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The Kantian Sublime and the Nostalgia for Violence

For Kant, there are two kinds of aesthetic judgments: judgments of taste (which are judgments of the beautiful) and judgments of the sublime. I shall be concerned here only with the aesthetic judgment of the sublime. What I propose to argue is that Kant's notion of the sublime describes the founding moment of both subjectivity and community, and that it does this via a legitimation of domination and violence. Put *differently* (and yet, perhaps the most crucial thing I hope to show is that there is no important *difference* between the proposition that the sublime is the justification of domination and violence and the following formulation): The achievement of the sublime is that it makes domination pleasurable and violence beautiful, or rather: sublime. I shall attempt to show the sublime as the staging of domination as disinterested pleasure.¹

The following elaboration upon Kant's formulation of the sublime presupposes one substantial alteration in Kant's own conception of the relation between beauty and the sublime: the priority, contra Kant, of the sublime. Yet I believe that my explication of Kant's sublime is wholly consistent with his own description of it, indeed, perhaps more consistent than his cursory suggestions might at first glance seem to allow.² In a nutshell, I pose the sublime as a more central and constitutive aesthetic judgment than beauty because the sublime more successfully avoids falling prey to the short-circuiting logic of objective subreption. Objective subreption is the term in Kant's aesthetics for the inevitably mistaken gesture that attributes aesthetic qualities to an *object*—mistaken because Kant explains aesthetic judgment as a *subjective* harmony of faculties. Every judgment of beauty is thus evidence that this subjective harmony has instead mistaken it-

self for something objective. The sublime, on the other hand, thwarts this mistaking of object for subject insofar as it fails to present anything objective. (Kant himself characterizes what precipitates the sublime as the failure of presentation.)³ In sum, the sublime rather than beauty is the more central and constitutive element in Kant's aesthetics because it prolongs and problematizes the project of generating a self-subsistent, whole, and harmonious subject, whereas beauty merely (but pleasurably) confirms subjectivity's misrecognition of itself. Beauty, in a word, offers but a false and static image of subjectivity.⁴

I want to suggest that the implication that follows here from the priority of the sublime over beauty is that the whole realm of the aesthetic may now be associated with our capacity for sublime experience. The aesthetic realm (let us call it culture) may then be interpreted not as that which emerges out of some prior civilizing process or community, but rather as the originary foundation from which arise civilization, community, and subjectivity. To formulate this in line with Kant's most famous dyad would be to say that it is according to our capacity to make a judgment of the sublime that we *supposedly* leave the realm of nature and enter that of freedom. What I hope to show is that this seeming leave-taking of nature is instead a regression to domination and violence, that is, culture is the regression to something worse than anything nature might have been. The *pleasure* of the sublime is the vehicle of this regression.

If the judgment of beauty occurs as subjectivity's successful misrecognition of itself by means of which it achieves a pseudonymous objectivity, what then can be made of the judgment of the sublime in which just that mechanism of misrecognition fails to occur?⁵ The sub-

lime lacks the solace of beauty.⁶ What is an agitated subjectivity to do with itself when the mechanism of objective subreption is not at hand, when beauty, and indeed everything else, fails to come to appearance?⁷ Beauty is the unrecognized doppelgänger of (civilized) subjectivity. My contention is that the absence of objective subreption in the sublime forces a thwarted subjectivity to appear as a dynamism rather than an image.⁸ The sublime is the problematic of a subjectivity not just unable to make a presentation *to* itself, but more importantly, unable to present *itself* at all (as objective).⁹

What I want to suggest is that the dynamic of the sublime, lacking the resources of objective subreption—according to which subjectivity might stabilize (but thereby forget) itself as beauty—instead (re)capitulates and reifies its *mechanism* as culture. Unable to present itself as appearance, the sublime inscribes itself as origin. If beauty for Kant is the (misrecognized) appearance of subjectivity, then the judgment of the sublime—which by definition cannot appear—reproduces itself as the dynamic of culture.¹⁰

Culture then, to further trace out my suggestion, is the institutionalization of domination, and hence community and the self—the two foremost arenas for all that happens in the third *Critique*—are the primary institutes of domination. I want to investigate the Kantian sublime as the moment when domination becomes legitimate as a certain kind of civilized pleasure. What needs to be specifically investigated then is how this dynamic of the sublime functions, which is to say: how domination becomes legitimate and prescribed as free pleasure.

