

Should we desublimatize the Kantian sublime? Some remarks on Lyotard and Deleuze readers of the *Analytic of the Sublime*

Alessandra Campo
University of L'Aquila

Abstract

This paper aims to desublimatize the Kantian sublime by tempering the enthusiasm with which some French philosophers have woven its praise. Contrary to what Lyotard and Deleuze argue in their works, in the *Analytic of the Sublime* Kant does not go beyond himself, nor it is hard to set up a philosophy of the subject after reading these pages. Sublime, for these two clever readers of Kant, is any excessive use of the faculties. But Kant is less interested in excess than in its regulation. Thus, while harmonising with other 80-90s French readings of the Kantian sublime, the faith placed by Lyotard and Deleuze in its potentialities seems unfounded. It is fuelled by a lack of consideration of what happens in the second stage of this complex feeling. Unlike the encounter with the moral law introduced as a 'Fact of Reason' in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, in the *Analytic of the Sublime* the presentation of the idea does not occur at the expense of the ego but in support of it. And the ego thus elevated is not only an ego 'super', but a (Freudian) Super-ego.

Keywords: sublime, Kant, Lyotard, Deleuze, fact of reason

Introduction

In this essay we would like to start what could be defined, with an icastic formula, 'the desublimation of the Kantian sublime': a vast and complex process articulated in three steps corresponding to the three operations necessary to bring it to completion. (1) The attenuation, by means of a return to the Kantian text, of the enthusiasm with which some of the most brilliant post-war French philosophers wove its praise; (2) The reconsideration of the 'negative' pleasure and of the subject that experiences, namely, of what occurs during the second

stage of this articulated feeling. Finally, (3) a reversal of course in the philosophical investigation of the sublime – a course which, according to Monk, is oriented towards Kant as towards an “unconscious goal” (Monk 1960, 10) – in favour of that anti-humanism conveyed by Burke’s *Inquiry* of 1757.¹ We have, therefore, *Burke after Kant* (Sertoli 1986), or the sublime as sensation (*Empfindung*) after the sublime as feeling-judgment (*Gefühl*)².

However, in what follows, it will already be a substantial step if we manage to show the necessity of a desublimation. For lack of space, we cannot fully develop our proposal here. We will rather concentrate on the first step of the desublimation; we will reserve the analysis of the subsequent steps to subsequent papers. We shall do so with particular regard to Lyotard and Deleuze’s reading of Kant’s *Analytic of the Sublime* because, as a feeling of the soul concerning only the ideas of reason, the Kantian sublime does not play the role that Lyotard and Deleuze assign to it in their own philosophies. Contrary to what both claim, Kant does not reach beyond himself by including the sublime in the examination of the aesthetic judgement³. And if it is not even hard to set up a subject-centred philosophy after meditating on the pages of the thrilling appendix to the *Theory of Taste* – Lyotard’s thesis – it is because, in dealing with the sublime, Kant is less interested in the crisis of the imagination – Deleuze’s point – than in its resolution, less in the encounter of thought with its ‘outside’ or ‘other’ than in the possibility of endowing the sensible subject with a supersensible armour.

According to both Lyotard and Deleuze, ‘sublime’ is any excessive use of faculties, but Kant is more attracted by their regulation than in their excess, more by what the soul (*Gemüt*) can glimpse in the mathematical sublime through the imagination’s suffering than by imagination’s suffering itself; more by the power of reason than in the omnipotence, which is only apparent after all, of dynamically sublime nature. Therefore, the faith placed by Lyotard and Deleuze in the ‘magnificent and progressive fates’ – to quote the famous verse of Leopardi’s *Broom* – of the Kantian sublime is unfounded, although it is in line with other French readings of it (Nancy’s,

Richir's, Lacoue-Labarthe's etc). The faith is unfounded because it is fuelled by a lack of consideration of the elevation of the soul that takes place in the second stage of the sublime. Kant, it is true, does not disregard the much celebrated vertigo which strikes the subject in the first stage, but he subsumes it within a movement that, in the end, reaffirms, and indeed exalts, the 'I' which is suddenly filled with dizziness.

Unlike what happens in the encounter with the moral law which, in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant introduces as a 'Fact of Reason', in the sublime, reason does not become sensible at the expense of the ego's narcissism but in support of it⁴. And the self-preservation that reason assures to the indigent sensible subject is "of quite another kind" (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 28; 5:261, 145) from the one provided by his condition as a natural entity. Facing an object that, surpassing human limits both in size and power, threatens to annihilate the subject, the Kantian ego reacts by returning to itself, but a self which is different from the one that tests its own limits, both cognitive and physical. According to Alenka Zupančič (Zupančič 2000, ch.7), the thus reassured Ego is not only a 'super' instance of the Ego but an authentic super-Ego (*über-Ich*): the instance that, in Freudian-Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, embodies a merely imaginary version of the law and conveys an aestheticisation of the self whose purpose is to legitimise the superiority of the Ego over the unconscious or, as it is in Kant's *Analytic of the Sublime*, of the human being over nature.

Sublime, for Kant, is not nature but humanity, humanity as far as its rationality and morality are concerned. Yet, the transcendence of reason and morality over nature is indistinguishable from tyranny. In the sublime, the subject only harmonises with a higher good through the violence that this good exerts on nature both within us and outside us. In fact, the soul assesses even the immensity of nature as small and judges even its most vigorous force as impotent, but only in relation to moral reason as a super-sensible faculty that stands out like a colossus against both the immeasurability of nature (the mathematical sublime) and its irresistible power (the dynamic sublime). Baldine Saint Girons, in this regard, rightly speaks of "sacrilège" (Saint-Girons 1993, 383). Why do Lyotard and

Deleuze not do likewise? How can this assessment not condition their, albeit shrewd, analyses of the Kantian sublime? And how can they use it to dethrone the ego-syntonic subject⁵ if the Kantian sublime is exactly what makes the subject, to quote Spinoza, an ‘imperium in imperio’?

For Kant, the sublime is the feeling through which our independence in relation to nature and our extraordinary destination can be grasped for an instant. Thus, insofar as it is “denatured” (Lyotard 1994, 53), the aesthetics of the sublime is also, radically, anti-ecological⁶. The sublime, to use the language of a certain philosophical anthropology, is the human being’s feeling of his exceptional nature: neither the mark of our ontological finitude (Lyotard’s claim), nor the emotion with which we cross the hinges of the empirical use of the faculties (Deleuze’s thesis), but the germ of a certain, insidious, cultural imperialism. How, then, could Lyotard and Deleuze resort to it to affirm, respectively, human transience and the anarchy of the faculties? How could the constant reference, almost a narrative⁷, that Kant makes of humans’ special destination as moral creatures go unnoticed in their investigations? Could it be that anthropocentrism lurks in the folds of two philosophies that promise to demolish it?

We will not be able to answer all these questions in the remainder of this work. We will limit ourselves to drawing attention to the often forgotten letter of the Kantian text⁸. A comparison between the latter and a brief exposition of Lyotard’s and Deleuze’s positions makes evident, in our eyes, the gap between their interpretation of the *Analytic of the Sublime* and Kant’s theorisation. The recourse to psychoanalytic conceptuality effectively highlights this gap, just as it effectively helps to remodel the old psychology of the faculties – an eighteenth-century arsenal strangely kept alive by both the twentieth-century French authors – in the more agile terms of the Freudian topic. This, we believe, is particularly useful in (1) illuminating the enunciation of certain decisive Kantian utterances without lapsing into psychologism; (2) clarifying the nature of reason that “recognises no other determinate measure, valid for everyone and inalterable, than the absolute whole” (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 27; 5: 257, 140); (3)

understanding why “the vertiginous concept of the *Erhabene*, in the *Critique of Judgement*, is nothing but the Burke’s sublime-terrible united with the attempt to exorcise it” (Tagliabue 1980, 172, our trans.).

1. Collective hangover

By rereading Kant’s *Analytic of the Sublime* today, one suspects that the protagonists of the ‘sublime renaissance’ did not read it in depth and that the cult they reserved for the Kantian sublime was the result, if not of actual ignorance – a blasphemous hypothesis even if only murmured – then at least of a misunderstanding or of a biased judgement. From Lyotard to Deleuze, from Lacoue-Labarthe to Nancy, via Escoubas, Richir and many others⁹, there is nothing but praise for the sublime. And, also if it is not only the Kantian sublime that is praised, the specificity of Kant’s critical-transcendental treatment of this complex feeling does not seem to have hindered the practices of its beatification (even in light of the French works, the best way to define sublime seems to be the divine tautology: ‘the sublime is sublime’). No one has discerned in the Kantian sublime a deviation or irregularity from the canon that the most brilliant minds of post-war France intended to establish, and only rarely has adequate attention been paid to the fact that the Kantian sublime is something very precise that can hardly be jumbled together with other things.

Meditating on these works, one is struck both by how such heterogeneous and acute philosophers have been uniformly hypnotised, almost bewitched, by the Kantian sublime – it is in this sense that we speak of a ‘hangover’¹⁰ – and by how the sublime itself has been able to function as the lowest common denominator of different fields of experience and philosophical positions that are generally incommensurable. In France, between the 1970s and the 1990s, ‘sublime’ became an umbrella term with which to explain a multiplicity of phenomena without worrying too much about maintaining their heterogeneity. Then, the famous ‘tout est dit’ with which La Bruyère begins his *Caractères* could be extended with full rights to the all of these works, because everything and its contrary is said about the sublime, even the Kantian one.

