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Sublim

(_estetikk) Fra latin “sublimis”: “høyt hevet”. Dødens og ekstasens estetikk. Knyttet til fenomener som overgår det mennesket kan styre og kontrollere, som er utenfor vår viljes kontroll. Ved sublime opplevelser blir vi gjennomskaket av følelser, f.eks. ærefrykt. Opplevelsen oppstår oftest fra noe vilt og utelemmet, og skaper skremmende intensitet, “intensitet og voldsomhet” (Longinos 1966 s. 97).

Det sublime gjelder det ubegrensete, grenseløse (Courtine, Deguy m.fl. 1988 s. 50). “[T]he spectacle of the vast and unlimited is the immensity which feeds or releases the intensity within.” (Martin Price i Bloom 1986 s. 36)

Som estetisk stilretning er den sublime opplevelsen først og fremst beskrevet systematisk og tradisjonsdannende av grekeren Longinos, briten Edmund Burke og tyskeren Immanuel Kant.

Den tyske 1800-tallsfilosofen Friedrich von Schelling hevdet at det skjønne er det endelige innlemmet i det uendelige, mens det sublime er det uendelige innlemmet i det endelige (gjengitt fra Courtine, Deguy m.fl. 1988 s. 224).

“The sublime tended to be a name for those experiences whose power seemed incommensurate with a human scale or with formal elegance. [...] The sublime was an experience of transcendence, a surpassing of conventions or reasonable limits, an attempt to come to terms with the unimaginable. The moment of the sublime was a transport of spirit, and at such a moment the visible object was eclipsed or dissolved. The dissolution of the image threw the mind back on itself; typically, the failure of the image was expressed in a figure which played upon words that no longer sufficed. Such moments were fascinating to an age that had lost many of the forms of traditional piety and had diffused the religious experience – the sense of the numinous – over the natural world and over the processes of feeling as well. [...] It would be fair to say that the emotions are in this case blind; they respond to a stress with an appropriate counterstress, and the elevation the soul feels arises from a sense of its own power rather than from the nature of what it encounters.” (Martin Price i Bloom 1986 s. 31-32)

Det antikke verket *Om det sublime* (*Peri hypsous*) ble første gang trykt på 1500-tallet, og da tilskrevet den greske retorikeren Cassius Longinus (eller Longinos). Hans bok består i hovedsak av råd til talere og forfattere om hvordan de skal kunne gripe sine tilhørere, skake og imponere dem, støte dem ut av dagligdagse tankebaner ved billedlig talt å la lynet slå ned i hodet på dem. Senere ble det sublime ofte knyttet til det religiøse, men på 1700-tallet ble fenomenet frikoblet fra teologien.

Ordet “*hypsous*” rommet på gresk en lang rekke ideer knyttet til “retoriske, etiske, psykologiske, og man kan fortsette med: teologiske og metafysiske forestillinger.” (Reinhard Brandt i Longinos 1966 s. 13) Ordet har mange nivåer, og Longinos presiserer ikke tydelig hva han legger i det, men innsirkler et fenomen. For Longinos er det sublime blant annet en stilart som troner øverst i hierarkiet av stilarter (Reinhard Brandt i Longinos 1966 s. 16). Han vurderer Moses, Homer og Cicero etter de samme stilkriteriene (Reinhard Brandt; forord i Longinos 1966 s. 21).

“Det är ingen tillfällighet att Longinos här spelar på den sonora likheten mellan *hypnos* och *hypos* (“text” eller “väv”). Denna nästan fullkomliga homofoni understryker närlheten mellan det sublima och retorik, förstådd som ordnandet av ett stoff.” (Fioretos 1991 s. 226)

“Longinus resembles the great majority of writers on the sublime in this, that he prefers to illustrate his conception of the subject with quotations, and with lively metaphors of his own invention, than to undertake the more arduous task of deducing the psychological operations which result in the sense of the sublime.” (Marwick 1986 s. 14)

“I kosmos beundrer han [Longinos] ikke det lovmessige, ikke delenes harmoni, men naturens storhet og voldsomhet. [...] Naturen vekker vår undring når den overstiger alt vanlig, menneskenært, alt formålstjenlig og beregnelig, og viser sin makt i det uventede og underlige. Tilsvarende overskriden den menneskelige natur – som oppdager sin bestemmelse gjennom å betrakte naturen – i *hypnos* alle menneskelige begrensninger” (Reinhard Brandt i Longinos 1966 s. 16-17). Den har “anarkisk storhet” (Grimminger 1990 s. 192) Vi kan oppleve “loss of balance [...] disorientation of depth and space [...] scrambling of perception [...] psychological obliqueness [...] brave and perverse distortions of scale and depth” (Schama 1996 s. 474-475 og 477).

“The sublime image, Longinus tells us, is meant to astonish and overwhelm; it is not, like the proportional analogy of persuasion, an aid to comprehension. [...] We are moving from image to figure, from the picture to the dislocation of words that indicates the inadequacy of any picture.” (Martin Price i Bloom 1986 s. 42)

“For if the test of a sublime work is its power to overwhelm the reader, why should this not be accomplished by multiplying the number of details, dividing and scattering the reader’s wits among them, and terrifying him with the idea that a state of chaos is about to supervene? This is the situation which Longinus described in his chapter on “Inversion.” By interposing a great number of subordinate clauses between the principal clauses of his sentence, the orator “induces in his hearer the fear that the whole structure of the sentence will fall to pieces, and compels him in his agitation to share in the risk the speaker is taking.”” (Marwick 1986 s. 27)

Longinos mener at det sublime som impuls spontant og ufrivillig befrir oss og får oss til å forstå noe fundamentalt om det å være menneske (Reinhard Brandt i Longinos 1966 s. 20). Det sublime samsvarer med noe evig i menneskenaturen. Longinos oppfattet menneskets natur som historieløs, i likhet med kosmos (Reinhard Brandt i Longinos 1966 s. 22).

Det sublime overskridet menneskelig fatteevne (Courtine, Deguy m.fl. 1988 s. 225). Det sublime oppfattes som en krise i bevisstheten, et sjokk som inntreffer når noe overskridet våre sansers klare begrensninger. Sansene våre kan knapt ta inn så sterke inntrykk. Det kan være lys som blinder snarere enn å gjøre noe synlig, eller lyd som gjør oss nesten døve (Courtine, Deguy m.fl. 1988 s. 257).

“Det sublime er aldri tilgængelig for sanserne, og det lader sig aldri forme til noget værk. Det ekstatiske er sublimt, storstået og ufatteligt [...] det sublime er forestillingsevnens kollaps, formernes kollaps. [...] sublimiteten er i eminent forstand en *gnosis* [et gresk ord for innsikt], som ikke lader sig kommunikere.” (Bäcklund 1993 s. 8 og 17)

Det sublime er ifølge Longinos som et blendende lys (Reinhard Brandt i Longinos 1966 s. 18). Vulkaner og lysende lyn-forgreninger, stormer med svarte, forrevne skyer, tigre i spranget mot sitt bytte, og enorme snødekte tinder ragende opp i himmelen, er fenomener der det oppstår et crescendo av emosjon som ender i en erfaring som ikke kan innsnevres til å være enten lyst- eller smertefull. Vi frykter og beundrer samtidig. Vi befinner oss på en måte ved skjønnhetens smertegrense. Det vi opplever, er så voldsomt at vi gyser; det skjer et brudd med den normale, noenlunde ordnede mottagelsen av inntrykk, og mennesket blir stilt overfor “boundless power and mystery” (Ramazani 1990 s. 119) og “violent transformations, abrupt confluences of the human and the divine, dizzying rotations between eternally recurring and infinitely expanding antinomies” (Ramazani 1990 s. 128). Det sublime setter “tillvarons stora motkrafter och antitetiska zoner i beröring med varandra” (Engdahl 1986 s. 188).

Overfor noe overveldende stort i naturen har menneskets øye behov for en viss tid til å oppfatte hva det ser, og sansene må operere sammen med fantasiens, utenfor fornuftens domene (Courtine, Deguy m.fl. 1988 s. 191). Noe kan oppfattes som kolossalt, utenfor enhver sammenligning, utenfor all målbar størrelse, i noen

tilfeller også i det nærmest uendelig lille (Courtine, Deguy m.fl. 1988 s. 203). Det er noe som overskrider det endelige som tilhører menneskets verden. Det sublime innebærer dermed et slags nederlag (Courtine, Deguy m.fl. 1988 s. 207).

“The very gratification of instinctual aims, in its quality of excess, alerts the ego to a danger. There is simultaneously a wish to be inundated or engulfed by pleasurable stimuli and a fear of being incorporated, overwhelmed, annihilated.

[...] Fascination and dread coincide. Both Burke and Kant emphasize the factor of involuntary motion in the sublime, and this suggests an appeal to the instincts, a gratification too intense to be continued without anxiety.” (Weiskel 1986 s. 104)

“The intensity of the soul’s passions is measured by the immensity of its objects. The immensity is, at its extreme, quite literally a boundlessness, a surpassing of measurable extension.” (Martin Price i Bloom 1986 s. 41) “In language, too, the sublime has always been regarded as a form of excess, a surpassing of limits.” (Martin Price i Bloom 1986 s. 40)

“To call an object “sublime” means, first and most centrally, that it calls forth a characteristic conflict between certain feelings of pain and pleasure – it evokes what Burke labeled “rapturous terror.” On the one hand, the sublime prompts a painful feeling sometimes designated as terror, fear, or dread. But the sublime object does not cause merely pain or terror, but also “rapture”: we find it exhilarating and exciting.” (Plantinga og Smith 1999 s. 66)

Det sublime er en gjennombevning, en impuls som “slår” mennesket og skaper en momentan krise, opploftelse og frigjøring. Det er på parti med alt rystende, plutselig og ekstatisk. Det sublime kan kalles en opplevelse av det overveldende og ufattelige. Kontrasten til det sublime er primært det skjønne (det harmoniske, kultiverte, idylliske). Det sublime kan ikke forstås begrepslig (Reinhard Brandt i Longinos 1966 s. 20), eller er “et mot- og sprengningsbegrep av det vakre, for det rå og skrekkelige, det urgamle og umåtelige” (Zima 1995 s. 162). Det er et møte med “the infinite that is at once empowering and terrifying” (Ramazani 1990 s. 117). “Among the things the sublime enables us to discount is our life.” (Weiskel 1986 s. 95)

Det myke og sarte, og med relativt liten størrelse, er vakkert, mens det sublime gjelder det overveldende store, steile og mørke, desorienterende og som signaliserer fare (Grimminger 1990 s. 191). Det skiller mellom “the sublime (that which inspires fear) and the beautiful (that which inspires love)” (Yaffe 2013 s. 152). Forenklet og stikkordsmessig kan forskjellene mellom det skjønne og det sublime karakteriseres slik:

Det skjønne:	Det sublime:
Klart, tydelig	Sterkt, intenst
Harmonisk	Rystende, overveldende
Fredelig	Kaotisk

Glede	Gys, sjokk
Klare former	Umåtelig, formløst
Det kjente	Det ukjente
Det jevne	Det ekstreme
Innen faste grenser	Grensesprengende
Naturtro etterligning	Uttrykksfullt
Lett å høre og se	På grensen av det sansbare
Det tamme	Det ville og ukontrollerte
Bondegårder, sivilisasjon	Fjellmassiver, lyn, storm, løver
Vise fram livets gleder	Ekstatisk, men nær døden

Det sublime er alltid rystende. For et moderne menneske kan opplevelsen illustreres med berg- og dalbanen: I de voldsomme drivene nedover skriker folk både av skrekk og av fryd; de har tårer i øynene, og kroppen er ute av kontroll. Slik har det sublime med gys å gjøre – noe flyktig og sterkt som er både ekstatisk og skrekkelig, men først og fremst intenst. Mens det skjønne er fredelig, er det sublime sjokkartet, med en desperat intensitet. Det sublime er “et mot-begrep til det vakre” (Courtine, Deguy m.fl. 1988 s. 116).