Now to an account of Kant's formulation of the experience of the sublime. An aesthetic judgment of the sublime, insofar as it is a judgment, follows the pattern of judgment in general: a judgment is the subsumption of a particular (aesthetic judgments are always particular judgments)¹¹ under a concept, a universal principle, or rule. When I say: "She is nice," this judgment is the subsumption of this particular person under the concept niceness. Now what is peculiar about aesthetic judgments is that when I say "this is beautiful" or "that is sublime," I am again subsuming a particular this and that under a concept (beauty or sublimity), but without *knowing* that concept or principle. (Presum-

ably, in the example of the judgment that someone is nice, I know and can articulate what constitutes niceness.) Another way of formulating this lack of knowledge in an aesthetic judgment is to say that the very concept or rule according to which I make the judgment is absent. Judgment then, in the case of aesthetic judgment, comes to its excess. Judgment proceeds as a subsuming dynamic even when the rule which prescribes the subsumption is absent. (And this, incidentally, explains the direction of Kant's investigation of aesthetic judgment. He does not seek knowledge or articulation of what might be called the principles of beauty or the sublime—he does not seek the concept which allows these judgments to be made—but rather investigates how judgment is possible when its rule is absent.)

A judgment of the sublime is always a judgment about nature, whereas a judgment of beauty can be made either in reference to nature or art. But strictly speaking, a judgment of the sublime is never a judgment of nature *per se*. When I judge nature to be sublime (and Kant is quite explicit about this),¹² I am judging not nature but the manner in which I have presented nature to myself. I am judging a presentation of nature. Indeed, this is true for aesthetic judgment in general, for what Kant calls the liking within an aesthetic judgment¹³ is in reference not to the presentation or the content of the judgment, but what I instead like in aesthetic judgment is the *act* of judging. Yet even this formulation of the judgment of the sublime is incorrect, for in judging the sublime I am overwhelmed by nature such that I am unable to *present* nature to myself. It is the thoroughness of having been overwhelmed, the inability to even present nature as overwhelming, that leads Kant to discuss the relationship of the judgment of the sublime to nature in terms of power:

Power [Macht] is an ability that is superior to great obstacles. It is called *dominance [Gewalt]* if it is superior even to the resistance of something that itself possesses power. When in an aesthetic judgment we consider nature as a power that has no dominance over us, then it is *dynamically sublime*. (*CJ*, §28, 119)¹⁴

Those lines begin the section "On the Dynamically Sublime in Nature" and describe a

curious dialectic regarding power. Power is first defined as an ability “superior to great obstacles.” Dominance, however, is the name for a *superior* power, a power capable of *overpowering* that which already has power. One clear implication is that whatever possesses no power plays no role in the dynamically sublime, and yet the dynamically sublime occurs as an aesthetic judgment only when “we consider nature as a power that has no dominance over us.” So although power is constituted in relation to a resistance (“great obstacles”) or a competing power (dominance is *superior* power), in a subject who makes an aesthetic judgment of the dynamically sublime, nature is considered a *power*, but *not* one that has dominance.

The power of the subject who judges nature sublime is elaborated by Kant in two seemingly exclusive formulations. Kant explains subjectivity’s relation to nature as at once both independent of and superior to the power of nature. That is, subjectivity—in the case of the aesthetic judgment of the dynamically sublime—is wholly enmeshed in a power struggle with nature (since nature has power but no dominance) while at the same time completely superior to it (both nature and the power it is represented as having). Nature then neither overwhelms nor overpowers us. Nonetheless, we insist, in order to judge nature as sublime, that nature be powerful. The paradox of the sublime is that *we* accord nature an overwhelming power. And it is precisely the realization that it is *we* who have accorded nature this power which serves as the basis for judging nature sublime. Nature is accorded power in order for subjectivity to stage itself as dominant over it. Hence our power is truly independent of nature since the requisite “appearance” of nature as powerful for a judgment of the sublime is dependent entirely on the ability of subjectivity to bestow power to nature. We subjects are at once independent of and superior to the power of nature.¹⁵ I want to suggest that independence and superiority are not so much mutually exclusive formulations of subjectivity as they rather together reveal a particular overdetermination. The overdetermination is the symptomatic expression of the fear that the experience of the sublime is always defective—that it asserts but fails to establish the dominance of subjectivity over nature. It is the persistence of fear in the sublime that calls

