

Kant's Critique of Judgment: Analytic of the Sublime

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General Comment on the Exposition of A Reflective J

Sallis' model: 3 moments of apprehension, reflection, feeling.

1. Apprehension discloses excess of nature over theoretical and practical powers of man in experience of limitation [math sublime: limits to comprehension of nature; dyn sublime: limits to power of resistance to nature revealed in imaginal operation of fearfulness w/o fear].

2. Reflection refers apprehension to reason; it thus reveals excess of reason over imagination. Agency of referral is the imagination. Since imagination is apprehension/comprehension, [object of referral] and agency of referral, imagination refers itself to reason. What is referred is difference of nature over sensible powers of man in theoretical and practical realm. What it is referred to is difference of supersensible in man [R] over sensible in man [I]. It does this by using first, apprehended, difference btw nature and man as schema for excess of reason over imagination. That is, it renders sensible the difference between sensible and supersensible.

3. feeling: complex feeling of division and unity through division; that is, displeasure and pleasure through displeasure.

4. purposiveness of sublime would seem to be at first simply the accord of apprehended difference [nature and man] and reflected difference [reason and imagination]. that is, schematism is purposive. but it's not! the schematism produces pain, is contrapurposive, because it reveals discord of sensible and supersensible in man. So we must think through how an accord comes to be through this discord, an accord of discordance, or purposiveness of contrapurposiveness. That is, it is as if the discord were designed to reveal the superiority of reason; reason is not supposed to be in accord w/ sensibility, but is supposed to be superior to it, is supposed to have Gewalt over it. This is an economy of sense: we disclose difference between sensibility [sensation] and intelligibility [sense] and the direction of orientation between them [superiority of sense over sensation].

5. K attempts to control the sublime: he sometimes writes that what is sublime is the ideas themselves, not our feeling. ideas are site of delimitation and control, withdrawn from sensible, feeling, aesthetic subject. Even w/o this last step though the sublime is assimilated to sensible/supersensible hierarchy [economy of sense]. Reason thus provides guardrail, assimilating aesthetic to reason, keeping imagination from plunging into its abyss, turning profit from pain and violence.

#23: Transition from J B to J S

K: similarities:

- 1) like for own sake;
- 2) reflective J: refer to indeterminate concepts [power of exhibition = imagination];
- 3) imagination harmonizes w/ understanding [JB] or reason [JS];
- 4) singular J, yet universally valid, yet re: feeling of pleasure

K: differences:

- 1) B: form/boundedness; S: unboundedness + totality
- 2) B: understanding; S: reason
- 3) B: quality; S: quantity
- 4) B: direct feeling of furtherance of life; S: indirect pleasure: first inhibition of vital forces, then stronger outpouring
- 5) B: play; S: seriousness
- 6) B: positive pleasure; S: neg. pleasure [admiration + respect]
- 7) B: attraction; S: attraction and repulsion
- 8) B: ind nat B is subj purposive; S is contrapurposive to J, incommensurate w/ exhibition, violent w/ imagination

K: can only say object is suitable for exhibiting mind's sublimity

K: sublime cannot be contained in sensible form, but only ideas of reason; these cannot be exhibited adequately, but are aroused by the exhibition of their inadequation to exhibition; this leads mind to abandon sensibility and occupy itself w/ ideas of higher purposiveness]

9) B: ind nat B shows purposiveness that allows analogy w/ art; S: chaos of nature, not form, arouses ideas of S

K: thus S is not as important as B; it shows nothing purposive in nature, but only in the use we can make of our intuitions of nature to let us feel purposiveness w/in us independent of nature

K: sublime is thus mere appendix to A J of purposiveness of nature

#24: On Dividing the Investigation

K: use same framework of quality, quantity, relation, modality; except quantity goes first.