“An encounter with the sublime is an experience like no other. The jaw drops, the spine tingles and the mind flounders in its attempt to make sense of things. It is unnerving yet calming, joyous and indeterminate.” (Matthew Fitzgerald i <https://www.thecollector.com/the-sublime-concept-in-change-philosophy/>; lesetato 14.04.23)

Det uvanlige verdsettes mer enn det sannsynlige, det fantastiske mer enn det fornuftige, henrykkelse mer enn det moralske (Arnold og Sinemus 1983 s. 119). Det storslagne er mer en kvalitet enn en kvantitet, eller “kvantitet i egenskap av kvalitet” (Courtine, Deguy m.fl. 1988 s. 55).

Det sublime er ikke noe retorisk argumenterende eller overbevisende, men noe skakende som med uimotståelig og grensesprengende kraft leder til ekstase (Longinos 1966 s. 29-31). Det er “en uppbytande, splittrande och delande kraft” (Fioretos 1991 s. 14). Det er et mål på menneskets storslagne nederlag overfor det overveldende (Courtine, Deguy m.fl. 1988 s. 13).

Det skaper “en rörelse mättad med meteorisk kraft [...] Longinos använder verbet *ekferō* (“uppenbara”, “avslöja”, “frambringa” eller “producera”) i syfte att understryka den avslöjande – eller uppenbarande – kraft som inträffar i rätt ögonblick.” (Fioretos 1991 s. 18)

Den sublime opplevelsen gjelder ikke det fantasien skaper, men måten den skaper på og dens yttergrense (Courtine, Deguy m.fl. 1988 s. 57). Fantasien overskrider seg selv (Courtine, Deguy m.fl. 1988 s. 58). Den støter på sin egen maktesløshet

(Courtine, Deguy m.fl. 1988 s. 63). Det sublime presenterer det som ikke lar seg presentere (Courtine, Deguy m.fl. 1988 s. 131).

“Den plötsliga vändningen är den sublima retorikens modus operandi” (Fioretos 1991 s. 27). Longinos exemplifiserer med retoriske figurer som knyttes til det sublime: “the rhetorical question emphasizing the momentary quality of emotion arising from the occasion, asyndeton hindering the reading while pressing it onward, anaphora combining with asyndeton to force meaning to leap ahead, and so forth. As Longinus says of Demosthenes, “His order becomes disorderly, his disorder in turn acquires a certain order.” ” (Ramazani 1990 s. 120)

“Demosthenes har for det meste en abrupt storhet, Cicero brer seg utover. Demosthenes kommer plutselig, med fynd og kraft – vi kan sammenligne ham med lynet som med ett flammer opp og slår ned. [...] Demosthenes’ storhet og intensitet passer best i øyeblikk av ustyrlig og voldsom affekt og når det er om å gjøre å bringe publikum ut av fatning.” (Longinos 1968 s. 47)

“In Longinus’ treatment, sublimity is said to be the product of an inspired moment of passion, rather than of cool and sustained calculation. It follows that: (1) This highest quality of style invests only a short passage of verse and prose, as against ‘skill in invention, and due order and arrangement’ which emerge ‘as the hard-won result not of one thing nor of two, but of the whole texture of the composition.’ Accordingly, Longinus’ instances of sublimity range only from a single phrase or sentence – ‘Let there be light, and there was light’ – to short passages from Sappho, Homer, and Demosthenes. (2) This fragment bursts suddenly upon the auditor, with an effect of intensity, shock, and illumination: ‘flashing forth at the right moment,’ sublimity ‘scatters everything before it like a thunderbolt.’ The sublimity of Demosthenes, for example, is characterized by ‘speed, power, and intensity,’ and ‘may be compared to a thunderbolt or flash of lightning.’ (3) We auditors recognize the sublime not by an act of analytic or comparative judgment, but by our transport (*ekstasis*), and by ‘the spell it throws over us.’ ” (Abrams 1971 s. 133)

“Jeg nøyer meg med å si at i opphøyede avsnitt har det som sies, noe eget storslagent og fremragende over seg. [...] Det storslagne overtaler oss ikke når vi hører på – det river oss ut av oss selv. Det vidunderlige har en sjokkvirkning, derfor står det alltid langt over de fremstillingsformer som bare vil sannsynliggjøre eller underholde. Som oftest kan vi selv velge hva vi vil tro på, men det storslagne kommer med ubetvingelig kraft og styrke og gjør seg til herre over alle som lytter til det. [...] det opphøyede kommer som et lyn, og slynges det ut til rette tid, flerer det alt og viser oss i ett nu *taleren* i hans fulle kraft.” (Longinos 1968 s. 28)

En god taler er ifølge Longinos i stand til å presse sammen det han snakker om, slik at det uttrykkes med en sammentrengt, oppflammende og medrivende kraft (1966 s. 57). Grekeren Demosthenes klarte på denne måten å skake sin tilhørere, når han brukte en voldsom og lidenskapelig stil. En god taler klarer å skjule at han

overdriver (Longinos 1966 s. 103). Til slutt kan tilhøreren bli som en viljeløs beundrer av talerens kraft og patos (Longinos 1966 s. 65). Tilhørerne blir revet med som av en storm, ute av stand til å kalkulere (Longinos 1966 s. 89). Men det lidenskapelige i talen må virke naturlig og uanstrengt, som om den oppstod spontant i øyeblikket, selv om det er nøye planlagt (Longinos 1966 s. 73).

Longinos siterer fra et dikt av Sapfo, der han roser at jeg’et i diktet både fryser og gløder samtidig, og at mange følelser hoper seg opp (Longinos 1966 s. 51). Longinos beundrer diktere som “lar lidenskapen bryte fram som en foss, som likesom med nødvendighet fører med seg en flom av metaforer.” (1966 s. 89)

“I statuer søker man likhet med mennesker, mens man som sagt i taler søker det overmenneskelige.” (Longinos 1966 s. 101)

“Kunsten er nemlig fullkommen når den framstår som natur, mens naturen når sitt mål når den umerkelig rommer kunst i seg.” (Longinos 1966 s. 77)

Det sublime kan kalles en “redselsfull skjønnhet” (“schauriger Schönheit”; Reichel 1991 s. 203). Det overvelder, tar pusten fra en, ryster. Det sublime oppstår ifølge han når uendeligheten bryter inn i menneskets bevissthet (Meyer 1999 s. 204). For Kant rommer ikke det sublime noe begrepslig, og har heller ikke noen menneskelig formålstjenlighet (Bohrer 1993 s. 118). Kant oppfatter den sublime hendelse som fryktelig uten at vi frykter den. Naturen “appears as the medium through which the mind discovers and presents itself, in eddies of separation and reunion.” (Weiskel 1986 s. 6)

“The sublime object is vast, powerful, and overwhelming. Used about an artwork, “sublime” is a term of aesthetic praise, signifying that the work has a grandeur or a superlative kind of greatness. This is why accounts of the sublime were so often linked to theories of artistic genius. Kant also makes the interesting observation that in the case of something sublime, “it is not permissible to seek an appropriate standard outside itself, but merely in itself. It is a greatness comparable to itself alone” (97/250).” (Plantinga og Smith 1999 s. 67)

“The effect of the sublime is to drive us towards the two elements of reality we can never grasp: the thing-in-itself, and the totality of existence. The striving after these two unreachable targets is the experience of the sublime” (Hawkes 2003 s. 73).

I kapittel 35 skriver Longinos om utbrudd fra vulkanen Etna på Sicilia, der steinblokker spruter opp fra bunnen av krateret og elver av ild renner uberegnelig nedover fjellsidene (her gjengitt fra Courtine, Deguy m.fl. 1988 s. 145). “In chapter 35, Longinus contrasts ‘small streams, clear and useful as they are’ with ‘the Nile, the Danube, the Rhine and above all the Ocean’, and ‘the little fire we kindle for ourselves’ with ‘the craters of Etna in eruption’ (Longinus, 35.4). But his point here merely concerns the force of the unusual: ‘On all such matters I would say only

this, that what is useful or necessary is easily obtained by man; it is always the unusual which wins our wonder' ” (Emma Gilby i <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/13/the-seventeenth-century-sublime-boileau-and-poussin>; lesedato 24.04.20).

“Many of Longinus’s examples of the sublime describe combat or bloodshed, and Kant argues not only that we venerate the soldier because “his mind is unsubdued by danger” but also that “war itself ... has something sublime in it.” ” (Ramazani 1990 s. 129) For Kant kunne trusselen om krig og selve krigen skape en sublim effekt: “Even war has something sublime about it if it is carried on in an orderly way and with respect for the sanctity of the citizens’ rights. At the same time it makes the way of thinking of a people that carries it on in this way all the more sublime in proportion to the number of dangers in the face of which it courageously stood its ground.” (Kant sitert fra <https://conservancy.umn.edu/>; lesedato 04.09.15)

“As Samuel H. Monk notes and repeatedly demonstrates, eighteenth-century theoreticians of the sublime continually turned to Milton as “the supreme illustration of whatever particular type of the sublime they advocated.” Not only *Paradise Lost* [et epos av John Milton, utgitt 1667] as a whole, but the allegory of Sin and Death in particular, was frequently singled out for its sublimity.” (Knapp 1985 s. 52)

“Hildebrand Jacob in *The Works* (1837) can list the by-then familiar images of the sublime: All the vast, and wonderful scenes, either of delight, or horror, which the universe affords have this effect upon the imagination, such as unbounded prospects, particularly that of the ocean, in its different situations of agitation or repose; the rising or setting sun; the solemnity of moon light; all the phaenomena in the heavens, and objects of astronomy. We are moved in the same manner by the view of dreadful precipices; great ruins; subterraneous caverns, and the operations of nature in those dark recesses... the sight of numerous armies, and assemblies of people ... the whispering of winds; the fall of waters in cataracts, or heavy showers; the roaring of the sea; the noise of tempests amongst lofty trees; thunder; the clash of arms, and voice of war. Few can read in Milton the ... description, which he has given, of the opening of the infernal gates, without some emotion...” (sitert fra http://www.lukewhite.me.uk/sub_history.htm; lesedato 02.09.15).

Italieneren Francesco Petrarca besteg i år 1336 det nesten to tusen meter høye fjellet Mont Ventoux i Sør-Frankrike, og skrev senere om den vakre utsikten over Provence. Fjellturen tjente ingen praktisk hensikt. “[T]he first ‘modern’ man to climb a mountain for its own sake was the poet Petrarch in the late fourteenth century.” (Porteous 1996 s. 53)

“Transcendental experience is achieved when one attains a level of felicity or exaltation such that one is ‘taken out of oneself’; the self is transcended, and a higher state of consciousness is achieved. This ecstasy (literally ‘standing outside

oneself') may be achieved in many ways, including the geographical, notably in the experience of exotic landscapes, close encounters with nature, hard travelling, and situations involving remoteness, isolation and desolation. When this rapture involves a sudden opening-up to metaphysical forces in a wilderness setting, it has been termed a 'theophany' (Graber 1976)." (Porteous 1996 s. 145) "The transcendental impulse of the sublime is ultimately apocalyptic and self-destructive – a rage not only against formal order but also against the self and language." (Ramazani 1990 s. 125)

Først virker det sublime ydmykende og tilintetgjørende, men deretter løfter det mennesket opp (Reinhard Brandt i Longinos 1966 s. 25). Menneskets ånd kan overskride alle grenser, som om kosmos var for lite og som om mennesket var en gud (Longinos 1966 s. 99). Sjelen fylles ifølge Longinos av stolthet som om den selv frambrakte det sublime, som om den sublime opplevelsen er et slags ekko av en stor sjel (1966 s. 39 og 43).

