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BEETHOVEN AND KANT

GENIUS | REPUBLIC | FREEDOM

Exhibition in Beethoven-Haus Bonn
8 September 2024 until 6 January 2025

Content

Images on the cover:

(frontcover:)
Beethoven's conversation book
Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv (background image)

Ludwig van Beethoven, lithography after a drawing by Johann Stephan Decker
Beethoven-Haus Bonn

Immanuel Kant, engraving by Johann Friedrich August Clar
Ostpreußisches Landesmuseum / Leihgabe Stiftung Königsberg

(backcover:)
Conny Koeppl using:

Immanuel Kant, aquatint by Berger after a drawing of Johann Theodor Puttrich
Ostpreußisches Landesmuseum / Stiftung Königsberg

Ludwig van Beethoven, watercoloured drawing by Joseph Weidner
Beethoven-Haus Bonn

BEETHOVEN AND KANT
GENIUS | REPUBLIC | FREEDOM

This year marks the 300th anniversary of the birth of the philosopher Immanuel Kant. His thinking has shaped the ideals that democracies follow. For example, his statements on human dignity are reflected in Article 1 of our Basic Law.

Beethoven's world view was also greatly influenced by Immanuel Kant's ideas. He presumably learnt about them through lectures at the University of Bonn. Later in Vienna, he would have come into closer contact with the philosopher's thinking at public lectures and discussions in aristocratic salons, in intellectual circles in coffee houses and by reading journals. However, Beethoven probably never read Kant's texts in the original. The exhibition uses selected Beethoven objects and quotes from Kant to analyse the commonalities between the two contemporaries and traces Enlightenment ideas in the work of Beethoven and Kant.

GENIUS
KANT

In his *Critique of Judgment* (§§ 46-50), Kant designs an aesthetic of the genius, i.e. the beauty of art – to be distinguished from the beauty of nature – is the product of a genius. The genius has the creative ability to grasp an "aesthetic idea" and to present it sensually for others by means of imagination; e.g. divine or worldly power, the horrors of war, joy or rage.[1] An aesthetic idea is formed into a given material by the genius. Such original information does not occur according to mechanical laws, but out of free creative will.[2] In contrast to the recipient of art, who must have the ability to judge taste, the genius also possesses a talent that is innate and accidentally bestowed upon him by nature. Talent is particularly evident in creative originality. The originality of a genius consists in producing works that do not follow any rules, but rather contain and create such a genuine and novel regularity that, on the one hand, they are inimitable and, at the same time, enable other geniuses to follow in their artistic footsteps, by creating other new regularities.[3] The freedom of genius is present in the work of art through the original creative power that can inspire others to ingenious succession. This is why art traditions and art movements always go back to original geniuses. In "fine art", the genius creates in his works – to put it paradoxically – a kind of individual regularity in his works.

1 Just think of Beethoven's various depictions of the heroic in different genres of music or the nature in the *6th Symphony*.

2 In music, for example, a tonal order/regularity is formed in the temporal succession. According to Kant, time is given in the inner sense; in music, orders of time can be grasped in a structured way by means of tone sequences, pitches and timbres using meter, rhythm, melody and harmony. Kant understands the production of music in a literal sense of "composition" as a "composition" of sound material over time.

3 Therefore, there can be no AI-art according to the principles of Kant's aesthetic, because talent and originality can neither be learned nor technically reproduced (whether mechanically or digitally).

The vertical lines mark the quotes on the walls in the exhibition space.

"one can also explain genius in terms of the faculty of aesthetic ideas"

(Critique of the Power of Judgment, § 57, note I)

"Genius is the talent (natural gift) that gives the rule to art. *Since the talent, as an inborn productive faculty of the artist, itself belongs to nature, this could also be expressed thus: Genius is the inborn predisposition of the mind (ingenium) through which nature gives the rule to art."*

(Critique of the Power of Judgment, § 46)

"The proper field for genius is that of the power of imagination, because this is creative and, being less under the constraint of rules than other faculties, it is thus all the more capable of originality."

(Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, § 57)

"For every art presupposes rules which first lay the foundation by means of which a product that is to be called artistic is first represented as possible. The concept of beautiful art, however, does not allow the judgment concerning the beauty of its product to be derived from any sort of rule that has a concept for its determining ground, and thus has as its ground a concept of how it is possible. Thus beautiful art cannot itself think up the rule in accordance with which it is to bring its product into being. Yet since without a preceding rule a product can never be called art, nature in the subject (and by means of the disposition of its faculties) must give

the rule to art, i.e., ***beautiful art is possible only as a product of genius."***

(Critique of the Power of Judgment, § 46)

"He who possesses these faculties to a preeminent degree is called a brain, he to whom they are distributed in a very small measure a blockhead (because he always needs to be led by others), but he who conducts himself with originality in the use of these faculties (in virtue of his bringing forth from himself what must normally be learned under the guidance of others) is called a genius."

(Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, § 6)

"For as an old observation goes, genius is mixed with a certain dose of madness."

(Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, § 36)

"From this one sees: That genius 1) is a talent for producing that for which no determinate rule can be given, not a predisposition of skill for that which can be learned in accordance with some rule, consequently that originality must be its primary characteristic. 2) That since there can also be original nonsense, its products must at the same time be models, i.e., exemplary, hence, while not themselves the result of imitation, they must yet serve others in that way, i.e., as a standard or a rule for judging. 3) That it cannot itself describe or indicate scientifically how it brings its product into being, but rather that it gives the rule as nature, and hence the author of a product that he owes to his genius does not know himself how the ideas for it come to him, and also does not have it in his power to think up such things at will or according to plan, and to communicate to others precepts that would put them in a position to produce similar products. (For that is also presumably how the word 'genius' is derived from genius, in the sense of the particular spirit given to a person at birth, which protects and guides him, and from whose inspiration those original ideas stem.)
4) That by means of genius nature does not prescribe the rule to science but to art, and even to the latter only insofar as it is to be beautiful art."

(Critique of the Power of Judgment, § 46)

GENIUS
BEETHOVEN

Beethoven was not a shy or particularly modest person. He knew his artistic merits and saw no point in playing it down. He liked to idealise his own abilities and confidently put his talent on a pedestal. In favour of his talent, he liked to conceal the fact that he had systematically learned the craft from scratch. As an artist, he refused to bow to rules, conventions or (technical) limits: "Freedom to go further is the purpose in the world of art, as in all great creation," he wrote to Archduke Rudolph in July 1819. Through his artistic achievements, he saw himself as equal to the aristocracy, which is probably best expressed in the apocryphal statement to Prince Lichnowsky: "Prince, what you are, you are by chance and birth, what I am, I am through myself alone; there have been and will be thousands of princes; there is only one Beethoven".

1
Draft of a letter by Beethoven to Luigi Cherubini in Paris, Vienna, c. 12 March 1823
Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv
Mus. ep. autogr. Beethoven, 45
'true art remains everlasting and the true artist has intimate pleasure in true and great genius products'

Beethoven observed the music market of his time very closely and was very critical of his fellow composers. However, he greatly appreciated Luigi Cherubini's musico-dramatic works and his Requiem. In 1823, he asked his colleague, who was living in Paris, to support his offer of the Missa solemnis to the French king. In his letter to Cherubini, he confidently put himself on an equal footing with him as a great artist and genius.

2
Friendship leaf for Lorenz von Breuning by Beethoven, Vienna, 1 October 1797
Beethoven-Haus Bonn, Sammlung Wegeler, W 7
'Truth is there for the wise,
beauty for a feeling heart.
They both belong to each other.'

Beethoven quotes the Marquis of Posa's speech to the Queen from Schiller's *Don Carlos* (Act 4, Scene 21) for his closest friend in Bonn. Anna Maria Koch, landlady of Bonn's Zehrgarten, where the city's intellectual circles met to talk, noted down the same verses - supplementing the entry by her son Matthias Koch - in Beethoven's friendship book as early as 1792. Several of Beethoven's friends also quoted from the same scene from *Don Carlos*. By reading Schiller's works, the poet was one of Beethoven's most important mediators of Kantian ideas.

3
Beethoven, Epigrams, Vienna, c. 1819
Beethoven-Haus Bonn, Sammlung Wegeler, W 23
'I am what is there
I am everything that is, that was, that will be;
no mortal has lifted my veil
He is alone of himself, and to this One all things
owe their existence.'

