

The Movement of Mimesis
Heidegger's 'Origin of the Work of Art'
in relation to Adorno and Lyotard

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Abstract

Heidegger formulates the artwork's origin in a movement against the false motion of portrayal and repetition. The term mimesis is employed in the present essay to describe this origin and the means by which truth 'happens', specifically when mimesis turns against itself as imitation. The movement of the artwork is considered within the following constellation: the concept of mimesis is examined in light of Heidegger's 'Origin' essay to illuminate the concept and the essay by placing both in relation to Adorno's aesthetics (especially the way mimesis figures there) as well as Kant's doctrine of the sublime - via Lyotard's *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*. The movement of the artwork toward truth is presented as the movement of mimesis. Further, for both Heidegger and Adorno's accounts, the mimetic movement of the artwork parallels the movement of aesthetic judgment, especially as it is construed in regard to Kant's doctrine of the sublime.

Key words: aesthetic judgment, art theory, beauty, mimesis, the Sublime

Truth happens in the temple's standing where it is. This does not mean that something is correctly represented and rendered here, but that what is as a whole is brought into unconcealedness and held therein. To hold (halten) originally means to tend, keep, take care (luiten). Truth happens in Van Gogh's painting. This does not mean that something is correctly portrayed, but rather that in the revelation of the equipmental being of the shoes, that which is as a whole—world and earth in their counterplay—attains to unconcealedness.¹

As I understand Heidegger's formulation, the artwork's origin lies in a movement back across and against the *false* movement of portrayal and repetition. I would like to employ the term mimesis to describe this same origin and the means by which truth 'happens', specifically when mimesis turns against itself as *imitation*: 'In unconcealedness, as truth, there occurs also the other "tin-" of a double restraint or refusal. Truth occurs as such in the opposition of clearing and double concealing' (OWA, 60). Mimesis becomes the vehicle for truth in the artwork not simply by the setting of something in motion but rather in the *becoming* motion of 'that which is as a whole' that thereby 'attains to unconcealedness'. If mimesis occurs only as imitation, portrayal, or representation, it remains but a false and *falsifying* movement. Indeed, an abiding question is whether this fundamentally repetitive gesture ought to count as movement at all. It might better be portrayed as forestalled movement, as the rehearsal or staging of a movement yet to come. What sort of movement is the artwork such that Heidegger calls it the 'setting-into-work of truth' (OWA, 71)?

To answer this question I will consider a constellation of terms and relations: first, I will position the concept of mimesis in the light of Heidegger's 'The Origin of the Work of Art' essay. I hope to illuminate this concept and Heidegger's essay by placing both of them in relation to Adorno's aesthetics (especially the way mimesis figures there²) as well as Kant's doctrine of the sublime - via Lyotard's recent reading of it in his book *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*. What I hope to accomplish overall is a reading of 'The Origin of the Work of Art' that displays the movement of the artwork toward truth as the

movement of mimesis, though Heidegger himself does not explicitly employ this concept in the essay. Second, I want to suggest a parallel between two registers: I want to claim—for both Heidegger and Adorno's accounts—that the mimetic movement of the artwork parallels the movement of aesthetic judgment, especially in regard to Kant's doctrine of the sublime. To formulate this parallel more strongly would be to claim that there is a mimetic relationship between those two realms each of which is itself composed by mimesis. That is, the dynamic judgment of the sublime would be a mimetic appropriation of the mimesis embodied by the artwork.³ Put differently: the artwork is the prefiguration of, and the guide for, the movement of aesthetic judgment.⁴

Let me begin with Adorno and Horkheimer's citation, in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, of Mauss and Hubert's evocative description of mimesis in their *General Theory of Magic*: 'L'un est le tout, tout est dans l'un, la nature triomphe de la nature'.⁵ From this short passage two aspects of mimesis can be discerned: the first regards the tangibility of identity between the one and the many; the second aspect might be described as the self-overreaching of nature. Let us initially focus on the first aspect and attempt to relate this fungibility of identity achieved by mimesis to what I have elsewhere described as the foundational premise of Kant's aesthetics: objective subreption.⁶ Briefly described, objective subreption is the mistaking of object for subject. Recall that in Kant's aesthetics the actual content of the properly aesthetic judgment is the inner harmony of subjective faculties. And yet the success or completion of that judgment occurs only by way of a fundamental misrecognition of that same harmony by the subject. That is, the properly aesthetic judgment occurs in the moment when the subject making the purported judgment misrecognizes its own harmony as something objective; beauty is the name for this harmony misrecognizing itself. Thus the mistake is not simply along the lines of mistaking object for subject but is also the mistaking of a static form for a subjective *process*.⁷ We might thus call the subreption that constitutes aesthetic judgment a double or profound mistake.⁸ (With more time I would explain how this beautiful misnaming of subjective harmony also functions as a brake upon the aesthetic movement—and what Schiller calls the play—of the subjective faculties; in short, the judgment of beauty puts a halt to the movement within the subject. The sublime would then of course be construed as the subjective dynamism that forestalls its misrecognition as something static and objective.⁹)

Mimesis shares with aesthetic judgment a fluidity of identity between the singular and the universal as well as a confusion and constitutive mistakenness regarding subject and object. And in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* it is precisely the fluidity of identity in mimesis that allows it to be characterized on analogy with the criminal:

[The criminal] represented a deep inherent tendency in living things, whose overcoming is the mark of all development: the losing of oneself in the environment instead of actively asserting oneself, the inclination to let go, to sink back into nature. (DE, 227, translation amended)

The passage continues with the assertion that Freud calls this criminal tendency the death-drive while Roger Caillois names it mimesis. As Adorno later formulates it in his *Aesthetic Theory*, the anti-social character of mimesis makes it the object of a social taboo. Art, for Adorno, then becomes the 'refuge' for mimesis. (*Kunst ist Zuflucht des mimetischen Verhaltens.*¹⁰) And art, precisely as refuge for mimesis, becomes ever more mimetic alongside what Adorno sees as the increasing force of the social taboo on mimesis:

The mimetic orientation, a posture toward reality this side of the rigid opposition of subject and object, is taken up by semblance (Schein) in art—the organ of mimesis since the taboo on it—and, as complement to the autonomy of form, becomes the vehicle of it. (AT, 162)

Art is thus transformed from a refuge for mimesis to a positive vehicle of it. What this transformation within the realm and role of art implies is a corollary transformation of the power and sweep of mimesis itself. The sinking back *into* nature does not mean becoming nature once again but is rather the attempt at assimilation with the environment. However, the 'criminality' of mimesis implies that what has once severed itself from nature, especially if an identity occurs in opposition to and at the expense of nature, cannot become nature once again. Mimesis is thus the necessarily thwarted inclination to become one with nature, indeed to become nature. Mimesis ends with the act of becoming not nature, but *like* nature.

