

The Mathematical and Temporal Basis of Judgments of the Sublime: A Reading of Kant's Subjectivity of Reason

I. INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I will offer an exegesis of a passage of Immanuel Kant's section on "The Analytic of the Sublime," revolving around Kant's use of infinity and time.¹ To do this, I will use David Foster Wallace's exposition of Georg Cantor's diagonalization proof to explain the inadequacy of the imagination's attempt at a presentation of infinity due to reason's demand for an idea. What I hope to illuminate is that the imagination's failure to present infinity is rooted in its severed relationship to the understanding, which normally comprehends finite objects in time. Ultimately, I will cross-reference the cancellation of temporality in judgments of the sublime with G.W.F. Hegel's remarks in *Phenomenology of Spirit* about the need to cancel time for absolute knowing, filtered through Jean-François Lyotard's exegesis of aesthetic temporality. My thesis is that judgments of the sublime give consciousness the task of using reason to know a real (and absolute) object, but they defer the subjectivity of reason to do this. I will now outline the structure of the argument.

I turn first to Cantor who proves that there is a set of real numbers that are not intuitable (viz irrational numbers). He differentiates between an infinite set of numbers that can be described by a rule and an infinite set that cannot be ordered or enumerated and therefore cannot be described. This parallels Kant's distinction between the understanding's concept of infinity and reason's demand for infinity (through an idea). Reason's demand that the imagination conceive infinity is necessarily impossible because the imagination (the faculty that presents and organizes sense data) loses the conditions of its operation (time). As Lyotard points out, this task leads to a temporal collapse of cognition. However, at the same time that the imagination fails to present an infinitely large object, its frantic attempt to present some kind of infinity affirms the power of reason over that of the understanding because reason does not require time. (Understanding does require time and contradicts itself in thinking infinity.)

After showing the parallel in Kant's understanding of how infinity works regarding judgments of the sublime and Cantor's development of two kinds of infinity, I will offer a brief section to introduce this reading of infinity into Lyotard's analysis of aesthetic judgments. What I intend to emphasize beyond Lyotard's account is that the pleasure one feels in judgments of the sublime (albeit a negative pleasure) affirms the subjectivity of reason. With two kinds of infinity in Kant, one rooted in understanding and one rooted in reason, delineated and with my concerns about subjectivity from Lyotard explained, I will proceed to point out how this implicates a terse passage in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, namely the one in which consciousness must cancel time. What I will argue is that the pleasure of judgments of the sublime demands the subjectivity that would be required for absolute knowing, which is a thinking—a subjectivity—no longer constrained by time. But for Kant (and maybe even for Hegel), this moment never happens.

II. KANT, CANTOR, AND INFINITY

In *The Critique of Judgment*, Kant offers an account of sublime experiences. Importantly, Kant does not take sublimity to inhere within objects, but rather it arises out of a peculiar relationship of the mental faculties to each other and is only occasioned by an object. His analysis is not on sublime objects but on judgments of the sublime.

Our purpose here is to closely examine a passage that occurs in *The Critique of Judgment* and runs:

Measuring (as [a way of] apprehending) a space is at the same time describing it, and hence it is an objective movement in the imagination and a progression. On the other hand, comprehending a multiplicity in a unity (of intuition rather than of thought), and hence comprehending in one instant what is apprehended successively, is a regression that in turn cancels the condition of time in the imagination's progression and makes *simultaneity* intuitable.²

Taking my cue from Lyotard, I am interested in the repercussions of the cancellation of time pertaining to subjectivity. As Lyotard points out, the cancellation of time makes impossible all subjectivity that follows the model "I think" because such thinking—for Kant—requires time as a kind of container for one's actions.³

Let us establish some of the basic Kantian distinctions. In elaborating the structure of the mind, Kant distinguishes three parts: imagination, understanding, and reason.⁴ The imagination is the faculty that presents objects of experience to our minds and is necessarily subject to the transcendental conditions of space and time (Kant calls these two conditions "forms of intuition").⁵ The understanding is our power of concepts; it provides determinate rules for the imagination to follow in its presentations and constitutes the objects of our experience as distinct objects (and not just meaningless blobs differentiated only by time and space). Finally, reason is our power of ideas, that, unlike concepts, never makes possible objects of experience or cognition because they are speculative and transcendent, e.g., God, freedom, etc. Different forms of judgment involve interrelations among these faculties.