Beethoven wrote down the three sayings handed down from antiquity around 1819; according to Anton Schindler, they stood framed on his desk as a kind of 'creed'. Beethoven wrote them almost calligraphically, astonishingly clean and well-proportioned. The occasion for or purpose of these lines are – despite numerous later interpretations – not explained by any document from Beethoven himself. The model was Schiller's essay *Die Sendung Moses* (The Mission of Moses), published in 1790, in which he discusses the emergence of Judaism through Moses and thus the question of religion in relation to politics, reason and aesthetics. Schiller's writing is based on a publication by the Kantian Carl Leonhard Reinhold. Kant also quoted one of the epigrams in his *Critique of Judgement*, footnote to § 49 (On the faculty of the mind that constitute genius): 'Perhaps nothing more sublime has ever been said, or a thought more sublimely expressed, than in that inscription over the temple of *Isis* (Mother *Nature*): 'I am everything that is, that was, that will be; no mortal has lifted my veil.' *Segner* [Johann Andreas von Segner, 1704–1777, German mathematician] used this idea in a *profound* vignette placed at the beginning of his *Theory of Nature* in order to fill has apprentice, whom he was prepared to lead to the temple, with the holy tremor that was to tune the mind to solemn attentiveness."

4

Letter by Beethoven to Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig, Vienna, 22 November 1809

Beethoven-Haus Bonn, Sammlung H. C. Bodmer, HCB BBr 8

'One more thing: there is no treatise that would be too learned for me, without making the slightest claim to actual erudition, for I have endeavoured from childhood to grasp the meaning of the better and wiser of every age, shame on an artist who does not consider it his duty to go at least that far in this -'

Beethoven turns to his main publisher of the years around 1810, who is based in Leipzig. Communication took a long time, as the postal service was slow due to the coalition wars and the expansion of the French sphere of influence. Napoleon's troops had occupied Vienna in 1809 and had not left even after the peace treaty was signed. Living conditions were difficult due to the war. During this time, Beethoven was increasingly occupied with music theory and other areas of knowledge, which he acquired through self-study – presumably a kind of self-assurance and retreat into the private sphere in order to block out the war and its side effects. Breitkopf & Härtel was not only Beethoven's music publisher, Härtel also provided him with numerous literary and scholarly treatises and printed editions in addition to music by other composers. Beethoven's self-praise not only serves to convey his own greatness to the publisher. Rather, it stems from his conviction that he had a special obligation as an artist, but is also an expression of his great interest in almost every kind of reading. Kant's ideas on 'fine art' also shine through in Beethoven's letter to Xaver Schnyder von Wartensee. In 1817, he advises his Swiss composer colleague: 'Continue to pursue the Heaven of Art, there is no undisturbed, unmixed, purer joy than that which arises from it.'

5

"An die Hoffnung" (To hope), song for voice and piano op. 94, original edition, Vienna 1816

Beethoven-Haus Bonn, C 94/3

Beethoven set the song text to music twice, in spring 1805 and spring 1815, which emphasises the importance this text had for him. He had taken it from the lyrical and didactic poem *Urania über Gott, Unsterblichkeit und Freiheit* (*Urania on God, Immortality and Freedom*) by Christoph August Tiedge, an avowed Kantian and Kant mediator. The composer had met the poet in person in Teplitz in 1811 and was so familiar with him that he used the familiar "Du" form and called him by his first name. However, Beethoven used different editions of the text for the two settings and prefaced the second setting with another passage as a recitative. In his didactic poem, Tiedge sets central ideas from Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* and *Critique of Judgement* in verse. In his preface, he described the poem as a 'song of God and immortality'. In terms of content, the section that Beethoven sets to music is probably most reminiscent of Kant's question *What may I hope for?* According to Kant's aesthetic of genius in his *Critique of Judgment*, it is precisely the artistic genius who is in a position to take ideas of reason that have in and of themselves nothing sensual in their meaning and nonetheless to sensualize them and to represent through the medium of the senses the ideas, such as God, the immortality of the soul and freedom, in their works of art.

