Kant on Intuition

Western and Asian Perspectives on Transcendental Idealism

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Kant's Concept of the Sublime[1]

Zhengmi Zhouhuang

1. Introduction

There are various dichotomies in Kant's philosophy: sensibility vs. reason, nature vs. freedom, cognition vs. morality, noumenon vs. phenomenon, among others. There are also different ways of mediating these dichotomies, which is the systematic undertaking of Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. One of the most important concepts in this work is the sublime, which exemplifies the connections between the different dichotomies; this fact means the concept's construction is full of tension. On the one hand, as a pure reflection of aesthetic judgment, the sublime must be without interest or purpose, but on the other hand it has its foundation in moral feeling (*CPJ* 5: 265, 292). On the one hand, the sublime "represents merely the subjective play of the powers of the mind (imagination and reason) as harmonious" (258), but on the other hand, reason "exercises dominion over sensibility" and the imagination is "purposively determined in accordance with a law" of reason (268f). Taking into account these problems concerning the essential definition the sublime, this chapter will first illustrate how the sublime embodies the *a priori* principle of aesthetic judgment through contrasting the judgment of the sublime with the judgment of taste in order to establish a basic logical frame for the judgment of the sublime. Second, this chapter redefines the boundary between the mathematically and dynamically sublime in order to reveal both the coexistence of contemplation and movement within the sublime and the unrevealed function of reason and imagination. Finally, contrasting the sublime with moral feeling, this chapter elaborates the turning-structure (from sensibility to reason and from object-intuition to idea-exhibition) of the sublime.

2. Beauty and the Sublime

During the pre-Critical period Kant had already made a distinction between beauty and the sublime. Because he was influenced by British empirical aesthetics (especially Edmund Burke), his philosophy concentrated on the empirical and psychological distinctions between the two

concepts. This changed in *CPJ*, when he developed an *a priori* principle to define beauty and art, which distinguished aesthetics from cognition and morality. Thus, aesthetics became an independent discipline with *a priori* universality and objective necessity.

Kant's three disciplines of philosophy—theoretical, practical, and aesthetic—are built on the use of three different faculties of the mind, their application based on three higher cognitive faculties, and their *a priori* principles. In theoretical philosophy, understanding provides the faculty of cognition with *a priori* categories; in practical philosophy, reason provides the faculty of desire with moral law; and in aesthetic philosophy, judgment provides the faculty of the feeling of pleasure and displeasure with the *a priori* principle of subjective purposiveness. Though judgment plays an important role in both theoretical and practical philosophy, it serves only understanding and reason and does not have its own operating mechanism (reflection) or its own *a priori* principle. The judgment of taste is defined by Kant as such an activity: we compare given representations not with others, but with our faculty of cognition, and in the consciousness of the harmonious relationship between imagination and understanding we feel pleasure. On the one side, Kant criticized German rationalist aesthetics, which defined beauty as the perfection of an object, by grounding beauty in subjective feeling (as a judging criterion); on the other side, he differentiated himself from empirical aesthetics, which offered only a psychological description of aesthetic phenomena by endowing empirical feelings with an *a priori* principle.

The judgment of the sublime as a kind of aesthetic judgment is also an application of the reflecting power of judgment and follows subjective and formal purposiveness. The analytical judgment of the sublime and the analytical judgment of taste are regarded as the "two principal parts" of Kant's critique of the aesthetic power of judgment (*CPJ* 5:192). The connection and differentiation between these two parts, therefore, will then be the main line to comprehend and classify the sublime. I start this chapter by looking at the judgment of taste.

Guided by the table of logical functions in the first *Critique* (A70/B95), Kant examined the judgment of taste using four moments. First of all, in the moment of quality the judgment of taste is without any interest, regarding not only material and sensible interest (being different from what is agreeable), but also moral and intellectual interest (being different from what is good). Concerning the moment of quantity, the judgment of taste claims to have universal validity. In the moment of relation, the judgment of taste is based on the form of the purposiveness of an object, but without representation of an end. Concerning the moment of modality, judgment of taste involves universal assent and should have objective necessity. These accounts about the judgment of taste come from a perspective of reflection on the inner state of the mind: it begins with a rejection of interest (negation), asked for by the purity of reflection, and

the reflected state of mind has a universality (totality), a subjective purposiveness (reverse causality),[2] and necessity of the accordant state of mind.

