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Conatus and Feeling of Life A Genetic Shift in Kant's Faculty Doctrine?

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Abstract: In his reconstruction of Kant's critical philosophy as a whole, Deleuze argues that the cognitive and practical faculties are genetically grounded in the affective, enlivening dynamics of the reflecting power of judgment. In this paper I propose to take Kant's account of self-organization as model for understanding this genesis of the faculties in terms of a circular causality that is purposively animated from within by a self-productive and self-maintaining tendency. The key argument I develop is that this generative tendency may be understood as a *conatus* that is inherent to the power of judgment and comes to the fore in the subject's feeling of life.

Keywords: Deleuze, Kant, Leibniz, conatus, self-organization, individuation, feeling of life, power of judgment, circular causation

I. Introduction

In his reconstruction of Kant's Critical philosophy as a whole, Deleuze argues that the cognitive and practical faculties (*Vermögen*) are actually *grounded* in the affective, enlivening dynamics of the reflecting powers (*Kräfte*) in the mind (*Gemüt*): 'aesthetic common sense does not complete the two others; *it grounds them and makes them possible*' (Deleuze 1984: 49-50/72). According to Deleuze, both the *a priori* syntheses determined by the faculty of cognition (understanding) and the *a priori* syntheses determined by the faculty of desire (reason), presuppose a more fundamental organizational layer, which consists in the spontaneous, unregulated interaction of the cognitive powers as they engage in reflective judgment. Deleuze claims that this spontaneous integration of the powers must be understood as a generative dynamism in which all determining (cognitive and practical) interactions between the powers are rooted. Indeed, in Deleuze's view the faculties of understanding and reason would never take on a legislative and determining role were not all the cognitive powers together in the first place capable of this free subjective harmony:

In fact, determining judgment and reflective judgment are not like two species of the same genus. Reflective judgment manifests and liberates a depth, which remained hidden in the other. But the other was also judgment only by virtue of this living depth. (...) The point is that any determinate accord of the faculties under a determining and legislative faculty presupposes the existence and the possibility of a free indeterminate accord. It is in this free accord that judgment is not only original (this was already so in the case of determining judgment), but that it manifests the principle of its originality. According to this principle, despite the fact that our faculties differ in nature, they nevertheless have a free and spontaneous accord, *which then makes possible their exercise under the chairmanship of one of them according to a law of the interests of reason*. Judgment (...) never consists in one faculty alone, but in their accord, whether an accord already determined by one of them playing a legislative role or, *more profoundly*, in a free indeterminate accord, which forms the final object of a 'critique of judgment' in general. (Deleuze 1984: 60-1/87, emphasis mine)

Whereas the reliance on *a priori* laws allowed the first two Critiques to start from the presupposition of 'preformed faculties' with *a priori*, preformed determinate accords, the third Critique no longer assumes such a preformed accord based on an *a priori* lawful structure (Deleuze 2004a: 61/86). Instead, Kant's inquiry now revolves around the problem of 'a genesis of the faculties in their original free agreement' (ibid.). This spontaneous accord is 'original' and 'genetic' in the sense that it precedes the possibility of a determining relation among the cognitive powers. In reflective judgment the powers do not interact based on *a priori* logical or moral laws, which determine their interaction. Rather, the cognitive powers are integrated in a spontaneous and unregulated manner, and for Deleuze it is precisely this spontaneous integration of the powers, which forms the genetic 'living depth' in which all determining acts of understanding and reason are rooted.

In this paper, I propose to take Kant's account of self-organization as a model for understanding this genetic functioning of reflective judgment. I argue that in both his accounts of self-organization and reflective aesthetic judgment, Kant puts forward a generative process of reciprocal causation that is purposively animated from within by a self-productive and self-maintaining tendency. Just as the cohesive form or structure of living systems is generated by the purposive reciprocal determinations between the organism's parts and the whole that is produced out of this reciprocal causality, the reflecting power of judgment purposively integrates the cognitive powers into a living, self-organizing whole. This act of integration in turn produces a subjective 'feeling of life' (*Lebensgefühl* (Kant 2000: 5:204)) that has its 'ground' in a self-maintaining state of the cognitive powers 'reciprocally promoting each other' (Kant 2000, 20:231).

Kant calls the self-productive and self-maintaining tendency driving self-organization the organism's 'formative power' (*bildende Kraft* (Kant 2000: 5:374)). I argue that the mental equivalent of this formative power is a *conatus* that belongs to the power of judgment and that animates its spontaneous activity from within. This *conatus* forms the *causal potential* of the power of judgment to integrate the mental powers into a living, self-organizing whole. Drawing on Kant's *Lectures on Metaphysics*, I show how Kant establishes an intricate relation between (a) the cognitive powers, (b) the acts that are causally individuated by the powers, which are representations, and (c) a *conatus* that is the causal potential of the powers in the sense that the *conatus* is a spontaneous striving towards *self-activity* (and hence towards representation) that is inherent to each living power.

My key argument then goes as follows. In Kant's faculty doctrine, representations are mental acts that have to be causally individuated. These mental acts, which individuate representations, always result from the causal interaction between the different cognitive powers. In the First Critique, this process of causal interaction is a process of synthetic determination or subsumption of the powers of sensibility and imagination by or under the spontaneity of understanding as the transcendental unity of apperception. The kind of mental acts, that is the kind of mental representations, which result from this determining interaction is, of course, cognition. Accordingly, the *conatus* that is associated with the understanding's spontaneity may, as Béatrice Longuenesse (1998) has argued, be called a 'discursive *conatus*' towards cognitive representations (Longuenesse 1998: 7, 164-5, 396). In the Third Critique, however, the process of causal interaction that individuates feeling of life is not one of synthetic determination based in the spontaneity of understanding or reason. Rather, the individuating process of causal interaction is now one of *reciprocal determination* between the cognitive powers that is based on a spontaneity of the reflecting power of judgment itself: feelings of life are individuated by the spontaneous, reciprocal integration of the cognitive powers. I argue that the *conatus* of the reflecting power of judgment may accordingly be understood as a spontaneous, generative striving to produce and maintain a reciprocal integration of the cognitive powers, a *conatus* that comes to the fore in subjective feelings of life.

In developing this argument, my purpose in this paper is twofold. On the one hand, I aim to uncover what is ultimately at stake in Deleuze's genetic interpretation

of Kant's faculty doctrine. On the other hand, I aim to explore the implications of this genetic point of view. This, I believe, may allow us to shed light on one of the central endeavours of any genetic faculty doctrine: to introduce an organizational layer of individuation that is fundamentally distinct from, and constitutive of, the synthetic order of cognitive and practical reason.

