

## **Introduction to Cosmological Aesthetics: The Kantian Sublime and Nietzschean Dionysian**

### **I. Introduction**

This paper is founded on a close reading of Kant's *Opus Postumum* in order both to explore the essential motivation which drove Kant to write a last comprehensive magnum opus (after having completed his critical philosophy) and, by doing so, to show the essential link between his aesthetics and the idea of *Übergang* (transition from the metaphysical principles to physics) which was chosen by him to be the title of this last work. For this work contains not only his dynamical theory of matter defining motion within the natures of space and time, and the advanced version of his philosophy of natural science, but also his arguments for the phenomenal validity of the metaphysical foundations (or the essential unity of the theoretical and practical reason), his teachings on the aesthetic human faculties of judgment and *Anschauung* (sense-intuition), and the discernment of the transcendental philosophy from Platonic idealism carrying it to a rather cosmological level, i.e. Kant's insertion of the concept of *cosmotheoros*. That is why it would not be inappropriate to characterize the incomplete (but rich and innovative) *Opus Postumum*, as the continuation of both his theory of the sublime and reflective judgment from the third *Critique*, and his underlying motivation to integrate his physics, aesthetics, ethics and metaphysics into a single philosophical viewpoint like in the philosophical – cosmological systems of Pre-Socratics. For only in *Opus Postumum*, Kant began questioning the validity of the dichotomies between object and subject, matter and form, phenomenon and noumenon, *phusis* and *ethos*, nature and reason, world and God. For only there he mentioned the necessity of an all-encompassing a priori principle (of transition) from which all these oppositions derive and through which they exist in unity and balance. This system is itself the demonstration of the unity and relation of our pure intuitions of motion, space and time and the conceptual structure of our thought processes, of the primitive laws of nature and our aesthetic, ethical and political concepts. But since the process of transition is an aesthetic process based on the human senses, intuitions and judgments, the argument will follow that in order to explicate *Übergang*, we need to reconcile cosmology, as the oldest branch of philosophy dealing with the ways the forces of motion affect human life, with aesthetics, as the youngest branch of philosophy dealing with how we sense, intuit and judge the form and motion of matter. Therefore, in the last analysis, *Übergang* becomes rather a *cosmologic-aesthetic* principle similar to the Heraclitean *logos*. In that, while the agitating forces condition human perception and thus conceptualisation, equally and simultaneously, the same forces acquire their meaning and thus definition in the very same process of *transition*. But since this process is itself the determinant of the rules of the acts of cognition, the logical self-consciousness is not the determining act but the determined product of this very process. The analysis of *Übergang* shall further be substantiated by a discussion of the arguments of pioneering scholars of *Opus Postumum* like Förster, Tuschling, Guyer, Mathieu and Zammito.

Another building block of the paper is the fruitful comparison between the Kantian sublime and Nietzschean Dionysian, which are going to be construed as the aesthetic theories on human understanding representing the transition from nature to

art. For both of them are not only conceptual – aesthetic but also dynamic – cosmological theories owing to their reference both to nature and to human nature<sup>1</sup>. Bearing the abovementioned points in mind, this paper concerning the transition between the natural forces and aesthetic concepts will try to examine how we take nature in and apply it to the concepts of understanding with regards to the Sublime and Dionysian. In doing so, the Kantian sublime shall be defined both cosmologically and aesthetically, both as the aesthetic representation of Universality or *kosmos*, and as an idea generated within the faculty of the power of Judgment, which schematises the transition from the sensible to supersensible<sup>2</sup>. When it comes to the Dionysian, it is going to be proved that not only is it an aesthetic theory that links Nature (*physis*) to Human Nature (*ethos*) as it is represented in the Chorus in Greek Tragedy which plays an intermediary role between the gods and humans, but also is the symbolic representation of the universally valid and entirely senseless pure cosmic forces that require Apollonian form and sense giving force for its actualization.

