

# The Rule of Art: On Kant with Wittgenstein\*

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I do not propose to compare the esthetics of Kant and Wittgenstein or to show the sometimes very Kantian basis of some of Wittgenstein's reflections. I do not intend to take up the history of philosophy here (I will not, therefore, attempt to expound upon the relationship in Kant of the esthetic to the teleological or the moral, for example, or the relationship of art to ordinary language in Wittgenstein). That would not be without interest; quite the contrary, but I would prefer to compare the remarks of the one to those of the other in order to respond to a specific question: why is it said that there can be no rules for art, or more precisely, that the only rule is that there must be no rules? What authorizes art to play with the rules?

Let us start with the following remark: what seems to shock the contemporary sensibility most profoundly about the Kantian esthetic has to do with its ultimate recourse to common sense. This can be seen in a recent book, which points out the problem of value:

. . . if everyone's cognitive faculties did not operate in the same way, then the objectivity of knowledge itself would not be possible. . . . So there must be a universal knowing-machine, because otherwise skepticism would be right. . . . It is clear from the perplexity or inconclusiveness of the conclusion of the "Analytic of the Beautiful" that Kant recognizes the tautologous nature of the entire demonstration. . . . The claim of judgments of taste to universal validity being, it appears, ultimately ungroundable.<sup>1</sup>

Presented this way the Kantian argument seems flimsy enough to be brushed aside with a wave of the hand. But in fact it has been

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1. Barbara Herrnstein-Smith, *Contingencies of Value: Alternative Perspectives for Critical Theory*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press 1988, p. 70–71.

so simplified and deformed that it appears uninteresting. One suspects that Herrnstein-Smith objects to the principle of universal common sense, since she asserts the irremediable contingency of value. But it must be understood that Kant is in fact attempting to think in terms of the legality of the contingent and at the same time of common sense: if he thus sustains two apparently contradictory theses, it could not be because of ignorance or the misreading of the one to the benefit of the other. The argument is certainly more subtle than Herrnstein-Smith seems to consider it. Besides, to speak of a "knowing machine" is simply to take Kant – who wants precisely to think in terms of the organism (in its teleological version) and not the mechanism, of the legality of the contingent and not the mechanics of necessity – the wrong way. And what would be common consists in fact neither in the identity of the operations of the faculties of knowing,<sup>2</sup> nor in an "external sense," but in the "effect (*Wirkung*) resulting from the free play of our faculties of knowing." It is a question, therefore, of 1) a principle operating at the same level as the faculties that, in their generality, are universal and, at the same time, internal; 2) a principle that is only an effect; 3) this effect coming not from the usual exercise of the faculties of knowledge, but from their mutual (i.e., reciprocal) free play. If a problem occurs, then, it must be articulated not in relation to a consensual mechanism, but as a function of the notions of free play and liberty.

Before getting to that, we must make one more point. As Kant stresses, the principle of common sense can be either a constituent of the possibility of experience – it would then be an original and natural faculty of man – or simply a regulating mechanism for more elevated ends, making the faculty something that is still to be acquired (*zu erwerbenden*) and thus artificial (*künstliche*). Kant comes down on the side of the regulative. That is to say that common sense is both an opening to the future and a product of art. By a sort of trick of reasoning, we presume it in each judgment of taste. How does that make itself felt? Almost all Kantian analysis rests on pragmatism: he considers what we say, the assumptions

2. This is exactly the interpretation that he rejects: empirically one thinks that there is a wide agreement on esthetic judgments "not because one imagines that behind this accord there is some *a priori* principle, "the correct solution," but because (like the taste for the palace) subjects are by chance arranged in a uniform way" which is, he says, a "subterfuge." (§57). Emmanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, K. Vorländer, (ed.) Hamburg, F. Meiner 1974 (trans. A. Philonenko: *Critique de la faculté de juger*, Paris, Vrin 1984; I sometimes modify the translations).

behind some pronouncement or other, the conditions of usage as well as conditions of possibility, and draws the conclusion that in order for a judgment of taste to be accepted we must take for granted a common sense whose regulative character we can only assert.<sup>3</sup> But because Kant says that there is a problem of legitimacy in this, people seem to think that his reasoning itself is without legitimacy; because he thinks that the foundation can be both regulative and artificial (produced by the art of man), they would like to suppose that his whole argument is unfounded and artificial (pure artifice).