The argument is structured as follows. In the following section, I first give an overview of Deleuze's genetic interpretation of reflective judgment (§II). Next I turn to Kant's conception of the generative power of self-organization and the circular causality, which he ascribes to it (§III). To see how this idea of a reciprocal causality may be ascribed to the power of judgment, the fourth section examines Kant's association of a *conatus* with his faculty – power distinction in the *Lectures on Metaphysics* (§IV). I argue that although Kant's Critical philosophy abandons the Leibnizian conception of the *conatus* as a self-unifying force of the soul, his understanding of mental causation remains intrinsically tied to this metaphysical notion of the *conatus*: it is always a mental power that causes a mental act to act, and every causal act of a mental power continuously arises from its conative striving towards self-activity. Finally, the last section (§V) develops the proposed concept of a *conatus* of the reflecting power of judgment and its individuation of the feeling of life. I argue that distinguishing the *conatus* of the reflecting power of judgment from the spontaneity of understanding and reason opens up a more primordial purposiveness of the *Gemüt*, namely its striving to produce and maintain a reciprocal integration of the mental powers. I conclude with some final remarks on the teleological character of this conative striving of the reflecting power of judgment (§VI).

II. Deleuze's Genetic Interpretation of Reflective Judgment

Deleuze's genetic interpretation, which attributes to the reflecting power of judgment a genetic 'depth' (Deleuze 1984: 60-1/87) that was still lacking from Kant's faculty doctrine in the first two Critiques, consists of three ideas that are central to the purpose of this paper.

II.I The Para-Epistemic Dimension of Reflective Judgment

First of all, the power of reflective judgment is understood as isolating and manifesting a necessary subjective, affective component of all cognitive and practical mental life, which itself remains unnoticed in determining judgments. For Deleuze, the notion of reflective judgment must be seen as a re-consideration of Kant's previous account of the power of judgment in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Against a narrow approach which separates beauty and sublimity from questions of truth and moral rectitude, Deleuze argues that aesthetic reflective judgments have what Rodolphe Gasché has called a 'para-epistemic' dimension (Gasché 2003: 4). However, as Gasché notes, the idea that the reflective power of judgment is a 'ground' of determining judgments does not mean that it is foundational for or anterior to determining judgments (Gasché 2003: 53-4). Rather, it performs a mode of

thinking that stands beside and on a par with cognitive judgments, and without which the latter would not be possible.

The First Critique had already put forward the power of judgment as the essential unifying power constitutive of determining judgments: it mobilised concepts and constituted their predicative force by linking them to intuitions. It is because human understanding is for Kant essentially discursive and not intuitive that there is a crucial need for an independent, unifying faculty of judgment and its reflection. A determined concept is always the *product* of a unifying act of judgment: 'If the understanding in general is explained as the faculty of rules, then the power of judgment is the faculty of *subsuming* under rules, i.e. of determining whether something stands under a given rule (*casus legis*) or not' (Kant 1998: A132/B171). Kant even went so far as to identify judgment with the very act of thinking itself: 'the faculty of judging (...) is the same as the faculty for thinking' (Kant 1998: A80-1/B106).

This is no less true in the Third Critique, although Kant now envisages a new, non-determining mode of thinking. Unlike cognitive or practical judgments, aesthetic reflective judgments do not subsume under concepts. One may say the Third Critique envisages a mode of thinking that goes beyond the predicative limits of conceptual thought: in reflective judgments 'sense' (Kant 2000: 20:222) is independent from the analytical conceptual determination of a raw sensory material. The cognitive powers, which are involved in judgment, are given relevance beyond their contribution to a logic of truth and concepts extend their meaning beyond what we can clearly and distinctly conceive. In fact, as becomes evident in Kant's First Introduction, aesthetic reflective judgments always arise out of a partial failure of object constitution: faced with certain particulars and contingencies our understanding is at a loss and in these cases reflective judgment ensures a minimal organization and minimal identification of something for which no determined concepts are at hand. In the face of such particulars and contingencies we experience in imagination and intuition things that fall outside of the realm of conceptual thinking. But despite the First Critique's logicist definition of judgment these do not, for that matter, fall outside of all thinking. Art, beautiful nature and nature 'in its chaos or in its wildest and most unruly disorder and devastation' (Kant 2000: 5:246) require another, pre-conceptual mode of thinking: one in which judgments are grounded in and determined by *affects* (*Affekte*) caused within the judging subject.¹

Accordingly, it is no longer self-evident that judgment should be logical and that the constitutive forms, which thought receives from the power of judgment should be, again, logical. For Deleuze, reflective judgment gives rise to a form of intuition in which the sensible is valid in itself and unfolds in 'a pathos beyond all logic':

It is no longer the aesthetic of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which considered the sensible as a quality that could be related to an object in space and time; nor is it a logic of the sensible, nor even a new logos that would be time. It is an aesthetic of the Beautiful and the Sublime, in which the sensible takes on an autonomous value for itself and is deployed in a pathos beyond all logic, and which will grasp time in its surging forth, at the very origin of its thread and its giddiness. (Deleuze 1998: 34/48)

II.II The *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment* as a Transcendental Theory of Life

The second fundamental element of Deleuze's interpretation is closely related to this way of reading the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* in light of Kant's epistemological discourses in the earlier *Critiques*. If we adopt the view that the Third Critique can be read as a reconsideration of the Transcendental Aesthetic without absorbing the latter into the Transcendental Logic, it follows that we cannot assume the regime of self-affection to be *exclusively* that of the First Critique's synthesis. In this regard, Deleuze is close to Lyotard when he writes 'It would be wrong to look for the aesthetic "subject" in a synthesis similar to that of the *Ich Denke*, the sole purpose of which is to guarantee the objectivity of judgments' (Lyotard 1991, 21/35).

In reflective judgment, a given representation is related to the subject only 'in so far as it affects the subject by intensifying or weakening its vital force' (Deleuze 1984: 3-4/8, cf. CPJ, 5:204). The transcendental analysis of our receptivity to representation, not insofar as it can be objectified, that is '*become an element of cognition*' (*Erkenntnisstück*) (Kant 2000: 5:189), but only insofar as it can be *felt*, certainly does still appertain to that 'receptivity', which Kant had isolated in the Transcendental Aesthetic of the First Critique. It is not that the First Critique's 'sensation' (*Empfindung*) and the Third Critique's 'feeling' (*Gefühl*) would designate two different ontological domains. Rather, with the analysis of receptivity in terms of *feeling*, Kant opens up *another dimension of the subject's 'sensibility'* (*Empfänglichkeit des Subjekts*): one which is distinct from its cognitive power ('which contributes nothing at all to the cognition of the object' (Kant 2000: 20:222)) and which accordingly does not appertain to the problematic of the Transcendental Aesthetic *stricto sensu*.ⁱⁱ What is at stake in the transcendental analysis of aesthetic 'feeling' is how certain apprehended forms can trigger a *spontaneous* and *unregulated* interaction of imagination and understanding, which produces a stimulation of the mind's *feeling of life* – or what Deleuze calls its 'vital force'. Although this reference to the *Lebensgefühl* in Kant's account of reflective judgment has received relatively little attention, the principle of an increase or decrease of the subjective life of the *Gemüt* provides for Deleuze the general perspective for understanding the reflective functions of judgment and the introduction of a new transcendental principle in Kant's aesthetics.