The relationship between the a priori moving forces of matter and intelligible concepts of understanding rests neither on metaphysical principles, nor on empirical principles but on the *transition* between them. As it is presented in Kant's *Opus Postumum*, the determination of the purity of the concepts of understanding is dependent on the demonstration of their links to the a priori forces constantly affecting the human understanding. On the other hand, these forces can only acquire meaning through the concepts generated by human understanding, though this does not mean that human mind and its concepts are prior to the moving forces. Rather, this proves the necessity of a simultaneous transition between the sensible and supersensible realms for the completeness of human understanding. In that the transition occurs only when the moving forces do not exceed the intellectual or intuitive capacities of human mind. Reciprocally, human sense-intuitions and understanding are unable to apprehend and conceptualise any motion beyond their imaginative capacity<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, *transition*, rather than the dualist formations like forces and concepts, objects and subjects, phenomena and noumena must be the starting point of any philosophical inquiry.

In that sense, so as to have an account of both the moving forces and the ways they are apprehended and conceptualized through human inner and outer senses, as an

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<sup>1</sup> Therefore, an elaborate understanding of the comparison between these theories requires higher criteria and principles by which we can observe the affinities and transitions between forces and concepts, physics and metaphysics

<sup>2</sup> Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, sec.26, p.139

<sup>3</sup> Nietzsche explicitly confirms this argument in his *Late Notebooks*: “Our senses have a particular quantum as a medium span within which they function, i.e., we experience large and small in relation to the conditions of our existence. If we sharpened or blunted our senses tenfold, we would perish” (Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Writings from the Late Notebooks*, ed. Bittner, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p.111) He further expands on this point in his Heraclitus seminar published within his *Pre-Platonic Philosophers*. Here Nietzsche discusses the significance of the particular balance (or special measure which is sometimes used to describe the Heraclitean *logos*) of human senses for the necessary conditions of existence or for the maintenance of the sustaining principle of necessity for life. This also demonstrates the inherent relation between the principle of transition, which checks and balances the mediating capacity of human senses and concepts for their compatibility with the moving forces of nature, and the principle of necessity, which sustains the physiological grounding for the continuity of human existence.

introductory analysis, we have to demonstrate the cosmological and aesthetic arguments in *Opus Postumum*.

## II. The Cosmological Argument in *Opus Postumum*

The cosmological argument is not new in Kantian philosophy. From his doctoral thesis, *Principiorum primorum cognitionis metaphysicae nova dilucidatio* (*A New Explanation of the First Principles of Metaphysical Knowledge*) and early writings such as the *Universal Natural History and the Theory of Heavens* to his latest writings on dynamics and moving forces such as *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, Kant reflected on the principles and forces of nature and the universe as a whole. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, for instance, Kant defines the cosmological ideas and cosmic concepts (or world-concepts)<sup>4</sup>.

In Kantian philosophy, cosmic concepts cover the *synthesis* of noumena and phenomena because while they represent and schematise the appearances of things in nature, at the same time, as universally valid concepts, they carry these schemas and representations to a level that goes beyond possible experience (thus beyond any dualism such as object – subject and real – ideal<sup>5</sup>). However, at the same time, this level cannot simply be identified as *noumenal* because this would cut off the phenomenal or natural roots of these concepts. That is why Kant understood cosmological ideas as the syntheses of the ‘world’ as the totality of appearances and the transcendental world, the sum total of existing things. But what, if there is, is the difference between these two definitions of world? Why should we distinguish the totality of appearances from the sum total of existing things? In this passage Kant defines the cosmological ideas and world-concepts, and accentuates their synthesizing character, a character that brings the world of appearances and the transcendent world together. In other words, cosmic concepts or world-concepts are active and valid only insofar as they maintain the transition between these seemingly separate worlds. Kant elaborated on this crucial point in 1790s especially in the third *Critique* and *Opus Postumum* where he argued that the transition between these two worlds (the world as the sum of all appearances and the transcendental world) takes place through human senses and intuitions, and thus through the *aesthetic* understanding and sense-based intuition of the whole.