Judgments of the mathematically sublime, in particular, involve a discord or a rupture between the imagination and the understanding but an affirmation of the power of reason. Such judgments occur when the imagination attempts to present an object to the mind that is absolutely large (and not simply larger than some object).⁶ Kant writes of sublimity, "The sublime can be described thus: it is an object (of nature) *the presentation of which determines the mind to think of nature's inability to attain to an exhibition of ideas.*"⁷ Or, in other words, as the imagination attempts to present an object (in this case, an idea) to the mind for cognition it necessarily fails. But note here that the imagination is burdened not with making a presentation to the understanding for recognition in a concept but with making a presentation to reason for recognition in an idea. Given that the ideas of reason cannot be objects of cognition, the imagination must necessarily fail whenever it tries to present an object in accordance with such ideas. But why would it ever attempt to do so?

The impetus for the imagination's attempt to present an object in accordance with reason is that it has been subjected to a contradictory demand from the understanding. In order to see how this is possible, we have to know the stages of the work of imagination detailed in Kant's *The Critique of Pure Reason*. The imagination has a three step process of forming objects from sensations that follows this rough formula: apprehension, reproduction, and comprehension. In apprehension, the imagination gathers together all the sense data—think of it like an adding process. In reproduction, the imagination keeps in mind the previous components that have been

gathered for the process of addition. By analogy, consider the operation of $2 + 2 = 4$. In order to add the second 2 to the first 2, the imagination must necessarily keep the first 2 in mind as it gathers the second 2. Or, in other words, reproduction allows the imagination to make present those components that were gathered previously in time. Comprehension is the operation by which the understanding cognizes the object all at once, cancelling the time required for the process of putting the object together out of manifold sense data. It is the application of a single concept to the assembled sense object that constitutes it as something meaningful, that distinguishes it from other objects like a dog is distinguished from a cat.

But in judgments of the sublime, the understanding's concept is self-contradictory, and therefore the imagination cannot attempt to present the object to the mind, i.e., there cannot be recognition in a contradictory concept. The contradictory concept is the absolutely large (infinity). It is self-contradictory because "an absolute totality of an endless progression is impossible," or in the parlance of the three processes, apprehension never quits giving components to the reproduction process so that comprehension never takes place.⁸ Rather than having a neat cancellation of time by recognizing an object through its concept (a cancellation that would preserve the temporal process of the imagination), the temporality of the judgment collapses entirely. It would take infinite time to apprehend all of the components of an infinite totality, and such time is never given.

I will now direct our attention to a proof by Cantor with some parallels to Kant's judgments of the sublime.⁹ We turn here because Cantor demonstrates with mathematical clarity what Kant was attempting to express in concepts. What Cantor's proof is going to nicely show is that there are different "sizes" of infinity and that in order to demonstrate this he had to describe infinities that are subject to rules of orderability and infinities that can only be defined over and against rule-governed infinities (i.e., infinities that cannot be ordered).¹⁰

In order to show that there are different sizes of infinity, Cantor offers a *reductio* with two parts. First, he shows that some infinities are the same size by virtue of being expressible by a law of orderability. Second, he assumes that the set of all rational numbers (expressible by a fraction or a determinate decimal) and all irrational numbers (characterized by having non-repeating, non-terminating decimal points and not being expressible in fraction, such as pi) are expressible by the same abstract rule.¹¹ Cantor then defines an irrational number such that it defies that rule and demonstrates the initial assumption to be false. Keep in mind that we are dealing with the size of sets and not a single number. Let us take each step in turn.

First, we can quickly show that the set of all positive integers is the same size infinity as the set of all positive *and* negative integers. (The former is not half the size of the latter.) Each set, although they extend to infinity, can be described by the same rule. More specifically, both sets can be ordered in terms of ascending absolute value; you could write each set down in parallel lines:

$$\begin{array}{l} 1 \ 2 \ 3 \ 4 \ 5 \ 6 \ 7 \ 8 \ 9 \ 10 \ \dots \\ -1 \ 1 \ -2 \ 2 \ -3 \ 3 \ -4 \ 4 \ -5 \ 5 \ \dots \end{array}$$

and match every number in the first set to a number in the second set (1 to -1, 2 to 1, 3 to -2, etc.) for the ad infinitum.¹² And never would there be an excess or a deficit of one set in relation to the other; all numbers, given infinite time, would be accounted for and partnered.