REPUBLIC
KANT

In his writings *On Perpetual Peace* and *Metaphysics of Morals* (Part 1: *Doctrine of Right*), Kant develops his political philosophy, which aims to realize the highest political idea and the ultimate meaning of the political sphere, namely peace. The republic is a legal order of a community in which citizens should be free and only dependent on laws that apply equally to all. In a republic, only those laws apply to which the citizens themselves – insofar as they are reasonable subjects – can or would agree. In the republic, the reciprocity of all citizens is of central importance, i.e. the external freedom of one citizen finds its limit in the external freedom of another citizen. Given that the citizens see this as reasonable, legal and universally valid, they can exist together in coordinated freedom. They understand that the state, where it intervenes against violations of the law, does so in a legal manner desired by all in order to (re)establish justice and thus serves the freedom of all. The republic is the appropriate form of the political sphere for rational persons, because – in contrast to despotism, which only uses its subjects as a means – it preserves dignity.

"*Rather than that, the explanation for my external (lawful) freedom is as follows: it is the right to obey no external laws, other than those to which I could have given my consent. In just the same way, external (legal) equality in a state is that relationship among the citizens according to which no person can legally bind another, unless at the same time he submits himself to the law by which he, in turn, could be bound in the same way by the other person.* [...] *The validity of these inherited and inalienable rights, which necessarily belong to mankind, is confirmed and ennobled by the principle of the lawful relationship between man himself and higher beings (when he believes in them), because, in keeping with these very principles, he sees himself also as a citizen of a supernatural world."*

(To Perpetual Peace)

"*The civil constitution of each state shall be republican. It [the republican] is a constitution, in the first place, founded in accordance with the principle of the freedom of the members of society as human beings: secondly, in accordance with the principle of the dependence of all, as subjects, on a common legislation: and, thirdly, in accordance with the law of the equality of the members as citizens. It is then, looking at the question of right, the only constitution whose fundamental principles lie at the basis of every form of civil constitution.*"

(To Perpetual Peace)

"However, where the right to equality of all citizens as subjects is concerned, the answer to the question about the admissibility of a hereditary aristocracy depends solely on the following question: 'Does the rank endorsed by the state (which makes one subject superior to another) take precedence over merit, or does merit have to take precedence over rank?' Now, this much is clear: when rank is tied in with birth, it is completely uncertain whether merit (skill and integrity in discharging one's office) will follow as well. Thus, a hereditary aristocracy amounts to awarding the favoured person a position (making him a commander) without his having any merit, this arrangement is something the general will of the people would never agree to in the original contract) which is the principle of all right). For the fact that someone is a nobleman does not immediately make him a noble man. So far as the nobility of an official is concerned (a terme might use to describe the rank of a higher magistrate, which someone must earn by merit), the rank is not attached to the person, like a possession, but to the position, and equality is not harmed by this, because when someone gives up his official position, he also sets aside his rank and moves back among the people."

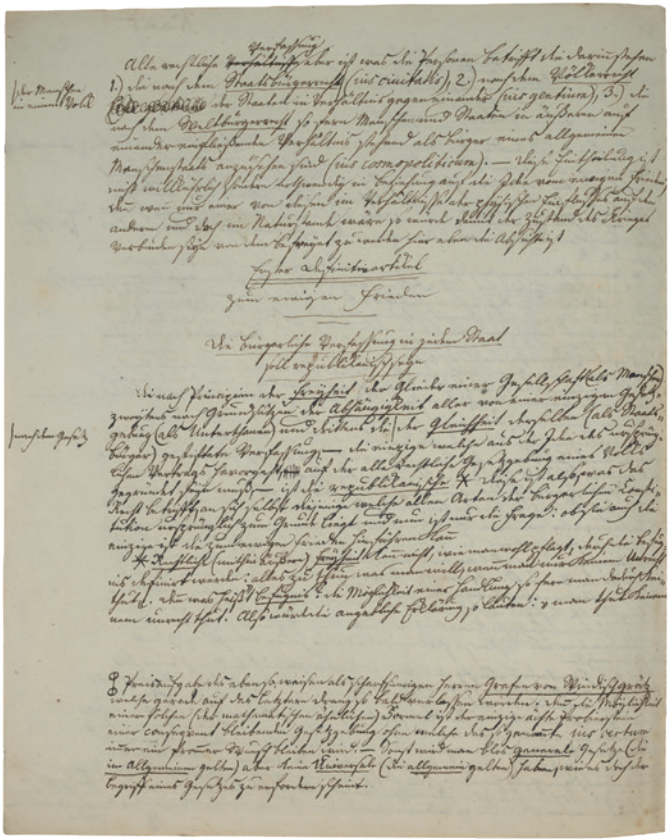
(To Perpetual Peace)

"The second way of distinguishing the form of the state is by the form of the government (forma regiminis). This involves the way the state makes use of its supreme power, an arrangement based on the constitution (the act of the general will by which a crowd of people becomes a nation). From this point of view the form of government is either republican or despotic. Republicanism rests on the political principle of separating the executive power (the government) from the legislative power. Despotism is the form in which the state arbitrarily executes laws which it has given itself. Thus, it will carry out the public will to the extent that this is the same as the private will of the ruler."