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<sup>4</sup> In the first *Critique*, Kant articulates this as follows: “I have called the ideas with which we are now concerned “cosmological ideas,” partly because by “world” is understood the sum total of all appearances, and our ideas are also directed only toward the unconditioned among appearances, but partly too because in the transcendental sense the word “world” signifies the absolute totality of the sum total of existing things, and we are directing our attention only to the completeness of the synthesis (though properly only in the regress toward its conditions). Considering, moreover, that taken collectively these ideas are all transcendent and, even though they do not overstep the object, namely appearances, **in kind**, but have to do only with the sensible world (not with *noumena*), they nevertheless carry the synthesis to a **degree** where transcends all possible experience; thus in my opinion one can quite appropriately call them collectively **world-concepts** (*Weltbegriffe*)” (A420/B447). Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Guyer and Wood, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p.466. Some translators such as Politis also translate world-concepts or *Weltbegriffe* as ‘cosmical concepts’, and I will be using them interchangeably throughout the thesis. This can also be justified by Kant’s own definition of ‘world’ as the absolute totality of the sum total of existing things, namely ordered *ta panta* or simply *kosmos*

<sup>5</sup> This important argument is going to be discussed in the following sections

On the general spectrum of the first *Critique*, Förster notes, “the fundamental a priori determinations of a “nature in general” were the proper subject of this book, not the systematic unity of an empirical science”<sup>6</sup>. This is also valid for *Opus Postumum*. But then, what is new in the latter? Why did Kant feel the need to write a post-critical *Opus* when everyone was convinced of the completeness of his philosophical system after the third *Critique* where he attempted to reconcile the natural necessity and rational spontaneity? Kant’s answer is that he found a new principle, which would bridge his system of nature and the systems of pure understanding and reason. This new principle, I argue, is not a logical but a “cosmological” principle. It is not just transcendental (at least in the sense of its use in the first *Critique*) because its existence must be justified through the empirical intuitions and because this principle pulls the aforementioned worlds together. Tuschling is right when he says Kant is not content with his transcendental deductions in the first *Critique*; according to the new principle, however, the concept of an object of possible experience begins to point at the *universality* of the experience. Förster too agrees that transition is the principle according to which basic forms and concepts can be thought within an all-encompassing system<sup>7</sup>.

Kant emphasizes this all-encompassing cosmological principle that bridges the transcendental and natural world and that determines both the cosmic forces and ideas in several places in *Opus Postumum*. For example, he uses the concept of *cosmotheoros* which constitutes, as a principle, in his words “a basis in idea for all the unified forces which set the matter of the whole of cosmic space in motion”<sup>8</sup>. This definition plainly demonstrates his belief in the necessity of an archaic principle that precedes any other idea or principle and that can underlie the movement and regulation<sup>9</sup> of cosmic forces from which the cosmical concepts are derived. However, in *Opus Postumum*, Kant also uses the term *cosmotheoros* to define the universal theorist or the philosopher. As a person, this philosopher is the one “who creates the elements of knowledge of the world himself, *a priori*, from which he, as, at the same time, an inhabitant of the world, constructs a world-vision [Weltbeschauung] in the idea”<sup>10</sup>. This *cosmotheoros* and its personified version also appear in the first *Critique* where Kant discusses the logical and cosmological handling of the concept of philosophy<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Förster, Eckart. *Kant’s Final Synthesis*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000, p.4

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, p.115

<sup>8</sup> Kant, Immanuel. *Opus Postumum*, ed. Förster, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p.82

<sup>9</sup> Since all forms of movement cause regulation and direction, principle of motion is also a directing and regulating principle

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*, p.235 Here, even though Kant uses *Beschauung* (observation or inspection) rather than *Anschauung*, it is not hard to see that the 20<sup>th</sup> century term *Weltanschauung*, as the follower of the Heraclitean *Logos*, is a version of the Kantian *Weltbeschauung*, or cosmo-theory. These points are going to be expanded on in the sections concerning the relation between Heraclitean *logos* and Kantian *Übergang*, and between the *Genius* and Kantian *cosmotheoros*.

