition of active determinability. Second, Schiller discusses how freedom of choice can be impaired and what role uniformity plays in this; although at this stage he does not yet link this uniformity to the division of labor. Third, he explicitly connects the possibility of moral action with choice: if a person does not pay attention to her motives, then she does not really choose, instead, she acts automatically, hence, not free and, hence, not morally. Fourth, Schiller distinguishes between the two wills, and this distinction is to receive in the future a Kantian reinterpretation as the distinction between the will as a supra-sensual faculty that grounds self-legislation; and the

⁵¹ As I will show in the following, in his later works, Schiller shifts even further toward compatibilism, elaborating on the process of reflective assessment of reasons for action in an aesthetic condition of active determinability. Nevertheless, even in the later period, he retains certain elements of incompatibilism. On these elements, see in particular the discussion of the spiritualizing function of resolve in Chapter Five.

choice, which is the manifestation of the will in the sensual world. In what follows I discuss how Schiller conceives of both of these aspects of will in his later, Kantian works.

2. The free will as a supra-sensual faculty

Although Schiller's main focus in *Grace and Dignity* is on theories of virtue and moral beauty, he also touches on self-determination there. What is important is that here he is talking mostly about the noumenal aspect of self-determination, that is, about the free will as a supra-sensual faculty. He understands self-determination in *Grace and Dignity* as man's "prerogative of delving with his will into the cycle of necessity, which is unbreakable for merely natural beings, and of initiating a fresh series of appearances in himself" (Schiller 20: 272, GD 141). It is telling that Schiller emphasizes the capacity for self-determination rather than its actualization as a necessary human feature:

A human being <...> is a *person*, a being, that **can** in *itself* be the cause and even **the absolutely final cause of its condition** and which can change in accordance with reasons [*Gründen*] which it draws from itself. Its type of appearance is dependent upon the types of feeling and willing, that is to say, upon the conditions that it freely determines by itself, not those determined in accordance with the necessities of nature (Schiller 20: 262, GD 132, my emphasis (bold)).

What does a requirement to be the absolutely final cause of one's condition mean? It means that, according to Schiller's concept of self-determination, it is not enough that a person's action can be explained by reference to her character, desire, or decision; for genuine self-determination she also needs some unconditional rational control over her character, desire, or decision. Although nature "shares the control with freedom, and although her [that is, natural] laws exist, it is the mind that decides about the instances" (Schiller 20: 262, GD 132). What does the characterization of a person as capable of self-determination mean? It could simply be sloppy writing on Schiller's part, and he might have meant that active self-determination is an essential feature of a person, i.e. that a person **is** in itself the cause and the final cause of her condition. But this reading is not merely uncharitable to Schiller, but also inconsistent with his recurring concern that genuine self-determination might be forfeited. Hence, it is more correct to read this statement as implying the following: self-determination is a human capacity that may well not be used or fully realized, hence, there may be people who are not the ultimate causes of their conditions.

The capacity for free choice, or, as Schiller himself calls it, the capacity for humanity [*Vermögen zur Menschheit*] (Schiller 20: 378, AL 78), makes human beings unique in comparison to animals. On the one hand, a human being cannot escape the yoke of natural necessity: "humans are exactly the same as animals, and the most strong-willed Stoic feels hunger just as acutely and loathes it just as strongly as the worm at his feet" (Schiller 20: 290, GD 155).

This holds not only for hunger, but for any need based on pain or pleasure; a human being must feel these needs, and there is nothing she can do about it. But, on the other hand, while for other animals these needs are necessary determinants of their actions, “[i]n humans, there is an additional factor, namely, the *will*, which, as a **suprasensual faculty**, is not so subject either to the law of nature or to that of reason that it does not have complete **freedom to choose** whether to follow the one or the other” (Schiller 20: 290, GD 155, my emphasis (bold)). Schiller’s point is that although a human being, like an animal, cannot block his sensations, i.e. determinations by nature, due to possessing the free will he can choose how to respond to these determinations, thereby exercising self-determination.

Schiller notes a certain neutrality of free will: it elevates a person above other animals, even when she exercises her free will in “matters of indifference” (Schiller 20: 290, GD 155). In other words, free will is not exhausted by the commission of moral acts, but is expressed in any act by which one is “breaking the natural necessity in oneself” (Schiller 20: 290, GD 155). This neutrality of free will should not be exaggerated. The moral exercise of free will elevates a human being even higher – to divinity. And while Schiller characterizes the will as standing between two jurisdictions – of nature and of freedom – and independently deciding whose law to accept, he still claims that relations between the will and these two jurisdictions are not the same: the will “is bound to neither but indebted to the law of reason” (Schiller 20: 291, GD 155). When nature demands of the will the fulfillment of some sensual desire, the will must first obtain the resolution of reason. If it successfully does so, it acts ethically; if not and it still proceeds with this desire, it acts sensually. So, while a person can exercise her free will to act against morality, such an exercise of free will is unworthy and leaves the person within the boundaries of nature. And for the case of the conflict between the demands of nature and the moral law, Schiller offers a strictly Kantian answer: “it is the absolute duty of the will to place the demands of nature after the tenets of reason, since natural laws only bind conditionally but reason’s laws bind absolutely and unconditionally” (Schiller 20: 291, GD 156). Through justified resistance to the demands of nature, a person manifests her independence [*Selbstständigkeit*] and moral vocation.

The indebtedness of will to the law of reason, however, has no effect on the demands of nature. The act of will [*Willensakt*], by which man tests the compatibility of sensual desire with the requirements of morality, is already perceived by nature as unnatural and foreign. And the very choice to not submit to the demands of nature in no way diminishes their force. Occasionally nature even seems to “cut short its path, and, without first bringing its petition before the will” (Schiller 20: 291, GD 156), determine person’s action. Yet the question inevitably arises: if the will is a suprasensual faculty independent of all empirical beings, how can nature bypass its control? In answering this question, Schiller has to turn to the empirical aspect of self-determination, that is, not to the will as a noumenal grounds of self-determination, but directly to choice as a particular manifestation of the will in the sensual world. The empirical aspect of

self-determination is a central theme of another of Schiller's works – the *Aesthetic Letters*.

3. Schiller's analysis of humanity

In the *Aesthetic Letters*, Schiller offers another way of analyzing self-determination, undertaking a transcendental deduction of beauty for this purpose.⁵² At first glance, it may seem that it has nothing to do with self-determination, but, as I show in this subsection, this is not so. Transcendental arguments are characteristic of Kantianism. These deductive – or, arguably, abductive – arguments begin with a compelling premise about our experience and conclude that for that experience to be possible something else must be the case. In this particular transcendental argument, Schiller intends to prove that beauty is a necessary condition for humanity. He stresses that while there are historical examples of how interest in beauty and the aesthetic experience of beauty have both improved morals and worsened them, empirical evidence is a poor guide to the truth, since it is not clear whether beauty is understood in the same way in these examples. The transcendental deduction of beauty as a condition of humanity is supposed to provide us with a concept of beauty that is independent of particular opinions. Moreover, as I argued in Chapter One, Schiller invites us to consider beauty as an imperative: “[t]he beautiful is not a concept of experience, but rather an imperative <...> [that is] a necessary task for sensual-rational nature” (Schiller 27: 70). It is in this sense he believes beauty to be a necessary condition for humanity. One consequence of Schiller's approach is that he makes the assumption – some might rightly accuse him of begging the question – that there is a rational concept of beauty that is not shaped by our experience of the beautiful, but precedes it and potentially corrects our individual judgments about the beautiful. For the argument of this chapter Schiller's immediate intention behind deduction is not important. I will discuss this aspect of the transcendental deduction of beauty and how successful and persuasive it is in Chapter Five. Now, instead, I focus on Schiller's analysis of humanity, as the concept of humanity is directly relevant to the topic of self-determination.

3.1. Three fundamental predispositions to good in Kant

Humanity [*Menschheit/Menschlichkeit*] is a crucial concept in Kantian philosophy which should not be understood literally. Both Kant and Schiller use the

⁵² Technically, this is Schiller's second attempt at the transcendental deduction of beauty. The first was in *Kallias or Concerning Beauty* (henceforth *Kallias*), and I discuss it in Chapter One. But the first attempt was not about beauty itself, but rather about judgments about beauty, and Schiller attempted to deduce them from the architectonics of the mental faculties. The deduction in *Kallias* in no way showed, or even intended to show, that beauty is a condition of humanity.

terms ‘humanity’ and ‘rational nature’ interchangeably. According to Kant, the predisposition to humanity is one of our three original predispositions to good, the two others being the predisposition to animality and the predisposition to personality. Thus, humanity, animality, and personality, according to Kant, are three distinct goods to which a human being has original predispositions. I briefly outline the key aspects of Kant’s three fundamental predispositions to good, as this provides a useful context for Schiller’s analysis of humanity.

According to Kant, human beings as living beings have the original predisposition to animality [*Thierheit*].⁵³ In *Religion*, he associates the predisposition to animality with “physical or merely *mechanical* self-love, i.e. a love for which reason is not required” (Kant 6:26, R 75). By mechanism, Kant means here that the predisposition to animality is not simply consistent with, but fully determined by, natural laws. Kant identifies three major manifestations of the predisposition to animality: it manifests itself as the drive to self-preservation, as the sexual drive to the propagation of the species, and as the social drive to community [*Trieb zur Gesellschaft*] with other human beings. In *Metaphysics of Morals* Kant also mentions the drive to “the preservation of [man’s] capacity to enjoy life, though still on the animal level only” (Kant 6: 420, MM 545) as belonging to the predisposition to animality. Striving for happiness, however, does not belong to the predisposition to animality, since Kant understands happiness as an idea, that is, as something unattainable on the level of animality. Generally speaking, the predisposition to animality facilitates the survival of man and mankind, and preserves the potential for the development of capacities relevant to the other two predispositions to good.

As rational and capable-of-culpability [*der Zurechnung fähigen*]⁵⁴ human beings have the predisposition to personality, by which Kant understands “the susceptibility to respect for the moral law *as of itself a sufficient incentive to the power of choice*” (Kant 6:27, R 76). This predisposition is the subjective ground for incorporating respect for the moral law as an incentive into our maxim. Allen Wood convincingly connects the predisposition to personality “with the sensitive preconditions of morality in us: moral feeling, conscience, love of humanity, and self-respect” (Wood 1991: 118). Thus, we can say that the predisposition to personality is the predisposition to morality. We should not confuse it with self-legislation, although the predisposition to personality is directly related to it as a condition of pure self-legislation’s effectiveness in determining the power of choice.

⁵³ It must be said that Kant’s views on animality were constantly evolving. Initially, he viewed animality solely as an obstacle to morality and personality, the removal of which required the use of violence (see Kant *Anth.Fried* 25:682). The view of animality as a predisposition to good is that of the later Kant. Yet it is the view with which Schiller was most familiar. For a more detailed review of the role of animality in Kant’s philosophy, as well as the changes in his attitude toward animality, see Baumeister 2022.

⁵⁴ I deviate from the Cambridge translation in favor of the more literal translation suggested by David Baumeister (2022: 75).

Between these two predispositions there is another predisposition, the predisposition to humanity. Intriguingly, according to Kant, it belongs to the human being as a living and rational being, so it is at the intersection of the other two predispositions. Like the predisposition to animality, Kant associates the predisposition to personality with physical self-love, though not merely mechanical, but involving “*comparison* (for which reason is required)” (Kant 6: 27, R 75). It is only by reflectively comparing oneself with others that one judges oneself happy or unhappy. Comparative self-love is a source of social activity. On the one hand, through competition it provokes in a person ambition and a desire for self-realization and the development of her capacities. On the other hand, comparative self-love is also a source of the worst social vices, or, to use Kant’s term, “*diabolical vices*”, such as “*envy, ingratitude, joy in others’ misfortunes, etc.*” (Kant 6: 27, R 75). In the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, Kant divides the predisposition to humanity into two components: the “*technical* predisposition for manipulating things (mechanically joined with consciousness)” and the “*pragmatic* predisposition (to use other human beings skillfully for [one’s] purposes)” (Kant 7: 322, A 417).⁵⁵ The technical predisposition involves our rational capacities to manipulate things to our own ends, thus acquiring skills and arts. The pragmatic predisposition involves becoming civilized through culture and cultivation of social qualities. Both these dispositions make “the human being not suited for one way of manipulating things [and using other human beings] but undetermined for every way” (Kant 7: 323, A 418). In other words, human beings are not determined by nature to manipulate objects and other human beings in any particular way, but can apply the social qualities and technical skills they acquire to achieve their own ends. The latter is crucial because it implies that the ends of human beings are not implanted by nature but are freely set by them. As Henry Allison notes, “[i]t is a prevalent view in the literature that ‘humanity’ as it is used in GMS [Kant’s *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*], refers to every minimally rational agent and that what qualifies every such agent to be an end in itself is a capacity to set ends” (Allison 2011: 210). A similar point we can find in Paul Guyer who says that “by humanity Kant means nothing other than the ability to set our own particular ends freely rather than having them set for us by inclination” (Guyer 1997: 64). This capacity distinguishes human beings from other living beings: only human beings (of all beings known to us) do not merely pursue ends predetermined by nature, but are also capable of setting their own ends and even capable of refusing to pursue ends given to them by nature. Thus, humanity involves “[t]he capacity to set oneself an end – any end whatsoever” (Kant 6: 392, MM 522). Such a capacity implies that human beings, unlike animals, can “act in accordance with the representation of laws, that is, in accordance with principles” (Kant 4: 412, GMM 66), or maxims. Their actions are not determined by natural laws, but by conscious decisions

⁵⁵ I am greatly indebted to Wood’s discussion of *humanity* (Wood 1999: 119), in which he points out this further distinction in Kant.

based on their representations of connections between ends and the means to these ends. Human beings are able to sum up the entire satisfaction of their needs and ends “under the name happiness” (Kant 4: 405, GMM 59). The drive for happiness belongs to the predisposition for humanity, and not to the predisposition for animality, precisely because it relies on the complex idea of happiness, which requires the capacity to set one’s own ends. The other point I would like to stress is that humanity and free choice are conceptually linked in Kant. He makes an explicit connection between them by saying that “[a]n end is an *object* of free choice” (Kant 6: 384, MM 516). So, every time we set our own ends, we make a choice.

To summarize a few last points, according to Kant, the predisposition to humanity enables a person to set ends, use the means to achieve them, and form the idea of happiness out of the sum of these ends. It is this end-setting aspect of humanity that is most important in the context of Schiller’s analysis. At one place he overtly speaks of humanity as a capacity [*Vermögen zur Menschheit*] (Schiller 20: 378, AL 78), describing it as a condition for any active determinations. Humanity is what makes self-determination possible: if you cannot set your own ends, then all ends you can pursue are imposed on you either by your nature or by circumstances, which, from a Kantian perspective, means that all your actions are determined by something external. Thus, an analysis of humanity is also an analysis of the possibility for self-determination through a choice.

3.2. Self and its determinations

Schiller begins his analysis by focusing on two elements of humanity; he says that there is something unchangeable in man which makes him identifiable, and something that constantly undergoes change. He calls the former a person or the self [*Selbst*]; and the latter – condition or person’s determinations [*Bestimmungen*]. Already at this point we have some linguistic hint that Schiller is talking about elements of self-determination [*Selbstbestimmung*]. Occasionally, he also uses the term ‘personality’ [*Persönlichkeit*] to refer to the first element. For example, Schiller says that:

[w]e shift from rest to activity, from affect to indifference, from agreement to contradiction; but we are always the same, and whatever follows directly from us remains. Only in the absolute subject do all determinants remain with the personality, because they flow from personality (Schiller 20: 341, AL 38).

The choice of terms is very striking, as Schiller was well acquainted with Kant’s *Religion*.⁵⁶ As discussed earlier, Kant consider the predisposition to

⁵⁶ In Chapter Two, I discussed Schiller’s letter to his friend Körner, in which he shares his impression of the first part of Kant’s *Religion*. In particular, Schiller writes that he is “enthralled by the text” and that “one can find no objection against [Kant’s] proofs [about radical evil], as much as one would like to” (Schiller 26: 219, K 175).

personality, like the predisposition to humanity, to be one of three fundamental predispositions to good, namely, the moral predisposition which enables human beings to determine themselves according to the moral law through the feeling of respect for that law.

Schiller claims that personality (the self) never changes and always refers only to itself; i.e. personality is grounded on itself, it cannot be influenced by anything external, and this brings us to the idea of freedom as autonomy. Schiller offers an argument to emphasize the necessity of the unchanging personality in order to talk meaningfully about change at all: “[b]y saying that the flower blossoms and withers, we make the flower permanent in this transformation, and lend it, as it were, a person in whom these two conditions reveal themselves” (Schiller 20: 342, AL 39). That is, if we do not assume some unchanging personality, it is not clear to whom to attribute the changes that occur to it. Determinations of personality, by contrast, must follow from something external. The condition for their existence, or rather their becoming, is time, “as succession is the condition of something that succeeds” (Schiller 20: 342, AL 39). Although personality (the self) and its determinations constitute a whole, they should not be confused with one another or deduced from one another: “[i]t is not because we think, want and feel that we are who we are; not because of who we are that we think, want and feel. We are because we are; we feel, think and want because beyond us something other than ourselves exists” (Schiller 20: 341–2, AL 38).

According to Frederick Beiser, Schiller breaks with Kant and allies himself with Fichte by holding that personality – which Beiser reads as a noumenal self – exists only through change (see Beiser 2005: 138). To substantiate his reading, Beiser draws particular attention to Schiller’s claim that “[h]e only *exists* by changing himself; and only by remaining unchanged does *he* exist” (Schiller 20: 343, AL 39). If ‘he’ in this claim refers to the noumenal self, then Beiser is obviously right, and Schiller “is virtually saying that the Kantian noumenal self exists only in and through its determinate phenomenal manifestations” (Beiser 2005: 138). I suggest a different interpretation. In my view, the reference of the word ‘he’ is not personality or the noumenal self, but rather man or humanity, which Schiller understands as an embodied personality, i.e. personality under certain determinations. My reading is supported by Schiller’s discussion of a possible objection to his concept of personality.

The gist of this objection is this: in order to exist, man first comes into existence; it allegedly follows from this that personality cannot be unchanging and eternal, since it has a beginning in time. Schiller’s response to this objection is that “man is not merely a person in general, but a person finding himself in a **determined** condition [*bestimmten Zustand*]” (Schiller 20: 342, AL 39, my translation and emphasis). As a phenomenon, man has a beginning in time. But man is not personality per se, but personality under certain determinations. So, the fact that this embodied man has a beginning in time in no way threatens the claim that personality as a pure intelligence is unchanging and eternal. However, it is fair to say that personality can manifest itself only in time. In

other words, only through change can personality become perceived by itself and others, for personality, abstracted from any determinations, “is merely the disposition for potentially infinite expression; <...> no more than form and empty potential [*leeres Vermögen*]” (Schiller 20: 343, AL 40). In speaking of the emptiness of form, Schiller means only that there is no material content in personality. But Kant’s noumenal self has no material content either, the very word ‘noumenal’ implies this. Thus, contrary to Beiser, I do not see in this line of thought a sharp break with Kant.

To functionally explain personality and its determinations, Schiller turns to further distinctions. He says that man’s “sensibility, considered in itself and separately from all spontaneous activity of the mind, can do no more than render him, who in the absence of sensibility is mere form, into matter; but in no respect can it unite him with matter” (Schiller 20: 343, AL 40). As I read it, the spontaneous activity of the mind is a manifestation of personality, and sensibility is what makes determinations possible. According to Schiller, man exists only through determinations, but through them he exists only as part of the world. Most likely, Schiller has in mind here the natural man or the savage, whom I will discuss in detail later. For now, suffice it to say that the savage is not active, but only reactive; all his actions refer to external causes, not to the spontaneity of his mind. In a sense, we can even say that these are not quite *his* actions, but rather events that happen to him, as “only personality makes his activity his own” (Schiller 20: 343, AL 40, my translation).

Schiller summarizes the two complex requirements for humanity – (i) the self/personality which is associated with spontaneity and form; and (ii) condition/determinations which is associated with sensibility and matter – as follows: “to be something more than mere world [man] *must* lend form to matter; and to be more than mere form he *must* actualize the disposition that he bears within himself” (Schiller 20: 343, AL 40). Thus, we come to two abstract musts that characterize rational nature. In further exposition, Schiller naturalizes these two musts into two basic drives [*Trieb*] – the material and formal drive. These two drives seem to me Schiller’s equivalents of Kant’s predispositions to animality and personality, respectively.

3.3. The material drive and the formal drive

In analysing the two basic elements of humanity – the unchanging personality and its changing condition – Schiller elucidates their psychological or conative aspect. Personality manifests itself through the formal drive; personality’s conditions – through the material drive. In what follows I discuss what each of these drives contributes to volition, knowledge, and action, and why neither is sufficient without the other for proper cognition and morality.

Schiller describes drives as “the only motive forces [*Kräfte*] in the sensible world” (Schiller 20: 330–1, AL 26) which “impel us to realize their object” (Schiller 20: 344, AL 41). The concept of drive Schiller probably borrows from

Karl Leonhard Reinhold. In his *Essay on a New Theory of the Human Capacity for Representation* (1789), Reinhold introduces the distinction between

the drive to material [*Trieb nach Stoff*] and the drive to form [*Trieb nach Form*] of representation. <...> The first strives for being affected in receptivity and is sensory in the broader sense; the latter for expression of spontaneity, and is intellectual in the broader sense. The first is satisfied only when there is some given, and is self-interested; the latter – only through action per se, and is to that extent unselfish (Reinhold 2011: 276).

In this fragment, Reinhold is interested in the capacity for representation, but later, in the seventh letter from the second volume of his *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy* (1792), he applies the same concepts to the will, distinguishing between self-interested and unselfish drives of will (Reinhold 2008, 161–82)⁵⁷ with the first roughly corresponding in Schiller to the material drive and the second – to the formal drive.

According to Schiller, the material drive represents man's urge to "actualize the disposition that he bears within himself" (Schiller 20: 343, AL 40). Its object is "life [*Leben*], in its widest meaning" (Schiller 20: 355, AL 53). Life includes everything that materially exists or is directly present to the senses. The material drive "derives from the physical existence of man, or from his sensuous nature", and "seeks to place him under the constraints of time" (Schiller 20: 344, AL 41), thus making him matter. By matter Schiller means change, or more precisely, the filling of time with sensation. Sensation restricts man, but in so doing it also determines him. That is, through sensation man becomes something concrete, for example, a hungry being, or that being whose hands he now sees. But if man is affected predominantly by the material drive, his restriction is so great that he can be said to be simply an element of the world, completely determined by natural necessity. Schiller notes that there are expressions in language that very accurately describe a state of complete domination by the material drive, e.g., "to be beside oneself [*ausser sich seyn*]" (Schiller 20: 345fn*, AL 42fn*). To be beside oneself, say, with anger means that very strong anger pulls man away from his own self, and all that is left in him now is blind natural necessity.

I suggested earlier that Schiller is modelling his notion of the material drive on the basis of Kant's notion of the predisposition to animality. I will now provide some evidence to support my hypothesis. Kant understands the predisposition to animality as one through which humans possess instincts for preservation, procreation, and basic sociability. Schiller, too, associates the

⁵⁷ On Reinhold's influence on Schiller's concept of drive, see Sabine Roehr (2003), and Beiser (2005: 139). An alternative theory is that Schiller derives his theory of drives from Fichte. But as Beiser (2005: 139fn39) convincingly points out, the alternative theory is unlikely, for Fichte does not distinguish between form and sense drives. Not to mention the fact that Reinhold's *Essay on a New Theory of the Human Capacity for Representation* and the second volume of his *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy* were written and published several years earlier than anything written by Fichte.

material drive with the instincts and urges characteristic of animals. Man, driven solely by the material drive, is understood by Schiller as the savage, the human animal in its purest form. Kant characterizes the predisposition to animality as physical and merely mechanical; Schiller similarly emphasizes that the material drive is derived from man's physical existence and places him within the constraints of time, in which each event is mechanistically predetermined by the preceding one. Of course, there is also a significant difference between Kant and Schiller's concepts. For Kant, the purpose of animality is exhausted by instinctive activity; animality is good only in that it contributes to preserving man and the human race from physical destruction and misfortune. Schiller's material drive, by contrast, applies to absolutely all aspects of human's existence as a phenomenon: "since all form appears only as material <...> it is certainly this material drive to which the entire phenomenon of humanity is ultimately bound. <...> [I]t is this drive that rouses and develops the dispositions of humanity" (Schiller 20: 345, AL 42, translation modified). In other words, if we assume that the material drive is Schiller's version of the predisposition to animality, then, unlike Kant, Schiller assumes the predisposition to animality to be an element of the predisposition to humanity, instead of seeing them as two separate predispositions to good.

Although only the material drive – as the cause of all change – is capable of developing humanity, it is also an obstacle to such development, as it does nothing to help man to choose this development. Anne Margaret Baxley argues that Schiller does not endorse Kant's conception of radical evil, according to which human beings have a radical tendency to act in opposition to the moral law (Baxley 2008: 12). In Chapter Two, I challenged Baxley's position and showed that Schiller, actually, accepts Kant's conception of radical evil. It is even more clear in Schiller's discussion of the material drive:

the [material] drive recognizes no such moral law, and wants to have its object realized through the will, whatever reason might have to say about it. *This tendency of our appetite to dictate directly to our will without any regard for higher laws* conflicts with our moral determination, and is the strongest opponent with which man in his moral action has to contend (Schiller 26: 324, LtP 159, my translation and emphasis).

This is where the second drive comes in. The formal drive "is based upon the absolute existence of man, or upon his rational nature" (Schiller 20: 345, AL 42) and it drives man towards freedom, bringing "harmony into the diversity of his appearance and affirm[ing] his person amidst all change of condition" (Schiller 20: 345–6, AL 42–3).⁵⁸ Its object is "*form*, both in the figurative and

⁵⁸ The harmony that Schiller speaks of here is not between sensibility and reason, but rather the inner harmony of reason with itself. With such harmony, Schiller associates, in particular, Kant's notion of freedom as moral autonomy. Cf. with Kant: "[T]he moral law expresses nothing other than the autonomy of pure practical reason, i.e., freedom; and this

the literal sense of the word: a concept that includes all the formal properties of things, and all of their relations to the powers of thought” (Schiller 20: 355, AL 53, translation modified). The drive which is intended to maintain and assert unchanging and eternal personality, says Schiller, can only be directed to the demand of that which is absolutely necessary, for anything contingent can easily be a threat to personality’s unity and harmony and, hence, its eternity. The demand for what is absolutely necessary is, basically, the demand for truth in theoretical judgments and justice in practical ones. In Kant terms we can say that the formal drive is the drive to the unconditional. Hence, unlike Kant, Schiller conceives his analogue of the predisposition to personality not only as a moral predisposition that allows man to define himself in accordance with the moral law, but also as the capacity and aspiration to cognize the world in a rational way.

And yet, although the formal drive is the basis for rational cognition and moral action, it cannot produce either the former or the latter by itself. Schiller explains this as follows: the formal drive provides the “laws for every judgement if it concerns knowledge, and laws for every will if it concerns actions” (Schiller 20: 346, AL 43), but only the material drive, through sensation, provides the cases to which these laws can be applied.⁵⁹ What is interesting is that, in Schiller’s view, the material drive on its own can provide us with some very limited truths and imperatives. Truths provided by the material drive are purely phenomenological: “[f]eeling can only say: that is true *for this subject and for this moment*” (Schiller 20: 346, AL 43), on such truths one cannot base a real science in the Kantian sense. Imperatives provided by the material drive are merely hypothetical⁶⁰: “[i]nclination can only say: that suits *your individuality and your present need*” (Schiller 20: 346, AL 43). And, of course, such imperatives alone cannot lead man to happiness, because in order to form the idea of happiness he needs to better understand who he is and what the world around him is like, and all this is impossible without the contribution of the formal drive.

To summarize: according to Schiller, there are two basic drives. Each of them contributes to self-determination: one by providing laws for self-determination; and the other by providing cases for self-determination. Each of these drives, without the other, is insufficient for proper cognition of the world and the commission of a moral act. These drives are pulling man in different directions and, *prima facie*, oppose each other. If cognition and moral action require some genuine interaction between drives, it is not clear what can make

[autonomy] is itself the formal condition of all maxims, under which alone they can **harmonize** with the supreme practical law” (Kant 5: 33, CprR 166, my emphasis).

⁵⁹ Cf. this with Kant’s statement that “thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind” (Kant A51/B76, CPR 193–4).

⁶⁰ And not all hypothetical imperatives, but only the simplest variations of the so-called pragmatic imperatives. All technical imperatives, as based on theoretical knowledge, definitely require some input from the formal drive.

them work together. It seems that some third element is needed, but, according to Schiller, the third basic drive is unthinkable.

3.4. Reciprocity and the play drive

Let us restate the guiding hypothesis of this chapter: Schiller revises Kant's theory of the three predispositions to good by arguing that the predisposition to humanity is not a separate predisposition, but a composite result of the interactions of the predispositions to animality and personality. Schiller uses the term 'drive' instead of 'predisposition'. In the previous section, I described the two basic drives distinguished in Schiller's theory of self-determination: the material drive that roughly corresponds to the predisposition to animality; and the formal drive that roughly corresponds to the predisposition to personality in Kant. In this section, I am going to focus on how the two basic drives interact with each other. As I said earlier, the drives seem incompatible, since the material drive is directed toward diversity and change, and the formal drive is directed toward absolute inviolability and immutability. Schiller agrees that the drives have opposing tendencies, but notes that they are to be aimed at different objects. It is true that the material drive requires diversity and change, but this requirement does not extend to the domain of personality, that is, to the basic principles that govern theoretical and practical judgments. It is also true that the formal drive requires unity and constancy in these basic principles of personality, but this requirement does not extend to sensations. In other words, diverse experiences and sensations do not necessarily contradict the requirements of the formal drive; one can lead a very rich sensual life without erring against truth and transgressing morality. It is also unnecessary, indeed undesirable, for a person to subject every aspect of his life to principles: it is one thing to subject one's reactions to sensations to principles – that is right and necessary; but quite another to subject the sensations themselves to principles – it is an intrusion into the exclusive domain of the material drive and violence against the person's sensual nature. An example of the latter is the monastic asceticism of the over-zealous rigorists in morality; they have subjected not only their maxims and actions but even their feelings to principles, thus turning the moral life into a constant self-suppression.

Schiller's general point is that two basic drives may well coexist without fierce antagonism, provided that each makes its demands only within its own domain. That raises the question of how to keep them from violating each other's borders. Schiller believes that the very problem of such violation of borders is not natural, but cultural, and can only be solved through culture. It is a common belief in contemporary culture, both theoretical and practical, says Schiller, that there is a fierce and unavoidable antagonism between reason and sensibility.⁶¹ Yet, such an assumption is begging the question, depriving us of a

⁶¹ I talk more about the problem of modernity, which has led to a loss of harmony and wholeness, in Chapter Four.

more pleasant alternative – the possibility of harmony. Harmony is one of Schiller’s central concepts, having many meanings and connotations. In this case, Schiller speaks of harmony as reciprocity [*Wechselwirkung*].⁶² This concept does not involve the total absence of antagonism between the drives, but rather the taming of this antagonism – turning it into a useful tool of checks and balances that promotes healthy competition and cooperation between drives. “Both principles are at once subordinated to each other, and coordinated” (Schiller 20: 348fn*, AL 45fn*).

What is the role of culture in establishing and maintaining this reciprocity? According to Schiller, culture is supposed to contribute to the harmonious development of both the capacity for feeling and the capacity for reason. The development of the former occurs through “the most varied contact with the world for the receptive faculty, while intensifying as far as possible passivity in feeling” (Schiller 20: 349, AL 46). By passivity Schiller does not mean here the numbing of feeling, but only that feeling should not immediately lead to action. The more developed the capacity for feeling is, “the greater the amount of the world that man can *grasp*, the more faculties he develops within himself” (Schiller 20: 349, AL 46). The development of the capacity for reason occurs through “securing for the determining faculty [*bestimmenden Vermögen*] the greatest independence from the receptive faculty” and intensifying “reason to the greatest possible degree of activity” (Schiller 20: 349, AL 46). The activity of reason consists in the establishment of a reliable connection between the understanding of what is to be done and the motivation to do it. The more developed the capacity for reason is, “the more world does man *comprehend*, <...> the more form he creates outside of himself” (Schiller 20: 349, AL 46). And if both capacities are equally well developed, “man will combine the most abundant existence with the greatest autonomy and freedom” (Schiller 20: 349, AL 47, translation modified).

As Schiller argues, reciprocity between the basic drives not only results in them limiting each other’s claims, but also enables them to interact, thereby making morality and knowledge possible. Reciprocity is only possible through the completion [*Vollendung*] of human existence and, thus, represents the idea of humanity. This brings me back to the comparison between Schiller’s binary structure of humanity and Kant’s three predispositions to the good. For Kant, the predispositions to animality, personality, and humanity, are original and basic, that is, neither is an element of the other. For Schiller, only the predispositions to personality and animality, or the self and its determinations, are original and basic. Furthermore, these predispositions are opposite in their tendencies, but, provided there is reciprocal interaction between them, the result of their confrontation is the realization of humanity. Therefore, according to Schiller, the predisposition to humanity is not an original and basic predis-

⁶² ‘*Wechselwirkung*’ is also translated in the literature as ‘reciprocal interaction’ or ‘interchange’. Schiller takes this concept from Fichte’s *Foundations of the Science of Knowledge* (Fichte 2021: 230), but changes its content and application considerably.

position, but a complex predisposition composed of two competing and reciprocally interacting elements.

The two basic drives, provided there is the reciprocal interaction between them, constitute a third drive, the play drive [*Spieltrieb*]. The object of the play drive is beauty which Schiller also describes as a living form [*lebende Gestalt*] (Schiller 20: 353, AL 53).⁶³ In other words, Schiller claims that it is through the aesthetic experience of beauty that our basic drives come into the reciprocal interaction. What is the exact effect of the play drive? The material drive subordinates man to natural necessity; the formal drive subordinates man to moral necessity; together they constrain man both naturally and morally, thus annulling “all contingency and [setting] man physically and morally free” (Schiller 20: 354, AL 51). Schiller gives an example to explain how necessities can coincide:

If we embrace someone passionately who deserves our contempt we are pained by the *compulsion of nature*. If we feel enmity towards someone who demands our regard, then we are pained by the *compulsion of reason*. But as soon as he has both engaged our affection and gained our regard, the compulsion of both sensation and conscience disappears, and we begin to love him, that is, play with both our affection and our regard (Schiller 20: 354, AL 51–2).

It seems to follow from this example that the play drive is possible only if the requirements of the material and formal drives coincide. However, this is a much more substantial requirement than a mere reciprocity. For reciprocity, it is sufficient that the basic drives are both developed enough to keep each other within their respective domains. It does not follow from reciprocity that, being within their domains, the basic drives cannot make demands that will ultimately prove irreconcilable. Let me explain the difference in more detail. As we shall see later, a clear intrusion of the material drive into the domain of the formal drive is, for example, the claim that pleasure and pain are the ultimate standards of good and evil, in other words, the naturalization of morality. So the demand of the material drive to steal something on the grounds that it will bring much pleasure and, therefore, good is absolutely impossible under conditions of genuine reciprocity between the basic drives. Yet the demand of the material drive to steal something because it will bring much pleasure, without equating that pleasure with good, is quite conceivable even under conditions of reciprocity, though of course it would be incompatible with the demand of the formal drive, i.e., with the moral law. How then can we explain Schiller’s example? I think that in this example he is not talking about a typical demonstration of the play drive, but rather about the most favorable one. He reveals the case in which the necessities coincide. But that does not mean that the play drive is impossible when they do not coincide. This reading is consistent with Schiller’s claims that “the play drive <...> will render contingent

⁶³ For an enlightening discussion on Schiller’s concept of living form, see Samantha Matherne and Nick Riggle (2020: 14–6)

both our formal and material disposition, and at the same time our perfection and our happiness” (Schiller 20: 354, AL 52, translation modified) and that “dual compulsions cancel each other out, and the will has complete **freedom of choice** between them” (Schiller 20: 371, AL 70, my emphasis).

The will – as a supra-sensual faculty and the source of the moral law – is an absolutely unconditional force, independent of the phenomenal world, i.e. atemporal and aspatial, therefore, no drives can have any effect on it. But the human will manifests itself in space and time only through choice, and choice is possible only where both basic drives are already active. Sabine Roehr (2003: 130) is correct in pointing out that here Schiller diverges from Kant, according to whom freedom cannot be demonstrated in the sensible world. Schiller is clearly aware of this problem and tries to circumvent it by insisting that he is talking not about the demonstration of the will, but its manifestation. What is the difference? The demonstration is a reliable proof of something, whereas the manifestation is not. Still, the manifestation, or rather its absence, can give us some knowledge. We cannot judge from the manifestation of the free will its existence, but we can judge from the obvious absence of such a manifestation that the action in question was definitely not determined by the free will. For Schiller, this is a very important point: he wants to preserve the unconditionality of the will, so all conditions refer only to its manifestations, that is, concrete acts of choice, in the phenomenal world, or, in Schiller’s own words, to freedom as “an effect of nature” (Schiller 20: 373, AL 73). He makes it very clear that the play drive is related specifically to freedom of choice in its empirical aspect, not to freedom as moral self-legislation (see Schiller 20: 373, AL 72).

As I see it, the function of the play drive in Schiller is twofold: in an ideal case it makes all contingencies necessary, as a result of which the requirements of the formal and the material drives coincide, and a person performs a moral act without feeling any compulsion; in a less than ideal case the play drive makes all necessities contingent, thereby depriving both these drives of compulsive force and creating the possibility of choice. In less abstract language, it means this: (i) the play drive allows a virtuous person in a situation that is not excessively tragic to perform a moral act because she at once must do it and wants to do it, the choice is like a play for her (i.e. easy and joyful) because the courses of action offered by the moral law and inclinations coincide harmoniously; and (ii) in the case of a divergence of options offered by the moral law and inclinations (this divergence may be due to either a lack of virtue or to the excessive tragedy of the situation), the play drive allows a person to make a free choice between these options, this choice being “accidental to the disposition [*Gesinnung*] that precedes it” (Schiller 20: 268, GD 137). This reading is also supported by what Schiller says about the workings of self-determination.

4. Active determinability

As I discussed, the reciprocity between the two basic drives results in the emergence of the third, play drive. The example given by Schiller seems to imply that the play drive moves a person towards virtuous behavior, that is, it is active when the person wants to do what she ought to do. In that case, the discussion of the play drive is merely a continuation of Schiller's discussion of a beautiful soul from *Grace and Dignity* examined in Chapter Two. The gist of the theory of a beautiful soul is that genuine virtue consists in the harmony between reason and sensibility. That is, both reason and sensibility move a person in the same direction. This virtue is attainable only through the conscious cultivation by the person of inclinations conducive to the fulfillment of duty; it thus presupposes a relationship to the self as a kind of work of art. By bringing her mental faculties, that is, sensibility and reason, in harmony, the person ceases to do violence to her sensual part in committing moral acts and endows these acts with aesthetic quality of grace.

However, I think that Schiller actually offers a different theory in the *Aesthetic Letters*, rather than restating his theory of a beautiful soul in new terms. This does not mean that he abandons the theory of a beautiful soul. Schiller simply turns his attention to an entirely different problem. Whereas, in *Grace and Dignity*, he is mainly concerned with the aesthetic character of the moral act and virtue, in the *Aesthetic Letters*, he is interested in the theory of choice and its empirical conditions. At the root of both problems Schiller sees the lack of harmony. But these are two very different kinds of harmony. In *Grace and Dignity*, it is what I call the harmony of dispositions. What matters in the harmony of dispositions is that sensibility and reason must be both conducive to moral action. They should not contradict or cancel each other. On the contrary, they should support each other. I call this kind of harmony the harmony of dispositions, because both reason and sensibility move a beautiful soul to the same direction.⁶⁴

In the *Aesthetic Letters*, Schiller is concerned with a very different kind of harmony. I call it the harmony of power. Without the harmony of power the play drive does not emerge. In the case of the harmony of power it does not matter what exactly the formal and material drives move us to do. What matters is that both drives are equally strong and reciprocally strained. Through mutual limitation they create possibility for choice, thus making self-determination possible. The harmony of dispositions is a special case of the harmony of power, just as a truly virtuous person is a special case of a person able to use her free will. In this section, I focus on what Schiller says about the working of self-determination to substantiate my interpretation.

⁶⁴ Matherne and Riggle make a similar distinction between the reciprocity we achieve through the wholeness of character which roughly corresponds to the harmony of dispositions and the reciprocity we achieve in play which roughly corresponds to the harmony of power (Matherne and Riggle 2020: 11fn20).

In describing how the will is determined, Schiller distinguishes among four different conditions of the human mind. He distinguishes “two different conditions of passive and active determinability [*Bestimmbarkeit*], and just as many conditions of passive and active determination [*Bestimmung*]” (Schiller 20: 368, AL 67). I briefly discuss each of them. At first, Schiller considers the condition of the human mind which precedes any determination at all. This means that this condition precedes all thoughts and sensations. Schiller defines it as “one of a limitless capacity to be shaped and defined” or “an empty infinity [*leere Unendlichkeit*]” (Schiller 20: 368, AL 67). This is the point at which an infinite number of possibilities are open to man precisely because he is not yet determined in any way. In this condition nothing even tries to determine the will, so it can also be called the condition of passive determinability. It is unlikely that such a condition is to be found in the phenomenal world, because as soon as a sensual being begins to exist, it also begins to sense, that is, it begins to be determined by its sensations. As I see it, the concept of passive determinability is rather brought by Schiller as a theoretic possibility and as the contrast to another kind of determinability to which I get later.

Man’s will is either determined passively, that is, determined by something external through his sensibility; or it is determined by will’s own legislation, in which case we speak of active determination. Although active determination has moral priority over passive determination, Schiller says that historically⁶⁵ nature has a physical advance: it manifests itself before the individual becomes aware of himself as intelligence. As soon as any sensation begins, man becomes determined by the material drive. “The sensual [*sinnliche*] drive takes effect earlier than the rational [*vernünftige*] drive, because sensation precedes consciousness” (Schiller 20: 374, AL 73, translation modified).⁶⁶ The material drive is not opposed by anything at the moment, so it almost completely dominates man. The mind of this man is in the condition of passive determination, for at this stage he does not actively participate in determining his actions. It is fair to say that his actions are not quite actions, but rather events occurring to him. And it can be true for both certain sensations, say, the feeling of hunger; and unreflective reactions to these sensations, say, the immediate quenching of hunger with whatever comes to hand.

At some point, after the emergence of sensations, man begins to develop self-consciousness. This is a manifestation of the formal drive. However, this manifestation does not mean that man’s mind has entered the condition of active determination: “it is not the fact that we feel, but that sensation becomes decisive – not that we achieve self-consciousness, but that the will dictates the way that pure self-ness becomes determinant” (Schiller 20: 372, AL 70). In

⁶⁵ This discussion is about the chronological formation of any particular human mind. But it is worth noting that Schiller divides the development of nations into similar stages.

⁶⁶ We can safely assume that sensuous and rational drives are synonymous with material and formal drives, respectively.

other words, man can have self-consciousness, but still be determined by his sensations.

If the mere emergence of the formal drive is not enough to ensure the active determination, what else is needed? According to Schiller, “to exchange a passive determination for an active one, [man] must be momentarily free of any determination” (Schiller 20: 374, AL 74). In other words, the situation of choice is the condition of indetermination or – which is the same for Schiller – the condition of determinability. In order to determine himself through the choice, man needs to cancel the passive determination, that is, he needs to return to the condition of determinability, similar to that which preceded all determination. But it is not possible for him to return to the condition of passive determinability, because man cannot stop thinking and sensing once he has started. The state of passive determinability is induced by lack of determinations, but a similar condition, Schiller believes, can also be induced by the equally strong and reciprocal strain of the two basic drives, for the real task here is to free oneself from their coercion, and this can be achieved through their equilibration. “When its pans are empty, a scale balances; but it also balances if the pans contain equal weights” (Schiller 20: 375, AL 74). So man must get into the condition of active determinability in which both basic drives determine him, thereby canceling all determination. If the condition of passive determinability is a condition of empty infinity, i.e. it does not have any content, in the condition of active determinability, on the contrary, the basic drives, being equally strong and reciprocally strained, offer man a huge number of possible determinations. That is why Schiller also calls this condition the condition of a fulfilled infinity [*erfüllte Unendlichkeit*]. Only through this condition the transition to the condition of active determination by the formal drive is possible.