There is also another way to look at the judgment of taste, from which Kant analyzed taste in a more empirical way that is more in accordance with our daily life. The judgment of taste can be expressed like this: "X is beautiful because it brings us satisfaction". In this judgment, the moment of quality is about the way a predicate states the feeling of satisfaction (i.e., the reality of a "feeling of life"). The quantity of the judgment is not aesthetic, but logical. This suggests that judgments of taste are singular. Concerning relation, beauty can be seen as the attribute of an object (substance and accident) and a concrete judgment which, made in the experience, embodies a kind of actuality. In this way we can differentiate two lines in the analysis of a judgment of taste: one is reflective, aesthetic, and *a priori*, while the other is empirical, logical, and grammatical.

The analysis of the sublime is also guided by the logical functions of judging and develops from those previously described four moments. Kant pointed out several basic similarities between taste and judgment of the sublime: both involve satisfaction and the pure use of reflecting judgment (quality), both involve singular judgments with universal validity (quantity), and both are purposive and necessary (relation and modality). However, there are also differences. First, the analysis of the sublime begins with a moment of quantity rather than quality. The sublime relates not only to the amount of the object to be judged but also to the amount the object possesses. The reflecting judgment involves not only judging subjects (universality) but also the subjective capacity for comprehending infinity and totality, no matter what endeavor of imagination is need to comprehend infinity or the demand of reason for totality.

In the judgment of the sublime, the estimation of the magnitude of objects is not logical and mathematical, but sensible and aesthetic. In the former, we estimate an object by means of a given objective measure, which is united with numbers. In this type of estimation, there is no "greatest", because a numerical series can progress to infinity. But in aesthetic estimation we compare an object not with any objective measure, but only with our own subjective measure, as expressed through the faculties of apprehension and comprehension of imagination in the inner sense. When we try to comprehend partial representations of an oversized object into a whole, our imagination reaches its maximum and cannot complete the image. To try to comprehend the whole of an object can thus provoke feelings of imaginative inadequacy; our imagination does not continue trying to perceive the object, but "sinks back into itself" (*CPJ* 5:252). Through reflection of our mind a supersensible faculty (reason) is found and evoked. Reason claims an absolute totality, whether an object is given or infinite. Upon reason's request our imagination strives to comprehend all representations into an intuition, but this request goes beyond the faculty of imagination. Despite the incapability

of imagination, the act of striving embodies the vocation of reason and is purposive for the reason.

Regarding the moment of quality, the sublime is not a pure and direct pleasure but one that is complex (mixed with displeasure) and indirect (evoked through striving). In the aesthetic estimation of magnitude, the limitation of imagination is contrapurposive for reason, but its striving for rational ideas is purposive, so displeasure and pleasure are felt at the same time. Different from the direct affirmation and stimulation of the feeling of life present in the judgment of taste, in the sublime there is a stronger and inner feeling of life, or "feeling of spirit" (*CPJ* 5:192), that is aroused from inhibiting the sensible feeling of life.

Regarding the moment of relation, we can still regard beauty as a property of an object.[3] Though for Kant a feeling of pleasure is aroused through reflecting on one's state of mind, a state of mind is still related to an object—in other words, stimulated by intuition of the form of an object. So from pleasure we can see the harmonious relationship not only between the faculties of mind, but also between ourselves and the object, which cannot actually expand "our cognition of natural objects, but our concept of nature, namely as a mere mechanism, into the concept of nature as art: which invites profound investigations into the possibility of such a form" (*CPJ* 5:246). The sublime, on the other hand, cannot be seen as a property of an object. The absolutely great is not the object, but the supersensible idea aroused by the object. The feeling of the sublime in nature is actually respect for our own vocation, "which we show to an object in nature through a certain subreption (substitution of a respect for the object instead of for the idea of humanity in our subject)" (257). In this sense, we could say that the sublime describes the properties and nature of a subject.

