

# TRANSCENDENTAL MONSTROSITIES?

## Part Two –

### Kant, *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*, Second Book: The Sublime

Ricardo Mandolini

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the first part of this research, published under the title “Transcendental Monstrosities? A Composer Lost in the Labyrinth of Beauties,”<sup>1</sup> I analyzed the internal contradictions of the Analytic of the Beautiful. I demonstrated how the importation of the categories of understanding into the domain of reflective judgments generated an insurmountable cleavage between “pure beauty” (without concept, without interest, without emotion) and “adherent beauty” (that of art, that of the ideal), leaving the living aesthetic experience expelled from the territory of philosophical aesthetics. The title of that article, which some colleagues judged provocative, responded to a still undeveloped intuition: the suspicion that in the *Critique of Judgment* something akin to an internal deformation occurred, a productive contradiction that disfigured the very concept of aesthetic judgment. I was inspired by another title, that of engraving No. 43 from Francisco de Goya's *Los Caprichos*: “The Sleep of Reason produces monsters.”



Francisco de Goya, "El sueño de la razón produce monstruos"

That intuition now finds its confirmation in a passage from the third *Critique*, where Kant himself defines the “monstrous.” My article will attempt to apply that definition to the conceptual edifice of Kantian aesthetics, to demonstrate that the treatment of reflective judgments is monstrous, now adopting the Kantian sense of the term. This path leads us to highlight the structural aporias of Aesthetics, the never-justified contact zones between teleology and the cognition of reflective judgments. Far from pointing them out as simple contradictions, my hypothesis is that they serve as an unavoidable support for the architecture of the two books, having consequences for both the Beauty and the Sublime.

But before concentrating on the consequences that these structural aporias have for the treatment of the sublime, we must dwell on a theme that conditions everything that follows: the progressive degradation of the imagination in the Kantian system. Because that faculty, which in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1781 could

<sup>1</sup> Ricardo MANDOLINI, “¿Monstruosidades trascendentales? Un compositor perdido en el laberinto de las bellezas”, in

*Itamar, revista de investigación musical: territorios para el arte*, universidad de Valencia N° 11 (2025).

be the “common root” of understanding and reason, the foundation of subjectivity, and the support of all metaphysics, ends up in the second edition of 1787 reduced to a “blind function,” incapable of pronouncing itself individually, and consequently, subjected to the service of understanding and reason. And this lack of suitability of the imagination, which prevents it from operating autonomously, is inherited directly by the *Critique of Judgment*: in the beautiful, the imagination will be guided by the understanding, and in the sublime, it will be violated by reason.

Only after having established this double diagnosis—structural aporias and the degradation of the imagination—will we be able to delve into the analysis of the sublime. We will then see how the latent violence against the imagination becomes explicit: in the mathematical sublime, the imagination is violated by theoretical reason, which presents an absolute measure (the infinite) in relation to which everything turns out to be small. Here the imagination is humiliated because it cannot apprehend this totality.

In the dynamical sublime, on the other hand, the imagination is domesticated by practical reason, which makes us aware of our superiority over nature. Practical reason confronts us with our moral freedom. The imagination fails when trying to protect us from brute force; there, reason elevates us by showing us that we possess an internal value (moral personality) that is above any external force. Both operations respond to the same logic: the failure of the sensible faculty must be converted into the triumph of the supersensible faculty, and that process of conversion is presented by Kant as the very core of the sublime experience.

And in that denigration of the imagination—which is also a political operation, although Kant does not make it explicit—the philosopher goes to the extreme of presenting war as a sublime spectacle, thus revealing the darkest face of his enterprise: aesthetics at the service of morality, and morality at the service of the legitimization of barbarism. The violence against the imagination within the subject finds its correlate in the real violence of states, and both are justified from the same conceptual apparatus.

Our research aims to make visible the scope of this monstrosity, or rather, of this list of monstrosities, seeking to demonstrate that the *Critique of Judgment* is by no means the ontological foundation of aesthetics, but a gigantic heuristic construction solely at the service of the unity of transcendental philosophy, built both upon the systematic violence exerted against the imagination and upon the ignorance of real artistic experience.

## I – The Structural aporias of Kantian Aesthetics

### I.1. Teleology

The starting point of my current research is a definition by Kant that, paradoxically, has not been sufficiently analyzed by commentators. In §26 of the *Critique of Judgment*, dedicated to the estimation of natural magnitudes, we read:

“Monstrous is an object which by its magnitude destroys the end which constitutes its concept.”<sup>2</sup>

This definition situates the monstrous in the teleological terrain—in the relationship between an object and the end inscribed in its concept—not in the realm of pure aesthetics. An object becomes monstrous when its physical magnitude (its disproportion, its excess) prevents it from fulfilling the end for which it was conceived. This definition acquires unexpected relevance when we apply it to the conceptual edifice of Aesthetics. Because what Kant calls “reflective judgments”—those that must ascend from the particular to the universal without a determinate concept, and among which are counted the aesthetic judgments on the beautiful and the sublime—find themselves, based on the cited definition, in a fundamental aporia: how can the monstrous, which necessarily implies a concept and an end, have any relation to aesthetics, which Kant defines as the realm of the “without concept”? Let us remember here a clarifying example of how aesthetic judgments are exempt from all teleology: “Beauty is the form of purposiveness in an object, so far as this is perceived in it apart from the representation of an end.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> „Ungeheuer ist ein Gegenstand, wenn er durch seine Größe den Zweck, der den Begriff desselben ausmacht, vernichtet.“ Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft, §26, p. 175.

<sup>3</sup> „Schönheit ist Form der Zweckmäßigkeit eines Gegenstandes, sofern sie, ohne Vorstellung eines Zwecks, an ihm wahrgenommen wird.“ *Ibid.*, §17, p. 155

## I.2. Aesthetic judgments are not logical, but they appear to be.

At the beginning of the first book, *Analytic of the Beautiful*, second sentence, Kant says: “The judgment of taste is not, therefore, a judgment of cognition, and is consequently not logical, but aesthetical, by which we understand that whose determining ground can be no other than subjective.”<sup>4</sup>

But this definition is preceded, in the first sentence, by the following assertion:

“If we wish to discern whether anything is beautiful or not, we do not refer the representation of it to the object by means of understanding... but by the imagination (*perhaps in conjunction with understanding*) [...]”<sup>5</sup>

And another parenthesis at the foot of the page reinforces the uncertainty:

“(I have sought the moments to which this Judgment attends in its reflection guided by the logical functions of judging; *for a judgment of taste always contains a reference to the understanding.*)”<sup>6</sup>

It is from the two affirmations contained in the parentheses that Kant feels authorized to import from the *Critique of Pure Reason* the system of categories proper to determining judgments (whose end is theoretical cognition) into reflective judgments. It is once again, according to his own definition, a monstrosity: he admits the existence and specificity of the reflective judgment, but applies to it, to dissect it, the mold of a judgment that is radically different from it, thus contradicting the very concept of reflective judgment.<sup>7</sup> This ultimately means that the aesthetic judgment is not cognition—Kant states this categorically and on multiple occasions—but neither is it alien to cognition; it maintains with it a “friction” (*Beziehung*), an analogical relationship that links it, albeit subjectively, with the laws of understanding. The judgment of taste says nothing about the object, but, in appearance, its claim to universality can only be explained by this residual link with the logical.

## I.3. The role of aporias

Reflective judgments thus enclose two contradictions that negate their own concept: one, by the surreptitious attribution of a teleology, and the other, by the hypothetical relationship to cognition. This is no accident. Our central thesis is that, although Kant needs the judgment of taste to be autonomous (without concept) to found aesthetics as its own philosophical realm, irreducible to logic and morality, he cannot do without a link to cognition to explain the claim to universality of taste. Thus the one who judges

“[...] must believe that he has reason to demand a similar delight from everyone. Accordingly, he will speak of the beautiful as if beauty were a quality of the object and the logical judgment (constituting a cognition of the object by concepts of it); although it is only aesthetic, and contains merely a reference of the representation of the object to the subject; because it still bears this resemblance to the logical judgment, that it may be presupposed to be valid for all men.”<sup>8</sup>

This “friction” with cognition is, ultimately, what allows the beautiful to aspire to a subjective universality, but at the cost of making aesthetics an imperfect analogue of logic.

What is at stake here is the very possibility of aesthetics as an autonomous discipline. The subjective universality that Kant attributes to the judgment of taste arises from what we might call an imitative play of aesthetics with

<sup>4</sup> „Das Geschmacksurteil ist also kein Erkenntnisurteil, mithin nicht logisch, sondern ästhetisch, worunter man dasjenige versteht, dessen Bestimmungsgrund nicht anders als subjektiv sein kann.“  
KANT, *op.cit.*, §1, p. 115.

<sup>5</sup> „Um zu unterscheiden, ob etwas schön sei oder nicht, beziehen wir die Vorstellung nicht durch den Verstand auf das Objekt zum Erkenntnis, sondern durch die Einbildungskraft (vielleicht mit der Verstande verbunden)[...]“  
*Ibid.*, §1, p. 115

<sup>6</sup> „Die Momente, worauf diese Urteilstkraft in ihr Reflexion Acht hat, habe ich, nach Ausleitung der logischen Funktionen zu urteilen, aufgesucht (denn im Geschmacksurteile ist immer noch eine Beziehung auf den Verstand enthalten).“  
*Ibid.*, §1, p. 115

<sup>7</sup> To explore this subject further, see Ricardo MANDOLINI, *art. cit.*, p. 68.