Schiller provides some helpful description of the condition of active determination which allows us to connect it with an act of free choice. Qua a rational being man should be actively determined “to show that [he is] an independent and absolute force whose effect is not at all passive, but **freely chosen** by itself and self-determined” (Schiller 26: 309, LtP 143, my emphasis). To become actively determined, a person resists immediately following the demands of the sensations, but first weighs these demands and decides whether they are worth complying with. As Matherne and Riggle rightly put it, Schiller talks here about a certain “volitional openness with respect to the ways one has constituted or ruled oneself” (Matherne and Riggle 2020: 3), without this openness there cannot be a proper choice and self-determination. It should be stressed that the decision does not have to be toward morality. Schiller insists on a certain neutrality of will: it elevates man above other animals, even when he exercises the free will in “matters of indifference” (Schiller 20: 290, GD 155). So even if the person makes an immoral choice, that would be an active determination. What matters is that his behavior is no longer fully determined and explained by nature: “nature can no longer prescribe [his] activity to [him] through sensations; instead this has to flow quite autonomously and freely from knowledge” (Schiller 26: 309, LtP 143, translation modified).

Let us briefly summarize what has been said in this section so far. Active determination requires the act of choice. The act of choice is possible only if sensations do not directly determine the action. Sensations do not directly determine action in two cases: first, when there are no sensations; second, when the two basic drives are equally strong and reciprocally strained. The first case is that of passive determinability, it is no longer attainable by man. Thus, only the second case, the case of active determinability, is available to man. Unlike passive determinability, active determinability is not devoid of content. On the contrary, it contains all the determinations provided by both drives. I find this aspect quite important because it allows Schiller to distinguish choice from chance. Choice is not arbitrary; it is derived from a set of options, each of which has its own justification and rationalization in terms of reasons. Even if choice contains some indeterminacy, it would be wrong to say that it is irrational (i.e. lacks reason explaining and justifying it) or uncaused (i.e. lacks cause that physically accounts for it).

But how exactly is the choice made, what explains it? Noller proposes a Frankfurtian reading of Schiller's theory of choice "in terms of harmonious structure of first-order desires and second-order volitions" (Noller 2022: 243). Schiller clearly points to the second-order volitions in *Grace and Dignity*:

Only by crushing the power of desire, which rushes too eagerly towards satisfaction, and would prefer to skirt around the will's authority altogether, do human beings display their independence and prove themselves to be moral beings, which never simply desire or simply loathe, but have *to will* their loathing and desire in each instance (Schiller 20: 292, GD 157).

To manifest freedom, it is not enough to desire something, but we must also will our desire. We can desire something, but not will it. For example, I may want to eat, but at the same time I may not will my desire to eat because I am on a diet. If I still act on my desire and eat something, then I am not demonstrating freedom, because my act is passively determined by a first-order desire, not a second-order volition. Noller draws particular attention to the significance of reflection, which Schiller calls "the first liberal attitude [*liberale Verhältniß*] toward the world" (Schiller 20: 394, AL 95). Reflection allows the will to distance itself from first-order desires, thereby preventing them from immediately determining the will: "[i]f desire seizes its object directly, contemplation shifts its own object into the distance" (Schiller, 20: 394, AL 95). Through reflection, a person can weigh first-order desires and form second-order volitions in relation to them, through these volitions, in turn, a person determines herself actively. It is this reflective distance as a transitional stage between first-order desires and second-order volitions that is produced by the play drive.

If in the young Schiller's theory of will the soul-directed attention was ideally expected to be completely undetermined, thereby violating the compatibilist picture, then the mature Schiller's theory, as Noller shows, can well be described as compatibilist. In the process of reflection, "the human will is not

necessitated, but rather united, integrated and coordinated” (Noller 2022: 252) in such a way that “the individual ‘resonance frequency’⁶⁷ of the person is realized” (Noller 2022: 249). Schiller does not describe in detail the process of such integration and coordination. However, this is understandable, insofar as this process will be unique to each individual. Nevertheless, there is nothing in this process that is clearly incompatible with determinism.⁶⁸

I find Noller’s reading to be accurate, but I would like to highlight one point. We should not read Schiller’s theory of choice as a theory of virtue. In other words, the fact that a person acts according to second-order volitions does not mean that she has completely harmonized the demands of reason and sensibility and has become a beautiful soul. It only means that she now acts according to her choices, and these choices are the result of a reflective evaluation of her desires. Why do I think Schiller is talking here specifically about choice and not virtue? First, Schiller regularly insists on the neutrality of the will: “it truly exercises its freedom even when it acts in contradiction to reason” (Schiller 20: 291, GD 155). Second, there are clearly three stages in his presentation: (i) “[i]n his *physical* condition man suffers merely the force of nature”; (ii) “he detaches himself from this power in the *aesthetic* condition”; and (iii) he “prevails over it in the *moral* [or logical] condition” (Schiller 20: 368, AL 89). At the first stage man is in the condition of passive determination, and we can speak neither of his choice nor of his virtue, as man is too akin to an animal yet. At the second stage man enters into the condition of active determinability, it means that he is reciprocally determined by both basic drives, and thus the play drive emerges. If Schiller’s task in the *Aesthetic Letters* was to provide a theory of virtue, that is, to explain how harmony between reason and sensibility is possible, this task seems to be already accomplished at the second stage of this presentation and it is not clear why a third stage is needed at all. However, there is a third stage; furthermore, it has two varieties. It is either a logical or a moral condition of active determination. The former corresponds to theoretical judgment and the latter to practical judgment, and both involve the spontaneous activity of the mind. The very structure of the presentation indicates that harmony as a reciprocity between drives plays a different role here than harmony between the prescriptions of reason and sensibility. Schiller is not talking about a path to knowledge or virtue. What he presents is rather the structure of each particular act of judgment (and thus of choice). Each judgment is preceded by man’s determination by sensation, so for determination not to remain passive, reflection is necessary. Only through reflection can the theoretical or practical response to a given sensation be chosen. But it does not follow from this that all theoretical responses will be correct and practical responses – moral.

⁶⁷ It is a reference to Henry Frankfurt’s notion: “When a person identifies himself *decisively* with one of his first-order desires, this commitment ‘resounds’ throughout the potentially endless array of higher orders” (Frankfurt 1791: 16).

⁶⁸ I want to note that even in his mature philosophy Schiller retains some elements of indeterminism. They are especially clear in Schiller’s analysis of the sublime. I will address this topic in Chapter Five.

Schiller characterizes the condition of active determinability as aesthetic, because it involves the weighing of possible reasons against the full variety of human powers – physical, logical, and moral (Schiller 20: 375–6fn*, AL 75fn*). Moreover, the situation of choice shares significant similarities with the aesthetic experience. The most significant similarity is the reflective distance: man is distanced from possible determinations, he can contemplate and weigh them in the same manner as he contemplates beautiful representations. Desire requires touch, possession, and absorption; beauty is content with mere reflection. The similarity between the situation of choice and the aesthetic experience makes, in Schiller’s view, experience of beauty and, more broadly, aesthetic education absolutely essential for the stable exercise of freedom in the phenomenal world.⁶⁹

5. Three stages of the development of individual self-determination

As I mentioned earlier, Schiller is interested in the empirical aspect of freedom of choice. One of the most important consequences of this is that his theory of choice becomes historical. That said, Schiller’s discussion of three moments or stages of determination is not so much a historical overview as a structural analysis of judgment. Elsewhere, however, Schiller presents conjectural history in which he explains how, for the first time, the natural man begins to exercise freedom of choice. It should be emphasized at once that Schiller makes no claim to historical accuracy. He admits that the natural man is an artificial philosophical concept to which nothing in experience corresponds. Schiller’s conjectural history is supposed only to clarify conceptual connections. He presents the first, pre-Kantian, version of such history in §10 and §11 of his third dissertation *On the Connection between the Animal and the Spiritual Nature in Man* (1780) (Schiller 20: 50–6, TD 411–7); the second – in his letters to Friedrich Christian von Augustenburg (1793) (Schiller 26: 301–21, LtP 136–55); and the third – in the 24th–27th *Aesthetic Letters* (Schiller 20: 388–412, AL 89–112). By historicity of Schiller’s theory of choice I mean, that this theory commits Schiller to the thesis that free choice is not simply a capacity that is equally predicated on every person, but it has different levels of development and varies from epoch to epoch, from nation to nation, from class to class, and from individual to individual. Already in the first version of his conjectural history Schiller lays down the basic outline: (i) the natural man is wild and governed only by need; (ii) then he gradually accumulates luxury, and his determination by nature begins to weaken; (iii) at some point, he recognizes himself as a spirit and acquires mastery over the nature around him and within him. These three stages roughly correspond to the three stages discussed in the previous subsection. Schiller is fully aware of this parallelism: “[these] three moments <...> are on the whole three different eras in the development of the

⁶⁹ This argument will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

whole of humanity, and for the entire development of one single man; but they can also be distinguished in every single perception of an object, and so are in sum the necessary conditions for all knowledge received through our senses” (Schiller 20: 394fn*, AL 95fn*). In what follows, I discuss three stages of Schiller’s conjectural history of self-determination to show how the capacity for humanity emerges historically. I place particular emphasis on the role of reflection in this process.

5.1. The natural stage

According to Schiller, the natural man is “[t]he most stubborn egoist among all the animal species; and while inclined to freedom, the most dependent of slaves to his senses” (Schiller 26: 314, LtP 148). At first, the natural man, like other animals, is passively determined by need and natural necessity, and they are so strong that he is completely under “the power of the moment [*das Machtwort des Augenblicks*]”. The world is not an object for the natural man, but “mere fate” (Schiller 20: 388, AL 89). If he looks at the beauties of nature, it is only with “the covetousness of a thief”; and at its sublime manifestations, such as thunder, flood, earthquake, he reacts with “the servility of a wrongdoer” (Schiller 26: 314, LtP 148). His female companion interests him only as an object of raw sexual desire, his clothing and dwelling serve only the simplest of practical purposes: protection from other animals and the bad weather. As an extreme egoist, the natural man expects the same from his neighbor. All that is weaker is prey for him, all that is stronger is a terrifying foe. “In both cases his relation to the sensual world is one of immediate *physical contact* [*Berührung*]” (Schiller 20: 389, AL 90, translation modified).⁷⁰ This is how, Schiller says, “Thucydides describes the ancient Pelasgians, and those voyaging the world have confirmed his descriptions for many peoples of the South Seas and northern Asia” (Schiller 26: 315, LtP 149). Later, however, he qualifies that, in its purest form, the natural man is a historical-philosophical fiction, which, however, reveals much about modern man as well: “[i]t can be said that man never was in this brutish condition, but neither has he entirely escaped from it” (Schiller 20: 389–90, AL 90).

The presence and even the use of reason do not mark a transition to a new historical stage for man. Reason demands the absolute and unconditional, thereby tearing man out of the bonds of time and all that is merely material. But if man turns out to be totally unprepared for this, which is the case of the natural man, then these very demands of reason are perverted and applied to physical existence. In other words, instead of freeing man from all temporal and material things, reason, under the influence of sensibility, attaches to temporal and material things the characteristics of the absolute and unconditional. The natural man

⁷⁰ Literally ‘*Berührung*’ means ‘touch’. This word is very typical for Schiller’s description of the natural man’s interaction with the world.

is therefore merely prompted by this imperative to lend his individuality infinite extension, rather than abstract from it; instead of striving for form, he strives for an endless source of material; instead of striving for something unchanging, he strives for eternal change, and an absolute assurance of his temporal existence (Schiller 20: 391, AL 91–2).

The infinite and absolute need to accumulate and protect temporal and material things leads him to anxiety and fear [*Sorge und Furcht*], which are thus products of misguided reason rather than mere sensibility. All eudaimonic ethics, says Schiller, has its source in the misattribution by reason of absoluteness to the temporal and material, more specifically to happiness. The natural man denies the moral law in the Kantian sense because, perceiving himself as primarily a sensual and material being, he finds this absolute law foreign and coercive. He considers the concepts of good and evil to be merely conventions deliberately established at a certain time (Schiller 20: 393, AL 93). Even his religion is built on the promise of punishment and reward, for without a correlation to reward and punishment good and evil make no sense to him.

In general, the natural stage is the stage of passivity. The natural man perceives what is external to him, and through this perception he feels, and through this feeling he is determined to actions. “He feels pleasure [*Lust*], because matter is given to him from outside; and he feels displeasure [*Unlust*] simply because it is not given to him, or has been taken away” (Schiller 26: 311, LtP 145, translation modified). Pleasure and displeasure become the causes of desire and aversion, respectively; desire and aversion move him to act in a certain way. Reason has merely an instrumental role and even its demand for the absolute is subordinate to nature. Thus, all of natural man’s behavior is ultimately determined and explained by nature: “I felt, because something happened to me; because I felt, I desired” (Schiller 26: 312, LtP 146). At the natural stage, both the causes and effects of determination are purely physical: the causes are external stimuli, and the effects are the inner machinery of sensibility, turning pleasure and displeasure into desire and aversion.

5.2. The aesthetic stage

The aesthetic stage is marked by the enjoyment of observing objects and reflection on their representations. Schiller contrasts desire and observation: the former is immediate, the latter is distant; the former often destroys the object in its satisfaction, the latter does not even touch it; the former seeks possession, the latter is satisfied with the mere idea of the object; the former dominates man, the latter gives him space for free contemplation [*freie Kontemplation*] (Schiller 26: 311–2, LtP 145–6) or reflection. Reflection allows him to relate objects not directly to his physical condition, but to his reason. As mentioned earlier, Schiller calls reflection the first liberal attitude to the natural world. Schiller’s point is that reflection pushes the world a certain distance away from man, thus liberating him from it.

What was the factor that so drastically changed the human condition? The source cannot be freedom, because, on the contrary, it is reflection that opens up space for the realization of freedom. Schiller thinks that the real key to the emergence of reflection was the delight in semblances [*Schein*] and the inclination for finery [*Putz*] and games. Before going any further, I want to dwell a little on Schiller's concept of semblance. Too often Schiller's '*Schein*' is translated into English as 'appearance', thereby adding confusion to already challenging texts. The problem is that appearance is a classical philosophical concept with a special meaning in Kantian philosophy. Appearances in Kant's epistemology are the objects as they are given to us, i.e. in time and space (see Kant A37–8/B54–5, CPR 165–6; and A42–3/B59–60, CPR 168). They must be distinguished both from things in themselves and from illusions. Thus some real but unobservable entities (e.g., magnetic matter, see Kant A226/B273, CPR 325–6) are also appearances in Kant's terminology, while observable hallucinations, say, the desert mirages, are not. The desert mirage, however, is a perfect example for Schiller's concept of semblance. Schiller is particularly interested in aesthetic semblances, a special subset of semblances which, unlike hallucinations and other kinds of visual illusions, necessarily involve transparency: the genuine aesthetic pleasure of the perceiver is predicated on that he knows that it is an aesthetic semblance before him. This is also true for naturally beautiful objects; reflection on them evokes some aesthetic semblances in the viewer.⁷¹ According to Schiller, it is the interest in aesthetic semblances that marks man's transition to a new stage in the development of self-determination.

This interest can emerge only under favorable external conditions in which the natural man does not spend all his energies on satisfying basic needs. If there are such conditions, the natural man begins to satisfy his natural desires. He gets a sword to defend himself, a dwelling to shelter him from the cold and the beasts, food to satisfy his hunger, a woman to satisfy his lust, and so on. After that, he begins to accumulate a surplus; he needs more swords, dwellings, food, and women. In Schiller's terminology, this man strives for the "surplus of the material [*Ueberfluß des Stoffes*]" (Schiller 20: 405, AL 106, my emphasis). As Terence M. Holmes correctly points out, such surplus can be called quantitative (Holmes 1980: 29). This quantitative surplus, or in other words, stock, allows the natural man to anticipate the pleasure of its future use. His anticipation of future pleasure is an exercise of the imagination, through which he takes the first step toward breaking free from the power of the moment, for the natural man now lives not only in this particular moment, but also in his anticipation of the future. However, what becomes even more important in freeing the natural man from the power of the moment is the pursuit of another kind of surplus, the "surplus in the material [*Ueberfluß an dem Stoffe*]" (Schiller

⁷¹ See Elizabeth Wilkinson (1953) for discussion on the importance of Schiller's theory for modern aesthetics. See also Susanne Langer (1953) for an influential modern theory of art built on Schiller's concept of semblance.

20: 405, AL 106, my emphasis), which Holmes rightfully regards to be qualitative (Holmes 1980: 29).

According to Schiller, man becomes interested in the surplus **in** the material only after he has already accumulated some stock, that is, has realized his desire for the surplus **of** the material. A man who has several swords in his collection is no longer interested in another sword, but he may form a new interest in objects. For example, an interest in the sword as such, an interest in its qualities. And this is not a matter of functional qualities, such as the sword's effectiveness in killing opponents, all such qualities still belong to the previous type of desire. Rather, it is a matter of how the sword looks, whether it in itself pleases the man without regard to any instrumental usefulness. It is an aesthetic perspective on objects, and it becomes available to man only if he ceases to be completely dominated by need and natural necessity. Only by adopting the aesthetic perspective man begins to interact with the world not directly, but through reflection. Through reflection, he turns from a slave of nature to its suzerain. He begins to make judgments about objects and situations, or, to use more abstract Kantian language, he begins to lend form to the matter around him. "What had previously ruled over him as *force* is now the *object* of his judging gaze" (Schiller 20: 395, AL 96).

Now he demands an additional quality from the objects around him, namely, beauty. Schiller stipulates that the early beauty was accessible to the unsophisticated people: it was something unusual and striking, perhaps, something colorful. In aesthetic judgments it is the form of judgment that matters, not the content. The judgment of beauty is based not on immediate response to stimuli, but on reflection and free observation. The early aesthetic expressions may seem ridiculous and tasteless to us, says Schiller, but this is only because they were the first steps away from nature. Perhaps, the man from the past judges as beautiful what we would call, and quite rightly so, ugly; nevertheless this man is in a fundamentally different, much freer relationship with the world than the natural man. His judgments are based on reasons he weighed in reflection. One point needs to be clarified here. It is not that man at the aesthetic stage relies on reasons for his actions or cognition, whereas the natural man does not. In a significant sense, the natural man also relied on reasons, but it is only at the aesthetic stage that man begins to weigh these reasons: are they good enough to justify belief or action?

"Once [man] finds enjoyment in his eye, and seeing becomes something to value for itself, then he is already liberated aesthetically, and the play drive has begun" (Schiller 20: 400, AL 101). He makes aesthetic demands to all kinds of things: on clothing, on dwelling, on food, on his own appearance:

Now the ancient German looks for better-looking animal skins, more imposing antlers, more delicate drinking cups; the North Caledonian lays on the most colourful shellfish for his feasts. Even weapons are no longer simple instruments of terror, but also something pleasing to the eye. The rough yells of the field take on a rhythm, and begin to turn into song (Schiller 26: 316, LtP 150).

Man “decorates his hair with feathers, his neck with coral shells, he even decorates his own body, and in seeking to beautify himself distorts his natural form to a hideous degree” (Schiller 26: 316, LtP 150). From this point on, he also begins to pay additional attention to people’s behavior, including his own. He is interested in the aesthetic aspect of behavior, that is, how it is perceived by others. A desire to be liked by others emerges in him, so he introduces flourishes and embellishments [*Schnörkel und Verzierungen*] into his social conduct. Man becomes dependent on others’ opinions about him, so he restrains his selfish impulses for self-preservation and domination and shows respect⁷² for the freedom of others. Schiller does not deny that, to some extent, the natural man also depends on the opinions of others, but it is only an instrumental dependence. For example, the natural man might want others to like him in order to ensure his own safety. At the aesthetic stage, man becomes directly dependent on the opinions of others, he genuinely cares about what others think of him. To show his changed attitude toward others, man becomes a mild appearance [*milde Erscheinung*]: “he does not drag others, like a hostile star, into the vortex of his being, but occupies them, like a distantly twinkling star, as a mere lovely representation [*Vorstellung*]” (Schiller 26: 317, LtP 151, my translation). This is evident in sexual relationships as well: women are now expected to be attractive, and men are expected to court them. Even the relationship with gods changes. At the previous stage, the gods were simply feared as incomparably more powerful beings, their worship was exclusively servile and based on the promise of punishment and reward. As soon as man begins to perceive the world aesthetically, the imagery of monstrous demonic forces gives way to an idealized image of man himself.

Aesthetic pleasure contains a noticeable element of passivity, as we receive impressions [*Eindruck*] of external objects. However, aesthetic pleasure is not a mere effect of these impressions on our capacity for sensation [*Empfindungsvermögen*] as it is the case with purely material pleasure, “but instead an intervening operation of my soul: of reflection upon what places me in a state of pleasure” (Schiller 26: 312, LtP 146). Aesthetic semblances are not extracted from the object, but are actively produced by man in his contemplation of the object (Schiller 20: 401, AL 101). If material pleasure is completely based on the matter which we receive, aesthetic pleasure is based on the form which we lend to the received matter. In case of aesthetic pleasure the natural mechanism of pleasure is intruded by reason as an intermediary. This experience allows man to discover the rational within him without abandoning the sensual: “I involve myself, as a free principle and as a person, into my condition. I am still passively affected [*Ich erleide zwar noch*], for I feel, but I am affected because I act” (Schiller 26: 312, LtP 146, translation modified). Compared to the natural stage, the causes of human determination are no longer purely physical, but

⁷² It is important to note that Schiller speaks here only about the aesthetic dimension, that is, about semblances. If one shows respect to the other, it does not necessarily mean that one genuinely respects the other.

mediated through reflection by reason. The effects of human determination, however, are still physical, i.e. they are based on the inner machinery of sensibility, which turn pleasure and displeasure into desire and aversion, respectively.

5.3. The moral stage

Schiller does not say much about the moral stage of the development of self-determination, which seems to be explained by the fact that this stage has not yet been reached, but I will try to summarize the main points. At the moral stage man makes the moral law a condition for all other determinations, consistently denying any determinations that contradict morality. Although in terms of the external effects his behavior may look indistinguishable as compared to that at the aesthetic stage, great changes occur in the internal, motivational structure of his actions: at the aesthetic stage man is still governed by feelings of pleasure and displeasure, at the moral stage the primary motivation is duty. In other words, at the moral stage both the causes and effects of determination involve reason: “I act because I acted; i.e. I will because I cognized [something]. I elevate concepts into ideas, and ideas to practical maxims” (Schiller 26: 313, LtP 146, translation modified). The very mechanism of determination changes: it is not merely based on sensibility which turns pleasure and displeasure into desire and aversion; now it involves the alternative route of determination in which man’s cognition of the moral law is already sufficient to determine him to action.

It is important to note that the parallelism that Schiller finds in the structure of judgment and the development of self-determination does not apply entirely to the individual and the state. The structure of judgment and development of self-determination is tripartite: a) the physical (natural); b) the aesthetic; c) the rational (moral or logical). Individuals and the state, however, pass through similar stages in a slightly different order: a) at first there is an individual as a part of nature and the dynamic state of rights [*dynamische Staat der Rechte*], and they remain so throughout the first two stages of the development of self-determination, i.e., throughout the natural and aesthetic stages; b) it is only at the moral stage of the development of self-determination that the individual can become moral and the state – the ethical state of obligations [*ethische Staat der Pflichten*] (Schiller 20: 410, AL 110), as “[t]he formation of [the ethical] state will require that the moral order be a motivating force” (Schiller 20: 315, AL 10); c) but this is not the end of the development of the individual and the state, as they have not yet reached full harmony and wholeness. By becoming not merely moral, but truly virtuous, the individual becomes a beautiful soul and achieves almost complete harmony between the precepts of reason and sensibility. Being a beautiful soul, he fundamentally reconsiders the relationship not only with himself and others, but with the entire world, thereby opening up the possibility of the aesthetic state, in which all things of the world are citizens

and the main law is “to give freedom by means of freedom” (Schiller 20: 410, AL 110).⁷³

Conclusion

In this chapter, I reconstructed Schiller’s theory of self-determination. I showed that Schiller distinguishes between the noumenal and empirical aspects of self-determination. In *Grace and Dignity*, he examines the will in its noumenal aspect as a suprasensual faculty, which is completely free to choose whether to follow the law of reason or the law of nature. In the *Aesthetic Letters*, Schiller focuses on the empirical aspect of self-determination, that is, on choice, because it is through acts of choice that man determines himself in the spatio-temporal world. More specifically, Schiller analyzes capacity for humanity, which he associates, following Kant, with the capacity to choose and follow one’s own ends. I argued that in his theory of choice, Schiller revises Kant’s account of the three predispositions to good from *Religion*, and reinterprets the predisposition to humanity as the complex product of interaction between the other two predispositions. According to Schiller, man can actively determine himself if and only if he is momentarily freed from any passive determinations, and this is possible only if the two basic drives are equally strong and reciprocally strained. In this case, he takes an aesthetic perspective in relation to the world, and this perspective is characterized by reflection. Reflection allows man to free himself from passive determination and creates a space of freedom in which he can evaluate his desires, circumstances, and reasons, and determine himself actively in relation to them. Finally, I presented Schiller’s conjectural history of the development of self-determination to emphasize the historicity of self-determination as an effect of nature and the role of reflection in self-determination.

Schiller argues that the full-fledged agency requires the reciprocity between reason and sensibility, and this reciprocity, in its turn, presupposes the harmonious development of both the capacity for feeling and the capacity for reason (Schiller 20: 349, AL 46). However, Schiller also claims that, in the context of modernity, the disharmonious development is much more typical. The disharmonious development results in one of the two drives invading another’s domain and acquiring properties and functions that are foreign to it. If the material drive prevails over the formal one, then what should be governed by principles falls under the control of senses. In this case, a person tends to behave like an animal. If the formal drive intrudes into the domain of the material drive, it leads to moral asceticism at best; at worst, it ends with apathy or even contamination of rationality. In the next chapter, I will explore how freedom of choice can be hindered by disharmonious development.

⁷³ I discuss the beautiful soul in Chapter Two. Schiller’s division into three states is the main topic of Chapter Six.

CHAPTER 4. SAVAGES AND BARBARIANS

As argued in the previous chapter, Schiller regards the realization of self-determination as occurring in a historical context and having certain stages. However, how should we characterise this kind of historicity more precisely? It will emerge in this chapter that Schiller's historical approach does not imply a schematic inevitability of successive stages in the realization of self-determination. For Schiller, the historical context directly affects this realization; some contexts are more conducive to the realization of self-determination than others, whereas some may even preclude it. This does not mean that the historical process as such is predictable. Indeed, as Schiller himself indicates, the philosophical analysis of world history has a normative and regulative meaning rather than a prognostic one:

All well-meant attempts of philosophy to bring into agreement what the moral world demands with what the real world accomplishes are refuted by the statements of experience, and as obliging as nature in its organic realm is or seems to be in accordance with the regulative principles of judgment, as unruly it tears off the reins in the realm of freedom by which the spirit of speculation would like to lead it captive (Schiller 21: 49–50, OtS 140, my translation).

Humans' incapacity for genuine self-determination is one of the central problems that Schiller struggles to conceptualize and resolve in the *Letters Upon The Aesthetic Education of Man* (henceforth *Aesthetic Letters*). According to his account, self-determination requires a harmonious interaction between two basic psychological drives, and this interaction can be reliably achieved and maintained only on the condition of harmonious human development. Disharmonious human development may accordingly hinder the realization of self-determination. In the *Aesthetic Letters*, Schiller not only points to the possibility of disharmonious human development, but also analyzes its types and causes, and shows how this analysis can be applied to explain current political processes. This is the topic I focus on in this chapter.

The aim of this chapter is to lay out the precise types and causes of disharmonious human development in Schiller's philosophy. This kind of detailed analysis has not been undertaken so far. As I show, according to Schiller, disharmonious human development results in people either being incapable of reflection or becoming unresponsive to moral reasons as a result of the suppression of sensibility; this in turn makes them incapable of individual self-determination. The structure of the chapter is as follows: first, I show that Schiller frames his discussion of the obstacles to individual self-determination as the political problem of transforming the natural state into the state of reason; then I reconstruct two conditions of choice in Schiller's theory of individual self-determination; the third section is devoted to Schiller's distinction between savage and barbarian and my psychological reading of this distinction; in the fourth section, I discuss the causes of savagery and barbarism; and in the last

two sections I show in detail how exactly savagery and barbarism render people incapable of self-determination.

1. A political framing of the problem of individual self-determination

To better understand what, in Schiller's view, may hinder individual self-determination, we need to look at the exact conceptual framework in which he addresses the issue. Schiller frames the problem of individual self-determination as a political problem of the transformation of the state. As a given we have a natural state, which Schiller defines as "any political body that derives its original existence from forces [*Kräften*] and not from laws" (Schiller 20: 314, AL 8). The natural state is well suited to a physical man, who prescribes laws to himself only in order to cope with natural forces. In other words, the physical man governs his behavior merely on the basis of his own desires and external circumstances. Utility [*Nutzen*] is the primary regulatory mechanism of the natural state. For the sake of utility, civil and political liberties are to be restricted because the physical man is not ready to use them, and if he had them, he would only harm himself and the state. But the same utility is a limitation for a morally free man.

As a Kantian, Schiller holds that the will is genuinely free only if it does not depend on external utility, so he believes that there is another kind of motivation in which the morally free man acts upon the self-prescribed laws that do not depend on particular desires and circumstances. Initially, the morally free man sleeps inside a physical man. As soon as he awakes a little from sensual slumber, he finds himself in the natural state and unsuccessfully tries to justify it by appealing to a rational idea of a social contract. Schiller deems this idea to be a retrospective fiction which cannot be confirmed in experience, because the very notion of a contract assumes that those who enter into it have a sufficient capacity to choose and agree to adhere to the choice, and natural men do not meet these requirements. Still, the idea of the social contract has an important purpose. It shows a proper foundation for the state. After understanding this proper foundation, a morally free man feels the urge to rearrange the natural state into a moral one, to make the fictional story about the social contract a reality (Schiller 20: 313, AL 8). The problem is that while the physical man already actually exists, the morally free man exists only problematically,⁷⁴ that is, as something possible or exceptional. The morally free man within the physical man is already able to feel the need for change, but he is not quite ready for the change, because he is not yet fully realized. And if the transformation of the state starts immediately, the physical man, that is, the actually existing man, risks not surviving this process.

⁷⁴ Schiller uses the modal term from Kantian logic. 'Problematic' [*problematisch*] in this case means that the morally free man exists only as a possibility.

What does moral freedom mean in this context? It is unlikely that Schiller means that a morally free man always acts morally. Only a perfectly virtuous or, perhaps, even holy being meets this requirement, but it is a very special case of moral freedom which can hardly be expected from people. At the same time, Schiller is hardly treating the morally free man here in the spirit of Kantian orthodoxy, that is, as a person who prescribes a moral law for himself. Otherwise, Schiller could not have argued that people are not morally free, since according to Kant, they, being persons, certainly prescribe a moral law for themselves. Instead, Schiller sees some middle ground between these two options: people are not morally free not (i) because they are incapable of prescribing moral maxims for themselves (as they are capable of!), and not (ii) because they do not **always** follow moral maxims (as this would be a condition of perfect virtue or even holiness, rather than of moral freedom), but (iii) because they **systematically** prefer maxims based either on raw desires or on utility to demands of the moral law.⁷⁵ They are not morally free because there is a systematic malfunction in their motivation: moral considerations almost never override their sensual wants, despite the fact that, according to Kant, ought implies can. Schiller believes that this systematic malfunction is caused by a disconnection between reason and sensibility or more specifically by a lack of reciprocity between the two basic psychological drives.⁷⁶ Schiller's concern about the disconnection between reason and sensibility should not be read as a monistic critique of the faculty psychology. He does not argue that the very division of mind into different faculties is fundamentally wrong. Schiller's point is rather that healthy agency requires a great deal of interaction and reciprocity between these faculties. If a decision based on the right reasons has no supportive response from our senses, it means that there is no such interaction and reciprocity.

Schiller's thoughts are not an empty abstraction. He argues that this is exactly what happened in France during the revolutionary period (see Schiller 26: 262, LtP 123, also 26: 333, LtP 166). In the French state, mechanisms based on utility were gone, being replaced by entirely different mechanisms, which were based on the assumption that citizens are morally free. But this assumption was overly optimistic at all levels. Schiller believes that both higher and the lower social classes were not ready. It seemed that prejudice and superstition have been defeated and reason can triumph, and now all that was needed is "the signal for the great transformation, and a union of souls". But when this signal came in the form of the French Revolution, it revealed the "incapacity and unworthiness" (Schiller 26: 262, LtP 123) not only of the French people, but of all Europeans. Many fiery speeches were held, many persuasive treatises were written, several constitutions were adopted, many just slogans were shouted, but

⁷⁵ As I show in the next chapter, Schiller allows that, in addition to maxims based on raw desires and utility, maxims of taste may also conflict with the requirements of moral law as long as developed taste is in no way constrained.

⁷⁶ I discuss Schiller's theory of drives in Chapter Three.

the result was *la Terreur*. The widely demonstrated capacity to self-prescribe the moral law had little effect on the actual actions of people. So Schiller makes a bold claim that “the human race has not yet grown out of the force of tutelage” (Schiller 26: 262, LtP 124),⁷⁷ it is not yet ready for political liberty [*politische Freyheit*]. And this unreadiness is not due to the lack of knowledge of truth and justice. On the contrary, we already possess the knowledge which can correct our concepts (Schiller 26: 297, LtP 132). What we need now is to determine ourselves accordingly: “[r]eason has done what it can by discovering the law and establishing it; its execution is the task of resolute will and living feeling” (Schiller 20: 330, AL 26). But this is not happening. The problem is that our knowledge has no effect on our will (Schiller 26: 266, LtP 127), there is some gap between them, and Schiller believes the reason for this is the fragmentation of our humanity, i.e. a disconnection between reason and sensibility. This is not to say that no one in revolutionary France acted morally at all. Schiller does “not doubt that there are among both classes examples of true virtue” but he thinks “that they are the exception, and not the rule” (Schiller 26: 333, LtP 166). And the exception is not something on which you should rearrange the state.

The problem of fragmentation concerns not only the transformation of the state. While Kant does not find the exceptionality of moral behavior to be a major problem for his moral philosophy, Schiller clearly believes that it requires not only additional philosophical analysis and explanation, but also some remedy to make the moral acts less exceptional. The fragmentation of our humanity is not only a political problem for Schiller,⁷⁸ but also a moral practice problem, for it calls into question the very possibility of free choice, and thus moral self-determination. Let us now turn to Schiller’s analysis of choice and its conditions to better understand how the possibility of free choice can be limited.

2. Two conditions of choice

In Kantianism, the freely-set end “is an *object* of free choice” (Kant 6: 384, MM 516). By making choices, according to certain principles or desires, people determine their actions and choose a particular model of life. Their choices are the individual bricks from which their self-determination is built. For this reason, the capacity for choice or, in Schiller’s own terms, the capacity for humanity [*Vermögen zur Menschheit*] is a sole means of individual self-determination. It can be argued that choice is a condition of acting as such. If there is

⁷⁷ Although there is a strong echo in Schiller’s statement with Kant’s Enlightenment essay, it should be noted that they use different terminology. Kant talks about self-incurred immaturity [*selbstverschuldete Unmündigkeit*] (Kant 8: 35, E 17), whereas Schiller uses the phrase ‘the force of tutelage’ [*vormundschaftliche Gewalt*].

⁷⁸ In this chapter, I address the political framing of the problem of individual self-determination only as a backdrop for a better understanding of this problem. I address the political implications of Schiller’s philosophy more thoroughly in Chapter Six.

not even the slightest element of choice in what happens to you, it would be more correct to describe it as an event, rather than your action. I cannot go into detail now and discuss whether such a choice must be fully conscious, or whether there must be alternatives for the choice to be a choice, but suffice it to say that if a person *sincerely* does not recognize his choice or its influence in what is happening, then most likely he has not made a choice, but has simply been a part of some event. Sincerity is a crucial point here, however, because a situation in which one simply lies to oneself and others and refuses to recognize the consequences of one's choices is quite plausible.

As showed in Chapter Three, Schiller, indeed, makes the distinction between an action and an event (i.e., something that merely happens to a person), terming the former an active determination [*aktive Bestimmung*] and the latter a passive determination [*passive Bestimmung*] (Schiller 20: 368, AL 67). We are constantly influenced by the external world trying to determine us, so passive determination comes most naturally to us. Any empirical input we have, visual, tactile, auditory, and so on, first determines us passively, and only through active determination do we somehow recognize, judge, or respond to it. Without choice, it is impossible to move from passive determination to active determination. Here it is worth noting that, according to Schiller, theoretical judgments also involve choice. So, for example, deciding to go to the store after being passively determined by a sense of hunger and solving some mathematical problem would equally be acts of self-determination involving choice. In the broadest sense, choice is a reaction to a passive determination. But this definition is too broad, because, for example, a cough can also be a reaction to some passive determination, say an irritation in the throat, which does not automatically make it the result of our choice. An additional element that, according to Schiller, makes our response to passive determination a choice is reflection, specifically such reflection that is motivationally related to our response to passive determination. In case of a genuine choice, our response to passive determination is reflection-guided.

Thereby, we have found the first condition of choice. Choice implies reflection on the situation, the available options for action, and the reasons for preferring one option or another. Schiller holds that reflection has an aesthetic nature and involves the capacity to push the world with its immediacy away from oneself to a certain distance; hereafter I will refer to this condition of choice as *reflective distance*. There is another condition of choice, which I hinted at when I said that in choosing our reactions to passive determinations are not simply accompanied by reflection, but must be reflection-guided. In other words, our reflection should make a direct contribution to our favoring of one or another course of action. This means that principles and judgements which we recognize as right and applicable to the current situation must have a motivational effect. If we simply judge some course of action to be right and fitting with our principles, but make no attempt at all to put it into practice, then

it is not a choice.⁷⁹ In what follows, I will refer to the second condition of choice as *motivational commitment*.

The very combination of reflective distance and motivational commitment as conditions for choice is quite paradoxical. The first of these is essentially a kind of nonattachment and passivity: a person contemplates the world around her, detaching herself from this world. The second, on the contrary, implies the strongest degree of activity and involvement: the person does not simply think that something should be done, but carries out – or at least tries to – some action, presumably leading to the set end.⁸⁰ This paradoxicality has its precursor in Schiller’s analysis of the capacity for humanity, which I reconstructed in Chapter Three. To recap, Schiller argues that the capacity for humanity requires the reciprocal interaction of two basic psychological drives, the formal drive [*Formtrieb*] and the material drive [*Stofftrieb*], that can be roughly correlated with what in Kantian philosophy is called reason and sensibility respectively. As Beiser aptly summarizes it, the task of the former “is to formalize matter, or to internalize what is external”, and the task of the latter “is to externalize what is internal” (Beiser 2005: 139). The formal drive is associated with activity, rationality, principles, concepts, reasons, normativity, morality, timelessness, absoluteness, and personality. The material drive is associated with passivity, inclinations, instincts, sensual desires, feelings, self-preservation, happiness, and individual conditions of personality. If the two basic drives are equally strong and reciprocally strained, their claims suppress the compulsion of each other (Schiller 20:367–8). As a result of active and reciprocal interaction between the two basic drives, a complex third drive, the play drive [*Spieltrieb*], emerges and the person finds herself in a condition of active determinability, which allows her, through reflective distance, to examine all claims of both drives, make a choice in favor of one of them, and act accordingly.

That is, reflective distance and motivational commitment are to be understood as the essential features of the condition of active determinability that make choice possible, and in that sense they are conditions of choice itself. These two conditions assume an approximation to the ideal of holistic humanity, that is, the active and reciprocal interaction of reason and sensibility, whereas in reality humanity is often fragmented and this interaction does not take place. Without this interaction, a person lacks either reflection or moti-

⁷⁹ In the chapter, I talk mainly about choice as applied to practical matters. But in theoretical matters, too, there may be reflection without a motivational effect. For example, a person may, through reflection, conclude that the reasons available are sufficient to regard a certain theory as correct, and yet he continues to deny this theory.

⁸⁰ Perhaps, Schiller was influenced by Reinhold’s proposition of consciousness [*der Satz des Bewusstseins*]: “In consciousness, the representation is **distinguished** from, and **related** to, the subject and object, by the subject” (Reinhold 1790: 267, my emphasis). As you can see, it contains a similar paradoxical combination of attachment and nonattachment. On Reinhold’s proposition of consciousness, see Frederick Beiser (1987: 252–63), and Karl Ameriks (2000: 119–25).

vation to make a genuine choice. In the next section, I address in more detail how, according to Schiller, humanity can be fragmented.

3. Schiller's savage/barbarian distinction

Schiller describes the fragmentation of humanity with the savage/barbarian distinction. He writes that

man can be at odds with himself in two ways: either as a savage [*Wilder*], his feelings ruling his principles; or as a barbarian [*Barbar*], if his principles destroy his feelings. The savage despises the art [*Kunst*], recognizing nature as his unrestricted master [*Gebietter*]; the barbarian scorns and dishonours nature; but more contemptibly than the savage, he often enough continues to be the slave of his slave. The cultured man makes nature his friend, honoring its freedom by merely restraining its arbitrariness [*Willkür*] (Schiller 20: 318, AL 12, my translation).

The sense in which Schiller uses the terms 'savage' and, especially, 'barbarian' is quite unique in the history of ideas. Typically, a savage is understood as a purely natural man, and a barbarian as a man in the earliest stages of civilization, that is, the barbarian in his civilizational development is somewhere between the savage and the cultured man, but closer to the former. The understanding of the barbarian as a man, who through his principles destroys his feelings, thereby, paradoxically, becoming a slave to these feelings, has no precedent before Schiller.

Although we can find the distinction between the two extremes opposed to the free cultured man already in Schiller's first dissertation (see Chapter Three), the distinction between barbarian and savage in exactly such terms is a relatively late invention of Schiller. We can even pinpoint the approximate time when he introduced this distinction. As early as November 11, 1793, in a letter to Prince Frederick Christian II, Schiller used the terms 'barbarian' and 'savage' and their derivatives as synonymous. However, in a subsequent letter of November 21, 1793, he suddenly makes a clear distinction between the terms: "savagery means the complete lack of human development, while barbarism is improper human development" (Schiller 26: 317, LtP 150).⁸¹ The most important difference from the typical understanding of barbarism is that for Schiller the barbarian is not a man caught somewhere between savagery and culture, but a man who, so to speak, has gone in the wrong direction, his problem is not that he is underdeveloped, but that he is not **properly** developed. Strangely enough, Schiller's distinction between savage and barbarian is little discussed in Anglophone literature.

⁸¹ It is worth noting, however, that the novelty of the letter of November 21st consists precisely in the use of this terminology, while the concepts themselves, or at least their anticipation, can also be found in Schiller's earlier works.

