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# TWO CONCEPTIONS OF INFINITY IN KANT'S **MATHEMATICAL SUBLIME**

#### 1. Introduction

In this paper I present an interpretation of the mathematical sublime, as developed by Kant in the KU1. According to the interpretation proposed here, this theory revolves around the concept of the infinite, which admits a double perspective. On the one hand, we have the infinitude of the sensible world. It is the potentiality to always add a new unity to what is already given. On the other hand. Kant introduces the idea of the infinite as something absolutely given. In the theoretical framework of Kant's criticism this kind of infinity cannot be found in the sensible world. In the following, I will try to reconstruct the most important aspects of Kant's mathematical sublime. To do so, I will consider how the two conceptions of infinity outlined above are articulated.

First, I will review the Kantian definitions of the sublime, as developed in § 25 of the KU. Secondly, I will explain how the Kantian sublime takes the sensible infinite as its point of departure in order to arrive from there at the suprasensible infinite.

## 2. Nominal definitions of the sublime

The § 25 of the KU is entitled Nominal Definition of the Sublime. Unfortunately, Kant does not explain why he characterizes the definition he will offer of the sublime as nominal. Perhaps it would be useful to review a passage in the KrV in which some detail is given about what we should understand by real definition, and thus to infer what Kant would be referring to when he speaks of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The following abbreviations will be used: KU: Kritik del Urteilskraft (Kant 1790); KrV: Kritik der reinen Vernunft (Kant 1781/1787). In the case of the KU, it is cited according to the scholarly edition of Kant's texts. In the case of the KrV, we follow the tradition of citing with A or B (first or second edition of the KrV), followed by the page number.

'nominal definition' (*Namenerklärung*) in the framework of the *Analytic of the Sublime*. In an extensive note belonging to the *Third Chapter of the Transcendental Doctrine of the Faculty of Judgment*, we find the following statements:

I mean here the real definition, which does not merely supply other and more intelligible words for the name of a thing, but rather contains in itself a clear mark by means of which the object (definitum) can always be securely cognized, and that makes the concept that is to be explained usable in application. A real definition would therefore be that which does not merely make distinct a concept but at the same time its objective reality. (KrV, A 241-242)

If we take into consideration this passage of the KrV, we could conjecture the following: the title of § 25 is anticipating that we must be cautious in the inquiry about the sublime, since everything that is said about this concept will only give us some understanding about the way in which we must understand the term 'sublime', without this meaning the attainment of any knowledge referring to the objective reality signified by this term. This is significant insofar as the treatment of the sublime refers us to a supersensible dimension. Given that in the framework of Kantian criticism it is impossible to know something by omitting the conditions imposed by sensibility, it is understandable that any definition of the sublime has a merely nominal character.

The first definition of the sublime is formulated as follows: «Sublime is the name given to what is absolutely great» (KU, § 25, AA V: 248). In order to explain what it consists in to be «absolutely great» (schlechthin Groß), Kant takes care to distinguish this predicate from others such as being «great» (Groß) and being «a magnitude» (eine Größe). Something is absolutely great, only if it is great above all comparison (Cfr. KU, § 25, AA V: 248). Thus, Kant will later assert that the sublime is a magnitude that is equal only to itself. In contrast, particular objects are only great in a comparative sense, never in an absolute way. For this reason, Kant affirms that the truly sublime is not in sensible nature, but in the mind itself (*Gemüt*) - as the capacity to overcome the limits of sensibility. So far, we have drawn the distinction between the predicates 'to be absolutely great' and 'to be great'. Thus, it remains to analyze what 'being a magnitude' consists of. Kant affirms in this respect:

Given a multiplicity of the homogeneous together constituting one thing, and we may at once cognize from the thing itself that it is a magnitude (quantum). No comparison with other things is required. (KU, § 25, AA V: 248)

We know that something is a magnitude without the need to compare it with other things. That is to say, the gathering of the multiple in the same object is enough for us. By this, it is not affirmed that the constitution and possible perception of an object is totally independent of the background of other objects, but that we become aware of a magnitude thanks to the gathering of a plurality of relatively homogeneous elements in the same object. To find this unity we do not need to compare it with anything. On the contrary, to say that something is large presupposes a comparison with other magnitudes, even if we do not precisely determine the size of an object.<sup>2</sup> Now, when we maintain that a magnitude is absolutely large, we formulate a judgment that exceeds the mere perception by which we say that something is a magnitude. But this does not mean that we are forced to compare such an absolute magnitude with other magnitudes in order to judge its greatness, for the absolute character of the greatness that we find in this type of magnitude makes it impossible to have recourse to any possible comparison. In this way, Kant begins to introduce the idea of the sublime within the plane of the supersensible, insofar as it refers to an absolutely great magnitude, which cannot be sought in the things of nature, but only in our ideas.

