

ARTH 383 - Art & Philosophy

Lecture 7 - The Sublime II

- On the Sublime, from Longinus > translated from greek to latin to english
- Boileau (french philosopher) revives idea of the Sublime
 - anticipates Sublime, but to the same as Kant
- Boileau: where is the sublime?
 - can't be found in poetry without Rules
 - sublimity is crucial in academia
- 'je ne sais quoi' > in academics; negative seen as positive
 - name given to unseen quality
 - sublime is negative pleasure - Kant
- sublime meaning 'elevated' > grandeur
 - distinguished sublime style > grandeur of thoughts
 - (not just visual > quality absent or experienced negatively)
- Sublime and Beautiful connects to the BODY
 - Burke believes certain qualities: obscurity, difficulty, magnitude, acid/bitter taste
 - can trigger sublime effects
- importance of body in mortality and knowledge of text
 - sense, sensibility, imagination
 - sensation to desires
 - body is separate from the mind
 - reinvention of the aesthetics gives field to body passion
- Burkes interest in Triggers/stimulus to sublime
 - body as origin and end of practices

- Kant response to Rationalists and Descartes > takes into account the desires of the body: agreeable, judgement and sensation
- Burke/Kant > shift between triggers of sublime and ideas present in the mind themselves sublime
 - how we experience art vs. how to produce art
- Burke: 'standard of taste same in all creatures as we have the same faculties'
 - Locke: 'the senses are the great origin of all ideas'
- Burke marginalized the role of reason > only physical effects (so Empiricists)
 - sublime: Formal, material qualities of objects themselves
 - if beautiful to eyes, assumed beautiful to touch and taste
 - No primary elements > we see colour in our eye even though it's not the colour we see
 - triggers of sublime: the Passions "origin of the mind"
 - Locke and Isaac Newton
 - ex. LeBrun > how to draw the passions
 - distinction between art and literature > expressions of interiority is possible, but painting believed unable until this book
- Habitus: comportment and ethos
- Affect: Burke believed mind at rest met of the time
 - only when stimulated through pleasure or pain is equilibrium disrupted (anticipates Freud)
- Aesthetics becomes study of senses and reaction to senses
- Burke:
PAIN—————equilibrium ('rest')—————PLEASURE
- B: Pleasure and pain are not opposites (not binary)
 - to remove pain gives delight, not pleasure
- categorizes range of feelings

Self preservation

- individual interests
 - response to pain and danger
 - social
 - preserve society
 - Sublime (Burke) contrasts
 - radical excess or radical lack
 - sudden contrast
 - quantity ie infinity (Kant agrees, comp to quality)
 - missing = je ne sais quoi, or too much
 - intermitting elements
 - ie sound
 - succession and uniformity
 - private collections (Wunderkammer)
 - Burke: obscurity produces terror (lack)
 - intellectual obscurity/uncertainty; unsure of what will happen
 - that which can't be seen
 - sublime in the guise of fear us imagination
 - missing: the thing itself
 - vulnerability at play in Sublime
 - Freud uncanny: horror films predicated on sudden lack to excess (jump scare)
 - ex. Piranesi drawings of space
 - drastic contrast of light and dark
- >Sublime: delight from suspension of pain/fear
- awe is not the same as terror
 - 'distance is the only way terror can be transformed into delight'
 - sublime in representation
 - ie storm paintings at sea
- > Structure of Sublime

- excess of form, perspective

- the Beautiful and the Sublime are not opposites > both aesthetic judgments
 - beautiful: judgment of taste , sublime: different judgment
- Kant: if they'r not opposites, what is the opposite of the sublime?
 - the Ridiculous!
- sublime is serious, negative pleasure
- beautiful is playful, tranquil, contemplative
- sublime as related to moral judgment (very close)
 - moral judgments are not playful
- Kant Analytic of the Sublime
 - similar to beauty— both liked for their own sake (reflective judgments)
 - not logically determining judgment (good), or judgment of the sense (agreeable)
- aesthetic judgment refers to our whole power of faculties
 - judgment of beautiful, the power of concepts
 - singular but proclaim universality, even when based on feeling rather than cognition of the subject
- sublime difference to beauty: beauty is bounded, sublime is unbounded
 - beauty- form of object, vs sublime- formlessness of object
- unbounded: object beyond measure, or represents unboundedness / totality
- beautiful is representation of intuition (free-play) concept of understanding
 - but sublime > ideas of reason are engaged
 - no corresponding intuition (ie mortality, God, infinity)
- in beautiful, liking presented as (e?)quality
- in sublime, liking presented as quantity
- liking of beautiful carries liking being furthered