There are some exceptions. David Pugh, for example, conceives of Schiller's distinction between savages and barbarians as the distinction between an excess of nature and an excess of reason, both of which are portrayed by Schiller as equally blameworthy (Pugh 1997: 296–7). Although I agree with Pugh's main point that barbarians and savages are characterized by a persistent disharmony between reason and sensibility, I have one clarification and one objection to Pugh's reading. My clarification is that it is not the excess of nature or reason itself that is blameworthy, but the disproportion between nature, i.e., sensibility, and reason, and the resulting disconnectedness between them. In other words, excess only makes sense as a relative concept in Schiller's thought: there is no excess of reason by itself, but only an excess of reason in relation to an underdeveloped sensibility, and the same goes for nature. As to my objection to Pugh, it is that he is wrong when he qualifies both excesses as **equally** blameworthy. Schiller is quite clear that the savage, as an unwilling slave of nature, deserves "more our sympathy than our scorn" (Schiller 26: 299, LtP 133), whereas the barbarian who enslaves nature himself, "**more contemptibly** than the savage, <...> continues to be the slave of his slave" (Schiller 20: 318, AL 12, my emphasis). Schiller reiterates a similar point later: barbarians who represent the refined civilized classes [*civilisirten Klassen*], demonstrate "a depraved character which is all the more disgusting [compared to that of savages] because culture itself is its source" (Schiller 20: 320, AL 15).

We can find some discussion on Schiller's distinction between savage and barbarian in Susan Bentley (2009). Bentley interprets savages as those who live "within the necessity of nature", and barbarians as those who "eschew nature and reside in artificial niches of culture" (Bentley 2009: 55) and correctly notes that Schiller considered barbarians a greater challenge to morality and politics than savages (Bentley 2009: 264). Bentley considers their common negative trait to be that both barbarians and savages neglect their contributions necessary for the functioning of the whole, that is, society, and even compares them to "rogue or damaged organs" (Bentley 2009: 126). While I agree with Bentley that barbarians and savages have no intrinsic interest in the common good, I do not think that the problem is that they do not perform the necessary function like damaged organs. According to Schiller, a natural state based on selfish needs is capable of getting these people to perform necessary functions (Schiller 20: 314, AL 8), so at least within the natural state, barbarians and savages are fairly healthy organs. The problem is rather that these people are nothing more than organs, that all their ends are imposed either by instinct or rational egoism, or by a natural state which skilfully exploits their instincts and rational egoism. Such people are not able to make decisions autonomously, that is, to exercise their freedom of choice, and, therefore, they are incapable of establishing better forms of state, whether ethical or even aesthetic, because these states presuppose the moral freedom of their citizens.

My main complaint with both of these interpretations is that, first, they do not appreciate the uniqueness of Schiller's understanding of barbarism, and, second, they do not go into detail about exactly how savagery and barbarism

interfere with self-determination. And that is exactly what I intent to accomplish in this chapter.

How, on the most basic level, should we understand Schiller's savage/barbarian distinction? I argue that it is more correct to read it not as an anthropological distinction, but as a distinction between two extreme opposite psychological conditions. That is, a savage is a person who is in a psychological condition of savagery, while a barbarian is a person who is in a psychological condition of barbarism. These two extreme conditions are both contrasted by Schiller with the harmonious aesthetic condition which alone allows for freedom of choice. Why do I think this psychological reading is more accurate than the anthropological reading? First, the psychological reading helps explain how barbarians and savages can exist in Schiller's modern European world. Second, the psychological reading explains how the same person can be at one time a savage and at another a barbarian. Third, the psychological reading can easily explain the class and anthropological application of these same concepts: for example, if the representatives of civilized classes are mostly characterized by the psychological condition of barbarism, then in a derivative sense we can call them barbarians (see Schiller 20: 319, AL 15); the same is true for individual peoples, civilizations, and even eras: for example, in the most ancient times people were presumably characterized by the psychological condition of savagery, so in a derivative sense we can call them savages. Fourth, the psychological reading explains how the same people can be "partly savage, partly barbarian" (Schiller 20: 337, AL 33). Fifth, the psychological reading is also supported by Schiller's insistence that the different stages of development through which humanity passes must not be thought of as abstract moments strictly separated from one another. As discussed in a previous chapter, these stages are also characteristic of the individual development of each person and even of each act of judgment (see Schiller 20: 394fn*, AL 95fn*).

How does the psychological reading fit in with Schiller's statement that savagery is the absence of human development and barbarism is improper human development? I think that Schiller refers there to paradigmatic cases and typical causes of the psychological conditions of savagery and barbarism. In the hypothetical absence of all human development, man is devoid of all principles, so it is not surprising that he is fully ruled by nature. Although the lower classes in France can hardly be characterized as devoid of any human development, Schiller calls some of them savages.⁸² As I show below, the same is true of barbarism: paradigmatically, it is caused by disharmonious development, and on the psychological level it always implies a lack of harmony between reason and sensibility. In what follows, I consider the causes of savagery and barbarism in detail.

⁸² I make this qualification because Schiller allows that there may be the members of the lower classes who are examples of true virtue (Schiller 26: 333, LtP 166).

4. Causes of savagery and barbarism

Assuming the psychological reading is correct, and barbarism and savagery are to be understood as psychological conditions of individual people, why do individual people tend to be in these conditions? Let us begin with causes of savagery, for it is a simpler and shorter topic. As I said above, the paradigmatic case of the savage is the natural man. It is worth noting that Schiller regards the natural man not as an anthropological type that actually existed, but as an artificially created concept that allows us to analyze man both in the past and in the present. “It can be said that man never was in this brutish condition, but neither has he entirely escaped from it” (Schiller 20: 389, AL 90). The life of the natural man is characterized by immediate contact with the world and the triumph of natural necessity. In many ways he is akin to animals in being directly ruled by instinct and basic natural needs. For savagery to manifest itself in a modern man, it is necessary to put him in such a condition that natural necessity reveals itself in all its strength, forcing him to go into the most immediate contact with the world. That is to say, man is driven into savagery by extreme need and exhaustion. Partially the causes of savagery are socio-economic. Numerous people are worn down by the need to secure shelter and food, but they, according to Schiller, “deserve our sympathy rather than scorn” (Schiller 26: 299, LtP 133). We need to strive for improving their physical wellbeing, for it is a necessary condition of their character development:

the work of enlightenment in a nation must begin with the improvement of its physical condition. The spirit must be freed from the yoke of necessity before it can be led to freedom of reason. And only in this sense is it right to regard the care for the physical well-being of the citizens as the first duty of the state. <...> Man is still very little when he lives warmly and has eaten his fill, but he must live warmly and have enough to eat if the better nature is to stir in him (Schiller 26: 299, LtP 133).

Another cause of the prevalence of savagery is the shortage of a theoretical or philosophical culture. The task of the theoretical culture [*theoretische Kultur*] is to correct our concepts and thus eradicate prejudices (Schiller 26: 265, LtP 126). If the cause of savagery in general is the complete lack of human development, then the cause of savagery now is the shortage of education and knowledge among most people. Schiller advocates making theoretical culture more accessible to people. His fundamental divergence from many other advocates of theoretical culture, however, is that he does not consider savagery to be the main problem of modernity. To be sure, many people still do not have even their most basic needs met, and many of those who do escape extreme poverty still have no access to knowledge for reasons beyond their control, but these are solvable problems that do not explain why a well-fed and educated person may show just as much, and sometimes more, depravity of character as so-called savages. And this brings us to a related topic, namely, the causes of barbarism.

As Dahlstrom correctly puts it, Schiller considers barbarism to be an inevitable result of disharmonious development under conditions of alienation from nature and over-specialization (Dahlstrom 2008: 97–8). The accumulation of empirical knowledge and increasingly sophisticated thinking made a more precise division between scientific disciplines necessary, and the increasing complexity of the mechanism of the state required a further division between different professions and ranks. These processes had a tremendous effect on the wholeness of human nature, separating and opposing reason and sensibility. In describing this effect, Schiller’s prose becomes especially powerful:

State and Church, laws and customs were now torn apart; pleasure was separated from work, means from end, effort from reward. Eternally shackled to one small fragment of the whole, man forms himself only as a fragment, in his ear the constant and monotonous noise of the wheel that he turned; never capable of developing the harmony of his being, and instead of expressing humanity in his nature, he became merely an impress of his occupation, his particular knowledge (Schiller 20: 323, AL 19, my translation).

Schiller’s position should not be simplified. He believes that the division of labor made rapid scientific and cultural progress possible. For humankind⁸³ as a whole the division of labor is a great good, and the internal antagonism between reason and sensibility produced by the division of labor is the only instrument capable of developing the various human capacities (Schiller 20: 326, AL 22). However, what is good for the whole, for humankind, turns out to be detrimental to the wholeness of the individuals who form it. In a literal sense, individuals are reduced to a mere means of promoting the development of the whole, they have become “the servants of humankind [*Knechte der Menschheit*]” (Schiller 20: 328, AL 23). It is interesting to note that, on the one hand, Schiller directly follows Kant, who holds that man is the only creature on earth whose natural predispositions related to the use of reason “were to develop completely only in the species, but not in the individual” (Kant 8: 18, UH 109); on the other hand, unlike Kant, Schiller wonders: is it fair to the individual? Is he not being used merely as a means? Should we not try to compensate for this in some way?

Extreme specialization entails that people focus on a single capacity, almost completely neglecting all the others. Thus, their human development becomes fragmented. For example, abstract thinkers become prone to coldness, since their specialization involves analytical parsing of impressions into components, while these impressions thrill the soul only when they are whole; and businessmen become prone to narrow-mindedness, since their profession forces them to focus always on the same things. These are different variants of barbarism that threaten the capacity for humanity in one way or another. As noted earlier,

⁸³ I use the word ‘humankind’ when referring to the set of all people, and ‘humanity’ when referring to the rational nature or capacity to set one’s own ends. Schiller uses the word ‘*Menschheit*’ in both cases.

Schiller defines barbarism not as an intermediate stage between savagery and civilization, but as an inappropriate form of human development. Now we can expand on this idea: the barbarian is inappropriately developed because he is unilaterally developed.

But does not the same hold true for the savage, who has developed only capacities pertaining to sensibility rather than reason? This is an interesting question. If the answer is affirmative, then the division of labor is not only the cause of the spread of barbarism, but also of savagery. Schiller scholars mainly see over-specialization as a source of barbarism only. For example, Beiser identifies in Schiller's discourse on the division of labor a dialogue with Rousseau, in which Schiller admits that "the division of labor emasculates human beings" (Beiser 2005: 161). To some extent, this reading is explained by the fact that sensibility and reason begin from unequal positions. As shown in the previous chapter, according to Schiller, a natural man begins with feeling and only then acquires rationality. That is, the natural man's sensibility initially has some level of development, while his reason is only in its infancy, and this original imbalance between the mental faculties makes the natural man a savage. But when with progress comes the division of labor, then, through specialization, certain elements of rationality develop rapidly, while the senses begin to be suppressed. As a result, the original imbalance between sensibility and reason turns into its mirror image: now reason, albeit fragmented, dominates sensibility, making man a barbarian.

While the overall structure of Schiller's analysis looks like this, I see no conceptual or textual reason why the division of labor cannot also contribute to the spread of savagery. Moreover, when Schiller associates savagery with the least educated and poorest classes, it is as if he is pushing us toward the idea that these people, as a result of the division of labor, find themselves in a position where almost all of their human development concerns only their sensibility and in the most primitive sense: they are engaged in hard, motile, and dull physical labor. At the very least, the division of labor is one of the reasons why they have neither the time nor the opportunity to engage in the development of their reason and the capacities pertaining to it. Therefore, I believe that the division of labor, as Schiller describes it, contributes to all variations in the fragmentation of humanity, not just barbarism.

Another cause of barbarism, though only supplementary to the division of labor, is the cult of theoretical culture. Schiller recognizes the importance of theoretical culture in correcting concepts, but believes that overemphasis on it can be counterproductive for dealing with the challenge of modernity. By focusing on, and inflating, the problem of savagery, people overlook or ignore the more pressing problem of barbarism. This one-sidedness turns theoretical culture from medicine to poison. Barbarism lies not in the obscurity of concepts as in the lack of influence of the right concepts on our sensibility and, thus, on our action. And theoretical culture "shows so little refining influence on sensibility that it rather more helps make a system out of corruption, rendering it incurable" (Schiller 26: 263, LtP 125). Two points are important here. First,

theoretical culture, being one-sided, directed exclusively at reason, only aggravates the disharmony of human development caused by the division of labor. Second, under conditions of disharmonious development, theoretical culture itself becomes perverted and becomes a tool to protect one-sidedness, coldness, rational egoism, and utility as “the great idol of the age, to which all powers are in thrall and all talent must pay homage” (Schiller 20: 311, AL 5). In other words, it formalizes the corruption that already exists in human nature into a firm system of principles.

Let us summarize what has been said about the causes of the fragmentation of humanity. Schiller believes that free choice is possible only through the intense and reciprocal interaction of the two basic psychological drives, the material and the formal, which he associates with sensibility and reason, respectively. This interaction presupposes a certain harmony in the development of relevant capacities. However, modernity makes the harmonious development of these capacities highly improbable. The causes of savagery are extreme need, physical exhaustion, and lack of access to the benefits of theoretical culture. The main causes of barbarism are the division of labor and overspecialisation in modern society, which encourages one-sided development of human abilities. Arguably, the same division of labor also contributes to the preservation and reinforcement of savagery. Lastly, an excessive focus on theoretical culture also contributes to the disharmony of human development and the elevation of rational egoism to an absolute principle, thus contributing to the spread of barbarism. In the following sections, I will consider how exactly barbarism and savagery hinder individual self-determination.

5. The savage’s lack of reflection

In this section, I show that the main aspect of savagery that impedes self-determination is the absence of reflection. To begin, I will briefly explain why reflection is necessary for self-determination. Schiller believes that self-determination requires a certain independence from the world. By this he means that self-determination implies that a person participates in determining his own judgments and actions, rather than being exhaustively determined by the laws of nature. It does not follow from this that free action is contrary to the laws of nature; moreover this would be impossible from the point of view of the Kantian philosophy of nature to which Schiller more or less adheres. To clarify, let us consider what, according to Schiller, an action fully determined by the laws of nature looks like.

The action fully determined by the laws of nature is passive and automatic. This is, for example, breathing or involuntary blinking. More complex actions can also be passive and automatic. A sudden outburst of anger, which provokes a person to violence toward others, may also be an example of an action entirely determined by the laws of nature. A common feature of all such actions is their immediate connection to the sensual world (Schiller 20: 389, AL 90): breathing

and blinking are directly caused by instinct, the sudden outburst of anger – by some natural desire. Immediacy in this case means that there is no intermediate link between cause – instinct or natural desire – and action. Nothing in these actions suggests that they are the product of choice and not merely a phenomenon in nature’s causal chain. One may argue that these are events rather than actions. You are not really choosing to have a sudden outburst of anger; rather, it happens to you. Although, if after your outburst you decide to work on yourself to avoid such outbursts of anger in the future, such a decision would be a genuine choice. The fundamental difference is that in the latter case you are not directly reacting to some state of affairs, but to your reflection on that state of affairs. Reflection, which Schiller calls the first liberal attitude toward the world (Schiller 20: 394, AL 95), is precisely this missing link that makes action a product of self-determination. Reflection allows a person to win back some independence from the world by pushing his desires and even instincts to a certain distance. Through reflection, the person does not simply follow his desires, but can first evaluate them and decide whether his reasons for seeking certain actions are good enough. Through reflection, a person’s rational self is revealed. Without reflection, there is no self; it is entirely substituted by natural necessity. And without the rational self there is no self-determination.

Having addressed why reflection is necessary for self-determination, let us now turn to why the savage lacks reflection. Let us begin with the paradigmatic case, i.e., with a natural man. To put it very simply, the main cause of a natural man’s lack of reflection is that reflection presupposes a certain development of reason, which the natural man lacks. As we saw in Chapter Three, reflection presupposes a certain opposition of man as rational agent to the sensual world. But, as Schiller notes, the natural man is an artificial philosophical concept to which nothing in experience corresponds. In other words, we cannot say of modern savages (at least of the vast majority of them) that their reason is so underdeveloped that they are incapable of reflection. The very fact that they use speech indicates otherwise. How, then, can we ascribe to them lack of reflection? This is not difficult to answer if we accept my reading of savagery as a psychological condition. Although modern savages generally have a sufficiently developed reason for reflection, there are external factors that prevent them from keeping their reflective distance from the world. No matter how capable of reflection a person may be, extreme need and extreme physical fatigue can easily provoke her into immediate (that is, unreflective) contact with the world: “[t]o satisfy hunger or to quench thirst man will do deeds at which humanity will shudder: against his will he turns traitor or murderer – even cannibal” (Schiller 20: 47, TD 408).

I have already alluded that Schiller’s analysis has a social dimension. He claims that savagery is more characteristic of the representatives of the lower class, who merely want to abolish the civic order so that nothing could prevent them from satisfying their animal wants. Schiller’s intonations are particularly conservative in his letters to Prince Frederick Christian II (1793): the lower class people “are not free men whom the state had oppressed; no, they [are]

merely wild animals that the state had bound with benevolent chains” (Schiller 26: 263, LtP 124). Had it been otherwise, with the destruction of the state these people would have shown their humanity rather than rushing “with un-governable fury to their animal gratification [*thierische Befriedigung*]” (Schiller 20: 319, AL 14).

But the lower-class savage’s incapacity for political self-determination does not manifest itself only in a furious desire for the animal gratification of passions. There is a less cruel variation of political savagery: being physically and spiritually exhausted, people may simply not find the strength to participate in political life. In other words, it is not only that, after the overthrow of the natural state, they may become aggressive animals, but also that they may be too weak to really feel the significance of political participation and to take a reflective distance from what is happening (Schiller 20: 331, AL 27). At this point, as we shall see later, the line between savage and barbaric is particularly thin, and yet there is a difference: the savage avoids political participation involuntarily, he is exhausted by life and therefore incapable of reflection; the barbarian, as I discuss in detail in the following sections, if he avoids political participation, does so not from lack of reflection, but from the cowardice of the heart or flaccidity. Schiller is much more sympathetic to the former than to the latter: while savages “deserve our sympathy, we are justified in despising those whose fortune has freed [them] from the yoke of need, but who nonetheless choose to bend themselves to it” (Schiller 20: 332, AL 27).

To sum up, according to Schiller, savagery renders a person incapable of self-determination because it involves lack of reflection. Savages cannot take a reflective distance from the world, thus they do not meet one of the conditions of choice. The causes for their lack of reflection are extreme need, exhaustion, and insufficient theoretical culture. It is interesting that Schiller, while acknowledging the importance of theoretical culture, clearly regards the terrible and exhausting conditions in which people live as a more important cause of their savagery: “the mind must be released from the yoke of necessity before it can be led to freedom and reason” (Schiller 26: 299, LtP 133). According to Schiller’s analysis, the causes for savagery are entirely external. This means that no one chooses to be a savage, and therefore savages deserve some sympathy. In the following section, I show how barbarism impedes individual self-determination and why, in Schiller’s view, it is far more blameworthy than savagery.

6. The barbarian’s suppression of feelings

This section is devoted to explaining how barbarism hinders individual self-determination. In Schiller’s moral psychology, the barbarian is a much more complex figure than the savage. It might even be said that it is an umbrella concept that combines at least three very different problematic developments in human characters. Although Schiller himself offers no explicit gradation

between the various types of barbarism, but merely lists them, I think that we can place them in a certain order according to their level of threat to individual self-determination. First, there is a problem of monastic asceticism: if the barbarian does his duty, he does so by suppressing his feelings, not allowing them to play any role in his moral life. Second, a problem of flaccidity and cowardice of the heart: although the barbarian understands what ought to be done, he does not feel motivated to do it out of laziness or fear. Third, a problem of becoming a slave to one's slave (see Schiller 20: 318, AL 12): by suppressing feelings aided by theoretical culture, the barbarian risks, without realizing it himself, turning the suppressed feelings into principles, thereby formalizing his flawed nature. All three problems are caused by the disconnection between reason and sensibility, which is the result of inharmonious human development under conditions of the division of labor and over-specialization. In what follows I consider each type of barbarism, one by one.

6.1. The barbarian's monkish asceticism

Some authors notice only one aspect of barbarism in Schiller. Katerina Deligiorgi, for example, predominantly concerns the problem of monkish asceticism. According to her reading, the barbarian "drowns the voice of feeling and desire in order to to achieve conformity with the moral law" (Deligiorgi 2005: 142), and Schiller regards it to be wrong to fulfill duty without an accompanying inclination, for this leads to the extinction of "natural feelings of sympathy and human fellowship" (Deligiorgi 2005: 144). Indeed, one can find in Schiller a critique of monkish asceticism, especially if one reads the *Aesthetic Letters* through the prism of *On Grace and Dignity*, in which Schiller contrasts the morality of action with the morality of character (the latter involves fulfilling one's duties with joy). But in what way does the barbarian's moral asceticism hinder his self-determination? In a certain sense, and Schiller admits this, the moral ascetic is quite successful in his moral self-determination. The moral ascetic understands the precepts of pure practical reason and follows them. But by aggressively suppressing feeling, he commits violence against himself as the sensual being. Such violence, first of all, is not a prescription of pure practical reason, but only a manifestation of fanaticism on the part of the barbarian.

Second, this violence contradicts the aesthetic obligation to respect freedom even in the sensual world, unless, of course, there are compelling moral reasons to the contrary. What does freedom in the sensual world mean? Strictly speaking, Schiller, as a Kantian, considers only a person as an intelligible being truly free, that is, capable of determining herself independently of external causes. Man as a sensual being governed by desires and instincts is not free in this sense, since his actions are determined by natural necessity through cause and effect. However, despite this, according to Schiller, we tend to perceive some objects around us as self-determined. First of all, people as sensual beings, but also, for example, animals or even outstanding works of art. When we see

ease and joy in the actions of others, we perceive these actions as free, that is, arising from the self-determination of these people, even if, strictly speaking, these actions are entirely due to their nature, which they did not choose and over which they have no or only very limited control. Schiller believes that the perception of freedom in the sensual world is the perception of beauty, and it has normative implications, even if not as strict as the normativity of morality. To put it very simply, we have an aesthetic obligation to contribute to more beauty, that is, to contribute to making more actions around us happen with sincere ease and joy. This applies to our own actions as well. And the barbarian, by suppressing his feelings, deliberately destroys any joy and ease that might accompany his moral actions, hence, he acts contrary to this aesthetic obligation without a good justification. By violating the aesthetic obligation, the moral ascetic can still be considered self-determined as a moral intelligible person, but he does not meet the requirement for a more complete self-determination as an embodied sensual-rational being.

Third, the moral ascetic shows by his behavior that although his choices and actions are moral, he himself as a person is not quite moral. We can say that while he possesses a motivational commitment to the right reasons, this commitment is not holistic, it does not represent his whole humanity, but only the rational part of it. The moral ascetic does not trust himself as a sensual being so much that he completely suppresses his feelings. According to Schiller, the moral ascetic should instead try to ennoble his feelings, to bring them into harmony with moral principles, thereby acquiring virtue and becoming what Schiller calls a Beautiful soul. Until the moral ascetic does this, he is always on the verge of falling into even greater barbarism. “The enemy who has merely been *laid* low can get up again” (Schiller 20: 284, GD 150). Repressed sensibility goes nowhere, and until it is harmonized with reason, it is a potential threat even to moral self-determination.

6.2. The barbarian’s flaccidity and cowardice of the heart

For all his shortcomings, a moral ascetic manages his basic task – he acts morally right and for the right reasons, that is, out of consciousness of his duty. In Kantian terms, the pure reason of the moral ascetic is practical, that is, it can motivate him to do the right thing. He still has a motivational commitment to the right reasons, even if this commitment is not holistic. But the moral ascetic’s position is precarious, and at any moment he may fall into even deeper barbarism, in which the pure reason is no longer reliably able to move him to do the right thing. I do not mean by this a total impracticality of pure reason, which would be contrary to Kantianism, but only the systematic impracticality. In other words, the moral ascetic is dangerously close to beginning to act morally only in exceptional cases. At that point he will cease to be a moral ascetic and become a barbarian of another kind. Let us discuss this kind of barbarian.

This barbarian is aware of what needs to be done, but he remains deaf to this awareness. If he is aware of his duty, then why does he not act according to his

duty? Schiller thinks that “there must be something in the people’ feelings [*Gemüter*] that stands in the way of receiving the truth, no matter how brightly it shines, and of accepting it, no matter how vividly it convinces” (Schiller 20: 331, AL 27, my translation). But what can there be in the people’ feelings if the barbarian is precisely characterized by conscious or unconscious suppression of feelings? “It is thought that only by completely abjuring sensibility can we find protection against its aberrations” (Schiller 20: 320, AL 15), says Schiller, but instead, by suppressing feelings, the barbarian creates conditions for the indolence of nature [*die Trägheit der Natur*] (or flaccidity [*Erschlaffung*]) and the cowardice of heart [*die Feigheit des Herzens*] which are inseparable from the human nature. Flaccidity and cowardice create the very gap which separates the awareness of duty from the commission of a moral act. As Schiller puts it, the barbarian’s heart becomes closed against the power of reason.

What does this mean in practice? Firstly, flaccidity results in the fact that although the barbarian understands what he ought to do, time and again he is unresponsive to even the most persuasive reasons. Secondly, the cowardice of the heart leads the barbarian, instead of acting according to reason, to subordinate his free judgment to the despotic opinion of others [*ihre despotische Meinung*], the state, and the priesthood [*das Priesterthum*] (see Schiller 20: 320, AL 15; 20: 332, AL 27; also 26: 299, LtP 133). In this, the barbarian bears a resemblance to the savage. However, there is a difference: if the savage shies away his moral judgment and political participation involuntarily, due to physical and mental exhaustion, the barbarian does the same without any external reason. In other words, the barbarian chooses nonparticipation or nonthinking on his own.

That said, Schiller says that barbarism also has external causes: it is stimulated by over-specialization and the cult of theoretical culture. Why does Schiller not forgive the barbarian what he forgives the savage, and why does he say that only the former willfully chooses to delegate his free judgment to others? As far as I can see, Schiller here follows Kant directly. Even Schiller’s terms – ‘flaccidity’ and ‘cowardice of heart’ – have antecedents in Kant’s ‘idleness’ [*Faulheit*] and ‘cowardice’ [*Feigheit*] from the essay, an *Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment*. Schiller is quite open about the source of his inspiration and even suggests that Kant pointed out the cure for barbarism: “A wise old man has sensed this [i.e. flaccidity and cowardice of the heart], and it lies hidden in the pregnant statement: *sapere aude*” (Schiller 20: 331, AL 27). In his essay, Kant is concerned with the problem of emancipation of people from self-incurred immaturity. The nonparticipation or nonthinking of barbarians and savages is very much what Kant means by immaturity, but only in barbarians is immaturity self-incurred. Unlike savages, barbarians are usually found not among the poor and needy people, but rather among the civilized classes, who are free from the yoke of need (see Schiller 20: 320, AL 15). They are guilty of their choice because they are capable of reflection and have time for it. “They do not flee from enlightenment because of the effort that it requires to acquire it; they fear it instead because of where it leads” (Schiller 26: 299,

LtP 134). They base their social value on wealth, fame, and physical advantages, and do not want to subject it to a real test, for which all these factors are just different kinds of prejudice. To venture into true enlightenment, they “must have a gift for disavowal, **a strength of mind, a resolve** that one seldom acquires in the arms of opulence” (Schiller 26: 300, LtP 134, my emphasis).

But are not lack of resolve and cowardice of the heart exactly the external, that is, unchosen factors which render the relevant actions as unchosen? For Kant and Schiller they do not. No one can justify his decision or refusal to make it by the fact that circumstances and nature made him indecisive and cowardly. Even though the systematic impracticality of pure reason perceived in experience deeply disturbs Schiller, he follows Kant and holds that pure reason can be practical, and thus the barbarian, despite the flaccidity and cowardice of the heart, can do the right thing. And if he does not, it is a result of his choice rather than simply an effect of circumstance or his nature. And this choice paradoxically abrupts the barbarian’s self-determination, because he chooses not to choose for himself. He chooses not to self-determine.

6.3. The barbarian’s depraved character

The barbarian discussed in the previous subsection is not yet an extreme case. Unlike the moral ascetic, he is no longer capable of a systematically moral life, but he can still have an idea of it. He is still rational and recognizes the right reasons but lacks motivational commitment to them. Out of flaccidity and cowardice of the heart he does not respond to the right reasons. Now he needs some kind of justification for his moral and political inactivity. And unlike the savage, he can use all the power of theoretical culture available to him to justify his lack of response to right reasons conclusively. At this point, according to Schiller, the barbarian ultimately solidifies his more fallen condition than that of the savage: “[t]he sensuous man cannot fall lower than the animal; but if the enlightened man degenerates he goes to the devil” (Schiller 26: 263, LtP124).

The barbarian uses theoretical culture to formalize corruption that already exists in human nature into a firm system of principles. As a result, he creates a complex and consistent form of Epicureanism (that is, the materialist moral philosophy), which, coupled with his increasing dependence on all kinds of objects, brings him “to a condition in which the maxims of passivity and passive obedience count as the supreme rules of life, hence of limitation in thought, powerlessness in action, dreadful mediocrity in creativity” (Schiller 26: 263–4, LtP 125). If in the previous stage the barbarian was morally and politically passive because of flaccidity and the cowardice of the heart, in this stage he fully justifies flaccidity and the cowardice of the heart by creating a new rationality befitting them. Whereas before, when acting wrongly, the barbarian might have realized that he lacked the resolve to do the right thing, now he believes that he *is* doing the right thing, and he has a powerful rational system to prove it to himself and to others. Rational egoism becomes his main moral principle and utility his main political principle. He is no longer

influenced by absolute values, because he does not acknowledge them, and only “the balance of evil [*das Gleichgewicht des Schlimmen*]” (Schiller 20: 321, AL 16; 26: 264, LtP 125) provided by the natural state can keep him from outright villainy.

Having justified his views, the barbarian takes a decisive step toward what I would call active passivity. By this I mean that he is no longer passive in the ordinary sense of the word, but may quite actively participate in the realization of his distorted idea of morality and politics. The barbarian is worse than the savage in his ultimate downfall not only because, unlike the savage, he has chosen his lot, but also because, by suppressing his feelings, he is capable of more evil than the savage. The heart “in the primitive natural man often beats in sympathy” (Schiller 20: 320, AL 15), while the barbarian makes his heart cold [*kalt*] and closed [*eng*] (Schiller 20: 325–6, AL 21). Where the savage stops because of sympathy, the barbarian moves on. Unlike the savage, the barbarian is capable of the most careful deliberation of his actions. He can commit evil methodically, according to a sophisticated plan, using considerable intellectual means to achieve his goals. And yet, in his coldness and methodicalness, the barbarian remains “a slave of his slave” (Schiller 20: 318, AL 12). His rationality is not the product of pure practical reason, it is compromised and perverted. He is capable of choice, but his range of choice is determined by principles based on the sensibility he so strenuously suppresses. His tragedy is that he is not even capable of fully understanding how limited his self-determination is. Arguably, we cannot say that even this barbarian completely lacks the capacity for humanity. It would be more accurate to say that he has it, but that it is considerably limited and distorted. He can reflect on, justify, choose, and perform actions prescribed by sensibility, because sensibility has its own motivating power. But actions based on moral principles are devoid of any motivating power for him, and hence the choice in their favor is very unlikely for him.

As indicated above, Schiller himself offers no explicit hierarchy of the different types of barbarism. He simply lists its manifestations: moral asceticism, lethargy, cowardice of the heart, and the formalization of the corruption of human nature by means of theoretical culture. The barbarian does not necessarily pass through all three stages in his development; he may begin at once, for example, with the third and formalize his selfishness into a principle. We should not forget that barbarism and savagery, according to the reading I defend, are first and foremost psychological conditions. It means that barbarism and savagery are not something completely rigid. Any barbarian can fall into savagery in great need, say, if he starves to death; just as yesterday’s savage who is well-fed today can become a barbarian. Such a change may not even always be observable. For example, if a person first avoided moral judgments and political participation because of extreme exhaustion, and then, having overcome poverty and want, continued to avoid them because of the cowardice of the heart, this would hardly seem a great change to an external observer who has no access to that person’s psychological conditions. One might wonder if

the distinction between barbarism and savagery is that important and meaningful. Schiller himself firmly believes that it is so. He believes that barbarism is the main threat, and it is extremely important not to confuse it with savagery. Not least because the ways of dealing with savagery are more or less obvious, while barbarism is only enforced by the same ways.

Conclusion

As seen in this chapter, Schiller regards disharmonious human development, manifested in savagery and barbarism, as an obstacle to individual self-determination. According to a psychological reading, we should understand barbarism and savagery as psychological conditions that prevent the individual from making choices. The causes of savagery are extreme need and physical exhaustion, as well as a lack of access to the benefits of theoretical culture. Barbarism is caused by the division of labor, over-specialization, and the cult of theoretical culture. The savage is incapable of self-determination because, due to circumstances beyond his control, he is incapable of taking a reflective distance to the world. The unreflectivity of the savage may manifest itself in uncontrolled outbursts of anger or other strong emotions, but also in a forced avoidance of moral judgment and political participation. Barbarism interferes with self-determination in quite a different way. First, barbarism results in moral asceticism. Although the moral ascetic is capable of moral self-determination, he does so only at the cost of disregarding his sensual nature. His motivational commitment to the right reasons is partial at best, and this makes his self-determination unreliable: without the support of sensibility, the barbarian risks becoming incapable of moral action at any time. Second, barbarian's suppression of sensibility is likely to result in flaccidity and the cowardice of the heart; these two prove to be the motivational chasm that separates the consciousness of duty from the performance of the corresponding action. As a result, the barbarian, lacking a motivational commitment to the right reasons, avoids moral judgment and political participation, delegating them to public opinion, the state, and the church. Finally, third, the barbarian cements his rejection of moral and political self-determination in principles. Rejecting pure practical reason and absolute unconditional values, he subordinates his life to the moral principle of rational egoism and the political principle of utility.

What both the savages and barbarians have in common is a lack of capacity for systematic moral action, on which alone claims to political liberties can be grounded. By systematicity in this case I do not mean the perfection of moral behavior, but rather its reliable regularity. It is important to stress that Schiller does not make virtue the condition of political freedom as the ancients did, but the capacity for systematic moral action. The transformation of the state is hindered not by a lack of virtue (since a person can be capable of committing moral acts even without being truly virtuous), but by animal savagery on the

one side, and by corruption elevated to a principle on the other. Until something is done about these obstacles, until “the character of mankind has not been raised from the depths of its decay”, Schiller finds the creation of “a state constitution upon principles <...> to be untimely” (Schiller 26: 264, LtP 125). That is why he believes that it is necessary to focus on ennobling the character of mankind, not to the level of virtue (as only a person herself can do this), but at least to the level enabling people to reliably commit moral acts. Schiller sees the means to this in aesthetic culture and aesthetic education.

CHAPTER 5. AESTHETIC EDUCATION AND FUNCTIONS OF ART

In the previous two chapters I unpacked Schiller's theory of self-determination, highlighted its historicity, and showed how historical context can hinder the realization of self-determination through the fragmentation of humanity. In short, the modern division of labor and over-specialization lead to a highly disharmonious exercise and development of human capacities, which in turn results in a fragmentation of almost each individual person's humanity. In the conditions of extreme need and lack of theoretical culture, some people, usually those from the poorest classes, become modern savages, incapable of taking a reflective distance from the world. Still others, who are generally quite wealthy and successful, by suppressing their sensibility while at the same time praising ideals based on it, such as utility and rational egoism, become modern barbarians and lose much of their motivational commitment to the right reasons. The natural state can usually handle modern savages and barbarians through the balance of evil [*das Gleichgewicht des Schlimmen*], but the transition to a freer form of state proves unfeasible, and attempts to force this transition lead to disaster, of which *la Terreur* in France was an obvious example. Having described the problem, Schiller is not satisfied with the conservative conclusion in favor of permanently preserving the present natural state, but hopes to find in art a means of overcoming the fragmentation of humanity. To this end, he puts forth a project of aesthetic education.

Through this chapter I discuss the functions of art relevant to self-determination and free choice in Schiller and show that the main purpose of his project of aesthetic education is to restore the wholeness of humanity, thus enabling the capacity to set oneself ends and act in accordance with them, that is, the capacity for choice or the capacity for humanity [*Vermögen zur Menschheit*], as Schiller calls it at the end of the 21st of his *Letters Upon The Aesthetic Education of Man* (henceforth *Aesthetic Letters*) (Schiller 20: 378, AL 78). Beyond this, I propose a two-level classification of the functions of art into direct and mediated functions; show the role of aesthetic education in cultivating dispositions and capacities that promote morality; and discuss the dialectic of taste and show how the cultivation of resolve enables us to keep taste within its limits, thus defending morality.

The structure of the chapter is as follows: first, I outline the general structure of the functions of art in Schiller and show how direct functions differ from mediated functions and what role mediators, that is, dispositions and capacities shaped by the direct functions of art, play. Next, I discuss each function one by one and show exactly what it contributes to self-determination. In the second section, I focus on the didactic function of art; in the third section – on the liquifying and the energetic functions. Section four is devoted to the central purpose of aesthetic education, that is, to the emancipatory function of art and the capacity for humanity. In the fifth section, I consider the functions of taste,

and outline the dialectic of taste, which is Schiller's own objection to his project of aesthetic education. Finally, in the last section, I show how Schiller responds to this objection by addressing the need to cultivate resolve.

1. The general structure of the functions of art

In his writings, Schiller discusses the various functions of art that contribute to self-determination. In some cases he discusses moral self-determination, that is, the exercise of freedom consisting in determining one's actions by the principles prescribed by pure practical reason. In other cases, Schiller deals with how art helps the exercise of freedom of choice. In third cases, he shows what art contributes, and how it relates, to holistic freedom, that is, freedom involving both the rational and the sensual parts of the individual. In addition to the fact that the different functions of art are related to different aspects of self-determination, it is also important to note that Schiller speaks of the direct and mediated functions of art, although he himself does not make this distinction explicit.

What do I mean by direct and mediated functions of art? The direct function involves the immediate effect of art; so, for example, the energetic and liquifying functions of art, representing two different aspects of beauty, are direct functions of art, since a person immediately undergoes their effect during the corresponding aesthetic experience. The mediated function of art presupposes the development of some capacities and dispositions; I would call these capacities and dispositions mediators in this chapter. For example, one of such mediators is the taste which facilitates the fulfillment of the substitutive and ennobling functions of art. These two functions are derivative of the formation of taste in man through aesthetic experience and that is why I call them mediated functions. This distinction should become clearer with a more detailed discussion of functions of art.

Let us list and briefly describe these functions of art which, according to Schiller, contribute in one way or another to this or that variation of self-determination.⁸⁴ I will begin with the direct functions of art:

- (FA1) The didactic function – art informs us what is bad and what is good; informing through the aesthetic experience is more efficient than through other channels of information because it involves the appeal not only to reason, but also to the senses.
- (FA2) The harmonizing function – the aesthetic experience brings the mental faculties of a person back into harmony. This function is especially important in the modern world, which is characterized

⁸⁴ Of course art may have other functions besides those; in particular, Schiller readily admits that the genuine end of art is to give pleasure. However, as I show later, even pleasure in art Schiller associates with either the spiritualizing (Schiller 20: 101) or harmonizing functions (Schiller 20: 99) which are directly relevant for self-determination.

by the division of labor; because it is over-specialisation that leads people to use their capacities selectively, hence, develop them very unevenly and, thus, becoming prone to either sensual or intellectual overstrain. Art relaxes overstrain, bringing a person into harmony with herself. This aesthetic condition of harmony, according to Schiller, is of great significance, for only in it is it possible to exercise the capacity for choice. The harmonizing function is a combination of energetic and liquifying functions, characteristic of ideal beauty:

- (FA2a) The liquifying function – the beautiful in art tempers the unilateral dominance of both senses and principles by establishing a reflective distance between them and a person, thus safeguarding him from automatism and thoughtlessness. In addition to this, the liquifying function contributes to the formation of taste, that is, the capacity which allows a person to maintain moderation and thoughtfulness in all judgments and actions;
- (FA2b) The energetic function – the sublime in art, through the humiliation of a person as a sensual being, enables him to recognize himself as an intelligent being, capable of self-determination in all circumstances. The energetic function involves, on the one hand, an intensification of moral feelings, on the other, an awareness of independence from inclinations and circumstances, thereby facilitating resolve and restoring a person's motivational commitment to the right reasons. In addition to this, the energetic function [*Entschluß*],⁸⁵ which ensures a person a steadier awareness of his spiritual vocation.

In addition to the direct functions, there are also indirect or mediated ones, involving the formation and/or cultivation of some mediator:

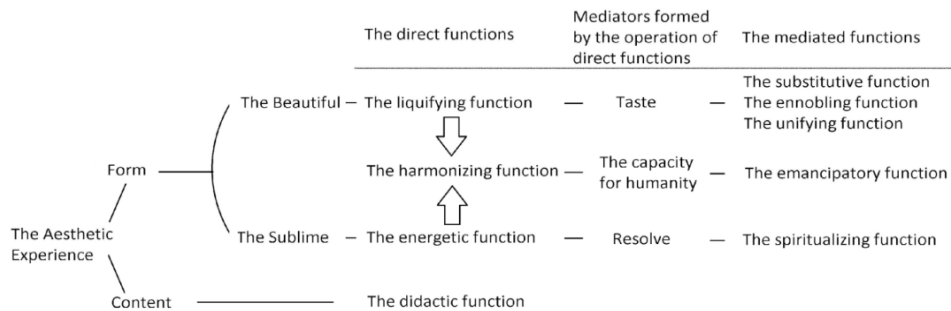
- (FA3) The emancipatory function is directly related to the harmonizing function (FA2). But while the harmonizing function refers directly to the moment in which a person has an aesthetic experience, the emancipatory function allows her to return into a harmonizing condition when making choices. In other words, through the cultivation of the capacity for humanity, the harmonizing condition becomes more habitual for the person, thereby making her capable of exercising her freedom of choice.
- (FA4) The substitutive function is that the developed taste substitutes for a missing virtue and keeps a person from committing immoral acts.

⁸⁵ Schiller also uses the term 'courage' [*Muth*].

For example, the substitutive function leads one to refuse to kill not because he considers it immoral, but because the act does not conform to his aesthetic standards of honor, in other words, killing is aesthetically repugnant to him.

- (FA5) The ennobling function helps a person become holistically free. Having the developed taste and resolve, she becomes more responsive to the justified demands of nature within and without. Pursuing an ever more perfect harmony between them and the moral law, she becomes a beautiful soul and contributes to the formation of an aesthetic state around herself.
- (FA6) The unifying function. Schiller refers to it only superficially, but the point is that art contributes to the formation of community and even the spirit of the nation, by which Schiller understands similarity and agreement in views and inclinations toward objects that excite different thoughts and feelings in another nation.
- (FA7) The spiritualizing function is directly related to the energetic function (FA2b) and in some sense confronts the ennobling function (FA5). If the ennobling function encourages a person toward the realization of greater harmony between the legitimate demands of reason and nature, the spiritualizing function prevents any inappropriate disregard for the demands of pure reason.

The general scheme of the functions of art looks something like this:



The direct functions of art come from mere aesthetic experience, they are self-sufficient and do not imply an educational program. When Schiller speaks of the need for aesthetic education, I take him speaking of the need to form in people mediators that facilitate mediated functions of art. The central task is to restore the capacity for humanity – the capacity to freely set and achieve ends (see Schiller 20: 378, AL 78).

The scheme can be briefly described as follows: the didactic function (FA1) of art is based primarily on its content, and this is one of the reasons why Schiller rejects the didactic function in his mature aesthetics: in a major sense it is heteronomous to art, and therefore destructive to it. The aesthetic education is

based on the effects of the beautiful and the sublime, both of which are produced by the specific form rather than by the content of art. The beautiful in art is the source of the liquifying function (FA2a), which moderates claims of both reason and sensibility by establishing an aesthetic distance between them and a person and contributes to the development of the taste. The sublime in art is the source of the energetic function (FA2b), which reminds a person of her spiritual moral vocation and contributes to the cultivation of resolve [*Entschluß*]. Taken together, the liquifying and energetic functions constitute the harmonizing function (FA2). Through the harmonizing function, the capacity for humanity is developed, which enables people to exercise their freedom of choice – this is the emancipatory function of art (FA3). The taste, in its turn, has three functions: it substitutes morality for people lacking virtue, this is the substitutive function (FA4); it promotes moral behavior, thereby enabling people to show grace, this is the ennobling function (FA5); and finally, it unites people into a community, this is the unifying function (FA6). Finally, resolve fulfills a spiritualizing function (FA7), which is to ensure that in a situation of insurmountable conflict between duty and inclination demands of pure practical reason are not compromised. In what follows, I intend to examine these functions in more detail.