"For the key poststructuralist critic Louis Marin [...] the sublime painter 'par excellence' is Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665). There are two reasons for this. The first is the subject matter of his work: Poussin is particularly talented at portraying the storms and the tempests which provide Longinus with an analogy for sublime experience and which become, in later theories of sublimity, the catalyst for that experience. The second reason for Marin's interest in Poussin is that the latter is a philosopher-artist whose writing about painting, says Marin, successfully questions the limits of representation. As Poussin writes in a 1651 letter [...] 'I tried to portray a tempest, and I imitated the best I could the effects of a sudden, headlong wind, a darkened sky, rain, lightning and thunder striking the earth' [...] Poussin's obsession is with representing the unrepresentable." (Emma Gilby i <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/13/the-seventeenth-century-sublime-boileau-and-poussin>; lesedato 24.04.20)

Filosofene Edmund Burke og Immanuel Kant knytter på 1700-tallet det sublime til de tidlige alpevandringenes mål: emosjonelle rystelser, møte med det grenseløse og skakende, erfaringer på grensen av det menneskets sanser tåler ("fysiske grenseerfaringer"; Hitzler og Pfadenhauer 2001 s. 172). Burke har også en tydelig kobling til skrekklitteratur og den svarte romantikken: I slik kunst er emosjoner hovedsaken, og mørket kan romme alle slags ekstreme skapninger og hendelser. Den tyske filosofien forbinder det skjønne med det endelige og det sublime med det uendelige. En tysk kulturforsker hevder at det sublime under romantikken oppstår ved en smertelig konfrontasjon mellom det egne selvet og selvets fantaseringer (Lange 1992 s. 71). "[D]et sublime i sin søken etter det ekstreme utfordrer våre begreper om begrensninger som finnes innen moralske forbud og i representasjonsprosessen" (Duperray 2000 s. 109). Max Duperray sikter her til måten sansningene representerer virkeligheten for oss på.

“In the Kantian moment of the sublime the surface is broken, the discourse breaks down, and the faculties are checked or suspended: a discontinuity opens between what can be grasped and what is felt to be meaningful.” (Weiskel 1986 s. 21) “The sublime in Kant also seems, as Schiller phrases it, “two contradictory perceptions in a single feeling”, f.eks. “delightful horror”, som ifølge Edmund Burke er “the most genuine effect, and truest test of the sublime” (gjengitt fra Ramazani 1990 s. 108).

“Self-consciousness, together with the powers of reasoning, judgement and so on, is swallowed up in the overwhelming impression of sublime amazement. The mind’s powers are entirely concentrated upon the object, leaving virtually no resources of self-definition, which are ‘suspended’ in the encounter with a degree of terror essential to the experience of the ‘sublime’. The result is at once a sense of boundlessness and of powerful unity” (Welburn 1986 s. 131). Den tyske sosiologen Georg Simmel skrev i essayet “Alpene” (1923) at høyfjellet har en “transcendent virkning på den menneskelige sjel” (gjengitt etter Giesen 2009). Det sublime er ifølge Harold Bloom “the quest for a transcendence of limits” (1995a s. 524).

I Kants *Kritikk av dømmekraften* (1790) viser den tyske opplysningsfilosofen hvordan det er en grunnleggende uoverensstemmelse mellom menneskets verden og naturen. På tvers av dette skillet kan det bare finnes symboler og analogier, aldri sammenfall. I prinsippet er det splittelse og konfrontasjon. Men dette reduserer ikke mennesket, mener Kant, for uendeligheten og totaliteten ved den ytre verden finnes også i mennesket. Alt i naturen er framtredelser som mennesket bare kan oppfange ved å mobilisere sine egne krefter. Selv de mest voldsomme naturkrefter, så voldsomme at våre sanser ikke makter å gi dem proporsjoner, vekker ideer i oss. Alle har i seg et rom av frihet og imaginasjon uhemmet av naturens raseri og følelsenes kaos. Havets eller verdensrommets uendelighet kan ikke true menneskets autonomi som åndsvesen, men bare sette sansene ut av spill, for disse har kroppens begrensninger. Mens våre sanser bare kan oppfatte biter av den faktiske uendeligheten, kan derimot bevisstheten stille opp ideer som rommer den, balanserer den. Det er disse ideene som ryster oss. Det sublime er dermed for Kant en mulighet som finnes i menneskets sjelelige utrustning. Mennesket har åndelige krefter i seg som oppveier naturens velde, hvor stor denne enn måtte være. Vi oppfanger det formløse og rystes innenfra når havet i storm får sansene til å svikte, men menneskets indre styrke gjør det umåtelige til sitt eget.

“We call an object sublime if the attempt to represent it determines the mind to regard its inability to grasp wholly the object as a symbol of the mind’s relation to a transcendent order.” (Weiskel 1986 s. 23) “The mind which recognizes its own sublimity will not prostrate itself timorously before the Godhead; it will identify with that Godhead.” (Weiskel 1986 s. 77)

Kant skriver om det “ateleologiske” ved det sublime: “The *Sublime* is what pleases immediately through its opposition to the interest of sense. [...] If then we call the

sight of the starry heaven *sublime*, we must not place at the basis of our judgement concepts of worlds inhabited by rational beings, and regard the bright points, with which we see the space above us filled, as their suns moving in circles purposively fixed with reference to them; but we must regard it, just as we see it, as a distant, all-embracing vault. Only under such a representation can we range that sublimity which a pure aesthetical judgement ascribes to this object. And in the same way, if we are to call the sight of the ocean sublime, we must not *think* of it as we [ordinarily] do, endowed as we are with all kinds of knowledge (not contained, however, in the immediate intuition). For example, we sometimes think of the ocean as a vast kingdom of aquatic creatures; or as the great source of those vapours that fill the air with clouds for the benefit of the land; or again as an element which, though dividing continents from each other, yet promotes the greatest communication between them: but these furnish merely teleological judgements. To call the ocean sublime we must regard it as poets do, merely by what strikes the eye; if it is at rest, as a clear mirror of water only bounded by the heaven; if it is restless, as an abyss threatening to overwhelm everything.” (fra §29 i *Kritikk av dømmekraften* sitert fra <http://oll.libertyfund.org/>; lesedato 16.01.14).

“Velbehaget ved det skjønne har med form å gjøre, og form setter grenser. Det sublime er derimot formløst, det er ubegrenset. Ideene om det sublime vekkes av “naturens kaos eller av den villeste og mest uregelmessige uorden og forlatthet, forutsatt at den oppviser størrelse og makt” (Kant 2008, § 23, s. 77). Det gjør at velbehaget oppleves ulikt i de to tilfellene. Velbehaget ved det skjønne er et positivt behag. Kant skriver at det gir en direkte følelse av at livskreftene fremmes. Velbehaget ved det sublime, derimot, er en negativ lyst, som kan beskrives som beundring og aktelse, og som gir en følelse av at livskreftene først hemmes for så å utgytes. Lysten fremkommer indirekte, via en omvei, så å si. Det gjør at bedømmelsen av det skjønne foregår som en rolig kontemplasjon, mens bedømmelsen av det sublime innebærer sinnsbevegelse eller rystelse. [...] Skjønnheten utgjør i seg selv en gjenstand for velbehag, mens hvis noe vekker følelsen av det sublime i oss, kan det fremstå nærmest som voldelig fordi det som fremkaller følelsen av det sublime i oss, overskridet innbilningskraften ved sin størrelse og kraft.” (Bale 2009 s. 86)

“Ifølge Kant finnes det to varianter av det sublime: Det matematisk sublime, som har med at noe er stort å gjøre, og det dynamisk sublime, som har med makt å gjøre. Som eksempel på det matematisk sublime oppgir Kant pyramidene i Egypt. I den forbindelse skriver han at hvis innbilningskraften skal kunne motta et anskuelig kvantum, må den utføre to operasjoner – oppfattelse og sammenfatning. Mens oppfattelsen er uendelig, finnes det for sammenfatningen et maksimum som den ikke kan overskride. Står man for nær pyramidene, trenger øyet tid til å fullføre oppfattelsen nedenfra og opp. Men før innbilningskraften har fått med seg de øverste trinnene, har de nederste forsvunnet. Sammenfatningen blir slik aldri fullstendig for så store gjenstander. Man føler at innbilningskraften ikke strekker til for å fremstille ideen om et hele. Innbilningskraften når sitt maksimum, og i

bestrebelsen på å utvide dette toppmålet synker den tilbake i seg selv. Det er da lystfølelsen melder seg. Det sublime finnes således i den dømmendes sinn, og ikke i de objektene som ledet til sinnsbevegelsen. Følelsen av ulyst skyldes uoverensstemmelsen mellom innbilningskraftens og fornuftens størrelsesvurdering, som Kant betegner som en strid (som altså motsvarer harmonien mellom innbilningskraft og forstand i smaksdommen), mens følelsen av lyst skyldes oppdagelsen av at vår evne til fornuft overskridet hva vi kan sanse i løpet av én anskuelse fordi den har evnen til å kreve absolutt totalitet og til å tenke uendelighet. Vekslingen mellom tiltrekning og frastøtning gjør at følelsen av sublimitet kan kalles rystelse.” (Bale 2009 s. 87)

“Når Kant skal beskrive hva som kan avstedkomme følelsen av det dynamisk sublime, er det mektige naturfenomener han griper til. “Djerve, overhengende, nærmest truende klipper, tordenskyer som tårner seg opp på himmelen og trekker med seg lyn og brak, vulkaner i hele sin destruktive voldsomhet, orkaner som etterlater seg ødeleggelse, det grenseløse oseanet hensatt i opprør, et høyt vannfall fra en mektig elv og lignende ting gjør vår motstand til ubetydelig småtteri sammenlignet med deres makt. Men synet av disse tingene blir desto mer tiltrekkende jo frykteligere det er – forutsatt at vi befinner oss i sikkerhet. Og fordi de foreker den sjelelige styrken utover dens dagligdagse gjennomsnittsnivå og lar oss oppdage en evne til å stå imot av et helt annet slag, en evne som gir oss mot til å måle oss med naturens tilsynelatende allmakt, kaller vi gjerne disse gjenstandene sublime.” (Kant 2008, § 28, s. 81) Den som frykter disse naturfenomenene, kan ikke ha en sublim erfaring, for da vil den ikke være interesseløs. Snarere er det slik at den sublime følelsen kommer når den fryktinngytende naturen fremkaller styrke i oss. For i sin bestrebelse på å utvide sitt maksimum i forsøket på å sammenfatte forestillinger om tordenskyer, vulkaner og orkaner, viser innbilningskraften at menneskesinnet overskridet naturen. I anskuelsen av naturen utvider vi vår forestillingsevne (matematisk eller dynamisk) slik at *fornuft* vekker sinnet til en bestrebelse på å gjøre sansenes forestillinger adekvate for ideen om totalitet. Denne ideen er en lovmessighet, ifølge Kant. Den sublime følelsen er en følelse av respekt for denne fornuftsideen.” (Bale 2009 s. 87-88)

“Whether the sublime is considered in its natural or rhetorical aspect, it implies a relationship of the conscious subject to the abyss.” (Marwick 1986 s. 73) “[D]et sublima senare kom att förenas med teorier om det osägbara, emblematiskt koncentrerade i formeln “Je ne sais quoi” [‘I don’t know what’: a pleasing quality that cannot be exactly named or described].” (Fioretos 1991 s. 228)