Now we start the actual *reductio*. If Cantor can prove that one infinity is utterly incommensurable with an orderable infinity (describable by a rule), then he will have proved they are different sizes. So he—and we following him—will assume that the two infinities in question are commensurable under a single, definable rule. The two infinities in question will be all rational numbers between 0 and 1 and all real numbers (including irrationals). Even though we are taking

a finite line segment as our object, there is an infinite number (two infinities, actually) of points on that line segment.

Here's the rule Cantor proposes to describe both infinite sets of points on the line (let us call it "The List"):¹³

- (#1) 0.a₁a₂a₃a₄a₅a₆a₇a₈a₉ . . .
- (#2) 0.b₁b₂b₃b₄b₅b₆b₇b₈b₉ . . .
- (#3) 0.c₁c₂c₃c₄c₅c₆c₇c₈c₉ . . .
- (#4) 0.d₁d₂d₃d₄d₅d₆d₇d₈d₉ . . .
- .
- .
- .

Each number has an infinite number of digits, and there are an infinite number of such numbers. So on the top row, you will have decimal places well past a_{1,000,000} (you'll have an infinity of *a*'s); and past #4 (the *d*'s) you will have to invent symbols after you run out of the English alphabet as you continue formulating numbers. And, each digit within a single number can be any number (0–9) at all; the "*a*" only designates that the digit belongs to the first number in the list, and the subscript only indicates the digit's location within the number. In other words, the rule is completely abstract and variable and can literally account for any number you can attempt to write down, even if you have an infinite amount of time to write a single number just scribbling digits at random.

This completely abstract rule clearly captures all rational numbers we can think of, and it even captures any irrational numbers we may attempt to think of. So how can the addition of irrational numbers offer anything beyond this rule? Cantor's strategy is to define a number not on The List. Simply enough, the number is

$$0.a_1-1b_2-1c_3-1d_4-1e_5-1f_6-1g-1h_8-1i_9-1. . . .^{14}$$

The number has been formulated as different from any number you can ever put on the list. It cannot be the first number on the list because its first digit is one less than #1's first digit (*a*₁); its second digit ensures it is different from #2's second digit (*b*₂); its third digit ensures it is different from the #3's third digit, and so on forever. This is how the "diagonalization" proof got its name. Given that The List has an infinite number of numbers each with an infinite number of digits, you can draw a diagonal line from the top left toward the bottom right ensuring difference all the way through infinity. And, the moment you try to actually put the defined number (let's call it *X*) into an actual number (let us call it *X'*) and not just variables, *X'* goes on the list and *X* remains different from it by virtue of that infinitely extending line of difference. By definition, *X* cannot be accounted for by the rule for ordering all rational numbers.

Let us return to Kant. All rules for ordering infinity are contradictory as concepts because each rule would require an infinite amount of time to apprehend all of the parts. For instance, for The List, you would need infinite time simply to write down all of the digits to the first number in the series which itself has an infinite number of members. This is, in Kant's terms, a contradictory concept because—insofar as concepts are used to cognize objects—concepts must be determinate. Nevertheless, as Cantor showed, we do not simply have rules that would require infinite time to complete; we have infinities which defy such rules entirely. The significance of *X*—the variable that can never appear on The List—is that it indicates a power of the mind higher than the understanding, namely reason. Thus, when the mind tries to think of infinity with the understanding, the faculty of reason is able to attempt to think it in the understanding's place.

Even in the world of mathematics, this debate over the status of infinity caused quite a stir because it proved that irrational numbers were *bona fide*.¹⁵

In judgments of the sublime, the imagination cannot present an object whose concept requires an infinite amount of time to apprehend, and so the faculty of reason demands that the understanding present the object in accordance with an idea of reason that transcends the forms of intuition (time and space). Because the idea of infinity (as seen in the set of real numbers) is not constrained by rules of ordering and thereby evades time, the imagination is hoodwinked into attempting to make such a presentation of an absolutely large object and necessarily fails. On the one hand, there is the imagination that requires time to apprehend an object; on the other, there is reason demanding that the imagination present an object that transcends time. The struggle of the powers of the mind that erupts from this tension is, in its first moment, painful. However, the second moment of judgments of this sort is a kind of pleasure in this pain because it affirms the power of reason that normally has no (legitimate) use in comprehending the phenomenal world.¹⁶