Because there is artifice, let us see if art can help us to understand what part is free play and what part liberty in judgments of taste. In paragraph 43, Kant defines art in general. There, he distinguishes it from nature, from science and from work.

Compared to nature, which acts or causes in general (*agere*), art is a construct (*facere*), but a construct produced only by liberty, i.e., with intentionality: "a representation of what it is must have preceded its reality in its cause without this cause having been able to think of the effect precisely" – intentionality is a short circuit of time, that thinks in the present of the future effect, without being able, nevertheless, to judge its effectiveness, because the time necessary for its creation is precisely what is lacking.

Compared to science, which is both knowledge and power, art is knowledge without power: "Only that which one does not possess – the skill (*Geschicklichkeit*, or *savoir-faire*) of making something – even if one is perfectly familiar with it, constitutes art." Art would thus be only a competency without realizable performance.

Compared to a paid profession that attracts mercenaries even though it is disagreeable, art is called liberal because it succeeds only as a game, "that is, as an activity that is agreeable in itself." Kant does not say that art does not merit payment, but that its finality does not require it. Work is seductive because there is something beyond its activity (money); art is an agreeable activity in itself, regardless of anything else.

That there is anthropocentrism in the distinction between art and

3. Barbara Herrnstein-Smith brings out this discursive interest, but discounts it under the pretext that "the historicity of linguistic convention (and, thereby, of linguistic 'intuition') and the contingency of usage deprive such observations of any epistemic authority of axiological force." If that were the case, then all Mrs. Herrnstein-Smith's discussion – which affirms, however, forcefully, the value of the contingent and the fact that it in no way prevents pronouncements with a value of truth, with epistemological authority and axiological (historic) force – would be reduced to nothing.

nature is undoubted, but the interest resides in this temporal punctuation of the difference. Likewise between art and work, the separation could not be so simple (Kant himself notes this), but it nevertheless exhibits this characteristic of art, i.e., its relative independence of ends. The distinction that seems the strangest is that of milieu. One would expect, in effect, that art would be rather definite, something that does not depend on the degree of competence, but on performance. The Platonic analysis of *mimesis* in Book X of *The Republic* rested precisely on the fact that there was performance without competence. Is the Kantian position really the opposite? In fact, no. In Plato the artist knew what the image of the bed was, but could only make the image of the image of the bed: he did not have the skill of the artisan, *a fortiori* that of the demiurge. Art is well defined as a technique, but a technique that consists solely of some knowledge: thus however well versed the poet may be in history, psychology or logic, his poem is not the work of a logician, historian or psychologist; a novelist, though he may sometimes speak as a doctor, would certainly be prosecuted if he began to give consultations (the time of Sganarelle, when the wearing of a uniform sufficed to legitimize the giving of prescriptions, is long finished – at least legally). The problem of art is that it has, finally, no legitimacy to exercise its knowledge. Two examples that Kant relegates to notes indicate the difficulty: in his country, he confides, the common man knows that the problem of Columbus's egg "is not art, it is only science," and even illusionism; on the other hand this same compatriot of Kant "would not hesitate to call the skill of the tightrope walker art." Where is the difference to be found? The tightrope walker plays with an instability that is constantly renewed, while the illusionist or Columbus with his egg force stability upon something that did not previously have it. This example, which has a Nietzschean resonance for us, points up the deep instability of the position, as well as its delight: to create equilibrium out of a welter of incessant disequilibriums.

If art is knowledge without power, one can imagine the lack of equilibrium in such an uncoupling: it is the necessity of reference that is missing, the possibility of extracting some of the actual from the existing. Paradoxically, that presumes a certain anesthesia precisely where esthetics establishes itself – disinterestedness is another name for this anesthesia. What is this anesthesia? What does it play upon? What is its necessity?

