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Paula Órdenes' *Teleologische Erhabenheit der Vernunft bei Kant* is not an ordinary discussion of the aesthetic judgment of the sublime in the role it plays in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Rather, it is a study of the systematic nature of reason as a teleological faculty, which, thanks to the sublime, can be understood in its unity while simultaneously highlighting its duality.

The importance of the sublime in relation to reason is confirmed by the methodology employed by the author to structure her research: her analysis of the third *Critique* involves a continuous comparison with the *Critique of Pure Reason*, to explain theoretical reason in relation to the mathematically sublime, and with the *Critique of Practical Reason*, to show practical reason in the freedom felt thanks to the dynamically sublime. The first two Critiques turn out as a constant and indispensable reference, as their main objects, i.e., nature and freedom, intersect in the sublime, as the feeling of the finite and the infinite. The regulative use of reason in nature is distinguished from the constitutive use that concerns

freedom, but these two domains cannot be divided, especially when asserting a systematic reading of philosophy. In this regard, the sublime plays a pivotal role as a mirror of reason, being both twofold and unitary: the sublime establishes a special and immediate bridge between the practical and the theoretical through an aesthetic judgment, i.e., the feeling, which acts as an exemplar bridge [*Übergangexemplar*, p. 17] because on the one hand it is paradoxical, and on the other hand it demonstrates the unity of reason.

After presenting, in Chapter 1, the state of research and the main themes in this joint study of the sublime and reason, in Chapter 2 the author embarks on an original exploration of the judgment of the sublime in Kant's critical system focusing on the role of imagination in reference to cognition. For this purpose, the distinction between the dynamically and mathematically sublime is explained by adopting as a criterion the homogeneous and not homogeneous characters of synthesis that Kant discusses in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. It is noteworthy that, while Kant talks about the synthesis of the homogeneous (see for example KrV B162; B202), Paula Órdenes assumes the homogeneous or non-homogeneous as a character of the synthesis itself. Apart from this terminological difference, the insight of the author is not to be taken for granted: she refers to the homogeneous synthesis (that is the connection of similar representations) and to the non-homogeneous synthesis (that connects representations among themselves heterogeneous) to elucidate the difference between the mathematically and the dynamically sublime. Moreover, the distinction between the mathematical and dynamic extends to the two «dispositions» [*Stimmungen*] assumed by the imagination in the sublime: the mathematical *Stimmung* of the imagination is connected to the cognitive faculty, while the dynamic *Stimmung* is connected to the faculty of desire.

The homogeneous synthesis achieved in the mathematically sublime expresses the experience of subject's finitude while simultaneously revealing the infinite. In the mathematically sublime, we deal with an intuition that cannot be comprehended in a unitary totality, but thanks to this

impossibility we gain the representation of the infinite totality as an idea of reason. Human understanding can conceive the infinite (p. 80) and performs a homogeneous synthesis by combining two unrepresentable totalities that mutually nullify each other: the demonstrable object [*darstellbare Objekt*] does not become a representable totality [*Einheitliches vorstellbar*]. In other words, the immediate does not become mediated because the imagination cannot have any intuition of the totality: accordingly, in such an aesthetic judgment an idea of reason becomes necessary.

In the dynamically sublime, the process of judging differs from that of the mathematical sublime. Once again, the sensible side of the subject comes to the fore, but it is no longer connected to the cognitive faculty, instead, it relates to the faculty of desire. The dynamic synthesis is heterogeneous, as it involves the entire existence of the subject in the encounter between its two necessary characters: nature and freedom, the sensible and the suprasensible.

The original reading of the mathematically and dynamically sublime, rooted in the distinction between the two «*Stimmungen*» of imagination and the two types of synthesis, proceeds in Chapter 3, focusing on the expansion of imagination in its relationship with reason. The seriousness of this relationship is palpable in the negative pleasure that arises: at first, the encounter between imagination and reason reveals the inadequacy of the object, expressed in the feeling of displeasure. This displeasure reflects the imagination's incapacity to provide at a sensible level an adequate representation for the idea of reason. However, the awareness of such a great representative faculty within us leads to pleasure; this transition from displeasure to pleasure in the feeling of the sublime corresponds to the feeling of our suprasensible *Bestimmung*, analogous to the feeling of respect. For this reason, the feeling of the sublime requires two presuppositions: a *Stimmung* capable of discerning a practical idea of reason, and culture, which protects the subject from a threatening phenomenon and makes sure that he does not experience fear (p. 97).