<sup>8</sup> „[...] folglich muss er glauben Grund zu haben, jedermann ein ähnliches Wohlgefallen zuzumuten. Er wird daher vom Schönen so sprechen, als ob Schönheit eine Beschaffenheit des Gegenstandes und als Urteil logisch (durch Begriffe vom Objekte eine Erkenntnis desselben ausmache) wäre; ob es gleich nur ästhetisch ist und bloß eine Beziehung der Vorstellung des Gegenstandes auf das Subjekt enthält: darum, weil es doch mit den logischen die Ähnlichkeit hat, daß man die Gültigkeit desselben für jedermann daran voraussetzen kann.“  
KANT, *op.cit.*, §6, p. 124

respect to logic. The imagination, in the judgment of taste, schematizes without a concept: it performs an operation analogous to that of cognition (synthesis of the manifold, reference to unity), but without a determining rule, without a concept that subsumes. Beauty is, in this sense, a promise of cognition that is never fulfilled. And Kantian aesthetics, as a whole, is an analogy of logic: the beautiful is the sensible analogue of logical perfection (purposiveness without purpose as an analogue of objective purposiveness), and aesthetic universality is the analogue of logical universality (validity for each and every one, but without concept).

This situation is not an accident in Kant's thought, but rather the consequence of an inescapable historical legacy. It so happens that modern aesthetics was born, precisely, under the sign of this structural subordination. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, the founder of the discipline, defined it in his *Meditationes philosophicae* (1735) as the "science of sensible knowledge" (*scientiam sensitivae quid cognoscendi*)<sup>9</sup> and, in his *Aesthetica* (1750), as "inferior gnoseology" (*gnoseologia inferior*).<sup>10</sup> For Baumgarten, aesthetics is knowledge—but sensible knowledge, analogous to rational knowledge, imperfect (confused clarity as opposed to the distinct clarity of logic). Kant breaks with Baumgarten on a decisive point: he does not accept that aesthetics is knowledge, not even inferior knowledge. However, he inherits the problem of the relationship between aesthetics and logic, and resolves it by making the former an analogue of the latter by dint of peremptory assertions in parentheses which, as we have seen, are never actually demonstrated.

Before Baumgarten, Leibniz and Wolff already defined beauty as a confused intelligible. Baumgarten's writings seemingly follow this same direction, but he accomplishes an extraordinary intellectual pirouette in his *Meditationes*: he affirms that the artistic cannot be anything other than confused. It is from this condition that aesthetics obtains its differential profile with respect to logic. And that is, precisely, what Kant does not recover: that the *confusus* constitutes the specificity of art, of beauty, of sublimity, and of everything linked to them.

Modern aesthetics is born, thus, under the sign of subordination: it is the "other" of reason, but *another* always defined from it, in relation to it, in its image and likeness.

Recapitulating: what we call "monstrous" in Kant is by no means an "error" that can be corrected with minor adjustments. It is the symptom of an unresolvable tension that runs through all of aesthetic modernity: aesthetics wants to be autonomous, but its language (universality, purposiveness, form) is taken from logic; the pure reflective judgment is a limit ideal that, in practice, always brushes against knowledge. This "friction zone" is the place where the very possibility of aesthetics as a philosophical discipline is at stake, and also where its deepest contradictions are revealed.

Our research aims, therefore, to make these edges visible, highlighting the critical moments in which the Kantian system cannot close itself without revealing its fissures. In my judgment, the major problem of the third *Critique* is, as I will substantiate later, the attempt to pass off as ontologically constitutive of aesthetics certain personal conjectures, which, as such, can be debatable and eventually replaceable by others.

#### I.4. Imagination: tale of a misfortune

In the *Critique of Judgment*, the imagination is assisted by the two faculties of cognition: the understanding, for beauty, and reason, for the sublime. To what is its patent lack of suitability due? To explain this, one must go back to the changing status that Kant grants to the imagination throughout his work. In the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), the imagination was a transcendental faculty, a "metaphysical base" that made possible the synthesis between sensibility and understanding.

Kant had written, in relation to that purpose, that:

"There are two stems of human knowledge, which perhaps may spring from a common, but to us unknown, root, namely, sensibility and understanding, through the first of which objects are given to us, but through the second of which they are thought."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Gottlieb BAUMGARTEN, *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus* (1735), §CXVI, ed. bilingüe: *Reflexiones filosóficas acerca de la poesía*, trad. José A. Míguez (Buenos Aires: Aguilar, 1973), p. 102.

<sup>10</sup> Alexander Gottlieb BAUMGARTEN, *Aesthetica* (Frankfurt a.O.: Kleyb, 1750), §1. Facsimile edition: Olms, Hildesheim, 1970, p.1.

<sup>11</sup> „Nur so viel scheint zur Einleitung oder Vorerinnerung nötig zu sein, daß es zwei Stämme der menschlichen Erkenntnis gebe, die vielleicht aus einer gemeinschaftlichen, aber uns unbekanntem Wurzel entspringen, nämlich, Sinnlichkeit und Verstand, durch deren ersteren uns Gegenstände gegeben, durch den zweiten aber gedacht werden.“

Heidegger, in his work *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (1929), argues by asserting that this “common root” is none other than the transcendental imagination. It is what allows:

“[...] determining the infinite essence of the subjectivity of the human subject in an original way, in its unity and in its totality”.<sup>12</sup>

Heidegger affirms that Kant conceives the transcendental imagination as the basis of a metaphysics, very different from the metaphysics of reason that, precisely, the *Critique of Pure Reason* excises from knowledge. The transcendental imagination is its original root.

Kant favors this Heideggerian interpretation in a precise and forceful manner:

“We therefore have a transcendental imagination as a fundamental faculty of the human soul, which lies at the basis of all knowledge a priori. Through it we connect the manifold of intuition on the one side, with the condition of the necessary unity of pure apperception on the other. The two extremes, namely sensibility and understanding, must necessarily be connected by means of this transcendental function of the imagination, because otherwise the former, to be sure, would yield appearances, but no objects of an empirical knowledge, and consequently no experience. Actual experience, which consists in the apprehension, in the association, (in the reproduction) and finally in the recognition of appearances, contains in the [125] last and highest (of the merely empirical elements of experience) concepts which make possible the formal unity of experience, and with it all objective validity (truth) of empirical knowledge. These grounds of the recognition of the manifold, so far as they concern merely the form of an experience in general, are those categories. Upon them is based, then, all formal unity in the synthesis of imagination, and by means of it also of all its empirical use (in recognition, reproduction, association, apprehension) and thus downwards to the appearances, because these can belong to knowledge, and in general to our consciousness, and therefore to ourselves, only by means of those elements.”<sup>13</sup>

As is clear here, the transcendental imagination would be an indispensable element for establishing the relationship between experience and knowledge, as well as the foundation of the categories upon which thought is based to recognize and order phenomena. We see then the importance that the transcendental imagination holds: the entire edifice of critical philosophy rests upon it.

But there is a second version of the *Critique of Pure Reason*; that of 1787. There, Kant steps back from the abyss he himself had opened. Paraphrasing Heidegger, we can say that it is not a simple change of mind; what happens is that the philosopher of Königsberg becomes aware of what follows from his own theses, that is, the revelation that it is the imagination, and not reason, that is the true constitutive foundation of being. Reason would be nothing

---

Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, second edition (1787) online in

<https://archive.org/details/kritikderreinenv19kant/page/642/mode/2up>

[A15] / [B29, p. 79.]

<sup>12</sup> « [...] déterminer l'essence finie de la subjectivité du sujet humain de manière originelle, en son unité et en sa totalité. »

Martin HEIDEGGER, *Kant et le problème de la Métaphysique*, translation to French from A. de Waelhens and W. Biemel, Gallimard, 1953 for the French translation, p. 36 y 37.

<sup>13</sup> „Wir haben also eine reine Einbildungskraft, als ein Grundvermögen der menschlichen Seele, das aller Erkenntnis a priori zum Grunde liegt. Vermittelst deren bringen wir das Mannigfaltige der Anschauung einerseits, und mit der Bedingung der notwendigen Einheit der reinen Apperzeption andererseits in Verbindung. Beide äußerste Enden, nämlich Sinnlichkeit und Verstand, müssen vermittelst dieser transzendentalen Funktion der Einbildungskraft notwendig zusammenhängen; weil jene sonst zwar Erscheinungen, aber keine Gegenstände eines empirischen Erkenntnisses, mithin keine Erfahrung geben würden. Die wirkliche Erfahrung, welche aus der Apprehension, der Assoziation, (der Reproduktion,) endlich der Rekognition der Erscheinungen besteht, enthält in der [125] letzteren und höchsten (der bloß empirischen Elemente der Erfahrung) Begriffe, welche die formale Einheit der Erfahrung, und mit ihr alle objektive Gültigkeit (Wahrheit) der empirischen Erkenntnis möglich machen. Diese Gründe der Rekognition des Mannigfaltigen, sofern sie bloß die Form einer Erfahrung überhaupt angehen, sind nun jene Kategorien. Auf ihnen gründet sich also alle normale Einheit in der Synthesis der Einbildungskraft, und vermittelst dieser auch alles empirischen Gebrauchs derselben (in der Rekognition, Reproduktion, Assoziation, Apprehension) bis herunter zu den Erscheinungen, weil diese, nur vermittelst jener Elemente der Erkenntnis und überhaupt unserem Bewußtsein, mithin um selbst angehören können.“

Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, first edition (1781), online in

<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/6342/pg6342.html>

[A124][A125]

more than a derivation, a consequence, a sprout born from that deeper root. To accept this would mean condemning the supremacy of Reason, and that is precisely what Kant feels he must avoid. For that reason, the second edition of the first *Critique* (1787) consummates a sort of philosophical "coup d'état": in it, the imagination will lose its character as an ontologically constitutive foundation, and with it, any pretension of confronting Reason. In this second version, the imagination is transformed into a factor of synthesis, without its own light, supplementary and accompanying.