It must be admitted that the legitimacy of common sense is cer-

tainly not based on a simple empirical consensus, but is in fact found in the heart of our activities, on the level of the grammar of our actions. If common sense is not the result of our judgments, on the other hand the act of judging implies the idea of common sense. When we judge a color "green," for example, the important thing is to see that this is a decision made in the present time by a subject used to making decisions, to having concepts of colors, to expressing his impressions. But this judgment is valid only in certain circumstances. We are not in the habit of saying "it's green" every time we encounter the color green; we say it if there is a doubt about the color, or if the driver of a car has not noticed a stoplight changing color, or if we are trying to teach a concept of color, etc. We do not learn something by referring to a consensus but only as a function of particular judgments and decisions that events present to us case by case. The very process of judgment, however, presupposes the usefulness of a consensus. As Wittgenstein says: "No doubt our play of language can begin only if there is a certain consensus, but the concept of consensus does not intervene in the play of language." And he adds this image of a Borgesian lottery: "If the consensus were perfect, its conception could remain totally unknown."<sup>4</sup>

The consensus is misunderstood to the extent that we look to it as the necessary origin of our judgments, because then we are led to postulate an empirical, statistical consensus to validate *a priori* the truth or falseness of our pronouncements: this is what the first skeptic to come along can easily invalidate, because it is to admit that the rule does not necessarily determine the action. The alternative then appears as a Platonian perspective in which the rule for determining an action becomes a necessarily supra-empirical fact. One has the impression of a lack of choice between the two. For it is a question of the same illusion each time: one postulates an artificial distance between the rule and its application, and it is this distance that becomes problematical. In practice, however, there is no distance, but exactly the opposite – an extremely strong internal connection that makes each event an application of the rules – a connection of the grammatical type.<sup>5</sup> (A spatial conception leads to

4. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Fiches*, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright, trans. J. Fauve, Paris, Gallimard 1971, § 430.

5. For a presentation of the skeptical problem of the rule, see Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press 1982; against this position and that of an empirical consensus, Baker, Gorden and Hacker, *Scepticism, Rules and Language*, Oxford, Blackwell 1984.

the error of an illusory distance; the relationship between the application and the rule is conceived more easily in terms of time, as more or less perfectly synchronized velocities, as the effects of rest or inertia.)

The question of common sense can be resolved only in constant exchange and through changing unstable usage that give the rule the force of an event. In other words, this question coincides with that of knowing what it means to "follow a rule." In Kant, the presupposition of common sense is like an end to the inquiry: common sense is a necessary control if we want to understand the coherence of judgments that are individual but nevertheless lay claim to universality. Esthetic judgments present the same problem that inspired the *Critique of Pure Reason*, i.e., the possibility of a *priori* synthetic judgments, but the solution of common sense offers only a relative answer, that of the regulative. Now if Wittgenstein takes up this problem, he seems to do it in the inverse way, in the manner of Nietzsche:

... it is finally time to replace Kant's question: "How are *a priori* synthetic judgments possible?" with another question: "Why is belief in such judgments necessary?" It must be understood, in fact, that it is for the conservation of our species that these judgments must necessarily be held to be true, which does not prevent them, of course, from being false! ... It is a basic belief (*Vordergrunds*, literally a foundation put in front), an evidence (*Augenschein*, i.e., at the same time an appearance) that belongs to the perspective and the vision of life.<sup>6</sup>

The inversion lies in the replacement of a possibility of being by a necessity of belief, but in fact we can see how implicit this reversal is in the Kantian notation, which makes common sense a purely regulative effect. What Kant sees as a trick of reasoning becomes in Nietzsche and Wittgenstein a form of our life. To ask the question "why" and not "how," to think in terms of necessity and not possibility leads to a pure and simple disappearance of the problem: it is the practice of our activities that answers and supplies the foundation, unstable certainly, but sufficient. That these judgments are really necessary is what must be taken into account.

Bouveresse, in line with certain commentators, notes the parallel between Kant's and Wittgenstein's solutions, but according to him the resemblance stops when Kant thinks he has found a justification for the technique of calculation in the pure intuition of time

6. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse (Beyond Good and Evil)*, trans. G. Blaquais, Paris, Aubier-Montaigne 1978, § 11 (translation modified by author).