<sup>11</sup> In the first *Critique* Kant puts it as follows: “Until now...the concept of philosophy has been only a **scholastic concept**, namely that of a system of cognition that is sought only as a science without having as its end anything more than the systematic unity of this knowledge, thus the **logical** perfection of cognition. But there is also a **cosmopolitan concept** (*conceptus cosmicus*) that has always grounded this term, especially when it is, as it were, personified and represented as an archetype in the ideal of the **philosopher**. From this point of view philosophy is the science of the relation of all cognition to the essential ends of human reason (*teleologia rationis humanae*), and the philosopher is not an artist of reason but the legislator of human reason. It would be very boastful to call oneself a philosopher in this

When it comes to the demonstration of the essential relation between cosmology and aesthetics, one of the structural arguments this paper shall present is that the theory of moving forces in *Opus Postumum* reveals essentially a similar motivation to which constitutes both Kant's theory of the sublime in nature and his theory of reflective judgment. For both processes of argument begin from the construal of Nature as an aesthetic notion and systematized whole based on an a priori elementary system. The primary reason for this is that while *ta panta* (everything or the whole) becomes the ordered whole or *kosmos* only as an aesthetic idea, any aesthetic notion about nature must handle and explain it as an elementary system (either a mechanical or dynamical one) or cosmologically. However, for the investigation of the common motivation behind the third *Critique* and *Opus Postumum*, we also need to demonstrate the aesthetic argument in the latter.

### III. The aesthetic argument in *Opus Postumum*

Can *Opus Postumum* be considered as the continuation of Kantian aesthetics as presented in the third *Critique*? Most of the commentators have discussed this question not only because both of these books belong to Kant's late period works but also due to the apparent continuity of the arguments Kant employed in them. *Opus Postumum* launches a new theory of aesthetics based on a new a priori principle introducing the mediating character of the power of reflective judgment and the crucial role of motion and moving forces in the determining concepts of the understanding and the regulative ideas of reason. This new theory begins with the picturing of the concepts of understanding as a whole or from a cosmological level, and this new aesthetics moves beyond Kant's theory of taste and the analytic of beauty. Mathieu, for instance, argues for the continuity in Kant's argumentation in his three last books: *Metaphysical Foundations*, *Critique of Judgment* and *Opus Postumum*, even though their contents were different, the first concerning the ground for a science of nature, the second concerning the ground for an aesthetics of nature (especially from the analytic of the sublime onwards), and the last concerning a possible transition between these grounds<sup>12</sup>. What interests us in this paper is the relation between the second and the last book in this alleged trilogy. Mathieu defends this relation by stressing the unifying role of the subjective principle of reflective judgment and thus its indispensable necessity for any aesthetic theory of transition. Even though Förster tries to rule out this argument of Mathieu, he cannot help concluding his book on Kant's final synthesis with Hölderlin<sup>13</sup> (using his aphorism 'I

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sense and to pretend to have equaled the archetype, which lies only in the idea" (A838-9/B866-7) Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Guyer and Wood, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp.694-5 Both referring to its original form, *Weltbegriff* and to Kant's own Latin translation, *conceptus cosmicus*, it is far more appropriate to call this **cosmic** or **cosmical concept** or **world-concept** like in the previous passage (which was chosen by most of the other translators) rather than **cosmopolitan concept**.

<sup>12</sup> Lehmann was one of the first scholars to assert that the origins of the idea or schema of a transition are present in the *Critique of Judgment* and *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* prioritizing the former to the latter in his *Kants Nachlasswerk und die Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1939).

<sup>13</sup> Here, Förster particularly underlines Hölderlin's definition of art as the bridge from nature to culture (*phusis* to *ethos*). Furthermore, supporting Hölderlin's aesthetic argument Förster writes, "Reason lays the ground with its principles (*Grundsätze*), which are laws of thought and action that are related to what Hölderlin views as the universal conflict in man. This universal conflict is the conflict between the striving toward the absolute on the one hand, and the striving for limitation on the other. It is a conflict that characterizes the human situation in what he calls the *Urtheilung*, or 'original separation.'

regard reason as the beginning of the understanding') which is evidently a sign of his recognition of the intermediary role of aesthetics and reflective judgment (bridging understanding and reason). This proves the necessity of considering the character of Kant's transcendental aesthetics if we are to present the argument of *Opus Postumum* as a complete whole.