III. LYOTARD, TEMPORALITY, AND SUBJECTIVITY

Lyotard picks up on this contradiction between the imagination (requiring time) and reason (transcending time) because their relationship is a "differend"; i.e., it is an irreconcilable conflict (it is a conflict that cannot be overcome with a higher, mediating unity, as in Hegelian dialectics).¹⁷ His interest in the differend is further connected to the dissolution of what we might call the modern subject, which conforms to the model of the "I think." Given that the modern subject is always an "I think *x*," it must always think a phenomenal object; it is thereby constrained by a notion of time that works roughly like a container (technically, it's a form and not an objective grid) and relies on a unitary, powerful subject. The dissolution—however temporary—of the subject that Lyotard is interested in is accomplished by the irreconcilable cancellation of time as the condition for the subject. He writes,

I have chosen the example of the sublime judgment because it responds clearly, that is, negatively, to the question of the possibility of a subject and an aesthetic temporality (both sublime) constituted according to the model of the *Ich denke* ["I think"] and the temporality required for theoretical thinking. There seems to be no question that the most elementary conditions (the syntheses of time) for the synthesis of a *Selbst* [self] are lacking here.¹⁸

We should note first of all that Lyotard is not denying any form of subjectivity and temporality whatsoever but is denying the form of subjectivity and temporality that follows the model of cognitive thought. In fact, Lyotard claims, it is the denial of the modern subject, the subject of theoretical cognition, that allows judgments of the sublime to be part of the order of the subjective (The judgment gives rise to a sensing of itself and only of itself).¹⁹

The subjectivity of the "I think" is the model of subjectivity from *The Critique of Pure Reason*, in which Kant elaborates the "transcendental unity of apperception" (the "I" that necessarily accompanies every thought) as a sort of synthesis of three syntheses (apprehension, comprehension, and reproduction) and arises in response to the stimulation of the senses by external objects.²⁰ This form of subjectivity exists wherever the three syntheses successfully carry out their mechanical work, and it is in judgments of the sublime where the imagination fails to apprehend sensations fit for the concept of infinity.

Lyotard contends that the model of subjectivity of judgments of the sublime (which work similarly to judgments of taste in their manner) do not and cannot be a subjectivity as synthesis or container as it is in the "I think" because, in the failure of the conjunction of the syntheses

apprehension and comprehension, there is a temporal collapse in judgments of the sublime, i.e., "I think" time disintegrates in judgments of the sublime.²¹ This is in contradistinction to the temporality of the agent of practical reason, whose rules for conduct are transhistorical and, presumably, have a way of interrupting phenomenal time. And, neither of these models are the same as aesthetic subjectivity, which is a subjectivity that is promised to one in the suggested accord of the imagination and understanding in judgments of the beautiful.²²

Let us take as a given that for Lyotard sublimity is akin to an excess of beauty.²³ It becomes clear, then, that judgments of beauty have a subjectivity related to judgments of the sublime. The subjectivity of judgments of beauty, distinguished from the "I think" subjectivity, garners meaning from the promise of being unified, fit, and in accordance, i.e., it is a subjectivity because it is the promise of a unitary subject that thinks and in thinking feels its thought—although this subject is not determinately derived from concepts because *it is only felt by "inventing" itself in reflective (i.e. aesthetic) thought*. That is, the pleasure felt in reflective aesthetic judgment—qua mere feeling—is a sensing of oneself that appears only in this kind of act of judging.²⁴ And, this is the subjectivity and autonomy of reflective judgment. What Lyotard offers in his analysis of judgments of the sublime (beyond judgments of beauty) is an account of the collapse of the subjectivity that captures (or attempts to capture) infinity by way of a determinate rule and that requires its apprehensions to be played out over time to arrive at comprehension.