and space, because, for Wittgenstein, “the technique of the calculation of arithmetic equalities gives us the intuition we need, but does not itself rest on an intuition that would preexist in some way the adoption and practice of calculation.”<sup>7</sup> The division is not, however, as neat as all that, to the extent that what happens to certain propositions when we declare them *a priori* is not to anticipate the experience in the form of a truth anterior to the experience, but “in the form of a rule for the description of experience” (ibid.): if such is in fact Wittgenstein’s proposal, the pure intuition of time and space really does not say anything else, as it is never a “truth” but a rule for describing what happens. Wittgenstein simply makes Kant’s solution clearer and more economical. If we keep this reference to time in mind, we understand more easily one of the important characteristics of *a priori* synthetic judgments according to Wittgenstein, i.e., the fact that they appear to stop time: “‘red is a pure color’ is a statement about the ‘essence’ of red, time does not enter into it; one cannot imagine that *this* color could *not* be simple.”<sup>8</sup> The criterion for an *a priori* proposition is that its negative cannot be imagined: that is not part of our descriptive laws. In *a priori* judgments time stops so that the other propositions can gravitate toward and circulate around them. This is the reason for Wittgenstein’s interest in propositions of the empirical order that play a manifestly *a priori* role:

It often happens that the use of propositions is at the boundary between the empirical and the logical, so that their meaning changes in different parts of this boundary and they are sometimes used as the expression of a norm, and sometimes as the expression of an experience.<sup>9</sup>

There are many things that seem solidly fixed to us but that disappear from circulation. They are, in a manner of speaking, pushed onto a side track. . . . But they give their form to our ways of seeing. Perhaps they were disputed at one time. But perhaps they have belonged since time immemorial to the structure of all our ways of seeing. (Each human being has parents.)<sup>10</sup>

7. Jacques Bouveresse, *La Force de la Règle: Wittgenstein et l’invention de la nécessité*, Paris, Minuit 1987, p. 89.

8. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Bemerkungen über die Philosophie der Psychologie (Remarks on Philosophy and Psychology)* (I), ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright, trans. G. Granel, Mauvezin, Trans-Europ-Repress 1989, § 622.

9. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Bemerkungen über die Farben (Remarks on Colors)*, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe, trans. G. Granel, Mauvezin, T.E.R. 1984, I, § 32.

10. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *De la certitude*, trans. J. Fauve, Paris, Gallimard 1982, § 210–211.

“Each human being has parents” is certainly an empirical fact, but its negative would be difficult to imagine, except perhaps for an anthropologist coming across a tribe in which children were created “anonymously” and cared for by the community as a whole, or for our own children, who may in a few decades be used to genetic manipulations or test tube babies. These are “historical *a priori*” that have been retired from the ordinary circulation of the language in order to function as paradigms and rules: for the moment, time does not count for them. But it is nevertheless in time that they are formed. The paradox of the rule stems, in effect, from a confusion about time: we have the impression when we understand the meaning of a word that we should know all its future uses from now on (as if we had nothing to do in the future but act mechanically), while in fact we master the present use, and in the same way we will master future usages, to the extent that we will use our judgment. This is why Wittgenstein states that an agreement on definitions is not sufficient; there must also be agreement on judgments.<sup>11</sup> The paradox of the rule can be resolved only in reference to our ways of life.

Paragraphs 241 and 242 are among the most important of the *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, not only in that they summarize what is the truth for Wittgenstein: how to decide what is true and what is false; but also because they articulate the two ways he tries to treat the problem (the paradoxes of the rule and of private language). The two arguments are symmetrical and, contrary to what Kripke claims, the second really does bring something new to the discussion, by showing on the one hand that the the skeptic’s impulse always comes from the same error (asking questions where there is nothing to ask, confusing the empirical and the grammatical), and on the other hand showing how much language works, not on the possibility, but on the necessity of hearing it publicly.

The basis of the agreement (*Übereinstimmung*) is precisely the language in the *a priori* word structures that it implies. That is why it is not an agreement on opinions (sociological consensus) but on ways of life. This understanding (*Verständigung*)<sup>12</sup> through language does not only require, as consensus would, an agreement on definitions – and this is also why the fact that the private speaker’s

11. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Schriften I: Tractatus logico-philosophicus, Tagebücher 1914–1916*, *Philosophische Untersuchungen* (abridged PU), Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1969, § 241 (author’s translation).