In the reflected perspective of the moment of relation, we can distinguish the purposiveness in the sublime from the purposiveness in beauty in the following two ways. First, unlike the direct purposiveness in beauty, the purposiveness in the sublime is indirect, achieved through a lack of purposiveness or even contrapurposiveness. Kant regarded this as "[t]he most important and intrinsic difference between the sublime and the beautiful" (*CPJ* 5:245). Second, the purposiveness in the beautiful corresponds with sensible purpose. The free play between imagination and understanding is in harmonious and undetermined relationship, in which understanding serves the imagination. Without the constraint of understanding, the imagination creates "voluntary forms of possible intuitions" (241). But the purposiveness in the sublime corresponds to the purpose of reason. Imagination and reason exist in a serious and intense relationship. No matter how imagination tries to expand itself to reach the infinite (in the mathematical sublime) or to overcome power and promote itself to the supersensible world (in the dynamically sublime), it merely serves reason as a tool to accomplish the business of reason, despite the fact that imagination is also expanded and strengthened.

Concerning the moment of modality, common sense (*Gemeinsinn*, *sensus communis*) as an ideal norm demands universal assent to the judgment of taste and ensures the necessity that it be universally communicable (*CPJ* 5:237f). Kant defined common sense as a disposition of the cognitive powers (imagination and understanding) for cognition in general, and it is assumed to be a necessary condition for the universal communicability of cognition (238f). However, in the case of the sublime the disposition is not about imagination and understanding, but imagination and reason, so it has nothing to do with the subjective condition of cognition. This kind of disposition can only be based in our "predisposition to the feeling for (practical) ideas" (265), because a determined correspondence between reason and sensibility lays the foundation for the undetermined correspondence between reason and imagination.

3. The Mathematically Sublime and the Dynamically Sublime

In addition to the concrete differences between the beautiful and the sublime in the four moments described above, Kant also added to his composition of the sublime something that did not exist in the concept of beauty: a distinction between the mathematically sublime and the dynamically sublime. Through this differentiation Kant underlined the different states of mind when conceiving of the beautiful and the sublime. A judgment of taste is contemplative, and "[e]motion, a sensation in which agreeableness is produced only by means of a momentary inhibition followed by a stronger outpouring of the vital force, does not belong to beauty at all" (*CPJ* 5:226). But a judgment of the sublime always accompanies movement, which can be compared to a "vibration, i.e., to a rapidly alternating repulsion from and attraction to one and the same object" (258). The contemplation of the beautiful can only be regarded mathematically, which is similar to the contemplation that occurs in theoretical cognition; and the emotion present while discerning the sublime is more dynamic, similar to the indispensable incentive (*Triebfeder*; i.e., driving force) in moral praxis.

Kant concretely defines the mathematically and dynamically sublime using two kinds of functions (modes) of imagination in emotions. Imagination is related either to the faculty of cognition or to the faculty of desire, and then has one of two dispositions: mathematical or dynamical. The purposiveness of the given representation is judged only in the respective disposition of imagination. According to this distinction, Kant correlated the moments of quality and quantity to the mathematical sublime and the moments of relation and modality to the dynamical sublime. But how should we understand this distinction? It is conceivable that imagination relates to the faculty of cognition, but how does it relate to the faculty of desire? In this arrangement, the two kinds of sublime have only two moments in which to be elucidated. Does this mean there is a

kind of incompleteness and asymmetry between the mathematically and dynamically sublime? I shall use these questions to examine Kant's definitions and applications of the mathematically and dynamically sublime.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant splits the understandings of the sublime into different classes. The first class is concerned with intuitive objects and the second with existence (see B110). Considering how pure concepts could be applied to possible experience, Kant also divided synthesis of the sublime into two types: mathematical and dynamical. Both are combinations of a manifold of representations, but the former is composed of a homogeneous manifold wherein the parts do not necessarily belong to each other, whereas the latter is composed of a heterogeneous manifold wherein the parts do necessarily belong to one another (see B199f). In the Transcendental Dialectic, Kant also distinguished the two perspectives to define the cosmological ideas behind these two categories. The mathematical whole (world) is an aggregation of all appearances in reference to their quantity (both in the great and the small, or their progress through composition and division). The expression of the dynamical whole (nature) emphasizes the necessary unity in the existence of appearances (A418f/B446f). In this way, we can summarize the distinction between the mathematical and dynamical sublime in three points: (1) intuition vs. existence, (2) homogeneous vs. heterogeneous, and (3) unnecessity vs. necessity. Returning to Kant's analysis of the sublime in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, we can verify that these distinctions are present there as well.