2. The didactic function (FA1)

Schiller gives the most detailed overview of the didactic function of art in his essay *Die Schaubühne als eine moralische Anstalt betrachtet* (*The Stage considered as a Moral Institution*, 1784, henceforth *Stage as a Moral Institution*). Why should art have a didactic function at all? This is not an idle question, especially since Schiller would later change his position and regard explicitly didactic art as bad art. But in *Stage as a Moral Institution*, he defends the didactic function of art by noting that, unlike didactic treatises, art, through images, symbols, and subjects, can influence the senses, not just reason; and influencing the senses is important because most people are rather sensual than rational beings.

What exactly does art convey to us? First, it can tell us what is bad and what is good. For example, Caesar's mercy to the traitor Cinna is exemplary, and Regan's indifference toward the blind and childless King Lear is condemnable. Second, art not only tells us about vice itself, but also makes us aware that the world is full of vice, thereby teaching people to recognize vice and to resist its influence. Third, it can reveal that the world is full not only of vice, but also of folly. Satire, by ridiculing folly and bad habits, is especially effective in preventing their negative effects. Fourth, even if art proves ineffective at countering the vices and folly inherent in its recipient, it at least informs him that he is surrounded by fools and vicious people, thereby protecting him from their wiles and evils. As Schiller says, perhaps the dying Sara Sampson will not turn any man away from seducing girls, but at least she will warn the girls about

the seducers. Fifth, in art we learn about fate and chance. Watching the fate of Ariadne or Ugolino, we realize the importance of courage and become a little more prepared for unpleasant accidents. Sixth, as we learn about the role of chance in life, we also realize that sometimes people who have acted wrongly at the mercy of circumstance may deserve at least a modicum of our sympathy. Seventh, art is especially valuable to those in power because it has the courage to tell them the truth. Eighth, in addition to its purely moral didactics, art can contribute to the prudence of its audience in other matters.

As can be seen from the above, for the didactic function of art, the content of art is of great importance. This does not mean that form is completely irrelevant. On the contrary, it is the form of art that makes it possible to appeal to the feelings of the viewer. Nevertheless, one cannot fail to notice that the didactic function depends directly on specific narrative motifs. This focus on content does not feature in Schiller's late aesthetics. In the works of the Kantian period he seeks the uniqueness of art precisely in its special form, and regards the excessive dependence of its effect on the content as a deviation from the ideal beauty: "In a genuinely fine work of art the content should do nothing, the form everything" (Schiller 20: 382, AL 82). It is also important to note that in later works Schiller no longer discusses the didactic function of art. With this in mind, I hold that, in his mature philosophy, Schiller does not regard the didactic function as important and authentic for art and does not connect the moral significance of art with this function.

3. The harmonizing function (FA2)

I shall begin with a brief explanation of why the harmonizing function breaks down into a liquifying and energetic function. According to Schiller's transcendental analysis of humanity⁸⁶, beauty as the object of the play drive ought to fulfill the harmonizing function. It means that, under the influence of the aesthetic experience of beauty, our psychological drives ought to come into reciprocal interaction, thereby depriving each others' claims of subjective necessity. But this is a normative view of beauty, not a descriptive one. As Schiller writes in a letter (October, 25th, 1794) to his friend Körner, "[t]he beautiful is not a concept of experience, but rather an imperative" (Schiller 27: 70). Therefore, it is unconditionally true that art through beauty fulfills the harmonizing function only in the case of an ideal of beauty to which every artist should aspire, but which is unlikely ever to be fully attained (Schiller 20: 58). The actual works of art always exhibit a certain imperfection, which is manifested in two ways: the works of art are apt to either liquify or energize the viewer. As Lydia Moland (2021) correctly points out, Schiller sees some danger in this: unconstrained energetic beauty may promote savagery, while exclusively liquifying beauty may reinforce the enervation characteristic of modern

⁸⁶ I discuss Schiller's transcendental analysis of humanity in Chapter Three.

barbarians. Only ideal beauty brings a person into harmony which involves a combination of the reflective distance of liquifying beauty with the energetic beauty's resolve, hence, with motivational commitment to the right reasons. Schiller himself offers no definitive solution as to how to prevent the problem of non-ideal art. Nevertheless, in many of his writings, he gives detailed advice on exactly how to achieve particular effects in art.⁸⁷ As I see, such advice is given, *inter alia*, to help artists approximate the ideal of beauty as closely as possible. That is, Schiller does not consider the unattainability of the ideal as a reason not to strive for it, and the non-ideality of art, provided artists do their best, as a reason to abandon the project of aesthetic education. Furthermore, Schiller implicitly hints at the need for aesthetic diversity as a remedy to the problem of the non-ideality of art: in his later essay *Ueber das Erhabene (On the Sublime, 1801)* he argues that an appeal to the sublime is necessary in order to correct possible inflections of taste brought by the focus on the beautiful.⁸⁸ In what follows I am going to discuss two non-ideal varieties of beauty and their functions.

3.1. Clarification of terms

Before moving on, however, it is necessary to discuss the terminology Schiller uses in the *Aesthetic Letters*. I have already hinted that he distinguishes between liquifying and energetic varieties of beauty with correspondingly named functions. The problem is that this terminology is unique and can only be found in the *Aesthetic Letters*. What is also striking is the almost complete absence of the term 'the sublime' in the *Aesthetic Letters*, whereas in his other works, both those that preceded the *Aesthetic Letters* and those written later, Schiller frequently uses this concept. There are three possible explanations. The first explanation is that Schiller simply does not speak of the sublime in the *Aesthetic Letters*; liquifying and energetic beauty are just the two kinds of beauty which Schiller distinguishes, just as Kant, for example, distinguishes two kinds of the sublime: the mathematical and the dynamic sublime. In particular, Wilhelm Böhm (1927: 115–7, 189) argues against equating these concepts, especially the sublime and energetic beauty. The second explanation is that Schiller is swapping the traditional distinction between the beautiful and the sublime for a distinction between liquifying and energetic beauty, without substantially changing the content of these concepts. This explanation is supported, for example, by Klaus Petrus (1993: 31), David Pugh (1997: 25), and, with some modifications, Leslie Sharpe (1991: 123, 167–9), and Alexander Schmidt (2016: xxvii). The third explanation is a kind of middle way between the first two, according to which Schiller indeed swaps the traditional distinction between the beautiful and the sublime for a new distinction between the two

⁸⁷ For example, on how to achieve the effect of the sublime, see Schiller (20: 148–170).

⁸⁸ I discuss this topic in detail later, in the sixth section of this chapter.

varieties of beauty, but he changes not only the names, but also the content of the concepts.

I see at least two arguments in favor of the first explanation. One is that it would explain why the sublime appears in works written before the *Aesthetic Letters* as well as in works written afterwards. If Schiller had abandoned the term 'sublime' in favor of 'energetic beauty,' one would have expected him to be consistent. And his almost immediate return to a term he recently abandoned seems very inconsistent. Secondly, in the *Aesthetic Letters*, Schiller constantly emphasizes the unifying and harmonizing nature of beauty, while in his discussions of the sublime, on the contrary, he emphasizes that the sublime reveals to us the disharmony between the physical and the spiritual, as well as the superiority of the latter over the former.

Nevertheless, there are equally strong arguments in favor of the second explanation. The most convincing of these is that in the *Letters to Prince Frederick Christian von Augustenburg* (henceforth *Letters to Prince*), which are essentially a draft version of the *Aesthetic Letters*, Schiller uses the traditional concepts of the beautiful and the sublime instead of concepts of liquifying and energetic beauty with the same aims (see, e.g., Schiller 26: 305, LtP 139). The second argument is that if we assume that Schiller's sublime and energetic beauty are two different aesthetic experiences, it would be very difficult to distinguish them functionally, because they both imply a motivating effect on a person, strengthening his resolve to resist circumstances and inclinations. The third argument for the second explanation is Schiller's focus in the *Aesthetic Letters* predominantly on liquifying beauty. It is rather odd that Schiller, after introducing the distinction between the two variations of beauty, pays almost no attention to one of them. But if we assume that 'energetic beauty' and 'the sublime' are different terms describing the same type of aesthetic experience, then the lack of discussion of it in the *Aesthetic Letters* becomes more intelligible: Schiller had already said quite a lot about the sublime and its effects before the *Aesthetic Letters*; moreover, the role of Schiller's *On the Sublime* (1801) becomes clearer: as some scholars (e.g., Pugh 1997: 25) regard this essay to be a kind of supplement to the *Aesthetic Letters*.

I reluctantly lean toward the third explanation, which I consider to be rather a variation of the second. Schiller does change the names of the concepts of the beautiful and the sublime, but in addition to the names, he also subtly changes the concepts themselves, emphasizing their relatedness. The rationale for Schiller's decision to change the terminology is not exactly clear. Schmidt (2016: 174) seems to suggest that Schiller thus wanted to draw attention specifically to the psychological effects of beauty in experience, but I do not find this explanation very convincing, since Schiller had previously studied the psychological effects of tragedy and was quite content to do so in traditional terms. The rationale to which I am inclined is that Schiller wanted to show with the new terminology the transcendental unity of beauty, as well as the interdependence of its liquifying and energetic functions. While in the *Letters to Prince* these functions could be considered in isolation, in the new version

presented in the *Aesthetic Letters* they cannot even be properly performed unless they are performed together. Later in this chapter, I will touch a little on the problem of how the sublime, which implies disharmony between one's spiritual and physical self, can be a component of ideal beauty, which implies absolute harmony, thereby partially disarming the strongest argument in favor of the alternative explanation. In the next subsection, however, I focus on liquifying beauty, which, for the reasons just described, I shall refer to it as the beautiful.

3.2. The liquifying function (FA2a)

Having done with this lingering terminological quibble, I want first to contrast the liquifying function (as well as, for that matter, the energetic and harmonizing functions) with the didactic function. As it becomes clear already in Schiller's essay *Ueber den Grund des Vergnügens an tragischen Gegenständen* (*Of the Cause of the Pleasure We Derive from Tragic Objects*, henceforth *Cause of Pleasure*) the authentic direct functions of art (FA2–3) presuppose morality not as the end of art as in the didactic function (FA1), but as the means to the artistic end of free pleasure [*freies Vergnügen*]. Only thus can art aesthetically affect morality:

If the end [of art] itself is moral, it [art] loses that by which alone it is powerful, its freedom, and that by which it is so generally effective, the charm of pleasure. The play turns into a serious business, and yet it is precisely the play by which it [art] can best accomplish its business. Only by fulfilling its highest aesthetic effect will it have a beneficial influence on morality; but only by exercising its complete freedom can it fulfill its highest aesthetic effect (Schiller 20: 134–5, AL 362, my translation).

In this essay, Schiller is already deploying his mature aesthetics, within which didactic art is a self-contradictory concept because it ascribes to art an end that robs art of its aesthetic value grounded in freedom in appearance.⁸⁹ But what does Schiller mean when he speaks of free pleasure? He follows rather closely in Kant's account of aesthetic pleasure: all pleasure, including primitive physical pleasure, has its source in purposiveness. Merely physical pleasure is based on the law of necessity and does not need to have its purposiveness represented for its effect. So, for example, in order for an apple which I have eaten to give me pleasure, I do not need to represent the apple's purposiveness for any of my needs; it gives me pleasure simply on the basis of the law of necessity, on the basis of the fact that it satisfies some of my inclinations. Aesthetic pleasure works differently: reflecting on the representation of the object of art we, through the free play of our mental faculties, discover in this representation the form of purposiveness, and this discovery is pleasurable for

⁸⁹ See Chapter One for a discussion on Schiller's concept of beauty as freedom in appearance.

us. The purposiveness in this case is not objective, that is, it is not directed toward a specific purpose, but subjective, that is, the representation of the object of art is purposeful for the interaction of our mental faculties. It is the independence from a specific purpose, be it the satisfaction of some inclination or the acquisition of some knowledge, that makes aesthetic pleasure free.

Schiller offers a general classification of the various arts, based on which faculties interact during reflection. If the interaction is between understanding and the imagination, then we are dealing with the fine arts [*Schöne Kunst*], which primarily involve the beautiful. If, however, the interaction is between reason and imagination, we are dealing with the touching arts [*Rührende Kunst*], which primarily involve the sublime. Another important difference between the aesthetic experience of the beautiful and the sublime is that in the former, through reflection on the representation of the object, our mental faculties come into active harmony, which is quite similar to Kant's free play of imagination and understanding; whereas in the latter, by contrast, reflection on the representation of the object reveals an irresolvable conflict between the demands of reason and the capacities or needs of sensibility. For now, let us focus on the beautiful and on the harmony of understanding and imagination that corresponds to it.

When we see a beautiful object, we find ourselves captured by it. This happens because the representation of this object excites our imagination and understanding, as if it requires some kind of explanation. Imagination and understanding begin to interact with each other, proposing a series of images and concepts, and this interaction is not hierarchical, but playful: we play with the representation of the object in an attempt to give it an explanation, but it seems to resist our attempt, as if it were free. We have no desire to suppress this apparent freedom, only to give it some explanation, while maintaining a reflective distance. All this time, the play of our imagination and understanding brings us pleasure, as if we are reconciling them with each other and becoming less fragmented. According to Schiller, the beautiful "soften[s] the mind [*Gemüth*] both morally and physically" (Schiller 20: 362, AL 59) and this is what the liquifying function is all about. By fulfilling it, the beautiful liberates us from the oppression of concepts as well as from the oppression of sensations, both of which are violence against us as sensual-rational beings. By liberating us from this double oppression and immersing us in the play, the beautiful pleases us. Softening of the mind morally and physically should be understood not as weakening one of the two psychological drives, but as their harmonization. Harmonization, in this case, means that the mental faculties (and corresponding psychological drives) confine each other's domains through active interaction, and the closer the beauty is to the ideal, the more precisely they do so (Schiller 20: 366, AL 64).

It should be stressed that the idea that the beautiful liberates a person from the double oppression of concepts and sensations is a late Schiller's invention, which appears only in the *Aesthetic Letters*. According to the original scheme presented in the *Letters to Prince*, the beautiful liberates a person only from the

oppression of sensibility (Schiller 26: 304–6, LtP 138–40). Moreover, in the early version, the beautiful should not affect spirituality [*Geistigkeit*] at all, since it leads to weakness and passivity. That is, the appropriateness of the effect of the beautiful has quite different descriptions. In the *Letters to Prince*, beautiful has a positive liquifying effect when it affects the senses, and a negative liquifying effect when it affects spirituality; therefore, the appropriateness of the effect of the beautiful depends on the object it is affecting. In the *Aesthetic Letters*, it is not the object that is important, but the means: the beautiful has a positive liquifying effect when it harmonizes thinking and feeling (which occurs through their active interaction and mutual reinforcement), and a negative liquifying effect when it weakens any of them. In the early version, the liquifying function is meant for people who are unequivocally ruled by raw feelings, that is, savages in Schiller’s terminology. In the later version, the liquifying function also helps people suppressed by unjustified and distorted principles, that is, barbarians.

What exactly does the liquifying function do, apart from pleasing? Thanks to it, a person takes an aesthetic distance from the world. Neither his feelings nor any concepts or principles compel him to do something immediately with the object. He is freed from any automatism, although the feelings and concepts relevant to the object have not disappeared, and he is still aware of them. In the later essay *On the Employment of the Chorus in Tragedy*, which also serves as a prologue to the *Bride of Messina*, Schiller elaborates on the role that the imagination plays in the liquifying function of beauty.

According to the central idea of the essay, a work of art should not pretend to be reality. The perceiver must understand that it is a beautiful fiction; only by realizing this can he have a real aesthetic experience. This is why Schiller decides to add a chorus to the *Bride of Messina*; he wants to use this technique to remind all readers and viewers that the play is a fiction and they should perceive it as such. It does not follow from this that every artistic work must have a similar artistic device, but nevertheless Schiller insists that the perceiver must occupy a certain distance in relation to the aesthetic object. And the imagination is directly involved in forming such a reflective distance. First, Schiller says that only imagination allows us to form a coherent image from disparate sensations, and that one whose imagination is limited “will grasp [merely] the accidental appearances” (Schiller 1803, my translation). But even more importantly, second, every element of the artistic object must be idealized – both by the artist and the perceiver – so as to bind the spirit of the universal [*Geist des Alls*] in a corporeal form. Schiller’s point is that the very formation and perception of artistic images involves the processing of the elements of the artistic object by the imagination. Through this process – which is essentially a species of reflection – a work of fiction acquires universal significance. Thus, for example, the fate of an individual character in a play is idealized by the imagination⁹⁰ and perceived as a possible fate of man in general, and, therefore,

⁹⁰ Idealization in this case does not mean endowing the aesthetic object or any aspects of it

as something relatable. So, on the one hand, we stepped away from this character by some distance, but, on the other hand, it is precisely because of this distance that we find ourselves able to relate to him now. The same holds true for the world in general; only by drawing back from it at a reflective distance are we truly able to experience both our detachment and our involvement in the world.

Although Schiller himself does not use such terminology, we might say that the liquifying function is the negative aspect of the harmonizing function: it assures that we are not violently and directly forced by our sensibility to do something. However, the liquifying function also has positive content in the form of positive prescriptions of taste, which it helps to form. On this I need to say a little more. Both the liquifying and the energetic variations of beauty⁹¹ involve not only a direct function contributing to morality, but also an indirect one: the pleasure derived through them leads to the formation or cultivation of mediators that contribute to morality on a permanent basis. In *Cause of Pleasure*, Schiller says:

It is also certain that every pleasure, in so far as it flows from moral sources, improves man morally, and that here **the effect must again become the cause**. The pleasure in the beautiful, the touching, the sublime strengthens our moral feelings [*moralische Gefühle*], just as the pleasure in doing good, in love, etc. strengthens all these inclinations [*Neigungen*]. Art, then, does not have a moral effect merely because it gives pleasure by moral means, but also because the pleasure itself, which art affords, becomes a means to morality (Schiller 20: 135, CP 363, my translation and emphasis).

I read this Schiller's quote as an early anticipation of his project of aesthetic education. Through the aesthetic experience certain human capacities and dispositions – which I have earlier called mediators – are formed or strengthened; and through these mediators the indirect functions of art are realized. In case of the liquifying function, taste is such a mediator. Taste is sensitivity to the beautiful; it allows a person to retain the same harmonious moderation even after the aesthetic experience of the beautiful has ended. Schiller explicitly says that the cultivation of taste is one of the tasks of aesthetic education (Schiller 20: 375–6fn*, AL 75fn*).

It must be said that Schiller, in describing the action of the liquifying function, occasionally touches on something that belongs rather to the energetic

with perfection or typicality. Rather, idealization is an artistic procedure applied to an aesthetic object so that it can express ideas. For discussion on how Schiller's understanding of idealization differs from that of Leibnizian-Wolffian aesthetics, see Pugh (1993). In short, whereas for representatives of the Leibnizian-Wolffian tradition, such as Mendelssohn and Moritz, art in condensed form grasps and expresses the perfection of nature, for Schiller nature itself is the idea of reason and only as such can and should art express it. While the former are still can be considered as proponents of a very sophisticated variation of the Aristotelian theory of mimesis, Schiller almost completely breaks with it.

⁹¹ I will discuss the energetic function in detail in the next subsection.

function. I think the reason for this is that if we speak of these functions in the normative sense, we must assume that they act together. As soon as we completely isolate one function from the other, they change. So, for example, being completely isolated, the liquifying function ceases to free a person from the oppression of concepts and sensations through harmonization, but only weakens both feeling and thinking, making a person pampered and indecisive.

3.3. The energetic function (FA2b)

As it was shown, according to Schiller, ideal beauty inevitably breaks down into two variations when realized in the empirical world. One of them, liquifying beauty, I discussed in the previous subsection; here I turn to its counterpart, energetic beauty. Instead of the term ‘energetic beauty’ I will use the more traditional ‘the sublime’ for the reasons described in (3.1). However, I keep referring to the function of art realized by means of the sublime as energetic.

Schiller first speaks of the energetic function of art in the *Stage as a Moral Institution*. He argues that the laws of the state need external support and lists several reasons for it. First, the laws of the state are only concerned with prohibitions, while morality and prosperity require positive prescriptions as well. Second, the laws of the state are changeable, lacking the spirit of universality and eternity. Third, the laws of the state appeal only to reason, whereas most people are sensual rather than rational beings. The required external support for the state was earlier realized by religion, which provided positive injunctions, imparted to moral requirements a quality of universality and timelessness, and appealed through religious symbolism to the heart, not just to reason. But, as Schiller notes, religion was able to do this only through aesthetic instruments; if we take away its symbols, images, mysteries, and plots, it becomes foreign to most people. Schiller also carefully hints that religion has a political aspect in addition to a divine one, and that it can lose credibility; in such a case only art is capable of keeping man from falling into absolute depravity:

If no morality is taught anymore, if no religion is believed anymore, if no law exists anymore, we are still horrified when we see Medea staggering down the stairs of the palace and realize that infanticide has been committed (Schiller 20: 92, my translation).

Religion derives much of its motivating power from the aesthetic, that is, from the domain of art; and even if religion loses its power, art will still have its energetic effect on a person. How exactly does the energetic function work? The art does not merely convey some information, but evokes strong emotions: Augustus, mercifully extending his hand to the traitor Cinna, or King Lear, desperately shouting “I have given you everything!” to his daughter compel the audience to praise mercy and condemn the children’s ingratitude at least in the moment of viewing. It is not that art simply communicates through the senses

that something is bad or good – that would still be a didactic function (FA1); art does more: it evokes a strong emotional response to morally significant events and actions, and this response moves a person to realize her moral vocation and act accordingly.

Here it is important to point out that not every emotional response is related to the energetic function of art. Schiller has in mind a very specific emotional response, which implies a person's feeling of independence from the phenomenal world. In his discussion of the sublime, Schiller shows himself to be a true Kantian and emphasizes the unnatural and reasonable in a person, which allows the person to break out of the causal chain and realize her spiritual essence and moral vocation. Just as the liquifying function, the energetic function of art presupposes pleasure as art's end. But, unlike the liquifying function, it presupposes a very special kind of pleasure based on pain. Such kind of pleasure is characteristic of the aesthetic experience of the sublime.

To put it differently: the sublime involves a revelation of purposiveness through unpurposiveness. Schiller borrows this idea from Kant's theory of the sublime. At first, the experience of the sublime hurts us: it makes us grieve, or fear, or pity, or feel our own insignificance or incapacity. A human being, as Schiller writes, is not meant to suffer, and yet he suffers, and therein lays the unpurposiveness. However, if certain conditions are met, and Schiller discusses them at length in various works, this unpurposiveness can indicate that there is something else in the human being that is unaffected or even cannot be affected by any natural effect. In other words, the humiliation of our physical nature can reveal our spiritual essence and moral vocation; and this revelation is highly pleasurable to a person.

Like Kant, Schiller identifies two kinds of the sublime. The first – the theoretical sublime [*Theoretischerhabene*] (Schiller 20: 172)⁹² – is based on the limited possibility of sensual cognition and may be triggered when the imagination simply cannot cope with some immense magnitude or quantity, and such is, for example, the sublime of “unlimited distances and incalculable heights” (Schiller 21: 47, OtS 138, my translation). Chaos can also evoke the theoretical sublime because it defies typification and rejects the attempt to know it. According to Schiller, world history itself is the source of the theoretically sublime. We must believe in progress as a regulative ideal, but when we turn to history we see chaos, in which it is easier to find the triumphs of nature than the triumphs of freedom:

All well-meant attempts of philosophy to bring into agreement what the moral world demands with what the real world accomplishes are refuted by the state-

⁹² Kant calls this variation of the sublime the mathematical sublime; Schiller, in addition to the theoretical sublime, also uses the terms 'the sublime of quantity' [*Erhabene der Quantität*] (Schiller 21: 47, OtS 138) and the sublime of knowledge [*Erhabene der Erkenntniß*] (Schiller 20: 229, DR 262) in his writings. It is not clear whether these terms are synonymous or have different connotations. For the purposes of this chapter, however, the more subtle and detailed classification of the sublime in Schiller is not necessary.

ments of experience, and as obliging as nature in its organic realm is or seems to be in accordance with the regulative principles of judgment, as unruly it tears off the reins in the realm of freedom by which the spirit of speculation would like to lead it captive (Schiller 21: 49–50, OtS 140, my translation).

The theoretical sublime always begins with an awareness of un purposiveness of the perceived for the imagination. A person becomes aware of his limitations and suffers for it. However, in discovering his powerlessness as a sensual being, he may discover his strength as a rational and spiritual being. I shall quote Schiller's poetic retelling of Kant's thoughts on the sublime:

So I may lose myself in the dizzy idea of the omnipresent space, or of the eternal time, or I may feel my own nothingness in the idea of the absolute perfection – yet it is only I myself who give to the space its infinite width and to the time its eternal length, it is I myself who carry the idea of the all-holy in myself, because I set it up, and the Divinity which I imagine is my creation, as certainly as my thought is mine (Schiller 21: 203, my translation).

Infinite time, infinite space, and even the ideas of absolute perfection and Divinity – all of this cannot be found in the empirical world; all of it comes from the human being himself, from the transcendental forms of sensibility and ideas of reason. Even the very demand to grasp the great or to know the unknowable is a demand of reason. The revelation of the rational self is the revelation of a higher purposiveness in oneself, and it comes with intensive pleasure.

Even more significant to the moral life is the practical sublime [*Praktischerhabene*] (Schiller 20: 172), which is based on the fragility of man as a natural being that is never completely surmountable.⁹³ The practical sublime is evoked by the perception of something that threatens human existence. Schiller notes that sometimes there is very little difference between the theoretical and the practical sublime: thus an endless ocean in its calm state can, through its vastness, cause us to feel theoretically sublime, but if this ocean begins to rage, it will encroach not only on our conditions of knowledge, but on the very

⁹³ Kant uses the term 'dynamic sublime' to refer to a similar variety of the sublime. Schiller also speaks of the sublime of force [*Erhabene der Kraft*] (Schiller 20: 229, LB 262) and the touching [*Rührende*] (Schiller 20: 137, CP 365), which are similarly based on the idea of a person's vulnerability as a physical being. It is worth repeating that in this section I am not trying to understand the exact relationship of all these terms related to the sublime in Schiller. For an enlightening discussion of the relation between Kant's dynamic sublime and Schiller's practical sublime, see Paul de Man (1996: 138–9). De Man defends two theses: first, he thinks that Schiller, through the reformulation, introduces an opposition between the two kinds of sublime, the practical and the theoretical, whereas in Kant the mathematical and the dynamic sublime are not opposed; second, de Man seems to recognize the co-extensibility of the mathematical and theoretical sublime, but thinks that the practical sublime is markedly different in its content from the dynamic sublime, in particular, he believes that in Kant's dynamic sublime we cannot find the idea of physical danger in a strictly empirical sense.

conditions of existence, thereby producing the practical sublime (Schiller 20: 173).

Schiller distinguishes between two subspecies of the practical sublime. First, there is the contemplative sublime [*Kontemplativerhabene*], in which we conceive of an object as a force superior to us, and only through reflection on it do we create a corresponding representation of suffering (Schiller 20: 186–7). Danger in case of the contemplative sublime is something accidental and indefinite for us. That is, some other factor, an additional step (real or imagined), is needed for this representation to cause suffering. The representation of a raging ocean or a bottomless canyon can be contemplatively sublime, for example. It is only when we are at their mercy that they become truly scary.

Second, there is also the pathetic sublime [*Pathetischerhabene*], in which we immediately imagine the object not simply as a force, but as one that threatens us and is therefore this representation is immediately connected to our suffering (Schiller 20: 192). Here Schiller makes two very important reservations: the pathetic sublime is possible only if, first, it involves not personal suffering, but suffering out of sympathy [*sympathetische Leiden*] for someone else; second, the suffering that arouses our sympathy must not be real, but an illusion [*Illusion*] or a fiction [*Erdichtung*]. The reason he makes these reservations is that the initial suffering – that is, the awareness of one’s own unpurposiveness – must not be too intense, otherwise it would outweigh any possible aesthetic pleasure.⁹⁴

All kinds of the sublime are used in art, but it is not surprising that Schiller is particularly interested in the pathetic sublime, for it is the cornerstone of tragedy.⁹⁵ In addition to suffering itself, in the pathetic sublime there must be a representation of the overcoming of physical suffering, or at least a hint of such overcoming. In other words, it must be shown that there is something in human beings that is beyond the reach of physical suffering. Like Kant, Schiller believes that this something is free will, but, unlike Kant, Schiller is less likely to associate free will exclusively with the moral law. In particular, he says that even the portrayal of a villain who overcomes his petty inclinations and even his sense of self-preservation for the sake of committing a great yet evil act can give us an aesthetic experience of the sublime. But it is nevertheless wrong to think that Schiller perceives the will as absolutely neutral with respect to the moral law.⁹⁶ The portrayal of the overcoming of inclinations for the sake of committing an immoral act can only give us pleasure as long as we do not

⁹⁴ At least that is how it ought to be. Theoretically, we can imagine a situation, in which some man sympathizes with the grief of his real living friend and at the same time takes noticeably strong pleasure in knowing that this sympathy has as its source the moral law within him; but then it is hard to get away from the idea that there is something very wrong with this man.

⁹⁵ For an account of Schiller’s theory of tragedy, see Frederick Beiser (2005: 238–62).

⁹⁶ Schiller’s position is very difficult to identify precisely, as if he were trying to find a middle ground between Reinhold’s neutral concept of will and Kant’s concept of will as pure practical reason. For more on this see Chapter Three.

correlate the villain's end with the moral law. But this requires a certain reading disposition: in a sense, we have to close our eyes to the fact that "this Richard III, this Iago, this Lovelace are human beings, otherwise our sympathy for them infallibly turns into an opposite feeling" (Schiller 20: 145–6, CP 371, my translation).

In the early version presented in *Letters to Prince*, Schiller distinguished between positive and negative energetic effects of the sublime on the grounds of the object to which it is directed. If the effect of the sublime is directed toward the spiritual [*Geistigen*] part of mind, one gains energy to confront inclinations; if the effect is directed toward the sensual nature, the intensity of affects [*Affekte*] increases, thus making a person savage (Schiller 26: 305, LtP 139–40). That is, in *Letters to the Prince*, as in the case of the beautiful, the appropriateness of the effect of the sublime depends on the object on which it affects. It is appropriate when it affects the spiritual, and it is inappropriate when it affects the sensual. In the *Aesthetic Letters*, Schiller, on the contrary, holds that the energetic effect must affect both sides of a person, otherwise this person will find herself under the one-sided oppression of either concepts or sensations. This means that the correct (i.e., normative) performance of the energetic function is possible only if it is accompanied by the performance of the liquifying function:

[A] relaxing and a tensing effect is to be expected from beauty at the same time: a relaxing effect in order to keep both the sensual drive and the formal drive within their limits; a tensing effect in order to maintain both in their power. These two effects of beauty, however, are, according to the ideal, supposed to be only one (Schiller 20: 360–1, AL 58, my translation).

How is Schiller's revised understanding of the energetic function consistent with his distinctive conception of the aesthetic experience of the sublime as an experience which reveals the conflict between the natural and the spiritual in a person? This is a very difficult question, and Schiller does not so much explain how it is possible as he does explain it away. In the *Aesthetic Letters*, he introduces the ideal of beauty, which combines liquifying beauty and energetic beauty. In his late essay *On the Sublime*, he repeats the same point, using traditional terminology: "And this [the effect of the sublime] is quite a different from that which can be produced by the beautiful; I mean the beautiful in the real world, for the sublime itself loses itself in the ideal beauty" (Schiller 21: 43, OtS 134, my translation). In other words, Schiller does not claim that the beautiful and the sublime in the real world can form a harmonious whole in which all the conflicts inherent in the sublime disappear. Rather, he asserts that they are united and, thus, eliminated in the ideal of beauty to which one must aspire. As I said earlier, for Schiller it is this ideal of beauty that is the object of the play drive. The play drive is formed through harmony and reciprocity between the two basic psychological drives – the material and the formal. It means that the ideal of beauty would have engaged with all our humanity, i.e. it

would have occupied all our faculties, both those relating to reason and those relating to sensibility. So, by experiencing it, we were to come into perfect harmony with ourselves. Yet, as it was mentioned earlier, the ideal of beauty is just an ideal which is never fully realized in the phenomenal world; only its approximation is available in experience, so the harmony achieved is always somewhat imperfect.

Schiller attributes the fragmentation of the ideal of beauty to the fact that it is embodied in the limiting conditions of the phenomenal world. From this follows with necessity some perceived disharmony which evokes the aesthetic experience of the sublime; on the other hand, even in the phenomenal world there is room for a perceived harmony that opens up the possibility for the experience of the beautiful. But neither the former nor the latter encompasses the phenomenal world as a whole, and in order to take an aesthetic stance toward the phenomenal world that is somehow adequate to the holistic ideal of beauty, we need to unite these two. However, as Pugh (1997: 166–7) correctly points out, this unification turns out to be illusory, because the sublime still demands of pure practical reason prevail over our wish for the beautiful.

Pugh describes the paradoxical ideal of beauty as a synthesis of “unification and separation” (1997: 252), and Beiser – as wanting “to have dualism and monism at once” (2008: 74). Both of these formulations harmonize well with one of the meanings of perfection that we can find in the implicit form in Leibniz (identity in variety) and that was later developed in post-Kantian philosophy. Douglas Moggach describes this aspect of perfection as “the unity of unity and multiplicity” (Moggach 2022: 139). The very wording shows that this ideal cannot be achieved. Paradoxicality of the ideal of beauty also implies that our realization of freedom in the phenomenal world will always be incomplete. I do not think this is a fundamental problem for Schiller. As I mentioned many times, for Schiller beauty is an imperative, which he conceptualizes in two regulative ideals: the personal ideal of a beautiful soul and the political ideal of an aesthetic state. These ideals can be described in terms of perfection, but I agree with Eva Schürmann’s point that Schiller’s orientation towards ideals is more correctly to characterize as perfectibilistic [*perfektibilistisch*] rather than perfectionist [*perfektionistisch*]. “Schiller assumes that perfection qua ideality can never be achieved, but that we should always strive for it, that is, we should always assume the ability to perfect” (Schürmann 2020: 135, my translation).

At the end of this section, I would like to summarize in down-to earth terms exactly how the sublime should affect a person. When confronted with an object of art, we may experience some pressure, for example, we may feel that it overwhelms us by something incomprehensible or even evokes strong negative emotions in us. Such emotions are usually based on our sympathy for the attempts of fictional characters to confront the vicissitudes of fate, although Schiller does not rule out more complex cases either, such as resentment that the villain has gone unpunished. Negative emotions, however, if certain conditions are met, can push us toward an awareness of our strength as a

spiritual being. Of course, Schiller does not mean that we are literally making some logical argument that results in a conclusion about our spiritual vocation. No, it is only an outwardly rational description of an inner process in which the transition from initial pain to pleasure plays a significant role. In Schiller's late view, the experience of the sublime, involving the conflict between reason and sensibility, should energize them both, thus facilitating their active harmonious interaction. In addition to its direct effect, the sublime also contributes to the cultivation of resolve, which in turn transforms the energetic function of art into a more stable mediated function, which I, for the sake of distinction, call the spiritualizing function. As Schiller shows in *On the Sublime*, the cultivation of resolve is one of the tasks of aesthetic education.⁹⁷

In his later treatment of the liquifying and energetic functions, Schiller regards them as operating together. This is why we can speak of them as the two components that make up the harmonizing function of art. It is with this function that I associate the cultivation of the capacity for humanity, which makes it possible for a person to exercise freedom of choice. I will talk about this in the next section.

4. The emancipatory function (FA3)

In this section, I discuss what I consider to be the essential function of art in Schiller's project of aesthetic education. In a number of passages he does not simply speak of aesthetic education as something that can assist morality, but as something that makes freedom itself possible. For example, in the second *Aesthetic Letter* he says that "it is beauty by which one travels to freedom" (Schiller 20: 312, AL 6); in the tenth letter even more forcefully that as a result of transcendental analysis "[b]eauty should be shown to be a necessary condition of humanity" (Schiller 20: 340, AL 36); in the twenty-first letter that "beauty is <...> our second creator <...> [f]or it gave us nothing more than **the capacity for humanity** [*Vermögen zur Menschheit*], but leaves the use of this to our own determination of will" (Schiller 20: 378, AL 78, my emphasis); and finally, in the twenty-third letter, that

[t]he transition from the passive condition of sensation to the active one of thought and volition thus occurs no other way than through the middle condition of aesthetic freedom, and although this condition in itself decides nothing either for our insights or for our attitudes, and thus leaves our intellectual and moral value entirely problematic, it is nevertheless the necessary condition under which alone we can attain an insight and an attitude (Schiller 20: 383, AL 84).

I read these quotes as follows: the essential purpose of aesthetic education is to give people the capacity for humanity which makes it possible for us to get into the condition of aesthetic freedom. The condition of aesthetic freedom is

⁹⁷ I discuss resolve and the spiritualizing function in the sixth section.

another moniker for the condition of active determinability, i.e. it is a condition in which human beings are momentarily free from any determinations, whether of the reason or of sensibility. From a Kantian perspective, humanity involves the capacity to set oneself ends, that is, the capacity to choose freely and rationally. Schiller uses the term ‘the capacity for humanity’ to emphasize that in the choice a person has a fulfilled infinity [*erfüllte Unendlichkeit*] of possibilities for realizing his humanity. This is what distinguishes human beings from other known living beings: they do not merely pursue ends predetermined by nature, but are capable of setting their own ends and even of refusing to pursue ends given to them by nature.

In my reading of aesthetic education, I disagree with Paul Guyer, who regards Schiller’s aesthetic education as making an essentially cognitive contribution to moral development. According to Guyer’s interpretation, which is based on a footnote to the thirteenth *Aesthetic Letter* (Schiller 20: 349–51fn*, AL 47–8fn*), through aesthetic education we acquire a sensitivity to particularity which helps us “to recognize the circumstances, needs, and feelings of others and thereby to apply our principles to them appropriately” (Guyer 2014: 489–90). Drawing on this interpretation, Guyer has no trouble showing that aesthetic education cannot be a necessary condition for morality. His reasoning is very straightforward and persuasive. First, according to Guyer, it is implausible that sensitivity to particularity is an absolutely necessary condition of morality. Of course, one can agree that without sufficient attention to detail and context we are often incapable of doing moral acts; and that cultivating such attention can help us to be more successful in moral practice. Still, the thesis that a lack of attention to detail and context makes the application of our moral principles entirely impossible is rather difficult to defend.⁹⁸ Second, Guyer argues, it is unlikely that aesthetic education is the only way to cultivate sensitivity to particularity. He means that there are other ways to achieve the same or similar effect, such as talking to people, or visiting hospitals. It is not only art that teaches us to pay attention to detail.

Guyer’s arguments are based on a misreading of Schiller’s project of aesthetic education and its end. The footnote on which Guyer relies does not describe the main contribution of aesthetic education to morality, but an additional one (which I think is to be expected from a footnote). Indeed, in this very rich footnote Schiller talks about how lack of harmony affects our theoretical judgments. He argues that, being disharmoniously developed, we tend to lack empathy, make psychological projections, ignore experiential data, and generally engage in what might be called armchair science.⁹⁹ Guyer is right that through cultivating empathy, restraining our projections, and paying more attention to experiential data, we might become more successful in moral

⁹⁸ Honestly, this thesis does not seem completely hopeless to me. But I have no need to defend it, because I do not think it has any relevance to Schiller’s claim about the necessity of aesthetic education.

⁹⁹ The term is mine, not Schiller’s.

practice. Yet all of this is merely a supplement to Schiller's main theory, in which he tries to show that beauty is a condition of humanity. Explaining this theory is my task in this section.

To begin with, let me note that the purpose of aesthetic education is to attain not a temporary change in a person's condition under the influence of aesthetic experience, but a certain lasting effect on him, which is possible only through the formation of capacities or dispositions in him. And this formation can only be achieved through frequent and systematic exposure to aesthetic experiences. In the previous section I discussed two main authentic functions of art – the liquifying and the energetic. Each of them gradually develops a corresponding disposition. The liquifying function develops taste; the energetic function develops resolve [*Entschluß*]. In his description of taste Schiller points out two aspects: first, taste tames fierce desires, by demanding from us moderation and decency [*Mäßigung und Anstand*] (Schiller 21: 31, MU 122); second, it prescribes to us the striving for beauty, that is, it prescribes us to act so that in the world around us and within us there is as much perceived harmony as possible (Schiller 21: 3, LB 223). In describing resolve, Schiller stresses above all that it helps us to break free from the bonds of sensibility (Schiller 21: 45, OtS 136) in order to realize our moral autonomy [*moralische Selbstständigkeit*] (Schiller 21: 42, OtS 133).

The view that the capacity for humanity requires the full development of taste and resolve seems excessive and does not fit well with Schiller's reasoning that the development of taste and resolve is uneven: people become interested first in the beautiful and only then in the sublime. Furthermore, even though taste begins to develop earlier, we need to adopt right principles of cognition and morality before taste has fully matured:

But even though it [the beautiful] is our first love, and our sensitivity to it develops first, nature has ensured that it matures slowly, and awaits its complete development until the understanding and heart are formed. If taste attains its complete maturity before **truth** and **morality** are established in our hearts <...> the world of the senses would eternally remain the limit of our endeavors (Schiller 21: 46, OtS 137, translation modified, my emphasis).

So, according to Schiller, we are presumably able to adopt the right principles of cognition and morality before our taste is completely developed. And, as I have quoted Schiller before, the condition of aesthetic freedom is “the necessary condition under which alone we can attain an **insight** and an **attitude**” (Schiller 20: 383, AL 84, my emphasis). From these two claims follows that the condition of aesthetic freedom does not need fully developed taste. That is, fully developed taste is not a necessary condition for the capacity for humanity.

As for resolve, the matter is more complicated. Its relevance to moral freedom is obvious: without resolve one cannot resist inclinations and do what the moral law demands. But it is not clear what significance resolve has for setting ends that are not moral, but only legal. And Schiller clearly says that

beauty gives us “the capacity for humanity, but leaves the use of this to our own determination of will” (Schiller 20: 378, AL 78), in other words, Schiller regards the capacity for humanity as neutral, that is, it enables us to set moral, legal and even immoral ends. Another important point is that even if we assume that the main purpose of aesthetic education is to cultivate resolve and that resolve provides us with the capacity for humanity, we would have to defend the thesis that aesthetic education is the only way to cultivate resolve. And this is easily refuted by Schiller’s own statement that “nature alone presents a multitude of objects on which the sensitivity to the beautiful and sublime could exercise itself” (Schiller 21: 53, OtS 142, my translation). In other words, resolve can be cultivated through encounters with natural objects as well.

But if for every choice, for every act of self-determination, we must first enter the condition of active determinability, it follows – and this is rather implausible – that every choice we make must be preceded by an aesthetic experience. Yet I do not consider this to be Schiller’s viewpoint. Instead, he suggests that entering the condition of active determinability should become something habitual for us. This is what the formation of the healthy capacity for humanity is all about. And this is where aesthetic education comes in: regular aesthetic experience liberates a person not only at the very moment when he has this experience, but also makes him more apt to aesthetic freedom in general¹⁰⁰. In other words, the harmonizing function not only liberates the person momentarily, but cultivates in him the capacity for humanity.

