Özgün Makale

Aesthetics, Judgement and the *Sensus Communis* in Kant, Derrida and Since*

Kant, Derrida ve Sonrasında Estetik, Yargı ve Sensus Communis

Lewis JOHNSON[1]

Abstract

This article offers an account of Jacques Derrida's reading of Kant's *Critique of Judgement,* drawing out its implication for an understanding of the significance of aesthetic judgement in Kant, and in general. It argues that strictures identified by Derrida, concerning aesthetics and judgment, the role of analogy, instability in differentiations of beauty and the sublime, in ideas of the *parergon* and problematics of the *sensus communis,* are interrelated. It indicates how such problematics recurred in Clement Greenberg's Modernist accounts of painting, echoing displaced reiterations of aesthetic criteria in Kant's articulation of the sensus communis and in analogical argumentation, concerning the theorisation of art, and judgements of beauty and the sublime. The article concludes by showing how readings of the sublime, by Jean-Luc Nancy, Jean-François Lyotard and Jacques Rancière, and the beautiful, by Paul Guyer, fail to allow for the productive plurality of responses that Derrida's reading suggests.

Keywords: Aesthetics, Judgement, Sensus Communis, Kant, Derrida.

Öz

Bu makale, Jacques Derrida'nın Kant'ın *Yargı Yetisinin Eleştirisi* okumasının bir açıklamasını sunmakta ve özelde Kant'ın felsefesinden olmak üzere genel olarak estetik yargıların öneminin anlaşılmasına yönelik çıkarımlar ortaya koymaktadır. Derrida'nın okumasında estetik ve yargı, analojinin rolü, güzel ve yüce ayrımlarındaki istikrarsızlık, *parergon* ve *sensus communis* ile ilgili olarak işaret ettiği sorunsalların birbiriyle ilişkili olduğunu savunmaktadır. Aynı zamanda, bu tür sorunsalların Clement Greenberg'in Modernist resim anlatılarında nasıl yinelendiğini, Kant'ın *sensus communis* ve sanatın kuramsallaştırılması yoluyla, güzel ve yüce yargılarıyla ilgili analojik argümantasyonda estetik kriterlerin yerinden edilmiş yinelemelerini yankıladığını göstermektedir. Makale bu iddiayı, Nancy, Lyotard ve Rancière'de yüce ve Paul Guyer'de güzelin Derrida'nın okumasının önerdiği üretken yanıt çoğulluğuna nasıl izin vermediğini göstererek sona ermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Estetik, Yargı, Sensus Communis, Kant, Derrida.

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1 Assoc. Dr., Bahçeşehir University, Faculty of Communication, Department of Photography, lewiskjohnson@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-3081-8079.

This article addresses a series of topics that Jacques Derrida's deconstructive reading of Kant's *Critique of Judgement* brought to notice, but which has, in other accounts of Kantian argument, gone unremarked. Thus, this piece will argue that, while these topics have indeed been commented on, the significance of how they are interrelated in series has not been fully drawn out. Addressing the ways in which Derrida's remarks concerning judgement, the idea of the *sensus communis*, analogy, and the *parergon* are interrelated, and follow from the aims of Kantian critique concerning aesthetics, can serve to re-open what are sometimes blocked together, as other responses to Kantian argument will be shown to demonstrate. Thus, insofar as the Kantian critique of aesthetic judgement may be understood to seek to enable the comprehension of apprehension, this article argues that a deconstruction of this can re-open curiosity about these processes, in themselves as well as in their interrelation. Exemplary of this will be the way in which the questioning of the distinction between the beautiful and the sublime emerges as particular kind of difficulty in Derrida's account, where the failure in Kant to segregate these fully from one another undermines other re-appropriations of Kantian terminology and argument. Indicatively, then, in conclusion I shall be offering readings of accounts by Jean-Françoiş Lyotard, Jean-Luc Nancy and Jacques Rancière of the sublime, and Paul Guyer of the beautiful, in which the drive to comprehend experience aesthetically repeats problematic limitations of the possibility of its understanding.