The remaining definitions of the sublime that we find in § 25 of the KU seem to emphasize this reference to the supersensible in the human being. Thus, the second definition is formulated as follows: «[...] that is sublime in comparison with which all else is small» (KU, § 25, AA V: 250). It seems to be a definition that contradicts what has been established so far, for while the first definition implies that the sublime is beyond all possible comparison, the second holds that the sublime is that in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> As pointed out by C. Pries, although this aesthetic estimation of magnitudes according to quantity - by which we determine something as large or small constitutes an introductory step to the problem of the sublime, we can affirm that it is a theory in general about the aesthetic estimation of magnitudes. This would be so, insofar as beautiful objects can also be judged as large or small. On this question cfr. Pries (1995, 47).

comparison with which everything else is small. With this formulation, Kant tries to point out that every object of the senses is small in comparison with the sublime. That is to say, however great a sensible object may be, there always remains the possibility that it may be judged as small in relation to other natural objects. Hence it follows that every phenomenon is small in comparison with that absolute greatness designated by the sublime. Thus, a clear distinction is established between sensible objects and the sublime. The latter can only be thought of as belonging to a suprasensible dimension. Thus, the smallness of everything sensible in comparison with the sublime is a way of pointing out the difference between the sensible and the suprasensible. The kind of comparisons that can be drawn between sensible objects reveals the relative character of the greatness or smallness of an object. Instead, the comparison between the sublime and sensible objects points out that the former possesses an indeclinable and absolute greatness, in the face of which every phenomenon is necessarily small. On the other hand, we can point out that within the sensible objects can be compared among themselves, while within the suprasensible we find a single absolute magnitude that is equal to itself and that cannot be compared with other hypothetical magnitudes of the same type.

Before introducing the third definition of the sublime Kant points out that there is an inadequacy (*Unangemessenheit*) between the tendency of our imagination and the pretension of our reason. This is because the former tends to progress towards the infinite, without ever reaching the totality of the sensible world which it progressively traverses. On the contrary, reason aspires to absolute totality as a real idea (Cfr. KU, § 25, AA V: 250). It is this inadequacy of the imagination with the claims of reason that awakens the feeling of a supersensible faculty. In other words, we must suppose a suprasensible faculty if we want to account for that absolute totality before which imagination fails.

Next, we find a formulation that underlines a double directionality in the analysis of the sublime. On the one hand, we must pay attention to a certain use of the faculty of judgment. On the other, there is a focus on the sensible objects that are judged. That is to say, the absolutely great is identified with a certain operative mode of our faculty of judging. Now, in order for this mode of operation to be effective, certain natural objects must be

judged in order to awaken in us the feeling of a supersensible faculty. While it is true that the natural object can never be sublime, the reference to such an object is a condition without which the faculty of judgment could not effect the mode of operation which is characterized as absolutely great. In this way, a necessary reference to sensible objects is established, for without it, the feeling of the sublime could never occur. In other words, the sublime appears necessarily mediated by the judgment of certain sensible objects. This denial of the sublimity of the sensible object and the simultaneous supposition of such an object is considered in the third definition of the sublime: «[...] it is the attunement of the spirit evoked by a particular representation engaging the attention of reflective judgment, and not the object, that is to be called sublime» (KU, § 25, AA V: 250). Therefore, the reference to the suprasensible implied here cannot omit the necessary use that the faculty of judgment must make of certain representations that refer to phenomenal objects. In the passage just quoted the term 'representation' (Vorstellung) can assume various meanings. On the one hand, it can refer to the representation of sensible objects that we judge in order to awaken in us the feeling of the supersensible. On the other hand, it could mean representation of the absolutely great. According to the interpretation I intend to offer, it is the conjunction of both representations that generates the temper of mind that we call sublime, for as we have already analyzed, the sublime supposes a mismatch between imagination and reason, between the endless progression of the phenomenal world and the idea of absolute totality mentioned by our reason.