If the organic is that which tends toward decay and disintegration, mimesis is then that contradictory process whereby differentiation is produced through the inclination toward non-differentiation.¹¹ Mimesis is the vehicle of the desire for identity and unity that necessarily brings about their opposite. Put differently: identity is precisely that concept and inclination which brings forth the non-identical. The implication for a theory of production is clear: production is the method of creating likenesses, which, by dint of the structural impossibility of their being identical to that which they are a product of, are after-images not of what they seek to (re)produce but instead of their own thwarted movement toward identity. Products are the mimetic trace of their own becoming, that is, of failed identity. (Commodities might then be defined as products that *begin* by embracing the premise of their own failed identity. The ideology of the commodity, if you will, is thus the foreclosure in advance of the movement toward identity.) It is the failure of identity, and the repetition compulsion of mimesis which attests again and again to this failure, that allows production to live up to its concept: to be production of *something*. It remains to be asked how the principle of identity, in its failure to live up to its own concept, nonetheless succeeds as production and reproduction of human life. Put differently, how is it that mimesis, the vehicle for the principle of identity, brings forth a likeness which both is and is not identical?

Perhaps an answer is to be found in a mimesis that transforms imitation to anticipation: 'The thing-in-itself, which artworks lag after, is not an imitation of something real, but an anticipation of a thing-in-itself yet to come, of something unknown and to be determined

by way of the subject' (AT, 114). Before we anticipate in Heidegger's text a similar transformation of mimesis from imitation to anticipation, let us return to the first aspect of mimesis: its mistaken-ness—precisely what it shares with aesthetic judgment. Heidegger writes the following in regard to the ability of one being to appear in front of another, and thereby to conceal it:

Here concealment is not simple refusal. Rather, a being appears, but it presents itself as other than it is. This concealment is dissembling. If one being did not simulate another, we could not make mistakes or act mistakenly in regard to beings; we could not go astray and transgress, and especially could never overreach ourselves. That a being should be able to deceive as semblance is the condition for our being able to be deceived, not conversely. (OWA, 54)

The passage continues with Heidegger asserting that the double concealment which allows a clearing for truth to happen as unconcealedness is due specifically to the combination of concealing and dissembling. We might formulate this double concealment as a mimesis no longer concerned with imitation, simulation, or representation.¹² This transfigured mimesis performs then not as re-production but rather as production, and indeed a production premised upon an unmotivated, excessive, and originating mistakenness.¹³ Heidegger writes: 'Truth occurs precisely as itself in that the concealing denial, as refusal, provides its constant source to all clearing, and yet, as dissembling, it metes out to all clearing the indefeasible severity of error' (OWA, 55). What we thus have from Heidegger is a description of the artwork—or more correctly we should say its origin—as twofold concealment: as denial *and* as dissembling. I want to assert that it is between these two folds, between concealment as denial and concealment as dissembling, that the *movement* of mimesis occurs. That is, it is the transition from the static concealment that occurs by way of one being put merely in front—and thereby in place—of another, to the concealment that is instead an active dissembling.

Heidegger's characterization of the first moment of concealment as a simple displacement neatly fits Kant's formulation of the subreption that occurs between subject and object in a judgment of *beauty*. The *sublime* might be construed less as the refusal of representation and more as the refusal of the displacement of subjectivity by objective subreption. Finally, this refusal of the displacement of the subject becomes the *demand*, in the sublime, for the actual *production* of the subject. This is what I began by describing as the movement back across and against mimesis, since this second moment is a movement modeled upon the incomplete movement of concealment that Heidegger calls refusal or denial. The work of the artwork, for Heidegger, is contained not in a second movement that *denies* or *cancels* the refusal performed by the originary moment of concealment, but rather in a setting-into-motion (or as he calls it: a setting-into-work) of the ontological stasis presumed by concealment:

... the nature of art was defined to begin with as the setting-into-work of truth. Yet this definition is intentionally ambiguous. It says on the one

hand: art is the fixing in place of a self-establishing truth in the figure ...
 Setting-into-work, however, also means: the bringing of work-being into
 movement and happening. (OWA, 71)

In this passage we notice that the movement of mimesis is not just the *becoming* movement of its static, imitative, and refusing gesture, but more importantly is also 'self-establishing'.

We might best pursue the character of a self-moving mimesis by turning here to consider another Heidegger essay, 'Kant's Thesis About Being'. Indeed Heidegger's exposition of Kant's 'thesis' has a striking affinity with 'The Origin of the Work of Art'. Consider first that something 'shines' in both texts; in the 'Origin' essay, Heidegger concludes his discussion of Van Gogh's shoe-painting as follows; 'That is how self-concealing being is illuminated. Light of this kind joins its shining to and into the work. This shining, joined in the work, is the beautiful. *Beauty is one way in which truth occurs as unconcealedness*' (OWA, 56). Compare this beautiful shining with the formulation of how Kant's thesis appears, in which Heidegger asserts that since 'Kant elucidates his thesis in a merely episodic way', an adequate understanding must

... be guided by the intention of allowing one to see how, in all Kant's elucidations, i.e., in his basic philosophic position, his thesis everywhere shines through as the guiding idea, even when it does not form the scaffolding expressly constructed for the architectonic of his work.¹⁴

To appreciate the full measure of this affinity consider that Kant's thesis, according to Heidegger, though it appears only in episodic elucidations, nonetheless - even 'in his basic philosophic position'—'everywhere shines through'. Is not then the character of this shining *appearance* of Kant's thesis fully aesthetic? I want to suggest two things here: the first is that Heidegger's text amounts to the assertion not only that a crucial element of Kant's most basic philosophic position reveals itself in an aesthetic manner but also that Kant's text, and his thesis, are thereby aesthetic constructs. Secondly, if shining is, according to the 'Origin' formulation, the (beautiful) illumination of self-concealing being, then Kant's thesis, precisely because it is a thesis 'about being', is revealed according to a shining illumination. Kant's thesis, in short, cannot be disclosed expository but must instead — though this is a dubious locution — show itself as a shining.¹⁵

What shines (through?), I want to suggest, is not being but a thesis 'about' it, just as in the 'Origin' essay it is not the artwork—whatever that might be—that is illuminated but instead the *shining* itself. Shining is the illumination of self-concealing being not insofar as it reveals either the substance or the surface of something, but rather in its self-reflexive relation to both substance and surface. Shining is revelatory of nothing; it is instead the denial of depth and substance and the pleasurable acceptance of the *form* of appearance as complete in itself. Shining, as illumination, is not simply an embrace of surface, but as a blinding focus on the superficial is also the illumination of the *transitory* character of the object. The shining of an object is the illumination of what Heidegger calls the

objectness of the object, and thereby—I want to suggest—the first stage of putting the object back in motion. In this regard shining is akin to positing and predication, with the crucial qualification that shining points self-reflexively at its own action of positing and predication. Shining then may be likened to the double, reflexive movement of mimesis. Heidegger's explication of the Kantian determination of the essence of the understanding itself centers on the movement of positing:

What is posited in positing is what is posited of a given, which, for its part, becomes for the positing, by means of such setting (*Setzen*) and placing (*Stellen*), something placed opposite and standing over against, something thrown against (*Entgegenworfenen*) it, i.e., an object (*Objekt*). The setness, *Position*, i.e., being, changes into objectness (*Gegenständigkeit*). (KT, 20)

It is then the understanding—functioning according to the limitation imposed by sensuous intuition—that transforms being into objectivities. Kant's thesis about being, and for Heidegger the guiding concept of Kant's entire critical project, is that being *performs* as positing. And my efforts here are an attempt to describe the shining of this thesis as an aesthetic and reflexive phenomenon. A further implication is that it is the task of judgment, rather than the understanding or cognition, that posits being. As Heidegger explains,

Because being is no *real* predicate, but is nevertheless a predicate and therefore is attributed to the object and yet cannot be elicited from the substantial content of the object, the being-predicates of modality cannot stem from the object, but rather must, as modes of positing, have their origin in subjectivity. (KT, 25)

Being, in other words, becomes a predicate only by way of subreption. That is, Heidegger is attempting to extend the sweep of objective subreption beyond the realm of aesthetic judgment to include not only the whole of predication but also thought in general. Heidegger, we might say, is aestheticizing cognition.

And he attempts this aestheticization first by way of reflection:

In the interpretation of being as positing, is included the fact that positing and positedness of the object are elucidated [in Kant] in terms of various relations to the power of cognition, i.e., in back reference to it, in bending back, in reflection ... consideration no longer goes directly to the object of experience; it bends itself back toward the experiencing subject, it is reflection. (KT, 27—8)

What Heidegger of course has in mind here is Kant's transcendental reflection, which Kant describes in the first *Critique* (A261, B317) as the action of comparing representation with the faculties of pure understanding and sensible intuition in order to discern the provenance of any given representation. What is especially significant here is that the transcendental reflection, the royal road to the heart of subjectivity, is no mere

meditation on thought. Transcendental reflection ought properly to be characterized not simply as a thinking about thinking, but more especially as a thinking about the thinking that occurs in conjunction with perception:

The access to subjectivity is reflection. To the extent that reflection as transcendental does not aim directly at objects but at the relationship of the objectivity of the objects to the subjectivity of the subject, and therefore to the extent that the theme of reflection in its turn, as the named relationship, is already a relating back to the thinking ego, the reflection by which Kant elucidates being as positing and locates it, proves to be a thinking related to perception. (KT, 29)

Heidegger's reformulation of Kant here says at once too much and too little. The 'thinking related to perception' implies that perception plays some role here; this is to overstate Kant's case since the value of sensuous intuition (not perception) for transcendental reflection is not the result of the content of such intuitions but rather insofar as it functions as the *limitation* on pure understanding. More bluntly, the role of the sensuous for reflection is the resistance it provides to understanding. And without this resistance of the sensuous there is no reflection, but this is not to imply—though Heidegger's formulation seems to—that the character of reflection is somehow sensuous. To make this assumption would be to fall prey once again to subreption.

The crucial affinity here is between reflection as the positing that occurs in the 'relating back to the thinking ego', and what Heidegger intimates with the term shining. Shining, like Heidegger's gloss on Kant's transcendental *reflection*, is a self-reflexive act. And yet each is able to refer to itself only after positing the sensuous. Both are therefore—once they have set themselves in motion—able but unwilling to discard the pretense of a sensuousness that precedes their self-origination. And it is here—in a self-originating dynamic which nonetheless persists in the maintenance of a gesture outside itself—that we find ourselves at the heart of mimesis. And the heart of mimesis, in Heidegger, is to be found located in the thing he calls a 'rift' (*der Riss*):

... there lies hidden in nature a rift-design, a measure and a boundary and, tied to it, a capacity for bringing forth — that is, art. But it is equally certain that this art hidden in nature becomes manifest only through the work, because it lies originally in the work. (OWA, 70)

The manifestation of the artwork is due then to the measure and boundary, the rift, that is accompanied by a 'capacity for bringing forth'.¹⁶ This rift, I want to suggest, is the singular fold that exists between the twofold nature of concealing as refusal and concealing as dissembling, as well as the fold articulated by Derrida in his essay 'Economimesis':

One must not imitate nature; but nature, assigning its rules to genius, folds itself, returns to itself, reflects itself through art. This specular flexion provides both the principle of reflexive judgments—nature guaranteeing

legality in a movement that proceeds from the particular—and the secret resource of *mimesis*—understood not, in the first place, as an imitation of nature by art, but as a flexion of the *physis*, nature's relation to itself. There is no longer here any opposition between *physis* and *mimesis*, nor consequently between *physis* and *tekhne*; or that, at least, is what now needs to be verified. (E, 4)

The injunction against imitation that begins this passage from Derrida also appears in Adorno's aesthetics, and is in the latter coupled with a prescription for an alternative object of imitation: 'instead of imitation of nature, imitation of natural beauty' (AT, 105).¹⁷

This is an appropriate place to note Adorno's rejection of Hegelian aesthetics. Hegel's notorious dismissal, in his *Lectures on Aesthetics*, of natural beauty for artistic beauty is taken by Adorno as a wholesale capitulation to a mimesis that, rather than attempting to overreach itself, instead limits itself to the realm of the artifactual. That is, for Adorno, Hegel seems to imagine aesthetics premised upon an error-free mimesis, and an aesthetic judgment not founded on a mistake. In short, Hegel's aesthetics would keep mimesis at the first stage of imitation and thereby eviscerate the very notion of mimesis as *anticipation* of what has not yet occurred—hence Hegel, appropriately enough, is taken to be an advocate for the death of art thesis.¹⁸ Hegel, we might say, wants to remove the rift, the fold, from mimesis. He wants to imagine a seamlessness between production and reproduction, a judgment without fault. He wants finally—and to put it this way seems obvious and banal—an identity between subject and object.¹⁹ And yet this same desire for identity is at the heart of mimesis, as we have seen in Adorno and Heidegger. But the mimetic movement toward identity, in the accounts of Adorno and Heidegger, begins as a movement away from false identity, as a movement toward the loss of a false identity, (And beauty in Kant's aesthetics, let us not forget, is the most profound falsification of identity, so profound that it is beauty itself that spurs a movement toward the loss of identity called the sublime.²⁰)