K: do need to distinguish mathematical [size] from dynamic [force]

K: one last distinction: B: restful; S: agitation, yet purposive

K: in S, we refer agitation to reason as cognitive power [=theoretical reason] in math S and to reason as faculty of desire [practical reason] in dyn S; this leads to similar objective illusion, of attributing sublimity to object

1. but in effect, what is apprehended is not a singular object, but an excessiveness, a disproportion of size or power
2. size = math sublime: disproportion between our ability to estimate size sensibly [through imagination's apprehensive and comprehensive powers] and [theoretical] reason's [cognitive] demand for totality,
3. power = dyn sublime: disproportion between our ability to resist nature physically [in an imaginative situation of fearfulness w/o fear that refers to empirical practice as mediated by our bodily forces] and our ability to overcome nature morally [pure practical reason]

A: On the Mathematically Sublime

#25: Explication of the Term Sublime

K: S is absolutely large, large beyond all comparison

K: J magnitude needs a unit, so all J mag is comparative

K: J absolute largeness is indeterminate; yet based on aesthetic standard; an a priori standard relates to subj conditions of exhibition in concreto

K: universally communicable liking for expansion of imagination

K: respect for the large; contempt for the small
holdover of martial, masculine coding of sublime

K: J abs large = J S = mag equal only to itself = that in comparison w/ which everything else is small

K: nothing in nature escapes comparison, as microscopes and telescopes show;

K: conflict between I and R: I progresses to infinity, R demands totality, so I is shown as inadequate, since it cannot exhibit an infinite totality

K: but this inadequacy is purposive: it arouses in us feeling of our own supersensible power [=R];

K: thus what is absolutely large, what escapes comparison, is not natural things, but use by J of certain objects to arouse feeling of R; all other uses of J are small by comparison [small in virtue, small morally];

K: what is sublime is not the object, but the attunement

K: reformulation: S = thought that proves mind has supersensible R

#26: On Estimating Magnitude of Natural Things in Idea of Sublime

K: mathematical est of mag: via numerical concepts or their signs; aesthetic est through intuition (eye); to avoid infinite regress of concepts, all numerical concepts used to ext. mag. are ultimately aesthetic

K: there is a max for A est mag; when this is judged as absolute, then we get idea of S, and emotion no math est can provide

K: two acts of the imagination for intuition of quantum:

1. apprehension: progress to infinity

2. comprehension: reaches max when first apprehensions are becoming extinguished, so that gains in progression are balanced by losses [due to limits of reproduction]

K: examples are strange in that they are works of art, not crude nature, as K had said is needed for JS; nevertheless, they show that middle position is necessary; there we get feeling that imagination is inadequate to exhibit idea of whole [as demanded by reason]; here the imagination strives to expand its max, but in so doing falls back into itself

Sallis: this is "experience of limitation" [of imagination] which reveals excessiveness of nature = infinity of nature; thus what is disclosed is a difference [btw. nature and Imag]

K: pure A J S not in art, nor in natural things w/ determinate concepts [extrinsic purposes], but in crude nature w/o charm or fear; simple natural magnitude, nothing monstrous [too big for its concept] nor colossal = almost too big for exhibition [borders on relatively monstrous]

K: what is subjective purposiveness in S? how is it a standard?

K: logical estimation is purposive objectively, and can proceed to infinity

K: reason demands exhibition of totality, even with infinite series; i.e., reason demands totalization of the infinite

K: the infinite is abs large; even to think infinite as a whole proves supersensible power [=R], since we could never sensibly exhibit such a totalized infinite

K: supersensible power of reason can think its noumenal object as substrate underlying appearance [indeterminate supersensible substrate as allowed by CPR]

K: this purely intellectual [neither logical/numerical or aesthetic] est mag comprehends infinite of world under a concept: that is, the idea of the infinite;

K: idea of the infinite expands mind to think supersensible practically, through feeling of inadequacy of efforts of imagination

K: in math est, imag is always adequate; in aesth est mag we feel inadequacy of imagination to grasp basic measure of natural world = whole of nature = infinity comprehended [as sensible, we can only progress to infinity in our investigation of nature]; thus we demand a self-contradictory concept: totality of [what can only be given in] infinite progress; hence we must turn to thought of supersensible substrate [this can be thought, since it doesn't require sensuous exhibition via infinite progress--precisely because it is super-sensible]