This is why the fact that in reflective judgment the faculties are exercised freely, that they engage in a spontaneous and undetermined accord, does not mean for Deleuze that determining and reflective judgments are like two *species* of the same *genus*. In fact, for Deleuze, Kant's formulation that the imagination 'schematizes without a concept' (Kant 2000: 5:287) is 'brilliant rather than exact' (Deleuze 2004a: 59/83), because an aesthetic judgment is something quite different from schematizing. The central difference is that in reflective judgment, Kant discovers a new dimension of the imagination's transcendental activity. In its essential role of unifying the disparate mental realms of sensibility, understanding and reason, the imagination is no longer only the First Critique's 'common but to us unknown root' (Kant 1998: A15/B29). Rather, the Third Critique attributes to the transcendental

imagination an *enlivening principle*, which provides an essential *animating swing* (*Schwung*) for the *Gemüt*, an *enlivenment* representing the minimal condition of the mind's life. Deleuze calls this the central discovery of the Third Critique: 'the life-giving principle that "animates" each faculty, engendering both its free exercise and its free agreement with the other faculties (...), "a point of concentration in the super-sensible", from which all our faculties extract both their force and their life' (Deleuze 2004a: 69-70/98-9).

In the metaphysical terminology that Kant inherited from Leibniz and Wolff, the reflecting power of judgment may accordingly be understood in terms of a *conatus*: it enacts a recurrent, self-referential *effort* or *striving* to integrate the powers into a living, self-organizing whole. Just as the Spinozist *conatus* corresponds to a living sensibility that strives to conserve a creature's existence, the striving of the reflecting power of judgment corresponds to an inclination to preserve a dynamic interaction of the powers that is 'reciprocally expeditious' (*wechselseitig beförderlich* (Kant 2000: 20:224)). Accordingly, the *conatus* of the reflecting power of judgment may be understood as a spontaneous striving to produce and maintain a reciprocal integration of the cognitive powers. As we will see, it is this conative striving, which comes to the fore in aesthetic pleasure as a *Lebensgefühl*, for the latter has its 'ground' (*Grund*) in 'a state of the powers of the mind reciprocally promoting each other' (*der Zustand einander wechselseitig befördernder Gemütskräfte* (Kant 2000: 20:231)).ⁱⁱⁱ

This focus on the theme of life in Kant's aesthetics is also stressed by Alexis Philonenko, who argues that the theory of the beautiful and the sublime constitutes 'the transcendental theory of life', whereas *The Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment* forms the theory of finality, concerned with *organization* as a mere 'Analogon of life' (Philonenko 1998: 44). Philonenko emphasises the ruinous consequences of situating Kant's theory of life strictly in the second part of the Third Critique, as though aesthetic teleology wouldn't deal with life and only with the beautiful in a free and disinterested way: 'In placing the theory of organization in the place of the theory of life, one has ended up demolishing the meaning of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* by misjudging its architectonic value' (Philonenko 1998: 45).

II.III The Idea of Transcendental Genesis

The third and perhaps most striking idea in Deleuze's reading is that the Third Critique does not simply complement the two others but rather unveils a genetic 'ground' (Deleuze 2004a: 69/98) that remained hidden in the two other Critiques. Whereas the reliance on *a priori* laws allowed the first two Critiques to start from the presupposition of preformed faculties with *a priori*, preformed determinate accords, the Third Critique, in contrast, no longer assumes an accord of the faculties based on an *a priori* law-like structure. For Deleuze, this means that the Third Critique reveals to us a completely different domain than that of the two other Critiques. As he writes:

In the *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment*, Kant poses the problem of a genesis of the faculties in their original free agreement. Thus he uncovers the ultimate

ground still lacking in the other Critiques. The Critique in general ceases to be a simple *conditioning* to become a transcendental Formation, a transcendental Culture, a transcendental Genesis (Deleuze 2004a: 61/86).

Kant's inquiry now concerns a free and *spontaneous* accord in which the interaction of the faculties does not rely on preformed *a priori* laws, but rather in which they generate their own purposive lawfulness in the face of contingencies. In Deleuze's view, the Third Critique thus discovers the most original figures of the faculties:

An original free imagination, which is not content to schematize under the constraint of the understanding; an original unlimited understanding, which has not yet folded under the speculative weight of its determinate concepts, or has not already been subjected to the ends of practical reason; an original reason that has not yet acquired the taste to command, but frees itself by freeing the other faculties – these are the extreme discoveries of the *Critique of Judgment*, each faculty finding the principle of its genesis by converging towards this focal point, the 'point of concentration in the supra-sensible' from which all our faculties extract both their force and their life (Deleuze 2004a, 69-70/98-99).

As I understand it, this interpretation of the reflecting power of judgment hints at the unity of the Third Critique, *both* the Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment and the Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment being concerned with conceiving self-organization as a process of immanent purposiveness, that is the purposiveness immanent to a self-organizing whole. In accordance with Kant's understanding of organisms as natural purposes, then, the *Gemüt itself* would be a self-organizing natural purpose if and only if:

- i. Its parts are only possible (with respect to their existence and their form) through their relation to the whole (Kant 2000: 5:373).
- ii. Its parts are combined into a whole by being reciprocally the cause and effect of their form (Kant 2000: 5:373).

This means that for the *Gemüt* to be a natural, self-organizing system, it is required that its heterogeneous parts (that is the different faculties) 'reciprocally produce each other', and thus produce a 'whole' out of their own reciprocal causality (Kant 2000: 5:373).^{iv} In my view it is exactly such a principle of circular causality that Kant's reconsideration of reflective judgment was after: a principle that is capable of both spontaneously generating and maintaining the organic unity of the *Gemüt*.

The consequence of such an organicist reading is indeed a new, *genetic* reading of Kant's faculty doctrine. On this reading, the spontaneity of the higher faculties of cognition (understanding) and desire (reason) is ultimately grounded in the generative, enlivening element of the indeterminate, reciprocal interaction of the cognitive powers as they engage in reflective aesthetic judgment. For Deleuze, the

reflective power of judgment is the original ‘germinal’ element out of which the faculties themselves are *generated*.^v Accordingly, ‘aesthetic common sense does not complete the two others; *it grounds them and makes them possible*’ (Deleuze 1984: 49-50/72).