forth a further violence. Indeed, I want to suggest that the persistent fear required for sublime judgment functions as the prescription for a compulsive repetition of violence and domination as the appropriate and pleasurable response. Thus Kant’s overdetermined characterization of the relation of subjectivity to nature in the aesthetic judgment of the sublime as both independent and superior foreshadows the demand of the sublime upon subjectivity: the demand for continual violence. If sublime experience truly established the independence and superiority of subjectivity, then such an experience need only occur once.¹⁶ But the sublime instead presents the demand that nature requires a repeated overcoming. Reason—whose absence for Kant in nature (and presence in subjectivity) allows subjectivity to assert itself, in the midst of the experience of the sublime, as independent and superior to nature—is particularly cunning in the sublime insofar as it appears as a disinterested pleasure on the side of civilization.

In the sublime, nature comes to *appear* powerful only when its power has been negated, only, that is, when it is no longer powerful. The deflected, deferred, and specifically non-powerful appearance of nature as power is, curiously enough, the appearance of nature as a sublime object of fear. Kant writes: “Hence nature can count as a power, and so as dynamically sublime, for aesthetic judgment only insofar as we consider it as an object of fear” (*CJ*, §28, 119). Nature is empowered when we *present* it as an object of fear. And it is this deflected appearance of power as fear which will allow the sublime domination of nature.

Fear is simultaneously both the revelation and concealment of nature as overwhelming power. Kant describes the dual character of fear within the sublime as follows: “We can, however, consider an object *fearful* without being afraid of it” (*CJ*, §28, 119). Kant’s formulation of the necessity of fear for the sublime is disingenuous; for the difficulty is not to imagine that we could be fearful of something while not being afraid of it, rather, the very notion of *considering* an object fearful already presupposes a distance between ourselves and the object, just that distance which allows us not to be afraid of it. We may describe this distance as the ground of a double realization. In a judgment of the sublime we are first overwhelmed by nature,

and this is painful. Insofar as we then *realize* that we have been overwhelmed, insofar as we, so to speak, distance ourselves from the pain which attends the fear of an overwhelming nature (or rather, the presentation of such a nature), we thereby experience the pleasure of the sublime. And this second moment is, strictly speaking, the true moment of the sublime. I characterize this as the true moment of the sublime because it is the moment of pleasure (in other words: the aesthetic moment) and because it is just the inability of the primitive and the barbarian to move beyond the first moment which is precisely what defines them as such.

The sublime realization of an imagined external distance between ourselves and nature has as its complement the imagined internal distance between ourselves and our fear of nature. There is then within this initial sublime realization an echo directed inward,¹⁷ for when we realize that we have been overwhelmed, what we also thereby realize is ourselves. And yet, curiously enough, insofar as we still insist that nature is at least fearful (this insistence is necessary for the sublime), we still pay homage to that which we have supposedly overcome. The sublime is the realization of our dominance, our power over the supposed power of nature. But in order to feel this power of ours, in order to realize our dominance, we must insist upon nature being a fearful power—and in repeatedly staging its redoubtable character we repeatedly stage our dominance. (One suspects we would tire of so much rehearsal.)

The barbarian has only a pragmatic, which is to say: animal relation to nature. Her power remains within nature, and nature thereby continues its dominance over her. In order to become cultured, the pain of being overwhelmed by nature must be redeemed by pleasure. But this redemptive pleasure cannot come from nature—it must instead be an emphatically unnatural pleasure. This is why Kant argues that in order for pleasure to be considered aesthetic it must not precede judgment.¹⁸ Aesthetic pleasure cannot be derived from the object of a judgment—it must instead be the pleasure of the act of judging itself. If aesthetic pleasure is founded upon the experience of the sublime, and the pleasure of the sublime is not derived from nature, then culture must construe itself as having its basis in a specifically non-pragmatic

and freely chosen relationship to nature. The problem is that this freely chosen, non-pragmatic (and let us not forget: pleasurable) relation to nature is one of dominance.