As the *Stimmung*, at the same time, of an irreducible otherness and sameness, and as the trademark, at the same time, of both the Heideggerian ontological difference and of the Deleuzian difference within the “being of the sensible” (Deleuze 1995, 75; 87; 161-163; 263; 295), the sublime was used in those years to demonstrate both the absolutely equivocal character of the real as well as its absolutely univocal character, the wondrous transcendence of being as well as its equally wondrous immanence. As the pure experience of the possible that inaugurates the subject and, at the same time, as the pure experience of the necessary that traumatises the subject by showing it the illusory nature of freedom, the sublime is said to both ‘open’ and ‘close’, to both liberate and constrain, to both ‘unveil’ and ‘veil’ the infinite. The givenness that characterises it has been described as both primary and secondary, because the sublime, it has been argued, is both an event and a state, both an act and a fact, both a cause and an effect¹¹. It is difficult, therefore, to orient oneself; it is impossible to distinguish between sublime’s right and left, or between the sublime’s high and low. The ambivalence of this feeling, already so ambivalent in itself given that, in the sublime, the soul is “is not merely attracted by the object, but is also always reciprocally repelled by it” (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 23; 5: 245, 129) – the same held for the ‘sacred’ addressed a few decades earlier by the College of Sociology – only increases.

Yet, there is one thesis that the protagonists of the renaissance share: the sublime unleashes the essence of the postmodern ethical, aesthetic and metaphysical attitude. With the consequence that what Kant reserved to the narrow place of an appendix in his *Critique of Judgement* could be used to designate every place in the contemporary world: the place of man in relation to God, of man among other men, of thought in relation to its other, of art in society, of art in art itself and, last but not least, of aesthetics in philosophy. For the most effervescent minds of post-war France, the sublime is the name of a question: that of sensible presentation. Therefore, if the sublime has been employed so easily to baptise so many other questions, it is to the extent that sensible presentation has been interpreted as equivalent to sensible existence *tout court* while

the latter has come to coincide with our frequentation of the world¹². “Nous ne revenons pas au sublime – goes the motto of the renaissance – nous en provenons” (Nancy, in Courtine 1988, 5). And although there are differences between the return to the sublime of Deleuze, Lyotard, Nancy, Richir etc., what strikes the attention of us postmodernists are, above all, the analogies.

Passion mixed with terror and astonishment, pain doubled in joy, vital force that pushes sensibility to its insensible limits are, in fact, just some of the shared expressions used in France to describe the moods associated with the sublime: a post- or hyper-modern feeling because of its criticality, conflict and disharmony¹³. To the naive and classical faith placed in the agreement between subject and nature, the sublime replaces the lucid awareness of their incompatible contrast. Its aesthetics is negative, paradoxical. No promise of any sort of happy ending is enshrined in it. The sublime does not rescue us; the transcendental kinesthesia that takes place in it is not eschatological. As a tragic feeling, it follows the Nietzschean revelation of God’s death in attacking the lethargic life of the Cartesian *ego cogito*. The superior receptivity that characterises it, and that Kant qualifies as a specific “receptivity to Ideas” (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 29; 5: 265, 148), is the condition of an intimate apocalypse that the ego does not survive. The sublime prefers fracture to continuity; dissimilarity and formlessness to form, chaos to order, indifference to complicity. Its power is effusive. Its force is violent, because if the sublime is an experience – its French admirers sing in chorus – it is the experience of the failure of experience.

2. Human limit

The limit, in the sublime, is its main protagonist: the limit of imagination and sensibility for Kant, but also the limit of the presentable, the figurable and the thinkable for his transalpine readers. In a word: the limit of the human being. But, there is no sublime, if the sublime exists, that does not overcome the limit. Tension, spasm, crisis are the terms that Lyotard and Deleuze most willingly associate with the sublime to emphasise that, by including this feeling in his last *Critique*,

Kant has, in some way, violated his own rules. Deleuze is enthusiastic about this transgression: the *Critique of Judgement* is the orgy of the faculties, the party that suspends the profane order imposed by the vile intellect on the wild imagination. Kant, maybe because he is close to death, allows himself the most unbridled freedom, which is, first and foremost, the freedom he himself granted to the *Einbildungskraft*.

Productive, in the 1990s, the imagination explodes. Genius expands its flames with its art and the sublime drags it to its utmost, to where, feeling everywhere surpassed, “the imagination surpasses itself” (Deleuze 2000a, 35, our trans.) with a leap into the supersensible unknown. The case of the faculty of the imagination in connection with the sublime, according to Deleuze, is the only case in which “Kant considers a faculty liberated from the form of a common sense and discovers for it a truly legitimate transcendent exercise” (Deleuze 1995, 168). Normally, criticism opts for the empirical use of faculties, but with the sublime,

the imagination is forced or constrained to confront its own limit, its *phantasteon*, its maximum which is equally the unimaginable, the unformed or the deformed in nature (*Critique of Judgment*, s. 26). Moreover, it transmits this constraint to thought itself, which in turn is forced to think the super-sensible as foundation of both nature and the faculty of thought: thought and imagination here enter into an essential discordance, a reciprocal violence which conditions a new type of accord (s. 27). As a result, in the case of the sublime, the recognition model and the form of common sense are found wanting in favour of a quite different conception of thought (s. 29) (*ibidem*).

For both Lyotard and Deleuze, the prize for the unrestrained exercise of the faculties is the supersensible: the “horizon of horizons” (Lyotard 1994, 215); the sea within which each faculty, as a single river of thought, spills out as soon as it makes an exorbitant use of itself. Indeed, in the critical system “the unconditioned of the conditions of thought in each of its capacities is always deferred” (Lyotard 1994, 214). In each of its domains, reflection cannot determine by its own resources the absolutes on which these same resources depend. “The unconditioned of knowledge cannot be known. The absolute law of the faculty of desire cannot be desired. The supersensible

principle that founds the demand for the universal communication of taste is not the object of an aesthetic pleasure” (*ibidem*).

No faculty can think its limit with its own means. Yet, the fact that each one can attempt to think it proves that the supersensible is within it. The effort of each faculty to transcend its limit is the *ratio cognoscendi* of the presence of the supersensible (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 57; 5: 339-341, 215-216) and the presence of the supersensible, in turn, is the *ratio essendi* of faculties’ effort to make it sensible. Like an ether, the supersensible is always present as the transcendental margin of the faculties that commutes every impasse into a passage. Deleuze argues that the supersensible is the soul itself: a plane of immanence (Deleuze 2000a, 46) like an absolute surface that cannot be glossed over at a sovereign distance. The supersensible is the limit of each limit-idea, and Kant, therefore, uses it to unify the faculties. But, the unification, for Deleuze, is not transcendent with respect to that which is unified. In their higher use, the faculties do not leave the world; instead they grasp “that in the world which concerns it exclusively and brings it into the world” (Deleuze 1995, 143).

Supersensible, then, is both the edge and the overflow: that which makes all modes of thinking compossible by the fact that they all think excessively. As soon as a faculty reaches its point of dyspnoea, namely its proper *hybris*, it is gripped by its own intrinsic inconsistency: an unthinkable threshold that every power of thought approaches in its effort to legitimise itself through the resolution of its own individual antinomy. Like a *kerigma* the supersensible compels sensibility to feel, imagination to imagine, memory to remember and thought to think, but to feel the insensible, to imagine the unimaginable, to remember the immemorial and to think the unthought. The supersensible or the ‘being of the sensible’, that which Deleuze thinks as an intensive ground (Deleuze 1995, 43; 68; 258-263), becomes sensible as an impossibility, but the impossible, for him as for Lyotard, is the point at which the impotence of each faculty reverses itself into its own idiosyncratic necessity and recognises itself for what it is.

Now, the transcendent use of faculties, for both Lyotard and Deleuze, is a sublime use, and sublime insofar as it is reflective. Sublime, in other words, is the very faculty or power of reflection: an exercise that commits each faculty to its specific boundary. As soon as said boundary is reached, each faculty ceases, at once, to be what it is in order to become, an instant later – in a momentary release following the accumulation of tension – precisely the power that it is. When this happens, each faculty enters into unison with the others thanks to the inconsistency which each one experiences ‘unlimiting’ itself. And this is the reason for which, ultimately, “one must think excessively, until the discordance” (Deleuze 2000a, 300, our trans.). Only at their limit do the faculties hear the voice of the ‘new type of accord’, the very one presupposed by common sense. At the point where they cannot go further, faculties become attuned because the limit is nothing but the very tendency of the limit to exhaust itself.

3. Divine Allegory

Thanks to the sublime, every faculty meets its limit and achieves its determination. At the extreme point of its immensity, each one falls prey to a violence that reveals its proper ‘passion’. This revelation is the very faculty or power of judgement (*Urteilkraft*) as a meta-capacity: the subjective condition of all judgements. Lyotard, however, is more cautious than Deleuze when it comes to evaluating it. He presents himself as a reader of the *Analytic of the Sublime* rather than a fan of it. Nevertheless, he shares with Deleuze the thesis that it is a struggle to set up a philosophy of the subject after reading Kantian *Analytic of the Sublime*. In the *Third Critique*, the subject is caught in *statu nascendi* and has, at most, the thickness of news bulletin: that which sensation conveys to thought regarding its state.

When it is connected to feeling, sensation is no longer a representation of an external *quid* (*Empfindung*), but a feeling (*Gefühl*): it concerns information about the subject regarding its own condition. Lyotard says that judgement-feeling is reflective insofar as it is *tautoegorical*¹⁴, because the pleasure or displeasure that it judges as feeling is, at one and the same

time, a felt state of the soul and the information the soul gathers, in the form of a judgement, about its state. Indeed, for reflective thought, to be informed of its state is to feel it, to be affected by it. And feeling, for this reason, is *sensus sui*: the sign of itself for itself. *Tautogory* means perfect coincidence of feeler and felt, active and passive, law and content. The state of pleasure or displeasure is the principle by which this same state is judged, but the circularity here is not vicious. It sheds light on a minimal, barely sketched subject: a euphonic (pleasurable) or cacophonic (displeasurable) note.