12. It is important to keep the idea of comprehension (*verstehen*) and of understanding (*Verstand*) at the same time as that of agreement.



insistence on the model of the ostensible definition blocks it in its position – but an agreement on judgments themselves. One ought to be able to recognize sad behavior and to judge, for example, whether it is feigned or not. If it were impossible to agree on such judgments, the definition of pretense would no longer be good for anything. Nevertheless this agreement on judgments seems to undermine the very foundation of the argument against the skeptic: logic – what remains of the *a priori* if even judgments require an agreement? In fact there is nothing left; this agreement supports, on the contrary, the possibility of logic, for it is an agreement on ways of acting and on language based on ways of acting. The foundation of logic no longer rests on transcendental conditions. This does not mean that the *a priori* is abandoned; quite the contrary, it simply stems from practice itself, from the ways of life that men share. This is why the *a priori* is not unalterable and eternal like essences or metaphysical ideas (cf. § 250 and § 252), as it always stems from a certain environment (*Umgebung*); it is also why it assures a rigid link not between the word and the thing, but between the expression and its comprehension or usage. This is precisely the link against which the solipsist stumbles, and that metaphysics fails to recognize.

This does not mean that all truth can be reduced uniquely to language either: “It is one thing to describe the method of measuring (agreement on definitions), and another to find and set forth the results of measurement (agreement on judgments). But what we call ‘measuring’ is also determined by a certain consistency in the results of measurement (resistance of the ‘world’).” (§ 242). Language gives only the conditions for the possibility of understanding and describing the world (the *a priori* is found there); the world itself can validate or invalidate them to different degrees. Without a certain consistency in definitions, judgments and empirical results, human activity could never lead to the accord upon which apprenticeship, understanding and the daily use of language and behavior depend.

What does it mean, then, to follow a rule, when in questions of aesthetics it seems that the only predicable rule is not to follow any rules? Is it really a question of suspending the rules, of a particular case in the application of the rule? Going in this direction forces us to give works of art a bizarre ontological status. What is valid for the problem of fiction is also valid for the rules of judgment. If we want to avoid the usual aporia, we have to give up the idea of con-

tinuity in art and in other forms of activity and see if we can nevertheless understand the original position of art.

Let us take the concept of "to see as" (*sehen als*), whose best known paradigm is Jastrow's "duck-rabbit."<sup>13</sup> The temptation that Wittgenstein finds fault with is that which consists in believing that the change in perception that causes me to see the same figure first as a duck and then as a rabbit implies that there must be an internal visual impression that is different from the drawing itself. It is as if it were necessary that there be an "organization" above and beyond forms and colors for one to be able to explain the perceived change. In fact, if we wanted to reproduce the interior image, we would only recopy the original figure. In the same way "the limit of language appears as the impossibility of describing a fact that corresponds to a proposition (which is its translation) without repeating the proposition (we are dealing here with the Kantian solution to the problem of philosophy)."<sup>14</sup> The perception of the duck-rabbit as a duck does not therefore consist in the perception of forms and colors plus something that one could not describe. What one can describe perfectly well and precisely what helps us see the duck-rabbit as a duck are different representations of ducks. That is, I need a whole context so that I can interpret the duck-rabbit as a duck. The problem therefore comes down to this: "It is not the change of appearance that one sees, but the change in interpretation" (*Fiches*, § 216). In other words, reception and interpretation are not separable operations. But we tend to think that "to see as" comes either out of an *Erlebnis* (lived experience) or out of a thought, whereas "the substratum of this experience is the mastery of a technique." (*PU*, p. 208) It may happen that I cannot communicate my visual (in the psychological or even physiological sense of the term) impression exactly, but I can communicate it without any problem, because I interpret the image and see it as I interpret it. Now it is clear that this interpretation takes place in the mind and thanks to a common culture. As Bouveresse emphasizes, "it is only of someone who is likely to say and to do certain things that it makes sense to say that he experiences a certain esthetic impression. And that is why the esthetic experience is, in a certain sense, essentially communicable."<sup>15</sup>

13. Joseph Jastrow, *Fact and Fable in Psychology*, New York, Books for Libraries 1971, (reprinted from the 1901 edition).

14. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, (*Remarques mêlées*), ed. G.H. von Wright, trans. G. Granel, Mauvezin, T.E.R. 1984, p. 20 (abridged VB).

15. Jacques Bouveresse, *La Rime et la Raison*, Paris, Minuit 1973, p. 203.

What is communicated in this way is precisely a change of vision, of interpretation. But Wittgenstein also stresses that the work of art itself is what brings a change in perspective.