“The sublime refers to our responses to everything that is too overwhelming to comprehend, for example, forces of nature such as volcano eruptions or man-made objects like pyramids. According to Immanuel Kant, the observation of such overwhelming matter leads first to a feeling of insignificance and speechlessness, followed by the experience of a feeling of rising above the overwhelming matter. [...] it is a discontinuation of the narrative of our life course. There is something

that breaks through all normal human boundaries. The common forms are broken through. [...] he or she would only experience real fear of dying, which does not qualify as sublime because it is not followed by relief. The sublime therefore consists of two aspects: a disturbance and the overcoming of that disturbance. We feel powerless or small because of something that is stronger or larger than us. But we also experience a feeling of pleasure which is sublime when it results in happiness or understanding. Sometimes this pleasurable feeling produces an abstract experience of ‘the otherness’. Kant discusses the sublime in his third *Critique (Critique of Judgement)*. According to him it comes in two ways: as mathematical (a form of immeasurability) and as dynamical (a form of powerfulness). The mathematical sublime is an experience of overwhelming vastness; it is caused by objects that appear infinitely large. The dynamical sublime is an experience of overwhelming power brought about by objects that seem to have absolute power over us.” (Rob Leurs i <http://www.the-philosopher.co.uk/sublime.htm>; lesedato 09.06.16)

“Kant says that the sublime involves an experience of something “almost too great” to be presented or represented (100/253). [...] But, still, this gets translated into something we can conceptualize and feel pleasure at. [...] we might say that the sublime object presents us with a sensory and emotional experience of some sort that is so extreme, unsettling, or intense that it would be disturbing on its own. But in its context it forces us to shift into another mental mode, cognition, or thought. We become more able to handle the deep feelings evoked by the work, and we put a label on them and on the work. Within this new reflective mode, we categorize the object in some way, and through its painfulness we find it pleasurable, exhilarating, or elevating. [...] The experience of the sublime serves the higher end of reinforcing our human moral nature by calling forth awareness of and respect for the moral law.” (Cynthia A. Freeland i Plantinga og Smith 1999 s. 68 og 71)

“Like the sublime, the Law is both fearful and alluring; indeed for Kant, the moral law is the ultimate form of sublimity. The holy terror of the sublime is the way in which Nature points beyond itself to the moral law in its very raging destructiveness. Once sublimated in this way, those destructive forces seem to be redeemed: they now take the form of moral authority itself, in all its daunting majesty. Yet because this authority is unrepresentable in itself, it can be imaged only by Nature, and so is bound to have an aura of Nature’s chaos and callousness still clinging to it. There is a parallel here with tragedy. [...] Pity refers to the social bond, whereas fear refers to the danger of its dissolution. They thus correspond roughly to the roles which Edmund Burke in his aesthetic treatise respectively assigns to the beautiful and the sublime – the former as the graceful affinities and acts of mimesis which bind social life together, the latter as the disruptive dynamic or restless enterprise which dissolves it only to recreate it anew. Tragedy, one might argue, is a blending of beauty and sublimity: it trades in the ordinary social relations of love and politics, but sees these as opening on to an otherness which they cannot entirely master.” (Eagleton 2003 s. 150-151 og 154)

“Kant discusses the mathematical sublime more extensively than the dynamical sublime. He illustrates the mathematical sublime with the example of a pyramid: it takes time for your eye to go from the base to the top (if you are near the object). During that time some parts of your observation will disappear from your imagination. And as you still have to observe later parts you can never fully comprehend the pyramid. The imagination has to completely perceive an object that is too large to observe as a whole. The normal functioning of bringing order and consistency to the sensory perception fails: a pyramid crosses the limits of what the imagination can perceive in one go. We cannot get an overview of the pyramid. This brings about a feeling of displeasure; [...] The feeling of displeasure is succeeded by pleasure: although we cannot perceive a pyramid as a whole, we are still able to think it as a whole. We can overcome this flaw in sensory perception as theoretical Reason can think the absolute totality. We are above the sensory world due to theoretical Reason. In short, the mathematical sublime is about Reason, which is in contrast to the dynamical sublime.” (Rob Leurs i <http://www.the-philosopher.co.uk/sublime.htm>; lesedato 09.06.16)

“Some examples of the dynamical sublime are overhanging rocks, volcanos and thunderclouds. We experience these objects as frightening. This time imagination is not confronted with theoretical but practical Reason. This is the moral aspect of Reason. A feeling of displeasure arises because we perceive the frightening phenomenon as something that can destroy us. But then pleasure occurs: although a volcano can physically destroy us it can never endanger our humanity: we are rational beings and therefore, in moral respects, we are free. Fear caused by, for instance, volcanos makes us realize that we are more than nature; nature can bring about fear but because we are morally gifted we are superior to nature. [...] Where the mathematical sublime is about reason, the dynamical sublime concerns respect for the moral law. (The moral law is our knowledge of the difference between good and evil and our inner conviction that we must do what’s good. It is located in practical reason.) The mathematical sublime occurs when an object is too large to be perceived as a whole, while the dynamical sublime is caused by frightening phenomena. In both instances displeasure is succeeded by pleasure: the mathematical sublime indicates that we can make use of theoretical Reason and the dynamical sublime reveals a respect for the moral law within us. In both cases we are superior Reason-able creatures: subject to Reason and to moral law.” (Rob Leurs i <http://www.the-philosopher.co.uk/sublime.htm>; lesedato 09.06.16)

Kant hevder at det sublime ikke forholder seg direkte til den fysiske omverden. Det er et symbol for det opphøyde ved menneskets fornuft. Menneskets rasjonelle evne er sublim. “[T]he sublime transforms the painful spectacle of destruction and death into a joyful assertion of human freedom and transcendence.” (Ramazani 1990 s. 107). Han skiller mellom det “fornuftssublime” og det “natursublime”, og vurderer det førstnevnte høyest (Grimminger 1990 s. 192).

Den skotske dikteren James Macphersons publiserte i 1760 verket *Fragments of Ancient Poetry Collected in the Highlands of Scotland and Translated from the Gaelic and Erse Language*. Ossian var en skald og krieger som var kjent fra irske og skotske (keltiske) sagn og ballader. ”Namnet Ossian betecknar hos [den svenska dikteren Thomas] Thorild ett poetiskt tillstånd, i vilket skrankorna mellan jaget och naturen har försvunnit. [...] Ossian ersätter till och med sfärernas musik, uttrycket för Alltets eviga harmoni, samtidigt som han är inbegreppet av vällustig fasa. Han är med andra ord *det sublima*. [...] diktjaget omges av naturens tumult och kraftspel.” (Engdahl 1986 s. 109) Dikterne var oppmerksomme på “the very dualisms – of eye and object, spirit and sense – that the sublime presupposed and reinforced.” (Weiskel 1986 s. 6)

Det sublime kan oppfattes som “a staged confrontation with death” (Ramazani 1990 s. 110). “[T]he destructive urge, or death drive, [is] at work in the poetics of the sublime.” (Ramazani 1990 s. 121) Den irske dikteren William Butler Yeats beskrev det sublime som “Gaiety transfiguring all that dread” (siteret fra Ramazani 1990 s. 110). Det smertefulle møter det frydefulle (Courtine, Deguy m.fl. 1988 s. 65).

Den tyske dikteren Friedrich Schiller var påvirket av Kant, bl.a. i Schillers ”Om det sublime” (1801). Men Schiller oppfatter det sublime mer som en fortsettelse av det skjønne enn det Kant gjør. Schiller mener det er en kvantitativ ulikhet mellom det skjønne og det sublime, mens Kant mener at det er en kvalitativ, grunnleggende forskjell. For Kant er det sublime hinsides enhver anskuelsesform.

Kant og Schiller påpeker at mennesket overalt støter på grensene for sin naturlige eksistens, og først og fremst døden er en uovervinnelig betingelse i menneskelivet. Dermed kan friheten synes svært begrenset, men det finnes en måte å unnsinne de absolutte nødvendighetene på: frivillig anerkjennelse av dem, av fri vilje. Naturen og menneskenes historie byr på mange muligheter til å erfare døden og andre ufravikelige livsbetingelser, men på betraktende distanse, uten fare og som en estetisk opplevelse. ”Den forestillende sansningen av egen makteløshet provoserer fram en følelse der mennesket opplever frihet som ikke kan ødelegges av naturbetingelser, av rett og slett ytre vold.” (Jürgen Stenzel i Segebrecht 1984 s. 69). Schiller vektla menneskets mulighet for ”verdighet” (tysk ”Würde”) i motgang og lidelse, og evnen til slik verdighet kan styrkes gjennom estetiske opplevelser, f.eks. ved synet av stjernehimmelen, enorme fjell, havets uendelighet eller en tragediehelts undergang (Segebrecht 1984 s. 70).

Den svenske 1700-tallsdikteren Bengt Lidners lange dikt *Yttersta domen* (1788) sin ”skräcksblima” skildring av apokalypsen har formen av en vision, och detta minskar ytterligare möjligheten att göra en sträng åtskillnad mellan de bilder som rullas upp i själva synen och de som frambringas genom figuration. Det som skalden ser är retoriska figurer: en svärm av metaforer, svällande liknelser, personifikationer och allegoriska attribut. Världen går under i troper.

Nu Ödets kädja bräcks, nu Tidens grundval gungar,
Och Dödens Ängel ner på domsens åska ljungar.
Nu ramlar hoppets thron. Förtviflan rusar fram,
Och ljusets vida rymd, är natt, och blod, och dam.” (Engdahl 1986 s. 118-119)

I Sverige på begynnelsen av 1800-tallet brukte den romantiske dikteren Carl Jonas Love Almqvist en annen betegnelse enn det sublime: “Det som Almqvist kallar *det dunkelskona* är en excess, en kraftens rikedom som överbjuder de moraliska normerna.” (Engdahl 1986 s. 187) Almqvist “hjälper oss att förstå vad det sublima egentligen säger: att harmonin mellan Subjektet och Alltet inte kan inrättas på de mänskliga behovens nivå, inte i förståndets och gemenskapens termer, utan bara genom jagets paradoxala kärlek till något ofantligt eller vederstyggligt.” (Engdahl 1986 s. 188)

På 1600-tallet pågikk det en diskusjon om det sublime i denne setningen i 1. Mosebok (1. kapittel, 3. vers): “Da sa Gud: “Det skal bli lys!” Og det ble lys.” Diskusjonen gjaldt om en så kort og enkelt oppbygd setning, uten språkfigurer som verbal “utsmykning”, kunne være sublim (Auerbach 1988 s. 107-108). Setningen har både et enormt innhold og noe dunkelt som kan fylle leseren med ærefrykt og beven.

Den engelske teologen Thomas Burnet inkluderte i verket *The Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1690) “reminiscences of his trip across the “great Ruins” of the Alps, and the description of Alpine sublimity had become a standard *topos* among eighteenth-century connoisseurs of pleasing horror, including John Dennis, Shaftesbury, Addison, and Thomas Gray, who had vied in representing prospects where, as Gray said, “not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry.”” (Abrams 1973 s. 105) Briten John Beattie skrev blant annet *Essay on the Sublime* (1747). Han “failed to disrupt his own religious and political orthodoxy. Empiricism reassures him while abstraction humbles yet excites. Beattie offers a mixture of knowledge and ignorance; he combines childlike faith in the instructive reality of Nature with an honest inability to dissect or delimit the totality and immensity of Nature’s impact. It is true that the romantic tendencies within his poetry and prose were originally intended primarily as bold tropes designed to reinforce a set of very familiar messages, and that he identified the Author of the Sublime absolutely with the God of the Scriptures.” (Conrad Brunstrom i http://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/12905/1/CB_James%20Beattie.pdf; lesedato 29.06.22)

“In *The Moralists*, published in 1711, Shaftesbury thought the true magnificence of “Nature was better served by the rude rocks; the mossy caverns, the irregular unwrought grottoes and broken falls of water, the horrid graces of wilderness itself” than “the formal mocking of princely gardens.” A year later Joseph Addison commented that “the Alps are broken into so many steps and precipices that they

fill the mind with an agreeable kind of horror and form one of the most irregular and mis-shapen scenes in the world.” ” (Schama 1996 s. 453)

Den engelske dikteren Thomas Gray “accepted an invitation to accompany [Horace] Walpole on the Grand Tour to Italy. Their letters home to [Richard] West describing their crossing of the Alps and the Grande Chartreuse are key documents in the development of a rhetoric of the sublime in eighteenth-century travel literature.” (Raimond og Watson 1992 s. 128) The Grand Tour var en “aristokratisk dannelsesreise som var spesielt typisk for 1600- og 1700-tallet” (Chiara Nifosi i <https://journals.openedition.org/rief/8078?lang=en>; lesedato 16.12.22). De unge aristokratenes store reise gikk ofte innom Paris, Firenze, Bologna, Padua, Roma og Athen (Bonniot 2017 s. 107).