What now might be the possible object or model of identity for the movement of mimesis away from false identity? I believe the answer is to be found in Adorno's statement that 'The mimesis of artworks is their resemblance to themselves' (AT, 153). Two implications follow from this: the first is that mimesis is a self-enclosed—or to use Heidegger's term in regard to the kind of truth that is fixed in place in the artwork, a self-establishing—relation. The second implication is that mimesis is a dynamic and continuous relation. And yet this dynamism of self-relation is counterbalanced by the stasis of self-resemblance, just as the static and the dynamic engender one another in Heidegger's statement with which I began this essay: 'Truth happens in the temple's standing where it is'. What Heidegger and Adorno's texts offer then is less an account of the nature of the art *object* and more an evaluation of the nature of the relations composed, engendered, and exposed by the *work* of the object.²¹ And the nexus we encounter in their texts is one in which pure stasis and pure dynamism confront one another according to the mechanism of mimesis.²²

For Adorno, not only is spirit a central term in the dynamic of mimesis, but so too does spirit's very prehistory occur in mimesis—indeed as the originary act and future method of objectification: 'Mimesis is in art pre-spiritual, contrary to spirit and yet that which ignites it' (AT, 174). Mimesis is pre-spiritual not simply in a chronological ordering but more importantly as spirit's necessary presupposition: mimesis is the originary act that generates the lack of spirit will then be produced to fill. Mimesis also, as the source of the method and law of production, generates that excess we call objectivity and the world, atop and against which spirit burns. Spirit is not then the return of repressed nature, the reappearance of what has been sacrificed, but rather the appearance and coming to be of an opposition to repression and sacrifice.

It is here—with mimesis—that we encounter one of the largest obstacles to interpreting Adorno's aesthetic theory. It often seems as if Adorno asserts both that a mimetic mode of relating and production still occurs and that art is the instance or refuge for such activity, as in, for example, 'Art is a refuge for mimetic behavior' (AT, 79). The problem with an uncritical reading that valorizes a mimetic—as potentially immediate, and hence recuperable - relation to nature is that it fails to recognize the transformation of mimesis by art.²³

Derrida elicits the fundamentally relational economy of mimesis in his 'Economimesis'. But this economy is already alluded to, and repeatedly, by Adorno, And, in Adorno's case, mimesis always arises as a problem of both identity and exchange. Consider the formulation in his 1959 essay on the composer Alexander Zemlinsky that 'Since in reality everything stands under the spell of equality, of absolute interchangeability, everything in art must appear to be absolutely individual'.²⁴ For Adorno, the spell of equality is part and parcel of the spell of labor and its concomitant principle of exchange—just that principle, incidentally, which lies at the source of Odysseus's cunning, according to the analysis of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.²⁵ Artworks—and recall that for Adorno these function as the refuge for mimesis—attempt a relation toward themselves which is denied every other thing precisely because every other thing already consists of a universal relation to things. (Here we might note the similarity between Adorno and Heidegger's accounts in the centrality accorded to the thing—character of the artwork for its genesis, even though Heidegger's is an ontological while Adorno's is a social analysis.) Artworks attempt an identity against the identity of a thing among things, and a relation not premised upon exchange. Their mimesis is a movement, like that of Kant's aesthetic judgment, toward self and identity, but nonetheless through a profound mistakenness. Aesthetic mimesis, like spirit, does not reproduce but rather anticipates that which as yet is not. This is the distinction between imitation as reproduction of the *Immergleiche* and the radical production of that which is not. These activities correspond to the two kinds of mimesis. The distinction between the two may be extrapolated from Adorno's description, cited above, of art as an imitation of natural beauty rather than an imitation of nature. Mimesis, in other words, cannot continue as imitation when that which it seeks to imitate (and thus reproduce) refuses to congeal into appearance. Put differently: mimesis is forced to imitate that which categorically refuses to be mimetically appropriated. Mimesis

then turns in upon itself, and is marked—for Adorno and Benjamin—by a shudder, when it encounters what cannot be appropriated. And yet this turn inward upon itself—the attempt by spirit to become an in-itself—is what creates the emphatic identity of the artwork that we witnessed in Adorno's statement regarding the mimesis of the artwork as a resemblance to itself.

Derrida finds in Kant's discussion of poetry as the highest form of art-making an implicit ratio between imitation and resemblance: 'It is the art which imitates the least, and which therefore resembles most closely divine productivity' (E, 17). Derrida continues by relating the excessive productivity of poetry to a peculiar production of and break with value:

... inferiority is produced there and is better preserved there in its plenitude. And it produces not only the most moral and the truest disinterested pleasure, which is therefore the most present and the highest, but also the most positive pleasure. A priceless pleasure. By breaking with the exchange of values, by giving more than is asked and more than it promises, poetic speech is both out of circulation, at least outside any finite commerce, without any determinate value, and yet of infinite value. It is the origin of value. (E, 18)

The productivity of the artwork then, insofar as it is a pure productivity, produces no product. Such a productivity produces not value—since value would always imply a relation to things—but the 'origin of value', what we might also call the promise of value. What Derrida describes as the plenitude of interiority depends upon a non-produced pleasure, a pleasure both promised and exceeded, and specifically not fulfilled. The economy of exchange and identity that regulates the being and production of things—which the artwork works against—this same economy must also be opposed, superseded, and denied by aesthetic pleasure. And this pleasure, as we well know from Kant, cannot be the pleasure of things nor even the product of some action. Aesthetic pleasure must instead be the non-produced promise of pure productivity. And pure productivity, for Derrida, is intimately related to mimesis:

We have recognized the fold of *mimesis* at the origin of pure productivity, a sort of gift for itself of God who makes a present of himself to himself, even prior to the reproductive or imitative structure (that is foreign and inferior to the Fine-Arts): genius imitates nothing, it identifies itself with the productive freedom of God who identifies himself in himself, at the origin of the origin, with the production of production. (E, 13)

The gift is of course a model of exchange premised upon a denial of the law of exchange—recall Adorno's absolutely scathing attack, in the section entitled 'Articles may not be exchanged' in *Minima Moralia*, on the seemingly innocuous phenomenon of the modern gift-shop.²⁶

The pure productivity of the artwork, the fold of mimesis, is a movement without cessation, and yet is a movement modeled on the productivity that issues in a product. This model is the source for the anticipation of a product, and in the case of mimesis this product is subjectivity. Thus subjectivity comes to be first anticipated according to the model of a static product. And this model of static subjectivity remains until an object appears that is itself in motion. Mimesis is the name for those objects (set) in motion, for those objects whose stasis as objects becomes unstable. It is precisely their illusory character as objects that puts them in the motion of mimesis. We might thus formulate the first moment of mimesis—that moment of imitation, simple reflection, and representation, called simply by Heidegger 'concealing'—as an over determined and over determining stasis. Imitation, on this account, would then be a provocative, and ontological, insistence on the utter unmoveability and permanence of the objective. (The judgment of beauty, incidentally, might then be construed as an ironic imitation of this metaphysics of imitation, just as the so-called 'timelessness' of artistic masterpieces can only be taken as a tragic parody of hope.) And, again, it is on the model of this first moment of mimesis, of imitation, that we are called and come to expect a stable and unmoving subjectivity. The problem of mimesis is thus the problem of how a movement modeled on stasis can occur at all. Heidegger attempts to solve this problem by interpreting the original imitative moment of mimesis, its fold, as a demand addressed to subjectivity for a pure productivity and for a ceaseless movement.²⁷ As he writes in the Addendum to the 'Work of Art' essay, 'Being, however, is a call to man and is not without man' (OWA, 86). I want to suggest that the trajectory of the movement called for may be traced in the nature of the call, specifically its permanence.²⁸ In short, the *permanence* of the call of Being to human beings is mimetically echoed in the anticipation of subjectivity. And this *anticipation* of subjectivity begins first with the *semblance* of permanence embodied by imitation.