Such a genetic interpretation of Kant’s transcendental philosophy indicates an important step beyond the limitations of the First Critique’s transcendental framework. Although Kant accepted the idea that the empirical content of science could historically evolve, he did not accept the idea of a historical development of its *a priori* principles. For this reason it has often been argued that transcendental philosophy cannot truly explain the historical development of knowledge. Whereas Kant’s claim that rules exist prior to experience is still widely valued, his claim that some rules are *definitive* because they reflect immutable structures of human reason is generally taken to be narrow and false. For example, the allegedly immutable system of categories or pure concepts of understanding is related to dynamics and appears to have no bearing on statistical laws of nature. This challenge facing Kantian transcendentalism to move from a static to a generative conception of the faculties and their *a priori*’s did not derive from the developments of science alone, however. The challenge was formulated already by the early pioneers of German Idealism, such as Maimon and Schelling, who sought to convert the subjective formal *a priori* into a formative power and who replaced the spontaneity of understanding with a generative force of organic development. Before examining how such a generative force may be ascribed to the reflecting power of judgment, we will now briefly consider Kant’s conception of the generative force of organic development itself.

III. The Formative Power of Self-Organization

III.I Circular Causality

For Kant, the essential and ‘inscrutable’ property of living organisms is their ‘*formative power*’ (*bildende Kraft*), which is distinct from the mere ‘*motive power*’ that is characteristic of inert matter (Kant 2000: 5:374).^{vi} Kant conceives the formative power as a natural force that is responsible for generating and sustaining the organised teleological *structure* or *form* of organised beings. This structure consists of a reciprocal determination between the parts of the organism and the organism as a whole. For Kant, this structure is not that of a mechanism and eschews the laws of geometry and physics, because the latter could not account for the systematic *unity* of the structure and the cohesive, organic connection between its parts. As Kant puts it in a central, well-known passage in §65 of the Third Critique:

An organized being is thus not a mere machine, for that has only a *motive* power, while the organized being possesses in itself a *formative* power, and indeed one that it communicates to the matter, which does not have it (it organizes the latter): thus it is a self-propagating formative power, which cannot be explained through the capacity for movement alone (that is, mechanism). (Kant 2000: 5:374)

Although Kant was convinced that a true knowledge of nature (life included) should be described mechanically, and organised beings certainly do possess motive power, he argued that the origin and functioning of living self-organization could only be understood in *teleological* terms. An organism, Kant writes, is ‘possible only as a purpose’ (Kant 2000: 5:369). Our judgment of life ‘*necessarily* carries with it the concept of it as a natural purpose’ (Kant 2000: 5:378, emphasis mine). But what exactly is teleological about the self-propagating formative power of organisms? What is it that makes this formative property not susceptible to mechanical explanation? To understand this, we have to see how this formative power has the causal power to organize matter.

Kant explains the meaning of the concept of organization as the production of a ‘whole’ in which each part is ‘not merely a means, but at the same time also an end, and, insofar as it contributes to the possibility of the whole, its position and function should also be determined by the idea of the whole’ (Kant 2000: 5:375, note). This means that the formative power has the causal capacity to generate a particular kind of organic *structure* in which whole and part are purposes for each other. However, Kant is clear that this teleological structure of the organism does not mean that it has come into being on the basis of a rule that is external to the configuration of its material parts themselves – for in that case it would be an artifact that derives from an external, rational causality. The teleological structure is *intrinsic* to the organism and is related precisely to the organism’s formative power. Kant specifies the latter as a specific kind of circular causality: the formative power is what drives the reciprocal causal influence among the different material parts of a system. Let us examine this idea of a reciprocal, purposive causality more closely.

First of all, in organic systems the causal influence of parts on other parts has the remarkable effect that the parts *produce each other*. In other words, reciprocal causality is responsible for a self-productive dynamics. An organism produces and reproduces its biological macromolecules, cells, organs, and vascular and nervous systems as parts, of which it is composed. The different material parts and their capacities (their functions) are not *pre-given* but rather they are *produced* by the organic whole itself. The interrelation of the parts is not the product of an external designer who conceives the purposive idea of the structure as a building plan. Rather, in a natural purpose ‘it is required that the parts produce themselves [*hervorbringen*] together, one from the other, in their form as much as in their binding, reciprocally, and from this causation on, produce a whole’ (Kant 2000: 5:373). With regard to the functions of the different parts, this means that the dynamical interaction of forces in an organic system does not merely cause the way in which each part exercises its functions. Rather, the reciprocal dynamics are also a *generative* cause of the very existence of those functions in the first place.

A second important aspect of this self-productive capacity of the formative power is that it causes a specifically organic kind of *structure* or *form*, which Kant calls a ‘whole’. That is to say, the formative power causes the ‘form’ and the ‘combination’ of the parts to be such that each part ‘exists only *through* all the others’ (Kant 2000: 5:373). This means that parts do not merely co-exist but that their existence is reciprocally dependent upon the others. In a machine, the parts exist only

for one another in that each is the condition of the other's functions toward a common functional end. In an organism, however, the parts exist *for* one another but also *by means* of one another.^{vii} For example, one might say that a gear of a watch remains that same gear if separated from the watch: the gear, outside of the watch, is still the same (formed) bit of metal. An organ, however, separated from the rest of the living body, loses all its characteristic properties, behaviours and effects: cut off from the body, the organ is dead. As such, the parts of an organic system are essentially internally related. They reciprocally adapt themselves to one another and to altered external circumstances, in function of the preserved equilibrium or continued activity of the whole. As we will see, this idea of a reciprocal determination between the parts of a whole that occurs in function of the equilibrium of the whole is also a central feature of Kant's conception of the subject's feeling of life.

Finally, a third teleological effect of the formative power is that it causes not just the form and combination of the particular parts, but it also causes the form of the organic whole itself and generates a reciprocal relation between the particular purposes of the parts and the general purpose of the whole.

III.II Self-organization and Individuation

In contemporary terminology, the generative process that constitutes the properties of biological systems is called the *individuation* of cells, organs, organisms and species. From Kant's point of view, it is the purposive, circular causality driving self-organization that individuates the organic structure of living dynamical systems. What makes individuation specifically organic for Kant is the fact that it involves a circular causality between the parts and the whole: on the one hand, the parts reciprocally produce each other and the resulting whole, and on the other hand, in so doing they are also determined by the (future of the) whole. What is thereby essential to the individuation of living systems is the *structural, cohesive unity* that holds among their different, interdependent parts – a unity that is essentially 'contingent' in the sense that it is not necessitated by physical laws (cf. Kant 2000: 5:360). What makes self-organization intrinsically purposive is the fact that material components are *more* than the mere matter of a system: the material parts also generate its self-sustaining, future-directed organic *structure* or *form*. This 'self-preserving' structure is not that of a mechanism, because mechanical features of a system cannot be directed towards a (future) purpose (cf. Kant 2000: 5:424). The structure depends therefore on the formative power, which purposively causes the reciprocal determination between the organic whole and its parts.