Nevertheless, it should be admitted that the new principle introduced in *Opus Postumum* not only complements but also, revising Kantian metaphysics as a whole, encompasses particularly the third *Critique*. In that sense, I agree with Förster's argument that the primary motivation behind *Opus Postumum* cannot solely be attributed to the problems and ideas arising in Kant's theory of the reflective judgment. Rather, I support the view that the third *Critique* itself (especially from the section on the sublime onwards) was a product of the very same unresolved motivation that possessed Kant throughout his philosophy, and which culminated in the unfinished *Opus Postumum*. And that is precisely why reading of Kant must begin with his last work.

In *Opus Postumum*, Kant uses the term *Übergang* for 'transition' meaning 'to go over, to move over from one realm to another'. *Übergang* is certainly an deliberate choice of concept emphatically distinguished by Kant from *Überlegenheit* (the state of being superior or transcendence), which rather refers to *one's* ascending or going beyond his subjectivity (achieving a purity and superiority). Thus the latter presupposes two separate realms, the actual (contingent) and ideal (pure) realms of self and the understanding. It assumes that the transcendence begins from the level of the subject, thereby relying upon the late metaphysical construction of "the subject". Due to the superiority (*Überlegenheit*) assigned to it, the notion of subject as well as human reason replace the God and the godly in classical and medieval metaphysics. Kant attempts at this association until the end of his critical period (and before *Opus Postumum*) using *Überlegenheit* as the notion that exalts human being to a distinct rational superiority and transforms it into a totally separate intelligence observing the phenomena surrounding him. Consider, for instance, the following passage from the third *Critique*<sup>14</sup>. In *Opus Postumum*, by contrast, distinguishing *Übergang* from *Überlegenheit*, Kant revises his aesthetics in accordance with the principle of motion. As a result, his theory becomes immune against ontological or psychological interpretation and reconstruction.

Förster argues that this necessary science of transition "requires an 'idea' or 'plan' according to which it is to be executed" which can be derived neither from mere modern physics nor from the metaphysical foundations<sup>15</sup>. For the derivation of this idea or plan, I propose, we need to demonstrate the transition between the

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The primordial being of which Hyperion speaks passed into the *Urtheilung* when we became conscious. As an original unity of subject and object that precedes every relation of a subject to an object, this 'being' can never itself become an object of knowledge" (Förster, Eckart. *Kant's Final Synthesis*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000, p.153)

<sup>14</sup> "the feeling of the sublime in nature is respect for our own vocation, which we show to an object in nature through a certain subreption (substitution of a respect for the object instead of for the idea of humanity in our subject), which as it were makes intuitable the superiority (*Überlegenheit*) of the rational vocation of our cognitive faculty over the greatest faculty of sensibility" (Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.141)

<sup>15</sup> Förster, Eckart, "Introduction" in Kant, Immanuel. *Opus Postumum*, ed. Förster, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p.xxxvii

intuitive knowledge of the cosmic forces, and the sensible knowledge on the aesthetic concepts. In so doing, we need primarily to *understand* this transition (*Übergang*), in other words, *how* the cosmic forces affecting human inner and outer senses are represented in the concepts of human understanding and in the ideas of human reason. This pure understanding of nature, I propose, is necessarily an *aesthetic* one which is represented in the Kantian sublime and Nietzschean Dionysian in a seemingly different but essentially similar way.

#### **IV. The Kantian Sublime as a Theory of Cosmological Aesthetics representing the Transition**

Both the Kantian sublime and Nietzschean Dionysian represent a transition from the phenomenal to the metaphysical realm through intuitions, and/or from the microcosm to macrocosm by way of conceptualising the cosmic moving forces<sup>16</sup>. In Kant's words, *the sublime pushes human mind to apprehend the transition from the sensible stratum to the supersensible substratum*<sup>17</sup>.