When reflective judgement is at stake, Lyotard observes, Kant rarely employs the noun ‘subject’. He prefers the adjective or adverb, the subject being ‘only’ a certain nuance – similar to musical note or tone – that affects thought while it is thinking something, and that affects it incessantly. Sensation is always present, although this does not mean that it is permanent in the same way as a substratum. Sensation is present in the sense that it accompanies thought in all its acts like a shadow or an echo, allowing it to orient itself on the scale of the different affective tints in which it finds itself. Lyotard, who does not distinguish sensation from feeling and who, besides, often uses the former term to describe the latter, proposes to look at feeling as the immediate judgement that thought has of itself: a domesticising judgement that synthesises the act that is being performed on the occurrence of an object with the affection that this same act procures.

Deprived of cognitive finality, sensation is the feeling of the soul, because the affection is no longer the action of the extrasensible object on sensibility, namely it is no longer hetero-affection as it was in the *Transcendental Aesthetics*, but self-affection: the inner repercussion of thought’s action on itself. Lyotard concludes from this that, in the singularity of its occurrence, “aesthetic feeling is pure subjective thinking or reflective judgment itself” (Lyotard 1994, 25) because, in the *Third Critique*, ‘aesthetic’ is what is judged as the state of thought, through an inner sensation. The recurrence of the latter in every instance of thought means that thought knows, in the sense that it feels, what its state is in each moment, and this even when it relates to the objects of that limitless field

that is the supersensible. Even the sublime, in fact, is a state registered by the subject: a state originally painful because it is concomitant with the checkmate of the imagination engaged in presenting the unrepresentable; in presenting, as Lyotard admirably puts it, “that there is something unrepresentable” (Lyotard 1997, 241).

However, what Kant finds sublime in the sublime is not the catastrophe of recognition on which Deleuze so insists (Deleuze 2004, 110 ff.). The sublime of the sublime, for Kant, is not the fact of coming “to present an object which cannot be presented” (Lyotard 1994, 141). Kant is less interested in the dissolution of schematism than in what it reveals, because the sublime, for him, is allegorical, not *tautoegorical*; or better: the sublime is the allegorical in every allegory, the metaphorical in every metaphor. The movement that characterises it coincides with the coming to an end of one experience and the ready beginning of another; but it is a shifting movement – hence its allegorical nature – thanks to which the subject lands elsewhere by skilfully displacing the sensible ‘now’ (sensibility, once again in *Anthropology*, is evil). Therefore, the last word of the Kantian sublime is neither ‘rupture’ nor ‘chaos’ nor ‘formlessness’. The last word of the Kantian sublime is *Bestimmung*, a term that could be translated as ‘determination’ but which all translators of the *Third Critique* unanimously render as ‘destination’¹⁵.

In this, they are faithful to Kant’s interest in this feeling, which is the same as that nurtured by reason for the potlatch of the sensible datum: “to make the sign of the good arise from the cinders of the beautiful” (Lyotard 1994, 188). For Kant, in other terms, destroying is always functional to constructing, as well as decomposing is always functional to recomposing. So, the festive time of the imagination is never a free time. The festive time is employed, and employed promptly. The *Einbildungskraft* is destined for work, or commitment, “the genuine property of human morality” (Kant 2000, *KDU* I, II; 5: 269, 151), from the very beginning of the *Analytic of the Sublime* and, to some extent, also of criticism. But what is this commitment?

4. Adequate inadequacy

By excluding the monstrous¹⁶ from the analysis of the sublime, Kant declares that he is already starting with the terrible rather than the terrifying, because one may have critique, even critique of judgement, only if the terrifying – in the triple form of the merely felt (*Critique of Pure Reason*), the blindly coveted (*Critique of Practical Reason*) and the chaotically imagined (*Critique of Judgement*) – is banished. There is critique, in short, only after domestication¹⁷ at a distance: the same distance that, in the dynamic sublime, is introduced as a necessary clause for the sublime to be experienced before the omnipotence of nature. Yet the examples of the mathematical sublime, of St Peter and of the Pyramids, also presuppose distance. Kant does not draw them from his own experience, because he has never visited them. Then, it will be necessary, Derrida urges, to come to terms with this. “Does not the distance required for the experience of the sublime open up perception to the space of narrative?” (Derrida 1987, 142).

For Kant, the sublime is a feeling of the soul that “cannot be contained in any sensible form, but concerns only ideas of reason, which, though no presentation adequate to them is possible, are provoked and called to mind precisely by this inadequacy, which does allow of sensible presentation” (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 23; 5: 245, 129). The sublime, in fact, consists in the inadequacy of nature in relation to the ideas of reason, and consequently it presupposes these ideas (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 28; 5: 264, 147). However, nature does not contribute to the sublime with its forms, but only when it allows greatness and strength to appear, only, one might translate, when it is phallic¹⁸. What awakens the Ideas is nature in its occasional infinity of magnitude and of power together with the finiteness experienced by the subject that encounters it, namely, nature as phenomenon: “the mere presentation of a nature in itself (which reason has in the idea)” (Kant 2000, *KDU* I, II; 5: 268, 151).

Kantian sublime is “a supersensible state of mind” (Clewis 2009, 68). In the mathematical sublime this state is reawakened by the encounter with “that which is absolutely

great” (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 25; 5: 248, 131). Yet, ‘absolutely great’ is a syntactically incorrect expression for what is properly unquantifiable. Kant calls ‘magnitude’ the absolutely great, that which is no longer quantity. But,

why can magnitude, which is not a quantity, and not a comparable quantity in the order of phenomena, let itself be represented under the category of quantity rather than some other category? What does it have in common or analogous with that category even when it is incomparable with it? In other words, why call magnitude or ‘absolutely large’ that which is no longer a quantity? [...] And why would the sublime be the absolutely large and not the absolutely small? Why would the absolute excess of dimension, or rather of quantity, be schematized on the side of largeness and not of smallness? Why this valorization of the large which thus still intervenes in a comparison between incomparables? To be sure, the absolutely large is not compared with anything, not with any phenomenal dimension in any case, but it is preferred to the absolutely small. In short, why is the sublime large and not small? Why is the large (absolutely) sublime and not the small (absolutely)? (Derrida 1987, 136)

The ‘more’ and the ‘less’ should no longer make any sense here since it is the absolute great, the great equal only to itself and devoid of comparisons, which is at stake in the sublime. However, Kant introduces them because evaluation, in reality, is a comparison. Moreover, it is a comparison that always points upward, because sublime is that “in comparison with which everything else is small” (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 25; 5: 250, 134), the very possibility to evaluate in this way. Therefore, no sensible presentation will ever be adequate to reason’s ideas, nor, after all, must it be. To the sublime, inadequacy is essential because “nature is thus sublime in those of its appearances the intuition of which brings with them the idea of its infinity. Now the latter cannot happen except through the inadequacy of even the greatest effort of our imagination in the estimation of the magnitude of an object” (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 26; 5: 255, 138).

In the mathematical sublime, inadequacy is the medium of the encounter with the supersensible, in the same way that impotence is so in the dynamic sublime. At the height of its effort to comprehend the infinite as given in the whole of intuition, i.e. to exhibit the idea of reason, the imagination

shows its limits but, at the same time, “its vocation for adequately realizing that idea as a law” (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 27; 5: 257, 141), i.e. the duty to transcend them. Then, if in the sublime inadequacy presents itself, it is not, as inadequacy, part of the natural sensible, nor of nature in general. Inadequacy belongs to the soul that strives, obeying the command of reason, to employ nature to feel an end independent of it.

For just as imagination and understanding produce subjective purposiveness of the powers of the mind in the judging of the beautiful through their unison, so do imagination and reason produce subjective purposiveness through their conflict: namely, a feeling that we have pure self-sufficient reason, or *a* a faculty for estimating magnitude, whose pre-eminence cannot be made intuitable through anything except the inadequacy of that faculty which is itself unbounded in the presentation of magnitudes (of sensible objects) (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 27; 5: 258, 142)

Yet, unlike the beautiful, the principle of the sublime is in us because,

The feeling of the sublime is thus a feeling of displeasure from the inadequacy of the imagination in the aesthetic estimation of magnitude for the estimation by means of reason, and a pleasure that is thereby aroused at the same time from the correspondence of this very judgment of the inadequacy of the greatest sensible faculty in comparison with ideas of reason, insofar as striving for them is nevertheless a law for us (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 27; 5: 257, 141).

Precisely because of the substitution that takes place there, the *Analytic of the Sublime* deserves, in Kant’s eyes, the place of an appendix. Whether mathematical or dynamic, the sublime is the effect of our projection onto nature, which in turn is the effect of our inadequacy, and the appendix “is the place of this inadequacy” (Derrida 1987, 132): an adequate inadequacy if, as Kant says in the *General Remarks on the Exposition of Aesthetic Reflective Judgements*

There need be no anxiety that the feeling of the sublime will lose anything through such an abstract presentation, which becomes entirely negative in regard to the sensible; for the imagination, although it certainly finds nothing beyond the sensible to which it can attach itself, nevertheless feels itself to be unbounded precisely because of this elimination of the limits of sensibility; and that separation is thus a presentation of the infinite, which for that very

reason can never be anything other than a merely negative presentation, which nevertheless expands the soul (Kant 2000, *KDU* I, II; 5:274, 156)

5. Legal sin

For Kant, what makes the sublime sublime is the fact that the limit touched by the imagination is the sign of that limitlessness whose “deaf desire” (Lyotard 1994, 55) permeates not only the pages of the *Analytic of the Sublime* but, one might say, the entire critical enterprise as a “diète de l’esprit” (Saint-Girons 1993, 277) undertaken out of the fear of seeing reason unduly fattened. Yet, we know from the Hegelian critique of criticism and the sublime¹⁹ that, in order to set a limit, one must already be beyond it, and from psychoanalysis that, in reality, one only fears what one desires. Even in the *Critique of Judgement*, reminders of what is or is not permissible to do abound and here too, as in the first and second *Critiques*, they are the symptoms of the fact that Kant wants to transgress²⁰. Then, the frenzy that characterises the sublime is not, in Deleuze’s good grace, the stigma of the traumatic encounter, traumatic in that it is structurally unforeseen, with the being of the sensible, i.e., the chaotic realm of intensities. The spasm that connotes the sublime is the marker, human too human, of the dialectic between law and transgression in which every neurotic life is imprisoned (Lacan 1986, ch. 2-8).