Why is this pleasure, this so-called disinterested pleasure, necessary? The contradiction here between disinterest and necessity is expressed in the very character of this aesthetic pleasure. It is a disinterested pleasure, which means that it is not tainted by interest or desire. At times Kant's description of this pleasure makes it sound as if it is not even one's own pleasure, as if it is a pleasure beyond the self. It is thus no accident that Kant describes the realization of the sublime in terms of the supersensible. The supersensible is not merely that which is beyond the senses and cognition, it is also that which is beyond reason. In an aesthetic judgment the supersensible is not a cognition, nor is it even an idea of reason, but rather simply that which has been judged, that which is but the record of our having overreached ourselves. We judge even that which is beyond reason itself. And in this judging of that which is beyond cognition and reason we judge what is beyond ourselves. But this judgment is also the founding of the self. We realize and found the self in that moment when we judge that which is beyond the self. And this is pleasure.

We may characterize this contradictory founding of the self as the foreshortening of both the distance between ourselves and external nature and that of the internal distance between nature as *fearful* and the *fear* of nature. This double foreshortening of distance thereby represents the collapse of the distinction between civilized and barbarian, the collapse of the distinction between self as nature and self as superior to nature. The term according to which the self, via the culture of sublimity, reduces itself once again to merely that which opposes the blind dominance of nature is self-preservation. Kant writes:

though the irresistibility of nature's power makes us, considered as natural beings, recognize our physical impotence, it reveals in us at the same time an ability to judge ourselves independent of nature, and reveals in us a superiority over nature that is the basis of a self-preservation quite different in kind from the one that can be assailed and endangered by nature outside us. This keeps the humanity in our person from

being degraded, even though a human being would have to succumb to that dominance [of nature]. (*CJ*, §28, 120–121)

The sublime, or culture in general, is the means whereby we elevate ourselves above nature. And yet we see here that according to Kant the very principle which allows and indeed prescribes our cultured superiority over nature, self-preservation, is the self-same principle according to which we supposedly have always existed and preserved our existence in nature. The self, in elevating itself over nature, reduces itself to a version of that which it supposedly overcame. The nexus of this simultaneous elevation and reduction of the self, of this simultaneous denial and assertion of the self, is the specifically magical character of aesthetic pleasure, even though this pleasure denies its magical character by asserting that it is disinterested.

In a passage on the specific role of the imagination in a judgment of the sublime Kant alludes to the basis of this magical, sacred character of the pleasure of the sublime. Please bear in mind, when reading this passage, the etymological relation between the sacred and sacrifice. He writes:

The imagination ... acquires an expansion and a power that surpasses the one it sacrifices; but the basis of this power is concealed from it; instead the imagination *feels* the sacrifice or deprivation and at the same time the cause to which it is being subjugated. Thus any spectator who beholds massive mountains climbing skyward, deep gorges with raging streams in them, wastelands lying in deep shadow and inviting melancholy meditation, and so on is indeed seized by *amazement* bordering on terror, by horror and a sacred thrill; but, since he knows he is safe, this is not actual fear. (*CJ*, §29, 129)

We see from this passage both the character of the feeling of the sublime and its source. The pleasure of the sublime, its “sacred thrill,” is premised upon a preceding feeling: the feeling of a “sacrifice or deprivation.” Could we not characterize this movement of feelings here within the sublime in terms of an exchange? The imagination gives up its power and receives something in return. Is it not curious that what the imagination receives in this exchange is but more of what it has given up? “The imag-

ination ... acquires an expansion and a power that surpasses the one it sacrifices.” Two questions arise here: How is it possible for the imagination to surpass itself, and why is this pleasurable?

Let me try to answer these questions in such a way that does justice to the “sacred thrill,” to the magical character of the sublime. The exchange which allows the imagination to surpass itself appears impossible because it is the movement between two fundamentally opposed and extreme economies. What prompts the imagination to first give up its power is the recognition of an economy of utter scarcity. The imagination is reduced to complete powerlessness in the face of a nature so abundant that it cannot, initially, even be presented as overwhelming—that is, its abundance is inconceivable. And yet somehow this complete powerlessness, this utter scarcity within the economy of the self, is the basis for an exchange. But let us realize that this is no simple exchange, for it is not the case that the nothingness of the self is merely exchanged for the sheer abundance of an overwhelming nature. The sublime captures the true character of exchange within an economy of abundance, for what the sublime self becomes is not simply the possessor of the power of nature—it is not simply an exchange of roles that occurs here—but rather, the sublime is a never-ending abundance. The sublime self surpasses both itself *and* the overwhelming nature for which it sacrificed itself. In a true economy of abundance the self gains not merely *something* abundant, but rather itself becomes abundance. In other words, it continuously surpasses itself and all that might oppose it. The capacity to become something more than all that exists, the ability to remain the supremely dominant power, requires an incessant giving up of power, an incessant presentation of nature as that which necessitates the effacement of the self for the sake of an all-powerful self.