Let us imagine a theater: the curtain would rise and we would see a man alone in his room, coming and going, lighting a cigarette, sitting down, etc., so that we would see a man from the outside, as we never can see ourselves . . . it is life itself that we would see. But that is what we see every day, and it does not make the least impression on us! So be it! But we do not see it from this perspective. (VB, p. 14)

This new perspective, which serves as both spacing and framework, is, however, something more than simple criticism: the change in interpretation comes also from the fact that it takes the object from the outside, like a separate world and with the entire world as a backdrop.

A work of art is an object seen *sub speciae aeternitatis*. . . . In the ordinary way of seeing, we consider objects by placing ourselves among them, so to speak; in the way of seeing *sub speciae aeternitatis*, we consider them from the outside. In such a way that they have the entire world as background. Perhaps it is a bit as if we saw the object with time and space instead of seeing it in time and space? . . . The thing seen *sub speciae aeternitatis* is the thing seen in the entirety of logical space. (*Tagebücher*, 7-10-1916.)

Like *a priori* propositions, art sets up a relationship specific to time, yet different from empirical time. But where *a priori* propositions in some way stop time and blind themselves to it (from which comes at times the impression of following a rule blindly), art anesthetizes our passage through time, i.e., rather than blocking it, it follows its course, but as if from the outside (from which comes the occasional impression of seeing both the event and the time that accompanies it, "the occurrence of events" as the Epicureans say). With time, it is the total world that is given, the whole of logical space: a work of art always has to do with the idea of a whole; it is itself a whole. The problem with the application of esthetic judgment comes from that. Kant emphasizes that if the principle of an agreement is sought in the judgment of taste, its application can often fail. Does this contradict what has just been affirmed: that it is the occurrence of the application that makes the rule, that the correction of the application comes from corrections that one can bring to bear on the repeated exercise of judgment? In fact, no. We

learn a whole system of judgments that rest upon each other and assure the minimum homogeneity of a culture. With art, the difficulty stems from the fact that each work is a description of a whole culture and that in order to appreciate it we must put ourselves at the level of and try to master the totality of that world.<sup>16</sup> Understanding a work of art always takes effort.

Art is in contact with the transcendental. The following remark by Wittgenstein shows this very clearly. He is pondering the question of necessity in a work of art (the characteristic that causes us to be unable to change a word or a note in what appears to us perfectly logical) and he eliminates the answer that there should be a paradigm (mental, historical or other) outside of the work as well as the banality of a reference to the beautiful, but his object is to immediately clarify that there is a paradigm outside of the work, on the condition that understanding it is something that determines the very conditions of the existence of the work and its possible understanding by its audience, an essentially changeable paradigm since the theme and its repetition will add to it, giving a new configuration to our language, our thought and our sensibility:

“Repetition is necessary.” Why is it necessary? Well, sing it (the theme), you will see that only repetition gives it its extraordinary force. Is it not as if we needed a model for this theme to exist in reality, a model that the theme would not resemble or correspond to except if the model were repeated? Or must I be content with this platitude: “It sounds more beautiful if it is repeated”? . . . No paradigm justly exists, however, outside the theme. There is, however, a paradigm again outside of the theme: I mean the rhythm of our language, our thought and our sensibility. And besides, the theme is in turn a new part of our language, has been incorporated into it; we learn a new gesture from it. The theme is in interaction with the language. (VB, p. 64).

The problem of esthetic judgment does not reside only in the necessity of filtering it through an entire culture, but also in placing oneself on the same level of logical space, in the making and the repetition of descriptive rules, of ways and forms of the world’s contribution, in other words in rhythm. *There can be no rules in esthetics because esthetics already speaks in the idiom of rules.* Well,

16. The question of the identification of the reader with characters, for example, should be thought of in this way: I do not identify so much with Lucien Leuwen or James Bond as much as with their worlds. When Alice goes through the looking glass, she does not identify with the Queen of Spades or with the cat’s smile, but with this astounding new world.

there is no metarule: esthetics demonstrates the rules, it cannot state them. It shows time, space, what a description is, and the making of sense or the setting of value.

This is what must be understood by the term exemplarity in Kant. If a genius is asked by another genius to produce a new work that does not respect the rules that can be gotten *a posteriori* from the preceding work, this is because logical space is different each time. "An entire culture" does not mean the sum of all the accomplishments of each individual participating in a given culture, something like a *Weltanschauung*, but the individual's share in a society: that is, the common as well as the different. The universality seen in works of art stems from a double displacement: from the author toward others and from the reader toward this other world. Judgment is always the exercise of an impulse, of an invention of the other.