This argument concerning there being something of the beautiful in the sublime and the sublime in the beautiful in Kant's arguments is not simple, in particular insofar as it depends on the role of analogy, sustaining an idea of the truth claims that can be made in the name of the *sensus communis*, the idea of aesthetic judgement as a common sense, as Derrida points out, and as I shall show. I will suggest that Kant does not resolve the question as to whether the commonality of this common sense is to be understood as constitutive of this particular modality of judgement or, apparently more modestly, as ideally regulative of its exercise. If this appears to echo the problematic of segregation just mentioned in connection with judgements of the beautiful and the sublime, though, then this would not be, on Derrida's reading, accidental. As I shall point out, his questioning of the Latinism used by Kant to denominate the claims of this problematic identifies a movement and an end that projects an ideal lexical stability and an orderly proportionality that reiterates the criteria of beauty in the very phrasing of his claim. In this, Derrida's account in "The Parergon", the long first chapter of *The Truth in Painting*, offers a radical questioning of Kantian argument, but also more widely of traditions and cultures that Kant's text responded to and shaped. It does so by indicating how aesthetic judgement and, with it, the ideals it has served is given over to modes of recurrence: as if conserved in reiteration, acting on a purported "discursivity in the structure of the beautiful" (Derrida, 1987, 48), aesthetic response would be comprehended as such, and "the labour of mourning" of aesthetic experience accomplished (Derrida, 1987, 79).

There are many enigmatic-seeming formulations concerning questions of pleasure in "The Parergon." In a later echo of these, when questioned on the nature of beauty, Derrida may appear to have solicited controversy, referring as if perversely to the "joyful work of mourning" that beauty's temporal character offers (Brunette and Wills, 1993, p. 23). While this may point towards something irreducible in certain kinds of experience of beauty, there are other possible spatio-temporal economies that would encourage different affective relations. Nevertheless, the work of mourning that Derrida picks out in this tradition of aesthetic thought would typically be

a kind of proto- and supra-dialectical transformation of the question of experience of sensation in view of its discursive articulation and exchange. If the sense and significance of this process that would serve the deduction of the *sensus communis* remains obscure, as suggested above in view of the instability of differentiations of kinds of judgments, then symptoms of this will recur. The Latinism of *sensus communis* offers us a model, though, with its displacement of unacknowledged aesthetic criteria repeating that which in the hypothesis it would serve to deduce. Hence, in the deconstructive accounts of aesthetic judgement that follow, displaced, recurrent, unrecognised or disavowed as such, promises of the overcoming of aesthetic judgements may be retraced in displaced recurrence of the terms of their exercise.

In order to show that this does not just concern a particular genre of work concerning art, and that it can also invite the contestation of apparently authoritative aesthetic discourse in the criticism of art, it may be instructive to review a case of a particular form of displaced recurrence in a text by U.S. art critic Clement Greenberg. This would be something of a limit case insofar as Greenberg comes to deny that aesthetic judgement is involved in his invocation of the importance for his account of Modernist painting of the critical philosophy of Kant, "the first real Modernist" (Greenberg, 1982, p. 5). It may be that Greenberg's arguments became more important insofar as they became contested, with the retrospection of the history offered in "Modernist Painting", first given as a talk in 1960, and revised for publication first in 1965, looking back over a century of European-type painting in Western Europe and the U.S.A. echoing the notion of a moment of innovation in art that provided a model for its reinvention. However, Greenberg later denied that there was any aesthetic judgement at stake in this account of Modernism in painting. Offering an axiomatics of "flatness" and the "enclosing" of flatness in painting, Greenberg claims this as part of an "intensification" of that "self-critical tendency that began with the philosopher Kant (Greenberg, 1982, pp. 5-6). Manet's painting "declared the flat surfaces on which they were painted", while Cézanne "sacrificed verisimilitude [...] in order to fit his drawing or design more explicitly into the rectangular shape of the canvas" (Greenberg, 1982, p. 6). Kant had "used logic to establish the limits of logic", says Greenberg—missing the greater questioning of reason as such—restricting logic but rendering it "all the more secure" in what "remained to it", and the painters who came after him, Monet and Mondrian included, had, according to Greenberg, similarly sought to entrench painting more securely in its "area of competence" to the point even of Mondrian's conservatism of colour, for "colour was a norm and a means shared not only with the theatre but also with sculpture" (Greenberg, 1982, p. 5).

The kind of secure identification as art that Greenberg imagined, however, was not quite guaranteed to the painting he promoted. In "The Monochrome and the Blank Canvas", Thierry de Duve draws attention to the tensions over the breakdown of the authority of what Greenberg's criticism isolated as the "essential norms or conventions of painting" and the anxiety he betrayed in responding to the pushing back of "the limits before which a picture stops being a picture and turns into an arbitrary object" (Greenberg, 1982, p. 8) in art from the U.S.A. and elsewhere from the late 50s onwards—Ad Reinhardt's near-monochrome paintings; Donald Judd's specific objects that were neither painting nor sculpture; assemblages, environments and later installations (see De Duve, 1996, pp. 199-279). In a postscript of 1978, Greenberg had already responded to some of his critics, criticising them for taking him to have advocated rather than just described the process of this self-critical Modernism in painting. Yet, despite his later contention that he did not promote these "limiting conditions" as "aesthetic criteria", and that he was de-

scribing and not prescribing this "critical" purification, the sense of an "intensification" of the experience of painting offered by Modernist painting strongly suggests an understanding of a invitation offered by such painting to the affirmation of the tendencies he identified in it. Tacit in some measure though this remains, argumentation concerning the success of this process of auto-criticism falls into an extravagant series of analogies:

> We know what has happened to an activity like religion, which could not avail itself of Kantian, immanent criticism in order to justify itself. At first glance the arts might seem to have been in a situation like religion's. Having been denied by the Enlightenment all tasks they could take seriously, they looked as if they were going to be assimilated to entertainment pure and simple, and entertainment itself looked as though it was going to be assimilated, like religion, to therapy. (Greenberg, 1982, p. 5)

As a working art critic, Greenberg may not be expected to have produced much evidence for his more historical arguments. Perhaps it may be imagined that, fifty years ago, he had defensible reasons for believing or just wishing that religion might be dismissed as therapy, but it's clear enough that his argument moves by uncontrolled analogy, even if it may appear, on first inspection, that entertainment comes off decidedly better than religion. In any case, according to Greenberg the arts, painting among them, survived as a consequence of a process of criticism aimed at identifying what belonged to their practice rather than to any other: a seriousness that enabled the protection and promotion of a painting pure of other analogous techniques or effects, if not, indeed, axiomatically simple as such.

As I indicated above, this problematic of the unacknowledged recurrence of aesthetic judgement, caught up here in a teleological argument, recurs in a variety of different ways. This displaced recurrence in Greenberg's argument appears here to dictate this argumentation by analogy. The more the notion of aesthetic judgement seems to have been isolated as a form of judgement, the more it can be found mixed up with something else, not least with the question of judgement as form. Indeed, since Greenberg engaged with Kant, accounts of aesthetic judgement have been questioned more insistently for the ways in which objects and subjects are modelled after senses of form or forming, as shall be reviewed shortly. Following Derrrida's reading, however, what may be termed analogism has become something of a preoccupation of recent re-readings of Kant. Derrida's account of analogy, operative "everywhere in the [third *Critique*]", suggests the sense of an uncontrolled displacement (Derrida, 1987, 76). This may be understood to follow from Derrida's questioning of "the analytic of concepts" and "the doctrine of judgement" which, as he notes, blocks together the with and without concept: "universality *without* concept and universality *with* concept", quantity displaced by means of quality, yet providing the terms for the notional character of Kant's account of the disinterested relation to the object (Derrida, 1987, pp. 75-76). Stemming thus from the famous disinterestedness of judgements of beauty, Derrida points out that Kant's argument nevertheless models the sense of the "without concept" of the beautiful after logical judgements, analogising their claims on the basis of a resemblance in which "the nonconceptual resembles the conceptual" (Derrida, 1987, pp. 75-76).

This re-emergence of *mimesis* in this resemblance in what many, Greenberg among them, have taken as Kant's formalism also affects attempts to re-articulate the sublime as the key stake of Kantian aesthetics. Before moving on to this, however, something of the reach of the role of analogy may be indicated through a retracing of its limits in respect of the modality of judgement: not just in respect of the exemplary character of the *sensus communis,* the common sense

of aesthetic judgement, oscillating as this does in Kant between constitutive and regulative senses, but also in view of notions of the division of the arts. Pointing out that Kant proposes what he also apologises for as a "sketch" of a "theoretical project", Derrida picks out the division of the fine arts based on three modes of the use of concepts insofar as these appear to Kant to model the expression of sensations (Derrida, 1987, p. 116). Thus, "words, gestures, tones" dictate a theory of expression involving articulation, gesticulation and modulation, implying a model of "the body of man interpreted as a language dominated by speech and the gaze" (Derrida, 1987, pp. 116-117). This might, indeed, be instantiated by the heroising account of large-scale painting in post-Second World War U.S.A. in Greenberg's criticism, in which its expressive significance tends to be determined as demonstrating a generalised notion of freedom, enacted by the traces of the work of the artist for a generalised look or gaze, with more culturally particularised readings of the traces of gesture neglected. I have developed a version of this argument, outlining a more various range of kinds of mark-making in painting by Turkish practitioners responding to the example of gestural, abstract painting (see Johnson, 2009). Given this tendency in Greenberg's criticism, then, his later contention that the account of Modernist painting was merely descriptive and not the object of an aesthetic judgement as affirmation is undermined by this promotion of it as indicative of the freedom Kant implies aesthetic judgement involves and addresses.[2]