“Synthesis in general, as we shall hereafter see, is the mere result of the power of imagination, a blind but indispensable function of the soul, without which we should have no knowledge whatsoever, but of which we are scarcely ever conscious. To bring this synthesis to concepts is a function which belongs to the understanding, and it is through this function of the understanding that we first obtain knowledge properly so called.”<sup>14</sup>

This characterization of the imagination, changing over time—indispensable for knowledge and at the same time obscure to consciousness—has aroused numerous interpretations in the Kantian tradition. In particular, some commentators have pointed out that the later development of the system tends to attenuate the original role that this faculty seemed to occupy in the initial moment of the transcendental analysis.

“[...] The imagination, besides being relegated and marginalized, was reduced to a function of empirical and impotent synthesis regarding what is important: the transcendental constitution of all experience”.<sup>15</sup>

From another interpretative perspective, the problem can be formulated in broader terms: the imagination appears precisely as the instance that mediates between the great structural dualities of Kantian thought.

“We must remember here the distinguished orientation of the Kantian project. Kant seeks to found the universality of the three fundamental fields of knowledge, morality, and art. Fighting against the comings and goings of skeptical relativism, it is a solid foundation for his principles that he needs. His obsession is the fixed, the stable, the timeless. But the world in which we live is also fluid, unstable, and temporal. From this opposition arises, in the heart of his thought, a fundamental duality to which we will often return, a pair of irreducible oppositions. For a fundamental duality to exist, there must also be a link between the two entities that constitute it. This link is always murky, vague, difficult to determine. It is an intermediary, a 'tacit being', without contour. We are going to see that this link, this problematic place, coincides, in the Kantian theory of knowledge, with the imagination.”<sup>16</sup> Returning to the characterization of the imagination of 1787, the metaphor of “blindness” is revealing: he who does not see is not autonomous; he must be assisted. This is exactly what is going to happen with the imagination in the *Critique of Judgment*. It is no longer an origin, but a mere service: in the beautiful, it will be guided by understanding; in the sublime, it will be forced by reason.

<sup>14</sup> „Die Synthesis überhaupt ist, wie wir künftig sehen werden, die bloße Wirkung der Einbildungskraft, (einer blinden, obgleich unentbehrlichen Funktion der Seele), ohne die wir überall gar keine Erkenntnisse haben würden, der wir uns aber selten nur einmal bewusst sind.“

Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, second edition (1787) online in <https://archive.org/details/kritikderreinenv19kant/page/642/mode/2up> [B 104, p. 128].

<sup>15</sup> “[...] La imaginación, además de relegada y marginada, fue reducida a una función de síntesis empírica e impotente con lo importante: la constitución trascendental de toda experiencia”.

Leopoldo TILLERIA AQUEVEQUE, “Heidegger lector de Kant”, *Revista Veritas*, n.º 43, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, 2018, p. 11.

<sup>16</sup> « Il nous faut rappeler ici l’orientation phare du projet kantien. Kant cherche à fonder l’universalité des trois domaines fondamentaux de la connaissance, de la morale et de l’art. Se battant contre les vire- volètements du relativisme sceptique, c’est l’attachement à un socle qu’il vise. Son obsession est le fixe, le stable, l’atemporel. Or le monde qui s’offre à nous est également fluide, instable et temporel. De cette opposition naît, au cœur de sa pensée, une dualité fondamentale sur laquelle nous reviendrons souvent, un couple d’oppositions irréductibles. Or, pour qu’existe une dualité fondamentale, il faut qu’existe également un lien entre les deux entités qui la constituent. Ce lien est toujours trouble, flou, difficilement déterminable. C’est un entre-deux, un “être non franc”, sans contour. Nous allons voir que ce lien, que ce lieu trouble, coïncide, dans la théorie de la connaissance kantienne, avec l’imagination. »

Stéphane BARBERY, « L’art obscur », in *L’Imagination chez Kant*, Paris, L’Harmattan, 2004, p. 17.

In this article, we will address the second book of the “Analytic of Aesthetic Judgment”, dedicated to the sublime. We will see how the tension between aesthetic autonomy and dependence on the logical-moral is sharpened to the point of paroxysm, and how the violence that Kant exerts on the imagination in the sublime is the same violence that his system exerts on living aesthetic experience, in order to force it into the Procrustean bed of his architectonic of critical philosophy.

**II: The topography of the sublime — definitions and demarcations**

**II.1. The sublime vs. the beautiful: the transition from form to the formless**

“The beautiful in nature refers to the form of the object, which consists in its limitation; the sublime, on the contrary, can be found in a formless object, insofar as in it, or occasioned by it, limitlessness is represented and yet a totality of the same is thought, in such a way that the beautiful seems to be taken as the exposition of an indeterminate concept of the understanding, and the sublime as that of a similar concept of reason.”<sup>17</sup>

Kant establishes from §23 of the Critique of Judgment a series of sharp oppositions between the beautiful and the sublime. These oppositions are not merely descriptive; they are demarcation operations that seek to ensure the purity of both domains.

**The beautiful**

Concerns the form of the object, its limitation (*Form*).

Agreeable play of the faculties  
Positive pleasure, directly experienced.

The imagination plays freely with the understanding.

**The sublime**

Is found in a formless object, in the formless (*Unform*).

Emotion mixed with awe, admiration and respect  
Negative pleasure, which attracts and repels at the same time

The imagination is forced to its limit, violated by reason.

This table reveals to us that the sublime is defined by the negation of the beautiful. It is what the beautiful is not: formless, displeasing, violent. Kantian aesthetics is built from here on a system of binary oppositions that leave no room for the hybrid, the ambiguous, that which overflows classifications.

**II. 2. The presentation of the study on the sublime**

As Kant warns us, the investigation into the sublime continues to be carried out based on the categorical division already used for the beautiful, that is, the categories imported from the Critique of Pure Reason to which I have already referred in my previous article (quality, quantity, relation, and modality) are also valid here. But in the consideration of the sublime, a new distinction must be introduced, taking into account two different dispositions of the imagination that occur:

“[...] there is a division that the analysis of the sublime needs and that that of the beautiful did not need; it is, namely: that of the mathematical sublime and the dynamical sublime”.<sup>18</sup>

Unlike the beautiful, where sensation is produced in a restful manner, the sublime implies a movement of the imagination: whether related to the faculty of cognition (mathematical sublime), or to the faculty of desire (dynamical sublime). In both cases, the imagination is subjected by reason to an exercise of impossible extension. It is this inadequacy of the imagination that produces the feeling of the sublime.

**III: The mathematical sublime (§§25-27)**

**III.1. The original ambiguity: empirical magnitude or idea of infinity?**

The first difficulty facing the reader of the Analytic of the mathematical sublime is Kant's oscillation between irreducible planes: that of natural magnitudes (enormous, although finite) and that of the mathematical infinite (the absolutely great). The problem arises from the fact that Kant does not have the necessary conceptual tools to

<sup>17</sup> „Das Schöne de Natur betrifft die Form des Gegenstandes, die in der Begrenzung besteht; das Erhabene ist dagegen auch an einem formlosen Gegenstande zu finden, sofern Unbegrenztheit an ihm, oder durch dessen Veranlassung, vorgestellt und doch Totalität derselben hinzugedacht wird [...]“

Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *op.cit.*, p. 165.

<sup>18</sup> „Aber eine Einteilung hat die Analysis der Erhabenen nötig, welche die des Schönen nicht bedarf, nämlich die in das mathematisch– und in das dynamisch–Erhabene“

Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *op.cit.*, p. 168.

deal with the subject of the infinite, given that the precursors of transfinite mathematics: Bolzano, Dedekind, and Cantor are subsequent to him. Kant only knows the infinite as defined by Aristotle, that of endless succession: “The true (transcendental) concept of infinity is: that the successive synthesis of unity in the measurement of a quantum can never be completed.”<sup>19</sup>

The fundamental problem Kant confronts is that the “absolute totality” of reason is not the same as the “infinite progress” that the imagination carries out. They are two completely different ways of understanding the infinite since infinite progress is the endless task we perform when we look back in time searching for one cause behind another or when we divide a piece of matter into ever smaller parts without ever reaching an end. It is like climbing a staircase that never ends because there is always one more step above. This is the only infinite that Kant admits, and which is called *potential infinite*. The absolute totality of reason would be, for its part, the demand to reach the end of that staircase and contemplate at once all the infinite steps together in a complete and finished whole, as if we could have a picture of the entire infinite succession. This infinite, which is called *actual infinite*, is the supersensible to which Kant alludes when he speaks of reason. He does not admit it as infinite but as an “idea of Reason”. But when he speaks of the overflow of the imagination he oscillates between both concepts, the potential and the actual.<sup>20</sup>

The traditional error was confusing these two modalities by thinking that we could find in experience that absolute totality that only exists as a supersensible idea of reason, which causes a series of contradictions or antinomies where we can demonstrate opposite things with great ease because we are misapplying the concepts. From this confusion between the infinite that never finishes building itself and the infinite in which everything is already given arise the different ways of understanding the incommensurable that thinkers and mathematicians have explored throughout history.