In the *Third Critique*, to put it in another way, Kant confirms the goodness of the memorandum that was placed in the *Preface* to the second edition of the *Critique of pure Reason*: the limits imposed on reason are functional to make room for faith (Kant 1998, *KRV* xxx), and faith is always faith in something that surpasses limits in the sense that it transcends them in magnitude and power; it is always, therefore, faith in something sublime. The exhibition, even if not cognitive, of the existence of this huge ‘something’ is the core of the feeling that so admirably extends the soul, because sublime, for Kant, is neither the experience of an interruption nor that of our finitude. From fainting the subject recovers almost immediately. The dispute that Lyotard would like to make the emblem of a new, post-modern reason²¹, is “hoped for” (Málaga

in Sejten, Rozzoni 2021, 76 ff., our transl.), orchestrated, and therefore, in a way, also already composed a priori.

Using the Aristotelian lexicon, we could say that the dispute is *poietic* rather than *praxic*; only apparently “contrapurposive” (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 23; 5: 245-246, 129), it is, in truth, subjectively purposive. Indeed, what Kant finds sublime is the extraction of a subjective purposiveness in the form of a sense absent in nature. All that is needed for sublime to be experienced is a brute quantity in an inverted purposive relation: the quantity is as purposive for reason as it is not for the imagination. The displeasure that the latter feels by extending itself to correspond to what is unlimited is subjectively “purposive for reason, as the source of ideas” (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 27; 5: 260, 143), and so it is also necessary. The tension of imagination towards the ideas of reason is experienced as a moral imperative emanating from “an unlimited capacity of the very same subject” (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 27; 5: 259; 142). Then, to the extent that the faculty of forms takes pleasure in finding that every unit of measurement of sensibility is inadequate for ideas (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 27; 5: 257, 141), one cannot say, as the ‘anti-oedipal’ Deleuze would have it²², that the excess and the crash brought about by the reflection of ideal nature in real nature are pleasurable in themselves. The excess and the crash are pleasurable only insofar as they solicit something else to come forward, the Lacanian great Other²³.

The Kantian sublime consists in the relation in which the sensible is judged as suitable for a possible supersensible use. But this use that the imagination makes of its intuitions about nature, Lyotard did not fail to note, is an abuse. “Surrection” (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 27; 5: 257, 141) is the name Kant reserves for it as the operation by which the finite comes to reflect the infinite. Not, however, a natural infinite. It is the moral infinite that exhibits itself, albeit negatively, “indirectly” says Kant (Kant 2000, *KDU* I, II; 5: 273, 155), *through* the punishment of imagination and *as* the punishment of imagination. In the friction provoked by the absolute of measurement, the absolute of causality appears as a “purposiveness that is entirely independent of nature” (Kant

2000, *KDU* § 23; 5: 246, 130), and this appearance, a fact too often overlooked by the French estimators of the sublime, is the whole sense of the sublime according to Kant. It is a movement, as one can see, that is quite different from the one – which can be neither anticipated nor made purposive – with which the consciousness of the moral law transports us into freedom according to the doctrine of the *factum rationis*. Surrection is the act that turns horror upside down into wonder-stimulation for an Idea and not the act by which freedom makes itself felt through the law and as law by squeezing the faculty of desire to the last drop of *Pathologisch*: in one case we have an experience that destines us by elevating our ego, in the other an experience that determines us by decapitating it.

In canon law, the term ‘surrection’ qualifies the act of obtaining a privilege or grace by dissimulating what is opposed to its attainment. And which is the privilege obtained by violating the imagination? “A glimpse of the Idea, the absolute of power, freedom” (Lyotard 1994, 70). That this is an abuse depends on the fact that thought has no right to see it, because there is no sensible intuition of the ideas of reason. Yet, by forcing the imagination to go beyond its limits, reason still manages to wrest a quasi-presentation from them in the presence of a formless natural magnitude or force. The abuse, almost a crime, consists therefore of a peek into the supersensible after forcing out that which would prevent it: the constitution of *Einbildungskraft* and the iconoclastic laws of criticism. So, if even the imagination sins in the sublime, it must be said that it sins, at most, of voyeurism. It is not alone, however, in its disobedience. The exhibitionism of reason is also a sin. By engaging the imagination to present its ideas, reason violates the critical prohibition against finding, in sensible presentation, objects corresponding to its concepts.

Yet, in the end, both infractions are legal because thought, for Kant, is destined for the absolute. If it were not so, it would not feel satisfaction, namely, that pleasure that, in contrast to the pleasure of the beautiful, is defined, with an implicit reference to Burke, as “negative” (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 23; 5: 245, 129; I, II 5: 269,151), as soon as the absolute is presented.

6. Sacrificial topics

Sublimity, for Kant, resides in the soul of the subject who stands like a colossus in relation to the sensible world in both its form – the imagination – and its content – sensation. In the sublime, both mathematical and dynamic, what is at stake is the recognition of a sovereignty and the ensuing contempt for everything that, for a very short time, makes us tremble²⁴. There is gain in the loss and in the dissolution: “The imagination organizes the theft (*Beraubung*) of its own freedom, it lets itself be commanded by a law other than that of the empirical use which determines it with a view to an end. But by this violent renunciation, it gains in extension (*Erweiterung*) and in power (*Macht*)” (Derrida 1987, 131). The logic of the sublime, in fact, is the logic of sacrifice; Lyotard sums it up as: “Give up favour, and you will find regard”, (Lyotard 1994, 189), that is, regard for the law. And if one does not consider the gain of the imagination, one does not only lose the voluntary character of its subjugation to the reason that enjoins it to actualise its ideas (the imagination, in the sublime, is finally submitted to its true master and not finally free as Deleuze dreams!).

If one does not consider the strange kind of pleasure the imagination takes in making itself an instrument of reason, one also loses the sense of the whole sublime economy which, in the end, is not only an economy of the worst. There is an interest in the *dépense* of the sensible datum and this interest does not only belong to reason. In the sublime, the imagination is violent as well as violated, and violent with respect to itself, says Kant, namely with respect to the inner sense²⁵. But even this violence “is judged as purposive for the whole vocation of the mind” (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 27; 5: 259, 142). Consequently, what remains to be clarified is (1) to what extent the imagination takes part in reason’s project; and (2) how far violence should be backdated, that is whether there is, and if so at what level, a fundamental violence of criticism.

Now, for Kant, sublime is a *maîtrise*, and a *maîtrise* is always the *maîtrise* of a non-*maîtrisable*: be it the rhapsodic multiplicity of the *Merkmale* in the *Anticipations of Perception*, the autistic character of one’s enjoyment in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, or the hysterical activity of the imagination

that, before being rebuked by the law, amused itself by flirting with the intellect in the *Analytic of the Beautiful*. However, given that criticism is a mix of measures which are taken to govern the ungovernable – “l’objet de la philosophie critique est précisément d’éviter le vacillement du sujet, en l’arrimant plus solidement dans la sphère du supersensible” (Saint-Girons 1993, 455) –, one can conclude that the sublime is the critical form itself; a form that Kant invents, as how in music one invents “la forme sonate” (Saint-Girons 1993, 280). Understanding the sublime, therefore, means understanding criticism and, in a way, understanding Kant, both as a philosopher and, as far as we can given the distance that separates us from him and marks the limit of our aesthetic evaluation, as a man²⁶. The economic lexicon, at this level, is not aberrant; likewise, nor is the psychoanalytic one. Lyotard has merit of having legalised both by showing how, in the interfaculty affair of the sublime, only their joint employment allows us to get our bearings.

Following a long tradition, Kant presents the sublime as a feeling composed of two almost simultaneous times. He departs from that tradition only insofar as (1) he makes the sublime reside in the witness; (2) he presents this latter as dual, double. And it matters little that the witness is a single soul that splits and that the sublime is the feeling of this soul. There is a psychic topic to be taken into account because it is from this topic that the monster retreats, although “the erasure of its figure from the horizon of critical philosophy seems to reserve for it a more threatening place, an exterior that [with critical tools – our addition] we cannot see, perhaps because we maintain a more fundamental relationship with it” (Lemos 2014, 196, our transl.). In other words, the Kantian psychology of faculties is no less incisive because of its articulations, than the Freudian topic. Like the latter, it states that the soul is one, but multiple within itself and that every instance has its specific enjoyment. For Lyotard faculties are banks or capital which, in order to invest, must have some interest that must be negotiated (Lyotard 1994, 174). In her monograph on Kantian and Lacanian ethics, instead, Zupančič goes even further: the

antagonism between imagination and reason is the same as that between the ego and the super-ego (Zupančič 2000, 172 ff.).