Main arguments with regard to the Kantian sublime:

- I. *The sublime is the aesthetic representation of Totality and Universality ascribed to Nature (The Cosmological Argument Concerning the Sublime)*
- II. *The sublime, as an idea generated within the faculty of the power of Judgment, requires the mediation of the faculty of intuition (Anschauung) that goes beyond the limit of sensibility, sustaining the transition from the sensible to supersensible (Argument for the Aesthetic Role of the Sublime)*

In the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant defines the sublime as the presentation of an indefinite concept of Reason symbolizing the formless and boundless idea or feeling which has developed from the Idea of the Object of Nature, and which pleases immediately in multiple ways but arouses the thought of totality as ascribed to *Nature*. According to this cosmological viewpoint, the sublime is a “whole” rather than an individual object and therefore it is absolutely great but equally incomprehensible (if not entirely inapprehensible) by the human mind since it requires a supersensible *purely intuitive faculty* as an extension of the mind which feels itself able in another (practical) point of view to go beyond the limit of sensibility<sup>18</sup>. In Kant's theory of aesthetics, Nature is considered somehow distinct from human beings. However, Kant also acknowledges Nature as the source of any sublime feeling and movement in the faculties of the human mind. In that sense, *the motion in nature and the movement occurring in the aesthetic faculties are essentially linked* not only by way of their affects but also of their source.

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<sup>16</sup> Swift argues in his recently published book, “both the sublime and Dionysian represent underlying forces of nature that make the transcendental subject feel insignificant” (Swift, Paul A. *Becoming Nietzsche: Early Reflections of Democritus, Schopenhauer and Kant*, Lexington Books, 2005, p.111) Nonetheless, I totally reject that the “subject” feels insignificant as a result of the experience of the sublime or Dionysian. Rather, in the Kantian analysis, the sublime triggers human imagination and exalts the ideas of human reason over the objects of nature. Similarly, the Nietzschean Dionysian causes intoxication and teaches how to possess a stronger nature and higher consciousness through *pathos*.

<sup>17</sup> Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.139 Also see Zammito's chapter on the sublime and symbolism.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*, sec.26, p.138

“Nature considered in aesthetic judgment as a power that has no dominion over us, is dynamically sublime”<sup>19</sup>. However, the inner dynamism of the natural object is apprehended via the greatness of the resistance that can only be developed in human rationality again through a necessary separation of the human from Nature so as to ensure the outcome of a free aesthetical judgment on the latter<sup>20</sup>. For Kant, it is impossible to schematize our Nature via Imagination and here, the sublime, to which the subjective purposiveness is directed, represents the Nature beyond the grasp of human mind. Thus, since nature itself is unattainable, we have to and can only identify and examine nature with respect to its phenomenal representation without really knowing it, but only by intuiting and apprehending its essential sublimity. Similarly, in Nietzschean aesthetics, this sublime movement (stimulated by the Dionysian in art) appears to be posited as the feeling arises through the reconciliation of outer sensible nature and inner intuitive nature or via the final apprehension of the oneness of things; in other words, as the essential unity of the moving forces and the human understanding which actually is one of the objects of Nature.

Our cognitive faculties are inadequate to adopt a standard for the unlimited might of Nature and its aesthetic estimation. However, while this sublimity in Nature leads us to accept our physical powerlessness, it also reveals our capacity for judging ourselves independent of it<sup>21</sup>. However, the examples Kant provides to substantiate the claim for the externality of the experience of the sublime (such as the sublimity of war carried on with a sacred respect for the rights of the citizens and the sublimity of a courageous individual who does not fear the boundless might in his nature and faces it with fullest deliberation and compassion<sup>22</sup>) actually fail to support it. This is because both examples consider internal rationality and external nature to be inherently related and sublimity to underlie both. Here, Crowther defends Kant by asserting, “the major reason why, for Kant, war can be regarded as sublime is that, in the ultimate analysis, it is conducive to the realization of the final end – morality”<sup>23</sup>. This argument could be true if we consider Kantian philosophy as a whole. However, while discussing cases of the sublime in human nature, he praises these not only for