Let me briefly summarize the discussion: first, fully developed taste and resolve are not necessary conditions for the capacity for humanity, which, however, does not mean that the capacity for humanity does not involve at least some (i.e., incomplete) development of taste and resolve. Secondly, the even development of taste and resolve is also not a necessary condition for the capacity for humanity, since Schiller makes it clear that at some point the sublime (and resolve) must take a more privileged position in the process of aesthetic education. From this I conclude that when Schiller says that beauty gives us the capacity for humanity, he means something other than the formation of taste and resolve. I think it is important to take Schiller’s words seriously and regard the capacity for humanity as a product not exclusively of the liquifying or the energetic function, but as something that requires both components of beauty.

¹⁰⁰ As I see it, Samantha Matherne and Nick Riggle make a somewhat similar point while using very different terminology. They argue that, according to Schiller, it is not enough to “occasionally engage with aesthetic value”, e.g., to visit museums from time to time; what we really need is to cultivate “an aesthetic sensibility, a style, which disposes us to seek and create beauty, in a way that reflects who we are”, and only then “our aesthetic freedom becomes an integral part of who we are, as we not only have the ability to make commitments and cultivate a sense of self, but also to distance ourselves from our commitments, remind ourselves that we have freely chosen them” (Matherne and Riggle 2021: 27).

As I said earlier, the liquifying and energetic functions form a kind of not-quite-perfect unity through the harmonizing function.¹⁰¹ Although it is never perfectly realized, it is approximated in the aesthetic experience, since we usually feel both effects when interacting with art. In Schiller's examples of the sublime, the reflective distance plays an enormous role: only by taking an aesthetic distance in relation to the character in the tragedy can we not drown in his grief but instead ascend to an awareness of our spiritual vocation. In examples of the beautiful, unless of course it is an arabesque pattern, we encounter, now and then, enormous magnitudes, mysteries, powerful emotions, which are characteristic of the aesthetic experience of the sublime. In general, art presupposes both an aesthetic distance, characteristic of the beautiful, and an intensive feeling, characteristic of the sublime. As I understand Schiller's position, it is this double experience that liberates a person, by bringing him into a condition of active determinability. Matherne and Riggle interpret this condition as a condition "of volitional openness with respect to the ways one has constituted or ruled oneself" (Matherne and Riggle 2020: 3): through aesthetic experience a person is temporarily freed from his "normal sense of self," or rather from his normal, i.e. typical dispositions in behavior, feeling, and thinking and is open to "any mode of feeling, sensing, imagining, acting, or thinking" (Matherne and Riggle 2020: 18–9). As far as I see, my reading is fairly close to theirs, but I do not believe that such openness includes absolutely all kinds of behavior, feeling, and thinking.¹⁰² Although Schiller emphasizes the infinite number of determinations available to us in the condition of active determinability, he holds that their content comes from two basic drives: formal drive is the source of principles for cognition and action; and the material drive – of all our individual inclinations. In other words, different people, in a condition of active determinability, must differ in the determinations available to them, since they differ in their sensible constitution, that is, the motivational content which comes from the material drive differs between them.

Schiller describes the aesthetic condition of active determinability as one in which the interaction between the material drive and the formal drive, is, on the one hand, extremely intense, on the other hand, completely harmonious and reciprocal, and as a result, they nullify [*aufheben*] each other's claims (Schiller 20: 375, AL 74) and form a third complex drive, the play drive. The nullification of the effect of the two basic drives does not mean that a person no longer has any awareness of desires related to these drives. Their entire content is preserved in the play drive, but it no longer has a coercive force for a person. She can contemplate this content by taking an aesthetic distance in relation to it, as she did in the aesthetic experience of the beautiful. However, the aesthetic distance does not mean that the person is completely indifferent and neutral.

¹⁰¹ I discuss it in the third section of the chapter.

¹⁰² I allow that Matherne and Riggle may not think so either. They write later about that the condition of active determinability does not involve a complete break with the normal self after all, and that personal desires remain important. So maybe it is just their wording that misled me.

The component derived from the energetic function, i.e. from the sublime, is the motivational commitment of the person to her own choice. Through reflection, she can evaluate her options and make a decision. Jörg Noller (2022: 243) describes this decision in terms of second-order volitions: the contents of the two basic drives are first-order desires, which in the condition of active determinability have lost their coercive force; through reflective evaluation can they become second-order volitions and determine our action. The person thus manifests herself as a being “which never simply desire or simply loathe, but have to will their loathing and desire in each instance” (Schiller 20: 292, GD 157). That is, she becomes aware that she is willing or unwilling to fulfill her desire. And because she has a commitment to her own choice, it has a practical effect: her choice moves her toward this or that action.

I shall try to summarize all this in less technical language. Schiller notes that the aesthetic experience is unique because it involves a harmonious interaction between the mental faculties, which Schiller describes psychologically as an interaction between two basic drives. Art, on the one hand, being fiction and illusion, accustoms us to the reflective distance, thereby freeing us from unnecessary pressure; on the other hand, despite this distance, art touches us, it remains emotionally meaningful to us. Such an experience, according to Schiller, nothing but art can provide it. Other kinds of experience will lack either sufficient distance, as in sympathizing with the grief of real people, or sufficient vividness of feeling, as in theoretical scientific or philosophical constructions. Aesthetic experience addresses our entire sensuo-rational nature, and therefore prepares us for freedom of choice. For choice, too, presupposes, on the one hand, the absence of automatism, which is achieved only by taking a distance from our first-order desires, and, on the other hand, a motivational commitment to the right reasons. As a result of reflective evaluation of first-order desires according and formation of second-order volitions, we must receive motivation. The capacity for humanity, that is, the ability to combine reflective distance with motivational commitment, allows a person to actively determine himself through choice. This constitutes the emancipatory function of art.

I conclude this section with a brief description of how this function addresses the problem of the fragmentation of humanity in the context of modernity. The emancipatory function is supposed to help both those who are under the oppression of sensations and those who are under the oppression of concepts. Schiller calls the former savages and believes that it is their lack of reflection that deprives them of freedom of choice. Savages, quite literally, are slaves of first-order desires. Of course, art through the aesthetic experience of beauty might teach them to take a reflective distance, but, according to Schiller, their problem is rather socio-political. The savages are usually representatives of the poorest and most uneducated classes; they are busy surviving, they have no time for art or sciences. So while art might help them, art is clearly insufficient.

With the second group of people, whom Schiller calls barbarians, things are more interesting. Very often they lack a motivational commitment to their

principles, and art, through the effect of the sublime, might help them. But beyond this, barbarians are also characterized, on the one hand, by an excessive zeal in the fulfillment of moral requirements, and on the other, by a tendency to rationalize utility and rational egoism as the main practical criteria. That is, among Schiller's barbarians we can find both moral ascetics and extreme epicureans, as they both are governed not by raw feelings, but by principles or – to be more precise – by what they take to be the second-order volitions. The problem is that these principles are not willed by their whole nature, but only by a part of it: the rational one in the case of moral ascetics; and the sensual one in the case of extreme utilitarians and rational egoists. Although through the harmonizing and emancipatory functions of art they are enabled to achieve wholeness, their particular problems are better facilitated by other functions of art, which have to do with taste and resolve. I will describe them in the next sections.

5. The functions of taste

In the third section, I mentioned that the aesthetic experience of the beautiful gradually cultivates a sensitivity to the beautiful, or in other words, taste. In this section, I discuss the three functions that taste carries out. It is worth saying right away that taste, according to Schiller, does not play any role in rendering some particular action morally good (Schiller 21: 28, MU 119). Schiller takes a strictly Kantian position in ethics: for an action to be moral, first, it must be in accord with duty, and second, it must be done because it is in accord with duty. Of course, taste can motivate us to act in accord with duty, but in this case our action fulfills only the first condition and not the second. From this, however, does not follow that taste is morally irrelevant. Taste contributes to morality, but its contribution concerns favoring or enabling a morally good behaviour, rather than constituting it. How can it favor morally good behavior? There are two ways to favor morality. First, we can intensify pure practical reason and will power; second, we can weaken the power of temptation so that even weak reason and will can cope with it. The first way is the way of cultivating resolve; the second is the way of cultivating taste.

To explain his point Schiller compares inner moral freedom with physical freedom of action. A person is physically free when he can act according to his will without external interference. In a certain sense, an entity that could have prevented him from acting according to his will, but abstains from doing so, is the reason [*Grund*] why he is physically free. The same is true of moral freedom: if there is something that could limit one's freedom of the mind [*Gemüthsfreiheit*], but does not do so, then it can be called the reason why one is morally free. While these are external reasons, so to say, they nullify neither freedom of action, nor morality, as the former "rests upon its direct origin in the will of the person" and the latter "rests merely on the direct determination of the will through the law of reason" (Schiller 21: 29, MU 120, my translation; see also Schiller 26: 323, LtP157). In the case of taste and virtue, the situation is

exactly the same: “one can say that taste provides assistance to virtue, even though virtue expressly implies that it requires no external assistance” (Schiller 21: 29, MU 120, my translation; see also Schiller 26: 323, LtP157). In other words, taste assists morality only by removing obstacles to morality. The entity that could interfere with virtue but does not do so is our sensibility. Overcoming the obstacles imposed by sensibility makes our moral freedom of will more apparent, but if there are no such obstacles, or if they are overcome by a factor other than our will (that is, by taste), then moral freedom is not lost, even if it becomes less apparent.¹⁰³

What does taste exactly do? It “demand moderation and decency”, which have a relaxing effect on the material drive. Moreover, it “abhors everything awkward, blunt and violent”, thereby restricting a person from committing violent and disrespectful acts. Due to the effects described above, taste allows us “in the storm of emotion” to “hear the voice of reason, and place a limit on the raw outbursts of nature”, thus providing for us “the ability to interrupt the passive condition of [our] soul with an act of autonomy [*Akt von Selbstthätigkeit*], halting through reflection the hasty transition of feelings into actions”. To sum up, taste creates “space for the will to turn towards virtue” (Schiller 21: 31–2, MU 122–3, my translation; see also Schiller 26: 325–6, LtP 159). Taste itself, however, is not a friend of morality and can even become its enemy. It, too, has dictates, and like all dictates of sensibility, they are based on pleasure. And where motivation is governed by pleasure, there is no morality and there is always the danger of committing an evil act. And the more developed taste is, the greater the risk; but I will return to this theme at the end of this section. For now I shall focus on the benefits of taste for morality.

5.1. The substitutive (FA4) and the ennobling (FA5) functions

Moderation of the raw outbursts of nature, as well as taste’s positive prescriptions which require actions that increase visible harmony and beauty in the world, are often conducive to morality. Also, they can sometimes substitute for morality, which is not necessarily a bad thing. And this leads us to the two functions of taste: substitutive and ennobling. To distinguish these functions, let us turn to the examples Schiller discusses in the *Letters to the Prince* and also in the essay *Über den moralischen Nutzen ästhetischer Sitten* (*The Moral Utility of Aesthetic Manners*, 1796, henceforth *Moral Utility*), based on these letters. I

¹⁰³ Schiller’s position and terminology are most certainly inspired by Reinhold. In the second volume of his *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie* (*Letters on the Kantian Philosophy*), Reinhold objects to the identification of freedom of will with autonomy, arguing that the consequence of this identification would be the unfortunate position that “the will is free only with respect to moral actions, and that the ground of immoral actions, apart from the will, is to be found in external obstacles and limits to freedom. But assuming the latter, the ground of moral action would not be found in the mere self-activity of practical reason, but also in the absence of those obstacles, which is entirely independent of this reason” (Reinhold 2008: 296, my translation).

shall predominantly refer to *Moral Utility*, since it is more recent and was published during Schiller's lifetime. Schiller begins by distinguishing between two types of moral acts. In the first type we first have some strong sensual incentive, to which pure practical reason must respond with sanction or prohibition. In the second type, reason itself motivates us to do something, and we act without seeking any support from sensibility.

As an example of the former, Schiller recounts a story told by the Greek principle Anna Comnena. Her father Alexius, then a general, escorted the captured rebel to Constantinople. At some point, on the way, Alexius decided to rest in the shade and fell asleep. The rebel, meanwhile, was awake and fought the temptation to grab Alexius' sword and kill him. But, in the end, the rebel did not kill the general. If we assume that it was respect for the moral law that prevented the prisoner from committing this act, then it is precisely a case in which pure practical reason judges and rejects the permissibility of an act initiated by sensibility.

As an example of the second type of moral action, Schiller tells the story of Duke Leopold of Brunswick. Standing on the banks of the river Oder, the Duke saw his comrades trapped in the water and fighting the elements. He wondered in his mind whether he should risk his life and cross the turbulent stream to rescue those who were going to die without his help. Eventually, the Duke got into the boat and rushed to help people in trouble, putting the duty above his sense of self-preservation. It was not sensibility that initiated his action; on the contrary, sensibility hindered his decision in every possible way (Schiller 21: 32–3, MU 124; see also Schiller 26: 327, LtP 161).

Both these actions are moral, but what changes if we assume that both characters in these examples have very developed taste? "Taste gives the mind a mood [*Stimmung*] suitable for virtue, because it removes the inclinations that hinder it and awakens those that are favorable to it" (Schiller 21: 34, MU 125, my translation). The rebel, had he been a man of high taste, would have been intolerant of anything violent, excessive, and dishonorable. The question of whether or not to grab the sword and kill his escort would have been resolved before the prohibition of pure practical reason against this act. The act (or rather the refusal to act) of this refined rebel is a beautiful effect of his nature [*schöne Wirkung der Natur*], which cannot be classified as moral, but only as legal. As for the Duke example, adding taste as an additional factor would have resulted in the fact that the decision the Duke made as a man of duty would have found in his feelings not resistance but, on the contrary, enthusiastic support. This support would most likely facilitate a quicker decision-making process.

The refined rebel's act is only aesthetic, because taste, in a sense, substituted morality. This case, therefore, exemplifies the substitutive function of taste. The refined Duke's act, however, is both aesthetic and moral, and it demonstrates the greater integrity and harmony of the Duke's character. The Duke without taste was only a morally free person, whereas the refined Duke was holistically free, as he acted as a beautiful soul. The refined Duke's case exemplifies the ennobling function of taste.

The substitutive function of taste may seem not very inspiring, but Schiller asks to keep in mind that despite the immutability of our rational moral principles, it would be sacrilegious to ignore the fact that their fulfillment, that is, genuinely virtuous behavior, is quite accidental. What he means is that very rarely are our actions determined by duty alone. And this emphasizes the importance of the substitutive function of taste: “the more accidental our morality, the more necessary it is to take precautions for legality, and a careless or proud omission of the latter can be morally imputed to us” (Schiller 21: 36, MU 127; see also Schiller 26: 330, LtP 164). Schiller compares the substitutive function of taste with the same function of religion and notes some differences. Religion encourages legal behavior with promises of punishment and reward. Religion is more likely to help someone who is insensitive to beauty, that is, someone who lacks taste. However, there are situations – Schiller clearly alludes to the French Revolution here – in which even the most refined person descends to the level of instinct, that is, situations in which the very physical existence of a person is in genuine danger. If the stakes are so high, no amount of taste can motivate him to do the right thing. Of course, if he is already highly moral, by the power of pure practical reason he will be able to keep himself from transgressing duty. But such moral people are very few. As for the rest, whether highly cultured or not, only religion can keep them from trespassing moral law. “Religion is for the sensuous man what taste is to the refined man; taste is for everyday life what religion is for the extreme” (Schiller 26: 332, LtP 166).

Regarding the ennobling function, Schiller notes that the moral and physical worlds are highly intertwined, so that it is not uncommon for moral action to be pleasurable for a refined person. It is important to remember that virtue must be at the beginning, not the taste.¹⁰⁴ Schiller does not limit the ennobling function of art to moral actions. On the contrary, he argues that any action can be ennobled, thereby bringing freedom even to areas that are neutral in terms of pure practical reason:

This spiritually and aesthetically free treatment of common reality is, wherever it is found, the hallmark of a noble soul. <...> Noble is the name given to any form that imprints the mark of independence on that which, by its nature, merely serves (is merely a means). A noble spirit is not content to be free itself; it must set everything else around it, even the inanimate, free (Schiller 20: 386fn*, AL 87fn*).

It is from the ennobling function of taste that Schiller’s most ambitious ideas emerge as corollaries, in particular the idea of the aesthetic state in which absolutely all natural objects are to be treated as ends in themselves and “free citizens[s] who ha[ve] equal rights with the noblest, and may not even be forced for the sake of the whole, but must absolutely consent to everything” (Schiller 26: 212, LtP 170).

¹⁰⁴ I discuss virtue and the beautiful soul in detail in Chapter Two.

5.2. The unifying function (FA6)

Another function of taste which Schiller mentions in his philosophical writings is the unifying function. He notes that necessity can develop man's dual nature, but only beauty can unite this nature (Schiller 26: 337, LtP 167); in a similar manner necessity brings people together into society and reason give them social principles, but only taste can create a genuinely social character, that is genuine sociability (Schiller 20: 410–1, AL 111). These two unifications are related: the communicability of feelings and ideas is necessary for the wholeness of the individual as well as of society. Anything that interferes with communicability is banished by taste. Taste requires everyone to take their part in what others think and feel.

In the *Stage as a Moral Institution*, Schiller also admits that taste may have its own national character. In other words, taste does not simply unite people into communities, but unites them into nations with their own unique characteristics. This process involves the creation of a national spirit [*Geist der Nation*] by which Schiller understands similarity and agreement in views and inclinations toward objects that excite different thoughts and feelings in another nation (Schiller 20: 99, SMI 338). One of Schiller's arguments in favor of establishing a national theater is precisely that theater will contribute to the formation of the nation. One can, of course, suppose that this nation-building aspect of the unifying function is incompatible with Schiller's later Kantian universalist project, but I do not see sufficient textual or conceptual grounds for this supposition. Schiller's project is an attempt to reconcile the universal and the unique without sacrificing the latter more than absolutely necessary. For this reason (and also because Schiller himself acknowledges variations in taste depending on era, culture, and age) I find that Schiller's concept of national taste is perfectly consistent, provided of course there is a sufficiently strong universal core within it. This also fits well with the late Schiller's conviction that there are different but equally valid approaches to art-making – naïve and sentimental. If there are different but permissible ways of creating art, it is reasonable to assume that there may be different but permissible standards for assessing it. After all, taste and holistic freedom allow for more diversity than Kantian moral autonomy.

5.3. The natural dialectic of taste

Previously I discussed how taste can contribute to morality. I want to end this section by discussing the danger that developed taste can pose to morality. Schiller is sometimes characterized in the literature as an optimist about human nature compared to the more pessimistic Kant. Baxley (2010) offers one of the most convincing and interesting expositions and defenses of this position. To put it simply, the gist of this view is that Schiller is not very concerned about humans' propensity to radical evil and, therefore, tends to put undue trust in the sensibility's capacity for ennoblement. Schiller, according to this view, believes

that human nature can be ennobled, if not to the divine level, then very close to it, making the inclinations to transgress moral duty quite insignificant for a person. I have already presented my objections to this view in Chapter Two, but in this section I want to add one more reason to doubt it.

This reason is very simple – after the *Aesthetic Letters* Schiller wrote the essay *Ueber die nothwendigen Grenzen beim Gebrauch schöner Formen* (*On the Necessary Limitations in the Use of Beauty of Form*, 1795, henceforth *Limitations of Beauty*), in which he himself openly criticizes the undue optimism about the ennobling function of taste. It should be noted that the three essays written after the *Aesthetic Letters* – *Limitations of Beauty*, *Moral Utility*, and *On the Sublime* – form a single critical addendum to the *Aesthetic Letters*. In *Limitations of Beauty* Schiller offers a critical view of taste, thus making an objection against his own project of aesthetic education, in *Moral Utility* he responds to this objection by defending the substitutive and the ennobling functions of taste (which I discussed earlier), and finally, in *On the Sublime* he presents the second part of his response to the objection by showing how resolve can counter the attempts of taste to exceed its justified limits.

Schiller's critique of taste in *Limitations of Beauty* breaks down into two parts: he criticizes taste in theoretical matters and in practical matters. I will not detail here the illegitimacy of taste in theoretical matters, but very roughly the point is that the excessive pursuit of popularity, as well as the other requirements of taste, can interfere with the achievement of truth. Much more relevant to this chapter is the second line of criticism. Schiller notes that morality presupposes a complete independence of the will from sensual inclinations, that is, pure practical reason; whereas taste, by contrast, seeks to bring inclinations and reason into harmony (Schiller 21: 21–2, LB 241). And herein lurks a potential danger: the aesthetically developed person becomes so accustomed to having her sensibility in harmony with reason and not allowing herself pleasures that reason does not sanction, that she might begin to expect the same from reason. That is, she might come to expect that the legislation of reason must correlate with the interests of sensibility, and that every imperative, even the categorical one, must obtain the consent of our sensual part. According to Schiller, the proper harmony between reason and sensibility does not imply equality between them;¹⁰⁵ on the contrary, such equality is dangerous because it transforms unconditional morality into morality by contract:

The moral obligation of the will, which is valid without any condition, is regarded as a contract that binds one party only as long as the other fulfills it. The accidental coincidence of duty with inclination is finally established as a necessary condition, and thus morality is poisoned in its sources (Schiller 21: 22, LB 241–2, my translation).

¹⁰⁵ I defend this thesis in Chapter Two.

Schiller discusses at some length how the transformation of unconditional morality into morality by contract becomes possible. The most important condition here is the development of taste; only a person with taste can find beauty in moral actions. But the more often moral and aesthetic judgments coincide, the greater the risk that the person will imperceptibly reconsider the correct hierarchy between them. I use the term 'morality by contract,' but let it not deceive you, for Schiller as a Kantian morality by contract is not morality at all. In fact, in this objection to aesthetic education Schiller shows how sensibility may have a secret influence on our judgments, which is a paradigmatic illustration of the human propensity to radical evil.

Interestingly enough, there is a structural similarity to Kant's discussion of the natural dialectic of reason, "that is, a propensity to rationalize against those strict laws of duty and to cast doubt upon their validity, or at least upon their purity and strictness, and, where possible, to make them better suited to our wishes and inclinations" (Kant 4:405, GMM 17). Kant notes that the natural dialectic of reason grows with our knowledge and cognitive capacities, i.e. a better educated and smarter person is more likely to be able to rationalize for himself a digression from the moral law. The same with Schiller's argument: the more developed one's taste is, the more likely one will try to find aesthetic loopholes for not complying with the moral law:

Given the irreproachability with which taste administered its supervision over the will, it [taste] could not fail to be accorded a certain **respect** for its pronouncements, and it is precisely this respect that inclination now asserts with captious **dialectics** against the duty of conscience (Schiller 21: 23–4, LB 243, my emphasis and translation).

Schiller's discussion is not abstract; he gives examples of how the dialectic of taste can deflect us from duty. As a rule, taste favors imperfect duties, and it can easily give them a higher priority than the perfect ones. What if my beloved object [*geliebte Gegenstand*] suffers, but I can alleviate her suffering at the cost of some moral concessions? It seems like a pretty straightforward case for a Kantian: I am not allowed to make such concessions. But then taste says to me: are you really so selfish as to put the purity of your conscience above the suffering of someone dear to you? A sacrifice for the sake of love is often beautiful, but in this case it is also obviously against the moral law. However, a refined person in the grip of an exalted imagination can make this sacrifice and be absolutely sure that he has just "won a glorious victory over [his] self-love while in fact, on the contrary, [he is] its despicable victim" (Schiller 21: 25, LB 244–5, my translation).

Schiller is unsparing in his criticism of taste and cites a number of evils that can follow from the favoring of imperfect duties over perfect ones. I take the liberty of quoting a large passage in which he describes with special passion the possible consequences of an uncontrolled submission of the will to the demands of taste:

How many people allow themselves to be unjust, that they may be generous! How many fail in their duties to society that they may do good to an individual, and vice versa! How many people forgive a lie sooner than an indelicacy, a crime against humanity [*Verletzung der Menschlichkeit*] rather than an insult to honour! How many debase their bodies to hasten the perfection of their minds, and degrade their character to adorn their understanding! How many do not scruple to commit a crime when they have a laudable end in view, pursue an ideal of political happiness through all the terrors of anarchy, tread under foot existing laws to make way for better ones, and do not scruple to devote the present generation to misery to secure at this cost the happiness of future generations! (Schiller 21: 25–6, LB 245, my translation).

What is interesting is that this description of slaves of taste seems to correspond to people who formalize the corruption that already exists in their nature into a firm system of principles. And such people are one of the varieties of barbarians in Schiller's terminology. This may seem like a change from Schiller's original plan, for he regards barbarians as people who are dominated by principles above all else. And in the case of taste, it is rather domination by senses. Moreover, Schiller thinks that aesthetic education should help barbarians, and here it turns out that it leads people to barbarism. I believe that Schiller is still consistent here. First, he speaks of a developed taste, that is, no longer just a feeling, but a system of aesthetic principles. Second, he says that the barbarian is often "the slave of his slave" (Schiller 20: 318, AL 12). In other words, the barbarian is unknowingly a slave of his sensibility, which fully corresponds to the mechanism of the dialectic of taste. Third, aesthetic education is not limited to the cultivation of taste, and this is what Schiller wants to emphasize in his another late essay *On the Sublime*. He believes that in addition to cultivating taste, aesthetic education should also ensure that taste remains within its justifiable boundaries and does not attempt to influence anything that is strictly beyond them. I describe exactly how he thinks this can be achieved in the last section of the chapter.

6. The spiritualizing function of resolve (FA6)

I conclude this chapter by briefly discussing Schiller's final response to his own objection to the project of aesthetic education. Let me recap the objection: aesthetic education cultivates taste; and highly developed taste interacts so closely with the moral law that it can imperceptibly replace it, thereby plunging a person into the abyss of the most immoral deeds. Schiller's response to this objection can be summarized as follows: aesthetic education cultivates not only taste, but also resolve; resolve prevents a person from forgetting his spiritual vocation and substituting the demands of morality for the demands of taste.

Resolve is cultivated through the energetic function of art, that is, through an aesthetic experience of the sublime. Whereas the beautiful aspires to harmony and reconciles in us the demands of morality and the justified demands of

sensibility; the sublime, on the contrary, shows the absolute discord between the demands of morality and the unjustified demands of sensibility. The same is true of the dispositions cultivated by these aesthetic experiences: taste, through the ennobling of nature within us (i.e., sensibility) and nature outside us (i.e., the natural world), tries to make a person whole by reconciling her spiritual and sensual selves in the concept of grace or moral beauty; resolve demands that in any unsolvable conflict between morality and beauty, beauty must be sacrificed, not morality.

In *On the Sublime*, Schiller speaks of taste and resolve using the metaphor of two genii. Taste is a sociable and charming genie who makes the fetters of necessity easy for us; it guides us through life until we invade the boundaries of the pure spirit, that is, the realms of truth and duty. In these areas, taste must leave us, giving way to resolve, the second genie, serious and silent, for only he can guide us through the abyss that lies beyond the sensual world (Schiller 21: 41, OtS 132). What is the task of the second genie? To prevent us from losing sight of our dual nature and the fact that the spiritual in us is incomparably more significant than the sensual in us.

It is the pain associated with the aesthetic experience of the sublime that makes us aware of our dual nature. The sublime always involves the humiliation of our sensibility, and it is only through this humiliation that we recognize ourselves as intelligible beings. “The more often the spirit repeats this act of self-activity [that is, the experience of the sublime], the more it becomes a skill [*Fertigkeit*] for it” (Schiller 21: 51, OtS 141, my translation). There Schiller talks about cultivating resolve. Whereas the sublime has only a temporary effect on a person, resolve, which the sublime helps to cultivate, makes the person permanently aware that he has “the pure demon [*der reine Dämon*] within” (Schiller 21: 52, OtS 141), who does not depend on any natural conditions. I call this the spiritualizing function of resolve, but in essence it is still the same energetic function of art, merely taken to a higher degree.

How, exactly, is resolve supposed to help a person? Resolve is directed against the natural dialectic of both reason and taste. As we can see, such dialectics are always based on the desire to favor one’s own sensibility, and resolve makes obvious the unworthiness of such a desire whenever it is incompatible with the moral law. Resolve allows us to test our principles impartially and to purify them from the secret influence of sensibility. Even though resolve is of no use to the moral ascetic, it can liberate the barbarian of another type who has become “the slave of his slave”. For example, non-participation in political life may well have support in arguments of prudence (politics is dangerous) as well as arguments of taste (politics is a dirty game). If participation in political life is morally required, however, resolve neutralizes both types of arguments as possibly correct but insufficient in weight, because nothing is more important than the unconditional demands of moral law.

How does one cultivate resolve? First, Schiller says we must stop avoiding the world and turning a blind eye to its dangers. But, as he notes, “the true misfortune does not always choose the person or the time well; it often catches

us unarmed and, worse still, renders us unarmed” (Schiller 21: 51, OtS 141, my translation). In other words, there is a great risk that a person will simply die or be crippled, having learned not so much resolve as even greater caution. Luckily, there is a second option which is to turn to art and, in particular, to the pathetic sublime. Through art, we can experience many dangers, face an indifferent fate, see wars and betrayals. In this case, our imagination interacts with material that the skillful author has deliberately selected and formed in such a way as to maximize our chances of having an aesthetic experience of the sublime, and thus to increase our sensitivity to such an experience and the objects that tend to provoke it. As a result, it becomes easier for us to keep reminding ourselves of our moral vocation at the point of need and not let our taste lead us away from it.

Thus Schiller rehabilitates aesthetic education, finding in it a means of containing taste within its permissible limits. His own objection to taste was based on a fragmented understanding of aesthetic education that did not take into account the significance of the sublime and the cultivation of resolve.¹⁰⁶ In his discussion of the sublime, Schiller turns to Kantian dualism and emphasizes that his project seeks not monism, but the unity of two opposing elements of the self, two *genii*. But by placing this emphasis, Schiller seems to go beyond the compatibilist picture. The pure demon [*der reine Dämon*] within a person, which awakens her to self-activity, is described by Schiller in explicitly supernatural indeterministic terms. Noller notes that if we read Schiller’s theory of will in compatibilist terms, as describing the integration and coordination of the inner structure of the will through the pursuit of harmony between first-order desires and second-order volitions, we risk ending up with “a separation of freedom from normative questions” (Noller 2020: 350). This may have been the very motivation of Schiller when he turned to the aesthetic experience of the sublime as a means of evoking the spiritual essence and moral vocation of human beings. If we consider Schiller’s philosophy as a whole, we must admit that his theory of will can best be described by the same expression with which Allen Wood described Kant’s theory of will: Schiller seeks “the compatibility of compatibilism and incompatibilism” (Wood 1984: 74). This is not to say that Schiller’s theory cannot be read completely in compatibilist terms. I merely note in this dissertation, that his theory of the sublime and its role in aesthetic education and moral motivation still refer us to a supersensible and indeterministic understanding of freedom. But further development of this topic would require a separate study.

That said, I find it quite significant that in his last philosophical essay concerning aesthetic education Schiller takes an explicitly Kantian position: taste should never be above morality; a person will never be capable of complete harmony; where harmony is not attainable, happiness, not moral law, should be

¹⁰⁶ Needless to say, I do not think that Schiller did not realize that he was considering only part of the aesthetic education in *Limitations of Beauty*. I believe that he deliberately isolated taste in order to construct the most obvious, yet very convincing, objection.

sacrificed. And just like Kant, though in more explicit terms, Schiller even in this sacrifice finds something not only morally but also aesthetically significant, which to some extent compensates sensibility for its suffering.

Conclusion

The focus of this chapter was a comprehensive analysis of the contribution that, in Schiller's view, aesthetic experience makes to the realization of human freedom and morality. I dissected the various functions that Schiller associates with art and aesthetic education. The basis of my classification of functions was the division into direct and mediated functions. Direct functions comprise the normative effects that a person undergoes directly at the moment of the aesthetic experience. In particular, among the direct functions of art, I discussed the didactic function, in which art informs us what is bad and what is good, and the harmonizing function, in which art brings the mental faculties of a person back into the harmonious condition of reciprocal interaction. Schiller rejects the didactic function of art in his later works because he believes that didactics imposes "a specific tendency to the mind" (Schiller 20: 382, AL 82) and this is not compatible with his concept of beauty, which implies the momentary liberation of the human mind from the grip of any specific tendency.

The harmonizing function, in turn, breaks down into two sub-functions – the liquifying and the energetic. According to Schiller, only the ideal of beauty perfectly fulfills the harmonizing function; the beauty of real aesthetic objects is always, to one degree or another, incomplete, and constitutes either the liquifying or the energetic variety of beauty. In this chapter, I discussed functions, not variations of beauty, but when I referred to the liquifying function, I meant the effect that is more characteristic of the liquifying beauty, and, correspondingly, when I referred to the energetic function, I meant the effect that is more characteristic of the energetic beauty. In an early version, presented in the *Letters to Prince*, Schiller considered the two functions of beauty in isolation and argued that the liquifying function should affect only the senses but never the spirit; and the energetic function should affect the spirit but never the senses. This understanding of the two kinds of beauty implied the ideal according to which man should tame the senses and strengthen his spirit. In the *Aesthetic Letters*, Schiller revised this ideal and stopped considering these two functions of beauty separately. Both the liquifying and the energetic functions were now to be directed toward both the sensual and the spiritual parts of man. But, as I showed, this is only possible if these functions are fulfilled simultaneously. The new ideal entails that man's spirit and his senses are to be brought into tension and reciprocal interaction, thereby bringing man into harmony and enabling him to make free choices.

The harmonizing, liquidating, and energetic functions also contribute to the formation of predispositions and capacities which I named mediators. While direct functions comprise the normative effects that a person undergoes directly

at the moment of the aesthetic experience, mediated functions are fulfilled through mediators. The harmonizing function fosters a capacity for humanity, that is, a sustained capacity to combine reflective distance with motivational commitment to the right reasons. In other words, by frequently undergoing the harmonizing function of art, a person accustoms himself to reflect on his actions and to be motivated by those reasons which, as a result of such reflection, he recognizes as right. Through the capacity for humanity, art fulfills the emancipatory function, enabling a person to actively determine himself through acts of free choice.

The liquifying function forms the taste, through which three mediating functions are fulfilled, the substituting, the ennobling, and the unifying. Taste can be a substitute for morality, keeping people from committing immoral acts or even encouraging them to commit acts that from the outside appear to be moral. Also, taste contributes to the ennobling of man, thereby harmonizing his sensibility with the requirements of the moral law. In addition, taste unites people into national communities, thereby contributing to the formation of a nation. But Schiller warns that taste has a dark side. Developed taste can easily begin to intrude into domains that are not in its jurisdiction. This, in turn, can lead to the degeneration of unconditional morality into morality by contract, in which compliance with the requirements of taste becomes a condition for moral action. To prevent taste from transgressing the boundaries of its domain it is necessary to cultivate resolve. Within aesthetic education, resolve is cultivated through the energetic function of art. Having formed resolve, man is less tempted to lose sight of his moral vocation and to forget that he is not only a sensual being, but to a much greater extent a spiritual being capable of disregarding all the claims and hardships of the physical world, if that is what the moral law demands. Through resolve, the spiritualizing function of art is fulfilled.

Thus aesthetic education, according to Schiller, implies the formation and cultivation of the capacity for humanity, taste, and resolve. A well-developed capacity for humanity, a taste and resolve will enable us to lead free, moral, noble, and harmonious lives. Despite the emphasis on harmony, Schiller remains a Kantian and recognizes that in a situation where perfect harmony is impossible, the demands of morality have unconditional priority over all other demands. Aesthetic education is Schiller's answer to the challenge of modernity that threatens individual self-determination. As I show in Chapter Four, he frames this challenge as a political problem of state transformation: people incapable of individual self-determination are incapable of being citizens of a free state, which means that any substantial attempt to transform the state toward greater freedom will end in failure if people are not first prepared for freedom. In proposing aesthetic education as an answer to this challenge, Schiller argues that a transformation of the state toward greater freedom is possible after all.

CHAPTER 6. SCHILLER'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Schiller's political views as well as the political implications of his artistic and philosophical texts continue to raise many questions. The considerable difference in interpretations is due to several factors. First, Schiller's philosophical texts are very complex and rich, his artistic works are multi-layered, and the private statements that we can find in his correspondence or public lectures are much more subtle than they might seem at first sight. Second, despite his reputation as a political thinker, Schiller speaks rather little about the specific details of his political projects. We may see him approving certain decisions of Solon, criticizing the severity of Sparta, or quoting Montesquieu almost verbatim through his character Marquis de Posa, but we cannot find anything in him in which we can discern even a crude outline of a possible constitution, formal state apparatus, or specific institutions. In other words, Schiller discusses political matters on an extremely abstract level, and although he sometimes gives specific examples of what is respectable and desirable in politics and what is not, it is difficult to understand exactly what his political philosophy translates into on a more concrete level.

In this chapter, I reconstruct Schiller's political philosophy and attempt to contribute to several debates concerning this topic at once. In general, I adhere to a republican reading of Schiller, but my approach differs markedly from other authors who defend republican interpretations. A unique feature of my reading is my particular attention to Schiller's ternary division into the dynamic state [*dynamische Staat*], the ethical state [*ethische Staat*], and the aesthetic state [*ästhetische Staat*] and my analysis of the necessary conditions for each. The structure of the chapter is very simple: first I briefly review the current debates concerning Schiller's political philosophy, then I examine one by one the three types of state distinguished by Schiller.

1. An overview of debates on Schiller's political philosophy

Before moving on to my interpretation, I want to outline very briefly several debates that my interpretation touches on in one way or another. To begin with, there is the question about the very politicality of Schiller's philosophy in general. Almost no one thinks that Schiller's philosophy is completely devoid of a political element, but there is a long tradition of viewing Schiller as a quietist, that is, as someone who does not so much offer political ways to solve political problems as aesthetic ways to get along with those political problems. This reading is more characteristic of Marxists and has its origins in the diagnosis that Engels made of Schiller's project of aesthetic education as an apolitical utopianism that masks the "prosaic wretchedness" of material

conditions in Germany by abstract intellectual speculations.¹⁰⁷ Even Terry Eagleton, who proposes a generally more charitable interpretation of Schiller, notes in a similar vein that “the aesthetic would seem less to transfigure material life than to cast a decorous veil over its chronic unregeneracy” (Eagleton 1990: 117). We can find a similar reading in non-Marxists as well. For example, among contemporary Schiller scholars, the quietist interpretation of Schiller is particularly well defended by David Pugh (1997, 2005, 2008).¹⁰⁸ He stresses that Schiller’s very understanding of the aesthetic does not imply action or change, but a particular contemplative stance, one that is directed toward aesthetic semblances rather than toward real empirical objects or abstract laws, in other words, the aesthetic is not concerned with what objects actually are or are to be, whether as noumena or phenomena, but with how they are perceived and are to be perceived. In this chapter, when I argue against the quietist interpretation, I am mostly meaning Pugh’s position, as I find it most developed and convincing.

Having said that, I want to note that the quietist interpretation of Schiller is rather marginal nowadays, and most contemporary authors believe that some of Schiller’s suggestions are of a political nature and call for political change. But another question immediately arises: what policies do Schiller’s suggestions reflect? Should we consider Schiller a conservative or a progressivist? The former position is mostly shared by those who consider Schiller as a quietist, but this is not necessarily the case: aforementioned Pugh, for example, makes it clear that he does not regard Schiller as a supporter of the status quo and argues that “Schiller evaluates institutions on the basis of reason, not of piety, tradition, or deference, and there is no question but that this mentality is a product of the Enlightenment” (Pugh 1997: 411–2). In other words, Schiller may well be in favor of progress, but he may also be skeptical about its attainability, thus being a kind of moderate progressive quietist.

While a significant number of authors agree that in Schiller’s public statements, fiction, and political philosophy, the importance of progress is emphasized, another debate overlaps with the previous one to a considerable degree: namely, the debate about whether Schiller is an elitist or an egalitarian. Elitist interpretations are offered, e.g., by Pugh (1997, 2005, 2008), György Lukács (1954), and Terence Holmes (1980); they hold that Schiller’s project of aesthetic education is directed mainly (or even exclusively) toward the representatives of higher classes. According to egalitarian interpretations defended, e.g., by David Kaiser (1995), Frederick Beiser (1992, 2005), Douglas Moggach (2007, 2008), and Alexander Schmidt (2009), Schiller wants to use aesthetics and aesthetic education to unite people, to blur the social divisions between them, to reduce inequality. Philip Kain’s (1980) view is quite curious; he

¹⁰⁷ I am indebted to Moggach (2007: 521) for drawing my attention to Engels’ assessment of Schiller.

¹⁰⁸ Another proponent of the quietist reading is Marta Woodmansee (1994). See Kaiser 1999: 40–9 for an analysis and criticism of Woodmansee’s reading.

believes that Schiller's project is indeed egalitarian in its pretensions, but precisely because it focuses on the people, that is, the citizens, rather than the state itself, it is conceptually doomed only to reinforce and sustain inequality. In this chapter, I intend to show, contra Kain, that Schiller's focus on citizens in no way contradicts his egalitarian pretensions.

The next debate concerns Schiller's liberalism. By liberalism here I mean a political ideology according to which the intervention of the state in economic and social processes should be severely limited to secure the individual freedom of citizens.¹⁰⁹ Schiller has been called an explicit liberal by Friedrich Hayek (1966, 1978), Kaiser (1999), Holmes (1980), and Beiser in his early work (1992). Other authors, e.g., Rüdiger Safranski (2004), Jeffrey Church (2014), Beiser (2005), Moggach (2008), Schmidt (2009), Samantha Matherne and Nick Riggle (2020, and 2021), while largely agreeing that there are significant elements of liberalism in Schiller's political views, note that in general his liberalism is significantly limited by his commitment to the republican tradition.¹¹⁰

The question of Schiller's republicanism is one of the most popular topics among contemporary scholars, yet the very notion of republicanism is usually defined in very general terms. Beiser sees the essence of republicanism as the idea that virtue is a condition of civil liberties: a man devoid of virtue pursues only his private interest and has no concern for the common good (Beiser 2005: 124–5). To a large extent Beiser contrasts republicanism thus defined with liberalism as a doctrine in which private interest, uninhibited by the state, is itself capable of producing political order (Beiser 2008: 65). Focusing on the clear demarcation of republicanism from liberalism, Beiser finds himself engaged only tangentially in the debate about the nature of Schiller's republicanism. This debate deals with three aspects of republicanism: first, like Beiser, other debaters seem to agree that an important feature of republicanism is the active participation of citizens in the life of the country and the pursuit of the common good; I will call this **engagement**; second, again like Beiser, they also agree that engagement cannot be assumed in and of itself, there must be something that ensures this engagement; I will call this an **engagement condition**; and, third, rather than discussing classical republicanism, they discuss republicanism in the context of modernity, i.e. in the context of a commercial society, and they are interested in whether the engagement condition is compatible with a commercial society; I will call this the **compatibility problem**.

The first question in the debate on republicanism concerns Schiller's awareness of the compatibility problem. What is the compatibility problem? Very briefly, it is the problem of the compatibility of virtue and a society built on

¹⁰⁹ Pugh aptly warns that we should not anachronistically assume that Schiller himself uses the word 'liberal' in this way in his writings. Instead, Schiller uses this word in a pre-political sense, as a kind of synonym for such words as 'generous', 'unprejudiced', and 'benevolent'. See Pugh 1997: 273 and esp. 273–4fn81.

¹¹⁰ It is also worth mentioning the positions of Josef Chytrý (1989) who believes that Schiller's liberalism is qualified by his humanist commitments, but does not tie him explicitly to the republican tradition.

egoism and the pursuit of private interest. In debates about republicanism, the engagement condition has many different varieties. Sometimes it is thought of as a purely institutional condition, that is, political liberty secured by the constitution. But quite often, the engagement condition includes certain requirements for the citizens of the republic and, as a rule, involves virtue, which is sometimes additionally described in terms of patriotism, that is, as love for one's country (Beiser 2005: 163–4, Schmidt 2009: 291–2). How compatible is such patriotic virtue with a society that not only does not condemn the pursuit of private interest but is literally based on it? The answer to this question roughly divides republicanism into classical and modern. Classical republicanism condemns luxury, excessive wealth, and inequality as causes of the moral decay of citizens, leading to the preference of private interests over the common good. Representatives of the Scottish Enlightenment, especially Adam Ferguson, offer a more optimistic answer: yes, virtue can exist in a commercial society.