In respect to the first distinction within the judgment of the sublime—between intuition and existence—intuition is present not in the theoretical sense, but in an aesthetic one. Intuition involves the use of judgment's reflecting power, not only as it is related to the intuition of objects but also as it is associated with the relationship between a given object and cognitive faculties—i.e., with the reflection of a specific state of mind. Therefore, the distinction between the mathematically and dynamically sublime lies not only in the distinction between intuition and existence, but also in the distinction between intuition and reflection, or between the intuition of an object and the reflected state of existence of the subjective mind.

It is also worthwhile to mention that the existence of a subject here is not real, but only an imaginary existence that occurs when we confront an object with irresistible power. Though one might imagine that this object could destroy everything and endanger one's own existence, one actually remain safe, so that one can stay in "a mood of calm contemplation" and make "an entirely free judgment" (*CPJ* 5:263). As Kant pointed out, in the dynamically sublime the imagination is related to the faculty of desire (247). The constraint of nature on the sensible faculty of desire (e.g., self-protection) as well as one's powerlessness to resist is only represented in the imagination, and the purposiveness of reason aroused

by the contrapurposiveness of sensibility only concerns the power of representation. Therefore, reason is not the determining ground of the faculty of desire and is little related to one's capacity of action to bring about an object; reason is only sensibly aware in the reflection. The horror and astonishment that are felt when we view the sublime in nature are not an actual fear for our safety, "but only an attempt to involve ourselves in it by means of the imagination, in order to feel the power of that very faculty, to combine the movement of the mind thereby aroused with its calmness, and so to be superior to nature within us, and thus also that outside us" (269). In this sense, the dynamically sublime also has a contemplative character and a mathematical dimension.

The second distinction, between homogeneous and heterogeneous within the sublime, is not as explicit as it is in Kant's theoretical philosophy. In the mathematically sublime, the partial representations of an object that are to be comprehended are homogeneous; the increasing degrees of the power that is to be resisted can be regarded as successive and homogeneous. But there are also heterogeneous elements in both the mathematically and the dynamically sublime. In the former, we discover a supersensible capability providing the idea of totality from the limits of our imagination (*CPJ* 5:250). In the latter, we find a power both alien and superior to nature (i.e., the personality of rational beings and the moral idea), arising from our physical disability in the face of the power of nature, so that we can remove ourselves from sensible frustration. In this way, heterogeneity not only lies in the difference between objects being judged—intuited objects—and the reflected subjective state of mind, but also in the transformation of functional authority from the sensible being to the moral being.

Further support for this can be found in Kant's description of the mixed feelings in both types of the sublime. In both circumstances, there is a repulsion from and attraction to an oversized and overpowerful nature, as well an accomplished feeling: the inhibition of sensible vital powers and the more powerful outpouring of rational vital powers. In Kant's 1786 *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, he defines the dynamically sublime as a combination of "the original forces of repulsion and attraction" (*MFNS* 4:532). Thus, the boundary between the mathematically sublime and the dynamically sublime is not as settled as it seems.

The last differentiation between the two types of sublime is the necessary connection between partial representations. The crucial problem is whether the transformation of the heterogeneous, from imagination's contrapurposiveness when intuiting objects to the purposiveness of reason, is necessary. Though Kant said that contrapurposiveness, together with displeasure, "at the same time" (*CPJ* 5:258) is represented as purposive for reason, this transformation does not constantly occur. For example, when experiencing ugliness displeasure is also caused by the

contrapurposiveness of the relationship between imagination and understanding, but from this contrapurposiveness no purposiveness for anything is revealed. Kant also admits that "not every object that arouses fear is found sublime in our aesthetic judgment" (260). Another example is contributed by Kant himself: a man without a moral conscience feels only a fear of danger when viewing icy mountains, but the sight arouses no moral feeling (265).