Kant defines the mathematical sublime as that which is “absolutely great” (*schlechthin groß*), that is, “great beyond all comparison”.<sup>21</sup> But he also adds that the sublime does not reside in natural objects, but only in our ideas:

“[...] the properly sublime cannot be contained in any sensible form, but concerns only ideas of reason, which, though no adequate exposition of them is possible, are put into motion”.<sup>22</sup>  
Devoid of mathematical examples, Kant is forced to exemplify in this chapter with a battery of examples belonging to the dynamical sublime, which is highly confusing, since these are not infinite.

<sup>19</sup> „Der wahre (transzendente) Begriff der Unendlichkeit ist, dass die successive Synthesis der Einheit in Durchmessung eines Quantum niemals vollendet sein kann.“

Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, zweite Auflage (1787) online in <https://archive.org/details/kritikderreinen19kant/page/642/mode/2up> [A431] / [B460, p. 392]

<sup>20</sup> Jorge Luis Borges’ *The Aleph* is the most precise literary representation I know of that “absolute totality” which Kant identifies as an “idea of reason”. That minute point where the entire universe exists simultaneously, without succession or dispersion, is exactly what reason demands: to grasp in a single visual instant what experience can only offer us in a fragmented and successive manner. “In that gigantic instant, I saw millions of delightful or atrocious acts; none amazed me as much as the fact that all of them occupied the same point, without overlapping or transparency. What my eyes saw was simultaneous: what I shall transcribe will be successive, because language is successive [...]” (Jorge Luis Borges, *The Aleph*, Emecé Editores, 1996, p. 210). Borges’ genius lies in showing that this vision is overwhelming, vertiginous, almost unbearable for human consciousness, which is made for time and not for eternity. “[...] I felt vertigo and wept, because my eyes had seen that secret and conjectural object whose name men usurp, but that no man has looked upon: the inconceivable universe.” And the narrator, unable to convey what he saw, becomes a metaphor for the philosopher who cannot demonstrate the existence of the unconditioned, because language and logic are also trapped in finitude.

How beautiful it is when literature, philosophy, and mathematics cross paths!

<sup>21</sup> „Erhaben nennen wir das, was schlechthin groß ist. [...] Das letztere ist das, was über alle Vergleichung groß ist.“

Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *op.cit.*, §25, p. 169.

<sup>22</sup> „Das eigentliche Erhabene kann in keiner sinnlichen Form enthalten ein, sondern trifft nur Ideen der Vernunft: welche, obgleich keine ihnen angemessene Darstellung möglich ist, eben durch diese Unangemessenheit, Gemüt gerufen werden.“

Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *op.cit.*, §23, p. 166.

Indeed, nature cannot provide anything that is absolutely great, because every natural magnitude is comparative. Interspersed within the mathematical sublime, Kant's examples are revealing: the pyramids of Egypt and St. Peter's Basilica in Rome (§26) are finite objects, measurable in principle, even if their magnitude overflows immediate apprehension. The ocean or the celestial vault are, equally, natural phenomena with limits, however much our perception cannot encompass them. None of these examples is infinite in the strict sense.

These objects function as detonators of the sublime feeling of infinity. Their function is to set the imagination in motion in its attempt to adapt to what reason demands of it, but they do not constitute the mathematical sublime. As Samantha Matherne points out in her recent study on the imagination in Kant,

“[...] the sublime involves the necessary enlargement of the imagination to the point of adequacy to that which is unlimited in our faculty of reason”.<sup>23</sup>

That expansion of the imagination is an internal process of the subject, not a property of the object. In other words, the sublime does not reside in the physical magnitude of a mountain or in the colossal power of a storm, but in the response that these phenomena trigger within us. It is the subject who, when confronted with something that overflows the limits of their sensibility, experiences a paradoxical movement: first, a feeling of frustration or vertigo before the incommensurable; then, an awakening of the consciousness of their own rational capacity to think that which the senses cannot encompass. The imagination, forced to expand beyond its own limits, thus elevates itself to match the demands of reason. This process, purely internal, reveals that the sublime is, above all, an experience in which the subject discovers themselves as capable of going beyond the given, the sensible, and the measurable.

This analysis reveals a complementary problem: if we are not in a position to maintain the distinction between the incommensurable for the imagination (finite objects, but too large to be encompassed) and the infinite in a mathematical sense (that which has no possible measure, not even in principle), then the boundaries between the mathematical and dynamical sublime become blurred; that is, the entire systematic order of Kant's explanation and his division between the mathematical sublime and dynamical sublime collapses. But since in both one and the other, what finally produces the sublime feeling is the self-consciousness of reason as a faculty that surpasses all sensible limits, there is no real difference between the two: in the mathematical sublime, the occasion is magnitude; in the dynamical, the occasion is force. The cause of the sublime feeling—failure of the imagination, triumph of reason—is identical in both cases.

### **III.2. The conversion of displeasure into pleasure: the triumph of reason**

The failure of the imagination is, however, the condition for the emergence of a higher-order pleasure. Because that failure awakens in us the consciousness of a faculty that has no limit: Reason. Reason has the idea of the infinite, of absolute totality. Although it cannot present that idea sensibly (that is forbidden to it), it can think it. The spectacle of the imagination's impotence reminds us that we are rational beings, destined for the supersensible: “Sublime is, therefore, nature in those of its appearances whose intuition carries with it the idea of their infinity. This last, however, can only happen through the inadequacy of even the greatest effort of our imagination in the estimation of the magnitude of an object.”<sup>24</sup>

The pleasure of the sublime is, then, the pleasure of the superiority of our moral destination (*Bestimmung*) over our own sensibility. The imagination fails, but its failure is precisely what allows reason to affirm its greatness:

“The transcendent for the imagination (to which it is driven in the apprehension of intuition) is for it like an abyss in which it fears to lose itself; but for the idea of the supersensible in reason, to produce such an effort of the imagination is not transcendent but in conformity with its law; therefore, it is attractive precisely to the degree that it is repulsive to our sensibility.”<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Samantha MATHERNE, “Imagination and the sublime” in *Seeing more: Kant's theory of Imagination*, Oxford University Press, 2024, p. 299.

<sup>24</sup> „Erhaben ist also die Natur in derjenigen ihrer Erscheinungen, deren Anschauung die Idee ihrer Unendlichkeit bei sich führt. Dieses letztere kann nun nicht anders geschehen, als durch die Unangemessenheit selbst der größten Bestrebung unserer Einbildungskraft in der Größenschätzung eines Gegenstandes.“

Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *op.cit.*, §26, p. 178

<sup>25</sup> „Das Überschwengliche für die Einbildungskraft (bis zu welchem sie in der Auffassung der Anschauung getrieben wird) ist gleichsam ein Abgrund, worin sie sich selbst zu verlieren fürchtet; aber doch auch für die Idee der Vernunft vom Übersinnlichen nicht überschwenglich, sondern gesetzmäßig, eine solche Bestrebung der

But the mathematical sublime requires something more to complement the infinite as unlimited enumeration. It lacks the idea of the infinite as totality, as something that is “there” even though it cannot be apprehended.

In short: to indicate how the imagination is violated by reason in the feeling of the sublime, Kant needs the potential and actual infinities, one admitted and the other admitted only as a supersensible idea of reason.

### III. 3. The affirmation of "respect" and "contempt"

“When we [...] simply say of an object that it is great, this is not a determining-mathematical judgment, but a mere judgment of reflection on the representation of it, which is subjectively purposive for a certain use of our cognitive faculties in the estimation of magnitudes: and then we always combine with the representation a kind of respect, just as we combine a contempt with that which we simply call small”.<sup>26</sup>

This affirmation is doubly problematic:

First, because it introduces “respect” (*Achtung*), which is the moral feeling *par excellence* in the Kantian system (the one we feel before the moral law), into the analysis of the mathematical sublime. This reveals the surreptitious moralization of aesthetics: Kant cannot sustain the purity of the aesthetic judgment and needs to constantly resort to the moral to give content to his analyses.

Second, because “contempt” (*Verachtung*) has no place in an aesthetics that claims to be autonomous. Since when should the contemplation of the small—a flower, a stream, a child—arouse contempt? This affirmation only makes sense if moral smallness, not physical smallness, is projected onto nature. But that is exactly what Kant should not do if he wants to maintain the specificity of the aesthetic judgment.