Finally, Kant adds a fourth formula: «The sublime is that, the mere capacity of thinking which evidences a faculty of mind trascending every standard of the senses» (KU, § 25, AA V: 250). It is true that this last definition emphasizes the identification of the sublime with the absolutely great. However, the very idea of a faculty that exceeds all sensible measure reminds us once again of the necessary role of our aesthetic judgment in reference to nature. For without this reference to the phenomenal, it would make no sense to affirm the excess of a soul faculty over sensibility.

In sum, the various formulations of the sublime - contained in § 25 of the KU - reveal a movement of our mind between the sensible and the suprasensible. The use that our faculty of judgment must make of certain natural objects, in order to awaken the feeling of the suprasensible in us, underscores the impossibility of understanding the aesthetic judgment of the sublime without our considering the sensible dimension presupposed in this kind of aesthetic judgment. Moreover, it is the reference to the supersensible that compels Kant to hold that these definitions are merely nominal. That is to say, since the sublime implies a necessary reference to the supersensible, it is impossible to formulate a real definition of the sublime. We can specify what we understand by the term 'sublime' (*Erhabene*), although we can never cognize what we think and even feel when we judge something as sublime.

## 3. The movement from sensible to supersensible infinity.

In § 26 of the KU is developed the movement that our imagination -in intimate connection with reason- performs in order to reach the supersensible, after taking as a starting point certain sensible intuitions. The first step of the argument developed in this paragraph underlines the distinction between aesthetic estimations and mathematical estimations:

The estimation of magnitude by means of concepts of number (or their signs in algebra) is mathematical, but that in mere intuition (by the eye) is aesthetic. (KU, § 26, AA V: 251)

Aesthetic estimation is that according to which we affirm that an object is large, medium or small, without resorting to numerical determinations. Everyday perceptual experience confirms this idea, for we often judge an object as large or small without needing to have exact knowledge about its size. We claim that a tree is large because we implicitly compare it with other trees that are smaller. In contrast to this, mathematical estimates are those that assume some kind of numerical expression. Since number by itself is insufficient to determine size, we need to resort to a unit of measurement, e.g., the meter. Now, Kant points out that all mathematical estimation is ultimately based on aesthetic estimations. That is to say, we can only have a full explanation of mathematical estimates if at some point they refer to an aesthetic estimate of a given magnitude that we can apprehend in an intuition and that we use through imagination to present numerical concepts. If this were not possible, we would fall into an infinite regress, in which a numerical measurement would refer us to another numerical measurement and so on. In short, the unit of measurement used in a mathematical estimation is indebted to the meaning given by some magnitude given in the intuition:

[...] as the magnitude of the measure has to be assumed as a known quantity, if, to form an estimate of this, we must again have recourse to numbers involving another standard for their unit, and consequently must again proceed mathematically, we can never arrive at a first or fundamental measure, and so cannot get any definite concept of a given magnitude. The estimation of the magnitude of the fundamental measure must, therefore, consist merely in the immediate grasp which we can get of it in intuition, and the use to which our imagination can put this in presenting the numerical concepts: i.e. all estimation of the magnitude of objects of nature is in the last resort aesthetic (i.e. subjectively and not objectively determined) (KU, § 26, AA V: 251).

In the passage just quoted Kant establishes a foundation of mathematical measurements over aesthetic measurements. It is the latter that make it possible to avoid an infinite regress in the chain of mathematical measurements and they do so by making possible the intuitive and immediate apprehension of a first measure or a fundamental measure (ein erstes oder Grundmaß). We must keep this formulation in mind, in order to distinguish it from the reference to an absolute measure (absolutes Maß) or magnitude at all (Größe schlechthin), which is identified with the sublime. That is, logical or mathematical estimations necessarily presuppose an aesthetic estimation, but the latter must be distinguished from the aesthetic estimation referring to the absolute magnitude of the sublime. With this observation, I suggest that at the basis of mathematical estimations there is an aesthetic estimation, although this does not necessarily coincide with the estimation of the phenomena that awaken the feeling of the sublime and much less with the absolute measure that is on a supersensible realm.