(To Perpetual Peace)

"A philosophical attempt to work out universal world history according to a plan of nature that aims at the perfect civil union of the human species, must be regarded as possible and even as furthering this aim of nature."

(Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View)



Immanuel Kant,
Autograph of *To Perpetual Peace*
Princeton University Library,
John Wild Autograph Collection, C0047

REPUBLIC
BEETHOVEN

Beethoven was ambivalent about the Republic in its French form. His self-image as an artist nurtured in him the conviction that he was equal or possibly superior to others, especially the noble-born members of the ruling elite. His intellectual products ennobled him. At the same time, he consciously set himself apart from lower classes such as servants. He was also aware that a culture-loving aristocracy could be of benefit to an established artist, and opportunistically served the ruling class on appropriate occasions. Beethoven found his ideal conception of a political system in England. There, the king's power was controlled by parliament, while at the same time the wealthy bourgeoisie and aristocracy enabled cultural achievements that were unrivalled.

6
Bust of Lucius Junius Brutus,
displayed on Beethoven's desk, porcelain,
Austria, early 19th century
Beethoven-Haus Bonn, R 12

Lucius Junius Brutus is a non-historical figure in Roman history, a legendary figure who, according to legend, ended Etruscan rule around 500 BC, founded the Roman Republic and acted as its first consul. Brutus even had his sons executed for their treason in favour of the monarchy, and he also sacrificed his own life for the republic. In the 18th and 19th centuries, he was idealised by many intellectuals as the founder and defender of the republic. The reception of Brutus reached a peak during the French Revolution. However, the the young republic also used the legend of Brutus to justify the execution of the French king and the violent excesses of the Reign of Terror – a development that led most European intellectuals to turn their backs on the revolution.

7
Letter by Beethoven to Hoffmeister & Kühnel in Leipzig,
Vienna, 8 April 1802
Beethoven-Haus Bonn, NE 197

In March 1802, the music publisher Hoffmeister had apparently asked Beethoven for a sonata with an extra-musical programme depicting scenes and ideas of the French Revolution. He replied indignantly on 8 April 1802:
'Is the devil riding you, gentlemen? – To suggest that I make such a sonata now – at the time of the revolutionary fever – that would have been something like this, but now that everything is being forced back onto the old track, Buonaparte has concluded the Concordat with the Pope – such a sonata? – If it had been a Missa pro sancta maria a tre vocis or a Vespers etc. – now I would have liked to take a brush in my hand – and write

a Credo in unum with big pound notes – but dear God, such a sonata – in these new Christian times – hoho – leave me out – nothing will come of it'.

8
Notes by Beethoven, Vienna, c. 1822
Beethoven-Haus Bonn, BH 58

From 1817, Beethoven pursued a project close to his heart with great commitment, the complete edition of his works, which he negotiated with numerous publishers (although none of them wanted to get involved). He set down his thoughts on the matter in a four-page document, in which the remarkable sentence on the last page is completely unexpected: 'Just between us, as republican as we think, there is also something good about the oligarchic aristocracy'.

9
Libretto "Europens Befreiungsstunde"
(Europe's hour of liberation), text by Carl Joseph Bernard,
Vienna 1814
Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz,
Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv
Mus. ms. autogr. Beethoven, L. v. 37,34

10
Sketches by Beethoven for the cantata
"Europens Befreiungsstunde" (Europe's hour of liberation)
Unv 17, Vienna 1814
Beethoven-Haus Bonn, Sammlung H. C. Bodmer, HCB Mh 89

Beethoven was ambivalent not only about the Republic, but also about Napoleon Bonaparte. He was impressed by the myth that Napoleon had worked his way up from humble beginnings, but also by the general's achievements and successes. On the other hand, he clearly rejected the French expansion under