- compatible with charm, imagination at play
- sublime is indirect pleasure > momentary inhibition of life's forces > followed by an outpouring of all the stronger
 - anticipates Freud's death drive
- Kant- judgement of the sublime > seriousness (superego) rather than play is imaginative
 - superego; moral agency, judges ego. propensity to cruelty to self
 - so: seriousness of sublime wholly incompatible to charms
 - mind is attracted and repelled to sublime > Fascination
- liking for sublime is a negative pleasure
- Kant; judgement of sublime connected to admiration/respect > connects to moral law
 - closer to moral than judgement of beautiful
- sublime in nature
 - so sublime in art must be in harmony with sublime in nature
 - Free Beauty > sense of purposiveness
 - perceived to be preordained by our powers of judgement
 - the sublime is contra-purposiveness (we can't know)
 - we judge it as all the more sublime
- (superego always has further demands)
- Kant: Nature can't be sublime as sublime is contra-purposiveness
 - 'sublime object is suitable to submitting sublimity that is found in our mind'
- Kant's notion of sublime doesn't engage with our sensibility
 - concerns only ideas of reason (no corresponding intuition)
 - (???) sensibility attests only inability reason to [preset] idea
- art questions how such things are possible
 - Kant: we judge nature as if/by art

- judgement of sublime doesn't fit, lacks anything leading to concepts
- chaos in nature most arouses ideas of sublime
 - displays magnitude and might
 - for Kant, Sublime in nature has not purposiveness
 - challenges our powers of reason
 - judgement of taste, must seek outside oneself (universal basis to legitimate). for sublime, basis lies within the subject
- representation of sublime utilizes imagination to conjure ideas of sublime
 - art can't be sublime, but may attempt to induce feeling of sublime
- reflective judgment not based in concepts
 - difference between aesthetic judgment and cognitive judgment
- Kant: quantity of sublime judgment distinguishes it from other
 - mathematical and dynamical
- sublime we like: agitation is subjectively purposive
 - powers of reason
- purposiveness in sublime different from purposiveness is beautiful
- mental agitation either cognitive power or desire
 - mathematical sublime: cognitive powers, quantity, magnitude,
 - dynamical sublime: desire (non pathological) > disinterested
- mathematical sublime: 'absolutely' (total) large, rather than large by comparison
- objective, rather than how we perceive
 - ie. starry sky; vast beyond comparison
- measures of magnitude, concepts of understanding (not pure concepts, categories / a priori knowledge or sense)
 - absolute magnitude cognized from the thing itself rather than comparison to other things

- not a concept of understanding
- but relative magnitude is concept of understanding
 - (larger than x)
 - empirical judgment. based on known objects / magnitudes as opposed to absolute > a priori. requires no measurement.
- sublime: like without interest
 - why do we like it? expands our imagination
 - absolute magnitude: standard of judging cannot be found outside the object. equal only to itself in size > therefore cannot be found in nature, only in ideas. it's a feeling, not an object
 - natural objects can always be compared. nothing that's an object of the senses can be called sublime
 - imagination goes towards infinity. reason wants idea/rational
 - arouses super sensible power > everything is small in comparison
 - sublime as moral and aesthetic judgment
 - estimation of magnitude aesthetically (not math)
- limit to comprehension (absolute magnitude)
- distance obscurs magnitude, comprehension incomplete
- liking for the sublime is based in our feeling of inadequacy
- pure aesthetic judgment of sublime must be free from teleological (ie purpose) judgment
- dynamical sublime
 - feeling of respect attests to inability to attain idea that is a law (object of desire)
 - absolute whole / universality
- sublime > subsection. cannot be the object of possible experience
 - tangible/connects to idea of reason
- the law is by definition unattainable (superego)

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- might /power/force of dynamical sublime
 - nature as might which has no dominance over us
- respect vs fear > we don't fear intangible / unrepresentable threats