Combining both reflections, we believe it is possible to create a metapsychological (Freud 1991) description of the sublime. Kant, for his part, insists only on emphasising that pleasure is achieved derivatively as a result of an inhibition or arrest of vital forces. There is a momentary impediment, and then its resolution in the form of a stronger outpouring. Hertz, for this reason, speaks of a “psychic block” (Hertz 1985, ch. 3): first there is a vacillation of the ego, threatened with divestment and expropriation; then its re-establishment, a return to the self thanks to an impetus with which the ego regains possession of what it was about to lose. The scheme, Derrida points out, is that of a dam: “The sluice gate or floodgate interrupts a flow, the inhibition makes the waters swell, the accumulation presses on the limit. The maximum pressure lasts only an instant, the time it takes to blink an eye, during which the passage is strictly closed and the stricture absolute. Then the dam bursts and there is a flood” (Derrida 1987, 128).

7. Despotic culture

The oscillation between displeasure and pleasure, repulsion and attraction, terror and exaltation is decisive to understand the sublime, and it would be wrong to marginalise its importance in favour of the sublime’s negative presentation alone. The latter concerns only a moment of the sublime. And it is by insisting on the indirect figuration to the detriment of the pleasure nourished by it that one can make the Kantian sublime the bulwark of post-modern sensibility. Only by neglecting the specific amount of resolution, namely of the second moment, is it possible to forget that resolution is, for Kant, the true sublime performance. Sublime is less loss than gain, less despondency than euphoria, because, as it is consistent with a transecular etymology²⁷, even for Kant ‘sublime’ is the movement by which one reaches the summit by reversing gravity. Therefore, it is not detumescence, but erection, that is consubstantial to the sublime as the feeling of elevation with which the subject escapes the common misery of

the human condition in order to enjoy the privileges of individual superhuman tragedy (as the warrior praised by Kant in *KDU* § 28; 5: 262, 146).

Contrary to what should happen in analysis as a cure for neurosis according to Lacan (Lacan 2001, 551), in the sublime impotence is not elevated to impossibility, but to omnipotence, and it would be interesting to recalculate the results of Lyotard and Deleuze's analysis, attentive as they are to the reflective virtues of impossibility, beginning from the fact that, for Kant, impossibility is in Hegelian terms an inessential determination²⁸. Far more important is the feeling of grandeur with which one goes beyond it, since the elevation witnessed in the Kantian sublime is a phallic operation with which one secures an imaginary pleasure. The sign of the good that emerges from beautiful set ablaze is much more than a sign. Or, if it is only a sign, Kant interprets it by posing before nature like the prophets condemned by Spinoza²⁹. This should come as no surprise, although it should have alerted the ultra-Spinozian Deleuze: in the *Third Critique* it is against Spinoza that Kant unleashes an *ad hominem* argument contesting his immanentism, synonymous with dogmatism and determinism, and his individualism, synonymous with immorality.

In 1790, Spinoza is perceived as a threat insofar as he is an honest, free and good man albeit alone, that is, honest, free and good even without aesthetic-ethical imperatives guiding his action from the heights of *Kultur*. For the 'old' Kant, the *cogito* is always conjugated in the first person plural, and this is the case even though Bernard Dejudin had made easy game of demonstrating how, from thinking 'avec les autres' to thinking 'comme les autres', the step is a short one. Kant would accomplish this to the extent that, in the *Third Critique*, the break with nature facilitates the transformation of culture into cult, the cult of personality, and of natural teleology into moral theology ('sublime' is a name for God, but God is a "homme sublime" – Dejudin 2001, 312). Culture, Dejudin explains, « est une phénoménalisation effective des idées pures de la raison qui prennent corps grâce à l'autonomie d'une faculté de juger réfléchissante, donatrice de sense » (ibid., 16). But since the intellect is deposed – in the sublime, reason supplants the

ex-fiancé of the imagination – there is no barrier to be put up against the ideas' inherent yearning for totality and the ferocity with which they claim it³⁰.

Born of rape at worst, or of *coitus more ferarum* at best, the sublime is the child of the imagination, but “a child of its own and yet monstrous” (Deleuze 2000b, 14, our transl.). An air of respect comes to it from his father, but the *Erhabene* is not the *Erhebung*³¹. The sublime needs violence and courage, sacrifice and heroism, values that the moral law as Fact of Reason does not know what to do with. To respect, they are alien. *Die Achtung* is not measured by sacrifice: the moral law, in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, neither wants nor prescribes anything, least of all evil. The sublime, on the contrary, needs suffering because it must displease. For it to experience, the imagination must be violated because it is from its pain that the joy of seeing or quasi-seeing the law derives. Reason relies on the misery of imagination's favour to enforce the elevation of its law, and if presentation and presumption are necessary to it, it is only so that, in the presence of law, they manifest their nullity. Lyotard comments: “conversion (or perversion) in destination, which perhaps connotes the institution of the sacred. The latter requires the destruction or consumption of the given, of the present ‘wealth’, the *Stoff* of free natural form” (Lyotard 1994, 188).

8. Concerned Degreasing

The sublime is the child of the unhappy encounter between form and idea: a bastard child born of the lurch that nature takes for the law. Unhappy because “the law (the father) is so authoritarian, so unconditional, and the regard the law requires so exclusive that he, the father, will do nothing to obtain consent, even through a delicious rivalry with the imagination” (Lyotard 1994, 180). All that is sufficient for reason is an imagination “violated, exceeded, exhausted. She will die in living birth to the sublime. She will think she is dying” (*ibidem*) obeying a solemn ‘present me!’ Essential, in the Kantian sublime, is in fact the momentum that impels the soul to abandon sensibility in order to occupy itself with ideas that contain a nobler end. “That is sublime – says Kant – for which

even the ability to think of it demonstrates a faculty of the mind that surpasses every measure of the senses” (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 25; 5: 250, 134).

Therefore, as a subjective feeling that is immediately pleasurable because of its opposition to the senses, the Kantian sublime cannot be the key to the eco-sophy, or deep ecology elaborated by Deleuze’s great friend.³² The existence of nature, here, is indifferent. What matters are only the phallic values that we grasp in nature. For them sadistic reason gets crazy, because reason ever enjoys conflict and is aroused, says Kant, by the violence it exercises in proportion to the magnitude of the power it contrasts. The two definitions of the dynamically sublime prove this. The dynamically sublime is “nature considered in aesthetic judgment as a power that has no dominion over us” (Kant 2000, *KDU*, § 28; 5: 260, 143), namely a power – ours as rational beings – which is superior even to the “resistance of something that itself possesses power” (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 28, 111).

Now, note that for Kant, judging in this way is a duty: “it is a law (of reason) for us and part of our vocation to estimate everything great that nature contains as an object of the senses for us as small in comparison with ideas of reason; and whatever arouses the feeling of this supersensible vocation in us is in agreement with that law” (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 27; 5: 257, 141). Then, it is morally necessary to treat nature as the pattern of reason and to evaluate as insignificant, in comparison to the latter, that which, as the object of the senses, appears great and powerful to us. Which, after all, amounts to saying that we humans have a duty to rise above nature by freeing ourselves from its influences. “Thus sublimity is not contained in anything in nature, but only in our mind, insofar as we can become conscious of being superior to nature within us and thus also to nature outside us (insofar as it influences us)” (Kant 2000, *KDU*, § 28; 5: 264, 147).

Contrapurposive, therefore, the sublime is also against nature (like perversion?) because Kant thinks of it as “the disposition of the mind” (Kant 2000, *KDU*, § 26: 5:256, 139) with which the imagination is referred to reason, that is, the state of mind of the subject who relativises nature by forcing it

to be a mirror of the Idea. Sublime, says Lyotard, is nature divested, deflowered. And yet, if it is such, it seems to us to be so less because the “teleological machine explodes” (Lyotard 1994, 55), that is to say, less because the sublime “denies the imagination the power of forms, and denies nature the power to immediately affect thinking with forms” (*ibidem*), than because the sublimated nature is a nature without nature, and ‘without’ in a strong sense: that of a removal and of the substituting formation with which it is remedied.

The aesthetics of the sublime is an aesthetics *without nature* but *with morality*, thus, with a “second nature” (Kant 2002, *KPV*, 87, 112). The first stops speaking to us and “thinking enters a period of celibacy” (Lyotard 1994, 52). But celibacy, in Kant, does not occasion a meditation on the absence of relationship at the basis of every relationship, including the figurative one. This is what the protagonists of sublime’s renaissance desired and practiced, but not what Kant did. Similarly, in the religious sphere, Kantian celibacy is the condition of another marriage. Saint Girons is quite explicit in this respect: “on resiste à la nature parce que Dieu le veut” (Saint-Girons 1993, 379). Indeed, if the mother of the sublime is an artist, the father is a moralist. She reflects; he determines, and determines with such “obscene” (Žižek 2014, 115) rigour that the virgin finds herself fertilised without any regard for her pleasure. Reason demands regard only for itself, that is, only for the law and its realisation, and has no need of a beautiful nature.

In front of the law, the forms are torn apart and become distorted. But reason’s perverse interest in the failure of forms and the subjugation of imagination to a purpose that is not its own is shared by the imagination³³. Sacrificing itself on the altar of holy law, the imagination achieves a greater extension and strength than those it sacrifices. Deflowered, it feels that it flourishes again, and Kant says that it is precisely in the feeling of its spoliation that imagination feels, likewise, the cause to which it is subjected. Therefore, although it becomes celibate, Kantian thought does not, *ipso facto*, become an informal artist³⁴. In the sublime, the *Gemüt* does not make use of nature as abstract painters make use of matter. The position of

inferiority in which violence confines it is only momentary, and the magnitude felt as excess does not provoke an ‘inner experience’ (Bataille 2014) such as those aroused, for example, by Rothko’s canvases.