Displeasure and pleasure are essential to express the twofold yet unitary constitution of the subject, as well as of its reason, making the feeling

of the sublime a mixed feeling. In engaging with reason, the imagination becomes aware of the demonstrable indemonstrability [*dargestellte Undarstellbarkeit*] of the so-called sublime object (p. 108). Such an object makes the imagination conscious of its own limitations, but the mind's receptivity for moral ideas is always presupposed, otherwise such interaction between the faculties would fail to produce the sublime.

In analyzing the interaction between imagination and reason, the author consistently emphasizes the functionality of the contrast between two antithetical aspects, ultimately converging in a unified reconciliation: the subject discovers that within his sensible limits he is capable of something that is beyond the sensible, overcoming the division between the sensible and supersensible as both aspects are inherent to his nature.

The two modes of the sublime express two facets of a singular feeling of the supersensible, corresponding to two applications of the same reason. The construction of these chapters by constantly referring the sublime to reason, as well as to its systematic structure, leads to the demonstration of the teleological unity of reason in Chapter 4: in dealing with this theme, Paula Órdenes analyses the role of the ideas of reason from both theoretical and practical perspectives. This approach situates within the aesthetic context the paradoxical solution of a unity arising from the interplay between the duality of the subject and his reason. The most important task of the ideas of reason is to offer a unified systematicity for the cognition of nature. The author underscores the hypothetical and regulative status of these ideas in the theoretical domain, which entails the adoption of a general principle whose object is considered valid despite its non-objectivity (p. 151). If the subjective principles of reason are not treated as constitutive and their regulative use is properly maintained, they enable the systematic coherence of nature without contradiction. Without these principles we could not grasp nature as a unitary totality (*einheitliche Totalitaet*). The idea of totality has no possible intuition in nature but the theoretical effort of reason toward the idea of the infinite can be experienced aesthetically through the feeling of the mathematically sublime.

The status of regulative ideas expands in the case of a practical use: they are no longer maxims for the organization of knowledge of nature, but become universal and necessary practical laws for moral actions. Órdenes highlights the new form of reason that Kant introduces in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, shedding light on freedom as the universal and necessary law of reason. In considering again homogeneous and not homogeneous synthesis, dynamically sublimity once again reveals itself in the connection between conditioned and unconditioned. The parallel study of the theoretical and practical dimensions in the regulative and constitutive use of ideas is employed by the author to emphasize the two-fold action of reason: on the one hand, it prescribes an idea of totality for the system of nature, which regulates the activity of the understanding; on the other hand, it establishes the doctrine of the highest good in the system of freedom to secure the moral world. These two operations of reason aim toward the same end, namely, the creation of a systematic unity (p. 177) demonstrating both the teleological activity of reason and its unified structure. Reason tends toward the supersensible, whose determination is not possible, however, reasons' teleological need of the supersensible becomes immediately clear in the feeling of the sublime.

Chapter 5, the final chapter of this monograph, completes the study of the sublime, moving beyond its consideration as merely an aesthetic judgment to reveal it as a defining characteristic of our reason. The aim is not only to describe our reason as sublime but also to recognize the sublimity inherent in our reason. The sublime does not reside in nature, but in its resonance in the human mind, although the presence of nature remains a necessary condition for aesthetic *Beurteilung*, far from being a solipsistic or mere intellectual experience. Similarly, the judgment of the sublime is not moral, although morality is a condition of possibility for this judgment. The author considers the well-established perspective of the sublime as a preparation for morality, but to prevent misunderstandings, she conceives this preparation as the unveiling of the paradoxical character of our nature, which highlights the contradiction between nature and freedom.

Paula Órdenes' book thus presents a unified conception of reason and the sublime by using the very constitution of the sublime as a central point of reference: this strategy highlights the overall systematic unity of reason while acknowledging the duality of human beings as rational living beings. The sublime emerges as an especially fitting candidate for this task, as its dual mathematical-dynamic structure offers insight into reason in its dual theoretical-practical activity. In both cases, the reading of a duplicity as unity is confirmed: the author further explains this reading with the image of a medal, that cannot be conceived without two sides, though those sides cannot be viewed simultaneously (p. 221). In conclusion, this study does not reject the paradox of human nature, but instead embraces it. The very feeling of the sublime is itself paradoxical: this shows the dichotomy of the subject as a natural and rational being, and starts from the finitude of the subject to identify reason as a teleological faculty in both its theoretical and practical use. If the subject were not finite, he would have neither a beginning nor an end, and reason would lack orientation. Therefore, Órdenes' demonstration of the teleological unity of reason —achieved through the aesthetic lens of the paradoxical feeling of the sublime— is not only insightful but also highly original and appropriate.

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