Comparing these counterexamples, we can find some unexplored elements in the transformation from contrapurposiveness to purposiveness. The first pertains to features of an object. We feel something is ugly or awful for various reasons: weirdness, loathing, etc. But only those objects in nature, which have something in common (e.g., infinity, power) with the sublime in ourselves (e.g., the starry heavens and the sea) can be in accordance with the purpose of reason and can thus be described as sublime. The similarity is more obvious when sensible representations serve as attributes of supersensible ideas: for example, correlating the rational idea of a cosmopolitan disposition to the movement of the sun, or describing a rise in virtue as a sunrise (see *CPJ* 5:316). This is not only grounded in the conventional usage of language, but also necessary for Kant's construction of the judgment of sublime. Ideas can elevate the subject only when the supplement provided by the ideas has a similar aspect to what is lacking from sensibility. It is only through this similarity that a connection between the largeness and power of the outer object and the infinity and transcendence of the inner rational capacity is possible. This, in turn, makes possible the transformation from contrapurposiveness to purposiveness. This connection can only be accomplished through the function of the association of imagination.

The second element is related to the inner capabilities of the subject. We will only see danger and distress when faced with the power of nature if our reason is not sufficient to propel us from powerlessness and make us aware of the supersensible idea; this rids us of our fright and turns to satisfaction with our own personality. Thus, in the turn from contrapurposiveness to purposiveness, reason as supersensible power is not only found, but also initiates the turn. Despite the fact that this is not a practical incentive that can affect will and action, but an imaginative one that affects only the mind, reason pushes us to go deeper in our reflection: Not only is the relation between cognitive faculties reflected in this state of mind, but also the ultimate ground for this relationship. Thus, reason is not only awoken, but also lets itself be exhibited.

Though Kant portrays the mathematically and dynamically sublime as a neat distinction, this division is actually not so neat. The dynamically sublime also contains a mathematical element that limits the sensiblization of rational ideas only to contemplation. Likewise, in the mathematically sublime there is also a dynamical element that allows rational ideas to be revealed. To make this interplay possible, a spontaneous capacity

is necessary—i.e., reason. To connect the intuited object in nature to the reflected idea of reason, a capacity of association (i.e., imagination) is needed; it prevents judgment from falling apart as a result of the interplay.

4. The Sublime and Moral Feeling

In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant created a new definition of moral feeling that is differentiated from the traditional understanding of the concept in English empiricism. The moral feeling of respect, according to Kant, is an *a priori* feeling based in practical reason. It serves as an incentive for pure reason (i.e., the subjective determining ground of one's will) and drives a person to obey the moral law in actions. As a feature of feelings, the feeling of respect is divided into two types: negative and positive. The first refers to the pain and displeasure felt when denying a sensible inclination, while the latter refers to the pleasure and satisfaction that comes when one's intellectual personality is realized and affirmed.

There are many similarities between moral feeling and the sublime: concerning the subjective formal condition, both are pure, having no connection with natural need (neither an empirical nor sensible interest). Therefore, both are universal, though the universality of the former is imperative, while for the latter it is a claim for others' assent to our own judgment. In reference to the complexity of feelings, both are combined with complex feelings of displeasure and pleasure; in both cases, displeasure comes from the suppression and frustration of sensibility and pleasure from the consciousness and affirmation of reason.

The essential affinity between the sublime and moral feeling lies in the fact that the disposition of the sublime is based on the disposition of moral feeling, since the undetermined correspondence between imagination (as the sensible capacity of representation) and reason in the sublime has its foundation in the determined correspondence between the sensible capacity of desire and reason in moral feeling (cf. *CPJ* 5:265, 256). Kant wrote that "a feeling for the sublime in nature cannot even be conceived without connecting it to a disposition of the mind that is similar to the moral disposition" (268), and that "the intellectual, intrinsically purposive (moral) good, judged aesthetically, must . . . be represented . . . as sublime, so that it arouses more the feeling of respect" (271).