I would like to turn now to a suggestive path in Lyotard's recent reading of Kant's doctrine of the sublime.²⁹ Lyotard offers an alternative origin for the mimetic demand for a pure productivity, that is, for an anticipation of subjectivity.³⁰ What further recommends Lyotard's suggestion is its striking consistency both with the origin of the term 'aesthetic' in Baumgarten, and with Kant's sometimes confusing remarks regarding 'feelings' in the third Critique. Lyotard's evocative reading of Kant takes the following route: he begins by situating judgment in relation to the sensation and feeling of thought: 'Thought only judges according to its state, judging what it finds pleasurable. Thus this state, which is the "object" of its judgment, is the very same pleasure that is the "law" of the judgment'.³¹ He proceeds to efface any discontinuity whatsoever between feeling and thought: 'For sensation never takes place except on the occasion of thought' (L, 13). From this he goes on to question the necessity of a substantive subject for Kant's account of reflection, given that the origin of reflective judgment has just been so neatly allied with feeling. Lyotard then concludes:

In sensation, the faculty of judging judges subjectively, that is, it reflects the state of pleasure or displeasure in which actual thought feels itself to be. This almost elementary characteristic on which the deduction of the

subjective universality of taste will lean comes to light in aesthetic judgment. (L, 15)

It is with a particular feeling that Lyotard concludes his preface to this provocative reading of Kant's doctrine of the sublime: 'If one had to summarize in a few words what is here said, one could say that these lessons try to isolate the analysis of a *differend* of feeling in Kant's text, which is also the analysis of a feeling of *differend*, and to connect this feeling with the transport that leads all thought (critical thought included) to its limits' (L, x). Since for Lyotard the sublime is that which is 'subjectively felt by thought as *differend*' (L, 131), then in order to do justice to the limits of thought (and to bring thought to its limits), sublime feeling must remain irresolvable: 'The admixture of fear and exaltation that constitutes sublime feeling is insoluble, irreducible to moral feeling' (L, 127). We can likewise look neither to some dialectical synthesis nor to an aesthetics of beauty for a resolution of 'sublime feeling' ('In the aesthetic of the beautiful the subject is in a state of infancy' [L, 20]). For Lyotard the sublime in particular, and the aesthetic in general, is but a 'supplement'—the *feeling* between theoretical understanding and practical reason, between, that is, the first and second *Critiques*:

The reading that I advocate ... admits that if the third Critique fulfills its mission of unifying the field of philosophy, it does so, not primarily by introducing the theme of the regulative Idea of an objective finality of nature, but by making manifest, in the name of the aesthetic, the reflexive manner of thinking that is at work in the critical text as a whole. (L, 8)

(And, one might add, in the critical project of thinking as a whole.) What needs then to be made manifest, and what aesthetic judgment provides the most ideal and autonomous model of, is the manner according to which thinking occurs—a manner invisible, or better not cognizable, in either theoretical knowledge or practical action, even though both these realms nonetheless flourish according to this same manner. In short, Lyotard reads Kant's *Analytic of the Sublime* as the problematic pursuit of the attempt to make manifest the principle of judgment as such: 'the reflexive manner of thinking' according to the feeling (of *differend*) that heralds its appearance.

So too is it then only with the sublime that feeling (or thinking) comes fully into its own. And yet the feeling of the sublime depends in turn upon a denial of mimesis, or at least a denial of mimetic imitation, as is clear from Kant's statement in Paragraph 23 that 'we start here by—considering only the sublime in natural objects (since the sublime in art is always confined to the conditions that [art] must meet to be in harmony with nature)'.³² What specifically disqualifies art from the sublime is that insofar as mimesis, for Kant, has agreement with nature as its principle, so too then does this principle serve as a limit. And any limit whatsoever is of course anathema to the sublime. Conversely, one might thus argue that insofar as art depends upon the limitation of mimetic imitation, art thereby becomes the vehicle for the avoidance of the sublime.

For Lyotard, just as the sublime is the key to Kant's aesthetics—which in turn unlocks the critical project as a whole—so then is 'feeling' the key to the sublime. And it is likewise here—with feeling—that we not only find the germ of Lyotard's reading of Kant, but come to understand what he intends in this text with the term 'differend'.³³ Lyotard first recounts the well-known transition in meaning, from the first to the third *Critique*, of the term 'aesthetic', and then comments: 'Kant insists that the term "sensation" that is "a determination of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure ... is given a quite different meaning [*etwas ganz anderes*]" from the sensation that is "the representation of a thing"' (L, 9). Aesthetic feeling, then, is the sensation not of a thing (or its representation) but of *etwas ganz anderes*, of differend, of that which cannot be represented or had. It is on the basis of just this distinction between 'aesthetic' sensation of the first *Critique* and aesthetic 'feeling' of the third *Critique* that a reader of Lyotard's book would expect him to forge an interpretation of Kant's aesthetics and the sublime. But rather than insisting on this distinction (and this is precisely what will make this book relevant to the entire Kantian critical project) Lyotard instead effaces it by claiming that judgment is already present in even the first *Critique's* notion of sensation: 'It could be said that sensation is already an immediate judgment of thought upon itself (L, 10). (Thus, Lyotard's earlier contention that there is a pervasive 'reflexive manner of thinking', which nevertheless only makes itself manifest in the aesthetic, must also be regarded as already fully present in sensation.)