Ferguson is particularly important for two reasons: first, he does not believe that egoism and private interest are sufficient as the engagement condition, he believes that virtue is needed; second, Ferguson was one of those authors whom Schiller read and knew well, that is, we are justified in assuming that Schiller was influenced by the Scottish discussion of the compatibility of virtue and commercial society.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, without denying that Schiller had read Ferguson, Fania Oz-Salzberger (1995, 2005) argues that all the subtleties of the Scottish discussion of the role of virtue in commercial society were unnoticed by Schiller, in other words, she claims that he was not fully aware of the compatibility problem. There is one trivial sense in which her thesis is right: Schiller almost never talks about the specific role of trade or economics in political change. However, Oz-Salzberger's position is convincingly challenged by Schmidt (2009) and Moggach (2007, 2008) on the grounds that although Schiller does not directly refer to commerce, his analysis nevertheless focuses on the growing division of labor that results from a commercial society, and furthermore, Schiller is interested in making sure that citizens are engaged in political life without forcibly equating and eliminating the differences between them. As he says, "the constitution of a state will be very imperfect [*unvollendet*] if it can bring about unity [*Einheit*] only through the abolition of diversity [*Aufhebung der Mannichfaltigkeit*]" (Schiller 20: 317, AL 11, my translation). The very idea of preserving diversity in the republic – Moggach and Schmidt argue – shows that Schiller was well aware of the specific challenges of modernity to republicanism.

Nevertheless, a second question remains; even if Schiller understood the problem of compatibility, how did he propose to solve it: as a classical or as a modern republican? His aforementioned concern to preserve diversity in unity strongly suggests the second option: Schiller believes that the engagement

¹¹¹ On Schiller's study of Ferguson at the Karlschule, see, e.g., Beiser (2005: 19, 92, 125), Pugh (1997: 173–80), Wolfgang Riedel (1985: 124–6), Lesley Scharpe (1991: 58–9).

condition can be compatible with commercial society. But how exactly does he understand the engagement condition? Beiser, Moggach, and Schmidt consider it to be a virtue. I both agree and disagree with them. If we understand virtue, following Schiller, as the culmination of human spiritual development, that is, as a quality peculiar only to the most morally and aesthetically developed, to those whom Schiller calls beautiful souls, then I do not hold that, according to Schiller, virtue is the engagement condition. Nevertheless, I believe that the virtue of citizens understood in this way is a condition of an aesthetic state, but Schiller's aesthetic state is not a republic in general, i.e. it is not his only version of the republic, but a very special ideal polity. For a republic in general, Schiller's requirement is less demanding: for it to be established and sustained, its citizens must have an uncompromised capacity for choice, i.e., the capacity for humanity. In other words – as I intend to show in this chapter – the uncompromised capacity for humanity is the engagement condition, whereas virtue is a necessary condition only for the unattainable ideal of a perfect polity – the aesthetic state.

The last question I would like to address in this section concerns the role of beauty in Schiller's political project. It is a common criticism of Schiller's *Letters Upon The Aesthetic Education of Man* (henceforth *Aesthetic Letters*) that Schiller constantly vacillates between two positions: according to the first position, beauty is the means for political transformation; according to the second, beauty is the purpose of political transformation. We can find this criticism already in Kuno Fischer (1868) and later in other scholars, e.g., Hans Lutz (1928), and Walter Horace Bruford (1962). The criticism is made with the implication that Schiller falls into a vicious circle. An early answer may be found in Friedrich Jodl, who points out that the objects in question are quite different: beauty as a means is the beauty of the objects around us, i.e. works of art, natural beautiful objects, individual beautiful acts, and so on, "through looking at and enjoying the artistically beautiful man rises to a state of freedom in which the raw voice of the drive is silenced and the self-activity of reason <...> is opened". But when we rise to a state of freedom "a new task arises: to represent the beauty, whose outer appearance mediated the first change from sensual to spiritual man, also in his own being through the full harmony of nature and reason, substance and form" (Jodl 1882: 57–8, my translation), in other words, we feel an aesthetic and moral obligation to transform ourselves and our political formations into works of art, and here beauty stands as a purpose. It is weird to think that Schiller falls into dangerous circularity here, because the same circularity can be found, for example, in the situation in which we use white paint to paint a house white, here too we can say that whiteness acts as both means and end, but it is quite obvious that there is nothing problematic about this example. Among contemporary scholars, the best defense of Schiller against this accusation we can find in Beiser, who shows that it is based on the failure to distinguish between two different questions that Schiller discusses in the *Aesthetic Letters*: a causal question "What effect does beauty have upon us?" and a logical question "Does human perfection consist in

beauty?” (Beiser 2005: 136–7) Once we distinguish between them, we immediately realize that there is no problem that beauty (as a predicate of one object) can be a means to another beauty (as a predicate of an entirely different object). This, of course, does not mean that Schiller’s statement is true – this still has to be proven! But at least by its form one cannot immediately dismiss Schiller’s argument as wrong.

I mention this issue because I believe that although Beiser has resolved it convincingly, I have something to add to his solution. A little earlier I said that I do not think that, according to Schiller, the virtue of citizens is the engagement condition; instead I consider it a necessary condition of the aesthetic state. In terms of the debate on the role of beauty in Schiller’s political philosophy my thought can be expressed as follows: beauty as a means restores the capacity for humanity, but this does not mean that the capacity for humanity is beauty as an end. Moreover, the republic, as such, is also not beauty as an end. So there are several intermediaries between beauty as a means and beauty as an end, which only underscores that Schiller has no confusion here. I realize that what I am saying here looks rather dense. I will address this topic in more detail below. Here, however, I am only sketching a preliminary outline of my response to the critique of the role of beauty: aesthetic education, which is based on beauty as a means, enables people’s individual self-determination which is realizable only through acts of free choice. Through individual self-determination people are able, first, to form a republic, which Schiller defines as a moral [*moralischen Staat*] or ethical state of duty; and, second, to engage consciously in their moral and aesthetic perfection. But they still need to keep pursuing two ideals: namely, the hard-to-achieve ideal of virtue and complete humanity (see Schiller 20: 161, GD 298), that is, of maximum moral and aesthetic perfection, which in turn is a necessary but not sufficient condition of the second ideal – of an aesthetic state, which can never be fully realized, but only serves as a regulative ideal to which we must aspire.

And this brings me to an important point: all the debates described in this section can be clarified by greater attention to Schiller’s ternary division into dynamic, ethical, and aesthetic states. By analyzing in the following sections these three concepts and their necessary conditions, I show that Schiller is not a quietist, that he is a progressivist and a modern republican, and that he does not consider virtue a necessary condition of a republic in general, but believes that only by striving for virtue can we approximate an ideal polity or, in his terms, an aesthetic state.

2. The dynamic state of rights

At the end of the previous section I stressed the importance of Schiller’s ternary division of the various types of states. Now I turn immediately to the first element of this division, that is, the dynamic state of rights or, as Schiller also

calls it, the natural state [*Naturstaat*].¹¹² In my analysis of this concept, I shall, first, give my reasons for understanding the dynamic state and the natural state as equivalent terms; second, I shall show that we must not understand the dynamic state as a state of nature, as an ochlocracy, or, contra Beiser (2005: 162), as a minimal liberal state; third, I shall argue that a moral man cannot be content with the dynamic state and has a need for an ethical state because the dynamic state is not the product of his will and, thus, represents heteronomy and arbitrariness.

2.1. Equivalence of natural and dynamic states

The term 'natural state' as an element of the natural state/moral state dichotomy is introduced by Schiller in the third *Aesthetic Letter* (Schiller 20: 314, AL 7–8). The transition from the natural state to the moral state is the crucial political challenge discussed in the first ten *Aesthetic Letters*. However, at the end of the work, in the twenty-seventh letter, Schiller suddenly proposes a new ternary division into dynamic, ethical, and aesthetic states. How do the elements of the earlier binary division and the new ternary division relate? Leslie Sharpe (1991: 162) argues that we should not correlate the elements of the old and new divisions because the new typology reflects a paradigmatic shift in which beauty as means turned into beauty as ends. Frankly, I do not understand this argument. Does it mean that we should simply discard the earlier division into two kinds of a state as no longer relevant? In the previous section, I touched a bit on the problem of the shift from beauty as a means to beauty as an end and insisted that there is no kind of contradiction or confusion of terms. So I do not agree with Sharpe that there has been a paradigmatic shift toward the end of the *Aesthetic Letters* that renders the previous typology irrelevant. On the contrary, I believe rather that the new typology simply displays a new purpose, some project for the future, which will remain relevant even after the transition from the natural state to the moral state has been made. I, therefore, intend to provide reasons for thinking that the natural state from the early typology and the dynamic state from the later typology are equivalent terms.¹¹³

The first reason is quite trivial: in both typologies, these are the very first element, in other words, they are the starting point for statehood. The dynamic or natural state is the kind of political state in which most people find themselves now. Second, Schiller describes the dynamic state as operating through nature: “[t]he dynamic state can make society possible only by taming nature through nature” (Schiller 20: 410, AL 110, my translation). The third reason is Schiller’s emphasis on a force in describing both concepts. Thus he defines the natural state “as any political body which originally derives its institution from

¹¹² Schiller also uses the term 'state of necessity' [*Nothstaat*] in the *Aesthetic Letters*, but just once (Schiller 20: 313, AL 7). This term seems to be synonymous with 'dynamic state' as well.

¹¹³ The view that these are equivalent terms is rather consensual. See, e.g., Schaper (1985: 166), Pugh (1997: 326), Beiser (2005: 162), Schmidt (2009: 308).

forces, not from laws [*von Kräften, nicht von Gesetzen*]” (Schiller 20: 314, AL 8, my translation), while describing the dynamic state he says that “man encounters man as a force [*als Kraft*] and restricts his activity” (Schiller 20: 410, AL 110, my translation). And finally, fourth, Schiller contrasts both the natural and dynamic states with the state based on laws, that is, with the moral or ethical state.

2.2. Misinterpretations of the dynamic state

Despite the contrast between the dynamic state and lawfulness, we should not conclude that by the dynamic state Schiller means a state of nature which implies anarchy or even a war of all against all. Firstly, Schiller makes it quite clear that what is at stake here is a state as an institution. Secondly, he describes the idea of the state of nature as an artificial fiction, unsupported by experience and created to temporarily justify the present statehood as a product of free will; in other words, the idea of the state of nature serves as a necessary premise for the idea of the social contract, which in turn turns out to be not so much a description of past events as a moral justification for the future transformation of the state (Schiller 20: 313–4, AL 7–8). Thirdly, although Schiller denies the dynamic state lawfulness, it should be taken to mean that he is speaking of laws in the Kantian vein, that is, as something objectively valid. In other words, any positive law, unless it is adopted through a proper procedure, somehow embodying the ideal of self-legislation, and has objective validity, would not, in Schiller’s terminology, be called law. Instead, Schiller uses the term ‘right’ [*Recht*], and, it must be said, here he departs quite strongly from the terminology of Kant, for whom genuine right also implies objective validity. My understanding is that Schiller wants to stress that even in a dynamic state there is some legislation, even if its product does not deserve to be called a law. So he uses the term ‘right’ to refer to arbitrary positive laws, that is, laws not necessarily derived from self-legislation and not necessarily objectively valid.

The precise content of rights in the dynamic state is a very interesting question. I want to warn against two possible misinterpretations, first, a reading of the dynamic state as an ochlocracy; second, as a liberal watchguard (that is, minimal) state. The first misinterpretation may potentially follow from the political metaphor used by Schiller in *On Grace and Dignity* (henceforth *Grace and Dignity*) to describe a possible interaction between mental faculties. Schiller says there that if sensibility suppresses one’s reason, then one’s actions are arbitrary and cannot have any moral or aesthetic value. And such interaction between reason and sensibility reminds him of a wild ochlocracy [*wilde Ochlokratie*] (Schiller 20: 281–2, GD 148). The man who is ruled by sensibility is, in Schiller’s philosophy, a natural man in the bad sense of the word. Thus, by analogy, if the natural man’s psychology is described by the metaphor of a wild ochlocracy, then it only makes sense, that the natural or dynamic state, which corresponds to the natural man, must also be a wild ochlocracy.

However, later in *Grace and Dignity*, Schiller uses an even harsher metaphor to describe the psychology of the natural man, the metaphor of anarchy (see Schiller 20: 282, GD 148). That is, he no longer compares the natural man's psychology with the state (dynamic or ochlocratic), but with the absence of the state. So I think that we should be very careful about making any analogies here. Whatever a dynamic state is, it is still a state, that is, not anarchy. Moreover, in the *Aesthetic Letters*, Schiller makes it quite clear that the role of the dynamic state with its non-objective right is precisely to restrain the destructive impulses of natural man, to prevent him from lapsing into anarchy. Hence, I think that we should not make any specific assumptions about the content of rights in a dynamic state from the political metaphor used by Schiller in *Grace and Dignity*. Having said this, however, I would like to add that the dynamic state, as I show below, can be an ochlocracy, but this does not mean that it can be only an ochlocracy.

A second misinterpretation of the dynamic state can be found in Beiser:

The dynamic state concerns only the external actions of individuals, not their intentions or character. It is striking that this concept corresponds neatly with the liberal 'watchguard state'. Since Schiller places the dynamic state at the bottom of his hierarchy, we can see how he is far from endorsing traditional laissez-faire liberalism (Beiser 2005: 162).

I agree with Beiser that Schiller is far from being an advocate of laissez-faire liberalism, but I find Beiser's decision to associate the dynamic state with it unjustified. As far as I understand, Beiser interprets the dynamic state in this way because of Schiller's definition of it as a state of rights. Beiser thinks that the dynamic state presupposes the right of everyone to pursue his interest without interference from others. The main problem with this interpretation is that Beiser puts more into the concept of right than Schiller does. And it is quite easy to prove this: the *Aesthetic Letters* imply that any state not built on the principle of reason, in other words, almost any modern state, is dynamic, and this includes, say, pre-revolutionary France or Holy Roman Empire's Germany. It is very strange to assume that Schiller considers these states to be embodiments of laissez-faire liberalism. Arguably, it is possible to imagine a dynamic state that has accidentally become a liberal watch-guard state, but it certainly does not follow from this that any dynamic state is like that. It is much more correct to understand by right in a dynamic state the right of the strong [*das Recht des Stärkern*], to which Schiller alludes in a letter to Prince Frederick Christian II von Augustenburg (July 13, 1793) (see Schiller 26: 260, LtP 123).

2.3. Moral man's dissatisfaction with the dynamic state

As can be gathered from the previous discussion, the precise content of rights in a dynamic state cannot be specified conceptually. This is the very essence of the dynamic state: rights in it are arbitrary, they are dynamically formed on the basis of the interaction of different forces, these can be, e.g., geographical or

physical factors or even individuals. Schiller emphasizes that when these are individuals, they interact not as persons (that is, free agents), but as forces (see Schiller 20: 410, AL 110). The interaction of forces can be very diverse, and, as a consequence, have very different results. So yes, there can be dynamic ochlocracies or dynamic liberal watch-guard states. In theory, there can even be dynamic states in which rights are indistinguishable in their content from laws in the Kantian sense, but this still does not make them ethical states.

Dynamic states might meet all the requirements of a natural man, protecting him and creating conditions in which he can realize his needs. But at some point, under favorable circumstances, within the natural man, a moral man is born, who yearns for something that dynamic states cannot satisfy even in theory. According to Schiller, dynamic states never truly embody a general will and never have the authority that the reason of the moral man can recognize, and the rationale for this lies in the mechanism of rights formation itself: “the work of blind forces has no authority to which freedom had to bow” (Schiller 20: 314 AL 8). This is very important to emphasize: for the moral man, rights, that accidentally happen to be just, still do not meet his rational requirements. And this applies not only to the arbitrary content of rights in a dynamic state but also to the very fact of such a state’s existence, which is also arbitrary. It was not man as a person who established it, but the interaction of blind forces led to its creation:

even the sparse fragmentary connection [*Antheil*], which still ties the individual members to the whole, does not depend on forms, which they give themselves, (for how could one trust their freedom in such an artificial and light-shy clockwork?) (Schiller 20: 323–4, AL 19).

The idea of a social contract does not correspond to dynamic states, but for the moral man, whose reason requires autonomy, this idea turns out to be a demand to re-establish the state on new foundations and to start legislating using different mechanisms.

In sum, there are two fundamental problems for a moral man. First, the dynamic state was established without his involvement; second, he did not and does not have any input into the legislation within such a state. It can be said that such a state does not involve the engagement of its citizens in its establishment and existence. For this reason, the dynamic state does not embody political self-determination and is unworthy of a moral man. And that brings us to Schiller’s concept of an ethical state.

3. The ethical state of duty

Schiller’s ethical state receives surprisingly little attention in the literature. Beiser, for example, in his excellent book on Schiller, mentions the term in only two pages. He thinks that we should understand Schiller’s ethical state as Kant’s kingdom of ends (Beiser 2005: 162), i.e. as “a systematic union of different

rational beings under common laws” (Kant 4: 433, GMM 83). Schmidt, on the contrary, believes that the example of the ethical state, which he considers synonymous with the state of reason [*Vernunftstaat*], is the enlightened egalitarian moral state as imagined by revolutionaries (Schmidt 2009: 307–9).¹¹⁴ None of the Anglophone authors, to my knowledge, attempts a detailed analysis of this concept. That is exactly what I am about to do in this section. First, I briefly defend the identification of the moral and ethical state and show that the ethical state according to Schiller is a kind of republic. Then I discuss the engagement condition of the ethical state and present my arguments that it is not a virtue, but an uncompromised capacity for choice. After this, I discuss Schiller’s views on democracy and liberalism, argue that he is a progressivist and egalitarian, and show that the fragment about a special class is not evidence of his elitism, but rather concerns the special role of artists and contains an implicit dispute with Fichte’s position on the vocation of the scholar. Lastly, I defend the view that Schiller does not see revolution as a suitable means for the transition from a dynamic to an ethical state, although, unlike Kant, he does not entirely deny the right of rebellion.

3.1. The ethical state is a republic

I will not spend much time defending the equivalence of the terms ‘moral state’ and ‘ethical state’ used by Schiller in the fourth and twenty-seventh *Aesthetic Letters* respectively. In my view, this equivalence is obvious: both concepts are the second element of their respective typologies, the adjectives ‘ethical’ and ‘moral’ are used synonymously by an overwhelming number of both old and new authors, and Schiller in particular makes no technical distinction between them. And, as if for those who doubt equivalence, Schiller specifies that “the ethical state can make it [society] (**morally**) necessary only by subjecting the individual will to the general will [*allgemeiner Wille*]” (Schiller 20: 410, AL 110, bold mine). I believe that further discussion of equivalence is unnecessary. More importantly, the above quote undoubtedly connects the ethical state with Rousseau’s conception of the general will, and this leads me to the next task in this section, which is to show that Schiller’s ethical state is a republic. Very roughly, according to Rousseau, a state can be legitimate only if it is guided by the general will of its members. The general will acts as the source of all laws. All these laws are willed by every citizen, thus by obeying these laws a citizen remains free, for he obeys his own will. Unfortunately, unlike Rousseau, Schiller does not tell in detail what the formation of the general will does involve. But from Schiller’s brief discussions, we can learn that the ethical state is characterized by the rule of law, that only genuine freedom can be the basis of political association within the ethical state, that political legislation in the

¹¹⁴ Pugh’s position seems somewhat similar to Schmidt, but he makes the further point that ultimately the rational state remains a product of the imagination, in lieu of which Schiller ends up offering “an acceptance of an authoritarian state with a compensating aesthetic dimension” (Pugh 1997: 406).

ethical state is transferred to reason, and that man is to be treated as an end in himself in it (see Schiller 20: 319, AL14; and 26: 262, AL123). In other words, Schiller associates the general will not with the majority rule, but with Kantian autonomous self-legislation as the source of universal practical principles or reason.

In the previous section, I touched a little on another concept that Rousseau used extensively, namely the social contract. Schiller says that the present dynamic state is justified in our imagination by the fiction that we have by our willful decision exchanged the state of independence [*Stand der Unabhängigkeit*] for the state of contracts [*Stand der Verträge*] (Schiller 20: 313, AL 8).¹¹⁵ Why does he think it is fiction? Because such a decision requires that people conceive of the state of contracts as a purpose and be able to make a free choice in its favor. Schiller thinks that, at that level of development, humans had neither a proper knowledge of the purpose nor a functioning capacity for choice. In other words, the idea of the social contract implies the existence of a rational free agent, and man at that time was not one. Moreover, according to Schiller, at this time he is still not. Through an abundant theoretical culture, a man may have already formed the notion of a proper purpose, but he still does not meet the second condition, that is, he still does not possess an uncompromised capacity for choice, or in Schiller's terminology, a capacity for humanity.

These two references to Rousseau, as well as Schiller's discussion of why the transition to the state of contracts is not possible, allow us to point directly to how he fits into the republican tradition. In the first section, I talked about three aspects that play a central role in the debate about Schiller's republicanism: the active participation of people in the political life of their country, or **engagement**; some condition that makes such participation possible, or an **engagement condition**; and the question of whether an engagement condition is compatible with modern commercial society, or the **compatibility problem**. The first two aspects show whether the doctrine in question is republican, while the third aspect clarifies whether we are dealing with classical republicanism or modern republicanism. I am going to focus on the first two aspects for now.

For a moral man, the problem with the dynamic state is that it is deprived of engagement. It is deprived of engagement on two levels: first, people as persons do not participate in legislation, and second, people as persons did not participate in the establishment of the dynamic state itself. It was formed by the dynamic interaction of forces, and its rights are shaped in the same way. Finding no confirmation in the experience of the past, the notion of the state of contracts becomes slowly reinterpreted as an ethical and aesthetic obligation to reestablish the state so that there be genuine engagement among its citizens. What used to be a justification for the past becomes a duty for the future. The ethical state for which the moral man is striving implies persons' participation in its establishment through social contract and legislation through the formation of the general will. That is, Schiller considered engagement to be one

¹¹⁵ The word 'state' in this case has no political meaning; it is 'Stand', not 'Staat'.

of the central aspects of the ethical state and by pointing to the present un-readiness of people for such engagement, he also ipso facto makes it clear that there is an engagement condition that has not yet been met. So, Schiller's concept of the ethical state explicitly addresses the problem of engagement and also does so in terms of the republican concepts of Rousseau. From this, I claim that Schiller's ethical state is a republic. How engagement is to be carried out in it I will say a bit later. For now, let us compare Schiller's views on the establishment of a republic with that of Kant to clarify Schiller's position even further.

3.2. The difference between the positions of Schiller and Kant

Let me stress at once that Kant's views have changed and refined considerably over time. In the present chapter, I reconstruct his views as of 1795 and base them mainly on his two works *On the common saying: That may be correct in theory, but it is of no use in practice* (1793) and *Toward perpetual peace* (1795).

To begin, I first briefly repeat the relevant elements of Schiller's position. Schiller believes that the natural man cannot establish a republic, because a republic can only be established as a result of free choice, which the natural man, in Schiller's sense, is incapable of doing. What is meant by the incapacity for free choice in this case? It does not mean that the natural man is devoid of instrumental rationality and cannot, while having a definite end in mind, choose suitable means to achieve it. Quite the contrary, the natural man is capable of this; in Kant's terminology, we can say that the natural man is capable of following hypothetical imperatives. It is not the choice of suitable means to achieve already existing ends, but the setting of one's own ends that is not yet fully available to him. And, according to Schiller, the establishment of an ethical state or a republic is precisely such an end that is to be freely set. It means, in particular, that the ethical state cannot be established for any instrumental end. For example, it cannot be established for the purpose of better protecting one's possessions or more efficiently pursuing one's interest. The ethical state must be established not through a hypothetical imperative, but through a categorical imperative, that is, it must be established because it is an ethical state. For Schiller, its establishment is a duty. The same is true of the formation of the general will. It is not formed to solve any personal, social, or political tasks more efficiently. The formation of the general will is a duty for a moral man. It is formed for its own sake, out of respect for the moral law. Therefore, the establishment of an ethical state and the formation of a general will within it cannot be motivated by any instrumental considerations, but only by an awareness of, and respect for, the moral law. And from a Kantian perspective, determining oneself to act through mere awareness of, and respect for, the moral law is possible only for those who possess the capacity to set their own ends.

Kant, on the contrary, says that the problem of organizing the republican state does not depend on freedom or a choice, but solely on the mechanism of

nature which must be properly arranged. Thus this problem is solvable even for a nation of devils, provided they have an understanding [*Verstand*] (Kant 8: 366, PP 335). It is only necessary to build an organization in which the selfish inclinations of these devils would collide in a certain way and mutually neutralize their destructive effects, that is, they would work as checks and balances. As Reidar Maliks notes, the argument about devils implicitly refers to Kant's idea of unsocial sociability and serves to explain how a republic can arise in the first place (see Maliks 2014: 64–5). Nature itself, in a sense, wants a republic to exist, and it does not reveal its desire through duty (which is a product only of freedom), but directly, through the collision of different forces: “nature itself does it, whether we will it or not (*fota volentem ducunt, nolentem trahunt*)” (Kant 8: 366, PP 335).

However, despite all this, Kant, like Schiller, speaks of the establishment of the republic (or rather the establishment of the civil condition) as an intrinsic end, in other words, as something done for its own sake rather than as an instrument for some other end:

[T]hat union which is in itself an end (that each *ought to have*) and which is therefore the unconditional and first duty in any external relation of people in general, who cannot help mutually affecting one another, is to be found in a society only insofar as it is in the civil condition, that is, constitutes a commonwealth. Now the end that, in such an external relation, is in itself duty and even the supreme formal condition (*conditio sine qua non*) of all other external duties is the *right* of human beings under *public coercive laws*, by which what belongs to each can be determined for him and secured against encroachment by any other (Kant 8: 289, TP 290).

It might seem that in this passage Kant endorses the same requirement for the establishment of a republic as Schiller did: it must be done for its own sake, and not merely designed as a mechanism of checks and balances for a nation of selfish but rational devils. But this is a false impression, for Kant's argument is not genealogical; it concerns only the essence of the civil condition, rather than how it is to be established.

The difference between the views of Schiller and Kant becomes a little clearer if we pay attention to their understanding of the concept of the social contract. Like Schiller, Kant does not believe that ever in the past there has been an original contract between men. But whereas for Schiller the concept of the social contract describes not the past but a duty for the future, that is, the duty to establish an ethical state employing the genuine social contract, for Kant the social contract is only an idea of reason which should

bind every legislator to give his laws in such a way that they could have arisen from the united will of a whole people and to regard each subject, insofar as he wants to be a citizen, as if he has joined in voting for such a will (Kant 8: 297. TP 296–7).

In other words, while both deny the reality of the social contract in the past, Schiller nevertheless considers it possible and morally necessary to create it in the future, and Kant treats it as merely a regulative idea. Following Kant, we may say that Schiller adopts the position which Kant attributes to Danton,¹¹⁶ who treats the social contract as a necessary fact, without which “all rights and all property to be found in the actually existing civil constitution” (Kant 8: 302, TP 301) are null and void.

The disagreement between Kant and Schiller does not end here. Kant makes no demands on citizens of a republic and thinks it is far more important to organize the state properly. Schiller, on the other hand, believes that even a properly organized state will not become a republic if its citizens have only instrumental rationality. In other words, Schiller insists that an engagement condition of a republic is more than a proper constitution. What does it consist of? This is what I talk about in the next section.

3.3. An engagement condition of the ethical state

What exactly is needed, apart from a proper constitution, for the establishment and maintenance of an ethical state, i.e. Schiller’s version of a republic? It is in answering this question that I disagree with almost all the authors writing on Schiller’s republicanism (Beiser 2005, 2008; Moggach 2007, 2008; Schmidt 2009). The consensus position – which I henceforth call **the virtue reading** – is that the engagement condition for Schiller’s republic is virtue, sometimes also described in terms of patriotism. The virtue reading has two versions, a strong and a weak one.¹¹⁷ I begin with **the strong virtue reading** which I particularly disagree with. According to it, citizens must, through aesthetic education, become beautiful souls,¹¹⁸ so that the moral law is almost completely internalized by them and incorporated into their nature. Moggach and Schmidt stress that this does not mean that all the differences between citizens should disappear, on the contrary, Schiller’s concepts of a beautiful soul and aesthetic education allow diversity and even encourage it. How exactly does virtue, understood in this way, fulfill an engagement condition? Only beautiful souls can be consistently concerned about the common good. And, therefore, until most citizens have become beautiful souls, the establishment of a republic is premature. Let us turn to one passage in Schiller that seems to support the strong virtue reading. In the fourth *Aesthetic Letter* Schiller says:

(A) If then we are to count on man’s moral conduct with as much certainty as we count upon *natural* events, then this conduct must *be* his nature, <...> [and] this

¹¹⁶ According to Heinrich Maier, the Academy editor, it is very likely to be a misattribution.

¹¹⁷ This is my own distinction; other authors do not make it. I am not sure how best to characterize their positions, but relying on the principle of benevolence, I will assume that their interpretations are closer to the weak version of virtue reading, which I find much more convincing, though not entirely correct and complete.

¹¹⁸ I talk in greater detail about the beautiful soul in Chapter Two.

can only be accomplished by ensuring that the effects of these two incentives [duty and inclination] in the realm of phenomena are completely the same, and that, despite all differences in form, the matter of man's volition remains the same (Schiller 20: 315–6, AL 10).

The idea that the phenomenal effects of duty and inclination must coincide plays a key role in Schiller's theory of virtue. The beautiful soul is precisely characterized by the fact that it has so ennobled its sensibility that at all moments, whenever the limits of humanity permit it, duty and inclination act together and move a person in the same direction. So (A) strongly suggests the strong virtue reading. Schiller has other fragments that seem to confirm the strong virtue reading, but none of them seem as unambiguous as (A).

In some other fragments, Schiller no longer says that duty and inclination must coincide in their phenomenal effects, but only that for moral behavior to be possible, duty must affect man as a sensual being. This requirement is much less strong: a person may have inclinations that do not accord with duty, but his duty must be able to become a force in the phenomenal world that overcomes other forces:

(B) Reason has done what it can by discovering the law and establishing it; it is the courageous will and the living feeling that must carry it out. If truth is to gain victory in the conflict with forces [*craftte*], it must first become a force itself, and set up a drive as its proxy [*Sachführer*] in the realm of phenomena; for drives are the only moving forces in the sensual world (Schiller 20: 330–1, AL 26).

The fragment (B) is crucial for what I call **the weak virtue reading**. Virtue in the weak reading is no longer understood as the ethical and aesthetic perfection inherent in a beautiful soul, but simply as an important element that ensures that duty can become a force. Like Kant,¹¹⁹ Schiller often describes this element in terms of courage and resolve:

(C) there must be something in the people's feelings [*Gemüter*] that stands in the way of receiving the truth, no matter how brightly it shines, and of accepting it, no matter how vividly it convinces. A wise old man has sensed this, and it lies hidden in the pregnant statement: *sapere aude*.

Dare to be wise. It takes the energy of **courage** [*Muth*] to fight the obstacles that both the indolence of nature [*die Trägheit der Natur*] and the cowardice of the heart [*die Feigheit des Herzens*] put in the way of learning (Schiller 20: 331, AL 27, my emphasis (bold)).

(D) Force and energy of **resolve** [*Entschluß*] are therefore needed to overcome the obstacles that the natural indolence of the mind [*Trägheit des Geistes*] and the cowardice of the heart place in the way of accepting the truth (Schiller 26: 298, AL 132, bold mine).

¹¹⁹ On the association between courage and virtue in Kant, see Robert B. Loudon (2011). See also Anne Margaret Baxley (2010) for a recent systematic discussion of Kant's theory of virtue.

Courage and resolve are here primarily understood as a commitment to one's own principles against any external influence. According to the weak virtue reading, virtue understood as courage, is an engagement condition. Only by being courageous, that is, by daring to use their own understanding and by being able to overcome the indolence of nature and the cowardice of the heart, can citizens truly take an interest in the common good. And so, until, through aesthetic education, they acquire courage, the establishment of an aesthetic state, that is, a republic, is premature.

I am now going to state my reasons why I strongly reject the strong virtue reading and consider the weak virtue reading to be at least incomplete. While challenging both forms of virtue reading, I propose my reading, according to which the uncompromised capacity for choice, or in Schiller's terminology the capacity for humanity, is an engagement condition for the ethical state. I call my interpretation **the humanity reading**. I shall also attempt to explain how my reading can be compatible with the above quotes from Schiller.

The main reason I think the strong virtue reading is false is that it implies an anti-Kantian view of the state as an end, and of man as a means to that end. According to Schiller, a beautiful soul is the highest possible degree of perfection for man; but if the establishment of an ethical state requires that its citizens be beautiful souls, then it turns out that the unconditional good (a person in its perfection) is only a means to a conditional good (a state). One might suppose that Schiller is simply abandoning the Kantian position here and thinking that the state is something more significant and fundamental than man. But there is plenty of evidence that this is not the case and that Schiller is in perfect agreement with Kant on this point. Thus, for instance, he writes in a letter to Caroline von Beulwitz (November 27, 1788):

I believe that every single human soul developing its power is more than the greatest human society if I consider it as a whole. The greatest state is a work of man, man is a work of the unattainable great nature. The state is a creature of chance, but man is a necessary being, and by what else is a state great and venerable than by the powers of its individuals? The state is only an effect of human power, only a work of thought, but man is the source of power himself, and the creator of thought (Schiller 1788a, my translation).

The same point is reiterated in Schiller's historical essay *The Legislation of Lycurgus and Solon* (henceforth *Lycurgus and Solon*):

Everything may be sacrificed to the best interests of the state, except that for which the state itself serves only as a means. The state itself is never an end, it is only important as a condition under which the end of mankind can be fulfilled, and this end of mankind is no other than the development of all the powers of man, progress. If a state constitution hinders the development of all the powers that lie in man, if it hinders the progress of the spirit, it is reprehensible and harmful, no matter how well thought-out and perfect in its nature it may be (Schiller 17: 423, my translation).

So, contrary to some interpretations, Schiller himself unequivocally considers himself a champion of progress and criticizes any constitution according to which human progress can be sacrificed for the sake of the state. The last quotation also reveals another problem with the strong virtue reading. As we can see, Schiller, like Kant, views the state as a means of progress and human development. But if its condition is already a fully developed perfect man (i.e., a beautiful soul), it becomes unclear why the establishment of the state is needed at all, since its supposed purpose is already fulfilled.

I do not consider that this criticism in any way affects the weak virtue reading. The weak version does not claim that man has to be fully perfect to establish an ethical state, thus it is compatible with the idea that the ethical state is not an end in itself, but only a means for further human development, which becomes available to man when he cultivates courage understood as a motivational commitment to the right reasons. But there is another problem with the weak version: it does not fit well with what Schiller himself writes further about aesthetic education and its purpose in the *Aesthetic Letters*. Indeed, Schiller consistently speaks of the importance of the connection between sensibility and reason, which he analyzes in psychological terms as the interaction of the two basic drives, the material and the formal. But except for fragments (C) and (D), Schiller says that the connection between duty and feeling does not require courage, but reciprocity [*Wechselwirkung*] between two drives (see Schiller 20: 352, AL 50). Admittedly, Schiller revisits the subject of resolve in his final philosophical essay *On the Sublime*, in which he stresses the importance of its cultivation for a stable moral life.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, the role of resolve in the *Aesthetic Letters* seems rather auxiliary. That is, even assuming that the weak virtue reading is right and resolve is part of the engagement condition of the ethical state, the weak virtue reading still misses something, hence it is incomplete.

Before moving on, it is worth recalling a few of Schiller's relevant ideas discussed in this and previous chapters. Schiller speaks of the natural man as incapable of entering into a state of contracts. This incapacity is the key problem for the establishment and maintenance of an ethical state, and it stems from the more general natural man's incapacity of making full-fledged choices, i.e. from the fact that the natural man is not a proper self-determining agent. In Schiller's terms, we can say that the natural man's capacity for humanity is hindered. By the capacity for humanity, following Kant, Schiller understands the capacity to set oneself ends. This capacity distinguishes human beings from other living beings: only humans not merely pursue ends predetermined by nature, but are also capable of setting their own ends and even of refusing to pursue ends given to them by nature. In his discussion of the capacity for humanity, Schiller makes one of the most interesting departures from Kantian orthodoxy. Schiller believes that freedom understood as the capacity for

¹²⁰ On the role of resolve in Schiller's aesthetic education see the last section of Chapter Five.

humanity, that is, freedom of choice can be compromised at the phenomenal level:

That freedom cannot be acted upon is already evident from its mere concept; but that *freedom itself* is an effect of *nature* (this word taken in its broadest sense), not a work of man, and from this it follows immediately that freedom can therefore also be promoted and inhibited by natural means (Schiller 20: 373, AL 73, my translation).

As I show in Chapter Four, according to Schiller, the capacity for humanity can be limited in two ways. “Man can be at odds with himself in two ways: either as a savage [*Wilder*], his feelings ruling his principles; or as a barbarian [*Barbar*], if his principles destroy his feelings” (Schiller 20: 318, AL 12). Both barbarians and savages lack the uncompromised capacity for humanity, for it requires the reciprocity between two basic drives.¹²¹ Their lack of reciprocity is due that they have lived, educated, and worked under conditions of modernity, which involves super-specialization and division of labor. By constantly focusing on only one of their capacities, modern people have greatly contributed to the development of society as a whole, but this development has come at the expense of the personal fragmentation of individuals. Schiller has some class implications here. The members of the lower classes who strain and develop only the capacities related to sensibility are most prone to become modern savages, driven by instincts and raw inclinations. The modern savages lack reflection, hence, they are incapable of evaluating possible options and, therefore, of making full-fledged choices. This makes them unsuitable for the establishment of an ethical state which requires the active participation of citizens. As for the members of the upper classes, they are more likely to fall into modern barbarism. The modern barbarians are characterized by an extreme disrespect for sensibility that often results in their loss of the motivational commitment to the right reasons. Furthermore, often secretly to themselves, they tend to rationalize their selfish inclinations. As a result, members of the upper classes are also unsuited to the establishment and maintenance of an ethical state, because although they are capable of reflection they are not moved by the notion of the common good.

The purpose of this retelling was to draw attention to the fact that, according to Schiller, the problem of establishing an ethical state is not reducible to a lack of resolve. It is rather that people in the conditions of modernity, for various reasons, are deprived of their capacity for humanity, and so they find themselves incapable of individual self-determination. Schiller believes that aesthetic education can restore this capacity, which he says directly: “beauty is <...> our second creator <...> [f]or it gave us nothing more than the capacity for humanity, but leaves the use of this to our own determination of will” (Schiller 20: 378, AL 78). Note that he is not saying that beauty makes us predisposed to

¹²¹ For more details on barbarians and savages and exactly how their capacity for humanity is impaired, see Chapter Four.

any particular (for instance, virtuous) behavior, but only that it opens us up to self-determination. Elsewhere he repeats this thought:

[t]he transition from the passive condition of sensation to the active one of thought and volition thus occurs no other way than through the middle condition of aesthetic freedom, and although this condition in itself decides nothing either for our insights or for our attitudes, and thus leaves our intellectual and moral value entirely **problematic** [*problematisch*], it is nevertheless the necessary condition under which alone we can attain insight and an attitude (Schiller 20: 383, AL 84, my emphasis).

Schiller uses the modal term from Kantian logic. ‘Problematic’ in this case means that the value is not determined yet, and its determination is up to us. He is not meaning in this quote that people will become more virtuous under the influence of beauty, or that their inclinations will begin to coincide with duty in their phenomenal effects. Schiller’s thesis is quite different: people will be able to choose, and through choice exercise self-determination, and only such people can establish an ethical state, i.e. a republic. Since only the unhindered capacity for humanity makes individual self-determination possible, the unhindered capacity for humanity is a condition for citizens to participate in the life of the republic; in other words, it is an engagement condition of the ethical state.

I am not going to describe here exactly how aesthetic education, according to Schiller, is supposed to restore our capacity for humanity.¹²² Instead, I want to briefly explain how the quotations used to defend the virtue reading can be explained from the perspective of the humanity reading. First of all, I do not think that (B), (C), and (D), are problematic for my reading. They all speak of the need for duty to become a force in the phenomenal world, and (C) and (D) emphasize the importance of courage and resolve in this process. But all this can also be found in the humanity reading: for duty to become a force, an act of choice is needed, which only the capacity for humanity can ensure; and one of the conditions of choice is a motivational commitment to the right reasons, in other words, the reflective recognition that you ought to do something must have the moving effect on you. Resolve, therefore, is a component of the capacity for humanity.

Fragment (A) is, however, much more problematic for the humanity reading. Although it must be said that it is also problematic for the weak virtue reading. In (A) Schiller seems, indeed, to insist that the ethical state is impossible until duty and inclination coincide in their phenomenal effects. One possible reading, which I do not find completely convincing, is that Schiller is no longer talking here about an ethical state, but about a more demanding aesthetic state. In other words, what Schiller describes in (A) is a kind of ideal to strive for, although it cannot be achieved. But then it is unclear why he speaks of it precisely in the context of the problem of establishing an ethical state. Unfortunately, I must

¹²² See Chapter Five for that.

admit that I do not see how fragment (A) can be better explained or explained away.

3.4. On Schiller's liberalism and elitism

Having finished with the engagement condition of the ethical state, I want to say more about how exactly this engagement is to be carried out. This is the matter in which Schiller's liberalism is most evident, as Schiller opposes legislation that would demand desirable attitudes from citizens. I purposely wrote 'desirable attitudes' instead of 'virtuous attitudes' because Schiller believes that virtuous attitudes cannot be imposed; virtue implies freedom and personal choice. Thus, Schiller criticizes Solon for a law that commands every citizen to consider an insult inflicted on anyone as an insult inflicted on himself and not to rest until the offender is justly punished. The problem with this law is that it denies a person the freedom to reveal his virtue:

The noblest prerogative of human nature is to determine itself and do good for the sake of good. No civil law may compel loyalty to one's friend, magnanimity to one's enemy, gratitude to father and mother, for as soon as it does so, a free moral sentiment is transformed into a work of fear, into a slavish impulse (Schiller 17: 438, my translation).

As for the role of education in the formation of virtue, Schiller assesses very negatively Lycurgus' educational system which compels patriotism [*Vaterlandsliebe*] (see Schiller 17: 424, my translation). It is also quite significant that Schiller's aesthetic education in its later version is devoid of any didactic functions: it does not indicate or promote correct behavior or a virtuous outlook, but only restores the capacity for humanity, which a person is free to dispose of himself. So I am inclined to think that, following his close friend Humboldt,¹²³ Schiller did not encourage public education as a way of cultivating virtue, as he saw it as an infringement of moral freedom. And this is further evidence in favor of the version that it is not virtue but the capacity for humanity is the engagement condition of the ethical state. Man must take an interest in the affairs of the state and the common good freely. The fragmented nature of his development in modern conditions deprives him of this opportunity, and aesthetic education, through the experiences of the beautiful and the sublime, restores it to him.

