

## The feeling of life as a reflection of transcendental subjectivity

This talk claims that we can gain insight into Kant's concept of the feeling of life by reconsidering his understanding of the production of fine art. The feeling of life is an effect of the body or a reaction of what Kant calls the "mind" (Gemüt) only in a mediated sense (A 22 / B 37). Most immediately, it is the reflection of the animation of the transcendental faculties in inner sense (5:204, 217), and we can only experience it as appearance because "we intuit ourselves only as we are internally affected" (viz. B 153, trans. Guyer/Wood). Since the feeling of life is a special kind of self-affection (B 149 f., B 153 f.), that is, an imprint of the transcendental structures of subjectivity, this aesthetic self-awareness gives us a glimpse of the essence of the mind in aesthetic experience. In this respect, I follow Rudolf Makkreel, who writes that the feeling of life is a matter of the life of the mind, which is then used as model that is imposed on natural philosophy (*The Feeling of Life: Some Kantian Sources of Life-Philosophy*, 1985, p.89).

This interpretation rests on an account of what the extraordinary artist does when she produces a work of art, which is original and functions as a model for other artists to follow (5:318). I make the claim that the notion of spirit, which is "the principle, that animates the soul" and the "capacity to exhibit aesthetic ideas" (5:313f.), describes a special impulse, which can stem from a work of art or can even be ascribed to a person (5:313) and subsequently inspires the recipients (5:313). In this function spirit is the *causa efficiens* of the feeling of life. But spirit is also a metaphor for a work of art that possesses certain properties, that is, ones that cause this animated reaction as *causa formalis*. The work of art that animates the mind and prompts aesthetic pleasure has a special form supported by content (5:315f.) and that build an aesthetic idea (5:313). Kant calls the capacities for producing and presenting aesthetic ideas, which turn out to be expressions of one and the same capacity, exemplary geniality. Exemplary geniality is the ability to produce structures and forms that mirror the universal structures of the rational finite being. More concretely, the production of aesthetic ideas should be considered as an unconscious anticipation of figurative patterns (9:67, 7:187, 7:223) that prompt the free play of the faculties (5:313, 217) which as an effect arouses the feeling of life in the recipients. This relationship is best described as a relational fit by transitivity. The talk closes with an explanation of why the process of producing an aesthetic idea, following this account, also gives an answer to the question how genius can give a rule to art through nature (5:307).