The distinction I propose between 'absolute magnitude' (Größe schlechthin) or 'absolute measure' (absolutes Maß) 'fundamental measure' (Grundmaß) should not be confused with the type of distinction maintained by P. Crowther, who claims that in the Kantian text dedicated to the mathematical sublime two different lines of argument coexist. According to the first line, which he calls 'baroque sublime', large objects lead us to seek infinity in order to have a unit of measurement that allows us to

estimate those objects that are characterized by their large size. According to the second line of reading, called by Crowther 'austere sublime', we arrive at the sublime thanks to the inadequacy of our imagination with respect to the demands of reason that require us to apprehend an object in its totality. That is, according to the second line, we should not commit ourselves to any idea about infinity, but only to the rational idea of totality. Crowther believes that the austere approach would have been sufficient to account for the phenomenon of the sublime that Kant seeks to explain. For my part, I consider this distinction between two lines of argument made by Crowther to be unnecessary, since the baroque sublime could be thought of as an extension of the austere sublime. This is so insofar as the austere approach implies the idea of infinity that entails that sensible magnitude before which our imagination fails. That is, the baroque sublime seems to be implied in what Crowther calls the austere sublime.<sup>3</sup> By contrast, the distinction between fundamental magnitude and absolute magnitude that I have proposed is not intended to distinguish two lines of argument in the Kantian approach to the sublime, but to point out that while the aesthetic estimation of fundamental magnitude is at the basis of our everyday perceptual experience, the estimation of absolute magnitude is a necessary condition only in those cases in which we formulate judgments about the sublime.

Now, in the case of aesthetic estimations it is possible - though not necessary - to reach a maximum beyond which one cannot go. This is because the aesthetic comprehension carried out by the imagination encounters a limit which it cannot surpass. Such extreme cases - in which the imagination shows its impotence to encompass great magnitudes - lead to the recognition of our rational capacity to think the absolutely great. On the contrary, mathematical estimates lack a maximum, for a numerical unit can always be added. Hence mathematical estimations are never at

<sup>3</sup> Several interpreters have challenged Crowther's idea. Gibbons, S. (1993, 136) argues that the austere reading is a moderate version of the baroque one; Matthews, P. (1996, 166-180) points out that Crowther's two theses are the same, since the object that the imagination intends to measure seems infinite, so that infinity in Kant is not independent of the object, but is an idea sketched from the appearing of the object itself. B. Myskja (2002, 135) clarifies that the object is not to be characterized as something that appears infinite, but as unlimited.

the basis of the feeling of the sublime, since they are incapable of showing the limits of the imagination.

This aesthetic estimation of magnitudes which, on the one hand, is at the basis of mathematical measurements, and on the other, can be an occasion for the feeling of the sublime, involves two acts of the imagination. The first of these is aesthetic apprehension (*Auffassung*): it is the capacity to apprehend always a new unity. Let us imagine that we are contemplating an infinite wall built with rocks that are distinguishable from each other. There will always be the possibility of contemplating a new rock, of adding a unity to what has already been apprehended. In this mode of operating the imagination shows itself as an unlimited subjective potentiality capable of always apprehending a new unity. But when this same faculty tries to grasp simultaneously several rocks, the limits of the imagination appear there, for as we advance with aesthetic apprehension, the rocks that we apprehended at the beginning begin to be extinguished. This attempt of the imagination to embrace simultaneously what was successively apprehended, allows Kant to introduce the notion of aesthetic comprehension (Zusammenfassung), as a second mode of operation carried out by this faculty. When aesthetic comprehension reaches a limit beyond which it is impossible to advance, we find ourselves before the limits of the aesthetic estimation of magnitudes.