“The most histrionic versions of seventeenth-century sacred mountains had presented them as spectacles of holy terror. The expected response to a toiling ascent up an artificial Calvary, or toward a de Momper painting of a rock-cell saint, was devout and uncritical prostration: the crushing of the human ego beneath the rock of faith. For Gray and Walpole, though, the mountain experience was different. Intellectually skeptical, they could *make* themselves reverent as a form of aesthetic play. What they were interested in, along the high mountain passes, was not a true epiphany with the omnipotent Almighty, but an experiment in sensation. Their journey was designed to take them close to the edge, to toy with disaster. Where earlier mountain travellers had recoiled from mountain terror, Walpole and Gray revelled in it. They might have taken as their text the revealing remark by one John Dennis, who, on crossing the Alps in 1688, thought he had “walkd upon the very brink in a literal sense, of Destruction. … The sense of all this produc'd in me … a delightful Horrour, a terrible Joy and at the same time that I was infinitely please'd, I trembled.” [...] “magnificent rudeness … on one side the rock hanging over you, & on the other a monstrous precipice. in the bottom runs a torrent, called Les Guiers morts, that works its way among the rocks with a mighty noise, & frequent Falls. You here meet all the beauties so savage & horrid a place can present you with.” ” (Schama 1996 s. 449-450)

En av de første estetikerne som skrev om det sublime etter Longinos i antikken var briten John Dennis. I verket *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry* (1704) kobler han det sublime til det guddommelige: “the Sun mention'd in ordinary Conversation, gives the Idea of a round flat shining Body, of about Two Foot Diameter. But the Sun occurring to us in Meditation, gives the Idea of a vast and glorious Body, and the top of all the visible Creation, and the brightest material Image of the Divinity.” (sitert fra Leighton 1984 s. 15) “Tanken om det sublime var fra begynnelsen av tilknyttet en religiøs kontekst, men i romantikken ble det sublime sekularisert og knyttet til den romantiske subjektforestillingen.” (Hognestad 1999 s. 18)

“Dennis, in contrast to Longinus, put great emphasis on the element of terror present in sublimity. For example, when recalling his experience in the Alps,

during his Grand Tour, he described: "...a delightful Horror, a terrible Joy, and at the same time... I was infinitely pleas'd, I trembled." [...] Dennis' conception departs from Longinus' in two significant ways. Firstly, Dennis expanded the category of sublimity to encompass many other things (natural and supernatural phenomena), not just language. And secondly, he brought the notion of terror and threat into his conception – thus laying the foundations for the philosophers to come. [...] Soon after Dennis, English essayist Joseph Addison (1672-1719) added to the concept, distinguishing it from the beautiful in his essay *On the Pleasures of the Imagination* (1712). He said: "The beauties of the most stately garden or palace lie in a narrow compass, the imagination immediately runs them over, and requires something else to gratify her; but, in the wide fields of nature, the sight wanders up and down without confinement, and is fed with an infinite variety of images, without any certain stint or number." (Addison, in Brady, 2013). [...] Addison also identified the concept of infinity as a key feature of sublimity." (Matthew Fitzgerald i <https://www.thecollector.com/the-sublime-concept-in-change-philosophy/>; lesedato 14.04.23)

"If the only route to the intellect lies through the senses, belief in a supernatural Being finds itself insecure. God had to be saved, even if He had to marry the world of appearances. And so, in the natural sublime, He did." (Weiskel 1986 s. 14)

Det sublime er "an aesthetic of the limitless, the terrible, the grandiose" (Leighton 1984 s. 11). Denne opplevelsen kan vanskelig rommes i språk: "The principle of defeat, of insufficiency and unattainability, makes the art of the sublime one in which verbal grasp always falls short of imaginative reach." (Leighton 1984 s. 22) Det har også blitt hevdet at den sublime opplevelsen innebærer et erkjennelsestap (Bohrer 1993 s. 224).

Ifølge den franske kunstteoretikeren Nicolas Boileau er det sublime "neither style nor theme; it is psychological effect. Furthermore, it is an effect which draws heavily on the language of religious mysticism. The sublime is a mysterious and violent force, irreducible to anything in the work, which strikes and uplifts the involuntary reader without warning." (referert fra Leighton 1984 s. 10) Det var Boileau som i 1693 gjorde Longinos' bok berømt (Arnold og Sinemus 1983 s. 119). Det er en historisk ironi at nettopp klassisisten Boileau brukte Longinos som støtte for sin egen regelbundne poetikk (Arnold og Sinemus 1983 s. 120).

"At the end of the 18th century, the fear of darkness brought about a great fascination for everything concerning the dark side of life, for a fantastic world, filled with dark stone walls, hiding places and dungeons. A spatial phenomenology of darkness came to life." (Nele Bemong i <http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/uncanny/nelebemong.htm>; lesedato 23.11.15)

Den britiske filosofen Edmund Burke ga i 1757 ut verket *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Denne estetiske

avhandlingen sammenligner de to estetikkene som nevnes i tittelen, og beskrivelsene av det sublime fungerte som en “teori” for den gryende britiske skrekklitteraturen. Burke beskriver opplevelser som det å se på en vakker kvinnes kropp, å gå i en mørk skog, å oppleve en storm osv. Både det skjønne/vakre og det sublime overskridt fornuftens begrensninger, men det sublime er voldsomst og mest intenst. En lang rekke fenomener kan framkalle det sublime gys.

Burke beskriver det sublime som et område unndratt alle former for klarhet. Han bryter med klassismens idealer ved å lede oppmerksomheten mot hvordan uklarheter i visse tilfeller kan vække våre følelser sterkere til liv enn en entydig avbalansert referanse til en kjent virkelighet. Natten, mørket og alt dunkelt kan vække en skjelvende tiltrekning, nettopp ved at det virker skremmende. Mørket og dets særegne ugjennomtrengelighet rommer bestyrtelsen, skrekken, gjennomrystelsen. Det er noe som ligger på lur i det, noe vi ikke aldri helt kan forutse. I slik uhygge ligger både skrekk og ekstase latent, og disse følelsene er og forblir uimotståelige for oss når de opptrer sammen. Burke fokuserer på menneskets mentale behov for eksess. Han mener at mennesket har evner i seg som gjør det mulig for det umediert å ta det evige og det uendelige opp i seg, og dermed lamme fornuftens i en sublim opplevelse. Burke undersøker område etter område av mulige sjelelige rystelser. Han fokuserer på sansenes svikt og følelsenes ekstreme muligheter, på uvissitet som skaper ubalanse og kaos i menneskesinnet. Følelsene betyr så avgjort mer for mennesket enn fornuftens, som uansett aldri kan gjennomlyse menneskets subjektive virkelighet.

“Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling. I say the strongest emotion, because I am satisfied the ideas of pain are much more powerful than those which enter on the part of pleasure.” (Burke 1990 s. 36)

“I have already observed, 1 that night increases our terror, more perhaps than anything else; it is our nature, when we do not know what may happen to us, to fear the worst that can happen; and hence it is, that uncertainty is so terrible, that we often seek to be rid of it, at the hazard of certain mischief. Now, some low, confused, uncertain sounds, leave us in the same fearful anxiety concerning their causes, that no light, or an uncertain light, does concerning the objects that surround us.” (Burke 1990 s. 76-77)

Trekk ved det skjønne oppsummerer Burke slik: “On the whole, the qualities of beauty, as they are merely sensible qualities, are the following: First, to be comparatively small. Secondly, to be smooth. Thirdly, to have a variety in the direction of the parts; but, fourthly, to have those parts not angular, but melted as it were into each other. Fifthly, to be of a delicate frame, without any remarkable appearance of strength. Sixthly, to have its colours clear and bright, but not very

strong and glaring. Seventhly, or if it should have any glaring colour, to have it diversified with others. These are, I believe, the properties on which beauty depends; properties that operate by nature, and are less liable to be altered by caprice, or confounded by a diversity of tastes, than any others." (Burke 1990 s. 107)

Del 3 av Burkes bok avsluttes med en oppsummerende sammenligning av det skjønne og det sublime: "On closing this general view of beauty, it naturally occurs, that we should compare it with the sublime; and in this comparison there appears a remarkable contrast. For sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small: beauty should be smooth and polished; the great, rugged and negligent; beauty should shun the right line, yet deviate from it insensibly; the great in many cases loves the right line, and when it deviates it often makes a strong deviation; beauty should not be obscure; the great ought to be dark and gloomy: beauty should be light and delicate; the great ought to be solid, and even massive. They are indeed ideas of a very different nature, one being founded on pain, the other on pleasure; and however they may vary afterwards from the direct nature of their causes, yet these causes keep up an eternal distinction between them, a distinction never to be forgotten by any whose business it is to affect the passions. In the infinite variety of natural combinations, we must expect to find the qualities of things the most remote imaginable from each other united in the same object. We must expect also to find combinations of the same kind in the works of art. But when we consider the power of an object upon our passions, we must know that when anything is intended to affect the mind by the force of some predominant property, the affection produced is like to be the more uniform and perfect, if all the other properties or qualities of the object be of the same nature, and tending to the same design, as the principal;

If black and white blend, soften, and unite

A thousand ways, are there no black and white?

If the qualities of the sublime and beautiful are sometimes found united, does this prove that they are the same; does it prove that they are any way allied; does it prove even that they are not opposite and contradictory? Black and white may soften, may blend; but they are not therefore the same. Nor, when they are so softened and blended with each other, or with different colours, is the power of black as black, or of white as white, so strong as when each stands uniform and distinguished." (Burke 1990 s. 113-114)

Koblingene mellom skrek og det sublime er markante: "I have before observed, that whatever is qualified to cause terror is a foundation capable of the sublime; to which I add, that not only these, but many things from which we cannot probably apprehend any danger, have a similar effect, because they operate in a similar manner." (Burke 1990 s. 119) "[I]f the pain is not carried to violence, and the terror

is not conversant about the present destruction of the person, as these emotions clear the parts, whether fine or gross, of a dangerous and troublesome encumbrance, they are capable of producing delight; not pleasure, but a sort of delightful horror, a sort of tranquility tinged with terror; which, as it belongs to self-preservation, is one of the strongest of all the passions. Its object is the sublime. Its highest degree I call *astonishment*; the subordinate degrees are awe, reverence, and respect, which, by the very etymology of the words show from what source they are derived, and how they stand distinguished from positive pleasure.” (Burke 1990 s. 123) “There is something so over-ruling in whatever inspires us with awe, in all things which belongs ever so remotely to terror, that nothing else can stand in their presence. There lie the qualities of beauty either dead or unoperative; or at most exerted to mollify the rigour and sternness of the terror, which is the natural concomitant of greatness.” (Burke 1990 s. 142)

“In addition to terror, Burke emphasised the role of ‘obscurity’ in sublimity. By obscurity, Burke referred to that which we find difficult and incomprehensible to imagine. Incomprehensible things are that of death, infinity and eternity, among others. When we look at an ocean horizon, for example, we find it hard to conceptualise that there is no boundary to the water. These things we struggle to fully grasp in their implications, thus leaving us confused and unnerved. [...] Burke also asserted that power was necessary to the sublime object. The object must have superiority over the subject, in terms of power. For example, many natural phenomena are uncontrollable, such as a tornado or tsunami, and are thus more powerful than us. Therefore, sublimity stems from danger, hence its close relation to terror. These features – terror, obscurity and power – make Burkean sublimity an uncomfortable and difficult experience as much as a pleasurable one, drawing on John Dennis’ idea of it as a “delightful horror.” That being said, however, Burke was keen to distinguish that what makes the horror delightful is that the danger and terror are not actually threatening the subject. In other words, the viewer of the sublime object is safe from its potential danger, thus allowing for an aesthetic contemplation of it.” (Matthew Fitzgerald i <https://www.thecollector.com/the-sublime-concept-in-change-philosophy/>; lesedato 14.04.23)