On one hand, an affinity with moral feeling provides a foundation for the universality and necessity for the judgment of sublime. On the other hand, it challenges the purity of this judgment. If the sublime is based on an idea of practical reason, how can we say that judgment is without any interest or end, even though its interest/end is practical and intellectual? Concerning one's inner state of mind, Kant thought that "reason must exercise dominion over sensibility" in both the sublime and moral feeling (*CPJ* 5:268f). He argues that the latter serves the

business of former as its instrument, which is quite different from the free play in the judgment of taste. However, Kant also explicitly states that the sublime does not have a determinate concept as its ground: "[I]t represents merely the subjective play of the powers of the mind (imagination and reason) as harmonious even in their contrast" (258). Is the judgment of the sublime then determined and dominated or free and without purpose?

A possible solution is to divide the judgment of the sublime into two stages: the first is a free play of the cognitive faculties when intuiting objects and the second stage is the determination and dominion of reason over the imagination when exhibiting the idea of reason. The two stages are connected and exist together in turn (*Umschlag*).[4] When we start to intuit an object, we do not presuppose the end of reason,[5] yet the idea of reason is subsequently revealed and evoked. This revelation and evocation lie in both our sensibility and our reason. Without the empirical condition—the frustration of sensibility in intuition of an object as stimulation—it would be impossible. It would also be impossible without the *a priori* condition, the idea of reason and the moral disposition, as foundation. Therefore, unlike the purposiveness of reason in moral feeling, which always has an end in view, the purposiveness of reason in the sublime is without an end, and the correspondence between imagination and reason is brought out through the contrast and conflict that they freely generate. Negative freedom turns into positive freedom, and the free play in aesthetic reflection turns into free will with a moral task.

Except for the turn from contrapurposiveness to purposiveness, the mode and effect of the purposiveness of reason in the sublime is different from that of moral feeling, though in both cases sensibility is determined by reason purposively. First, reason in the sublime is not determinate—it could be practical reason or theoretical reason—yet theoretical reason is directed at, and ultimately based on, practical reason. Second, the dominion of reason over sensibility lies in the exhibition of supersensible ideas with imagination. Through this exhibition, "hidden" (*CPJ* 5:269) ideas can be sensibly exhibited, and imagination can also be enlarged and strengthened, so that it can exceeds the limitations of nature and "look[s] out upon the infinite, which for sensibility is an abyss" (265). In moral feeling, determined sensibility is imagination not as faculty of representation, but as faculty of desire. Moral feeling, as an incentive of practical reason, serves as a subjective ground for desire. It relates not to a feeling as much as to the capacity of desire. Though there is also affect and enthusiasm in the sublime, these are merely feelings that relate to the present state of mind but not to a future action (*APP* 7:251). The following table provides an overview of the differences between beauty, the sublime, and moral feeling.

	beauty	the sublime	moral feeling
the object	the reflected state of mind concerning the given object	the reflected idea of reason(the object as stimulation)	moral vocation (personality)
relation and state of the mind	Free play between imagination and understanding	from free play to determined correspondence between imagination and reason	determined correspondence between reason and the sensible capacity
mode of purposiveness	subjective purposiveness without purpose	Subjective purposive-ness without purpose (from contrapurposive-ness to purposiveness)	purposiveness with purpose
features of purposiveness	purposiveness of nature	purposiveness of freedom found in nature	purposiveness of freedom
the purpose in purposiveness	sensible power of life	purposive of reason (theoretical and practical)	purposive of practical reason
state of mind	contemplation	combination of contem-plation and movement	incentive to moral action
effect in the inner mind	animation of the imagination	exhibition of ideas of reason, enlargement and strengthening the imagination	subjective determination of reason over the will
similarities between two of the three	application of aesthetic reflecting power of judgment, subjective purposiveness without purpose, beginning with the object in nature, contemplation		
		realization of end of reason; dominion of reason over sensibility; conflicting feelings	
similarities between all three	negative freedom—i.e., without sensible interests and inclinations; universal validity		