In the following, I will argue that Kant's reconsideration of the reflective power of judgment may be understood as an attempt to construct just such a principle of generative, reciprocal causality on the level of the faculties themselves. To see how such a generative causality might be at work in Kant's faculty doctrine, the next section will consider how Kant links a *conatus* to the cognitive powers, which designates a spontaneous internal striving towards *self-activity*.

IV. The Concept of the Conatus in the *Lectures on Metaphysics*

IV.I Faculty, Power and Conatus

According to the standard interpretation of Kant's faculty – power distinction, the powers (*Kräfte*) are the actualization of the faculties (*Vermögen*):

Although sometimes Kant seems to use the expressions 'Vermögen' and 'Kraft' interchangeably, as when he characterizes the *Urteilkraft* or *Einbildungskraft* as 'Vermögen' (e.g. 5:179; 7:264), they stand for two aspects of causal connections that are clearly distinguished by Kant. Whereas the *Vermögen* consists of the mere *possibility* of an 'act', the *Kraft* consists of its actualization by a determining ground. (Willascheck et al. 2015: 1290, my translation)

This way of distinguishing the faculties from the powers can be traced back to Leibniz, Wolff and Crusius. For them already, the distinction between a faculty's mere possibility and a power's act concerns the idea of *self-activity*: a power is driven by a continuous striving or *conatus* to act, while a faculty consists in the mere possibility of acting (Heßbrüggen-Walter 2004: 58, 72, 76-7). This means that the concept of power is intrinsically tied to the concept of mental causation: it is always a power that causes a mental act to act, unless something external resists its internal striving (for example another power (cf. Heßbrüggen-Walter 2004: 135)). As Kant puts it in the First Critique, 'power' (*Kraft*) is 'the causality of a substance' (Kant 1998: B676). A faculty, on the contrary, does not entail this connection to causality and self-activity. The faculty never causes an act to act but it is merely the *possibility* of an act.

In his *Lectures on Metaphysics*, Kant adopts this distinction by calling a faculty a power whose act remains obstructed by the conflict with another power: 'This insufficient power is called a faculty' (Kant 1968: 27). Kant also calls faculties 'dead' powers, whereas powers that are not obstructed in their self-activity are 'living' powers:

Faculty and power must be distinguished. In the case of a faculty we have in mind the possibility of an act. It does not contain the sufficient ground of the act, which is the power, but rather it contains the mere possibility of the latter. Each power is either *living* [*lebendig*], in case it acts (and therefore is both internally and externally sufficient, being the ground of the effectuation of the *causati* or *accidentis*), or she is *dead* [*tot*], in case it is internally sufficient but externally insufficient or in case no act occurs because then an external cause must be there contravening it; e.g. each body has a power to fall, although this does not occur when another opposite power resists it; insofar as there is no resistance, all powers are therefore alive. The conatus or striving is actually the determination of a faculty *ad actum*. This should transform the faculty of dead powers into living powers, and means accordingly the insufficiency of a dead power, since the latter is dead only by a resistance, and something is in a state of striving only because something else is resisting it. (Kant 1968: 434, my translation)

The difficulty one faces upon interpreting this passage is to understand how Kant delineates at once faculty, power and *conatus*. At certain points in the text, *conatus* and faculty seem to say the same. However, as Stefan Heßbrüggen-Walter (2004) points out, the faculties may themselves not be interpreted as having a *conatus* towards self-realization. Rather, the faculties should be understood as a Leibnizian '*nuda potentia*': a mere potentiality (Heßbrüggen-Walter 2004: 138, note 396). Unlike the *conatus*, a potentiality or faculty is nothing but a possibility of acting, which needs an *external* excitation or stimulus to be transferred into action. As Leibniz writes:

Active force [*vis activa*] differs from the mere power familiar to the Schools, for the (...) faculty of the Scholastics is nothing but an approximate possibility of acting, which needs an external excitation or stimulus, as it were, to be transferred into action. (Loemker, 1969: 433)

In other words, a faculty is a potentiality and not a *conatus* in the sense that it requires an external cause to activate itself. By contrast, the central defining trait of the *conatus* is that its striving always involves a certain act and does not arise from an external stimulus. That is to say, its active striving does not require an external stimulus or cause to produce an actual act. Leibniz writes:

But active force [*vis activa*] contains a certain act or *entelecheia* and is thus midway between the faculty of acting and the act itself and involves a *conatus*. (Loemker 1969: 433)

In other words, the *conatus* does not receive the force of acting from another power, but rather it contains *within itself* a pre-existent striving or causal force of action (cf. Heidegger 1992: 84). The similitude between faculty and *conatus* comes from the fact that both designate a *capacity*. But the *conatus*, unlike the faculty, is not a dead inactive capacity that has not yet come into play or existence. To the contrary: the *conatus* of the active force is always active, it is actively striving, and this activity does not rely on prior external circumstances: it is an impulse towards self-activity that is essentially self-propulsive.^{viii}

But Kant also delineates the *conatus* from the living or active power: the striving is what transforms the faculty of a dead power into a living power. The *conatus* is then a certain kind of act and nevertheless not 'yet' the activity of a power in its real accomplishment. Rather, it is a *tending towards*, a *striving for* self-activity. Paraphrasing Leibniz, we should say the *conatus* is 'midway' between the faculty of acting and the act itself: it is neither the mere possibility, nor the actual process. It is exactly to the extent that the *conatus* strives towards the accomplishment of a power's living self-activity and to the extent that it itself contains the necessary causal forces to accomplish this, that one may say that the power already contains this self-activity, still before it unfolds. It is in this sense that the *conatus* of the power may also not be confused with the dynamic activities of the power: the striving is not 'yet' an action.

Summarizing, the *conatus* of a power is *more* than the mere possibility to act (a potentiality in the sense of Leibniz's '*nuda potentia*') and also *less* than the carrying out of an act. Like the Leibnizian *conatus*, the striving of a power is an active, living drive, an existing effort towards self-activity.^{ix} This striving must be distinguished from a mere possibility ('*nuda potentia*' or '*facultas*'), which depends upon an external stimulus, an external causality, to pass into action. This striving must also be distinguished, however, from the power's actions themselves, precisely because it designates the *impulse or tendency* towards the act – a tendency that 'already' contains the very principle of the act from within. Within Kant's faculty doctrine, the concept of a *conatus* thus means a striving that is inherent in every living mental power. Each living act of a mental power continuously arises from this *conatus* towards self-activity.