Not only is judgment necessarily present in every sensation, but so too—as an unavoidable counterpart—Lyotard will claim, is reflection:

Any act of thinking is thus accompanied by a feeling that signals to thought its 'state' ... For thought, to be informed of its state is to feel this state—to be affected ... Such is the first characteristic of reflection: a dazzling immediacy and a perfect coincidence of what feels and what is felt ... Pure reflection is first and foremost the ability of thought to be immediately informed of its state by this state and without other means of measure than feeling itself. (L, 11)

Lyotard's collapsing together of sensation, reflection, feeling and thinking is but a foreshadowing of the major implosion effected by his reading: the complete effacement of just that which the third *Critique* seems to attempt to universalize—subjectivity itself. (Imagine sustaining a genuine intersubjectivity, produced by or premised upon aesthetic judgment, but without a substantive subject.) Lyotard arrives at the de-substantialization of the subject by way of the temporal nature of aesthetic feeling. Since the latter always occurs, as Kant insists, as a singular event which nonetheless promises universality and necessity, so then for Lyotard must the purported subject of the feeling be subject to its promissory character. Thus, 'There is not one subjectivity that experiences pure feelings; rather, it is the pure feeling that promises a subject' (L, 20), (Think here of Stendhal's definition of beauty as the promise of happiness, as well as Harold Bloom's remarks regarding the necessary belatedness of literary form—as if literature works to record the inevitable failure of the promise to be fulfilled.)

If taste is then the promise, whispered by aesthetic feeling, of a unified and unitary subject, this promise nonetheless encounters a fault and an 'abyss' (Kant's *Abgrund*) at the heart of the purported subject; between the faculties of imagination and reason. The feeling of the sublime is the name for that breach between the faculties: "Taste promises everyone the happiness of an accomplished subjective unity; the sublime speaks to a few of another unity, much less complete, ruined in a sense, and more "noble" (L, 25). So although the sublime speaks of it as incomplete and ruined, it nonetheless still speaks of unity. The difference, however, is that for Lyotard the sublime does not 'speak' to accomplish the unity of a subject but instead in order to 'critique the notion of subject' (L, 26). And it is with this notion of the critique performed by sublime feeling that we come to understand the great stress Lyotard places on the heuristic capacity of the sublime. The lessons of the sublime, strangely then, are utterly didactic since they flow from the reflective judgment that already 'pre-logically' occurs within sensation itself. Sublime feeling is thus the performance—the bringing out into the open (or at least to its limit)—of the *a poria* that for Lyotard underlies not only all thinking but all sensation as well: the reflexive manner of cognition.³⁴ And bringing out into unconcealedness is likewise performed for Heidegger by both the temple and Van Gogh's shoes.

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NOTES

I thank Steve Melville and Lydia Goehr for their responses to a draft of the essay.

1. Martin Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York; Harper & Row, 1971), p. 56, henceforth cited as OWA. J. M. Bernstein's *The Fate of Art: Aesthetic Alienation from Kant to Derrida and Adorno* (Philadelphia: Penn State University Press, 1992) contains a quite probing analysis of the Heidegger essay in a chapter entitled 'The Genius of Being: Heidegger's "The Origin of the Work of Art"'. Bernstein is especially cogent in drawing out the political implications of the essay; he comments as follows on the relation between the 'Origin' essay and *An Introduction to Metaphysics*: 'The *polis* is the site of history, that is, the site in virtue of which a community has a specific historical identity and thus destiny. Here, then, the temple that was historicizing in "Origin" becomes itself a moment in the larger work that is the *polis* itself. And what makes the elements of the *polis* political is their remaining steadfast "at the site of history". The "political" thence denotes not matters of government ... but the creation, formation and sustaining of the historical identity of a people as being the people it is, the creation or re-creation of their categorical being in the world, their way of taking up and sustaining the burden of human significance' (p. 125).

Although both Heidegger and Bernstein's gloss on him here take up the political and communal aspect of Kantian aesthetics they nonetheless ignore the most salient aspect, which is Kant's contention that the highest achievement of intersubjectivity and the most poignant moment of *sensus communis* manifests itself only as an individual pleasure. Bernstein further remarks, 'The central question posed by "Origin", as well as by the Nietzsche lectures on art, is whether we can engage with art in a manner that is not aesthetical, in a manner that transcends the circumspection of art in "pleasure" and outside cognition and ethics ... Heidegger is committed to the thesis that aesthetic perception exceeds itself towards "what has proper worth in itself". In pointing to the Greek temple Heidegger is pointing to another conception of art, and asking whether, however dominated and repressed, art does not make an analogous claim now ... how, then, does aesthetic perception exceed itself?' (p. 131). My quarrel with Bernstein would be in regard to his formulation of this final question, for I contend that it is not with aesthetic perception but rather with mimesis that we encounter the figure of that which sets itself the problem of how to exceed itself.

2. The most comprehensive account of the concept of mimesis for Adorno is to be found in Josef Fruchtl's *Mimesis; Konstellation eines Zentralbegriffs bet Adorno* (Wtirzburg: Kdnigshausen & Neumann, 1986). A more general treatment of mimesis can be found in Arne Melberg's *Theories of Mimesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

3. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, in his essay 'The Echo of the Subject', in *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics*, ed. Christopher Fynsk (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989) writes the following in regard to the musical 'appearance' of mimesis: 'The absence of rhythm, in other words, is equivalent to the infinitely

paradoxical appearance of *the mimetic itself*: the indifferntiable as such, the imperceptible par excellence. The absence of that on the basis of which there is imitation, the absence of the imitated or the repeated (music, which in its very principle is itself repetition) reveals what is by definition unrevealable—imitation or repetition. In general, nothing could appear, arise, be revealed, "occur," were it not for repetition. The absence of repetition, by consequence, reveals only the unrevealable, gives rise only to the improbable, and throws off the perceived and well-known. Nothing occurs: in effect, the Unheimliche—the most uncanny and most unsettling prodigy ... rhythm would also be the condition of possibility for the subject' (p. 195).

4. My ensuing elaboration of mimesis, especially in regard to Adorno's aesthetics, was provoked in part by Wilhelm Wurzer's puzzling and provocative book, *Filming and Judgment: Between Heidegger and Adorno* (London: Humanities Press, 1990). Where Wurzer finds in Adorno's aesthetics a treatment of mimesis as inadequate for reflecting and responding to modern experience, I instead attempt to read mimesis in Adorno as the mechanism by which that inadequacy is exposed and problematized. In short, while I agree with Wurzer in regard to interpreting mimesis in Adorno's aesthetics as already pointing, in modernist art, beyond itself, I would insist in opposition to Wurzer that mimetic pointing—especially toward the beyond—is fundamentally reflexive. Thus I am tempted, despite Wurzer's expressed caution, to interpret what he calls 'filming' as precisely a mode of imagining the beyond modeled, however, on a reified mechanism of the past- and further, I think this is the true merit of the concept.

5. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Gunning (New York: Continuum, 1982), p. 15, henceforth cited as DE.

6. For a more detailed treatment of objective subreption see my essay 'The Kantian Sublime and the Nostalgia for Violence', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 53(3) (Summer 1995): 269-75.

7. Indeed, Jacob Rogozinski goes so far as to claim that for Kant form *is* movement: 'Form, says Kant, is not merely *Gestalt*; it does not designate the arrested contour of a figure but the movement of its figuration, the tracing of its limit, the unification of its diversity': 'The Gift of the World', in *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question*, trans. Jeffreys. Librett (New York: SUNY Press, 1993), p. 135.