Napoleon and the horrors and devastation that accompanied the war. Napoleon's downfall also offered him the opportunity to pander to the ruling class in Vienna. The plan to compose a cantata on 'Europe's hour of liberation' based on a text by his friend Joseph Carl Bernard at the beginning of 1814 should also be understood in this context. The cantata was planned for Beethoven's great academy in the Redoutensaal in Vienna on 27 February 1814; the idea for the composition probably came from Beethoven. However, the performance was banned by the censorship authorities on 17 February. The authorities also rejected a further submission on 10 September 1814 – in both cases without revealing their reasons. The text of the cantata is decidedly anti-French and revanchist. Publicly displayed hatred of France – as found in Bernard's text – was presumably undesirable in the context of the Congress of Vienna and the necessary state diplomacy.
On the left-hand side of the open double leaf are sketches for the beginning of the cantata and the first chorus: 'After France's disastrous fall, the God-forgotten! On the bloody ruins, nourished by the dread of death, a gloomy horror rose gigantically high […] And terribly the giant went forth'. On the right-hand side, Beethoven sketches from the centre of the cantata: 'The holy Moskva flames up, the wicked man falls in the victory run […] the peoples see the glow of freedom and like the Moskva all courage flames […] The pious Emperor of Austria says: Arrogance does not exist before God, I offer my hand faithfully for peace, my word is a sure pledge.'

11
Terzet "Euch werde Lohn in bessern Welten" (You shall be rewarded in better worlds), from Fidelio op. 72, third version, copyist's score corrected by Beethoven, Vienna 1814
Beethoven-Haus Bonn, Sammlung H. C. Bodmer, HCB Mh 48

Explanation see no. 16

12
"Abschiedsgesang an Wiens Bürger" (Farewell song to the people of Vienna), song for voice and piano, WoO 121, original edition with new title page, Vienna 1796
Beethoven-Haus Bonn, Sammlung H. C. Bodmer, HCB C WoO 121

In August 1796, in response to an appeal from the Emperor, the Viennese citizens formed a volunteer corps to fight against the French troops. Beethoven's composition was probably written for the flag dedication with a ceremonial procession onto the battlefield; Beethoven may even have been the corps' honorary bandmaster. Few of Beethoven's compositions show his political flexibility as clearly as the Abschiedsgesang, as he clearly demonstrates his solidarity with imperial interests with this engagement. In a letter to Nikolaus Simrock in August 1794, Beethoven mocked the political lethargy of the Viennese: 'Various people of importance have been drafted here, they say a revolution was to have broken out – but I believe that as long as the Austrians still have dark beer and sausages, they will not revolt.'

FREEDOM
KANT

For Kant (*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, *Critique of Practical Reason*), moral freedom consists in autonomy, which he understands literally as "self-legislation"[1]. Moral self-legislation is independent of any form of heteronomy: both of our integration into the sensual world, which subjects us either to the laws of nature or to sensual inclinations, and of our integration in relation to other free subjects, as is the case, for example, in law and in the political sphere. Moral freedom as the inner autonomy of each single person is therefore not arbitrary, because as legislation it is always universally valid and therefore cannot consist in individual arbitrariness. Therefore, only rational beings can be autonomous, because only rational beings can comprehend lawfulness and universality. The famous "categorical imperative" puts self-legislation into words: "act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law[2]". The maxim is a subjective rule of action that can be tested for its moral quality by the categorical imperative: If a maxim cannot be represented as universally valid, it is not morally; if a maxim can be universalized, it is morally good and thus a duty that one should perform out of freedom.

1 Kant distinguishes moral freedom in the narrower sense from freedom within the framework of law; this is done according to the scope of freedom in law or morality. Law is about external freedom in the coexistence of persons and morality in the narrower sense is about the single person's own freedom. Since both areas are concerned with freedom, both areas belong to morality in the broader sense or to ethics or morality.

2 Kant *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, in: *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*, ed. Mary J. Gregor, Cambridge UP, 1996, p. 73.

"Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another. This immaturity is self-imposed when its cause lies not in lack of understanding, but in lack of resolve and courage to use it without guidance from another. Sapere Aude! "Have courage to use your own understanding!"-- that is the motto of enlightenment.

Laziness and cowardice are the reasons why so great a proportion of men, long after nature has released them from alien guidance (natura-liter maiorennes), nonetheless gladly remain in lifelong immaturity, and why it is so easy for others to establish themselves as their guardians. It is so easy to be immature."