“Burke gjør spørsmålet om det sublime og det skjønne til et forhold mellom subjekt og gjenstand, og ikke som Kant til et forhold mellom egenskaper i subjektet og subjektets forestilling om gjenstander. Det gjør at verken den sublime eller den skjønne erfaringen er transcendental hos Burke. [...] Burke gjør den sublime gjenstanden til et forhold mellom erfarende subjekt og gjenstand, og ikke som Kant til et forhold mellom krefter i subjektet. [...] Kant nevner Burke i positive ordelag, men fremhever forskjellen mellom dem. Hos ham selv er den sublime følelsen altså en transcendental erfaring. Hos Burke, derimot, er den sublime følelsen en fysiologisk, kroppslig erfaring. Burke definerer det sublime slik: “Alt som på et eller annet vis er egnet til å fremkalle tanker om smerte og fare, det vil si alt som på en eller annen måte er fryktelig eller dreier seg om fryktelige ting eller virker på samme måte som frykt, er en kilde til det sublime; det vil si at det frembringer den

sterkeste følelsen sinnet er i stand til å føle.” (Burke 2008, I. VII, s. 34) Hos Burke er det gjenstanden som fremkaller følelsen som kalles sublim, ikke følelsen. Den er i sin høyeste grad overveldelse (*astonishment*), det vil si den tilstand der alle sinnets bevegelser suspenderes samtidig som man opplever skrekk, i lavere grad aktelse, ærefrykt, ærbødighet, respekt. Utgangspunktet for denne følelsen er en opplevelse av smerte, pine, fare, av frykt og skrekk. Imidlertid må den gå over i en annen sterk følelse for at gjenstanden som fremkaller den skal kunne kalles sublim: lettelse (*delight*) til forskjell fra behag (*pleasure*). Burke velger å bruke *delight*, her oversatt med lettelse, som uttrykk for følelsen som ledsager bortfall av smerte eller fare. Den gir han en fysiologisk forklaring på: Hvis smerten og skrekken modifiseres på en slik måte at de ikke volder skade på den som opplever dem, kan de frembringe lettelse ettersom disse følelsene åpner opp en farlig tilstopping med uheldige konsekvenser. Følelsen er en slags ro farget av redsel, en slags frydefull skrekk. Ettersom den tilhører selvoppholdelsen, er den en av våre aller sterkeste følelser.” (Bale 2009 s. 89, 91 og 99)

“Et klargjørende eksempel Burke trekker fram [...] er noen linjer fra Miltons *Paradise Lost* (1667):

O'er many dark and dreary vale
They pass'd, and many a region dolorous;
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp;
Rock, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens and shades of death,
A universe of death.

Milton 1968, bok II, v. 618-622

I den fjerde verselinjen ser vi hvordan den forenende kraften fungerer, påpeker Burke. Rekken av substantiver som betegner naturforekomster, går sammen om å danne et bilde vi kan gjenkjenne. Men kraften ville fortape seg betraktelig hvis ikke dette var *dødens* klippe, grotter, sjøer, myrer, hule og skygger. Ved å forene dette ordet med de øvrige oppnår Milton en sublim følelse hos leseren/tilhøreren, som øker ytterligere gjennom den siste verselinjen, “A universe of death”. Også her sammenstilles to ideer som bare kan sammenstilles ved hjelp av språket, og det slik at mulighetene for hva man kan forestille seg, er hinsides hva vi kan oppfatte.” (Bale 2009 s. 94)

Sammenstillingen “delightful horror” er et eksempel på språkfiguren oksymoron. Den retoriske figuren oksymoron, dvs. en åpenbar, konsentrert selvmotsigelse, er “par excellence det sublimes figur” (Courtine, Deguy m.fl. 1988 s. 118). Longinos oppfatter hyperbaton, der rekkefølgen på ord endres fra det som er vanlig, som en viktig språkfigur for å uttrykke det sublime (Groddeck 2020 s. 181). Eksempler på hyperbaton: “Some rise by sin, and some by virtue fall”; “This I must see”; “Surprised I find myself”.

Den franske forfatteren Jean-Jacques Rousseaus brevroman *Julie, eller Den nye Héloïse* (1761) bidro til “estetiseringen” av Alpene. I denne romanen skriver Rousseau: “Det er faktisk noe alle mennesker føler, selv om ikke alle er seg det bevisst, at man på høye fjell, der luften er ren og tynn, puster inn mer frihet, føler seg lettere i kroppen, kjenner med åndelig glede [...]. Det føles som om man svinger seg opp over menneskenes boliger og der etterlater alle lave og jordiske tanker, som om sjelen nærmer seg det eteriske med dets uforanderlige renhet.” Rousseau opplevde “det sublimas befrielse” (Engdahl 1986 s. 182).

Det britiske dikteren og bildekunstneren William Blakes dikt “Night the Ninth” i *The Four Zoas* (påbegynt i 1797, ikke fullført) “has been likened to the fourth movement of Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony*. The words *epiphany*, *apotheosis*, and *climax* have all been used to describe the grand finale of Blake’s unfinished epic, in which all of life appears to rush together to restore the transcendent unity that was shattered in Night the First. [...] The poem aims to delay the movement of the sublime from blockage to transport and elevation, long enough for the reader to see the warring visual and verbal elements of the fallen world as the fragmented and dismembered *body* of humanity [...] Blake’s poem [...] directs us to a human rather than transcendent reality. Contrary to the thrust of the sublime, therefore, the ‘transcendence’ canvassed in this poem is horizontal and temporal rather than vertical and eternal [...] Enlisting the services of Locke, Young, and Swedenborg clarifies Blake’s response to the sublime and shows convincingly how each member of that motley group is essential to Blake as he forges his response to it.” (<http://www.rc.umd.edu/reviews-blog/peter-otto-blakes-critique-transcendence-love-jealousy-and-sublime-four-zoas>; lesetdato 24.04.15).

Den engelske romatikeren Percy Bysshe Shelley omtalte i brev til en venn sublime opplevelser på denne måten: “- But how shall I describe to you the scenes by which I am now surrounded? - To exhaust epithets which express the astonishment & the admiration – the very excess of satisfied expectation, where expectation scarcely acknowledged any boundary – is this to impress upon your mind the images which fill mine now, even until it overflows? [...] The immensity of these aerial summits excited, when they suddenly burst upon the sight, a sentiment of extatic wonder, not unallied to madness – And remember this was all one scene. It all pressed home to our regard & to our imagination.... All was as much our own as if we had been the creators of such impressions in the minds of others, as now occupied our own.” (sitert fra Leighton 1984 s. 38).

Percy Bysshe Shelley skrev om et fjellområde i Wales: “Rocks piled on to each other to tremendous heights, rivers formed into cataracts by their projections, & valleys clothed with woods, present an appearance of enchantment – but why do they enchant, why is it more affecting than a plain, it cannot be innate, is it acquired? [...] Thus does knowledge lose all pleasure which involuntarily arises, by attempting to arrest the fleeting Phantom as it passes – vain almost like the chemist’s aether it evaporates under our observation; it flies from all but the slaves

of passion and sickly sensibility who will not analyse a feeling.” (sitert fra Holmes 1987 s. 74)

I skrekkromanen *Frankenstein* (1818) bruker Mary Shelley uttrykket “the sublime shapes of the mountains” om de sveitsiske alper (Shelley i Fairclough 1968 s. 295; begynnelsen av kap. 2). Om en isbre heter det senere i romanen: “I remembered the effect that the view of the tremendous and ever-moving glacier had produced upon my mind when I first saw it. It had then filled me with a sublime ecstasy that gave wings to the soul and allowed it to soar from the obscure world to light and joy. The sight of the awful and majestic in nature had indeed always the effect of solemnizing my mind and causing me to forget the passing cares of life.” (Shelley i Fairclough 1968 s. 361; begynnelsen av kap. 10)

Mary Shelley skrev om naturen ved Chamonix i de franske Alpene: “This cataract fell in to the Arve, which dashed against its banks like a wild animal who is furious in constraint. As we continued our route to Cerveaux, the mountains increased in height and beauty; the summits of the highest were hid in clouds, but they sometimes peeped out into the blue sky, higher one would think than the safety of God would permit, since it is well known that the Tower of Babel did not nearly equal them in immensity.” (sitert fra Holmes 1987 s. 339) “Another rock, over which a waterfall divided, seemed to her like the visionary image of ‘a colossal Egyptian statue of a female deity’ ” (Holmes 1987 s. 339).

Også ektemannen Percy Bysshe Shelley var overveldet av Alpene. “They arrived at Chamonix, exhausted, at 7 on Monday evening, and were startled by the unearthly thunder of an avalanche from the further mountain. [...] Then he began the second of his long descriptive diary-letters to [Thomas Love] Peacock, filled with the immensity and grandeur of the icy peaks. During the following days they visited the glaciers at Boisson and at Montavert. The impact which the sheer mass and cruel simplicity of the Alps at close quarters had on Shelley was profound. It entered immediately into the store of his fundamental imagery, like the rivers, and the sea, and the sky. On the first day in Chamonix he wrote to Peacock. ‘Pinnacles of snow, intolerably bright, part of the chain connected with Mont Blanc shone through the clouds at intervals on high. I never knew I never imagined what mountains were before. The immensity of these ariel summits excited, when they suddenly burst upon the sight, a sentiment of extatic wonder, not unallied to madness.’ ” (Holmes 1987 s. 339)

Percy Bysshe Shelleys “overall impression was one of overwhelming power, gigantic but infinitely remote force. It frightened and fascinated him. He was filled with awe and the sense of his own limited, human intelligence brought face to face with enormous natural energies and processes beyond anything he had previously imagined. The meditation became a poem called simply, ‘Mont Blanc’. [...] What he saw seemed to him both a symbol, and an actual example, of the sublime but utterly impersonal Power which functioned through nature. Describing the slow but

irresistible advance of the glacier towards Chamonix, and the ‘inexpressibly dreadful’ aspect presented by the shattered pines which were overwhelmed one by one by its relentless progress, a few feet each year, he wrote to Peacock that he tended to believe Buffon’s theory of Nature’s inevitable self-destruction, of its inherent entropy. He saw this as yet another example of a tyranny, of power functioning inhumanely to crush and destroy, and likened it to the esoteric Indian dualism which Peacock had used in his earlier poetry. This was the eternal struggle between Oromazes, the spirit of life and warmth, and Ahrimanes, the spirit of darkness, cold and death.” (Holmes 1987 s. 339-340)

“After a superb description of the terror of the glacier’s advance, he [P. B. Shelley] concluded: ‘I will not pursue Buffon’s sublime but gloomy theory, that this earth which we inhabit will at some future period be changed into a mass of frost. Do you who assert the supremacy of Ahriman imagine him throned among these desolating snows, among these palaces of death and frost, sculptured in this their terrible magnificence by the unsparing hand of necessity, & that he casts around him as the first essays of his final usurpation avalanches, torrents, rocks & thunders – and above all, these deadly glaciers at once the proofs and symbols of his reign. – Add to this the degradation of the human species, who in these regions are half deformed or idiotic & all of whom are deprived of anything that can excite interest & admiration. This is a part of the subject more mournful & less sublime; – but such as neither the poet nor the philosopher should disdain.’ ” (Holmes 1987 s. 340)

“Shelley thought the Terni waterfall the grandest natural spectacle he had ever seen except for the glaciers of Montanvert, and described with minute care the strange hallucinatory effect of the light and movement of the great mass of water as it fell 300 feet into the valley of the Velino. ‘It comes in thick & tawny folds flaking off like solid snow gliding down a mountain. … Your eye follows it & is lost below. … The very imagination is bewildered in it. … We past half an hour in one spot looking at it, & thought but a few minutes had gone by.’ ” (Holmes 1987 s. 460)

Den franske forfatteren François-René de Chateaubriand skriver i kortromanen *Atala* (1801) om et lyn som antenner en skog, og hvordan vindstøt og hyl fra skogens dyr, fallende trær og ildens voldsomme knitring skaper et “enormt kaos” som ikke bare er skrekkelig, men også storslagent (Chateaubriand 1971 s. 80). Noen av personene opplever Niagara-fossene der tusen regnbuer er spent over avgrunnen med det tordnende vannet. På en lang grein sitter det noen jerver og spiser kjøtt fra elger og bjørner som har blitt drept av vannmassene (Chateaubriand 1971 s. 131-132). Chateaubriand kaller det sublimt når mystisk skrekk gir mennesket lykkefølelse (Chateaubriand 1971 s. 83). Han hevdet at det skrekkelige i naturen øker det majestetiske i den (Gallo 2012 s. 182).