5. Turn and Unity

With the turn, we can explain the conflict between the rational purity and the sensible foundation of the sublime; but it is also worth noticing that the turn does not split judgment of the sublime into two things, but only two stages. In order to emphasize the unity of these two stages,

Kant claimed that sensibility's subjective contrapurposiveness is "at the same time" represented as reason's objective purposiveness (*CPJ* 5:257, 259, 261). By using the phrase "at the same time", Kant pointed out that our consciousness of sensibility's limitation and the revelation of reason's superiority come from the same act of reflection, in which the imagination strives under the regulation of reason to expand itself, mathematically or dynamically, with or without being conscious of the regulation. This insight does not conflict with the notion of a turn, which contains a logical as well as a temporal sequence.

There is also a tension between the object of nature and the ideas of reason. Kant continually emphasized that the object of the sublime is not an object in nature but our own supersensible capacity and that the former is merely a subreption for the latter (*CPJ* 5:257). Nature is a schema for the ideas of reason, albeit a failed one, because exactly through the failure is the "unattainability" (268) of the ideas revealed. Kant's emphasis on the distance and difference leads to the similarities and connections mostly being ignored, even though Kant admits that sensible representation can serve as an attribute of the ideas of reason and also animate it. The tension between the break and connection can be seen as Kant's protection of his dichotomous system (nature and freedom) on the one hand, and on the other hand his endeavor to find connections.

Despite the isolation between nature and freedom from an external perspective (nature outside us and freedom inside us),[6] Kant is more optimistic about the connection between them (nature within us and freedom inside us) in the subject. The human being can be cultivated to be more sensitive to morality by narrowing the distance between sensibility and reason and finding various ways of correspondence between them (e.g., sensible or intelligible, determined or undetermined). On the one hand, compared to the ideas of reason, imagination is insignificant; its limitations have to be overcome so that we can prepare for supersensible ideas. On the other hand, we do not abandon sensibility but force it to expand toward the supersensible, so that it can exhibit the latter in its own way. Unlike the determination of understanding over imagination in cognition, which involves the content of concepts and is constitutive, the determination of reason over imagination is only regulative for its expansion. Despite deprivation because of the dominion of reason, imagination obtains through this dominion "an enlargement and power which is greater than that which it sacrifices" (*CPJ* 5:269).

In this way, on the one hand, we can see conflict and a break between sensibility and reason in the sublime; on the other hand, we can also find the possibility of a transition between nature and freedom through the movement of self-promotion (*sich selbst erheben*)[7] from it. We can regard the sublime as a preparation for the realization of a moral end through overcoming the obstacle of nature both outside and inside of us, but also as a mutual promotion whereby reason rescues sensibility and

the latter honors the former by animating it. In this tension, we can see the maximal embodiment of Kant's dichotomy, as well as his endeavor to coordinate it with the spontaneity of reason, as he always did.

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[1] A previous version of this chapter was published in Chinese, in the Chinese journal, *World Philosophy* 2 (2017) 2, 67–76.

[2] Kant defined an end as an "object of a concept insofar as the latter is regarded as the cause of the former (the real ground of its possibility)" (*CPJ* 5:220). So there is a relationship between the concept as cause and the object as effect, based on causality. By contrast, purposiveness is "the causality of a *concept* with regard to its *object*" (220).

[3] He "speaks of beauty as if it were a property of things" (*CPJ* 5:212). "When we call something beautiful, the pleasure that we feel is expected of everyone else in the judgment of taste as necessary, just as if it were to be regarded as a property of the object that is determined in it in accordance with concepts" (218).

[4] This does not mean that there is always a turn in the feeling of the sublime. The turn exists only when the feeling of the sublime comes from intuiting an object in nature. We can also have a direct feeling of the sublime regarding our moral vocation, but this feeling is not brought about through aesthetic reflection, but intellectual consciousness.

[5] Just as when we observe an object, but do not automatically presume it to be beautiful.

[6] The connection between nature and freedom from an external perspective is not yet possible here, but possible in the second part of the third *Critique*, on teleology.

[7] The German Word "*das Erhabene*" (the sublime) comes from the verb "*erheben*" (to promote, raise).

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