(Answering the Question: What is Enlightenment?)

"Freedom is actually just the self-activity of which one is aware."

(Handwritten Remains, Reflexion no. 4220)

"So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means."

(Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals)

"Act only according to that maxim whereby you can, at the same time, will that it should become a universal law."
(Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals)

"Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect upon them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me."
(Critique of Practical Reason)

"For where my freedom is concerned, I have no binding obligation even with respect to divine laws, which I can recognize only with my reason, except insofar as I myself could have consented to them (for through the law of freedom of my own reason I first create for myself an idea of the Divine Will). Where the principle of equality is concerned in connection with the most exalted being in the world other than God, a presence I could perhaps picture for myself (say, a great Aeon), there is no reason why, if I carry out the duties of my position, as Aeon carries out his, I should be the only one with the obligation to obey and he should be the one with the right to command. This principle of equality (like that of freedom) does not extend to our relationship with God, because this Being is the only one to whom the idea of duty does not belong."
(To Perpetual Peace)

"and thus gradually arises, accompanied by delusions and whims, enlightenment, as a great good that must raise humankind even out of the selfish aims of aggrandizement on the part of its rulers, if only the latter understand their own advantage. This enlightenment, however, and with it also a certain participation in the good by the heart of the enlightened human being who understands the good perfectly, must ascend bit by bit up to the thrones and have its influence even on their principles of government."
(Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View)

"But two things are required for inner freedom: being one's own master in a given case (animus sui compos), and ruling oneself (imperium in semetipsum), that is, subduing one's affects and governing one's passions. – In these two states one's character (indoles) is noble (erecta); in the opposite case it is mean (indoles abiecta, serva)."
(Metaphysics of Morals)

"Freedom does not consist in the possibility that we could have chosen the opposite, but rather in that our choice was not passively necessitated."
(Handwritten Remains)

"His actions could all have been guided by reason. Therefore, he is free. But is there not a determining ground, perhaps not in the will of the human being in general, but in the circumstances and conditions? And if there is not, then from where do actions really arise? Answer: All stimuli of the sensual will cannot turn the active aspect of the human being into the passive. The higher will still decides on its own; but why it sometimes decides on the side of sensuality and sometimes on the side of reason, no law can be given, because there is no constant law governing both forces."

(Handwritten Remains)

"Between nature and chance, there is a third element, namely freedom. All phenomena are part of nature, but the cause of phenomena is not contained within the phenomena themselves, and thus is not part of nature. Our understanding is a cause of the actions of the will, which, while appearing as phenomena within nature, are, as a whole, subject to freedom."

(Handwritten Remains)

"Freedom is the faculty, to bring something about originarie and to have an effect. But how causalitas originaria et facultas originarie efficiendi can be present in a ente derivativo is entirely incomprehensible."

(Handwritten Remains)

"In the sensory world, nothing is comprehensible except what is necessitated by preceding reasons. The actions of free will are phaenomena; but their connection with a spontaneous subject and with (the faculty of) reason are intellectual; thus, the determination of free will cannot be submitted to the legibus sensitivis. The question of whether freedom is possible may be identical to whether there (or a human being respectively) is a true person and whether the self can exist in a being subject to external determinations."

(Handwritten Remains)

FREEDOM
BEETHOVEN

Beethoven claimed freedom for himself at all times. Although he had been brought up as a courtier in his youth and easily mastered court etiquette, he only followed it when it suited him. Beethoven was convinced that if one had earned independence through one's own achievements, this also meant individual freedom. Kant's call to use one's own intellect and thereby overcome intellectual dependency certainly struck a chord with Beethoven. He saw himself as a self-determined, morally autonomous personality.

13
Beethoven, Conversation book no. 7,
Vienna, beginning of February 1820
Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz,
Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv
Mus. ms. autogr. Beethoven, L. v. 51,6
''the moral law in us, and the starry sky above us'
Kant!!!
Littrow Director of the Observatory'

Beethoven's supposedly incorrect quotation from the conclusion of Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) was not actually quoted from Kant. Beethoven is literally copying the final sentence of an essay from the series of articles 'Kosmologische Betrachtung' by the astronomer, mathematician and director of the Vienna Observatory Joseph Johann Littrow. In his articles, Littrow explained astronomical facts in popular terms and also referred to Kant's *General Natural History and Theory of the Heavens* (1755).