In this sense Bataille is missing an important link when he states: "It is not necessity but its opposite, 'luxury,' that poses fundamental problems for living matter and for man."<sup>17</sup> Every work of art shows rather that the real problem is that of the luxury of necessity. It offers us this problem as if on a platter to the extent that art is found on the level of the faculties of understanding. In particular, art and genius have to do with imagination as a faculty of presentation, as a faculty of imago. From Kant onwards, imagination has been rehabilitated among the hierarchy of faculties: it has become productive, it participates in the economy of the image indispensable to the workings of the faculties of knowledge. To make images is to make the immediacy of the visible enter into the order of calculation. Because necessity passes through imagination, or more precisely, because the rules and paradigms that are *a priori* propositions have hardly any criteria other than the impossibility of a contradictory proposition (i.e., a contrary description), it is the unimaginability, the lack of imagination, that will, on the contrary, determine the necessary proposition. If the rules are in fact the order of a calculation (this is why Wittgenstein often chose the example of arithmetic), it is the incalculable that marks the boundaries of sense. Calculation intervenes in a relationship to time. Peirce had the following idea: "The past contains only a collection of particular instances that have been actually accomplished. The past is pure fact. But a general law cannot be fully realized: its

17. Georges Bataille, "La Part maudite," in *Oeuvres complètes*, VII, Paris, Gallimard, 1976, p. 21.

mode of being is *esse in futuro*.<sup>18</sup> Past time consists only of events; and future time, of rules; in the past, contingency; in the future, necessity; in the past, realization; in the future, possibility. Opposition is inevitable as long as one does not grasp that in each present moment there is an opportunity for the event and the rule, for the adventure of the contingent and the necessary, for actualization (not the realization of a possibility), in short, for action. For Cioran, myths degenerate into concepts the moment that lucidity replaces action.<sup>19</sup> This is possible only to the extent that a myth is a rigid causality used to calculate effects to come (effects, in fact, that have already come) and to let actions happen of their own accord; concepts, for their part, attempting to justify the arbitrariness of calculations, block temporality and action. The rule is withdrawn from the circulation of time in order to allow a stable calculation of the future. Necessity can invent itself – but not the other. The other is that incalculable moment, that event outside the order of calculation when necessity changes, when the rules of the same movement are distorted and restored. Now art, in order to enter into the description and control of rules, partly enters into this order of the incalculable: taste traces the network making up the calculation of time, the sublime records the unimaginable, the incalculable of time at the heart of our rules. Faced with an esthetic impression, “on all evidence what we aspire to is not . . . a calculation, a report of reactions.”<sup>20</sup>

Art plays with invention. It is an event that is not foreseeable, but describable, that announces a change of rhythm, an acceleration in relation to the temporality of knowledge and of reproduction. But at the same time, although the event is singular, its occurrence is repeatable. Invention demands both otherness and commonality; it needs a law, i.e., a stability, a sense, to be recognized as an event.<sup>21</sup> A shock would not be enough. That is a paradox only if we assume

18. Charles S. Peirce, *Existential Graphs*, quoted by Julia Kristeva, *Le Texte du roman*, La Haye, Mouton 1976, p. 34.

19. Cf. Émile Cioran, *Précis de décomposition*, Paris, Gallimard 1978, p. 159–160.

20. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Leçons et conversations sur l'esthétique, la psychologie et la croyance religieuse*, trans. J. Fauve, Paris, Gallimard 1982, III, 8 (abridged LC).

21. See Jacques Derrida, *Psyché*, Paris, Galilee 1988, p. 11–61; in the *Invention de l'autre* Derrida starts his reflections from Paul de Man's ideas on time, and in particular, on the two sides of the same *temporal predicament* that are irony in its instantaneity and allegory in its length; we find there the same two tenets of time that Kant found in taste and the sublime: it is not by chance that starting from there Derrida comes to discuss the whole question of invention, beginning with the ideas of calculation and time.

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that an invention puts everything into question again, puts everything on a different foundation. In fact this is never the case (cf. *LC*, I, 16). Nothing will, however, be the same again, since a new velocity is given to the whole. Invention is a sharing – it is like the augur, with the point of his stick, drawing a circle in the sky in which all the birds and clouds that time will provide will furnish material for interpretation and for the calculation of time.