### IV. The exclusion of art and the paradox of genius

For Kant, the sublime is not originated by works of art, but rather is produced in us by the contemplation of the infinite or nature in its chaotic, violent, and disproportionate aspect: unleashed oceans, erupting volcanoes, the immensity of the starry sky, deserts, storms. Art can, at most, represent the sublime, but not be sublime.

On this assertion, Kant tells us:

“[...] if, as is right, we consider here primarily only the sublime in objects of nature (the sublime in art is always restricted to the conditions of agreement with nature, emphasis mine) [...]; on the other hand, that which awakens in us, without reasoning, solely in apprehension, the feeling of the sublime, may indeed appear in its form to be contrapurposive for our Judgment [...]”.<sup>27</sup>

The agreement with nature refers here to the representation through the artistic object of something in nature that produces the sublime feeling. Consequently, neither art nor nature has a sublimity of its own:

“Thus, sublimity is not contained in anything of nature, but only in our own spirit [...]”.<sup>28</sup>

Now, this exclusion of art from the realm of the sublime is all the more striking if it is confronted with the Kantian theory of genius, developed in §§46-50 for the realm of the beautiful. Because there, paradoxically, Kant attempts to reconcile art with nature through a far-reaching conceptual operation. Genius is defined as “the innate mental

---

Einbildungskraft hervorzubringen; mithin in eben dem Maße wiederum anziehend, als es für die bloße Sinnlichkeit abstoßend war.“

*Ibid.*, §27, p. 181-182

<sup>26</sup> „Wenn wir [...] von einem Gegenstande schlechtweg sagen, er sei groß: so ist dies kein mathematisch-bestimmendes, sondern ein bloßes Reflexionsurteil über die Vorstellung desselben, die für einen gewissen Gebrauch unserer Erkenntniskräfte in der Größenschätzung subjektiv zweckmäßig ist; und wir verbinden als denn mit der Vorstellung jederzeit eine Art von Achtung, so wie mit dem, was wir schlechtweg klein nennen, eine Verachtung.“

Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *op.cit.*, §25, p.171.

<sup>27</sup> „[...] daß, wenn wir, wie billig, hier zuvörderst nur das Erhabene an Naturobjekten in Betrachtung ziehen (das der Kunst wird nämlich immer auf die Bedingungen der Übereinstimmung mit der Natur eingeschränkt) [...] das, was in uns, ohne zu vernünfteln, bloß in der Fassung, , das Gefühl der Erhabenen erregt, der Form nach zwar zweckwidrig für unsere Urteilskraft[...]“

Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *op.cit.*, §23, p. 166.

<sup>28</sup> Also ist die Erhabenheit in keinem Dinge der Natur, sondern nur in unserem Gemüte enthalten [...]“

*Ibid.*, §28, p. 189

disposition (ingenium) through which nature gives the rule to art”.<sup>29</sup> The work of art, although produced by man, is ultimately a product of nature acting through him. Hence Kant affirms that beautiful art must resemble nature: when we contemplate a true work of art, we must be aware that it is art, but at the same time it must present itself with the freedom and naturalness of a natural product, without the effort or the application of rules being noticeable.

“Thus, the purposiveness in the product of beautiful art, although it is intentional, must not seem intentional; that is, beautiful art must be regarded as nature, even though one is conscious that it is art.”<sup>30</sup>

The analysis of these passages evidences a flagrant contradiction: on the one hand, in §26 (p. 186), Kant says:

“[...] one must show the sublime, not in the products of art (for example, buildings, columns, etc.) where a human purpose determines the form and size [...]”.<sup>31</sup>

But, on the other hand, in §46 (p. 251), in his enumeration characterizing genius, Kant affirms:

“[...] nature, through genius, gives the rule not to science but to art [...]”.<sup>32</sup>

That is to say, genius is precisely the medium through which nature expresses itself in art. If this is so, then art, in its origin, is nature—nature acting through genius. The consequence is inevitable: if art is nature (mediated by genius), then it cannot be excluded from the sublime. What Kant excludes through the door of definition (art discarded because it has human purposes) is reintroduced through the window of the theory of genius (art is nature).

#### IV.1. Kantian genius and Romantic genius

Kantian genius, despite its natural origin, is subjected to taste, which acts as its “disciplinarian” (Zuchtmeister), “clipping its wings” to make it cultivable and communicable.

“Taste is, like Judgment in general, the discipline (or training) of genius; although it clips its wings severely and makes it civilized and polished, yet at the same time it gives it guidance as to where and how far it may extend itself in order to remain purposive, and by introducing clarity and order into the multitude of thoughts, it makes the ideas lasting [...]. Thus, if in the conflict between these two properties in a product something has to be sacrificed, it should rather be on the side of genius; and Judgment, which in matters of beautiful art claims its own principles, will rather permit damage to the freedom and wealth of the imagination than to the understanding.”<sup>33</sup> Suffice it to point out, as a radical objection to this comment, what Baumgarten had already seen: that sensible knowledge has its own perfection, and that the confused is not a deficit but a distinctive property. When Baumgarten founds aesthetics as the science of sensitive cognition, he is opening a space where art does not need to be disciplined by the understanding to be true. Kant, conversely, by subordinating genius to taste, restores the hierarchy that Baumgarten had deactivated: that in which the sensible must be “domesticated” by the intellectual. The Kantian genius is not a rebel who breaks the rules; it is the one who, by natural disposition, gives rules—but rules that others can later follow, rules that integrate into the community of taste. Its imagination is a domesticated imagination, playing freely, yes, but always within the limits imposed on it by the understanding.

<sup>29</sup> „Genie ist die angeborene Gemütsanlage (ingenium) durch welche die Natur der Kunst Regel gibt“.  
*Ibid.*, §46, p. 241-242

<sup>30</sup> „Also muß die Zweckmäßigkeit im Produkte der schönen Kunst, ob sie zwar absichtlich ist, doch nicht absichtlich scheinen; d. i. schöne Kunst muß als Natur anzusehen sein, ob man sich ihrer zwar als Kunst bewußt ist.“  
Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der Urteilkraft*, *op.cit.*, §45, p. 241.

<sup>31</sup> „[...] man nicht das Erhabene an Kunstprodukten (z. B. Gebäuden, Säulen u.s.w.) wo ein menschlicher Zweck die Form sowohl als die Größe bestimmt [...]“.  
*Ibid.*, §26, p. 175

<sup>32</sup> „[...] die Natur durch das Genie nicht der Wissenschaft, sondern der Kunst die Regel vorschreibe [...]“.  
*Ibid.*, §46, p. 243.

<sup>33</sup> „Der Geschmack ist, so wie die Urteilskraft überhaupt, die Disziplin (oder Zucht) des Genies, beschneidet diesem sehr die Flügel und macht es gesittet oder geschliffen; zugleich aber gibt es er die Leitung, worüber und bis wie weit es sich verbreiten soll, um zweckmäßig zu bleiben; und indem er Klarheit und Ordnung in die Gedankenfülle hinein, macht er di Ideen haltbar, eines daurenden zugleich auch allgemeinen Beifalls, der Nachfolge anderer, und einer immer fortschreitenden Kultur, fähig. Wenn also im Widerstreite beiderlei Eigenschaften an einem Produkte etwas aufgeopfert werden soll, so müßte es eher auf die Seite des Genies geschehen: und die Urteilskraft, welche in Sachen der schönen Kunst aus eigenen Prinzipien den Ausspruch tut, wird eher der Freiheit und die Reichtum der Einbildungskraft, als dem Verstande Abbruch zu tun erlauben.“  
Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der Urteilkraft*, *op.cit.*, §50, p. 257.

Against this figure of genius framed by taste, the Romantic genius represents an explosion of individual subjectivity that does not submit to any rule. It is not taste that motivates it as a predetermination; it is the other way around, it is the one who will impose its taste, transforming the taste of others. The Romantic movement, which arises precisely in the decades immediately following the publication of the Critique of Judgment, takes the exaltation of creative freedom that Kant had outlined to its ultimate consequences, but without respecting the limits he sets. For Romanticism, genius is not an instrument of nature. Its supreme value is neither adequacy nor the production of rules. It is, on the contrary, the setting in motion of an absolutely unpostponable personal purpose: desire.<sup>34</sup>

## VI.2. Other difficulties regarding the exclusion of art

a) In the exemplification corresponding to the mathematical infinite, Kant cites Savary's observations on the pyramids:

“[...] one must neither get too close to nor too far from the pyramids to experience the full emotional effect of their magnitude [...]”<sup>35</sup>

And he also mentions the entrance to St. Peter's Basilica for the emotion it arouses. Are the pyramids and the basilica natural objects? Kant uses them as examples of the mathematical sublime, contradicting his aforementioned exclusion of art.

b) Later Kant affirms:

“From this it is also seen that true sublimity must be sought only in the mind of the one judging, and not in the object of nature whose judging occasions this disposition in it.”<sup>36</sup>

If sublimity is in the mind that experiences it and not in the object that produces it, then it should be indifferent (gleichgültig) whether that object is mathematical, natural, or artistic. What is important is the feeling it awakens, not its origin. The exclusion of art is, from this premise, a pretension that is difficult to understand.

The difficulties pointed out reveal that the exclusion of art does not respond to a phenomenological necessity (that art cannot produce the sublime), but to a decision of a systematic order: to keep art confined to the realm of the beautiful so that nature retains the production of the sublime feeling.