The pleasure of the sublime is an attempt to mediate this paradox through a simultaneous concealment and legitimation of it. The “sacred thrill” is a recognition of the paradox and somehow nonetheless the acceptance of it, the insistence upon its continuation. This sublime, disinterested pleasure is what grounds the prescription for the necessity of sacrifice. The “thrill” of the sublime is the irrational legitimation of the impos-

sible exchange between two opposed economies. And yet the irrational and impossible become here, within sublime pleasure, the rational and necessary. They achieve this transformation under the guise of violence and domination.

The pleasure of the sublime is what binds subjectivity to itself; it is the moment when subjectivity “feels” itself, the moment when subjectivity becomes whole and cohesive, coherent and unitary. It is, in short, the moment in and according to which subjectivity is constituted. But the pleasure of the sublime is likewise the founding moment of culture, of that *sensus communis* which organizes itself—but only as that which opposes nature. Violence and domination are the twin poles of this organization and foundation. Violence becomes necessary and hence legitimate as that dynamic according to which nature is presented as fearful in order to call forth a subjectivity whose own violence might oppose that of nature’s. Subjectivity is grounded in the inverted, though nonetheless more powerful image of a threatening and fearful nature. Thus domination and violence are raised to the level of principle, indeed *the* principle for the foundation of self and culture. Pleasure is both the concealment and legitimation of this elevation. Pleasure conceals this elevation because it alludes, especially in the guise of disinterest, to the gratuitous character of violence and domination having become the originary moment of self and culture. But pleasure also legitimates this elevation insofar as it shows the benefit and joy, the very sublimity of (this civilized) pleasure.¹⁹

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1. I intend the present essay as a rejoinder to the current opinion regarding the sublime as a positive aesthetic and political force. As Jonathan Arac has summarized it: “Since the early 1970s, however, following the work of Harold Bloom, Neil Hertz, and Thomas Weiskel, the sublime has returned both as an indispensable concept and as a positive value. Jean-François Lyotard makes the sublime fundamental to his definition of postmodernism. ... We are now increasingly likely to agree that the disruptive force of the sublime works for the good both aesthetically and politically, exorcising the coercions of totalizing form and the totalitarianizing state.” Jonathan Arac, “The Media of Sublimity: Johnson and Lamb on *King Lear*,” *Studies in Romanticism* 26 (1987): 209.

2. The cursory nature of Kant’s treatment of the sublime has had unfortunate consequences for some modern commentaries on the third *Critique*. Paul Guyer, for example, explains in a note to the Introduction of his study that, “even if there is historical interest in Kant’s discussion of the sublime, I think it safe to assume that his analysis of this particular aesthetic merit will not be of much interest to modern sensibilities, and thus that most of what we can or will learn from Kant must come from his discussion of judgments of beauty.” Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste* (Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 400. It is heartening, therefore, to see Guyer reverse himself in the Introduction to his most recent book in which he is tempted to claim, among other things, “that the real heart of Kant’s aesthetic theory and the underlying motivation for its creation is the connection to his moral theory which appears in his discussion of the sublime.” Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Experience of Freedom; Essays on Aesthetics and Morality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 3.

3. Kant writes, for example, the following in regard to the mathematically sublime: “Hence it must be the *aesthetic* estimation of magnitude where we feel that effort, our imagination’s effort to perform a comprehension that surpasses its ability to encompass the progressive apprehension in a whole of intuition, and where at the same time we perceive the inadequacy of the imagination.” Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* [Hereafter abbreviated *CJ*, followed by the paragraph number (§), and page reference], trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), §26, 112. It should be noted that Kant was perhaps influenced about the inadequacy of presentation in the sublime by Burke’s suggestions regarding the importance of such things as obscurity and darkness for producing the effect of the sublime. See especially Parts II and IV of Edmund Burke’s *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1968).