8. Another name for the constitutive aesthetic mistakenness is failure: 'The sublime measures our failure. If it is a *sacred* relation to the *divine* that constitutes the sublime, then our failure will be equivalent to our distance from the sacred, or to our unbelief, our incapacity to navigate through the strains of the difference between immortal and mortal.' Michel Deguy, 'The Discourse of Exaltation: Contribution to a Rereading of Pseudo-Longinus', in *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question*, trans. Jeffrey S. Librett (New York: SUNY Press, 1993), p. 7. Deguy goes on to write: "The deluge, the sublime, simulates the origin in reproducing it and reproduces it in simulating the origin, the simplicity of the

origin, dissimulating still, reserving the diversity of multiplicity, turning itself "inside out" as it hides and "makes one forget" the division'(p. 11).

9. Or, as Jean-Luc Nancy more provocatively puts it: 'As is well known, there is no Kantian aesthetics. And there is not, after Kant, any thought of art (or of the beautiful) that does not refuse aesthetics and interrogate in art something other than art: let us say, truth, or experience, the experience of truth or the experience of thought ... the essential point is precisely that the claim of the sublime forms the exact reverse of the sublation of art' (p. 27). Nancy writes of the movement of the sublime much as I attempt in the present essay to describe that of mimesis: 'The sublime is a feeling, and yet, more than a feeling in the banal sense, it is the emotion of the subject at the limit. The subject of the sublime, if there is one, is a subject who is moved ... it would be better to say that the feeling of the sublime is hardly an emotion at all but rather the mere motion of presentation—at the limit and syncopated' (p. 44). 'The Sublime Offering', in *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question*, trans. Jeffrey S. Librett (New York: SUNY Press, 1993).

10. Theodor W. Adorno, *Asthetische Theorie*, Vol. 7, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), p. 86; English translation by C. Lenhardt (Boston, MA: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), henceforth cited as AT. All subsequent translations from the *Aesthetic Theory* in the present essay have been amended.

11. It might profitably be recalled here that central to Nietzsche's early work in aesthetics is the problem of the *principium individuationis*. See *The Birth of Tragedy, or: Hellenism and Pessimism*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967), especially Section 16.

12. Derrida writes: "True" *mimesis* is between two producing subjects and not between two produced things. Implied by the whole third *Critique*, even though the explicit theme, even less the word itself, never appears, this kind of *mimesis* inevitably entails the condemnation of imitation, which is always characterized as being servile.' 'Economimesis', *diacritics* 11 (1981): 9, henceforth cited as E.

13. Elaine Escoubas argues persuasively that the move from a reproductive to a productive mimesis is figured in the first *Critique's* depiction of the experience of temporality: 'in the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant says that "time itself does not flow away, but rather things flow away in time." Suspension of time, neither regressive memory nor progressive anticipation but the inscription of an *immemoriality*. such is the sense of the Kantian imagination. The reflexion and *Stimmung* of imagination in its play thus coincide, in this first turn, with the "apprehension" (*Auffassung*) of the pure form of time, the pure form of taking-place—which is also ... the installation of a mimesis which is not reproductive but productive' (p. 60). 'Kant or the Simplicity of the Sublime', in *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question*, trans. Jeffrey S. Librett (New York: SUNY Press, 1993).

14. Martin Heidegger, 'Kant's Thesis About Being', trans. Ted E. Klein, Jr and William E. Pohl, *The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* IV(3) (1973): 9, henceforth cited as KT.

15. It is interesting to recall here that in *The Birth of Tragedy* (Section 1) Nietzsche refers to Apollo, god of form, as the 'shining one' (*Der Scheinende*).

16. Bernstein, in his *The Fate of Art*, comments: The rift is an active indeterminacy, a difference, and a marking-unifying in virtue of which the rift as unrepresentable condition can be thought' (p. 121).

17. See Gunter Figal's *Das Naturschöne als spekulatwe Gedankenfigur; Zur Interpretation der 'Asthetischen Theorie' im Kontext philoso- pbischer Astbetik* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1977).

18. Lacoue-Labarthe remarks on the relation between Hegel and Heidegger's closure of aesthetics: The Heideggerian closure of aesthetics exceeds the Hegelian closure because it comprehends the "truth of the being" in terms of which this Hegelian closure had traced itself out.' Does this Heideggerian move not suggest an inadequacy in regard to the Hegelian closure as well as a repetition and mimesis of that same gesture of closure? Are we thus not witnessing in Heidegger an aesthetic response to Hegel? See Lacoue-Labarthe's 'Sublime Truth' in *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question*, trans. Jeffrey S. Librett (New York: SUNY Press, 1993), p. 82.

19. For a quite compelling attempt to recuperate Hegel's aesthetics as a dynamic overcoming of the stale mimesis of the rhetoric of the symbol, see Paul de Man's essays, 'Hegel on the Sublime', in *Displacement: Derrida and After*, ed. Mark Krupnick (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), pp. 139-53; and 'Sign and Symbol in Hegel's *Aesthetics*', *Critical Inquiry* 8(4) (1982): 761-75.

20. In an essay entitled 'The Hegelian Legacy in Heidegger's Overcoming of Aesthetics', Jacques Taminiaux comments that the surprising thing is that this profound reading of Kant [in Heidegger's Nietzsche lectures] is in no way integrated by Heidegger in his meditation on the history of art, insofar as the history of art is linked to the history of aesthetics. Everything happens as if ... Heidegger is taking Hegel as the only guide. In Kant, however, we find—in strict conformity with the doctrine of favor [*Gunst*—an invitation to cast another look on the history of art, one that would amount to considering it not in terms of progress or decline, but as "a domain of originality", that is, of an enigmatic irruption of nature that does not cease to be renewed in the interplay with the tradition that inspired it' (p. 151), in his collection *Poetics, Speculation, and Judgment; The Shadow of the Work of Art from Kant to Phenomenology*, trans. and ed. Michael Genre (New York: SUNY Press, 1993).

21. Rudiger Bubner's essay, '*Kann Theorie ästhetische warden? Zum Hauptmotiv der Philosophie Adornos*', argues that Adorno's aesthetics is an attempt to put theory in motion; specifically, aesthetic theory is to follow the movement of the artwork. And it is

precisely in this regard, I might add, that Adorno's aesthetics displays its true affinity with Kant's, since Adorno attempts to understand aesthetic judgment as the recapitulation of the movement of social material and technique embodied by the artwork. In short, Kant's aesthetics traces the movement of judgment whereas Adorno's traces that of aesthetic form. Most important for the present essay is that both tracings are mimetic, regardless of their model. The Bubner essay is located in *Materialien zue asthetischen Theorie* Theodor W. Adornos *Konstruktion der Modern*, ed. Burkhardt Lindner and W. Martin Ludke (Frankfurt am Main Suhrkamp, 1979), pp. 108-37.