IV.II Conatus and Individuation

In his interpretation of the Leibnizian *vis activa* in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, Heidegger calls the *conatus* a 'drive' (*Drang, Trieb*) that must be distinguished at once from a mere disposition (a faculty) and from an actual process (an active power) (Heidegger 1992: 82). In Heidegger's view, the essential function of the drive or active force is the individuation of a monad's 'unity': the drive is 'unity-conferring' (Heidegger 1992: 85). For Leibniz, the essence of the monad or soul is its indivisible unity, which cannot be compared to the composition of parts in material aggregates. More precisely, the essence of the monad consists in its striving to unify itself. And insofar as it unifies itself, the monad individuates itself. We may say therefore that a monad's individuation is structurally dependent on the *conative* essence of the monad as active force or drive.

If we ask how the active force unifies, and how it is individuated in the unification, we find that the active force unifies as a 'foregrasping grip' (Heidegger 1992: 99). The *conative* character of the monad's striving entails that it is continuously *anticipating* its own unity, its own individuation: the active force is continuously '*reaching out*' towards its own unity, '*gripping in advance*', or 'pre-hensive' (*re-präsentierend*) (Heidegger 1992: 90). If the *vis activa* strives for self-unification or individuation, this striving must thus also be a striving for *prehension* or *apprehension* (*perceptio* (Heidegger 1992: 91)). This means that the monad is continuously driven to unify the 'manifold' of dispersing 'perceptions' and 'appetitions' which it contains (cf. Heidegger 1992: 72-3, 89-91, 96). The active force unifies with a glance toward unity, always from within a certain point of view. Because monads are not isolated from the world, each presents the world from a viewpoint and 'this unifying presentation of the universe in each individuation is precisely what concerns each monad in its being, its drive' (Heidegger 1992: 97). Heidegger notes 'the deepest metaphysical motive for the monad's characteristic prehension [*Vorstellungscharakter*] is the ontologically unifying function' of the *conatus* or *vis activa*: the monad has prehensions and eventually apprehensions and apperceptions *in function* of its striving for self-unification or individuation. He adds:

‘Prehension [*vor-stellen*] is to be understood here quite broadly, structurally, and not as a particular faculty of the soul’ (Heidegger 1992: 91).

V. Conatus and Feeling of Life in Kant’s Faculty Doctrine

V.I Conatus and Individuation

In Kant’s faculty doctrine, *representations* are mental acts that have to be causally individuated (cf. Heßbrüggen-Walter 2004: 168-82, 260). For Kant, the mental acts, which individuate representations, always result from the causal *interaction* between the different cognitive powers. As such, each mental power that is involved in the individuation of representations should be understood as a causal potential of this individuation. But more importantly, the fundamental requirement for the individuation of representations is the cohesive, unified interaction between the mental powers.

In the First Critique, this process of causal interaction is a process of synthetic *determination* or *subsumption* of the powers of sensibility and imagination *by* or *under* the spontaneity of understanding as the faculty of apperception. The *kind* of mental acts, that is the *kind of representations*, which result from this determining interaction between the different powers, is, of course, *cognition*. Accordingly, the *conatus* that is associated with the understanding’s spontaneity may, as Béatrice Longuenesse has argued, be called a ‘discursive *conatus*’ towards cognitive representations (Longuenesse 1998: 7, 163-6, 396). In this context, spontaneity is no longer conceived as an original force or *vis activa* of the soul, but rather, as a synthetic act of *determination* that belongs to the faculty of understanding.^x The most important feature of this spontaneity of the understanding is the fact that it is the source of the synthesis of representations in judgment. Kant’s key premise in the First Critique’s Transcendental Deduction is that if a sensible manifold is to be combined by an act of synthesis, it is the spontaneity of the understanding that must be doing the combining or synthesizing. That is to say, the imagination’s figurative synthesis belongs ultimately to the understanding’s spontaneity: all synthesis ‘is an act of the spontaneity of the power of representation, and, since one must call the latter understanding, in distinction from sensibility, all combination (...) is an action of the understanding’ (Kant 2000: B130).

In the First Critique, it is thus ultimately the understanding’s spontaneity, which determines the causal interaction between the different cognitive powers involved in cognitive judgment. It is likewise the spontaneity of apperception, which determines the specific *cohesive* and *unified* character of the interaction between the powers. Accordingly, in the First Critique, the individuation of representations is grounded in the conative power of the understanding to *reflect upon* what is given in sensibility *in view of* subsuming it under discursive forms.

What happens to this notion of spontaneity or *conative* striving when Kant, in the transition to the Third Critique, shifts from the spontaneity of cognition to the spontaneity of feeling? How is the individuation of representations transformed in this transition?

As we have seen, Deleuze argues that in reflective judgments, it is no longer the faculty of apperception, which is the spontaneous, active source of the synthesis of representations in judgment. What is decisive in reflective judgment is that imagination is no longer subject to the laws of understanding. Rather, the imagination's apprehension of the form of an object produces a spontaneous, unregulated interaction between the cognitive powers, independently of any concept of the object. The individuating process of causal interaction is now 'a state of the powers of the mind *reciprocally* promoting each other' (Kant 2000: 20:231). The kind of mental acts, that is the kind of representations, which are individuated by this reciprocal determination are accordingly no longer cognitions. Instead, Kant introduces a fundamentally different '*kind of representation*' (Kant 2000: 20:221), which he calls the subject's 'feeling of life' (Kant 2000: 5:204)).

But what, then, happens to the notion of spontaneity or *conative* striving in Kant's shift from the spontaneity of cognition to the spontaneity of feeling? Following Deleuze's genetic reading, I argue that the *conatus* that drives the individuation of feeling of life is distinct from the synthetic spontaneity of cognition and the absolute spontaneity of freedom. The *conatus* connected to *feeling of life* belongs neither to understanding nor to reason but to the reflecting power of judgment itself. As I see it, this follows directly from Kant's view that the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, that is the feeling of life, is a faculty that is irreducibly distinct from the two other higher faculties of the *Gemüt*.

What differentiates the discursive *conatus* of the understanding from the *conatus* of the reflecting power of judgment is the fact that the latter must be understood as a *subjective purposiveness without a determinate end*, such as discursive presentation: the spontaneous striving of reflective judgment is not concerned with the logical act of concept formation through the reflective comparison of representations. Rather, it is concerned with what Kant now calls 'the special action of the power of judgment' (*die eigentümliche Handlung der Urteilkraft* (Kant 2000: 20:249)), which is to hold the cognitive powers together in a relation that is reciprocally animating. It is this spontaneous striving for reciprocal causation, which produces the feelings of life that are 'identical with the representation of *subjective purposiveness*' (Kant 2000: 20:249), 'for the state of the powers of the mind reciprocally promoting each other in a representation preserves itself' (Kant 2000: 20:231).