K: J S refers I to R to produce feeling compatible w/ moral feeling of respect; mind is elevated to moral feeling by J inadequacy of I to R

K: man as measure of all things: eye must judge; man's height is ready to hand measure

K: sublimity lies in recognizing that farther we progress, the larger the unity of measure becomes

#27: Quality of Liking in J S

K: respect = feeling that we cannot attain idea that is law for us; imagination has similar inadequacy to what is its law [command by reason]; but a certain "subreption" brings about objective illusion so that we call object sublime [rather than attunement]

K: feeling of S = displeasure/pleasure: displeasure at inadequacy of imagination compensated for by pleasure at recognition of supersensible power; part of our vocation to estimate natural objects that are large for us [man as measure] as small re: ideas of reason; hence our inner perception of inadequacy of imagination is in harmony w/ laws of reason and is a pleasurable displeasure

K: agitation of mind is a vibration, a rapid alternation of repulsion and attraction; thing, as excess to which imagination is driven, is an abyss for imagination; yet this thing is not excessive for reason, but conforms to its law. hence we get alternation of attraction/repulsion.

K: J S is aesthetic, not conceptual; presents play of harmony in contrast; I and R are purposive in conflict [as if conflict were designed to lead to feeling of supersensible R whose superiority can be exhibited only by inadequacy of I, whose power to exhibit sensible is unbounded {in infinite progress}]

K: comprehending a multiplicity in a unity of intuition [=comprehending in one instant what must be apprehended successively] is a regression [a type of mental Bewegung] that cancels time and makes simultaneity intuitable [instead of moving from one perceived object to another in time, I can see them together, see them as together, in "same" time].
NB: this violent regression holds for any intuition of multiplicity in unity, that is, for any cognition; cf. way free play of imag/und underpinned any cognition

K: this subjective Bewegung of imagination does violence to inner sense; but this violence [in large cases] is purposive for whole vocation [it points to supersensible R]; this is a purposive [and hence pleasurable] displeasure: inability only way to reveal an ability

B: On the Dynamically Sublime in Nature

#28: On Nature as a Might

K: Macht [power, might] vs Gewalt [force: violence, authority]

K: fearfulness w/o fear: supplement apprehension of object w/ imaginative operation in which we image resisting yet being overwhelmed

K: in judging ourselves as naturally helpless, we discover supersensible superiority over nature as possessors of R;

Sallis: apprehension thus discloses limitation of our power and excess of nature

K: nature has Macht over us in display of Gewalt [as violence] but it does not have Gewalt [as authority] over us as possessors of R

K: masculinist, martial coding of sublime; feminine degradation of peace

K: discussion of religion in terms of sublimity vs fear-inducing; sublimity distinguishes religion from superstition

#29: On the Modality of a J S in Nature

K: we cannot expect same empirical agreement w/ JS as w/ JB, since JS relies on cultured development of receptivity to moral feeling

K: in sublimely-attuned mind R has Gewalt over sensibility [as result of cultured moral pedagogy], allowing sensibility to look into the abyss [w/o falling in]; for those w/o this culture, sublime nature is only repellent, for they [whose bodies/minds are in state of nature, w/o reason's Gewalt] see only hardship, danger, misery in living there [in bodily life] peasant's judgment about bodily survival vs. rich thrill-seeking cultured tourists; find political economy links that distribute leisure, travel, etc.

K: nonetheless, the lower probability of empirical agreement of JS vs. JB shouldn't hide fact that JS is based on human nature: on predisposition to moral feeling; this grounds necessity of universal assent we rightfully claim in JS

K: discovering such an a priori principle for JS lifts it from realm of empirical psychology and puts it alongside JB in a transcendental philosophy

General Comment on the Exposition of Aesthetic Reflective Judgments