Den franske 1700-tallsforfatteren Voltaire skrev i en av sine verk om skrekkelige grotter i Alpene (Cresson 1958 s. 110). I Aasmund Olavsson Vinjes *Ferdaminni*

fraa Sumaren 1860 (1860) skildres hvordan Malene fra Foldalen utbryter at det er så stygt og øde når hun sammen med Vinje skuer utover fjellheimen. Dette var mange bønders syn på den ville naturen. Fjellene var unyttige (uproduktive), farlige og stigge. Det er en klar motsetning til den sublime følelse. Fjellene oppleves som det opprinnelige og det fjerneste fra sivilisasjonen.

Høyfjellslandskap ble i Tyskland til inn på 1700-tallet oppfattet som farlige og skrekkelige – og derfor stigge (Glaser og Luserke 1996 s. 91).

Thomas Burnets “book *Telluris Theoria Sacra* (The Sacred Theory of the Earth), first published in 1681, had the effect of making mountains more fascinating, rather than more repulsive [...] Burnet had actually seen the Alps, when he had accompanied the young earl of Wiltshire on his Grand Tour in 1671. And he was not so much impressed as appalled by what he saw. The sight of those “vast undigested heaps of stone” struck him so powerfully that “I was not easy until I could give myself some tolerable account of how that confusion came in nature.” ” (Schama 1996 s. 451)

“In eighteen-century England, three quarters of the population lived in the country and, except in London, no town-dweller was more than an hour’s walk from the wildest places. Natural scenery was part of everybody’s daily experience, but it was taken for granted and little attention was paid to it. Mentioning Bagshot Heath, Defoe found it ‘horrid and frightful to look on, not only good for little, but good for nothing’. That was a widespread feeling, especially at the beginning of the century [...] Particularly unattractive to contemporary taste was a mountainous landscape, a repulsion partly resting on a metaphysical basis. For Thomas Burnet (*Sacred Theory of the Earth*, 1684-90) and many thinkers of his time, the universe before the Fall was a flat paradise, with a smooth surface. Mountains and oceans appeared later, together with human corruption and sin. ‘Uncouth’, ‘inhospitable’, ‘Earth’s tumours’, ‘blisters’, ‘warts’, were terms commonly applied to mountainous scenes. The development of taste came with the growing practice of the Grand Tour after the ‘Glorious Revolution’ of 1688. Crossing the Alps became a vivid experience for Englishmen on their way to Italy; fear was mixed with fascination: Burnet himself, Lord Shaftesbury, Joseph Addison and John Dennis were among the first to express that mixture of pleasure and awe, a new aesthetic approach to landscape. In Italy, the English visitors discovered Claude Lorrain, with his peaceful, harmonious compositions, but they also enjoyed Salvator Rosa, the painter of grand scenery and strong emotions. Under these combined influences, a new taste for wild landscapes developed in England, promoted by the improvement of communications. Travellers visited Wales, the Lake District, the Highlands of Scotland. Most poets – Gray, Walpole – took similar journeys, writing diaries and letters for the benefit of their more sedentary contemporaries, who gave the warmest welcome to that travel literature; the English were moving ‘from mountain gloom to mountain glory’ (Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory*, 1959).” (Raimond og Watson 1992 s. 168-169)

“Horace Walpole’s shorthand, to his friend West, for the scenery of pleasing terror was: “precipices, mountains, torrents, wolves [...], rumblings, Salvator Rosa.” ” Den italienske maleren på 1600-tallet Salvator Rosa “seemed, almost perversely, to delight in exactly the scenery that convention rejected as savage: the steep, bare granite hills near Volterra, or the high Apennines. In a justly famous letter of May 1662 to his fellow poet and friend G. B. Ricciardi, describing his journey from Ancona to Rome through Umbria, Salvator goes out of his way to celebrate the “wild beauty” (*orrida bellezza*) of the scenery, “a river falling down a half-mile precipice and throwing its foam up again almost as high.” ” (Schama 1996 s. 456) Horace Walpole “wrote to his friend West “from a hamlet among the Mountains of Savoy,” he described a scene that was directly drawn from the efforts of Salvator’s imitators and engravers. “But the road, West, the road! winding round a prodigious mountain … all shagged with hanging woods, obscured with pines, or lost in clouds! Below, a torrent breaking the rough cliffs, and tumbling through fragments of rocks! Sheets of cascades forcing their silver speed down channelled precipices, and hastening into the roughened river at the bottom!” ” (Schama 1996 s. 453 og 456-457)

Den engelske maleren J. M. W. Turners maleri *Snow Storm: Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps* (1812) “is the culmination of a tradition that made mountains the dreadful judges of human delusions about omnipotence and invincibility.” (Schama 1996 s. 462)

Den franske filosofen Jean-François Lyotard har den sublime estetikk som et sentralt tema i noen av sine tekster. Hans syn er at “den sublime oplevelse slår punktuelt ind hinsides den formmæssige konstituering af omverden” (Brügger 1990 s. 86), og overskridet dermed vanlig diskurs og gjengse forståelsesrammer.

Den amerikanske avantgarde-maleren Barnett Newmans bilder uttrykker “hans personlige visjon av det sublime: overveldelse, voldsomhet, men også ekstrem enkelhet, styrke, og som tenderer til det absolutte.” (Bonfand 1995 s. 115)

Lyotard, “in his writing on the avant-garde, makes the sublime a ‘sentiment’, a sensation of shock upon being confronted with an art object (such as the paintings of the American artist Barnett Newman) that neither bends itself to models nor testifies to reality.” (Emma Gilby i <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/13/the-seventeenth-century-sublime-boileau-and-poussin>; lesedato 24.04.20)

Det sublime blir av Lyotard knyttet til det amorfe (Courtine, Deguy m.fl. 1988 s. 173). Dette er en idé fra Kant om det sublime som resultat av noe uformelig, en uorden, på grensen til fullstendig kaos, men aldri det totale kaos (Courtine, Deguy m.fl. 1988 s. 189). Det er kaosets krefter som rår, men på en måte som ikke vekker

frykt eller skrekk (Courtine, Deguy m.fl. 1988 s. 182-183). Det er ikke en monstrøs skrekk.

Lyotard var opptatt av Newmans kunst, knyttet til en teori og moderne, abstrakt malerkunst og det sublime. Ideene knyttet til noen bilder av Newman er “essential for Lyotard’s philosophy of the sublime. The first is that colour, line or rhythm are not considered for what they might portray: it is presence, rather than representation that makes them sublime. And the second is that even in a visual art like painting, sublimity is primarily a matter of time, not space. As Lyotard said in an interview to Christine Pries, Newman was one of the sources of his interest in the concept of the sublime. Newman’s theoretical text ‘The sublime is now’ and several of the titles of his paintings, such as *Here, Not There, Here, Now* and *Be*, indicate, according to Lyotard, a sense of place and time that cuts across the spatiotemporal coherence of conscious experience. “Newman’s *now* which is no more than a now is a stranger to consciousness and cannot be constituted by it. Rather, it is what dismantles consciousness, it is what consciousness cannot formulate, and even what consciousness forgets in order to constitute itself.” Consciousness demands an undisrupted connection of space continuing, time passing, events happening. Dreading the possibility of a void, of nothing happening, it is not able to think the occurrence of an event in its singularity and contingency. We can only think an occurrence as such, if we allow for the possibility that it could not have happened, even that nothing could have happened at all. Lyotard expresses this awareness in the question *Is it happening? Not what is happening is doubted, but that something happens at all.* This awareness evokes suspense, anxiety, fear – and then joy if something happens nonetheless: ‘the joy obtained by the intensification of being that the event brings with it’. The sublime is the feeling evoked by this awareness of a possible ontological void: ‘The sublime is a kind of hole, a breach in the given itself.’” (Renée van de Vall i Smith og Wilde 2002 s. 361)

“In his adaptation of the concept Lyotard maintained the contradictory structure of the sublime feeling, in which pain is mixed with pleasure, terror with delight. The idea of a terror inspired by the possibility of a void he derived from Edmund Burke’s section on privation: ‘All *general* privations are great, because they are all terrible; Vacuity, Darkness, Solitude and Silence’. The notion of the sublime as a breach in the given recalls Kant’s aesthetics, on which Lyotard has published a detailed commentary, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*. Lyotard agrees with Kant that experiential coherence presupposes a synthesis, an act of connection bringing unity in the diversity of what is given. The feeling of the sublime is evoked when this unity is first threatened, then restored at another level of consciousness. However, Lyotard departs from Kant in two respects. To begin with, Kant denied that art could be sublime. In contrast to beauty, defined by Kant as ‘the form of finality in an object, so far as perceived in it apart from an end’, the sublime cuts across every experience of finality or form. Sublime feelings are evoked by those natural phenomena that are too large to be comprehended by the

imagination or too powerful to be resisted by our physical capacities. It is through this absence of encompassing form and denial of natural purpose in experience that the spectator is made aware of the powers of a higher faculty and a higher goal: those of reason. What imagination cannot comprehend, infinity, reason is able to think as an Idea. Hence the joy we feel. According to Kant, works of art can never be an occasion for these feelings, because they always show discernible form and are created by purposeful acts. In response, Lyotard has answered that what matters most in Kant's 'Analytic of the sublime' is that something 'unformed' is incommensurable with the synthesis of the imagination. Lyotard claims that abstract or minimal art may very well be able to bring about the same kind of breach in the formal synthesis of consciousness as natural formlessness does." (Renée van de Vall i Smith og Wilde 2002 s. 362-263)

"Lyotard has to admit that there is something paradoxical in this conception of sublimity in art. The paradox is that art has to testify to the indeterminate but can only do so in a determinate fashion. The paradox disappears if the task of bearing witness to the indeterminate is equated with the avant-garde questionings of pictorial tradition. From Cézanne onwards, avant-garde artists have asked the question 'What is a painting?' and have brushed aside what were supposed to be its elementary constituents: figuration, form, colour, object, even spaces for display. One should be careful, however, not to mistake these investigations for a search for innovation, or to confuse true avant-garde art with the present-day, commercially induced proliferation of new styles. The feeling of the sublime is not a mere 'shock of the new'. 'The occurrence, the *Ereignis*, has nothing to do with the *petit frisson*, the cheap thrill, the profitable pathos, that accompanies an innovation.' The difference between sublimity and innovation lies in the work's relation to time: "Through innovation, the will affirms its hegemony over time. It thus conforms to the metaphysics of capital, which is a technology of time. The innovation 'works'. The question mark of the *Is it happening?* stops. With the occurrence, the will is defeated. The avant-gardist task remains that of undoing the presumption of the mind with respect to time. The sublime feeling is the name of this privation." In this diatribe against innovation Lyotard seems to distance himself from a distinction he has earlier made: that between a modern and a postmodern sublime." (Renée van de Vall i Smith og Wilde 2002 s. 365-366)