There is, then, an absence of clearer indications in the third Critique as to whether the idea of the *sensus communis*, the notional common sense of aesthetic judgement, is to be construed as constitutive or as regulative: that is, arising from some essential character of thought or rather, apparently more modestly, as orienting us towards an idea of a universal community. There are reasons for thinking that, given the importance of this distinction in Kant's first Critique and its dependence, as Callanan (2008) has carefully reviewed, on an articulation of different notions of analogy, that questions of the constitutive and regulative bring the question of analogy around again, encouraging Kant to insist on a division between the significance of the beautiful and the sublime in respect of an idea of this *sensus communis*. Rethinking this will allow for a review of a range of positions in recent work related to a privilege given to an idea of the sublime and its relation to art concerning the mourning of a wider range of aesthetic judgements, and modes of their recurrent displacement.

For, as Callanan among others has pointed out, the account of analogy in Kant distinguishing between "composition" and "combination" as modes of the connection of the manifold of appearances has often been remarked on, echoing senses of the quantitative and qualitative, and apparently dictating the question of a decision between the constitutive and the merely regulative (Callanan, 2008, 748-749). Thus, if the role of the idea of the "*sensus communis*" is clearly at stake, the correlative distinction between mathematical and dynamical has tended to be passed over (Callanan, 2008, p. 753 and note 21). Callanan outlines how Kant distinguishes between the "intuitive" certainties of the mathematical, with numerical or geometrical objects composed of a homogeneity of relations between objects of the same type; while combination serves to explicate the apprehension of a manifold of existence, in which connection as causality is at stake (Callahan, 2008, p. 755). Kant may have thought, then, that he had distinguished between constitutive and regulative modes of synthetic a priori judgements, with the latter given a transcendental status, and detached analogy from its ancient legacy of proportionality. Yet, a sense of proportion recurs in the idea of comparability in the conduct of inferential reasoning that al-

2 There is an extensive literature reviewing Greenberg's relationships with U.S. Government agencies involved in the promotion of Abstract Expressionist art as communicative of freedom from tyranny, beginning with Guilbaut (1985).

lows us to proceed from the known appearance or characteristics of some one object or existent to the possibility of similar characteristics of another comparable one. This may be controlled as hypothetical in respect of experimental knowledge, but its recurrence in relation to the equivocation over the significance of aesthetic judgement reminds us that there is more at stake in Kant's account of the sublime than a mere presentation of a range of positions on a topical issue in late eighteenth-century European culture.

Kant's determination of the sublime as falling outside taste proper, concerning nature rather than art, not only turns away from what was then the exploration of subject matter and cultivation of effects now associated with emergent Romantic art, but also from the history of media and popular culture, with the development of forms of impressive, spectacular entertainment such as the panorama and other predecessors of the cinema (see Thomas, 2008). Questioned energetically by Jean-François Lyotard, Jean-Luc Nancy and Jacques Rancière, this move is over-determined, in the sense Freudian thought encourages us to understand this notion, by the shadowing of the dynamic by the mathematical sublime (Laplanche and Pontalis, 2006, 292-293). For, if the former is marked by a suspension of pleasure, then it engages us in a revision of the provocation of appearances to what becomes our projection of the infinite of the sublime into nature, and, according to Kant, "totally separates the ideas of the sublime from that of a finality of nature" (Derrida, 1987, p. 132). Thus, giving the bias to the moment of quality according to the determination of the analytic of the beautiful as aesthetic judgement, Kant's argument memorialises the superiority of reason in grasping that it cannot grasp the absolutely large. Yet, this exceeding of analogy is held back and defeated by the presentation of the mathematical sublime, the largeness of the absolutely large thus comprehended as magnitude, with measure as the instrument of the quantitative and mathematical, but also with an operative role as recurrent aesthetic judgement.

If the arguments assembled together here are correct, then, the *Critique of Judgement* can be relied on to have stabilised neither the judgement of the beautiful nor that of the sublime, with the non-conceptual and conceptual that might appear to belong to the sublime accompanying the critical deduction of judgements of beauty, and measure, along with aesthetic judgement, as if salvaged from the measurelessness of the without-limit of the sublime. Thus, even while the third *Critique* displaces traditional notions of beauty as a form of or veil for perfection, it waivers in allowing the taking-of-measure back into the picture, resisting the want of proportionality in the sublime, suggestive of an ambivalence of Kant's treatment of this sort of judgement. It is this sort of instability in the estimation of the sublime, indeed, that has encouraged the sorts of re-readings I shall come to shortly, with the sublime soliciting variations on the theme of art exceeding limits, be these more on the side of the subject or that of the object.