In the context of § 26 of the KU we find a treatment of the intimate link between reason and imagination in judgments about the sublime in the mathematical sense. The voice of reason demands totality, which in this context means comprehension in one intuition for all given magnitudes. Whatever the size of the contemplated phenomenon, reason demands that it be intuited in a unitary way. For this, the imagination should be able to aesthetically comprehend the magnitude in question. That is to say, there is a demand to intuit simultaneously the multiplicity that composes the phenomenon in question. In the face of this pretension of reason, the imagination fails, since it reveals its incapacity to comprehend in a unitary manner certain phenomena that, due to their great magnitude, can only be contemplated in a partial and successive manner. It could be objected that the aesthetic comprehension of the imagination fails not only in the face of phenomena characterized by their large size, but also in the face of everyday objects, such as a tree. That is to say, I can walk around the tree and apprehend its parts in succession, but I will never be able to comprehend all the parts of the tree simultaneously. This would lead to the trivial thesis that every phenomenal object can be an occasion to experience the sublime. In response, we can point out that in the case of the tree we are able to structure the multiplicity that was successively apprehended under the unity of a limited object. That is to say, although we cannot aesthetically comprehend all the parts of the tree, when we perceive one of its parts we represent to ourselves a unitary and limited object. The latter does not occur in objects that stand out for their grandeur and before which we are incapable of subsuming the parts that we apprehend successively under the concept of a limited object.<sup>4</sup>

We can conclude that the failure of the imagination is a necessary but not sufficient condition to awaken the feeling of the sublime, for in addition to the failure of the imagination in its attempt to intuit simultaneously the multiplicity of an object, we must perceive the object as something unlimited. This does not mean that the object is indeed unlimited, but that it must possess certain characteristics from which the idea of infinity is suggested.

Although Kant does not make the following distinction explicitly, I believe that a careful reading of the text allows us to observe the passage from a sensible infinity to a suprasensible infinity, since at first we find the affirmation according to which reason demands totality -i. e. comprehension in an intuition - for every magnitude «[...] and does not exempt even the infinite (space and time past) from this requirement, but rather renders it inevitable for us to regard this infinite (in the judgment of common reason) as completely given (i.e. given in its totality)» (KU, § 26, AA V: 254). That is, the starting point is an intuition given to our sensibility, which in the case of pure intuitions - namely, space and time - implies the possibility of always adding a new unity. However, reason demands that we think of them as entirely given.

Next, Kant points out that «[...] the infinite is absolutely (not merely comparatively great)» (KU, § 26, AA V: 254). Thus, a contradiction emerges if we pretend to think the absolutely infinite on the merely sensible realm. If the infinite is defined as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Cfr. B. Myskja (2002, 117).

the absolutely great, this implies that it can only be found on a suprasensible realm, since on the phenomenal world there is always the possibility of finding a greater magnitude. For this reason:

Still the mere ability even to think the given infinity without contradiction, is something that requires the presence in the human mind of a faculty that is itself supersensible. For it is only through this faculty and its idea of a noumenon, which latter, while not itself admitting of any intuition, is yet introduced as substrate underlying the intuition of the world as mere phenomenon, that the infinite of the sensible world, in the pure intellectual estimation of magnitude, is *completely* comprehended *under* a concept, although in the mathematical estimation by means of numerical concepts it can never be completely thought. (KU, § 26, AA V: 254-255)

Thus, the demand for totality - coming from reason - shows the insufficiencies of the phenomenal realm to account for an infinity that is not contradictory.<sup>5</sup> The progressive movement of the imagination can always capture a new unity, thus implying a tendency towards the infinite. But the concept of an absolute infinity reveals that we must abandon the sensible realm and have recourse to a supersensible faculty. The latter implies the idea of a noumenon or supersensible substratum that underlies the world as mere phenomenon and our own faculty of thinking. We will never be able to intuit sensibly this suprasensible substratum, but we must suppose it in order to be able to think as a given whole the world of the senses before which our capacities of aesthetic estimation and logical estimation fail - since we will never be able to determine numerically that which we call absolute infinity.

This movement from sensible infinity to suprasensible infinity is parallel to the ascent from sensible intuition to suprasensible intuition. However, this does not mean that we have theoretical access to what lies outside the limits of our sensibility. Instead, this movement from the sensible to the supersensible realm implied in the judgment of the sublime - bridges the sensible realm in which our cognitive activity unfolds and the practical realm that makes our freedom possible:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Kant argues in another passage, explicitly, that the absolute whole as a phenomenon «[...] is a self-contradictory concept (owing to the impossibility of the absolute totality of endless progression) [...]» (KU, § 26, AA V: 255).