The rapture lasts an instant, because when reason supplants the intellect, it does so by inviting imagination to sign a long-lasting contract whose parties are both interested, and it is this interest that prevents Kant from being the father of abstract expressionism. For the colour-field painters, to make the sublime purposive, is a contradiction. ‘The sublime is now’, goes Newman’s famous motto (Newman 1990, 170–173; Carboni 2003, 96–113). But not so for Kant. It is not violence without comparisons that interests him. Kant,

uses the sublime to connect the subject to a rational, ideal, yet ‘objective’ sphere, untainted by the limitations of the senses. According to him, the experience of the sublime allows the subject to have access to this noumenal sphere by making it aware, upon reflection, of an inner rational strength, independent from and superior to the external reality that is mediated by the senses (Mathäs 2010, 23).

In the dynamic sublime, nature is reputed fearsome without inspiring fear, because, if its immensity and omnipotence threaten our sensibility, the sublime is the ability to evade this threat. The Kantian sublime, then, is ‘after’: the contrast is a diversion and the sublime is an elevation in the sense of a double, triple, avoidance: of the ‘external’ nature, of the ‘internal’ nature (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 28; 5: 264, 147) and of the faculty of our thought that is closest to both these natures: the imagination. The law commands that one decrease all material so that only the Idea can shine as a force in us “which is not part of nature” (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 28; 5: 262, 145). And it commands it by giving voice to the critical will “d’établir une police” (Saint-Girons 1993, 345).

9. Fatal distance

By asserting itself, the imagination enslaves nature in view of the exaltation of the law, but, like any sacrifice, this too is useless: the moral law does not allow itself to be bent by the consummation of forms. It only demands respect: a “white”

feeling (Lyotard 1994, 228), because it is beyond pleasure and displeasure. *Die Achtung* expresses a disinterested obedience that is not achieved by dint of maceration: an “immediate reverence” (Lyotard 1994, 189). The humiliation of the narcissistically affected ego is not a condition for respect, but a result of it, because respect is unconditional. Lyotard rightly says that it cannot be acquired “not even if one were to offer the price of all of nature” (Lyotard 1994, 190). The Fact of Reason is not to be bartered. Its economy is not that of less for more and, all things considered, neither is it an economy. The respect that makes the Fact of Reason a “felt fact” (Grenberg 2013, 45) depends on an ‘a-economy’, because there is no bargaining with the moral law. The consciousness of freedom, in 1788, is not the object of any negotiation, even if it were expiatory. The mediation between the sensible and the supersensible that Kant presents as the “sole Fact of Reason” (Kant 2002, *KPV* 31, 46) is an ‘impossible exchange’ (Baudrillard 2001) between the thing and the sign: the pure vertigo, or *tautegory*, of the Spinozist *causa sui*³⁵.

Yet, precisely the prodigious univocity of the *ratio sentiendi* can be unbearable; Kant as if to ease its burden, halfway through the chapter dedicated to the motives of practical reason of his *Second Critique*, abandons the register of sensible certainty in favour of that of sublime truth. Nevertheless, having not yet conceived his *Analytik des Erhabenen*, the sublime arises, here, as a perversion of respect, which, from a priori feeling, becomes an ordinary pathological motive as soon as the moral law takes on human words and features. In Lacanian terms, one can say that Kant fills the lack of the Other³⁶ – lack embodied by the lone signifying character of the categorical imperative (Campo 2020c, 446, n. 24) – with his gaze and voice. Both, Kant explains, make even the most daring evildoer tremble, but the reported tremor should not deceive; it is already a relief when compared to the anguish of respect. The humanised reason that towers above terrifies and excites the consciousness that suffers its constraint; and the sublime version of respect is precisely admiration (*Ehrfurcht*), an esteem combined with awe, that one feels in its presence. Kant defines it “consciousness of a free submission of the will to

the law” (Kant 2002, *KPV* 80, 104). Thus, it is not the sensation of this very subjection, but the exorcising reflection on it.

From being the immediate effect-affect of the moral law, respect becomes the feeling that accompanies its judgement. What provokes it now is the fact that the subject *sees* himself submitted to the law, *sees* himself humiliated. And the condition of possibility of this vision, as of every vision, is distance. Indeed, what is indispensable for the sublime to be experienced in the face of a phenomenon of nature, says Kant, is that the subject has taken refuge in a safe place (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 28; 5: 261, 144), be it a cell, the back of a window, or the top of a mountain. Sublime, indeed, is never the hurricane itself, but always only its spectacle. Thanks to the distance – here empirical, but perhaps also metaphysical – the subject can be simultaneously inside and outside the scene he contemplates; while he/she perceives his/her littleness or insignificance, something of him/her has already been evacuated and, thus, the voyeur can get the better of the one who lives and feels. The resolution of the anguish to which he/she proceeds in the passage from the first to the second moment of the sublime is, in this sense, a conversion of *zoé* into *bios*, which has the tenor of revenge: that of the soul over the body, of the noumenical realm of ends over the phenomenal realm of causes. The subject detaches him or herself, or he/she thinks so, from that part of him or herself that is connected to the whole of the universe, whose vision annihilates him/her, and begins to look at it as an extraneous part, belonging to another world.

The safe place, in other words, is safe because it guarantees the split between an I that grieves and one that rejoices, by reassuring the subject. However, contrary to what Kant believes, in doing so, the safe place vouches for the subject’s minority. In the sublime, it is true, the soul dominates itself. But the nature of the triumphant esteem it narcissistically feels³⁷ for the part of itself that has got away with it (*Selbstschatzung*) is not a feeling felt by the ego towards the unconscious, but by the Super-ego – within which the soul has taken refuge – towards the ego thus abandoned. According to Zupančič, in fact, the law that speaks and observes, arousing

the sublime version of respect, is the Super-ego's law, because the Super-ego is the instance that, by definition, observes everything and never stops talking, instituting one commandment after another; it is the Super-ego that imposes the tyranny of the ideal over the real, growing in direct proportion the more it is indulged; it is the Super-ego, finally, whose mere presence inhibits any kind of act (the sublime, for Kant, is contemplation, not action)³⁸. Resistance to nature is thus submission to the moral law, but only, we must now add, in its imaginary or psychological version, the one that sustains, reinforces and restores the full and sovereign subjectivity that the anti-humanism of Burke's investigation had dissolved (Sertoli 1995, 32).

Imaginary, after all, are also the two clauses of the Kantian sublime: totality (mathematical sublime) and security (dynamic sublime). The first lacks a perceptible counterpart, because it is a phallic idea of sadistic pure reason, and it is to the credit of Sacher Masoch's reader, Deleuze, to have noticed this (Deleuze 1991); the second is physical, empirical: an artifice heralding artifice, even if Kant disagrees, denouncing the naivety of the opinion of those who believe that the non-seriousness reality of exposure to danger undermines the serious reality of the feeling experienced.

This self-esteem is not diminished by the fact that we must see ourselves as safe in order to be sensible of this inspiring satisfaction, in which case (it might seem), because the danger is not serious, the sublimity of our spiritual capacity is also not to be taken seriously. For the satisfaction here concerns only the vocation of our capacity as it is revealed to us in such a case, just as the predisposition to it lies in our nature; while the development and exercise of it is left to us and remains our responsibility (Kant 2000, *KDU* § 28; 5: 262, 145-146).

As if to say that, since the sublime is a subjective feeling, it does not matter where one is when one experiences it: the feeling is a self-affection and what is 'hetero', consequently, does not matter. Kant presents this thesis as a truth, reserving the right to add that it is so, despite the fact that the soul may be conscious, "if it takes his reflection this far, of its present actual powerlessness" (*ibidem*). Yet not only the arguments

with which he defends this truth are suspect. In the light of the sublimity of criticism, there is good reason to suppose that the critically educated soul never reaches that far, namely never falls into the infamous darkness of sensation where barely an alteration (Kant 1998, *KRV* A 20-B34) is registered.

Conclusion

For this reason, the Kantian sublime is not, nor can it be, paradigmatic of the excessive exercise of faculties. In conclusion, we limit ourselves to listing the reasons for this schematically: (1) it is a feeling, and thus a judgement, while the encounter with the being of the sensible is a convulsive sensation that suspends it (Campo 2022); (2) the imagination experiences it in the presence of the omnipotence of reason and not by making degradation into the object of an affirmation (Deleuze 1995, 261; 267; 271); (3) what imagination glimpses is an idea, but the idea, for Kant, is a totalising totality and not, as the post-Kantian Deleuze states, an individuating differential, i.e. an intensity. This is why, on the other hand, (4) in the Kantian sublime one does not directly grasp the immanence of the supersensible, as required by the higher use of faculties, but, indirectly, its irremediable transcendence; and (5) one grasps it, albeit in a negative way, with the imagination, thus within the spatio-temporal boundaries of the schematism.

The latter, however, explodes when it encounters intensity, something that Deleuze himself, in his *Lectures on Kant* from 1968 to 1980 (Deleuze 2000a) and in his monograph on Francis Bacon (Deleuze 1981) clearly acknowledges. Moreover, as we have seen, (6) the Kantian sublime is the movement by which one escapes the violence of the hurricane, the cascade and the fall, thus from the kind of power necessary, according to a Nietzschean Deleuze (Deleuze 1995, 261), for the “sensory distortion” (Deleuze 1995, 264) that is the condition of the transcendent exercise. And, as Nietzsche intuited, this movement is an ascetic detachment from the natural world through the transfiguration into surreptitious power of the impotence we feel in contact with a power which is in truth stronger than we are. Exactly the opposite, then, of what the Spinozan and Nietzschean intensive ethics of descent suggests

we should do, namely, receive the lowest that meets us involuntarily, in the depths of transcendental subjectivity.