V.II Conatus and Feeling of Life

If in the Third Critique the realm of feeling becomes worthy of transcendental inquiry, it is not to consider the sense of merely empirical feelings of pleasure and displeasure, but because against all odds the unifying activity of the power of judgment becomes intrinsically connected to aesthetic feelings of pleasure and displeasure. In the Third Critique, the "aesthetic" form of sensibility, that is the aesthetic affection of the subject, does not derive from *intuition* (as in the First Critique), nor from representations of understanding or reason, but strictly and solely from the interactions between imagination and understanding. To be sure, the 'aesthetic' dimension of the power of judgment does remain rigorously linked to the

apprehension of an object, but the aesthetic ‘content’ of the judgment, that is its ‘sense’ (*Sinn*), is here limited to the subjective state of mind (*Gemütszustand*) that is determined by affection: ‘By the designation “an aesthetic judgment about an object” it is therefore immediately indicated that a given representation is certainly related to an object but that what is understood in the judgment is not the determination of the object but of the subject and its feeling [*des Subjekts und seines Gefühls*]’ (Kant 2000: 20:222).

It is precisely because the content of the judgment does not determine the object – leaving it ‘undetermined’ – but exclusively concerns the determination of the subjective state of mind that we can speak of a merely ‘reflective’ aesthetic judgment. The Transcendental Aesthetic of the power of judgment is concerned not with sensible ‘intuitions’ (as in the First Critique), but only with the *reciprocal determination* of the subjective relation between imagination and understanding, that is ‘insofar as one helps or hinders the other in the very same representation and thereby affects the *state of mind*, and is therefore a relation which is *sensitive* [*empfindbar*] (which is not the case in the separate use of any other faculty of cognition)’ (Kant 2000: 20:223).

Thus, it is not that in aesthetic reflective judgment there is no sensation (*Empfindung*), but ‘it is that sensation which the harmonious play of the two faculties of cognition in the power of judgment, imagination and understanding, produces in the subject’ (Kant 2000: 20:224). In other words, it is not that the ‘aesthetic’ of the power of judgment is no longer concerned with sensation, but rather that sensation is judged only in terms of a new, reflective principle of formal purposiveness, which the power of judgment uses when holding the imagination (in the apprehension of the object) together with the understanding (in the presentation of an undetermined concept). A merely reflective aesthetic judgment is triggered when the power of judgment has no concept ready for the given intuition and when instead it ‘perceives a relation of the two faculties of cognition which constitutes the subjective, merely sensitive [*bloß empfindbare*] condition of the objective use of the power of judgment in general (namely the agreement of those two faculties with each other)’ (Kant 2000: 20:223). In this ‘perception’ it is not a sensible given that appears phenomenally but much rather it is *the power of judgment itself* that appears in a certain manner, namely in the irreducible subjectivity of its enactment (cf. Benoist 1996: 297).

This, then, is how we should understand the intrinsic relation between the feeling of life and representation: the subject’s feeling of life *is* nothing but the consciousness of the relation between imagination and understanding *in the very same representation*. This means that the feeling of life is a *subjective receptivity to the act of the power of judgment*, which is to form representations by holding understanding and imagination together. Accordingly, the *conative striving* of the reflecting power of judgment, which comes to the fore in the feeling of life, is a purposive striving to put the cognitive powers in a state of mutual agreement. As François Marty writes: ‘*The mutual enlivenment* of these two faculties is “felt” and one understands the pertinence of speaking of “a feeling of pleasure” since the feeling is *the affectivity concerning acting*, and thus concerning *life*, pleasure being the increase of life’

(Marty 1998: 68-9). In our Leibnizian terminology, the feeling of life is an affectivity concerning the acts of the power of judgment, and thus concerning its *conatus*, pleasure being the increase of the *conatus*.

As Kant writes in his transcendental ‘explanation’ of the reflective feeling of pleasure (‘which is identical with the representation of *subjective purposiveness*’ (Kant 2000: 20:249)):

[*Aesthetic*] *pleasure* is a *state* of the mind in which a representation is in agreement with itself, as a ground, (...) for preserving this state itself (for the state of the powers of the mind reciprocally promoting each other in a representation preserves itself) (Kant 2000: 20:230-2).

In the subject’s feeling of life, a given representation is not related to the object but rather it is related by the power of judgment to the subject itself. But in what sense does a conative striving of the power of judgment produce this feeling? In what sense should the *reflective* feeling of life not be regarded as ‘the sensation in an empirical representation of the object, nor as its concept’, but as ‘dependent only on reflection and its form (the special action of the power of judgment)’ (Kant 2000: 20:249)? In my view, what Kant calls here ‘reflection and its form (the special action of the power of judgment)’ is exactly the holding together of imagination (merely in the apprehension of the object) with the understanding (in the presentation of a concept of a concept in general). The true novelty, which the Third Critique attributes to this ‘special action’ of reflection is that it ‘perceives a relation of the two faculties of cognition which constitutes the subjective, merely sensitive condition of the objective use of the power of judgment in general (namely the agreement of those two faculties with each other)’ (Kant 2000: 20:223-4). This special action of the power of judgment, which gives rise to an enlivening feeling of subjective purposiveness, concerns the *aesthetic* and not the *logical* purposiveness of the power of judgment. And it is precisely this ‘special action’, which the Third Critique explicates as a *conatus* or ‘striving’ that is inherent to the *reflecting* power of judgment, namely: ‘[the action] by means of which it strives to rise from intuitions to concepts in general [*die eigentümliche Handlung der Urteilkraft, wodurch sie von empirischen Anschauungen zu Begriffen überhaupt strebt*]’ (Kant 2000: 20:249).

This is how the feeling of subjective purposiveness at the heart of reflective aesthetic judgment is nothing less than the manifestation of a conative striving inherent to the reflecting power of judgment: a striving to put imagination and understanding in a relation that is “reciprocally expeditious” (*wechselseitig beförderlich*) (Kant 2000, 20:224). It is no coincidence that Kant should characterise this feeling of subjective purposiveness as a *Lebensgefühl*, because it fulfils the two central criteria used by Kant to define self-organization:

- i. It gives rise to a structure that is contingent in the highest degree, that is whose existence we cannot understand in terms of *a priori* determining principles.

- ii. There is a dynamic circularity between the generation of the parts and the whole, such that the possibility of the parts and the whole can only be understood in relation to one another: the parts do not exist as such, independently of each other, but only insofar as they collaborate in generating the unity of a whole and that this whole is at the same time a condition of existence of the parts themselves (cf. Kant 2000, 5:372-4).