The model of the subject here is perhaps the most pressing of issues, however, concerning the stakes of aesthetics that Kant's text can be understood to address. Whether more on the side of the beautiful or the sublime, the role of analogism would be to shore up the notion of judgement as grounded in the articulation of the essential character of experience. Whether the *sensus communis* is to be taken as constitutive or simply regulative, relating in principle to possible rather than to the actual judgements of others, as Kant stages it, the idea of these being ideally in common is retained in the notion of the regulative ideal of aesthetic judgement as an idea of reason. Thus, in one of the more dogmatic passages of the third *Critique* concerning the disinterested character of aesthetic judgement, the reported response of a visiting "Iroquois sachem", when asked whether he found the palaces in Paris beautiful, that nothing "pleased him better than the

eating-houses" is taken to miss the point of aesthetic judgement, a point that, for one reason or another, however, doesn't want to stay where Kant's text seeks to put it. The failure of the sachem to understand that the judgement of the beautiful is independent of "all interest", and thus bears not on the "real existence of the object" but solely on "the meaning" that one can give to one's representation of it, is inferred (Kant 1986, pp. 42-43). Yet, this inference is prejudicial of an understanding of this visitor to Paris, and indicative of a series of problematics concerning questions of hierarchies, between and within cultures, that one might expect the plural of aesthetics as such to be better able to acknowledge and allow to emerge. Kantian disinterestedness insists on "contemplation (intuition or reflection)", ascribing interest of the most essential kind in the existence of edibles to the visiting sachem, while excluding this representative of his culture from the horizon of a human community of the *sensus communis* of taste that might succeed the fall of the leaders who occupy such palaces or other sites of power.

As if responding to then topical instabilities of revolutionary politics, Kant's *sensus communis* would promise a reliable revolution in a return to a ground of pleasure and the social interest in its communication as the horizon of the human community. The solicitation of an inference that the sachem was impelled to refuse the invitation to evaluate centres of power in this way was premature, however. The representative of one of fifty clans in the Haudenosaunee confederation—'Iroquois' being a Francophone version of names ascribed by rival Algonquin-speaking clans that French colonists got to know first—may have admired the eating-houses more architecturally than Kant's text suggests: for Haudenosaunee means "people building long-houses", structures housing up to around twenty family groups, and as such shared, communal spaces (Haudenosaunee Confederacy, 2024). The expression suggestive of a preference for the eating-houses may thus have been for a form of sociability not obviously acknowledged in this model of aesthetics, if also for a refusal of this sort of disinterestedness in forms and their function. The assumption that those charged with the exercise of power for and on behalf of another culture, such as the sachem, might simply detach themselves from such a function and declare their disinterested preference neglects differentials of power that cannot simply be represented in aesthetic terms. Moreover, if the relation between culture and identity is some kind of relation, and not an identity,allowing for variations in responsiveness to eating-houses and to palaces, given the increasing range of complexities of cultural exchange and inheritance that do not need simply to be imagined today, it ought to be admitted that such relations are aporetic, of unpredictably difficult passage, something which cannot be disestablished or re-established according to an act of subjective will.[3]

Elaborations of this question of identity in view of issues of the understanding and study of culture, the social and the political are manifold, and will continue to ramify, displacing claims made in view of even comparative aesthetics, for instance, given the issues of hierarchies and disparities of power that the case of the sachem recalls, as models of modes of the reception of cultural phenomena. The drive to represent the difference between pleasure and its others that recurs displaced in Kant's text, accompanying the very phrase the *sensus communis* as an aestheticised model of the ground of this differentiation, may be understood to follow from a certain failure of mourning of judgements of the beautiful and the sublime, a failure that Kant's third *Critique* may still usefully recall. Indeed, perhaps it is such a failure of mourning in Greenberg which justifies a further return to his text, the claims of which attest to what would be a wholly

3 This may suggest something of a limitation of the effectivities of the staging of the preparation and/or consumption of food in recent art as conceptualised by Bourriaud's notion of relational aesthetics (Bourriaud, 1998/2002, in particular pp. 25-40).

successful—or, what amounts to the same thing—a wholly unsuccessful mourning of the power of aesthetic judgement. Enabled by the "self-critical" tendencies of Manet and Cézanne to understand what is and is not essential to painting, with art as if clearly framed and segregated from both religion and entertainment, Greenberg's claim to certainty as to when he was, and when he was not, judging by aesthetic criteria is exemplary of an avoidance of the predicament that Kant's account of the *sensus communis* bequeaths.