In addition to this, (7) from the perspective of Deleuze's transcendental empiricism, inspired by the radical empiricism of William James, Henri Bergson and Alfred N. Whitehead, the choice to assume a crisis and a limit for each faculty is very uneconomical. Deleuze suspends the maintenance of the psychology of faculties in order to rethink them in terms of powers. But, to be consistent with his own aims and those of his teachers, all dispassionately anti-Kantian, it is perhaps preferable to think of a single limit of the entire faculty, or power, of judgement³⁹. Otherwise, one risks to perpetuate the vivisection of psychic dynamism undertaken by Kant, and interrupted by Freud, who repeatedly warned against the risk of mistaking the topics for the energetic; but one also risks to perpetuate the schizophrenia that afflicts Deleuzian analyses of the sublime, which is ignored by the majority of commentators. When he speaks of the sublime, in fact, Deleuze forgets the law of intensity that Kant developed in the *Anticipations of perception* although he valorised it from *Difference and Repetition* onwards; when, instead, he illustrates this law, the sublime is out of the picture.

Now, were it not for the fact that sublime, for Deleuze, is always a catastrophe and that a catastrophe, according to him, is always the catastrophe of recognition that results from the encounter with the intensive ground of extensive representation, one might think that, for Deleuze, the encounter with intensity is not sublime. But Deleuze only finds sublime the dissolution of schematism at the hands of vibrant intensity, because one learns that "the truly experienced is the abstract" (Deleuze 2004, 83 our transl.), that is, the unrecognisable, only thanks to the violence with which the intensive 'outside' reduces representation to zero. Nevertheless, as long as one retains time, albeit ordinal, and imagination, albeit rebellious (Deleuze 2004), one remains within the realm of judgement, and thus of representation, whereas the *lex sensationis* is the law-principle of a synthesis that occupies but an instant (Kant 1998, *KRV* A 167-B 209) and in which the

imagination sinks into itself before the unimaginable, without any possibility of recovery nor margin of redemption. Here,

everything is like the flight of an eagle: overflight, suspension and descent. Everything goes from high to low, and by that movement affirms the lowest: asymmetrical synthesis. High and low, moreover, are only a manner of speaking. It is a question of depth, and of the lower depth which essentially belongs to it (Deleuze 1995, 261)

just as happens, one might say, in the unique, extraordinary, but *not sublime*, Fact of Reason.

NOTES

¹ This is what Sertoli suggests, with good reasons, in his introductions to Burke's *Inquiry* (Sertoli 1995, 32 ff.) and Monk's monograph (Sertoli 1991, XV e ss.).

² In these terms, we think it is possible to answer the call of Sertoli (1986). This does not mean, as it might seem, the dismissal of the transcendental, but rather the integration into Burke's analysis the proto-schematism that pertains to sensation as the origin of *realitas phaenomenon*: an impure, autonomous and radical transcendental; we cannot develop the point here. For such a reading of the Kantian *Empfindung*, and the supporting literature see Campo 2017; 2020b.

³ A separate discussion should be made for the genius and, more generally, for the *Third Critique* as a whole.

⁴ For the literature on the Fact of Reason and its interpretation in the terms mentioned here, see our Campo 2020a.

⁵ Despite their philosophical heterogeneity, which we cannot here report on, Lyotard and Deleuze agree on this point.

⁶ See. Málaga in Sejten, Rozzoni 2021, 74 ff. But it is also anti-ecological because to appreciate nature for what it is in itself, regardless of the use we may make of it and of what we may project onto it is quite different from appreciating it as an instrument of narcissistic idealisation. On the sublime relationship between man and nature see Bodei 2009.

⁷ If we look at its content it is a grand narrative, and then a modern rather than a post-modern kind of narrative (Lyotard 1984); if, on the other hand, we consider its form, it is a minimal narrative. The form, moreover, is taken from the modern tradition, which has always distinguished between two stages in the sublime. On this last point, see Most 1984.

⁸ On Kantian theory read *iuxta propria principia* and not misread see Pareyson 1984 and Crowter 1989.

⁹ See Deleuze 1984; Id. 2000; Id. 2004; Lyotard 1994; Id. 1997; Moreover, see the essays by Nancy, Lacoue-Labarthe and Rogozinski in Courtine 1988, respectively: 43-96; 123-188; 229-272. But also Richir 2010.

¹⁰ The French Kant is “dazed, perhaps diverted from his official project” (Carmagnola 2016, 86, our transl.).

¹¹ For reasons of space, we cannot render the conclusions of each work with due precision. We have, however, reported on them faithfully, albeit icastically. For an overview, see the essays in Courtine 1988.

¹² For these equivalences and their meaning, see the essays by Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe in Courtine 1988.

¹³ “The sublime shows a sensible free from the constraint of representation” (Carmagnola 2016, 92, our transl.). A separate discourse should be made for the classical reception of the sublime. We cannot do that here.

¹⁴ Lyotard borrows this term from Schelling, who in turn claims to have taken it from Coleridge’s *On the Prometheus of Aeschilus* (1834). In his *Philosophie der Mitologie* (1842-1854) Schelling defines the Oriental deities as tautohegorical in opposition to the Greek ones. The former are not something different nor mean something different, but only and exclusively what they are. In using this term to explain the Kantian feeling, Lyotard wants to emphasise the identity of being and meaning.

¹⁵ Even if the ultimate destination disclosed in the sublime can be understood as a new determination or definition of the subject. On this point see Brandt 2007, 413-421.

¹⁶ Monstrous or disgusting that, however, returns in the current debate. See e.g. Mazzocut-Mis 2015.

¹⁷ That the sublime is the domestication of the terrible is Nietzsche’s great thesis in *The Birth of Tragedy*.

¹⁸ Or ‘mastodontic’. See, e. g. Scolari 2009. Also for Mathäs “the merging of the self with higher universal principles could be regarded as a megalomaniacal idealization of the self” (Mathäs 2010, 21).

¹⁹ “Hegel reproaches Kant with setting out from cise and not from without-cise” (Derrida 1978, 138), i.e. from the limit rather than from the limitlessness to which limit makes a sign and of which it is the product as a limit.

²⁰ For reasons of space, we cannot illustrate here the similarities between the three *Critiques* with respect to this point.

²¹ To the postmodernity as thesis, dispute replaces (post)-modernity as problem. Cf. Lyotard 1988.

²² The reference is to the first volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* written together with Guattari: *The Anti-Edipus*. Note that Deleuze does not grasp, as Lyotard did, the oedipal-neurotic dynamic at the heart of the sublime. It is curious, given the attention he devotes elsewhere to this dynamic and to the patibular value of the law that grounds it.

²³ In Lacan’s structuralist theory, the great Other is the place of speech and language in which the subject comes into being as the symbolic subject of the unconscious. It is a treasure trove of signifiers in which we are immersed.

²⁴ “It is arguably a narcissistic aesthetization of the self that serves to confirm human superiority” (Mathäs 2010, 20).

²⁵ Rogozinski reflects on violence starting from the Heideggerian theses on imagination in Courtine 1988, 238e ff.

²⁶ For Derrida, only the body is the fundamental aesthetic measure. Yet, in the Kantian sublime there is only a “body of stone” (Derrida 1987, 141) which

is very different from the living one involved in the enjoyment of expressionist canvases (Bertolini in Sejten, Rozzoni 2021, 252).

²⁷ Among the studies devoted to the etymology of 'sublime' see Cohn & Miles 1977 and the more recent Baker 2004.

²⁸ We reserve the chance to do this in a future work.

²⁹ For Spinoza who interprets nature projects on it a meaning that nature does not have. See Deleuze 2011, 106 ff.

³⁰ It would be interesting to compare De Jardin's convincing and decisive analysis with those of Richir 1991.

³¹ On the morality of the sublime and its relation to respect see, e.g., Guyer 1982; Menegoni 1988; Crowther 1989; Meerbote 1990-1991; Goodreau 1998. On the role of the sublime in Kantian thought see Clewis 2015 and Feloj 2012.

³² The reference, of course, is to the concept developed by Felix Guattari in *The Three Ecologies* (1989).

³³ Is the reason-imagination ménage a sadomasochistic one? Sertoli seems to suggest it in 1995, 27-30.

³⁴ Zelle links the emergence of the sublime to an "Emotionalisierung der Kunsttheorie" (Zelle 1989, 58). But the emotion which is at stake in the Kantian sublime is not the one sought after by informal artists. On the connection between sublime, abstract expressionism and informal art, see Canadas Salvador and Bertolini in Sejten, Rozzoni 2021.

³⁵ Then, it seems to us that Pries' nice expression, 'Übergänge ohne Brücken' (Pries 1995), should be reserved for the *factum rationis*. We have sketched this point in Campo 2020a, but we reserve the chance to develop it better elsewhere.

³⁶ Since the 1970s, Lacan has argued that 'the Other does not exist' for the same reasons that brought Wittgenstein to say that there is no metalanguage. To believe the opposite, as neurotics do, is to bridge the structural inconsistency.

³⁷ "As in Lacan's mirror stage, the Kantian subject mentally transforms the unsatisfactory sensual impression into a feeling that reinstates the subject as an autonomous unity through the subreption mentioned above. [...] The feeling of the sublime lets the Kantian subject transcend its physical limitations and merge with the human species. This vacillation between megalomaniacal self-expansion and self-denial is also implicit in the narcissistic scenario [...] both the sublime and narcissism share the common trajectory toward self-expansion by merging with an ideal that is greater than the empirical self. Even though the experience of the sublime claims to be selfless, the question remains as to who experiences the sublime if not an expanded self. In short, one could view the sublime as a spiritualized form of narcissism in that it allows the subject to recognize its physical limitations and yet intuit its infinite spiritual capacity" (Mathäs 2010, 25).