VI. Conclusion

In both his accounts of living self-organization and aesthetic feeling of life, Kant puts forward a movement of reciprocal causation that is purposively animated from within by a self-productive and self-maintaining tendency. Just as the dynamic state of living systems comes about by the reciprocal determinations between the organism's parts and the whole that is produced out of this reciprocal causality, the feeling of life has its ground in a self-maintaining state of the cognitive powers. I have argued that this tendency of the cognitive powers may be understood as a *conatus* of the power of judgment. On this reading, reflective aesthetic judgment expresses the dynamic organization of the life of the *Gemüt*, a process of organization that is original in the sense that it enacts a striving for the *unification* of the *Gemüt* that is prior to the abstract separation of passive sensibility and active determination. It is in this sense that I interpreted Kant's statement that the reflective power of judgment is "a mediating link of the chain of human faculties *a priori*, on which all legislation must depend" (Kant 2000, 5:298). In Gérard Lebrun's terms, what is at stake in the Third Critique's reconsideration of the power of judgment "is only to prove without discontinuity the existence of an instance that is midway between the understanding and reason, and that is *a priori* more primitive than them" (Lebrun 1970, 4). Yet, this *conatus* is in and of itself not directed by a determined *end*; it can receive this from understanding or reason alone. The conative striving of reflective judgment is thus not the logical act of reflection that the First Critique ascribes to empirical concept formation. Rather, it is the most primordial purposiveness of the *Gemüt* itself, namely the striving to produce and preserve the unity required for the life of the mind. Just like the organism's formative power of self-organization, the *conatus* of the reflecting power of judgment is an animating dynamics without any pre-given *telos*. The *conatus* of reflective judgment is a purposiveness "without a concept" (Kant 2000, 20:224): "a purposiveness without an end" (*Zweckmäßigkeit ohne Zweck*) (Kant 2000, 5:226).

ⁱ Affects define for Kant our ‘sensibility’, that is ‘the capacity (receptivity) to acquire representations through the way in which we are affected by objects’ (Kant 1998: A19/B33).

ⁱⁱ In the First Critique, the Transcendental Aesthetic was an Aesthetic of cognition, that is of ‘the relation of the representation to an object, as an appearance, *for the cognition of that object*’ (Kant 2000: 20:221), emphasis mine. For this important distinction between sensation and feeling, see Benoist 1996 : 287-98.

ⁱⁱⁱ Cf., Lebrun, 1970: 353-4.

^{iv} Two organicist interpretations of Kant’s faculty doctrine, which have influenced my view, are those of Boris Demarest and Rachel Zuckert. In an inspiring article, Demarest proposes the following organicist interpretation of the faculty doctrine: ‘These faculties relate to each other and the whole of the *Gemüt* as organs do to each other and the organism they make up. (...) First of all, this suggests that the workings of a faculty and the a priori’s it involves can never be fully grasped in abstraction from the workings of the others. (...) [It] suggests further that the *Gemüt* is constituted in a dynamical process of self-production. (...) As a result, the faculties (*Vermögen*) can be conceived of as the result of the activity of the dynamic powers (*Kräfte*) of the *Gemüth* as they face contingencies in their cooperation’ (Demarest 2013: 110-111). Zuckert (2007) argues that the principle of the reflecting power of judgment (purposiveness without a purpose) is a ‘structure’ or ‘ordering principle’ engaged in the unification, synthesis, combination or anticipation of an ‘indeterminate, non-conceptually ordered whole’ (Zuckert 2007: 5, 14). According to Zuckert, what is decisive in this parts-whole structure of aesthetic experience is that it comprises a *reciprocal* parts-whole structure, in which each part is both means and end in relation to other parts (Zuckert 2007: 15). Thus, there seems to be the same reciprocity of relations among parts, and between parts and the whole, in both the experience of beauty as there is in organisms (Zuckert 2007, 193).

^v Cf. Deleuze 1984: 68/98: ‘This free accord appears (...) as a germ which destines us *to* legislative reason or to the faculty of desire’.

^{vi} For a detailed analysis of Kant’s conception of the formative power, see Goy 2012, Goy 2014.

^{vii} Deleuze defines structuralism in terms of a similar ‘structural space’ that is divided into regions with positional values. In structures, symbolic elements engage in constitutive, generative relations of ‘reciprocal determination’. Genetically, they are constructed from the unfolding of singularities, which differentiate and organise a space into a structural space. See Deleuze 2004b.

^{viii} Heidegger stresses this distinction between a mere potentiality and Leibniz’s conception of the conatus or ‘*vis activa*’ in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* (cf. Heidegger 1992: 82). For a detailed analysis of this distinction see also: Bernet 2013: 61-89; Bernet 2007. Already in the early *Thoughts on the True Estimation of Living Forces* Kant praised Leibniz’s idea of an internal, active force (*vis activa*) that inheres in every body and that is so fundamental that it belongs to a body prior to its extension. Leibniz’s claim was that active force is more fundamental in nature than extension. Since force is prior to extension, matter and space (which are extensive) cannot be primitives: before they emerged nature began with force. Kant here defended what he took to be the essentially metaphysical (Aristotelian) import of the concept of the active force against the reductivism he saw at work in Wolff’s identification of active force with the mechanical force of bodies.

^{ix} As Deleuze also points out with regard to Spinoza’s *conatus*, the latter is not to be interpreted as a mere possibility that ‘tends to pass into existence’, precisely because it *is a reality* that ‘lacks nothing’ and that ‘tends to persevere in existing’ (Deleuze 1988: 98). Such an active and real power or striving is what Deleuze, following Bergson, will himself call a ‘virtuality’. For Deleuze and Bergson as well, this virtuality is despite its lack of actuality a positive, existing force that belongs to the very essence of what they call ‘life’ and ‘consciousness’. For the distinction between the Leibnizian and Spinozist conception of the *conatus*, see Deleuze 1990, chapter 14.

^x Kant did not think that all the different faculties can be reduced to one single substantial power of cognition, as in Leibnizian or Wolffian metaphysics, which considered all faculties of the mind (sensibility, imagination, understanding, desire, etc.) to be different

manifestations of a single '*fundamental power*' of representation (the *vis repraesentativa* as the basic power of the soul (cf. Kant 1998: A648-9/B676-7; Kant 2000: 20:206). Instead, he followed Crusius' view that the diversity of our mental capacities is so fundamental that they could not be conceived as the effect of one single causal substance. To account for the unification of the soul, Crusius pointed to the *cohesion* between the fundamental mental powers: they had to relate to each other in a specifically cohesive way, such that together they could form a unified being. For Crusius, this kind of cohesive connection already entailed that the act of one power had to always be a conditioning *correlate* of the act of another power (cf. Heßbrüggen-Walter 2004: 105-6). The mental powers could interact and their *cohesive* interaction could generate effects, which a power taken in isolation would not be capable of.

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