14
"Abendlied unterm gestirnten Himmel"
(Evensong under the starry sky), song for voice and piano
WoO 150, original edition, printed in the Viennese Magazine
for Art, Literature and Fashion, Vienna 1820
Beethoven-Haus Bonn, P/1816 Wien

The song was commissioned by Johann Schickh, the editor of the *Viennese Magazine for Art, Literature and Fashion*, in which it appeared in March 1820. In the same spring, the astronomer Joseph Johann Littrow also published his series of articles 'Kosmologische Betrachtung' in the same journal. Schickh, who had previously published songs by Beethoven, explicitly asked him in December 1819 to set the rather unknown author's text to music, presumably because the didactic poem fitted well into the context of Littrow's essays.

15
Letter by Beethoven to Heinrich von Struve in Russia,
Vienna, 17 September 1795
Beethoven-Haus Bonn, NE 375

On 17 September 1795 Beethoven writes to his friend from his Bonn days, Heinrich von Struve, who is working as a diplomat for the Tsar and is on a business trip to St. Petersburg:
'so you are now in the cold country [Russia], where mankind is still treated so much below its dignity, I know for sure that you will encounter many things there that are against your way of thinking, your heart, and generally against your whole feeling. when the time will also come when there will only be human beings, we will probably only see this happy time approaching in some places, but in general - we will not see that, hundreds of years will probably pass.'
In no other place does Beethoven express himself as openly politically as in this letter. He obviously had a special relationship of trust with Struve.

16
Beethoven, Florestan's Aria "In des Lebens Frühlingstagen"
(In the springtime of life), from Fidelio op. 72,
second version, Vienna 1806
Beethoven-Haus Bonn, BH 66

Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio*, reflects the spirit of the times in many respects. It follows the genre of the rescue opera, which was en vogue around 1800, and idealises the themes of individual freedom in a just society, reason and morality, not without a certain pathos. Florestan's wife Leonore, who sneaks into prison disguised as a man under the name Fidelio in order to save her husband, embodies, as her alias makes clear, loyalty to her husband and thus a moral value. Her husband Florestan, a political prisoner in solitary confinement in a dungeon, also longs in his aria for the light and freedom he has lost, but

tolerates his martyrdom in the knowledge that he has acted morally correctly. The prison guard Rocco, who is actually an opportunist, is also a moral character because he does not want to kill an innocent man. In the trio "Euch werde Lohn in bessern Welten" (You shall be rewarded in better worlds), Florestan, Fidelio and Rocco praise freedom in an ideal world with an ideal social system.

17
Music for Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's drama "Egmont" op. 84, copyist's score corrected by Beethoven, Vienna 1810
Beethoven-Haus Bonn, NE 64

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe explicitly included music in his tragedy *Egmont*; at several points in the play, stage directions prescribe background music and songs. Carl Czerny reports on the creation of Beethoven's *Egmont* setting, which had been commissioned from Beethoven by the court theatre: 'When (around 1811) it was decided to perform Schiller's Tell and Goethe's *Egmont* on the city stages, the question arose as to who should compose the music for them. Beethoven and [Adalbert] Gyrowetz were chosen. Beethoven very much wanted to get the Tell. But a lot of intrigues were spun to assign him the (it was hoped) less musically suitable Egmont. He proved, however, that he could also write masterly music for this drama, and used all the power of his genius to do so.' The subject matter of the Dutch freedom fighter who fights for the freedom of his people against the oppression of the Spanish occupiers and even sacrifices his life for it must have been to Beethoven's taste, as his Florestan is also a political prisoner who has ended up in jail because of his convictions.

18
"Der freie Mann" (The free man), song for voice, choir and piano WoO 117, original edition, Bonn 1808
Beethoven-Haus Bonn, Sammlung H. C. Bodmer, HCB C WoO 117,126,127

The text of the song was written by Gottlieb Conrad Pfeffel, who in the first verse sings of the free man, 'to whom only his own will and no master's foolish ideas can give laws', thus paraphrasing Kant's ethics. Beethoven set the song to music in Bonn in 1792, where he was introduced to Kant's positions by the leading figures of the Bonn Catholic Enlightenment in the Zehrgarten and at the university and was able to listen to their debates.

Imprint

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