IV. THE CANCELLATION OF TIME AND THE PROMISE OF ABSOLUTE KNOWING

So far, we have distinguished between ideas of reason and concepts of the understanding through Cantor's differentiation of infinities. Infinity as a concept, although describable by a rule, requires infinite time for cognition—so it is self-contradictory. Infinity as an idea is not describable because it cannot be ordered; nevertheless, it does not require time. Presentations from the imagination cannot attain either infinity. They cannot fulfill concepts of infinity because the concepts short-circuit themselves by, at once, attempting to be determinate and demanding infinite time to process the object; they cannot fulfill the idea of infinity because ideas are not constrained by time or space (but the imagination most certainly is). The self-short-circuiting of the understanding is, however, the occasion for an affirmation of reason and thus gives pleasure in the judgment of the sublime (albeit a negative pleasure). Lyotard does not elaborate on the kind of subjectivity deferred in the pleasure of judgments of the sublime. In order to address this topic, I turn to a passage in the last pages of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.²⁵ Hegel writes,

In the Notion that knows itself as Notion, the *moments* thus appear earlier than the *filled* [or *fulfilled*] whole whose coming-to-be is the movement of those moments. In *consciousness*, on the other hand, the whole, though uncomprehended, is prior to the moments. Time is the Notion itself that *is there* and which presents itself to consciousness as empty intuition; for this reason, Spirit necessarily appears in Time, and it appears in Time just so long as it has not *grasped* its pure Notion, i.e. has not annulled time.²⁶

There are a number of parallels between this passage by Hegel and the passage from Kant that launched our discussion. In both passages, there are two moments of attempted cognition: first, the process of apprehension; and second, the negation of comprehension. And further, both passages are concerned with the relationship between time and the modern subject.

In Hegel, the first moment is the movement of the notion (or Absolute Idea), where there is multiplicity before there is a whole that is fulfilled by the multiplicity. (We could say there is an

ordering of discrete points prior to the establishment of their continuity as a whole.) The second moment is the understanding by consciousness that has yet to fully grasp the notion. For consciousness, the fact that time is there is the condition for spirit to appear (as an object for consciousness) at all. Thus, time is the absolute whole (which is free from empirical data) that precedes the discrete instantiations of spirit and makes those instantiations historically continuous (as the notion is for consciousness). Nevertheless, the multiplicity of appearances of this absolute object (viz "spirit") indicates the necessity of a unity of its own appearances in its history. So long as consciousness thinks the finite incarnations of absolute spirit (as objects), it fails to comprehend the higher-order infinity that undergirds the (possibly infinite number of) instantiations of spirit in itself.

The same structure appears in Kant. You first have the "objective movement of the imagination and a progression" as the imagination struggles to apprehend (keeps bringing up components of) the absolutely large object—a multiplicity before a unity in the sense data itself.²⁷ Second, there is the moment of attempted comprehension in which the process (necessarily in time) is cancelled so that the object is understood all at once (an impossible task which does "violence to the inner sense" when faced with the absolutely large).²⁸ The failure to cancel time through comprehension suspends the time required for the establishment of the synthetic unity of apperception (the "I" of "I think"), and it "inflicts [damage] on the subject."²⁹ The object that provokes the imagination to work is so overwhelmingly large that the active (subjective) organizational processes of the mind in cognition stall out. And yet, this experience is still "purposive for the whole vocation of the mind."³⁰ In having an experience of the sublime, our failure to know the object gives us the task to think the infinite with a power that does not require time but is nevertheless necessary in thinking something that is real. We saw the same situation in Cantor's diagonalization proof where he showed the set of irrational numbers was real by proving it made possible something as simple as the continuity of a line segment, even if we can never intuit that set.

What Hegel nicely brings to the fore is that being faced with an infinity (for him, an infinity of shapes and not an infinitely large object) indicates a task to think the object without the condition of time for the "I think." It is only a task, akin to Lyotard's account of the promise of subjectivity in judgments of the beautiful but more serious and desperate in manner. Here is what this tells us about Kant: Normally, reason is the faculty which transcends the limits of cognition when it tries to know the supersensible (like God or immortality) and gives to itself what are probably illusions. That is, reason is problematic for Kant. Judgments of the sublime are a moment when infinity, as something beyond what is intuitable because its concept is self-contradictory, is given as real and thereby gives the task of comprehension to reason.³¹ The fact that there is an irreconcilable divide between the imagination and reason ensures that this task is never completed. Nevertheless, the experience of the mathematically sublime offers a glimpse of a subjectivity that addresses the world without being constrained by the form of intuition (time) and knows things as they are in themselves.