And it is precisely here that Hegel's critique of Kant acquires its full meaning: in his Lectures on Aesthetics, Hegel formulates a decisive objection against the Kantian equating of natural beauty and artistic beauty.

“By this expression (“philosophy of fine art”) we immediately exclude the natural beautiful. [...] Certainly in everyday life we are accustomed to use expressions like beautiful color, beautiful sky, beautiful streams, beautiful flowers, beautiful animals and, above all, beautiful men. We do not want to enter here into the dispute of whether the quality of beauty can rightfully be attributed to such objects, thereby placing the natural beautiful alongside the artistic beautiful. But we affirm from the outset that artistic beauty is superior to nature. Indeed, the beauty of

---

<sup>34</sup> This conception finds its most perfect musical realization in Richard Wagner's “infinite melody” (unendliche Melodie). As the composer himself explains in his letters to Mathilde Wesendonck, his melody is not a closed structure unfolding toward a foreseeable end, but rather an irrepressible desire that cannot be halted—something that springs “from within” music itself, a pure immanence that rejects any external musical determinations. Hence, beginning with *Tristan and Isolde* (1857), tonality—that architectural principle of music which imposed a teleological direction and, above all, a predetermined closure upon musical discourse—loses its original function forever. Wagnerian music thus embodies, within the very matter of sound, that Romantic longing for infinity that no form can exhaust: each chord seeks resolution, yet this resolution is delayed, deflected, transformed into new desire, into an endless chain of tensions that never attains definitive rest. This is the genius that Kant could not conceive: an imagination that does not merely play freely with the understanding, but overflows every framework, daring to embrace the formless and the excessive without seeking permission from either reason or taste.

<sup>35</sup> „[...] daß man die Pyramiden nicht sehr nahe kommen, eben so wenig als zu weit davon entfernt sein müsse, um die ganze Rührung von ihrer Größe zu bekommen.“

Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, op.cit., § 26, p. 174.

<sup>36</sup> „Man sieht hieraus durch, dass die wahre Erhabenheit nur im Gemüte des Urteilenden, nicht in dem Naturobjekte, dessen Beurteilung diese Stimmung desselben veranlasst, müsse gesucht werden.“

Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, op.cit. §26, p. 179.

art is beauty born and reborn of the spirit. To the same extent that the spirit and its productions are superior to nature and its manifestations, the beauty of art stands out from natural beauty.”<sup>37</sup>

For Hegel, artistic beauty is qualitatively superior to natural beauty because in it the spirit, freedom, and self-consciousness are expressed. Nature can be beautiful, but its beauty is accidental; it is not the product of a decision, it is not a full exercise of freedom. The work of art bears within itself the imprint of the human, of creative subjectivity. It is, therefore, the proper place for the manifestation of the absolute.

## V. – The dynamical sublime (§28)

### V. 1. The mechanism of power: nature as force

The dynamical sublime is produced, according to Kant, in the contemplation of nature considered as a force (Macht) that has no dominion over us. The examples are of the same nature as in the mathematical sublime, but now considered from another perspective: not for their incomparable magnitude, but for their destructive power:

“Boldly overhanging and, as it were, threatening rocks, thunderclouds accumulating in the sky and advancing with lightning and thunder, volcanoes in all their devastating power, hurricanes leaving desolation behind them, the boundless ocean roaring with anger, a deep waterfall of a mighty river, etc., reduce our faculty of resistance to an insignificant trifle compared with their might. But their appearance is all the more attractive the more fearful it is, provided only that we are in a safe place [...]”<sup>38</sup>

Faced with these phenomena, the subject experiences their physical smallness, their vulnerability, their impotence. They feel fear—but a fear that is not real, because the subject is in a “safe place”.

### V. 2. The condition of the “safe place”: the domestication of vertigo

Kant is explicit: for the experience to be sublime, it is necessary that the subject be safe. This condition is the key to the whole operation. The danger must be contemplated, not suffered. Death must be a spectacle, not a real possibility. The subject must be able to say: “this could kill me” without suffering it directly. This “security” is what allows fear to become pleasure. Because from safety, the subject measures their physical impotence, but that same measure awakens in them the consciousness of a power of another order: the strength of their soul, their capacity to resist morally, to feel superior to that nature of which they are nothing but a weak physical creature. Kant expresses it thus:

“Thus, nature is here called sublime because it elevates the imagination to the presentation of those cases in which the mind can feel the proper sublimity of its destination, even above nature.”<sup>39</sup>

### V. 3. The conversion: from fear to moral self-affirmation

The mechanism of the dynamical sublime is, therefore, analogous to that of the mathematical sublime, applied to force and not to quantity. From theoretical reason we move to practical (moral) reason:

1. The imagination (and with it sensibility) experiences its limit: it cannot physically resist the force of nature.
2. This failure awakens the consciousness of a higher faculty: practical reason, which tells us that we are free, that our moral destination is above any natural power.

<sup>37</sup> “Mediante esta expresión (“filosofía del arte bello”) excluimos inmediatamente lo bello natural. [...] Ciertamente en la vida cotidiana acostumbramos a utilizar expresiones como color bello, cielo hermoso, bellos arroyos, bellas flores, animales bellos y, sobre todo, hombres bellos. No queremos entrar aquí en la disputa de si puede atribuirse con razón a tales objetos la cualidad de la belleza, situando en consecuencia lo bello natural junto a lo bello artístico. Pero afirmamos ya de entrada que la belleza artística es superior a la naturaleza. En efecto, lo bello del arte es la belleza nacida y renacida del espíritu. En la misma medida en que el espíritu y sus producciones son superiores a la naturaleza y sus manifestaciones, descuella lo bello del arte de la belleza natural.”

G. W. F. HEGEL, *Lecciones sobre la estética*, Introducción, traducción y notas de Alfredo Brotons Muñoz (Madrid: Akal, 2007), p. 27-28.

<sup>38</sup> Kühne überhangende gleichsam drohende Felsen, am Himmel sich auftürmende Donnerwolken, Mit Blitzen und Krachen einherziehend, Vulkane in ihrer ganzen zerstörenden Gewalt, Orkane mit ihrer zurückgelassenen Verwüstung, der grenzlose Ozean, im Empörung gesetzt, ein hoher Wasserfall eines mächtigen Flusses u.d.gl. machen unser Vermögen zu widerstehen, in Vergleichung mit ihrer Macht, zur unbedeutenden Kleinigkeit. Aber ihr Anblick wird nur um desto anziehender, je furchtbar er ist, wenn wir uns nur in Sicherheit finden [...]“

Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, op.cit. §28, p.185

<sup>39</sup> „Also heißt die Natur hier erhaben, bloß weil sie die Einbildungskraft zu Darstellung derjenigen Fälle erhebt, in welchen das Gemüt die eigene Erhabenheit seiner Bestimmung, selbst über die Natur, sich fühlbar machen kann.“

Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, op.cit., §28, p.186.

3. Experienced from a safe place, the displeasure of fear becomes pleasure: the pleasure of knowing oneself to be superior, of belonging to a supersensible order.

Kant is very clear on this point:

“In this way, nature, in our aesthetic judgment, is not judged as sublime because it provokes fear, but because it summons our power (which is not nature) in us, so that we may regard as small that about which we are concerned (goods, health, life) [...]”<sup>40</sup>

#### IV. 4. Aesthetic spectator vs. ethical admirer

Immediately a confusion arises that Kant does not resolve. Because after having established the necessity of the “safe place”, so that the feeling of fear does not take the place of that of sublimity, Kant introduces a counterexample opposing the sublime to the admirable:

“What is it that, even for the savage, is an object of the greatest admiration? A man who is not terrified, who does not fear, who does not flee from danger and, at the same time, however, sets about his task calmly and with full deliberation. Even in the most highly civilized social state this particular reverence for the warrior endures [...]”<sup>41</sup>  
 These propositions are, we must admit, highly problematic:

#### Text A (p.196-197)

#### Text B (p.197)

The sublime requires being in a safe place

The admirable is the one who does not flee from danger

Aesthetic contemplation implies distance

Ethical admiration demands exposure

The subject is a spectator

The subject is actor

Why does Kant mention this here, without taking the trouble to consequently develop the similarities and differences between the aesthetic and the ethical? Is the feeling of admiration part of the sublime? Or, on the contrary, are they two separate and different things?

- If the sublime requires a safe place, then the warrior who exposes himself to danger is not having a sublime experience (because he is having real fear), but rather is the object of the admiration of others. But then the sublime feeling is not his, but rather may be that of those who contemplate him from safety.
- If, on the contrary, the admirable were the fact of exposing oneself (or being brave) in the face of danger, then the sublime experience would be that of the one taking the risk, not of the one contemplating from afar. But Kant excludes that possibility by insisting on the “safe place”.

Here it becomes evident that Kant confuses the planes:

1. The aesthetic plane: the disinterested contemplation of nature from safety. Here the subject is a spectator.
2. The ethical plane: the admiration of virtue, of courage, of the capacity to face danger. Here the subject is an agent.

The warrior who does not flee from danger is not having an aesthetic experience; he is undergoing a moral experience (or, simply, fighting for his life). But Kant leaves open the question of whether that figure can be sublime for those who contemplate it. The problem is that then the sublime would no longer be a feeling in the face of nature, but a moral feeling (respect for virtue) projected onto nature.