³⁸ We developed Zupančič's proposal in more detail in Campo (forthcoming).

³⁹ This is what Lyotard, in almost all his works, attempted to do: think about the limit of representation. Yet, as mentioned above, Lyotard wrongly believed that Kantian sublime could be an ally in this endeavour.

REFERENCES

- Baker, David. 2004. "The Sublime: Origins and Definitions." *The Georgia Review* (58) 2: 303-309.
- Bataille, George. 2014. *Inner Experience*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Baudrillard, Jean. 2001. *Impossible Exchange*. London/New York: Verso Books.
- Bodei, Remo. 2009. *Paesaggi sublimi. Gli uomini davanti la natura selvaggia*. Milano: Bompiani.
- Borutti, Silvana. 2009. "Immaginazione e pensiero del limite. *Darstellung* e *Einstimmung* in Kant e Wittgenstein." *Paradigmi* 27 (3): 101-112.
- Brandt, Reinhardt. 2007. *Die Bestimmung des Menschen*. Hamburg: Meiner.
- Campo, Alessandra. 2017. *Fantasma e sensazione. Lacan con Kant*. Milano-Udine: Mimesis.
- Campo, Alessandra. 2020a. "Il *Faktum der Vernunft*: tra uso pratico della ragione e uso trascendentale delle categorie." *Rivista di Storia della Filosofia* 4: 705-740.
- _____. 2020b. "Logica della sensazione, logica dell'origine: Kant e l'estetica superiore delle *Anticipazioni della percezione*." *Quaderni di Inschibboleth* 13 (1): 47-71.
- _____. 2020c. "L'adeguatezza della legge morale: Spinoza, Kant e l'esperienza della libertà." *Meta: Research In Hermeneutics, Phenomenology, and Practical Philosophy* 12 (2): 429-458.
- _____. 2022. "Transcendental aesthetics as failed apodictic aesthetics: Kant, Deleuze and the being of the sensible." *Studi di Estetica* 50 (1): 201-220.
- _____. (forthcoming). "Il sublime kantiano: un sentimento umano troppo umano." *Phi/Psy. Rivista di Filosofia e Psicoanalisi*.
- Carboni, Mauro. 2003. *Il sublime è ora. Saggio sulle estetiche contemporanee*. Roma: Castelvecchi.

Carmagnola, Fulvio. 2016. *L'anima e il campo. La produzione del sentire*. Milano-Udine: Mimesis.

Clewis, Robert R. 2009. *The Kantian Sublime and the Revelation of Freedom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

_____. 2015. "The Place of The Sublime in Kant's Project." *Studi Kantiani* 28: 149-168.

Cohn, Jan, and Miles, Thomas H. 1977. "The Sublime: In Alchemy, Aesthetics and Psychoanalysis." *Modern Philology* 74 (3): 289-304.

Courtine, Jean-François. (ed.). 1988. *Du sublime*. Paris : Belin.

Crowther, Paul. 1989. *The Kantian Sublime: from Morality to Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dejardin, Bernard. 2001. *L'immanence ou le sublime. Observations sur les réactions de Kant face à Spinoza dans la Critique de la faculté de juger*. Paris : L'Harmattan.

Deleuze, Gilles. 1981. *Francis Bacon. Logic of Sensation*. Minneapolis. University of Minnesota Press.

_____. 1984: *Kant's critical philosophy. The doctrine of faculties*. London, The Athlone Press.

_____. 1991. *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty & Venus in Furs*. New York: Zone Books.

_____. 1995: *Difference and repetition*, New York, Columbia University Press.

_____. 2000a: *La passione dell'immaginazione. L'idea di genesi nell'estetica di Kant*, Milano-Udine: Mimesis.

_____. 2000b. *Pourparler (1972-1990)*. Macerata: Quodlibet.

_____. 2004. *Fuori dai cardini del tempo. Lezioni su Kant*. Milano-Udine: Mimesis.

_____. 2011. *Cosa può un corpo? Lezioni su Spinoza*. Roma: Ombre Corte.

Derrida, Jacques. 1987. *The Truth in Painting*. Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press.

- Feløj, Serena. 2012. *Il sublime nel pensiero di Kant*. Brescia: Morcelliana.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1991. *On Metapsychology. The Theory of Psychoanalysis: Beyond the Pleasure Principle, The Ego and the Id and Other Works*. New York: Penguins.
- Goodreau, John. R. 1998. *The Role of the Sublime in Kant's Moral Metaphysics*. Washington DC: Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change.
- Grenberg, Jeanine. 2013. *Kant's Defense of Common Moral Experience: a Phenomenological Account*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Guyer, Paul. 1982. "Kant's Distinction between the Beautiful and the Sublime." *Review of Metaphysics* (35) 4: 753-783.
- Hertz, Neil. 1985. *The End of the Line. Essays on Psychoanalysis and the Sublime*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kant, Immanuel. 1998. *Critique of pure Reason*. Paul Guyer, Allen W. Wood (eds. and transl.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press = [1781 A; 1787 B]. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft, Ak. III-IV (KRV)*.
- _____. 2000. *Critique of the Power of Judgement*. Paul Guyer (ed. and translator). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press = [1790]. *Kritik der Urtheilskraft, Ak. V (KDU)*.
- _____. 2002. *Critique of practical Reason*, Werner S. Pluhar (transl.); Stephen Engstrom (intr.). Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett = [1788]. *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft, Ak. V (KPV)*.
- Lacan, Jacques. 1986. *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII*. New York: Norton.
- _____. 2001. *Autres Écrits*. Paris: Seuil,
- Lemos, Fabiano. 2014. "Kant e o monstro." *Kriterion* 129: 189-203.
- Liotard, Jean-François. 1984. *The post-modern condition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Liotard, Jean-François. 1988. *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- _____. 1994. *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- _____. 1997. *Anima Minima*. In *Postmodern Fables*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (235-249).
- Mathäs, Alexander. 2010. "Keeping Narcissism at Bay: Kant and Schiller on the Sublime." *Konturen* 3: 19-44.
- Mazzocut-Mis, Maddalena (ed.). 2015. *Dal gusto al disgusto. L'estetica del pasto*. Milano: Cortina.
- Meerbote, Ralf. 1990-1991. "Kant's View on the Mathematical Sublime". In G. Funke (ed.), *Akten des Siebenten Internationalen Kant-Kongresses*, Mainz, Bd. II.I. Bonn: Bouvier (691-703).
- Menegoni, Francesca. 1988. *Finalità e destinazione morale nella Critica del Giudizio di Kant*. Trento: Verifiche.
- Monk, Samuel. 1960. *The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-Century England*. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press.
- Most, Glenn W. 1984. "Sublime degli antichi, sublime dei moderni." *Studi di Estetica* 12 (1-2): 113-130.
- Newman, Barnett. 1990. "The Sublime is Now". In J.P. O'Neil (ed.) *Selected Writings and Interviews*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf (170-173).
- Pareyson, Luigi. 1984. *L'estetica di Kant. Lettura della Critica del Giudizio*. Milano: Mursia.
- Pries, Christine. 1995. *Übergänge ohne Brücken. Kants Erhabene zwischen Kritik und Metaphysik*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.
- Richir, Marc. 1991. *Du sublime en politique*. Paris : Payot.
- Richir, Marc. 2010. *Variations sur le sublime et le soi*. Grenoble : Million.
- Saint-Girons, Baldine. 1993. *Fiat Lux. Une philosophie du sublime*. Paris : Quai Voltaire.
- Scolari, Raffaele. 2009. *Filosofia del mastodontico. Figure contemporanee del sublime e della grande dimensione*. Milano-Udine. Mimesis.

Sejten, Anne E., and Rozzoni, Claudio. (eds.). 2021. *Revisiter le sublime*. Milano-Udine: Mimesis.

Sertoli, Giuseppe. 1986. "Edmund Burke e la parabola del sublime". In *Aesthetica bina: Baumgarten e Burke*. Palermo: Centro Internazionale di Studi di Estetica (53-75).

Sertoli, Giuseppe. 1991. "Introduzione" a S. Monk, *Il sublime. Teorie estetiche nell'Inghilterra del Settecento*. Milano: Marietti.

_____. 1995. "Presentazione" a E. Burke, *Inchiesta sul bello e il sublime*. Palermo: Centro Internazionale di Studi di Estetica.

Tagliabue, Guido M. 1980. *Demetrio: dello stile*. Roma: Edizioni Ateneo.

Zelle, Carsten. 1989. *Schönheit und Erhabenheit: Der Anfang doppelter Ästhetik bei Boileau, Dennis, Bodmer und Breitingen*. In Pries, Christine (ed.). *Das Erhabene: Zwischen Grenzerfahrung und Größenwahn*. Acta humanora (55-73).

Žižek, Slavoj. 2014. *The Most Sublime Hysteric: Hegel with Lacan*. Cambridge: Polity.

Zupančič, Alenka. 2000. *Ethics of the Real. Kant, Lacan*. London/New York: Verso Books.

Alessandra Campo is post-Doctoral research fellow in theoretical philosophy at the University of L'Aquila. For several years she has studied the metaphysical and cosmological implications of Freudian-Lacanian theory using Bergson, Whitehead and Deleuze. More recently, her research has been devoted to Kantian philosophy, with reference to the metaphysical causal link presented as "fact of reason" in the second Critique and "anticipation of perception" in the first.

Address:

Alessandra Campo

University of L'Aquila

Viale Nizza 14, 67100 L'Aquila, Italy

Email: alessandra.campo@univaq.it