The issue of the *parergon* as it is isolated and analysed in Derrida's reading of the third *Critique* needs to be understood to disturb this sense of certainty (Derrida, 1987, 37-83). For, while this term appears to herald a working at the limits of media or genre that Greenberg was called to face, if also to downplay, with a breakdown of the authority of certain kinds of things such as paintings or sculptures as art, the question of the parergon brings with it a question of the determination of the work of art as object for the subject of judgement as such. The ornamentation or *parerga* that Kant comments on in paragraph 14, "the frames of pictures or the drapery on statues, or the colonnades of palaces", which should augment "the delight of taste… only by means of its form" and not as "finery" (Kant, 1986, p. 68), are questioned by Derrida not simply as "milieu, even if…contiguous with the work" (Derrida, 1987, p. 59). At stake, rather, is the determination of the work of art as such, as work and as art, as object for the subject of aesthetic judgement. The decision concerning the formality of pleasure, as Kant makes clear enough in the preceding paragraph, concerns knowing that the pleasure of these *parerga,* including the "*charms* of colours, or the agreeable tones of instruments" do not obstruct access to "*design or composition*" (Kant, 1986, p. 68; his italics). The standing-out of *parerga* should not obstruct the standing-out of form; and the standing-out of these cases of ornamentation ought not, as Kant remarked concerning the relation of judgement and example in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, to be taken to be able to supply the "*Mutterwitz*"—natural wit, spirit, or cunning—of judgement. Derrida's reading, however, points out that Kant's text determines these ornaments as supplements: as supplying an imagined lack—in the form of their charm—by means of an unstable excess—in the charm of their form. Commenting on that hostility to the prosthesis of examples in the first *Critique*, Derrida points to the "chance and the abyss" that Kant's contention resists, and which would reintroduce "the mourning of labor in the experience of the beautiful" (Derrida, 1987, p. 79), and it is this exemplary value of art as works of art that these *parerga* upset.

In a sense, then, Greenberg was right. The flatness of Manet's painted figures sometimes stands out as painted flatness. Cézanne's brushstrokes retrace something of the delimited shape of the canvas, and verisimilitude can seem to have been sacrificed. Obstructions to typical models of legible space as they are often taken to be, they do not, *contra* Greenberg, have the value of declaration or explicitness, as he tends to put it. This attribution betrays the failure to accept that these characteristics of the working of the work in question don't work to sustain either a single mode of apprehension or comprehension of these *parerga*. Recent re-readings of Manet and Cézanne as re-exploring modes of attentiveness to a variety of pictorial phenomena, including those of film as entertainment, for instance by Jonathan Crary, are close to this; but such accounts need not be taken as exclusive of modes of contention of the conduct of bodies, as in the Baudelairean reading of Manet as satirical dandy, or in that of Cézanne as awkward provincial.[4] There is no *a priori* of such categories of meaning of what art that doesn't simply work as art contests, no first or final instance of semiotic determination, and the value of the explicit or the declarative, especially in the case of literature, only represses this.

4 See Crary, 1999. I proposed this reading of Cézanne's work in Johnson (2005).

In conclusion, this issue of the labour of mourning in Kant's account of the beautiful and the sublime can be shown to conduct to a mourning of labour and back again, and may be linked conceptually with this point about art and the conduct of bodies. To do so, let us return to Kant's *parerga*. Of course, the non-fit between apprehension and comprehension in Kant's account of aesthetic judgement is baptised the sublime. The conclusion of paragraph 14 on *parerga* of the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* attests that this is where we should be heading if the frames of pictures, drapery on statues, the colonnades of palaces, colour or sound interrupt our judgement of their beauty. For Kant's text turns straightaway to it:

> Emotion—a sensation where an agreeable feeling is produced merely by means of a momentary check followed by a more powerful outpouring of the vital force—is quite foreign to beauty. Sublimity (with which the feeling of emotion is connected) requires, however, a different standard of estimation from that relied on by taste. A pure judgement of taste has, then, for its determining ground neither charm nor emotion, in a word, no sensation as matter of the aesthetic judgement. (Kant, 1986, p. 68)