22. If the artwork functions as the vehicle of mimesis, then the artwork might also be construed as something like the *absolute* event, or this at least is how Jean-Francois Courtine reads the implication of Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism*: 'If philosophy has had to—and still has to—turn resolutely to the work of art and to what this work contains, it is because in the work the consciousness of the absolute comes to light, or better: because in the work the *absolute* comes to pass. The work is in its ground an event, the absolute event' (p. 169). 'Tragedy and Sublimity: The Speculative Interpretation of *Oedipus Rex* on the Threshold of German Idealism', in *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question*, trans. Jeffrey S. Librett (New York: SUNY Press, 1993).

23. Habermas provides a shining example of such a misreading. For a more reasoned reading see Carl Braun's *Kritische Theorie versus Kritizismus; Zur Kant-Kritik Theodor W. Adornos* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1983).

24. Theodor W. Adorno, *Quasi una fantasia; Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 1992), p. 114. The passage continues: 'That archaic taboo on mimesis, the dislike of resemblances with which man has been inoculated for millennia, becomes fused with the prohibition on betraying the secret that works of art are interchangeable.' I would submit that Adorno's justly infamous remark regarding the impossibility of poetry after Auschwitz be considered in light of the above passage. Thus, whatever it is that allows the extermination of human life thereby also disallows the mythic pretense of a non-interchangeable artwork.

25. One of the best treatments of this text is to be found in Stefano Cochetti, *Mythos und 'Dialektik der Aufklärung'* (Konigstein: Verlag Anton Hain, 1985).

26 Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 1974), pp. 42-3.

27. Nancy captures nicely the interface of aesthetic pleasure and sublime demand: 'Enjoyment is mere enjoyment when it does nothing but please: in the beautiful. But there is the place (or the time) where (or when) enjoyment does not merely please, is not simply pleasure (if there is ever such a thing as simple pleasure): in the sublime, enjoyment touches, moves, that is, also commands' (p. 52). *The Sublime Offering*.'

28. For an enticing description of the nexus involving politics, excess, and being called by Being, see Chapter 7, 'The Aestheticization of Politics', in Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe's *Heidegger, Art and Politics*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Blackwell, 1990), especially page 69: 'If *techne* can be defined as the sur-plus of *physis*, through which *physis* "deciphers" and presents itself—and if, therefore, *techne* can be said to be *apophantic* in the Aristotelo-Heideggerian sense of the term—political *organicity* is the *surplus* necessary for a nation to present itself and recognize itself. And such is the political function of art.'

29. David Carroll, in his *Paraesthetics: Foucault, Lyotard, Derrida* (New York; Methuen, 1987), aptly summarizes Lyotard's earlier writings in aesthetics, especially *Discours, figure*, and in such a way that echoes much of what has been argued in the present essay regarding the *movement of mimesis*: 'Lyotard posits the figural, on the other hand, as not being determined by any philosophical tradition or linguistic system and as relatively free of the demands of meaning. The figural is disruptive of discursive systems and destructive of signification in general, a radical exteriority to discourse, what discourse is unable to say. In the figural realm, things *happen* that have never happened before and whose occurrence could not have been anticipated. Here meaning is not produced and communicated, but intensities are felt. The figural continually displaces the viewer and leaves him without a fixed identity rather than situating him in the position of addressee. It is the realm of movement, difference, reversal, transgression, and affirmation, that is to say, it is everything the discursive is not'. (pp. 30-1). Carroll's emphasis on the *feeling* of 'intensities' foreshadows Lyotard's treatment of aesthetic judgment in his subsequent Kant book. But the figural, as Martin Jay reminds us, is also intimately related to appearance — as that which 'injects opacity into the discursive realm', See his Chapter 10, 'The Ethics of Blindness and the Postmodern Sublime: Levinas and Lyotard', in *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), p. 564.

30. There is an attempt afoot to foreclose just that *anticipation* of subjectivity central to the experience of the sublime. The main source for this attempt seems to be Habermas's recuperative—and wrong-headed—reading of Adorno's aesthetics, a reading based in turn on Albrecht Wellmer's interpretation of Adorno. See for example Paul Crowther's recent conclusion, heavily indebted to Habermas, regarding Lyotard and the sublime: 'We see now—as we saw in relation to our responses to art—that the pleasure of the sublime is not just some affective jolt. Rather it brings elements of body-hold into heightened reciprocity, and affirms our dignity as rational embodied beings. True, there are dangers—aesthetic, moral, and political—in such experiences; but these can be countered by a proper mode of critical awareness.' In *Critical Aesthetics and Postmodernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 175. In short, the 'proper mode of critical awareness' signals the readiness of subjectivity to forestall, before the event, just that event that might call its origin into question. Instrumental reason functions here as protection from the sublime. 3 I Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime* (Kant's '*Critique of Judgment*', pp. 23-9), trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 12, henceforth cited as L.

32. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1987), p. 98.

33. John Sallis's chapter on Kant's *Analytic of the Sublime*, entitled 'Tremorings—Withdrawals of the Sublime', in his *Spacings—of Reason and Imagination in Texts of Kant, Eichte, Hegel* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 1987), begins with a question that nonetheless seems to capture the meaning of Lyotard's differend: 'What happens when reason comes to be perpetually interrupted, when a certain separation, a certain spacing, proves incessantly to intervene, dividing what would be unity, even the unity of self-presence, producing and continually reproducing difference?' (p, 84).

34. And this reflexive manner of thinking might also be construed as the *movement* away from the metaphysical stasis of cognition. Sallis seems to concur with Lyotard in positing movement within the opening moment of sublime feeling: 'it is quite decisive that even in the initial moment, that of apprehension, the sublime involves *movement*; again and again Kant will draw the contrast between the sublime and the beautiful by means of the opposition between movement and rest' [*Spacings*, p. 101]. Or again, 'One could say, then, that the judgment of the sublime is throughout a matter of movement or, rather, of the interrelation of movements: the movement apprehended by imagination in its own movement of being alternately attracted by and repelled from the object; the referral of what is apprehended to reason; and the affective movement, the emotion, that to some degree pulsates in accord with the initial movement in which imagination is attracted and repelled, that is, shaken, thrown into a state of tremulous excitement, overcome by a tremor, or—activating it still more by fabricating a corresponding verb—set trembling' (p. 104). What this further suggests is that in regard to Heidegger's formulation of the two moments of concealment we might now consider movement as not just occurring in the temporal alternation from the first moment to the second, but already prefigured in the first moment. The belatedness of the second moment—indeed the belatedness of movement—is but recognition of the movement of the first, seemingly static moment.