Even a faculty enabling the infinite of supersensible intuition to be regarded as given (in its intelligible substrate), transcends every standard of sensibility, and is great beyond all comparison even with the faculty of mathematical estimation: not, of course, from a theoretical point of view that looks to the interests of our faculty of knowledge, but as a broadening of the mind that from another (the practical) point of view feels itself empowered to pass beyond the narrow confines of sensibility. (KU, § 26, AA V: 255)

This does not mean that the sublime is identified with our freedom or belongs to the faculty of practical judgment. The sublime is rather the aesthetic feeling that we have before our suprasensible faculty (reason). The possibility of thinking this absolutely great suprasensible substratum establishes an enlargement of our mind from the sensible to the suprasensible. Now, when the subject contemplates his own reason -considered as the condition of possibility that makes the field of freedom possible- he judges this faculty as sublime. This does not mean that the sublime is a judgment in which we determine our will as free beings. Instead, we must understand the sublime as an aesthetic judgment that addresses itself to a certain faculty that is capable of realizing human freedom independently of sensible conditioning. Thus, the mathematical sublime reveals itself as the aesthetic experience in front of our freedom. This aesthetic evaluation implies a movement of our mind thanks to which we start from the consideration of ourselves and the world as phenomena and arrive at the noumenal and intelligible substratum that makes our freedom and our practical reason possible. We must also emphasize that the practical ideas involved here are indeterminate. The latter is an additional reason that prevents us from identifying the sublime with a judgment of practical reason. Whereas in the case of judgments about the beautiful, imagination subjectively accords with indeterminate concepts of the understanding, in the judgment of a thing as sublime imagination is related to indeterminate ideas of reason.

Now, we have spoken of an ascent from the sensible to the suprasensible. However, I consider that there are passages that allow us to outline the inverse movement according to which in the sublime there is a kind of intuitive presentation - indirect and inadequate - of the suprasensible. In this aesthetic presentation of the absolutely great the imagination enlarges itself by intuitively

presenting the idea of an absolute whole. Kant repeatedly asserts that the sensible object is merely an occasion for discovering the true sublimity of our mind. The latter, at the moment of judging a natural object as sublime, feels elevated by abandoning itself «[...] to the imagination and to a reason placed, though quite apart from any definite end, in conjunction therewith, and merely broadening its view [...]» (KU, § 26, AA V: 256).

What does it mean that reason broadens the imagination? Paradoxically, this broadening takes place thanks to the failure of the imagination in the face of certain magnitudes, for in its attempt to comprehend what is apprehended in a unitary totality, the imagination is listening to the voice of reason. That is to say, in its attempt to effect a certain comprehensio aesthetica the imagination provides an inadequate presentation of the indeterminate ideas of reason. It is legitimate to speak of a broadening of the imagination, since we are no longer in front of a faculty that turns blindly to the sensible, but that does so following the demands of reason and in such an operation presents intuitively - albeit inadequately - that supersensible substratum that our reason thinks.<sup>6</sup> This intuitive presentation that the imagination makes of the suprasensible gives us a way to think that there is not something like a radical abandonment of sensibility in the judgment of the sublime. That is to say, it is an aesthetic judgment in which the relation of the subject with phenomenal nature plays a fundamental role. The judgment of the sublime in the mathematical sense allows us to access the supersensible (and with it, the absolutely infinite) and for this it is necessary to judge certain objects that, due to their (comparative) greatness, allude to the idea of sensible infinity.

### 4. Conclusions

I have pointed out that the Kantian theory of the mathematical sublime can be studied from the point of view of the concept of the infinite, which admits a double perspective. On the one hand,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> S. Gibbons (1993, 125 ff.) points out that the role that reason plays in these judgments would imply a novel mode of interaction between reason and sensibility in comparison with the explicit theses of the KrV. That is to say, by virtue of the link between imagination and reason we observe a gradual passage from the sensible to the suprasensible that has no parallel in the framework of the KrV.

we have the notion of sensible infinity (which must be understood as the capacity to always add a new unit to a previously given sensible magnitude). On the other hand, we find the infinite as something absolutely given. This latter conception of the infinite demands that we situate ourselves on the suprasensible realm. I have shown that in the Kantian theory of the sublime both notions of the infinite coexist, for it is a kind of aesthetic judgment that takes as its point of departure the estimation of objects which, because of their large size, suggest the idea of sensible infinity. And in turn, the latter rests on the infinite as something absolutely given, which can only be explained if we understand the absolutely infinite as a suprasensible magnitude. Thus, the Kantian theory of the sublime allows us to understand how the sensible and the suprasensible are linked in the Kantian system.

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