This exclusion of the sublime from taste early in the third *Critique* will support Lyotard's reading of the sublime. It may also be noted that Jean-Luc Nancy's reading of Kant in "The Sublime Offering" effectively irons out the heterogeneity of the modes of authorship that Derrida's questioning of the work-likeness of the workings of art invites us to acknowledge. Nancy's is perhaps the most sophisticated of recent promotions of a thought of the sublime as the guide to the understanding of art, or of its vocation, but he cannot control the *parergonal* dislocation of the gesture which, he says, offers this offering: "at the limit of art there is the gesture of the offering: the gesture that offers art and the gesture through which art itself reaches, touches upon, and interferes with its limit." (Nancy, 1993, p. 52) The sublime, he acknowledges, "always risks burdening art either with pathos or morality (too much presentation or too much representation)", and he tries to retreat before the distinction between pathos and ethos to a naïveté which "simply touches the limit, without any disarticulating excess" (Nancy, 1993, p. 53). Finding the sublime that without which "the beautiful could not be the beautiful or without which the beautiful could be nothing but the beautiful (which paradoxically comes down to the same thing)" (Nancy, 1993, p. 34), echoing Derrida's deconstruction, he puts out of court "(self)-laceration, excessive tension, and sublime spasms and syncopations", thus beautifying the sublime and rendering art "a sacred inauguration and interruption" (Nancy, 1993, p. 53). Thus, his account of the beautiful sublime—perhaps in deliberate fashion—renders indifferent what Hegel's symbolism of the sublime differentiated into primitive and post-romantic art, re-sacralising art as the gesture of offering. Kant's confidently confusing claim in paragraph 14, suggesting that the sublime might be the kitsch of the abrupt switching into or out of agreeableness in the uncontrolled play of bad or good *parerga*, may be more likely to conceptualise the communication of an open seriality of affective states that art may be understood to encourage than this account of interference of or at the limit of art.

Kant treats the sublime as "a mere 'appendix' to the analysis of aesthetic judgement", claims Nancy, referencing paragraph 23 and the beginning of the section the "Analytic of the Sublime", and doesn't let this appendix infect the series of distinctions, between types of aesthetic judgement and their objects, be they of art or nature. Yet Nancy himself seeks to restrict the chance of the multiplication of affective states that a thought of the *parergon* of form, figure, colour, sound or gesture as lack and as excess as generated by a single work, claiming that sublime tension is over, and that the offering of art—despite its implication in the sacred—is governed by

what is, finally, a movingly finite gesture (Nancy, 1993, p. 33). By contrast, a contrast that Nancy explicitly solicits in his essay, referring inaccurately to Lyotard as arguing that the sublime is the "presentation of the fact that there is such a thing as the nonpresentable" (Nancy, 1993, p. 38), Lyotard's sublime as the presentation that there is "some unpresentable" holds to a heroic model of the role of art since Kant. Contradicting Greenberg's "formalist definition of the pictorial object", while yet extending the sense that art has separated itself not just from entertainment or religion, but from the "community of addressees", the *"de jure"* rather than *"de facto"* of the *sensus communis,* Lyotard's account of the sublimity of Western avant-garde art as a matter of matter—"matter as unpresentable to the mind"—is (at least sometimes) explicitly proposed in acknowledgement of Kant's exclusion of the sublime from taste (Lyotard, 2000, pp. 461-462).

Lyotard's essays of the 1980s, such as "The Sublime and the Avant-Garde" from which I have just quoted, have attracted much commentary. Jacques Rancière tries to insist that the whole problem of Lyotard's account follows from importing the idea of a non-representative art into Kant's account of nature as sublime, and that doing this reforms the very dialectic that Lyotard claimed to be resisting, perfecting "the system of rationalization it claims to denounce" (Rancière, 2009, p. 138). Rancière's thought echoes Lyotard's here, as the notion of the non-representative may suggest, cutting across figurative and abstract, but tending to find the artistry in what does not contribute to the more evident of meanings. There once was a "regime" of art in which the visible was subjected to the test of the sayable, within which what was unrepresentable might be felt, if not easily acknowledged. In our non-regime, where there is no governing sense of appropriateness, according to the Rancière, there is no sense in seeking to respond to a sense of the appropriateness or inappropriateness of a form of representation (Rancière, 2009, p. 11 et passim). Yet, while Rancière wants to insist on the new post-romantic regime in art, where anything might be represented, and perhaps anything goes, he seems not to allow that the non-fit between how and what, the presentation of representation, cannot be excluded as a concern, for practitioners of all sorts as well as for critical assessment, long after the stated passing of the old, academic regime.