This evidence shows that Schiller was a cultural liberal. By cultural liberalism, I mean the position that excessive government intervention in cultural affairs, including the development of virtue in citizens, is not desirable. The question of whether Schiller was also a strict economic liberal is somewhat more complicated. However, it is an important question, because the choice

¹²³ Humboldt's views are presented in his *Limits of State Action* (Humboldt 1969), excerpts from which Schiller published in his journal *Neue Thalia* and with which he was well acquainted.

between an elitist and an egalitarian reading of Schiller depends to a large extent on the answer to it. Defenders of an elitist reading, Lukács (1954), Pugh (1997, 2005, 2008), and Holmes (1980) point out that Schiller does not propose to change the fate of the poorest people in any way, thereby removing them from the project of aesthetic education. The crux of the problem is that most modern savages are so poor and exhausted that no amount of aesthetic education can affect them. One of the conditions of self-determination is reflection, and poor, weary people cannot take a reflective stance on the world, as they are too absorbed in it through their extreme needs. Holmes offers a rather convincing analysis showing that ownership is a condition for reflection. Simply put, in order to look at the world aesthetically, it is not enough for man to satisfy his basic desires, he must also create stocks that will move the future need away from him, as only through looking at the future, which is associated with a pleasant expectation of it, can man break free from the immediacy of the world (see Holmes 1980: 28–30). It follows from this that Schiller assumes some kind of a property bar to aesthetic education and political participation. By itself, this does not mean that we should regard Schiller as an elitist who excludes all poor people from the project of aesthetic education and active political participation in an ethical state. But if we also assume that he is a strict economic liberal who opposes all state interference in the distribution of wealth, then it might be fair to call Schiller an elitist.

However, I do not believe that we should view Schiller’s economic liberalism as unqualified. On the one hand, Schiller criticizes Lycurgus for dividing the land equally among all citizens, because “the legislator owed justice to the rich as well as to the poor” (Schiller 17: 432, my translation). But, on the other hand, Schiller considers Solon’s decision to exempt all debtors from their present debt obligations and to forbid loans of bondage to be laudable. Schiller admits that this is “a violent attack on the right of property [*Eigenthum*]” (Schiller 17: 432, my translation), so he realizes that by defending this solution he deviates from economic liberalism. He speaks about the state intervention even more clearly in a letter to Prince von Augustenburg (November 11, 1793):

the work of enlightenment in a nation must begin with the improvement of its physical condition. First, the spirit must be loosed from the yoke of necessity before it can be led to the freedom of reason. And only in this sense is it right to regard the care for the physical well-being of the citizens as **the first duty of the state**. If physical well-being were not the condition under which alone man can awaken to the maturity of his spirit; for its own sake it would not deserve nearly so much attention and respect. Man is still very little when he lives warmly and has eaten his fill, but he must live warmly and have enough to eat if the better nature is to stir in him (Schiller 26: 208, LtP 133, bold mine).

Thus, Schiller’s position is that economic liberalism can and even ought to be limited if it is required to ensure citizens’ capacity for humanity. If it were simply a question of happiness, then for the happiness of the many no state intervention in the distribution of goods should be allowed. The state has no

duty to make people happy through distribution, but only a duty to make them capable of self-determination.

Holmes argues against the view that Schiller is advocating state intervention to improve the material condition of people. He notes that we can find Schiller's advocacy of state intervention in the economy only in a letter to Prince von Augustenburg, but not in the *Aesthetic Letters*. Holmes thinks this is not coincidental and indicates to us that Schiller changed his position (see Holmes 1980: 33). I see no convincing evidence from Holmes in favor of this version. Moreover, as Beiser (2005: 134) points out, Holmes completely overlooks that Schiller considers Solon's decision to cancel debts to be laudable. In other words, Schiller is quite consistent in his defense of limited state intervention in the economy. It is possible, of course, that Schiller revised his assessment of Solon's actions as well, but then we are entering the territory of too much sparse speculation.

Pugh defends an elitist interpretation of Schiller in a completely different way. He draws attention to a fragment from *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry* (henceforth *On Poetry*) in which Schiller, in his view, "praise[s] an aristocratic ethos in the middle of a revolutionary decade" (Pugh 1997: 404). I quote the whole fragment:

Since, then, it must be left neither to the working part of men to determine the concept of recreation [*Erholung*] according to its need, nor to the contemplative part to determine the concept of ennoblement [*Veredlung*] according to its speculations, as the former concept ought not to turn out too physical and unworthy of poetry, and the latter – too hyperphysical and too exuberant of poetry; however, these two concepts, as experience teaches, govern the general judgment about poetry and poetic works, then, in order to have them interpreted, we must look around for a class of people [*Volkssklasse*] who are active without working and can idealize without fantasizing [*ohne zu schwärmen*], who unite all the realities of life with the least possible limitations of it and are carried by the current of events without becoming its prey. Only such a class can preserve the beautiful whole of human nature, which is temporarily destroyed by every labor and permanently destroyed by a laboring life, and, in everything that is purely human, give laws to the general judgment through its feelings. Whether such a class really exists, or rather whether the one that really exists under similar external conditions also corresponds to this concept internally, is another question with which I have nothing to do here. If it does not correspond to it, it has only itself to accuse, since the opposite working class has at least the satisfaction of considering itself a victim of its profession. In such a class of people (which, however, I here present merely as an idea, and by no means as a fact) the naive character would unite with the sentimental one in such a way that each would protect the other from its extremes, and in that the first would protect the mind from overstrain, the other would protect it from slackening (Schiller 20: 490–1).

Pugh believes that Schiller here speaks of the aristocracy, members of which by virtue of their status (no need to work) would be the main, if not the only, beneficiary of aesthetic education. Indeed, I would immediately agree with

Pugh that Schiller talks about some kind of privilege possessed by a certain class. But it is important to understand two interrelated things: first, what exactly this class is; second, what exactly the privilege is. As I have already mentioned, Pugh assumes that this class is the aristocracy. An alternative version he considers is that it is a class of artists. But Pugh rejects the alternative version, giving several reasons. First, it would be an odd use of the word ‘*Volksklasse*’ to refer to artists. Second, the caution with which Schiller speaks of the class in question becomes unclear. Pugh is referring here to Schiller’s caveat that the class may not exist or conform in full to its concept. Third, the fragment concerns not the creation but the reception of artistic works. Fourth, the aristocracy reading fits better with the jab that Schiller makes at the ‘educated bourgeois’ (Pugh’s term). I have nothing to say about the first reason, but I do not find it particularly convincing. The other three I want to discuss in more detail.

I begin with the fourth reason because I find it the most interesting. Pugh is referring to this fragment: “[n]othing is more common than that the scholars [*Gelehrten*], compared to the educated people of the world [*gebildeten Weltleuten*], embarrass themselves most ridiculously in judgments about beauty” (Schiller 20: 488). I do not agree with Pugh’s understanding of scholars as educated bourgeois. Well, I agree that the scholars were likely to be burghers and quite educated, but in using this term, Pugh introduces an unnecessary contrast between the burghers and the aristocracy that Schiller, in my opinion, does not have. If, however, we look closer at the text, we shall see that Schiller, actually, considers scholars to be representatives of the working class, the same class that has become a victim of its profession. Just before giving the example of scientists with their ridiculous opinions on art, Schiller says that tension is so destructive to aesthetic judgment, that “among the classes with real professions [*eigentlich beschäftigten Klassen*] there will be only extremely few who can judge in matters of taste with certainty and, what is so important here, with uniformity” (Schiller 20: 488). In other words, the jab here is not aimed at the educated bourgeois, but at scientists who are fully immersed in their work and focussed only on a limited set of their capacities which are directly required for their inquiry.

Now let us move on to the third reason Pugh talks about. Indeed, at first glance, the quoted fragment is not about creating artistic objects, but about perceiving them. But if we look at the larger context, we see that members of the mysterious class differ from others in being able to understand how recreation and ennoblement can be combined in art. But why the need for such understanding? Schiller was never a pure rationalist in his theory of art. In other words, he does not believe that the effect of art depends on whether or not the perceiver understands its mechanism. Of course, one must be capable of reflection and sympathy in order to achieve the right aesthetic effect, but understanding the mechanisms of art is not such a condition. That is, we cannot say that aesthetic education can affect only members of some exclusive class because only they understand how such an effect occurs. But we can say,

however, that it is precisely the people who understand how such influence can be possible that must be the organizers of aesthetic education.

Before talking about the second reason, I want to address the question of what exactly is the privilege of the class in question. As you can probably guess from my discussion above, I believe that Schiller is talking specifically about artists. He believes that only true artists can combine in their works both functions: recreation [*Erholung*] and ennoblement [*Veredlung*], thereby revitalizing man's capacity for humanity. And it is no coincidence that of all the representatives of classes with real professions, Schiller singles out the scholars, to whom he contrasts artists. I think that here Schiller enters into a polemic with Fichte, who in his famous lectures proclaimed that the vocation of the scholar [*Gelahrte*] is "the supreme supervision of the actual progress of the human race in general and the unceasing promotion of this progress" (Fichte 1988: 172). Schiller believes that scholars cannot be trusted with this task simply because they have a fragmented understanding of humanity. Their inability to make aesthetic judgments instantly betrays their contemptuous attitude toward nature and sensibility. Scholars are prone to fall into the most dangerous fanaticism [*Schwärmerei*]. As far as I understand Schiller, even the ideal scholar qua scholar will always be a fragmented person. Artists, on the other hand, can ideally be devoid of fragmentation in their artistic works, as "the poetic mood is an independent whole, in which all differences and all deficiencies disappear" (Schiller 20: 491).

And this brings us to the second reason Pugh mentioned. Schiller makes reservations not because he is afraid of hurting someone's feelings by singing hosannas to the aristocracy. The reservations are to show that not every artist meets the necessary requirements. Perhaps no such artist exists at all, but from a conceptual point of view, it is artists, not scientists, who could form a class that could supervise and promote the actual progress of the human race. In a sense, this position could be called elitism. But it is an elitism of a very different type. It is not that only artists or some other aristocrats are capable of becoming citizens of an ethical state. The point is rather that only art created by genuine artists – and not some brilliant philosophical treatises of scholars – can help people to become self-determining.¹²⁴

To summarize, Schiller believed that the state should not, through laws or education, impose a virtuousness on its citizens, in that sense it is correct to call him a cultural liberal. His economic liberalism, however, was qualified. He did not consider that the state had the right to intervene in the economy to increase the happiness of its citizens but considered such intervention justified to ensure their capacity for humanity. Schiller's position is explained by his egalitarianism. He believed that all people should have the opportunity to become citizens of an ethical state. And without the unhindered capacity for humanity,

¹²⁴ In asserting this, of course, Schiller does not deny the effects of natural beauty, which contribute to the same result. But natural beauty is not a matter of culture, and within culture, only the artist can fulfill the same function as nature.

they are deprived of such an opportunity. Having considered the issue of Schiller's liberalism and elitism, we can turn to the character of his republicanism.

3.5. Is Schiller a classical or a modern republican?

Before answering the question of what kind of republicanism Schiller endorsed, I want to find out whether Schiller was aware of the compatibility problem, in other words, whether he understood that there was a potential incompatibility between an engagement condition of the republic and a commercial society. Oz-Salzberger (1995, 2005) believes that this part of the Scottish debate on republicanism went unnoticed by Schiller. In a trivial sense, she is right: Schiller says almost nothing in his philosophical works about the role of commerce and how it transforms the modern world. It must be said, however, that Schiller was not entirely blind to its effects. For example, in his *History of the Revolt of the Netherlands* (henceforth *Revolt of the Netherlands*) he gives a rather traditional description of the role of commerce in the Netherlands:

The favorable situation of the country on the North Sea and on great navigable rivers early awakened the spirit of commerce, which rapidly peopled the towns, encouraged industry and the arts, attracted foreigners, and diffused prosperity and affluence among them (Schiller 1895: 26).

Necessity is the first lawgiver; all the wants which had to be met by this constitution were originally of a commercial nature. Thus the whole constitution was founded on commerce, and the laws of the nation were adapted to its pursuits (Schiller 1895: 27).

It is characteristic of Schiller in this book to speak of commerce and industry as parallel and interrelated phenomena. He also writes a great deal about the clash of private interests, often (but not exclusively) in a negative way. In the *Aesthetic Letters*, we can find clear echoes of commerce in the concept of utility, which Schiller considers the main political principle of the modern dynamic state: "*Utility* is the great idol of the age, to which all forces should rejoice and all talents pay homage" (Schiller 20: 310, AL 5). Furthermore, I agree with Moggach (2007, 2008) and Schmidt (2009), that Schiller in the *Aesthetic Letters* tries to find a cure for the very evil that has been produced by commerce, namely human fragmentation, which has resulted in people becoming unable in principle to pursue a common interest. It should be noted that Schiller himself views super-specialization and the increasing division of labor as a consequence of progress, not of commerce. Nevertheless, the fact that he links industry and commerce, and considers utility to be the main political principle of modernity, indicates that Schiller had a good awareness of the specifics of modern commercial society, even if he preferred to analyze it in his own terms.

What else brings him closer to the theorists of a commercial society, especially to Ferguson, is his ambivalent attitude toward modernity. Schiller readily admits that current progress is a good thing that would not be possible without over-specialization. He does “not deny the merits which the present race, considered as a whole, and on the scales of reason, may claim before the best in the previous world” (Schiller 20: 322, AL 18). Schiller is far from naive nostalgia for a golden past. At the same time, he underscores the price paid by individuals for the progress of all mankind:

Eternally bound only to a single small fragment of the whole, man forms himself only as a fragment, <...> he never develops the harmony of his being, and instead of expressing humanity in his nature, he becomes merely an imprint of his profession [*Geschäft*], of his science [*Wissenschaft*] (Schiller 20: 323, AL 19).

Schiller admires ancient Greece and often invokes it as the embodiment of the wholeness of humanity. That said, he thinks that the old solutions will not help to attain the same wholeness in modern conditions. Especially unacceptable to him is any solution detrimental to progress. One of his criticisms of Lycurgus’ legislation is that it made progress impossible. Schiller’s very desire to find a way to mitigate the negative effects of progress without abolishing it proves well that, in his own way, he was aware of the compatibility problem and that we must recognize him as a modern republican. My interpretation of the engagement condition of the ethical state as the capacity for humanity reinforces the view that Schiller’s republicanism is modern. By shifting the emphasis from virtue to freedom of choice, Schiller points to the possibility of a very different kind of republic that respects the freedom of citizens and their right to dispose of that freedom. The humanity reading I propose fits much better with Schiller’s emphasis on diversity than the virtue reading.

Schiller says that “the constitution of a state will be very imperfect if it can bring about unity only through the abolition of diversity” (Schiller 20: 317, AL 11), but what does he mean by diversity? Moggach suggests that Schiller makes a fundamental distinction between two kinds of diversity. First, there is the diversity characteristic of feudalism and absolute monarchy, which is represented by “the differential rights and privileges of a hierarchical social order” (Moggach 2007: 529), a diversity Schiller does not support, according to Moggach. But, second, there is a new diversity generated by a large number of differences in economic functions and interests between different citizens. Such diversity has a right to exist, but must first be ennobled by aesthetic education: “[Schiller’s] program of aesthetic education is based on two fundamental ideas: that highly diversified private interests exist, and that these interests must be consciously assessed and reshaped by their bearers as a requisite for political action” (Moggach 2008: 21). I am not sure that such a division between these two kinds of diversity can be found explicitly in Schiller’s texts, but it seems to me compatible with Schiller’s views. As for the two fundamental ideas that Moggach attributes to Schiller, I agree with Moggach on the condition that we

understand conscious assessment and reshaping as an act of free choice preceded by reflection.

As for diversity, following Moggach, I would like to highlight forms of diversity that Schiller considers acceptable and unacceptable. Quite obviously he does not regard savagery and barbarism as acceptable forms of diversity. Still, he recognizes that people may differ not only in their economic functions and private interests but even more fundamentally in certain anthropological types. In *On Poetry*, he distinguishes two very general groups, realists and idealists, and does not consider one of these groups better than the other. Schiller uses these terms not in a narrowly philosophical or metaphysical sense, but more broadly as two different worldviews with different theoretical and practical (including political) implications. In the broadest sense, it is a preference between a down-to-earth stance that is directed toward what can actually be expected (and also towards prosperity in general), and a somewhat exalted stance based on principles and ideals. Schiller emphasizes the shortcomings of both groups and, although he clearly considers himself an idealist, points out that corrupt idealism is many times more dangerous than corrupt realism because it entails fantasizing [*Phantasterey*], which “leads to an infinite fall into a bottomless depth, and can only end in complete destruction” (Schiller 20: 503). I shall leave a detailed analysis of the specifics and differences between realists and idealists for the future. Here I want to emphasize that Schiller believes that both realists and idealists should be represented in the ethical state since only together do they represent the ideal of humanity, and he specifically mentions this:

I remark, in order to prevent any misinterpretation, that in this division it is not at all intended to cause a choice between the two, consequently a favoring of one to the exclusion of the other. It is precisely this exclusion, which is found in experience, that I fight against; and the result of the present considerations will be the proof that only through the completely equal inclusion of both can the rational concept of humanity be satisfied (Schiller 20: 492–3f*)

What appears to be a simple desire for conceptual completeness, as further description shows, also has more pragmatic justifications: it is the realists who can save the republic when the idealists fall into fantasizing and drag the republic into the abyss; it is the idealists who will oppose the realists’ aspirations to be content with prosperity without progress.¹²⁵

Although Schiller wanted the republic to represent very different kinds of citizens, he was opposed to the idea of direct democracy. He criticizes Solon for

¹²⁵ Schiller understands that these two anthropological types are oversimplifications and that each person combines idealistic and realistic traits. As Sharpe correctly points out, even such an ardent idealist as the Marquis de Posa in *Don Carlos* has some bit of realism in him, as he distinguishes between “a realizable political goal, namely the protection of the Netherlands from brutal suppression” (Sharpe 1991: 90), and his idealistic dream of a future world based on high ideals of freedom and dignity.

making “a grave mistake in allowing the people to decide not through their representatives, but directly; with a huge crowd this could not proceed without confusion and disorder, and since most of this crowd was poor, at times it was not without bribery either” (Schiller 17: 440, my translation). Another reason he considers direct democracy inappropriate is that it gives enormous power to orators [*Redner*] who are able to pass off their own or someone else’s private interests as the common good. Very quickly such orators “became sophists, who put their glory in making the bad good and the good bad” (Schiller 17: 434, my translation). How exactly representation should be arranged, Schiller does not say, noting, however, that finding the golden mean between too few representatives, which leads to aristocratic despotism, and too many, which leads to ochlocracy, is a crucial task for future ages.

3.6. Schiller on the right of rebellion

At the end of this section I want to talk about the right of rebellion and whether Schiller saw revolution as a suitable means of transformation from a dynamic state to an ethical one. I intend to show that he did not think so, and I am going to cite as evidence both his personal statements on revolutions and the implications of his philosophical views. I start with his personal statements.

There is some schematic clichéd way of thinking about the reception of the French Revolution by educated Germans of progressive views. At first, the news of the Revolution led many into enthusiasm, then as more became known about the Revolution, and especially when *la Terreur* began, enthusiasm waned greatly, and opinions became much more reserved or even negative. I am not going into whether this schematic view has any truth to it, I merely note that Schiller does not conform to it at all. Schiller’s attitude to revolutions in general and the French Revolution in particular is examined in detail by Beiser (1992: 93–8). According to Beiser, Schiller listened with gravity and foreboding already to the first news about the French Revolution. Not sharing his acquaintances’ enthusiasm for speeches in the National Assembly, he worried about the new government in France and doubted whether a group of six hundred men could produce a decent and rational constitution. Schiller also gave little credence to the favorable reports emerging from Paris. He wrote, for example, in a letter (October 30, 1789) to Caroline von Beulwitz that the German traveler J.S. Schulz “knows how to tell very entertaining particulars about the riots in Paris, heaven grant that everything he says is true! I fear that he is lying until he believes it himself, and then he prints it” (Schiller 25: 312, my translation).

In the fall of 1792, perhaps, as a result of receiving the title of honorary citizen from the French, as Beiser suggests, Schiller briefly shows a little more hope for the prospects of revolution, but the December news of the decision to try the king and then of his interrogation deprive Schiller of all illusions. Further his attitude only worsened and led him to the diagnosis of the French Revolution which he reports in a letter (July 13, 1793) to Prince von Augustenburg:

The attempt of the French people to assert their sacred human rights and to achieve political freedom has only revealed their incapacity and unworthiness, and has thrown back not only this unhappy people, but also with it a considerable part of Europe, and a whole century, into barbarism and servitude (Schiller 26: 262, LtP 123).

We may assume that this diagnosis refers only to one particular revolution, but there is evidence that Schiller at that time was critical of revolution in general. In a letter (November 6, 1792) to his friend Körner, Schiller suggests that Körner write a historical work on Cromwell's revolution and adds that it would be an excellent opportunity "to make a sound creed [*gesundes Glaubensbekenntniß*] about revolutions," and since it "must be done **absolutely for the benefit of the enemies of revolutions**, the truths which must necessarily be told to the governments cannot make a spiteful impression" (Schiller 26: 164, bold mine).

Schiller's views may surprise those familiar with his reputation as a poet of revolution. However, Beiser (1992: 87–9) convincingly shows that one can hardly find in the works of the young Schiller an unequivocal endorsement of revolution. In *Die Räuber* Karl Moor uses morally repugnant means to achieve his ends, in *Verschwörung des Fiesco* Fiesco does not hesitate to intrigue and, in the end, betrays the cause of the revolution altogether. Quite significant that both of them fail in their aspiration. Safranski (2004: 258) offers a similar analysis of *Don Carlos* and argues that the main revolutionary, the Marquis de Posa, becomes the embodiment of revolutionary morality, which is internally contradictory since, on the one hand, it demands that man himself become the end, on the other, it makes the very same man merely the means of its operations.

Safranski's analysis matches that of Schiller himself. In *Letters on Don Carlos*, Schiller responds to criticism regarding the perfection of the Marquis of Posa's character. Critics saw the character so skillfully and successfully combining a love for a friend and a love for the republic to be unnaturally perfect. Schiller argues that they did not understand the real Marquis of Posa. In his opinion, the critics were blind to the fact that the love of a friend for the Marquis is a completely derivative thing, that in *Don Carlos* the Marquis loves not so much the man himself as the possibility of the liberation of the people, the possibility of the republic. His "attachment to the prince is based" not so much "on personal accord [*persönliche Uebereinstimmung*]" but rather on the fact that "he [Marquis] thinks of him [Don Carlos] as a king's son" (Schiller 1788b, my translation). Schiller stresses that the love of the Marquis de Posa for Don Carlos is not illusory, the Marquis certainly cares about the fate of his friend. Yet, a very apt way to describe the character of the Marquis is to borrow Nietzsche's distinction used by Semyon Frank in *Vekhi* to describe the Russian revolutionaries: "loving those farthest away" is more important and motivating for the Marquis than "loving one's neighbor" (see Frank 1971: 338). In terms of Kantian ethics, which Schiller had not yet adopted when he wrote *Don Carlos*,

the priority of love for those farthest away over love for one's neighbor can be defined as the readiness to use neighbor solely as a means. And that is exactly how Schiller describes the Marquis in his analysis: "the ultimate purpose of Posa's endeavors is moved beyond the prince's interests, <...> the prince is important to him [Posa] only as a tool [*Werkzeug*] for a higher end, <...> his friendship with the prince satisfies a drive other than that of friendship" (Schiller 1788b). When the Marquis sacrifices himself at the end of the play, according to Schiller, he does so not to save his friend, but to preserve in the person of Don Carlos the possibility of change, the possibility of a republic. As a true revolutionary, the Marquis treats not only the prince but even himself merely as a means. Although his fierce commitment to republican virtue commands our respect, Schiller notes that in his character the line between enthusiasm [*Enthusiasmus*] and fanaticism [*Schwärmerei*] is particularly thin. The Marquis is not guided by love or moral law, but only by a pure ideal. The ideal can be beneficial as long as we treat it regulatively as a guiding thread in the right direction, but as soon as we begin to believe in its imminent attainability, we fall into fanaticism. This is exactly what happens to the Marquis, who, being obsessed with his ideal, abandons everything real and natural. For this reason, Schiller makes a negative diagnosis of the Marquis's revolutionary project: "nothing unnatural can lead to the good" (Schiller 1788b).

Schiller's aversion to revolution as a means of transition to a republic is echoed on a conceptual level in his philosophy as well. This aversion has moral and aesthetic reasons. Schiller alludes to a moral reason when he tells Prince von Augustenburg that it is not only the end sought by the Jacobins that is of importance but also their methods:

As much as this great legal transaction [*Rechtshandel*], because of its *content* and its *consequences*, must interest everyone who calls himself a man, so much must it, because of *the manner in which it is conducted* [*Verhandlungsart*], be of especial interest to anyone who thinks for himself (Schiller 26: 260, LtP 122).

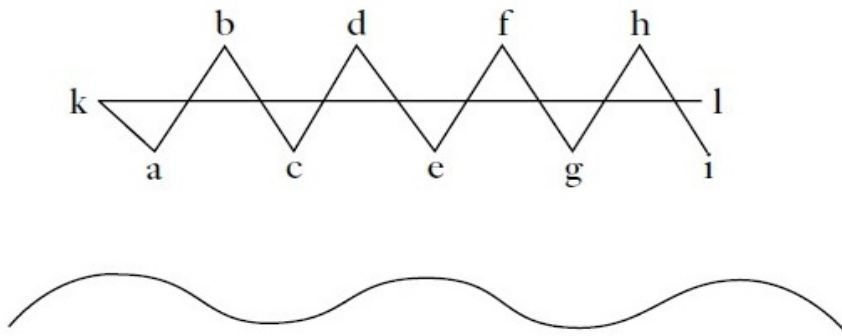
Schiller elaborates on a moral reason for the aversion to revolutions in the third *Aesthetic Letter*. The dynamic state ensures the preservation of the natural man; by removing the dynamic state, we risk destroying the very thing from which only the moral man can emerge:

Reason takes from man something that he really possesses, and without which he would have nothing, pointing him towards something that he could, and ought to, possess; and if this turns out to be asking too much of him reason would, for the sake of humanity that he still lacks, a lack that does his existence no harm, tear him from that animality which is actually the condition of his humanity (Schiller 20: 314, AL 8).

I agree with Beiser who says it is not a prudential argument, but precisely a moral one. The point is not that the revolutionary destruction of the dynamic state is a threat to the happiness of the natural man, but that "there cannot even

be reform for the sake of moral principles if our physical existence is undermined” (Beiser 2005: 132). What would Schiller say if most, or even all, of the citizens of a dynamic state were already moral men? I suppose he would say that then we are probably no longer talking about the dynamic state. But even assuming that the dynamic state, with a majority of its citizens already being moral men, is possible, even then the revolutionary destruction of that state would be immoral because within every moral man there is a natural man who might not survive the process.

Schiller has aesthetic reasons for rejecting the revolution. I was prompted to this idea by Lozinskaya’s comments on the sixth volume of the Soviet collection of Schiller’s works (see Schiller 1957: 745). She draws attention to how Schiller in *Kallias or Concerning Beauty* (henceforth *Kallias*) compares two lines, one of which is zigzagging and the other undulating: Here is how Schiller explains why he finds the second line more beautiful than the first:



Now, the whole difference between the second and the first line is that the former changes its direction *ex abrupto* while the latter does it unnoticed; the difference of their effects on the aesthetic feeling must be based on this single noticeable difference in quality. But what is a sudden change of direction if not a **violent change**? Nature does not love **jumps**. If we see it making one, it appears that it has suffered **violence**. A movement seems free, however, if one cannot name the particular point at which it changes its direction. This is the case with the curving line which is different from the line above only in its *freedom* (Schiller 26: 215–6, K 173, my emphasis (bold)).

Lozinskaya argues that in this fragment Schiller provides an aesthetic justification for his rejection of revolutionary methods. Revolution is bad not only because it is immoral but also because, due to its cruelty and drastic change, it is ugly and unnatural. Perhaps revolution could be justified in terms of another aesthetic category, namely the sublime, but, in terms of beauty and harmony, it must be rejected as a means of transforming a dynamic state into an ethical one. Instead, we must choose a way in which no one can trace exactly when the

change begins and ends. That is, Schiller's aesthetic views entail moderate reformism in politics.

Nevertheless, Schiller does not completely reject the right of rebellion. And we can find with some certainty the place from which revolution can be conceptually derived. As I wrote above, the dynamic state, according to Schiller, ought not to be destroyed through a revolution because it ensures the survival of the natural man. This is where the loophole for the right to revolution lies since we can imagine a state that does not provide for such survival. It is on these grounds that Schiller defends the right of rebellion in his *Revolt of the Netherlands*. As Beiser (1992: 89) notes, Schiller describes Philip II's reign as an unparalleled tyranny that attacked basic rights of life and property. The Dutch, according to Schiller, resorted to rebellion only after all negotiations had failed. We see a similar story in Schiller's later drama *Wilhelm Tell*. Gessler is portrayed as a mad tyrant, and Wilhelm Tell behaves calmly as long as those in power leave him alone. His rebellion is the forced rebellion of an apolitical man driven to extremes. Thus, although revolution cannot be a political means to transform the state, according to Schiller, citizens still have the right to rebel if the government threatens even their physical existence.

In this long section, I discussed the ethical state, which I interpreted as a modern republic that respects freedom and diversity. Drawing on Schiller's texts, I have reconstructed some features of his republicanism, showing the significance of liberalism for him, and his rejection of revolution as a method for founding a republic. However, Schiller's political philosophy does not end there. I have mentioned that Schiller criticizes Solon for prescribing virtue in the law, as Schiller believes that virtue is something that cannot be imposed on citizens from the outside by means of legislation or education; only citizens themselves can freely strive for it, provided that their capacity for humanity is unhindered. That said, he also speculates in his texts about what an ethically and aesthetically perfect state might look like, whose citizens are beautiful souls with fully cultivated virtue. Although Schiller does not believe that this state can be fully realized in our imperfect world, he holds that it has great value as a regulative ideal. The last section of this chapter is devoted to it.

4. The aesthetic state of semblances

Unlike the concept of an ethical state, Schiller's concept of an aesthetic state has received a great deal of attention in the literature.¹²⁶ Almost every author who writes about Schiller's philosophy touches on it in one way or another. However, the concept of the aesthetic state is still not completely demarcated from the concept of the ethical state. Although authors rarely write about the latter, they very often ascribe its features to the former. I am going to focus only on those features of the aesthetic state that belong to it and make it unique. To

¹²⁶ For an overview of the history of the concept of the aesthetic state, see Chytry (1989).

put it simply, the demarcation is based on the following criterion: the ethical state is built exclusively on the requirements of reason, that is, moral obligations; the aesthetic state adds to the requirements of reason the requirements of an ennobled nature, that is, aesthetic obligations. It should be noted that Schiller considers aesthetic obligations to be rational as well, that is, endorsed by reason. One of the clear differences between aesthetic obligations and moral obligations is the external unenforceability of the former.¹²⁷ The laws of the ethical state determine not people's internal attitudes, but only their external actions. As for the aesthetic state, it relies not on laws, but on beauty and sociable character [*geselliger Charakter*] (Schiller 20: 410, AL 110), so aesthetic obligations are not the mandates of the law, but exercises of free play. In other words, the aesthetic state does not need to enforce aesthetic obligations because it presupposes such citizens for whom these obligations are already fully internalized and are a manifestation of their genuine sociability.

I will begin this section with a discussion of how we should understand the aesthetic state and aesthetic normativity; then I address Pugh and Kain's critique that the aesthetic state involves only a certain attitude about how we should perceive the world, but has no practical implications for the real (phenomenal) world; I show that such criticism completely ignores the fact that for Schiller beauty is in some sense an objective property and thus any aesthetic obligations demand the real change in the world around us; finally, I discuss under what conditions an aesthetic state is possible and what aesthetic obligations the pursuit of it imposes on us.

4.1. The aesthetic state as a regulative ideal

According to one view in the literature, the aesthetic state is not something that supersedes (conceptually or historically) the ethical state. For example, according to Eva Schaper, the aesthetic state emerges on the condition that the dynamic state and the ethical state are "interacting and holding each other in check" (Schaper 1985: 166). That is, the aesthetic state coexists with the other two states as an emergent result of their interaction. I think Schaper goes too far in making an analogy with the interaction of two basic drives when she presents the aesthetic state as the result of the interaction of the dynamic and the ethical states. As I showed earlier, Schiller quite clearly distinguishes between the dynamic state, as formed naturally and on the basis of the interaction of forces, and the ethical state, which involves a social contract and legislation on the

¹²⁷ According to Kant, not all moral obligations are coercively enforceable either. In particular, the duties of virtue are unenforceable by others. Moreover, as Onora O'Neill shows, some Kantian duties of right, such as "the duty to enter a civil condition and duties of equity, are not in principle enforceable" (O'Neill 2016: 111) as well. Of course, at the time of writing the *Aesthetic Letters*, Schiller could not have known about Kant's distinction between duties of virtue and duties of right. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that in emphasizing the aesthetic character of virtue, Schiller somewhat anticipates Kant's distinction.

basis of a general will. Moreover, as you remember, Schiller believes that the main problem of transformation from a dynamic state to an ethical one is the unreadiness of citizens. And this unreadiness, if not restrained through the mechanisms of the dynamic state, may result in anarchy and numerous deaths. The possibility of the coexistence of dynamic and ethical states would make the problem of transformation unintelligible. If the creation of an ethical state does not require the disappearance of the dynamic state, it is simply impossible to see why the mechanisms that restrain unprepared citizens might disappear. Therefore, I do not think the interaction of a dynamic and an ethical state is possible since, according to Schiller, the latter truly supersedes the former.

That said, I think Schaper conveys well Schiller's important point that the aesthetic state can exist only occasionally and additionally. As Schiller says, we can find it "only, like the pure church and the pure republic, in a few select circles" (Schiller 20: 412, AL 112fn*). The aesthetic state, at least for the time being, is something that exists alongside the established state, not instead of it. But if the aesthetic state coexists with the other state, what kind of state does it coexist with? Pugh thinks it coexists with the dynamic state as a substitute for the rational, i.e. ethical state:

the end of the treatise therefore offers us an aesthetic (in the sense of unreal) substitute for the rational state, that is, a state in which the actual relationships and institutions of feudalism are preserved but in which the ruler and subjects act out, by means of a culture of courtesy and ornament, the values that exist in the ideal state of happiness (Pugh 1997: 360).

Pugh's position is that instead of establishing the ethical state that is likely to end in another *la Terreur*, Schiller offers an aesthetic alternative in the form of a particular contemplative attitude toward the world. This attitude focuses not on the phenomena around us, but on the semblances [*Schein*] related to them. So, according to Pugh, Schiller's aesthetic state coexists with the dynamic one and conceals from us, albeit with our voluntary permission, its shortcomings. That is, having failed to find real political freedom and having refused to seek it, we turn to beauty as illusory freedom.

I have three concerns about this reading of Schiller. My first concern is that Pugh's position implies that for Schiller the ethical state is an unrealizable project, so we substitute it for the realizable project of the aesthetic state. I do not see in Schiller's texts sufficient grounds to justify this implication. On the contrary, Schiller holds that the aesthetic state is rather a need which "exists in every finely tuned soul" and also "in a few select circles" (Schiller 20: 412, AL 112fn*) than a realizable political program. At the same time, he never questions the possibility or desirability of transition to an ethical state, even if he doubts that current generations are capable of it. Of these two types of state, Schiller considers the aesthetic state rather than the ethical state to be utopian and unattainable.

The second concern is that Pugh's position implies that for Schiller the aesthetic takes precedence over the ethical. But, as Pugh himself brilliantly and repeatedly shows in his book (Pugh 1997), in all conceptual dilemmas that force Schiller to choose between the ethical and the aesthetic, he always chooses the ethical. Let us turn to the beautiful soul, for example, the very citizen of the aesthetic state. According to Schiller, when the limits of humanity permit it, the beautiful soul behaves gracefully, that is, it combines morality and beauty and performs its duty with ease and joy. But as soon as the beautiful soul finds itself in a situation in which doing duty with ease and joy is contrary to humanity, it must prefer painful duty to joy and ease and thereby exhibit dignity: "humans should do everything with grace that can be carried out within humanity, and everything with dignity that requires going beyond humanity" (Schiller 20: 298, GD 162). It would be highly inconsistent for Schiller to allow the substitution of the ethical state with the aesthetic semblances since he holds that morality has a higher priority than beauty.

Schiller's theory of the beautiful soul gives us the key to understanding the aesthetic state. Grace requires more than moral behavior, it requires beauty beyond that. We might say that the aesthetic state, in addition to moral normativity, involves another kind of normativity, aesthetic normativity. In contrast to Pugh, I insist that the aesthetic state, according to Schiller, must coexist with the ethical state, principally as a kind of regulative ideal. There is no way the aesthetic state can coexist with the dynamic state because the aesthetic state presupposes a priority of the ethical, which the dynamic state cannot provide. The aesthetic state can never be fully realized precisely because our aspirations for beauty are always limited by the demands of the moral law. And in the conflict between morality and beauty, which is unavoidable in our imperfect world, the former has normative precedence. Schiller talks about this as early as in *Kallias*:

Reason **demands** *imperatively* of acts of will, or moral acts, that they exist through the pure form of reason; reason can only **wish** [*wünschen*] (not demand) that natural effects be *through themselves*, that they show autonomy (Schiller 26: 182, K 151, my emphasis (bold)).

I read the distinction between demands and wishes of reason as an emphasis that the former has normative precedence over the latter. Demands must always be met, and wishes only when they can be reconciled with demands. And so we have a first necessary condition of an aesthetic state. Only by establishing a state in which the demands of reason are met, that is, an ethical state, can we truly begin to strive for the aesthetic state. It will never completely supersede the ethical state, but in the best moments it can coexist with it. The wishes of reason, i.e. aesthetic obligations, will never become laws, but remain an expression of free play, fully achievable only by beautiful souls. This is where we discern the second necessary condition for the aesthetic state: its citizens

must be beautiful souls, that is, people who have achieved the greatest possible harmony between demands and wishes of reason.

However, these two do not exhaust the necessary conditions for the aesthetic state, for Schiller believes that striving for the aesthetic state involves a change not only in ourselves and our attitude toward the world but also in the world itself. And this brings me to my third concern with Pugh's reading of Schiller, namely, his understanding of beauty as illusory freedom. I discuss it in the next subsection.

4.2. Practicality of aesthetic obligations

In the previous section I showed that the ideal of the aesthetic state presupposes the existence of an ethical state and citizens who have become beautiful souls. The establishment of an ethical state is not an aesthetic obligation per se, since it derives entirely from the demands of pure reason. Now, becoming a beautiful soul is an aesthetic obligation. But it is an obligation that concerns only the person herself and her worldview, not the world around her. Throughout the literature, we can see worry about the practicality of aesthetic obligations. Does their fulfillment lead to any practical and perceptible effects in the world around us?

Pugh and Kain answer this question negatively. Pugh notes that instead of real transformation, the aesthetic state offers us "a permanent illusion, a kind of never-ending dramatic performance in which individuals participate willingly and knowingly" (Pugh 1997: 385). Kain, acknowledging Schiller's desire to ennoble the labor of the lower classes through aesthetic education, notes with regret that Schiller's real proposals are only concerned with how we should perceive this labor, but "[n]othing is said of transforming the actual conditions of work" (Kain 1982: 23). In other words, the problem is that the mere attitude of seeing natural objects as beautiful does nothing to change the real world around us. We can pretend as much as we like that we live in a beautiful society, but this will not make it any freer or more just; we can perceive the worker's lot as being full of its own particular proletarian beauty, but this will not make it one bit easier.

Pugh and Kain's criticism of the aesthetic state and of beauty as illusory freedom with no practical consequences for the world around us is based on an assumption that aesthetic normativity is fully exhausted by perceptual obligations. In other words, Pugh and Kain seem to hold that the only practical consequence of our aesthetic obligations is that we should perceive beauty everywhere. To some extent, this is a correct assumption, except that Pugh and Kain make the very wrong emphasis. The obligation to perceive beauty everywhere can be read in two ways: first, as an obligation to perceive beauty where there is no objective basis for it; second, as an obligation to transform the world so that we can perceive beauty in it. Pugh and Kain's criticisms are based on the first option, which is a perceptual reading. But this reading is clearly erroneous. That Schiller has the second option in mind is confirmed by his

theory of the beautiful soul. To become a beautiful soul, it is not enough just to change one's attitude toward oneself, one must work on oneself for a long time, and cultivate virtue, thereby making the fulfillment of one's duty easy and pleasant. Pugh and Kain ignore Schiller's essential thesis that beauty has some objective grounds. As Schiller claims in *Kallias*, there should be "the objective fact about things which enables them to appear free" and which is "the very same which enables them, if it is present at all, to appear beautiful, and if it is not present, destroys their beauty" (Schiller 26: 199, K 160). It is not enough to change our attitudes toward ourselves or the world to start perceiving ourselves and the world as beautiful. We need to change some objective facts about ourselves and the world, only then can we begin to perceive ourselves and the world as beautiful. In Schiller's terms, we ought to ennoble the world, and this ennoblement [*Veredlung*] is the third necessary condition of the aesthetic state. Therefore, contrary to Pugh and Kain, the abstract obligation to perceive beauty everywhere implies very serious practical consequences for the world around us: until the world is ennobled, we cannot perceive it as beautiful. To perceive beauty everywhere means to make everything beautiful.

4.3. The content of aesthetic obligations

The important question remains about the concrete content of aesthetic obligations. In Chapter One, I pointed out that Schiller *de facto* formulates the aesthetic imperative:

Beauty, or rather taste, regards all things as *ends in themselves* and absolutely does not tolerate that one serves the other as a means or bears the yoke. In the aesthetic world, every natural being is a free citizen who has equal rights with the noblest, and may not even be forced *for the sake of the whole*, but must absolutely consent to everything (Schiller 26: 212, K 170).

This shows the considerable influence of Kant's *Formula of Humanity* on Schiller's deliberation on aesthetic normativity. Basically, Schiller extends it to all natural beings. Let us call it *the Formula of Taste*: so act that you treat every natural being always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means. Another formula of the aesthetic imperative can be discerned in Schiller's view that in the aesthetic state, people are united not by universal laws, but by rules of free play. Let us call it *the Formula of Play*: act in accordance with the rules of a freely playing member of the aesthetic state. These two formulas are very abstract, but they give some idea of what is to expect from particular aesthetic obligations. I list some more specific ideas in Chapter One, but let us speculate on this a bit more, with a special emphasis on what is relevant to politics and sociability.

As it follows from the aesthetic imperative, every natural being can have an aesthetic claim on us. By natural beings, Schiller means any spatiotemporal object or phenomenon. It is worth remembering that for Schiller, beauty is directly related to harmony. The demand to make the world beautiful is a

demand to make it harmonious so that nothing seems forced or violent. Thus, any spatiotemporal object or phenomenon has an aesthetic claim on us not to exercise obvious violence against it. We can roughly distinguish three groups of such objects: (i) people as embodied sensual-rational beings; (ii) man-made artifacts, including works of art; (iii) natural objects in the narrow sense, like animals, rocks, oceans, etc.. This is my classification, and I employ it rather for convenience than for clarification. Schiller himself – as well as Kant – outlines only the distinction between works of art and aesthetic objects of natural origin.

Let us start with the aesthetic obligations toward people as embodied sensual-rational beings. I have already discussed on several occasions the aesthetic obligations of a person toward herself, which involve her transformation into a beautiful soul capable of harmonizing the demands of the moral law with those of ennobled sensibility, so I will not reiterate this topic here.¹²⁸ Instead, I concentrate on the aesthetic obligations toward other people. In *Kallias*, Schiller uses gentility as an example of such obligations. According to Schiller, gentility involves two laws: first, “*have consideration for the freedom of others*”; and, second, “*show your freedom*”. It is difficult to follow both, “but gentility always requires it relentlessly, and it alone makes the cosmopolitan man” (Schiller 26: 216, K 174). The question may arise, what exactly are the natural beings involved in gentility? Does not gentility regulate relationships between human beings, that is, between persons? The point is that Schiller regards gentility not as a moral obligation toward man as a person, but as an aesthetic obligation toward man as a natural being. Courteousness, polite prudence, the ability to turn a blind eye to the unimportant faults of others – all these are usually not the demands of the moral law. Accordingly, sharp straightforwardness in most cases is not a violation of our moral obligation toward others as persons. But as soon as we extend the claims of pure practical reason to nature and wish to see the exhibition of freedom in the sensual world, we become aware of a new set of obligations to other people, not as persons now, but as natural beings who are entitled to exhibit their freedom. Schiller even connects the universality of the aesthetic experience of beauty with cosmopolitanism (Schiller 26: 216, K 174). Thus, as citizens of the aesthetic state, we ought to set aside prejudice against people from other countries and cultures and regard them as equals. And this is not simply a reiteration of Kant’s *Formula of Humanity* in aesthetic terms. Aesthetic normativity requires not merely a formal respect for human beings as legislators of the moral law, but a more explicit regard for their exhibition of permissible freedom, that is, for their customs, culture, and history. We need “to accept alien nature into ourselves truly and faithfully, to adapt to alien situations, to make the feelings of others our own” (Schiller 20: 350fn*, AL 48fn*).