"I *Samtidskunsten og det sublime* skriver Wencke Qvale at det sublime har blitt et uttrykk for hvordan samtidskunsten skal yte en form for motstand mot samfunnets holdninger og verdier (2014). Zander Hagen skriver at det sublimes virke som grenseoverskridende opplevelse, som sprenger det skjønnes umiddelbare orden, passer godt inn i den postmoderne relativitetstankens utgangspunkt i å sprengde de store fortellingers dogmatikk (2002, 117-118). For å utdype dette kan man se til Qvales henvisning til Jean-François Lyotard og hvordan han knytter begrepet til modernitetens estetiske paradigme (2014, 8). Lyotard sammenligner forståelsen av det moderne samfunn med det han kaller det skjønnes regime, det vi si den friksjonsfrie, velsmurte, estetiske formfullendte virkelighet. Det sublime bryter

denne virkelighetsforståelsen. For det sublime er hva som viser seg når man velger å gi avkall på illusjonen om frihet og uavhengighet innenfor det moderne kapitalistiske samfunn, for dermed å oppleve den rå “ufortynnede” virkelighet i vold (2014, 8). Som Burke mener Lyotard at det sublime ligger i subjektet, ettersom det sublime overskridet menneskets erkjennelsesapparat (Qvale 2014, 8). Ifølge Qvale har det sublime spilt en viktig rolle som del av 1900-tallets konsept-kunst med dets grunnleggende skepsis til formaletiske problemstillinger samt forkjærighet for å plasseres på siden av det kulturelle etablissementet (2014, 2). Resultatet av en kunst som tar utgangspunkt i overskridelse av subjektets erkjennelsesapparat og fremhever en rå og nådeløs virkelighet, har hatt svært ulike kunstneriske uttrykk [...] [f.eks.] sjokkerende abjekte eksempler som arbeider med å forstyrre identitet, system og orden” (Stephanie S. Sundby i <http://bora.uib.no/bitstream/handle/1956/16737/Konfetti-og-krystaller-En-nymaterialistisk-unders-kelse-av-kunst-som-kunnskapsproduksjon-.pdf>; lesedato 13.10.20).

“Selv om det sublime har vokst seg til en svært mangefasettert kunstteori, definerer Qvale fortsatt begrepet som en angstfull opplevelse av krise eller katastrofe med klare elementer av fremmedgjøring (2014, 9). [...] Et premiss for en sublim lesning er at naturen forstås som en vill uregjerlig annen overfor mennesket. Det Qvale kaller for en radikal Annethet (2014, 9). [...] Burkes romantiske naturforståelse tar utgangspunkt i hvordan man i Vesten har forstått natur som et vilt og uregjerlig sted, altså som en motsats til det menneskelige samfunn. [...] i en tid med klimaendringer, som både frempreses av menneskelige og ikke-menneskelige krefter. Klimaendringer og katastrofer provoserer mennesket til å tenke over sitt forhold til vår umiddelbare materielle og naturlige verden. [...] å leve i en tid hvor naturkraftene konstant dyster oss mot en revurdering av forholdet mellom menneske og ikke-menneske, levende og ikke-levende, subjekt og objekt, harmoni og kaos, beskyttelse og trussel (2013b).” (Stephanie S. Sundby i <http://bora.uib.no/bitstream/handle/1956/16737/Konfetti-og-krystaller-En-nymaterialistisk-unders-kelse-av-kunst-som-kunnskapsproduksjon-.pdf>; lesedato 13.10.20)

I boka *The Theory of the Sublime from Longinus to Kant* (2015) Robert Duran “explains how and why the sublime became a key concept of modern thought and shows how the various theories of sublimity are united by a common structure – the paradoxical experience of being at once overwhelmed and exalted – and a common concern: the preservation of a notion of transcendence in the face of the secularization of modern culture.” (<https://philpapers.org/rec/DORTTO-4>; lesedato 30.04.24)

Lee Rozelles bok *Ecosublime: Environmental Awe and Terror from New World to Oddworld* (2006) “probes the metaphor of environmental catastrophe in American literature of the last 150 years. In each instance, Rozelle finds evidence that the ecosublime – nature experienced as an instance of wonder and fear – profoundly reflects spiritual and political responses to the natural world, America’s increasingly anti-ecological trajectory, and the ascendance of a post-natural

landscape. [...] A chapter on Charles W. Chesnutt and Rebecca Harding Davis analyzes a new breed of literary eco-advocate, educating and shocking mainstream readers through depictions of ecological disaster. A later chapter probes the writings of Edward Abbey and the Unabomber Manifesto to delve into the sublime dimensions of environmental activism, monkey-wrenching, and eco-terrorism.” (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322057078_Ecosublime_Environmental_awe_and_terror_from_new_world_to_oddworld; lesedato 03.09.20)

I mange dataspill skal vi oppleve det sublime som flygere av jetfly, som bilførere i majestetiske landskaper, i mørke haller i skumle slott o.l. Store byområder med skyskrapere kan virke sublime ved å romme spor av så mange menneskeliv at vi blir overveldet.

“The notion of the sublime is not entirely new to game studies. Paul Martin (2011) has employed it to explicate the manner in which the landscape in *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* (Bethesda 2008) is initially presented to the player as a boundless expanse, suggestive of near-infinite possibilities for exploration and constituting a whole beyond the grasp of the imagination. It is unsurprising that the sublime proves well-suited to the task of outlining Oblivion’s poetics of landscape – we need only recall the late seventeenth and eighteenth-century usage of the term to address the feeling of delight mixed with terror that accompanied the contemplation of Alpine landscapes for British Grand Tourists like John Dennis (1693) and Joseph Addison (1773). [...] The distinction between aesthetic judgments of the beautiful and judgments of the sublime is drawn by Kant in the following terms: “the Beautiful in nature is connected with the form of the object, which consists in having boundaries. The Sublime, on the other hand, is to be found in the formless object, so far as in it or by occasion of it *boundlessness* is represented, and yet its totality is also present to thought” (2007[1790], §23). An object that excites an aesthetic feeling of beauty in the viewer, as we have seen, does so through presenting an ordered form to perception, albeit a form that seems to fit no concept of the understanding; but an object that evokes the sublime does so because it appears “to be unsuited to our presentative faculty, and, as it were, to do violence to the Imagination” (*ibid.*). In other words – and Kant provides the sight of the Pyramids of Giza and of St.Peter’s Basilica in Rome as examples (§26) – its totality extends beyond the limits of perception, tied as it is to a narrow, situated viewpoint, leaving the faculty of the imagination struggling to represent it as a coherent object of thought determined by a formal order.” (Daniel Vella i <http://gamestudies.org/1501/articles/vella>; lesedato 21.10.15)

“Both when it comes to its ludic form (adopting the tropes of the action role-playing game) and in its cultural generic milieu (medieval high fantasy), *Dark Souls* pigeonholes itself within some of the most established videogame traditions. At first glance, then, it would appear to be a poorly-chosen example of the ludic sublime, proffering familiarity and a pre-established, conventionalized mastery that would seem to leave little room for mystery. In practice, however, *Dark Souls* sets

out with the express purpose of unsettling these preconceptions, deploying a range of formal techniques and mechanisms designed to arrest the player's judgment and prevent her from arriving at a stable cosmic understanding, preserving a sense of mystery and gesturing towards a whole that escapes the player's conceptualizing grasp. In various ways, *Dark Souls* works to actively remind the player of the limits and the inadequacy of her perceptual opening onto the milieu of the gameworld, the computational systems underlying it, and the space of possibilities they structure. This is not to suggest that *Dark Souls* presents us with a special case, in the sense that it establishes a sublime aesthetic mechanism that other games do not. What sets *Dark Souls* apart is arguably a matter of degree, not of kind: it simply foregrounds a sublime quality of mystery that, I have argued, is integral to the formal structure of digital games. A consideration of the ways in which *Dark Souls* achieves its sense of the ludic sublime, then, can perhaps begin to point us towards a poetics for this aesthetic mode. For this reason, I shall now proceed to outline a set of formal techniques – *indistinct boundaries, unclear causes and/or effects, undefined entities and ergodic irony* – by which *Dark Souls* suggests to the player an ineffable whole that extends beyond her necessarily limited perception and cosmic understanding of the game at any given moment.” (Daniel Vella i <http://gamestudies.org/1501/articles/vella>; lesedato 21.10.15)

“What is initially [i spillet *Oblivion*] encountered as a boundless spatial extension harbouring a dizzying range of possibilities is reduced into a network of locations, paths and possibilities for action, such that it can, eventually, be easily grasped as a bounded, orderly cosmos. The landscape of *Oblivion* is therefore only grasped as sublime for as long as it takes for the last vestiges of mystery to succumb to mastery: “the reductions necessary in the creation of Tamriel as a game space are discovered over the course of the game in a way that undermines the sublime mode in which the landscape is initially presented”. It is certainly possible to argue that the feeling of the sublime is transient, and will subside as soon as the player achieves a reasonably stable cosmic understanding of the game – in other words, as soon as mastery gains dominance over mystery. [...] Even after extended play has resulted in mastery of the game, there remains at least an opening for the possibility of surprise and further revelation – and the result of this is that the player’s cosmic understanding of the game, which serves as the basis for action and as the ground for the continuing feedback loop of the magic cycle of play – can never be finally closed, and must, by the very formal nature of digital game play, retain the status of a hypothesis.” (Daniel Vella i <http://gamestudies.org/1501/articles/vella>; lesedato 21.10.15)

I *Disaster Cinema in Historical Perspective: Mediations of The Sublime* (2020) spør Nikita Mathias: “How do we experience disaster films in cinema? And where does disaster cinema come from? The two questions are more closely related than one might initially think. For the framework of the cinematic experience of natural disasters has its roots in the mid-eighteenth century when the aesthetic category of the sublime was re-established as the primary mode for appreciating nature’s

violent forces. In this book, the sublime is understood as a complex and culturally specific meeting point between philosophical thought, artistic creation, social and technical development, and popular imagination. On the one hand, the sublime provides a receptive model to uncover how cinematic disaster depictions affect our senses, bodies and minds. On the other hand, this experiential framework of disaster cinema is only one of the most recent agents within the historical trajectory of sublime disasters, which is traced in this book among a broad range of media: from landscape and history painting to a variety of pictorial devices like Eidophusikon, Panorama, Diorama, and, finally, cinema.” (<https://www.adlibris.com/no/bok/disaster-cinema-in-historical-perspective-9789463720120>; lesedato 28.02.22)

“Artist, writer and critic Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe has expressed a current view of the beautiful–sublime relation in his book, *Beauty and the Contemporary Sublime*, 1999. What is most revolutionary about Gilbert-Rolfe’s perspective is his notion that the sublime cannot exist in nature today. He claims that the sublime can only inhabit, or be expressed by, technology – as technology is limitless and yet to be apprehended. Gilbert-Rolfe says that nature is limited and finite, and that the sublime requires the limitlessness of technology. Gilbert-Rolfe associates beauty with glamour and frivolity, as opposed to the “goodness” of the Kantian or Burkeian “beautiful” (Gilbert-Rolfe, 1999).” (Laura Smith i <http://humstatic.uchicago.edu/faculty/wjtm/glossary2004/beautifulsublime.htm>; lesedato 03.10.16)

Det onde har blitt kalt “det negativt sublime” fordi det sprenger meningsbegrepet (Faulstich 2008b s. 317).

Å sublimere innebærer i psykologen å forandre en dyrisk trang (f.eks. til vold eller sex) til noe høyere (f.eks. et kunstverk).

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