<sup>40</sup> „Auf solche Weise wird die Natur in unserem ästhetischen Urteile nicht, sofern sie furchterregend ist, als erhaben beurteilt, sondern weil sie unsere Kraft (die nicht Natur ist) in uns aufruft, um das, wofür wir besorgt sind (Güter, Gesundheit und Leben) [...]“

Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, op.cit., §28, p. 186.

<sup>41</sup> „Denn was ist das, was selbst dem Wilden ein Gegenstand der größten Bewunderung ist? Ein Mensch der nicht erschrickt, der sich nicht fürchtet, also das Gefahr nicht weicht, zugleich aber mit völliger Überlegung rüstig zu Werke geht. Auch im aller gesittetsten Zustande bleibt die vorzügliche Hochachtung der Krieger [...]“  
*Ibid.*, §28, p. 187.

The admiration that the savage feels for the warrior is not an aesthetic feeling in the Kantian sense (it is not disinterested, it is not formal, it is not a play of faculties). It is an ethical feeling that Kant introduces, apparently with the intention of giving moral content to the sublime. What happens is that by doing so he contradicts everything affirmed so far about the sublime. This situation refers us, once again, inexorably, to the definition of monstrous from the beginning: that which is capable of doing violence to its own concept.

### V. 5. The consummated monstrosity: war as a sublime spectacle

The passage in §28 about war is not an accidental digression or a rhetorical excess. It is the consummation of the entire Kantian edifice applied to the human sphere. Because here Kant not only moralizes aesthetics, but he aestheticizes war, and in that operation, he commits a double violence: against the truth of war and against the dignity of its victims.

“War itself, provided it is conducted with order and a sacred respect for the rights of civilians, has something sublime about it, and gives nations that carry it on in such a manner a stamp of mind only the more sublime the more numerous the dangers to which they are exposed, and which they are able to meet with fortitude. On the other hand, a prolonged peace favors the predominance of a mere commercial spirit, and with it a debasing self-interest, cowardice, and effeminacy, and tends to degrade the character of the nation.”<sup>42</sup>

Every sentence in this paragraph is morally untenable:

**“War itself [...] has something sublime about it”** – Inadmissible. War has nothing sublime about it. War is a crime that proclaims itself necessary and just, with total contempt for human rights; it is the death of youth, it is the rape of women, it is the starvation of children, it is the destruction of cities, it is the exile of peoples. War is the opposite of life, the opposite of culture, the opposite of humanity. To speak of the “sublimity” of war is an insult to all its victims throughout history.

**“Provided it is conducted with order and a sacred respect for the rights of civilians”** – This fallacy distorts reality. What war has ever respected citizens' rights? Wars are, by definition, a suspension of those rights. Civil rights are the first thing to be annulled when a state of emergency is declared. A “clean” war does not exist; it is a myth of power to justify the unjustifiable.

**“A stamp of mind only the more sublime the more numerous the dangers to which they are exposed”** – Here Kant is doing exactly what we state: moralizing war, presenting it as a school of virtue, as an occasion for greatness of soul. The peoples who apparently “carry on” the war are not heroic collective subjects; they are populations that suffer, that pay the costs, that bury their dead. And those who effectively “carry it on” in reality—the rulers who decide it—are usually very far from the front, in safe places, contemplating the spectacle from a distance.

**“A prolonged peace favors the predominance of a mere commercial spirit, and with it a debasing self-interest, cowardice, and effeminacy”** – This statement is simply abject. Peace would then be a state of degradation, and war a state of moral elevation. It is the complete inversion of any humanist ethics. What about the countries that have had centuries of peace and have reached the highest levels of human development, culture, and well-being? Are they peoples “degraded” by “base selfishness”? On the contrary, the peoples of the so-called Third World, who have suffered decades of foreign cultural domination, wars and violence, extermination of native peoples: are they “sublime” because of it?

#### V.5.1. The classical tradition and the condemnation of war

Let us imagine a question that, perhaps, Socrates could have asked the youth of Athens, exhibiting for eternity the fundamental aporia of all polytheism: How can one be devoted to Pallas Athena and at the same time to Ares? Let us remember that Athena was the goddess of wisdom, of defensive strategy, of civilization, of justice; Ares, on the other hand, was the god of brutal war, of massacre, of senseless destruction. Attempting to reconcile them is impossible. There never were, nor are there, nor will there be, just wars.

Kant, in attempting to moralize war, claims that war can be “sublime” if it is done “with order.” But war does not admit this distinction. As history has shown, “just” or “clean” wars are always the propaganda of the countries that attack first to justify themselves.

<sup>42</sup> „Selbst der Krieg, wenn er mit Ordnung und Heiligachtung der bürgerlicher Rechte geführt wird, hat etwas Erhabenes an sich, und macht zugleich die Denkungsart des Volks, welches ihn auf diese Art führt, nur um desto erhabener, je mehreren Gefahren es ausgesetzt war, und sich mutig darunter hat behaupten können: da hingegen ein langer Frieden den bloßen Handlungsgeist, mit ihm aber den niedrigen Eigennutz, Feigheit und Weichlichkeit herrschend zu machen, und die Denkungsart des Volks zu erniedrigen pflegt.“

Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der Urteilkraft*, op.ci§28, p. 187.

### V.5.2. War from the “safe place”

There is a biographical detail that should not be forgotten: Although Kant's hometown, Königsberg, capital of East Prussia, was heavily militarized, the philosopher never participated in an army and never experienced a real war. In an environment of parades, barracks, and uniforms, Kant grew up, was educated, and developed the essence of his critical philosophy. The fourth child of a family of saddlemaker artisans, on both his father's and mother's sides, by the age of 16 he was already a university student at one of the city's four universities, where he studied natural sciences, mathematics, philosophy, and theology. His relationship with armed conflicts was only ideal: a sympathizer of Napoleon's campaigns and the American Civil War, he wrote what we have just analyzed without leaving his “safe place” as a spectator, as a philosopher who can afford to theorize about a war he has not suffered.

This discrepancy between experience and theory is what makes the apology for horror possible. Whoever has seen war up close cannot speak of its “sublimity.” Whoever has lost a child in battle cannot admire the “way of thinking” of the people who wage it. Whoever has seen a refugee camp cannot despise peace as “base selfishness.”

### V.5.3. The just war: the ever-current lie of unscrupulous politicians

Since Kant wrote these lines, history has only confirmed the danger of his theory. Many among the men of power—from President George Bush invoking the doctrine of the “just war” against terrorism to the bombing of the girls' school in Iran just a few weeks ago—have tried to make us believe the same lie: *that war can be moral, that it can be sublime, that it can be compatible with human rights.*

And the tragedy is that a thinker of Kant's stature provides arguments for these discourses. His philosophical authority is used to legitimize the abominable: organized violence, the death of innocents, the destruction of peoples. *Not that Kant is directly responsible, but his theory offers a conceptual frame that the powerful can use to dress their crimes in ethical garb, to justify, invoking the name of the wise, the atrocities they commit.*

But this happens when one attempts to moralize what is not moralizable. Aesthetics has nothing to do with morality. Art is not an instrument of ethical perfection nor a preparation for civic virtue. Art is, simply, the sphere of human experience where the imagination plays freely, where meaning is produced without a concept, where beauty and vertigo exist for themselves.

## CONCLUSION

The path traveled throughout this article has allowed me to verify, in the terrain of the sublime, what I had already diagnosed in the analysis of the beautiful: the Critique of Judgment is a heuristic construction that instrumentalizes aesthetics, a gigantic fiction of reason at the service of the unity of the system, but radically useless—if not harmful—for understanding creation and real artistic experience.

Let us remember the passage from §22 with which I closed my first article. This is the only moment in the Critique of Judgment where Kant abandons his usual peremptory tone to ask himself about the nature, constitutive or regulative, of the aesthetic experience:

“This indeterminate norm of a common sense is actually presupposed by us; as is shown by our claim to lay down judgments of taste. Is there in fact such a common sense as a constitutive principle of the possibility of experience, or is there a still higher principle of reason which only makes it a regulative principle for us first to produce a common sense in ourselves for higher purposes? Is taste, therefore, a natural and original faculty, or is it only the idea of one yet to be acquired, an artificial one, so that a judgment of taste, with its expectation of a universal assent, would in fact be only a requirement of reason for producing such an agreement in the mode of sensing, and does the 'ought' (das Sollen), i.e., the objective necessity of the coincidence of the feeling of everyone with that of each, signify only the possibility of arriving at this agreement, and the judgment of taste only provide an example of the application of this principle?”<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> „Diese unbestimmte Norm eines Gemeinsinns wird von uns wirklich vorausgesetzt: das beweist unsere Anmaßung, Geschmackurteile zu fällen. Ob es in der Tat einen solchen Gemeinsinn, als konstitutives Prinzip der Möglichkeit der Erfahrung gebe, oder ein noch höheres Prinzip der Vernunft es uns nur zum regulativen Prinzip mache, allererst einen Gemeinsinn zu höheren Zwecken in uns hervorzubringen; ob also Geschmack ein ursprüngliches und natürliches, oder nur die Idee von einem noch zu erwerbenden und künstlichen Vermögen sei, so das ein Geschmackurteil, mit seiner Zumutung einer allgemeiner Beistimmung, in der Tat nur eine Vernunftforderung sei, eine solche Einhelligkeit der Sinnesart hervorzubringen, und das Sollen, d. i. die objektive Notwendigkeit des Zusammenfließens des Gefühls von jedermann mit jedes seinem besonderen, nur die Möglichkeit, hierin einträchtig zu werden, bedeute, und das Geschmacksurteil nur von Anwendung dieses Prinzips ein Beispiel aufstelle [...]“