Rancière is not wrong that Lyotard fails to respect Kant's restriction of the significance of judgements of the sublime to an idea of reason, of freedom, and the moral law. Lyotard is explicit about this in the conclusion of *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime,* arguing that the sublime escapes from the "principle of *sensus communis*", and from "affinity" between the forms of nature and "states of thought", and thereby from these twin sources of "universal communication" (Lyotard, 1994, p. 239). It is this "differend", or irresolvable conflict of claims between "moral universality" and "aesthetic universalization", that provides him with the occasion to point to, if not comprehend, artistic work that testifies to a dissensus operative across cultures and its forms (Lyotard, 1994, p. 239). "'There is simply no authority for my presupposing that other men will pay attention to it'", as Lyotard (slightly mis-)quotes Kant in the final paragraph of his book (Lyotard, 1994, p. 239).[5] Interrupting the sentence, which concludes: "...and take a delight in beholding the uncouth dimensions of nature, (one that in truth cannot be ascribed to its aspect, which is terrifying rather than otherwise)", (Kant, 1986, p. 149) Lyotard shifts Kant's stricture away from any delight in the uncouthness of nature to the transcendence of any such delight. The heroic activities of a Manet or a Cézanne and their avant-garde descendants have their motive in such an "interior ascesis", he claims (Lyotard, 2000, p. 462).

5 Lyotard subtly misquotes Kant, whose text reads "there is simply no authority for my presupposing that other men will pay attention to this" [not "it"], referring thus to the "supersensible sphere" and its "moral foundation".

It might be shown as well as inferred how Lyotard, like Kant, supposes that there is no reason to presuppose an interest in the sublime, even while he does this in relation to art rather than morality. For, as I have suggested, even if Kant seeks to exclude judgements of sublimity from an idea of the *sensus communis*, as he does, then he is also committed to doing so on the supposition that there is no communicable pleasure to be had from them. Lyotard's contention in "The Sublime and the Avant-Garde", for instance, that Cézanne was not a "talented painter finding his 'style'", but seeking to respond on canvas to those "colouristic sensations" hidden in "habitual" ways of looking idealises the artist, and resists understanding that style—rather than being a dead formalism—might be exactly what enables unusual sensations to be communicated (Lyotard, 2000, p. 462).

In conclusion, however, it may be noted that it is precisely to the degree that we cannot follow Kant in the resolution to a labour of mourning of the common sense of the beautiful that the sublime would conclude, and that Greenberg and Lyotard, in their different ways, repeat, that we can understand how Kant's account of aesthetic judgement nevertheless enacts an exemplary incompleteness of the mourning of beauty: the inability to be free of a loss of certainty concerning it. For this follows from Derrida's questioning of the *sensus communis* and the displaced interest, the role of proportionality, of an aesthetic judgement in the very naming of this common sense in Latin. This "dead or scholarly [language]" serves not simply to call up Kant's rewriting of Aristotelean *koinē aesthesis* or Stoic traditions, but, as a phrase not subject to variations of sense or meaning in the citations in common speech, projects the very horizon of agreement that Kant suggests he has established as belonging to beauty, even while he find himself denying that to judgements of the sublime (Derrida, 1987, p. 54).

Lyotard was right, then, to question the pacific forms of culture and the norms of art that follow from this. But he underestimated the interest of the disinterested beautiful too, and the way in which the play of analogy extends across the frameworks of the Kantian synthetic a *priori*. Paul Guyer claims that it is a local, logical "fallacy" that caused Kant to argue that the first moment in the analytic of the judgement of beauty, the judgement of quality, *"Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck"*, "purposiveness without purpose", needed to be thought wholly without "cognitive purpose" (Guyer, 2006, p. 316). But Guyer rewrites Kant, as he confesses:

> ...finding unity in our manifolds of intuition seems to be satisfied independently of the subsumption of the object under any particular concept. 'Purposiveness without a *purpose*' [sic; my italics] can also be called the mere 'form of purposiveness' (paragraph 11, 5:221). But Kant then simply equates the form of purposiveness with the purposiveness of form (paragraph 13; 5:223), in the narrow sense of form in which the spatial or temporal structure of something (a drawing, a melody) can be contrasted to everything else about it... . (Guyer, 2006, p. 316)

Guyer goes on to argue that, if we accept this rewrite, then we wouldn't need to follow those Kantians, or anti-Kantians, in supposing that the judgement of "pure beauty" is anything other than simple, and that there is little difficulty in accepting a non-formalist Kantian aesthetics that allows for free "play with the functional features of the object and other aspects of its form and matter" (Guyer, 2006, p. 317). Such objects may "simply satisfy the criteria for being an object of the kind that [they are]" (Guyer, 2006, p. 317). But is this "simply" not also an aesthetic judgement, unrecognised as such? Guyer's contention that Kant's account of the beautiful means that there can be free play "beyond" the recognition of the object—like Kant's own projection of the form of purposiveness as the pure purposiveness of form—means that we won't be done with

retracing the *parerga* of judgements of taste, concerning art or other objects, and that there is no one solution to coping with discoveries of uncertainty, over pleasure and the meanings of work and play.

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