4. In this light Schiller’s response to the third *Critique* might best be seen as an attempt to redeem the intersubjective element of Kantian aesthetic judgments by putting in motion—specifically as social circulation—the static and misrecognized images of beauty that all too readily lend themselves to conceptions of autonomous subjectivity. In short, Schiller attempts to make beauty more sublime. See especially the Second Letter in Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*, trans. Reginald Snell (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1965).

5. One answer to this question might be pursued in the account John Zammito gives of the difference between determinant and reflective judgment and the ability of the latter for self-generation. See part two in John Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant’s Critique of Judgment* (University of Chicago Press, 1992). See also my review of Zammito’s book in *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 33 (1993): 395–397.

6. Lyotard—in what may well be his most trenchant criticism of the Kantianism in Adorno’s aesthetics—describes Adorno’s commitment to modernist art as the product of having succumbed to the “solace” of good aesthetic form. See Jean-François Lyotard, “Adorno as the Devil,” *Telos* 19 (1974): 127–137.

7. Jonathan Arac provides an insightful reading of the relation between subjective agitation and the sublime in a

passage from D. H. Lawrence's *Women in Love*. See chapter six, "D. H. Lawrence and the Modernist Sublime: Stoning the Moon," in Jonathan Arac, *Critical Genealogies: Historical Situations for Postmodern Literary Studies* (Columbia University Press, 1987).

8. The allusion here is of course to Kant's dynamically sublime. And as Pluhar, Kant's translator, notes, the Greek *dýnamis* means might or power (*CJ*, §28, 119).

9. Paul de Man uses the term "materiality" as the name for the resistance to presentation—which he terms "phenomenality"—within the sublime. De Man's essay on Kant's sublime deserves more attention from aestheticians and Kantians: Paul de Man, "Phenomenality and Materiality in Kant," in *Hermeneutics: Questions and Prospects*, eds. Gary Shapiro and Alan Sica (University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), pp. 121–144.

10. The self-reproductive ability of the sublime might also be described as mimesis. I have tried elsewhere to explicate the mimetic character of aesthetic form, at least according to Adorno; see my, "Adorno's Aesthetics of Illusion," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 44 (1985): 181–189. Adorno's aesthetics is essentially Kantian insofar as it shares Kant's insight that the central, constitutive moment of the aesthetic lies in a profoundly social connection that is nevertheless inevitably concealed. Kant locates that moment in aesthetic *judgment*, whereas Adorno hears it in aesthetic *form*; but this difference is perhaps not all that great because Adorno's conception of form bears a striking resemblance to Kant's description of the judgment of the sublime.

11. *CJ*, §8, p. 59.

12. *CJ*, §23, pp. 97–100.

13. *CJ*, §5, pp. 51–53.

14. In this and subsequent passages from the *Critique of Judgment* I translate *Macht* as "power," where Pluhar translates it as "might."

15. See the passage below in regard to self-preservation, where Kant argues that nature's power "reveals in us ... an ability to judge ourselves independent of nature, and reveals in us a superiority over nature" (*CJ*, §28, 120–121).

16. Horror comes to mind here, and in particular Noël Carroll's assertion that "in general, works of horror represent transgressions of the standing conceptual categories of the culture." Though I, of course, agree with Carroll regarding the near ubiquity of horror in contemporary North American culture, rather than interpreting this abundance as transgressive of standing cultural categories, I instead see it as presenting the increasingly hysterical demand for a reproduction of the status quo. Horror, as a genre of cultural production, therefore embodies a failed imitation of the experience of the sublime: it aims only at the production of effects. The failure of horror to be sublime is evidenced by its repetition compulsion. Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror, or, Paradoxes of the Heart* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 210.

17. One of the best known statements from Longinus is that "Sublimity is the echo of a noble mind." "Longinus: *On the Sublime*," in *Classical Literary Criticism*, trans. T. S. Dorsch (London: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 109.

18. *CJ*, §9, pp. 61–64.

19. I would like to thank Ann Bermingham and Frances Ferguson for their comments on earlier versions of this essay.