This questioning, raised at the end of Book I of the *Analytic of the Aesthetic*, opens the decisive question that should have guided the entire investigation from the beginning: are we dealing with an aesthetics of an ontological character, founded on constitutive principles of experience, or rather with a heuristic construction, a conceptual scaffolding that reason gives itself to orient itself in the territory of the sensible? The abundance of internal contradictions, of statements introduced without demonstration, of peremptory reasoning that does not explain its foundations, of apparent justifications that in reality only serve the function of welding the pieces of the discourse together—all this invites us to think that the *Critique of Judgment* belongs to this second genre. It is plausible to maintain that Kant's *third Critique* is only a regulative fiction that reason offers itself to give coherence to its system, not a true analysis of the constitutive principles of aesthetic experience. However, at no time does Kant relativize the status of his statements, except in the quote indicated above. Neither when he analyzes, first, the four moments of beauty, nor when he later develops the *Analytic of the sublime*, does the tone cease to be peremptory, apodictic: what is merely a set of convictions, of suppositions, of skillfully articulated opinions is presented as demonstrated truth. Only in that final passage of Book I, almost as a slip, does doubt appear, which should have been the honest and humble starting point of the entire *Aesthetics*.

The *Critique of Judgment* would then be a construction of reason not admitted as such, unlike the *Critique of Practical Reason* where reason is indeed recognized as a founder:

“The concept of freedom, insofar as its reality is proved by an apodictic law of practical reason, constitutes the keystone of the whole structure of a system of pure reason, even of speculative reason; and all other concepts (those of God and immortality), which, as mere ideas, remain without support in the latter, now attach themselves to this concept, and by it obtain consistency and objective reality, that is to say, their possibility is proved by the fact that freedom is real, for this idea reveals itself through the moral law.”<sup>44</sup>

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, on the contrary, Kant banishes reason from knowledge in an unappealable manner: “The concepts of reason are, as has been said, mere ideas, and certainly have no object in any experience; but they do not on that account designate fabricated objects, which are at the same time assumed to be possible. They are thought only problematically, in order to found upon them (as heuristic fictions) regulative principles of the systematic use of the understanding in the field of experience. If we depart from this, they are mere creatures of thought, the possibility of which is not demonstrable, and which therefore cannot be employed as a foundation for the explanation of actual phenomena by means of an hypothesis.”<sup>45</sup>

The fictions of reason would have a legitimate use when employed as regulative principles, as orientations for the understanding in its journey through experience. But they can in no way be taken as constitutive principles, as real foundations of phenomena. If we apply this lesson to the *Critique of Judgment*, if we accept the hypothesis that its aesthetics is precisely one of those heuristic constructions that reason permits itself, then the consequence is clear: nothing affirmed therein has the character of necessity. We can read it, discuss it, even admire its architecture, but we are not obliged to accept its conclusions as if they were demonstrated truths. They are fictions that reason tells itself and tells us, to weld the two territories of its empire, the official one (*Critique of Practical Reason*) and the unadmitted one (*Critique of Judgment*).

---

Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, *op.cit.*, §22, p. 159.

<sup>44</sup> „Der Begriff der Freiheit, so fern dessen Realität durch ein apodiktisches Gesetz der praktischen Vernunft bewiesen ist, macht nun den Schlußstein von dem ganzen Gebäude eines Systems der reinen, selbst der spekulativen, Vernunft aus, und alle anderen Begriffe (die von Gott und Unsterblichkeit), welche, als bloße Ideen, in dieser ohne Haltung bleiben, schließen sich nun an ihn an, und bekommen mit ihm und durch ihn Bestand und objektive Realität, d.i. die Möglichkeit derselben wird dadurch bewiesen, daß Freiheit wirklich ist; denn diese Idee offenbaret sich durchs moralische Gesetz.“

Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, Prologue, Forword I, online in [https://dn710708.ca.archive.org/0/items/kritikderreinen00imma\\_234/kritikderreinen00imma\\_234.pdf](https://dn710708.ca.archive.org/0/items/kritikderreinen00imma_234/kritikderreinen00imma_234.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> „Die Vernunftbegriffe sind, wie gesagt, bloße Ideen und haben freilich keinen Gegenstand in irgend eine Erfahrung, aber bezeichnen darum doch nicht gedichtete 20 und zugleich dabei für möglich angenommene Gegenstände. Sie sind bloß problematisch gedacht, um in Beziehung auf sie (als heuristische Fiktionen) regulative Prinzipien des systematischen Verstandesgebrauchs im Felde der Erfahrung zu gründen. Geht man davon ab, so sind es bloße Gedankendinge, deren Möglichkeit nicht erweislich ist, und die daher auch nicht der Erklärung wirklicher Erscheinungen durch eine Hypothese zum Grunde gelegt werden können.“

Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, [A 771] [B799], online in <https://archive.org/details/kritikderreinen019kant/page/642/mode/2up>

Now, after having traversed the twists and turns of the sublime, we can add one more layer to this conclusion. Because what we have found in the Kantian treatment of the sublime is, in addition to a heuristic construction, an exemplary harangue that attempts to lead aesthetics into the territory of morality, but this time without the categorical imperative to serve as a guide.

The absolute autonomy of the aesthetic over the logical is what Kant, with his constant moralization, with his imperious need to cement the edifice of his critical philosophy, could not and was not able to recognize.

I conclude by establishing the hypothesis that the *Critique of Judgment* is, ultimately, the sleep of Reason, which sneaks into the domain of the sensible to domesticate it, to force it, to put it at the service of ends that are completely alien to it. And this is inadmissible for the simple reason that aesthetics is not a preparation for morality. It is not a break from civic obligations. It is not a symbol of freedom nor a path toward the supersensible. In art, the essential and the unexpected coexist to make way for the expression of life, graceful and young, and most of the time inexplicable...

#### CITED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- a. BARBERY Stéphane, « L'art obscur », in *L'Imagination chez Kant*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2004.
- b. BORGES Jorge Luis, *The Aleph*, Emecé Editores, 1996.
- c. HEGEL G. W. F., *Lecciones sobre la estética*, Introduction, Spanish translation and notes by Alfredo Brotons Muñoz, Akal, Madrid, 2007 for the Spanish translation.
- d. HEIDEGGER Martin, *Kant et le problème de la Métaphysique*, French translation by A. de Waelhens and W. Biemel, Gallimard, 1953 for the French translation
- e. KANT Immanuel *Kritik der Urteilkraft*, Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft, herausgegeben von Wilhelm Weischedel, 1974.
2. ———, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, online in [https://dn710708.ca.archive.org/0/items/kritikderreinenv00imma\\_234/kritikderreinenv00imma\\_234.pdf](https://dn710708.ca.archive.org/0/items/kritikderreinenv00imma_234/kritikderreinenv00imma_234.pdf)
3. ———, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, first edition (1781), online in
4. <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/6342/pg6342.html>
5. ———, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, second edition (1787) online in <https://archive.org/details/kritikderreinenv19kant/page/642/mode/2up>
- a. MATHERNE Samantha, "Imagination and the Sublime", in *Seeing More: Kant's Theory of Imagination*, Oxford University Press, 2024.
- b. MANDOLINI Ricardo "¿Monstruosidades trascendentales?", in *Itamar, revista de investigación musical: territorios para el arte de la universidad de Valencia*, N° 11, 2025, online in <https://turia.uv.es/index.php/ITAMAR/issue/current>
- c. TILLERIA AQUEVEQUE Leopoldo, "Heidegger lector de Kant", *Revista Veritas*, n.º 43, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, 2018.

#### CONSULTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BAUMGARTEN Alexander Gottlieb, *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus* (1735), §CXVI, bilingual edition: *Reflexiones filosóficas acerca de la poesía*, trans. José A. Míguez, Aguilar, Buenos Aires, 1973.
- , *Aesthetica* (Frankfurt a.O.: Kleyb, 1750), §1. Facsimile edition: Olms, Hildesheim, 1970.
- KANT Immanuel, *Crítica de la Razón Pura*, translation to Spanish, notes and introduction by Mario Caimi, Colihue Clásica, Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, 2022 for the Spanish translation.
- , *Crítica de la Razón Práctica*, translation to Spanish by E. Miñana y Villagrasa and Manuel García Morente, Espasa Calpe (Austral), third edition, 1984 for the Spanish translation.
- , *Crítica del Juicio*, edition and translation to Spanish by Manuel García Morente, Espasa-Calpe, Madrid, 1977–2007 for the Spanish translation.
- , *Critique de la raison pure*, translation to French by Alain Renaut, Flammarion, 2001.
- , *Critique de la faculté de juger*, translation to French by Alexis Philonenko, Librairie Philosophique Vrin, Paris, 1993.