As for aesthetic claims made on us by man-made artifacts, Schiller gives some examples in *Kallias*. For example, we can speak of an aesthetic obligation to one’s own clothing: “even the gown I wear on my body demands respect for

¹²⁸ See Chapter Two for the detailed discussion of a beautiful soul.

its freedom from me” (Schiller 26: 212, K 170). Only if neither the clothes nor the one wearing them infringes on each other’s freedom can we say that a person is well dressed. In this parlance, Schiller argues that clothes should fit the person and that they should be neither very tight nor very loose. In other words, he stresses the importance of the harmonious interaction between natural beings. Schiller also makes the point that as soon as the function of an artifact becomes too apparent to us, the artifact loses at least some of its beauty. For example, the handle of the pot may make its function too apparent, so “if the pot is to be beautiful, its handle must spring from it so unforced and freely that one forgets its purpose [*Bestimmung*]” (Schiller 26: 212, K 170). The obviousness of function robs the artifact of its beauty because it makes too obvious its subordination to us. That is, it makes too obvious that the artifact is merely a means.

Speaking of the aesthetic obligations to natural objects in the narrow sense, such as animals, rocks, or oceans, Schiller shifts his focus to how they should be portrayed in artistic works. And here he touches on another important idea, namely naturalness. He says, for example, that “a birch, a pine, a poplar are beautiful if they grow straight up, while an oak is beautiful if it bends” (Schiller, 26: 213, K 171). His point is that the object must be perceived as if it were fully determined by its nature, which he defines as “the inner principle in the existence of a thing [*das innere Prinzip der Existenz an einem Dinge*]” (Schiller 26: 207, K 164). Beiser (2005: 223) argues that thereby Schiller introduces into his philosophy the Spinozist idea of freedom as acting according to one’s nature. But Schiller’s thesis is not that acting according to one’s nature is freedom, but only that an object is perceived as free if it is perceived as existing according to its nature. And from there we can derive another aesthetic obligation. If we are to make the world beautiful, and the perception of an object existing according to its nature is the perception of that object as free and, hence, beautiful, then we must promote that all objects be perceived as existing according to their nature.

But what does this mean in practical terms? Among other things, Schiller’s aesthetic imperative provides a powerful conceptual basis for aesthetic versions of animal ethics and environmental ethics. Let me remind you that Schiller emphasizes that “[i]n the aesthetic state, everything – even the serving tool [*dienende Werkzeug*] – is a free citizen who has equal rights with the noblest” (Schiller 20: 412, AL 112) and that all natural objects should be regarded as ends in themselves (Schiller 26: 212, K 170). What he means, in my view, is that we should at the very least not hinder the existence of natural objects in accordance with their nature. Because if we do hinder it, we cannot help but perceive these objects as not existing in accordance with their nature. For example, we should not prevent living beings from living and physically free beings from being physically free, and so on. That is, aesthetic normativity forbids us to curtail the perceived freedom of all beings around us. Finally, I would like to point out that it is not just a matter of not preventing natural beings from exhibiting their freedom. Schiller’s aesthetic imperative obligates

us to facilitate natural beings' existence according to the inner principle, that is, we ought to promote their flourishing. We have an aesthetic obligation to participate in ennobling the world. The very striving for an aesthetic state implies such participation.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I reconstructed Schiller's political philosophy and his ternary typology of states. I showed that, according to Schiller, the precise content of rights in a dynamic state cannot be specified conceptually, since they are formed dynamically by the interaction of different forces. I explained why the moral man cannot be satisfied with a dynamic state: he wants to participate in the establishment and legislation of the state, and in a dynamic state, this is impossible. I showed that Schiller's ethical state is a kind of republic involving the social contact and formation of the general will and that its establishment and maintenance are possible only on the condition that citizens possess an uncompromised capacity for choice, or in Schiller's terms, capacity for humanity. I argued that Schiller is a modern rather than a classical republican, that he is a cultural liberal but his economic liberalism is qualified, that Schiller is an egalitarian, and that he allows the right of revolt only if the government threatens the physical existence of its citizens. I defended the reading of the aesthetic state as a regulative ideal that presupposes the ethical state and calls for ennobling the citizens and the world around them. Finally, I showed that pursuing this regulative ideal has profound practical consequences.

CONCLUSION

Already in his early philosophical writings, Schiller expressed profound anxiety about an incalculable gulf between nature and freedom. In this period, he conceived of this gulf in classic terms as the problem of interaction between body and mind. Schiller studied medicine and was well acquainted with modern scientific theories on the subject. He could not escape the thought that science had encroached on the most important spheres of life, weakening the power of the magical and the divine upon human minds, thereby destroying the (seeming) external coherence of the world and the internal coherence of the individual. Schiller expressed his longing for the lost world of the past vividly in poetry, particularly in the poem *Die Götter Griechenlandes*. In his early philosophical texts, he placed greater emphasis on the loss of inner harmony. Schiller felt that mechanistic theories of body and mind interaction left little hope for free will. In the artistic texts of this period, however, he discussed how the loss of inner harmony inevitably also entails the loss of outer harmony. Schiller feared that a world without the divine and the magical is extremely similar to a world without ideals and principles. It was unclear to him what could bind such a world together other than egoism and utility. He did not believe that genuine sociability and just political freedom could be built on egoism and utility. On the contrary, he saw modernity leading to an increasing fragmentation of society through the division of labor and over-specialization. Schiller was neither the first nor the last to see that the disenchantment of the world resulted in a total loss of coherence and meaning. He followed Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and similar ideas can be encountered subsequently in Alexis de Tocqueville, Friedrich Nietzsche, Max Weber, and many others (see Sonenscher 2020: 17).

We should not exaggerate Schiller's pessimism. Despite his longing for the magical and the divine, he hoped for the possibility of a new coherence brought about by the beautiful. Guided by this hope, Schiller found in Kant's philosophy a conceptual apparatus that allowed him to better articulate both the problem that tormented him and the possible way to solve it. It is no coincidence that Kant's philosophy resonated so much with Schiller. In the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, a book that Schiller studied particularly closely, Kant tried to overcome "an incalculable gulf fixed between the domain of the concept of nature, as the sensible, and the domain of the concept of freedom, as the supersensible" (Kant 5: 175–6, CPJ 63). Kant associated the overcoming of the gulf between nature and freedom with the search for the a priori principle of the reflecting power of judgment, which was to show how the connection between lawfulness and contingency could be possible. It was especially important for Schiller that, according to Kant, the aesthetic judgments of the beautiful and the sublime are grounded in this principle. In other words, Kant believed that the beautiful and the sublime make an important contribution to showing how freedom and nature can be unified. This idea in Kant was dear and clear to

Schiller. Having studied Kant, Schiller entered into a philosophical struggle for a future without dissociation and fragmentation.

Throughout the six chapters of my dissertation, I have shown how Schiller detects different kinds of disharmony and associates each of them with a particular kind of unfreedom. Chapter One was devoted to Schiller's theory of beauty. It demonstrated that for Schiller, aesthetics has direct practical significance. In his ardent defence of beauty, Schiller argues that aesthetic judgments are more closely analogous to practical judgments of what ought to be than to theoretical judgments of what (there) is. Here, perhaps, he took the first decisive step beyond Kant in asserting the practical nature of aesthetic normativity. According to Schiller, "[t]he beautiful is not a concept of experience, but rather an imperative. It is certainly objective, but only as a necessary task for sensual-rational nature" (Schiller 27: 70). Beauty bridges nature and freedom through its practicality. On the one hand, beauty rests on some objective facts about aesthetic objects, even though it is not reducible to them. On the other hand, reality can never fully satisfy the ideal of beauty, and so beauty always remains imperative. Beauty, as Schiller defined it, is freedom in appearance. Of course, he was speaking here of freedom in a symbolic sense, since, as a Kantian, he did not believe that a real demonstration of freedom is possible in the spatio-temporal world of phenomena. Instead, Schiller suggested that we turn to how beautiful objects are perceived, in other words, to the phenomenology of the beautiful, or, in his terms, to facts for our senses (Schiller 26: 210, K 168–9). In discussing the phenomenology of beauty, Schiller arrived at the idea of harmony. He said that an object is perceived as beautiful only if it is perceived as self-determining according to its own nature, and even this nature ought to be perceived as if it were freely chosen by the object. The most important condition of such a perception, according to Schiller, is harmony between the form and matter of the object. If form prevails over the matter, then the object looks overly artificial, with the ends of its author being too easy to identify; typical examples of the form prevailing are explicit didacticism and propaganda. If matter dominates form, then the object looks crude, lifeless, and unfree; it is incapable of evoking any suspension of disbelief in its viewer. An example of this would be any poorly made work of art in which one can instantly sense the incompleteness and ineptitude of its author.

Beauty as an aesthetic imperative guides the artist and demands him to adhere to the greatest possible harmony in his creations. However, in introducing the aesthetic imperative, Schiller immediately emphasized that it commands not only artists in the narrow sense. The aesthetic imperative is equally important to every person. In Chapter Two, I showed how aesthetic imperative is embodied in the justified demand of each person as a sensual-rational nature toward himself. In analyzing human action, Kant, too, distinguished between form and matter. He calls practical principles formal only if they are abstracted from all subjective material ends (Kant 4: 427–8, GMM 78). The formal, in this case, means having the form of law, that is, it can be applied universally and without contradiction. The material has to do with individual desires,

inclinations, and purposes, that is, with something that people may or may not have. The conflict between the formal and the material, understood in this way, is the conflict between the requirements of the moral law and individual desires or needs. Kant made it clear that this conflict must be resolved in favor of the formal, that is, the moral law. It was here that Schiller saw a potential encroachment on the legitimate demands of the aesthetic imperative. The domination of form over matter is detrimental to beauty. More importantly, it is, in a sense, detrimental to freedom. A human being who constantly sacrifices everything that is subjectively important and dear to him for the sake of a formal ideal of the moral law can command our respect for his spiritual sublimity, and, in this sense, we will appreciate his spiritual freedom. But through the painful sacrifices he constantly makes, he will also manifest his lack of freedom as a sensual being, in the dissertation I called this variety of freedom anthropological. As I have shown, Schiller applied his theory of beauty to morality, thus creating the first Kantian theory of virtue or the theory of a beautiful soul. In Schiller's dialogue with Kant, it is important to understand what it was precisely that Schiller was disputing and what he was not disputing in Kant's philosophy. Most importantly, Schiller actually accepted that the formal has primacy over the material. In other words, he held that the moral imperative has precedence over the aesthetic one. However, Schiller also emphasized that they do not have to contradict each other. Formal practical principles are not necessarily incompatible with individual material ends. The task of a truly moral person is to minimize the contradictions between the requirements of the moral law and his individual desires or needs. Both the moral and the aesthetic imperative converge in this task, which is accomplished through the cultivation of virtue. Every person is a bit of an artist in this sense, for he creates himself throughout his life as the most important work of art. Just as with other objects, the task of the artist is to keep form and matter from dominating each other. The moral man should not become a gloomy monastic ascetic, devoid of all feeling. Instead, he should work on his inclinations, cultivate those that help him in his moral life and restrain those that oppose it, thus becoming a beautiful soul. In the process of working on himself, he ought to strive for a harmony of dispositions; in other words, he ought to transform himself so that moral law and inclinations move him in the same direction, rather than tearing him apart. Achieving perfect harmony is impossible, but this is true for any aesthetic object. The ideal of beauty is not attainable in the phenomenal world, but that is no reason not to strive for it.

A person can become a beautiful soul only by his own will. Virtue, according to Schiller, cannot be imposed on the person from outside, the person must freely choose it as his end. And that brings us to the problem I discussed at length in Chapters Three, Four, and Five. Already in his early works, under the influence of modern medical and philosophical theories, Schiller began to feel that free will is under threat. Unlike Kant, he was particularly interested in its executive rather than legislative aspect. He was interested in self-determination proper, rather than self-legislation. Schiller believed that without assuming

individual self-determination it would be impossible to conceive of morality, genuine sociability, or just polity. He approached individual self-determination through the concept of choice. Acts of choice are the individual building blocks of self-determination. Schiller conceptualized the capacity for individual self-determination through the act of choice as the capacity for humanity. Chapter Three unpacked Schiller's analysis of necessary conditions of choice. Schiller believed that the act of choice is possible under two conditions. First, a person must be able to take a reflective distance from the world. It means that he must not act automatically, instead, he must, through a process of reflection, grasp the situation, the possible options, as well as the reasons for favoring one or another option. Moreover, reflection should not simply accompany the choice but have a direct influence on it. In other words, the choice must be reflection-guided. Hence, second, the awareness that the person has a reason for acting in a certain way must motivate him to act that way. This does not mean that this awareness must necessarily compel him to act that way, but it must have genuine motivating power. Thus, according to Schiller, the act of choice requires reflective distance and motivational commitment. These two conditions of choice apparently contradict each other, for the first implies detachment from the world, and the second, by contrast, involvement in the world. Schiller argued that choice is possible only if a person is in an aesthetic condition of active determinability, which alone makes it possible to combine reflective distance with motivational commitment. The condition of active determinability is attainable only through a certain interaction of mental faculties, reason and sensibility. Schiller described this interaction psychologically in terms of drives, the formal drive associated with reason, and the material drive associated with sensibility. To show how detachment and involvement can be brought together, Schiller ventured to point out the possibility of harmony which involves a conflict at the same time. Harmony, which I have called the harmony of power, between reason and sensibility is achieved if the formal and material drives are equally strong and reciprocally strained. Essentially, Schiller described a kind of perfect competition between the mental faculties. Reason and sensibility try to determine a person to action, but since their claims are equally strong, they act as checks and balances upon each other, thereby removing the necessity of each other's claims. Thus the person, through the activity of the formal drive, finds himself capable of reflecting on the situation, options, and reasons, and, through the equal activity of the material drive, he maintains an emotional connection with the reasons relevant to this situation. Schiller described this harmonious conflict between the two drives as the emergence of a complex third drive, the play drive. Schiller's term 'play' in this case does not mean a lack of seriousness but accentuates that in exercising the choice a person is combining lawfulness and contingency.

Schiller did not believe that every person at any time can enter into an aesthetic condition of active determinability, characterized by the equally strong and reciprocal strain of the two basic drives. He associated the attainment of this condition with the harmonious development of human capacities. Any one-

dimensional development of a person, say, the development of capacities related exclusively to sensibility, leads to the incapacity of that person to enter into an aesthetic condition of active determinability, and thus makes him incapable of proper individual self-determination through acts of choice. By introducing a connection between people's harmonious development and their individual self-determination, that is, their capacity for humanity, Schiller introduces a historical dimension to individual self-determination. The historical context can facilitate or hinder the harmonious development of human capacities, hence it can facilitate or hinder people's individual self-determination. Schiller was particularly interested in modernity, characterized by the division of labor and over-specialization. The division of labor and over-specialization result in a selective development of people's capacities, therefore, modernity is detrimental to individual self-determination. Chapter Four demonstrated that Schiller framed the question about individual self-determination as a political problem. He wanted to explain why the French Revolution led to *la Terreur* despite right principles, just constitutions, and vivid speeches in defense of the ideals of reason. His central thesis was that political self-determination implies that citizens are willing and able to participate in the establishment and affairs of the state and that such participation, in turn, implies that they are capable of freely reflecting on, and pursuing, the common good. In other words, individual self-determination is a condition for political self-determination. Schiller believed that modernity, with its division of labor, had led to a fragmentation of each individual's humanity and, hence, to people's incapacity for individual self-determination. The right principles and high ideals simply could not resonate with them, people either failed to notice them or remained deaf to them. Schiller described this problem in terms of modern savagery and barbarism. He called savages those whose disharmonious development led to the domination of the sensual over the rational within them; and he called barbarians, those whose development led to the domination of the rational over the sensual. The former lacked reflective distance, and the latter – motivational commitment and resolve needed to do the right thing.

Thus, according to Schiller, modernity, with its science and progress, had not only banished the magical and the divine, severing the ties between people and the world, but had also destroyed the wholeness of individuals, severing the ties between their rational and sensual selves. Nevertheless, Schiller believed that modernity was not hopeless and that there was a way to restore the wholeness of humanity. He attributed his hope for a new coherence to aesthetic education. Chapter Five described in detail all the functions of art that Schiller considered in his texts. Here it will suffice to mention the most important, the harmonizing function. Schiller believed that beauty is the object of the play drive. In other words, it is through the aesthetic experience of beauty that the formal and material drives come into reciprocal interaction. Beauty addresses our entire sensual-rational nature and, therefore, prepares us for freedom of choice. Art, on the one hand, being fiction, accustoms us to reflective distance, thereby freeing us from the pressure of reality; on the other hand, despite this distance, art

touches us, remaining emotionally meaningful to us. The aesthetic experience of beauty teaches us to habitually combine reflective distance with motivational commitment, thus restoring our capacity for humanity.

Having restored the capacity for humanity, people can participate in common political life and establish an ethical state. Chapter Six argued that the ethical state is a republic based on a social contract and the formation of a general will as a foundation of legislation. One needs to delve deep into Schiller's philosophy to grasp its political nature and goals. Ultimately, almost all of the themes he develops – the practicality of the aesthetic, the inner ideal of the beautiful soul, the historicity of individual self-determination, and the capacity for humanity as a condition of political self-determination – are in one way or another related to politics. But the capacity for humanity is of course the most central concept to Schiller's republicanism. According to my reading of Schiller, it is the necessary condition for the establishment and maintenance of an ethical state. The ethical state cannot be established for external purposes; its establishment is a duty. A person needs it not as a means for solving problems, but as something that corresponds to his dignity. Only by being able to choose freely can he establish the ethical state and participate in its affairs. Schiller's emphasis on free choice is evident in other aspects of his republicanism. For example, Schiller was opposed to virtue being imposed by the state through legislation or education. He emphasized that no one could be commanded to respect others. The absence of the didactic function of art within his project of aesthetic education is quite eloquent. Schiller believed that even morality should not be imposed through education, because this would destroy its very essence since a moral act is a free act. The only way to promote morality and virtue is to promote individual self-determination. Schiller's digression from consistent economic liberalism is directly related to this. Although Schiller believed that the state should not interfere in the distribution of wealth to ensure greater happiness for citizens, he considered state intervention to be permissible and justified if it was necessary to restore citizens' capacity for humanity, thus promoting their individual self-determination.

Contrary to some interpretations, Schiller was a true egalitarian. This was true not only of his relatively realistic project of an ethical state but even more so of his utopian ideal of an aesthetic state. The aesthetic state was the conceptual completion of Schiller's aesthetic imperative. In other words, it represented the result of the full fulfillment of all the aesthetic obligations of a person as an embodied sensual-rational being. Schiller emphasized that we must never forget that this ideal is unattainable. Trying to achieve it here and now would inevitably lead to fanaticism [*Schwärmerei*], destructive of all that really exists. Nevertheless, the ideal of the aesthetic state shows the way to an ever greater harmony among all natural beings. In particular, Schiller emphasized the importance of gentility, in which he saw a condition for cosmopolitanism. The aesthetic imperative requires respect and consideration for others, not simply as abstract persons capable of universal self-legislation, but as embodied representatives of unique cultures with distinctive qualities. Another important aspect

of the ideal of the aesthetic state is its radical inclusivity. In the aesthetic state, all natural objects, be they people, animals, shoes, or rocks, are equal citizens. All deserve to be treated as ends in themselves, which in turn means that we have an aesthetic obligation not to infringe on the possibility of each natural object to exist according to its nature. Although Schiller himself does not go in this direction, I think that his approach to aesthetic normativity contains a powerful conceptual basis for aesthetic versions of animal and environmental ethics.

There is still much to be said about Schiller's philosophy. In my dissertation, I have touched on only certain topics, but even with respect to these topics much remains to be studied and said. For example, in Chapter Two I touched on the possibility of a Schillerian virtue ethic that emphasizes not what one ought to do, but what kind of life one ought to live. Surprisingly, a similar theme emerges in Schiller's deliberation on natural objects in the context of the ideal of the aesthetic state. Natural objects, too, can flourish according to their nature, and Schiller believed that it is our aesthetic obligation to contribute to this flourishing. Preserving the primacy of the ethical over the aesthetic, Schiller nevertheless emphasizes the connection between a person and nature as well as the immeasurable value of the latter. Despite its Kantian roots, his philosophy is less human-centered than Kant's, which allows it, in my opinion, to go further in conceptualizing and pursuing harmony between man and the world. These ideas would merit to be elaborated in a future study. Schiller's republicanism also holds great promise as a type of political theory. Schiller places at the heart of the republic not virtue but the capacity for humanity, thus offering a nuanced and historically sensitive republican theory that takes seriously the challenges of the modern era, whilst at the same time appreciating, and seeking to, preserve modern diversity. It is thus likely that Schiller's aesthetic, moral and political philosophy can serve as a resource for addressing the most pressing questions of our own times.

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SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Individuaalne enesemääramine Friedrich Schilleri filosoofilistes kirjutistes

Friedrich Schiller polnud mitte ainult suurepärase näitekirjanik ja luuletaja, vaid ka filosoof. Ta kirjutas teoseid väga erinevates distsipliinides, näiteks esteetikas, moraalifilosoofias ja poliitikas. Teadusirjanduses kohtame erinevaid debatte Schilleri loomingu sisemise terviklikkuse osas: Schiller ei tegelenud mitte ainult erinevate distsipliinidega, vaid paistis ühendavat ühildumatuid, näiteks vabadust ja loomust, mõistust ja tundeid. Käesolev dissertatsioon väidab, et Friedrich Schilleri filosoofilised teosed on kooskõlalised ning neis on üks läbiv teema – enesemääramine. Schiller otsis ning nõudis enesemääramist inimeste tegudest, poliitilistest institutsioonidest, kunstiteostest ning isegi loodusobjektidest. Käesolev dissertatsioon näitab, et Schilleri kooskõlalisus tuleb ilmsiks siis, kui vaatleme teda kui Immanuel Kanti järgijat, kes ei kõnele mitte “objektide endi võimalikkuse konstitutiivsetest printsiipidest (Kant 5: 387, CPJ 259), vaid regulaatiivsetest ideaalidest, mis juhivad meid meie teaduslikes, moraalsetes, poliitilistes ja sotsiaalsetes praktikates. Antud uurimuse jaoks on Schilleri ja Kanti ideede suhe keskse tähtsusega. Enesemääramine on kantiaanlik idee ning Schiller oli sellest vägagi teadlik. Antud monograafia näitab, et Schiller mitte ainult ei tuletanud Kantilt palju, vaid ka arendab edasi Kanti visiooni mitmes olulises detailis. Kokkuvõtlikult esitab käesolev dissertatsioon kolm põhiteesi.

Esiteks väidab dissertatsioon, et tihedalt seotud harmoonia ja terviklikkuse mõisted loovad Schilleri filosoofias seose vabaduse ja ilu vahel. Schilleri iluteooria kui vabadus nähtumuses (*Freiheit in der Erscheinung*) on siinkohal esmatähtis, kuna sellega ühendas ta normatiivse tajutavaga. Olgugi, et vabadust ei saa enesemääramisena demonstreerida, on enesemääramise puudumisel käegakatsutavad ilminguid, mille võib umbmääraselt kokku võtta disharmonia ja fragmenteerituse ilmingutena. Schilleri jaoks ei ole ilu kõigest standard, mille järgi hindame konkreetseid objekte, vaid ka ideaal, milleni pürgime. Disharmonia ja fragmenteerituse ilminguid ei tajuta lihtsalt esteetiliste puudustena, vaid nende tajumine peaks motiveerima inimest neid kõrvaldama, õilistades asjakohaseid objekte ja nendevahelisi suhteid. Ilu muutub seega teeks vabaduse kui enesemääramise poole.

Teiseks näidatakse väitekirjas, et Schiller ei ole huvitatud mitte ainult enesemääramise kontseptsiooni analüüsist, vaid paigutab selle tõusu ning suutlikkuse selle poole pürgida inimajalukku. Ta spekuleerib, et mingil hetkel oli inimestele omane sisemine rahu, mis aitas ka säilitada sotsiaalset rahu, kuid nad kaotasid selle rahu modernsuse tulekuga. Schiller kuulub seega nende mõtlejate hulka, alates Jean-Jacques Rousseau’st Max Weberini, kes iseloomustavad modernsuse saabumist kui lummuse kadumist. Ta väidab, et olgugi, et sotsio-ökonoomiline progress on inimkonnale toonud suurt kasu, aidates kaasa teaduse ja kultuuri arengule, on see ka viinud lõhedeni ühiskonnas ja inimestes, kahjus-

tades seeläbi nende terviklikkust ja sisemist harmooniat. See on omakorda märkimisväärselt piiranud inimeste võimet jõuda individuaalse enesemääramiseni. Näiteks muutvad abstraktsed mõtlejad kalgiks, sest nende spetsialiseerumine hõlmab analüütilist muljete liigendamist komponentideks; samas kui need muljed erutavad hinge ainult siis, kui nad on terviklikud; ärimehed muutuvad aga kitsarinnaliseks, kuna nende amet sunnib neid keskenduma vaid ühtede ja samadele asjadele (vt. Schiller 20: 325–6, AL 21). Kalkus ja kitsarinnalisus takistavad tõsiselt inimeste tunnetust ja motivatsiooni ning seeläbi ka nende individuaalset enesemääramist. Antud uurimus loob detailse rekonstruktsiooni patoloogiatest, mida Schiller on inimajaloole diagnoosinud ning analüüsib tema nägemust sellest, kuidas esteetiline haridus saab aidata taastada au ja sisemise harmoonia modernsuse kontekstis.

Kolmandaks esitab uurimus uudse interpretatsiooni Schilleri poliitilistest ideedest. Uurimus näitab, et Schilleri enesemääramise analüüsil on poliitilised implikatsioonid, mille ta on detailselt välja töötanud. Olgugi, et mitmed autorid on juba kaitsnud teesi, et Schiller on vabariiklane, on tema vabariikluse olemus jäänud umbmääraseks. Mis kõige olulisem, Schilleri argumendis on tähelepanuta jäänud üks oluline element. Nagu antud dissertatsioon näitab, argumenteerib Schiller, et ühisesse eesmärki pühendumist ei saa väliselt sundida. Ühisele eesmärgile pühendumine on võimalik ainult individuaalse enesemääramise alusel. See on Schilleri kantiaanliku vabariikluse eripära: esmatähtis ei ole mitte kodanike voorus ja nende omavahelised kestvad suhted, vaid nende võimekus individuaalseks enesemääramiseks, mille kaudu nad saavad arendada voorust ja luua püsivaid suhteid. Seega, sisemise harmoonia probleemil on oluline poliitiline mõõde. Ilma sisemise harmooniata ei ole inimene suuteline ei individuaalseks enesemääramiseks ega ka poliitiliseks enesemääramiseks eetilise riigi kodanikuna.

Dissertatsioon koosneb kuuest peatükist. Esimene peatükk keskendub Schilleri iluteooriale. Selles näidatakse, et Schilleri jaoks on esteetikal otsene praktiline tähendus. Oma tuli hingelises ilu kaitses argumenteerib Schiller, et esteetilised hinnangud sarnanevad palju enam praktilistele hinnangutele sellest, mis võiks olla, kui teoreetilistele hinnangutele sellest, mis on. Schilleri sõnul pole “ilus (das Schöne) mitte kogemuslik idee, vaid selle imperatiiv. See on kindlasti eesmärk, kuid ainult meelelis-ratsionaalse loomuse olulise ülesandena” (Schiller 27: 70). Ilu ühendab praktilisuse kaudu loomuse vabadusega. Ühest küljest põhineb ilu mõnedel esteetiliste objektide objektiivsetel faktidel, kuigi ei ole samas neile taandatav. Teisest küljest ei suuda reaalsus kunagi täielikult ilu ideaali realiseerida, mistõttu jääb ilu alati imperatiivseks. Ilu, nagu Schiller seda määratles, on vabadus nähtumuses (in der Erscheinung). Kantiaanina ei uskunud ta, et fenomenide ruumilis-ajalises maailmas oleks tõeline vabaduse tõestus võimalik. Selle asemel soovitas ta, et me uuriks ilusate objektide tajumisviise, teisisõnu, ilu fenomenoloogiat ehk tema sõnade järgi: meie meelte fakte (Schiller 26: 210, K 168–9). Ilu fenomenoloogia üle arutledes jõudis Schiller harmoonia ideeni: objekti tajutakse ilusana ainult siis kui seda tajutakse loomuse kohaselt enesemääratuna; ja isegi seda loomust tuleks tajuda justkui see oleks

objekti enda poolt vabalt valitud. Schilleri arvates on sellise taju olulisim tingimus harmoonia vormi ja mateeria vahel. Kui vorm kaalub mateeria üle, näib objekt ülemäära tehnilik ning selle autori eesmärk on liiga lihtsasti identifitseeritav; tüüpilised näited sellest, kuidas vorm kaalub mateeria üle on eksplitsiitne didaktilisus ja propaganda. Kui mateeria domineerib vormi üle, näib objekt algeline, elutu ja mitte vaba; see ei ole võimeline laskma vaatajal end sisse elada. Selle näiteks võiks olla kehvasti tehtud kunstiteos, mida vaadates on koheselt märgata autori ebatäielikkust ja saamatust.

Teine peatükk demonstreerib, et esteetiline imperatiiv leidub igas inimeses meelelis-ratsionaalse loomuse püüdlusena leida iseenda sisemise harmoonia. Inimtegevust analüüsides teeb Kant vahet vormil ja materiaal. Praktilisi printsiipe nimetab ta formaalseteks ainult siis, kui need on abstraheeritud kõigist subjektiivsetest materiaalistest eesmärkidest. (Kant 4: 427–8, GMM 78). Formaalne tähendab antud juhul seaduse vormi omamist, ehk seda saab rakendada universaalselt ja ilma vastuoludeta. Mateeria on seotud individuaalsete soovide, kalduvuste ja eesmärkidega, ehk millegagi, mis inimestel võib olla või mitte.

Konflikt vormi ja mateeria vahel on sel viisil mõistetuna vastuolu moraalseaduse nõuete ja individuaalsete soovide või vajaduste vahel. Kant väitis, et see konflikt tuleb lahendada formaalse, ehk moraalseaduse, kasuks. Just siin nägi Schiller potentsiaalset sekkumist esteetilise imperatiivi õigustatud nõudmisesse. Vormi domineerimine mateeria üle kahjustab ilu. Veelgi olulisem on see, et see kahjustab teatud mõttes vabadust. Schiller rakendas oma iluteooriat moraali- luues sellega esimese kantiaanliku vooruseteooria ehk kaunishinge teooria. Ta nõustus Kanti teesiga, et formaalne on materiaalse üle ülimuslik, ehk moraalne imperatiiv on ülimuslik esteetilise ees. Samas rõhutas Schiller, et need ei pea olema üksteisega vastuolus. Formaalsed praktilised põhimõtted ei pruugi olla vastuolus üksikute materiaalistest eesmärkidega. Tõeliselt moraalse inimese ülesanne on minimeerida vastuolusid moraalseaduse nõuete ja tema individuaalsete soovide või vajaduste vahel. Nii moraalne kui ka esteetiline imperatiiv ühinevad selles ülesandes, mis saavutatakse vooruse kultiveerimise kaudu. Moraalsest inimesest ei tohiks saada sünge kloostriaskeet, kellel puuduvad iga-sugused tunded. Selle asemel peaks ta töötama oma kalduvustega, arendades neid kalduvusi, mis teda moraalses elus aitavad ja ohjeldades neid, mis sellele vastu seisavad, saades seeläbi ilusaks hingeks. Endaga töötades peaks ta püüdlema kalduvuste harmoonia poole; teisisõnu, ta peaks end muutma nii, et moraalseadused ja kalduvused liigutaksid teda samas suunas ja ei tiriks teda lõhki. Täiusliku harmoonia saavutamine on võimatu, kuid seda kehtib iga esteetilise objekti kohta. Iluideaal pole fenomenaaalses maailmas täielikult saavutatav, kuid see pole põhjus, miks selle poole mitte püüelda.

Inimene saab kaunishingeks ainult omal tahtel ehk individuaalse enesemääramise kaudu. Kolmas, neljas ja viies peatükk arutavad selle üle, kuidas see on võimalik. Schiller läheneb individuaalsele enesemääramisele valiku mõiste kaudu. Valikuaktid on individuaalse enesemääramise ehituskivid. Schiller käsitles individuaalse enesemääramise võimet valikuakti kui inimsusevõime (Vermögen zur Menschheit) kaudu (Schiller 20: 378, AL 78). Kolmandas peatükis

on välja toodud Schilleri analüüs tarvilike valikutingimuste kohta. Schiller uskus, et valikuakt on võimalik kahel tingimusel. Esiteks peab inimene suutma maailma suhtes võtta reflekteeriva distantsi. See tähendab, et ta ei tohi tegutseda automaatselt, vaid ta peab läbi refleksiooni hoomama olukorda, võimalikke valikuid, aga ka põhjuseid, miks ühte või teist varianti eelistada. Pealegi ei tohiks refleksioon valikuga lihtsalt kaasneda, vaid sellel peab olema ka otsene mõju. Teisisõnu, valik peab olema refleksioonipõhine. Teiseks, peab seega teadmine, et inimesel on teatud viisil tegutsemiseks põhjus, teda motiveerima vastvalt käituma. See ei tähenda, et see teadlikkus peab teda tingimata vastavalt käituma sundima, kuid sellel peab olema tõeline motiveeriv jõud. Seega nõuab valikuakt Schilleri järgi reflektiivset distantsi ja motiveerivat pühendumist. Need kaks valikutingimust on näiliselt üksteisega vastuolus, sest esimene eeldab maailmast irdumist ja teine seevastu seotust maailmaga. Schiller väitis aga, et valik on võimalik. Nimelt on see võimalik ainult siis, kui inimene on esteetiliselt seisundis, kus on aktiivne kindlaksmääratavus, mis üksi võimaldab ühendada reflekteeriva distantsi motiveeriva pühendumisega. Aktiivse kindlaksmääratavuse tingimus on saavutatav ainult vaimsete võimete, mõistuse ja tunnete teatud vastasmõju kaudu. Schiller kirjeldas seda vastasmõju psühholoogiliselt ajendite kaudu, nimelt mõistusega seotud formaalse tõukejõu ja meelelisusega seotud materiaalse tõukejõu kaudu. Näitamaks, kuidas eraldatust ja seotust saab kokku viia, julges Schiller välja tuua harmoonia võimaluse, mis hõlmab samaaegselt konflikti. Harmoonia mõistuse ja tunnete vahel, mida ma olen nimetanud jõu harmooniaks (*harmony of power*), saavutatakse, kui formaalne ja materiaalne aje on võrdselt tugevad ja vastastikku pingestatud. Sisuliselt kirjeldas Schiller vaimsete võimete vahelist täiuslikku konkurentsi. Mõistus ja tunded püüavad inimest tegutsema panna, kuid kuna nende nõuded on võrdselt tugevad, toimivad nad teineteise jaoks võimude lahususena, kõrvaldades seeläbi üksteise nõuete vajaduse. Inimene leiab formaalse ajendi tegevuse kaudu end võimelisena olukorra, võimaluste ja põhjuste üle reflekteerima ning materiaalse ajendi võrdse aktiivsuse kaudu säilitab ta emotsionaalse sideme selle olukorraga seotud põhjustega.

Neljas peatükk näitab, et Schiller käsitles üksikisiku enesemääramise küsimust poliitilise probleemina. Schilleri sõnul tähendab poliitiline enesemääramine seda, et kodanikud tahavad ja suudavad osaleda riigi loomises ja riigi asjades ning et selline osalemine omakorda tähendab, et nad on võimelised ühise hüve üle vabalt mõtisklema ja selle poole püüdlema. Individuaalne enesemääramine on poliitilise enesemääramise tingimus. Schiller ei uskunud, et iga inimene on igal ajal võrdselt võimeline individuaalseks enesemääramiseks. Ta seostas selle võime inimvõimete harmoonilise arenguga. Inimese mistahes ühemõõtmeline areng toob kaasa vastava inimese võimetuse siseneda esteetiliselt seisundisse, kus on aktiivne kindlaksmääratavus ja muudab ta seega võimetuks õigeks individuaalseks enesemääramiseks valikuaktide kaudu. Ajalooline kontekst võib soodustada või takistada inimvõimete harmoonilist arengut, seega võib see soodustada või takistada inimeste individuaalset enesemääramist. Schiller arvas, et modernsus on oma tööjaotusega viinud iga inimese inimsuse

killustumiseni ja seega teinud individuaalse enesemääramise inimeste jaoks võimatuks. Õiged põhimõtted ja kõrged ideaalid lihtsalt ei saanud inimestele mõju avaldada, sest inimesed kas ei märganud neid või olid nende suhtes pimedad. Schiller kirjeldas seda probleemi kaasaegse metsluse ja barbaarsuse terminites. Ta nimetas metslasteks neid, kellel domineeris ebaharmonilise arengu tõttu meelelisus ratsionaalsuse üle; niisamuti nagu ta nimetas barbariteks neid, kellel domineeris arengu tõttu ratsionaalne meelelise üle. Esimestel puudus reflekteeriv distants, teistel aga motiveeriv pühendumus ja otsustavus, mida oli vaja õigete asjade tegemiseks.

Sellegipoolest uskus Schiller, et modernsus pole lootusetu ja et on olemas viis inimkonna terviklikkuse taastamiseks. Seda lootis ta esteetilisest kasvatusest. Viies peatükk käsitleb üksikasjalikult kõiki kunsti funktsioone, mida Schiller oma tekstides käsitles. Siinkohal piirdugem kunsti kõige olulisema, harmoniseeriva funktsiooni mainimisega. Schiller uskus, et ilu esteetilise kogemuse kaudu saab tuua formaalsed ja materiaalsed ajed vastastikusse koostöösse. Ilu puudutab kogu meie meelelis-ratsionaalset loomust ja valmistab meid seeläbi ette valikuvabaduseks. Kunst, olles ühest küljest väljamõeldis, harjutab meid võtma reflekteerivat distantsi, vabastades meid seeläbi tegelikkuse survest; teisalt, vaatamata sellele distantsile, puudutab kunst meid, jäädes meile emotsionaalselt tähendusrikkaks. Esteetiline kogemus õpetab meid harjumuspäraselt ühendama reflekteerivat distantsi motiveeriva pühendumusega, taastades nii meie võime inimsuseks.

Olles taastanud oma võime inimsuseks, saavad inimesed osaleda ühises poliitilises elus ja luua eetilise riigi. Kuuendas peatükis näidatakse, et eetilise riigi on vabariik, mis põhineb ühiskondlikul lepingul ja üldise tahte kujunemisel seadusandluse alusena. Schilleri järgi kodanike inimsusevõime eetilise riigi loomise ja säilimise vajalik tingimus. Eetilist riiki ei saa asutada välistel eesmärkidel; selle asutamine on kohustus. Inimene vajab seda mitte kui vahendit probleemide lahendamiseks, vaid kui midagi, mis vastab tema väärikusele. Ainult vabalt valides saab ta rajada eetilise riigi ja osaleda riigiasjades. Schilleri rõhuasetus vabale valikule ilmneb tema vabariikluse muudes aspektides. Schiller oli selle vastu, et riik kehtestab vooruslikkuse seadusandluse või hariduse kaudu. Ta rõhutas, et kedagi ei saa käskida teisi austama. Ainus viis moraali ja vooruste edendamiseks on edendada individuaalset enesemääramist. Sellega on otseselt seotud Schilleri kõrvalepõige tema muidu järjekindlast majanduslikust liberalismist. Kuigi Schiller arvas, et riik ei tohiks kodanike suurema õnne tagamiseks rikkuse jagamise sekkuda, pidas ta riigi sekkumist lubatavaks ja põhjendatuks, kui see on vajalik kodanike inimsusevõime taastamiseks, soodustades seeläbi nende individuaalset enesemääramist. Vastupidiselt mõnele tõlgendusele oli Schiller tõeline egalitarist. See ei kehti mitte ainult tema suhteliselt realistliku eetilise riigi projekti kohta, vaid veelgi enam tema utoopilise esteetilise riigi ideaali kohta. Esteetiline riik oli Schilleri esteetilise imperatiivi kontseptuaalne lõpuleviimine. Teisisõnu esindas see inimese kui kehastunud meelelis-ratsionaalse olendi kõigi esteetiliste kohustuste täieliku täitmise tulemust. Eelkõige rõhutas Schiller peenekombelisuse tähtsust, milles ta nägi

kosmopoliitsuse tingimust. Esteetiline imperatiiv nõuab austust ja teistega arvestamist mitte lihtsalt abstraktsete isikutena, kes on võimelised universaalseks eneseseadusandluseks, vaid eriliste omadustega unikaalsete kultuuride kehastunud esindajatena. Esteetilise riigi ideaali teine oluline aspekt on selle radikaalne kaasatus. Esteetilises seisundis on kõik loodusobjektid võrdsed kodanikud, olgu nad siis inimesed, loomad, kingad või kivid. Kõik väärivad käsitlemist eesmärgina iseeneses, mis omakorda tähendab, et meil on esteetiline kohustus mitte riivata iga loodusobjekti võimalust eksisteerida vastavalt oma loomusele.

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Publications

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Participation in Research Projects

2020–2024 The research project *Self-Determination of Peoples in Historical Perspective* (PUT PRG942) (researcher)

Recent Talks

1. April, 21–25th, 2019, Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University, the 12th Kant Readings Conference, presentation “Schiller on Moral Motivation and the Aesthetic Education”
2. September 27th, 2021, the UK Kant Society ECR Workshop “Positive Freedom and Independence in Kant’s Political Philosophy”, presentation “Schiller’s positive conception of freedom”
3. November 26–27th, 2021, University of Bucharest, conference “The Cure of the Imagination. Intersections of Pedagogy, Medicine and Aesthetics in the

- Enlightenment”, presentation “Friedrich Schiller on the Role of Imagination in Enabling Freedom of Choice”
4. April 4–5th, 2022, NOVA University of Lisbon, conference “Kant: Concepts, Imagination, and Aesthetic Appreciation”, presentation “Aesthetic experience as a condition for the moral practice”

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Reshenin, S. (2022). Harmony without equality: Schiller’s theory of virtue. *Theoria*, 88 (5), 908–926. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1111/theo.12412>

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2020–2024 Uurimisprojekti *Rahvaste enesemäärmine ajaloolises perspektiivis* (PUT PRG942) täitja

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- 21.–25. aprill 2019, Immanuel Kanti nimeline Balti Föderaalülikool, konverents “The 12th Kant Readings”, presentatsioon “Schiller on Moral Motivation and the Aesthetic Education”
27. september 2021, UKKS (the UK Kant Society) ECR seminar “Positive Freedom and Independence in Kant’s Political Philosophy”, presentatsioon “Schiller’s Positive Conception of Freedom”

3. 26.–27. november 2021, Bukaresti ülikool, konverents “The Cure of the Imagination. Intersections of Pedagogy, Medicine and Aesthetics in the Enlightenment”, presentatsioon “Friedrich Schiller on the Role of Imagination in Enabling Freedom of Choice”
4. 4.–5. aprill 2022, Lissaboni Nova ülikool, konverents “Kant: Concepts, Imagination, and Aesthetic Appreciation”, presentatsioon “Aesthetic experience as a condition for the moral practice”

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