V. CONCLUSION

I undertook this paper to indicate a subjectivity deferred in judgments of the sublime analogous to Lyotard's account of the subjectivity promised in judgments of the beautiful. Just as judgments of beauty offer a suggested accord of imagination and understanding, judgments of sublimity demand an accord of reason with the object (which will never happen). Both of these kinds of subjectivity rely on a cancellation of temporality as a container (the temporality that makes possible the three syntheses—apprehension, comprehension, and reproduction). But, both of these

subjectivities rely on bringing to the fore a future-oriented temporality—in the subject to come (in beauty) and in the subject that must come but won't (in sublimity).

To show this, I explained how the passage in Kant about the cancellation of time relies on his theoretical structure of the mind. I then indicated through Cantor's diagonalization proof how something as simple as a line segment contains within it a set of points whose infinite number is so large that a rule for ordering it can never be formulated (by the understanding), thus affirming our power of thinking what is beyond intuition (reason). By refining my concerns about the relationship between temporality and subjectivity through Lyotard's account of aesthetic temporality, I set down the groundwork for pointing to subjectivities that don't rely on time as a container or on a subject whose form is always "I think." Finally, to outline this subjectivity that transcends the time necessary for intuition, I gave an account of Hegel's consciousness tasked with absolute knowing (a task which, for Kant at least, can never be completed).

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¹ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987).

² *Ibid.*, 258–9.

³ See Jean-François Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*, trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford University Press: Stanford, 1994), 22–3.

⁴ Kant parses the mind into a variety of different schemes, none of which are mutually exclusive. The imagination is most closely connected to sensibility, our ability to take in sensory input from external objects, and is given a direct exposition in Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996), A 98–103, Cf. B section 24. The distinction between understanding and reason remains a theme throughout both *The Critique of Pure Reason* as well as *The Critique of Judgment*, but in *The Critique of Judgment*, Kant offers a concise graph to map their relationship to each other and their function. See Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, Akademie, 198 in the second edition and 245'–6' in the first.

⁵ Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, section 8.

⁶ Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, Akademie, 251.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 268.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 255.

⁹ The following is a condensed retelling of David Foster Wallace's explanation of Cantor's proof given in David Foster Wallace, *Everything and More: A Compact History of Infinity* (W.W. Norton & Company: New York, 2003), 253–9.

¹⁰ For our purposes here, we are going to simply deal with the first two infinities dealt with in the diagonalization proof, viz the set of all rational numbers and the set of all real numbers. We will pass over any questions regarding any other size infinities. Compare with Wallace, *A Compact History of Infinity*, 288.

¹¹ Ironically, "irrational" numbers are going to prove the necessity of the faculty of "reason" which operates on the super-sensible.

¹² For a more pictographic account of ordering, see Wallace, *A Compact History of Infinity*, 252.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 254.

¹⁴ See *ibid.*, 255. Note that if one of the digits is 0, the subtraction of the 1 makes it 9.

¹⁵ Compare with Wallace's *A Compact History of Infinity*, in which some of the history of the conflict between competing schools is reshaped.

¹⁶ Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, Akademie, 262.

¹⁷ As opposed to the *Aufhebung* that occurs in regular comprehension where the understanding recognizes the object in its concept all at once. Note that Lyotard perhaps comes closest to offering a definition of a differend in section 5 of *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*, more precisely on pages 123–4.

¹⁸ Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*, 22–3.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

²⁰ Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, section 17. Compare with Lyotard's exegetical remarks in *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime* at 21 where "subjectivity" assures the objectivity of judgments about the phenomenal world.

²¹ Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*, 25.

²² *Ibid.*, 24.

²³ In judgments of beauty, the imagination engages in free play that just so happens to be in accordance with the understanding. (In determinate judgments, the imagination is subservient to the understanding.) In judgments of sublimity, the imagination is still free of the understanding, but rather than having a playful harmony with the understanding or reason, it desperately engages in a frenzy of presenting the components of the absolutely large object.

²⁴ Lyotard calls this sensation "tautegorical"; Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*, 13.

²⁵ G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 487, section 801.

²⁷ Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, Akademie, 258.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 259.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Most, if not all, ideas of reason get caught in their own antinomies; see the dialectical portion of *The Critique of Pure Reason*.

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