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<sup>19</sup> *ibid*, p.143

<sup>20</sup> For Guyer, Kant’s dynamically sublime is rather “a feeling that suggests a certain interpretation that we can only spell out by means of concept, but at the same time gives us a certain palpable sense of the validity of those concepts before we have even spelled them out” (Guyer, Paul. *Kant*, New York: Routledge, 2006, p.308)

<sup>21</sup> Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.145

<sup>22</sup> He actually borrows these examples from his *Observations*, see Kant, Immanuel. *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, trans. J. H. Goldthwait University of California Press, 1960, p.56

<sup>23</sup> Crowther, Paul. *The Kantian Sublime: From Morality to Art*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1991, pp.115-116 Then, Crowther concludes that Kant “wishes to show that the aesthetic experience’s metaphysical *raison d’être* is, in the final analysis, to promote our existence as moral beings” and it “does not exist in a vacuum” (or it is not purposeless) “and the sublime in particular has the capacity to humanize” (*ibid*, p.174) Here, it is possible to claim that while Kant tries to promote the justification of human existence by means of the moral consequences of the feeling of the sublime, Nietzsche does so by means of the immoral essence of the Dionysian representation of pure and motive process in human nature.



their pragmatic moral consequences but also for their aesthetic fullness (substantiality) and universality<sup>24</sup>.

Here, Kant accentuates the universality (“even to the savage”) and intensity (“with the fullest deliberation”) of the sublime in human nature down to its *motive force*, and then goes on to argue for the rationally generated moral pragmatic principles. From these examples, we can also conclude that human morality and goodness are essentially in need of the *energy* provided by the heroic human motives such as fearlessness and courage (which are amongst the moving characteristics of the sublime in human nature). In the end, Kant (not in his theory but in his examples) claims the inherent unity of man’s internal and external nature. In order for human action to reach an ultimate sublimity, the rational (internal) human nature has to reveal its roots in the (externally oriented) natural feelings and desires that are derived from *phusis* or natural forces. The sublime human action is the disclosure of the motivation underlying human rationality<sup>25</sup>.

The sublime *disturbs* our mental powers that struggle hopelessly to provide some satisfactory and rational explanations for this complex and difficult experience. In the end, this *movement* of the faculties of the mind causes the **transition** of the supersensible Idea of the sublime into the level of human faculty of reason. On the other hand, the sublime positively and indirectly stimulates and strengthens the possible use of our intuitions (the relationship between the sublime and *Anschauung*) by which it encourages our feeling of a purposiveness “independent of nature”. The stimulation of our intuitions occurs since our apprehension of the sublime requires our faculty of Imagination to try to extend its limits in order to be able to make a satisfactory judgment about the idea of the sublime object, causing in this same struggle “a movement of the mind”<sup>26</sup>. Therefore, for Kant, no object can be called sublime, as the sublime grows out of our faculty of Imagination, which falls beyond our standards of taste as an *entirely intuitive faculty*. Kant acknowledges that for the pure judgment on the sublime to be aesthetical, it should not be grounded on an object or its conceptual representation. This confirms its suprarational essence since no cognitive faculty can apprehend the sublime in its purest state due to its magnitude and formlessness. The sublime is a “whole” rather than an individual object and therefore it is absolutely great but equally incomprehensible by human mind since it requires a supersensible faculty. The Idea of the sublime is generated through our determining Judgment and is not to be sought in the things (phenomena) of nature hence “it is the disposition of the mind resulting from a certain representation occupying the reflective Judgment, but not the object, which is to be called

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<sup>24</sup> “For what is it that is an object of the greatest admiration *even to the savage*? It is a man who shrinks from nothing, who fears nothing, and therefore does not yield to danger, but rather goes to face it vigorously with the fullest deliberation” (Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.146)

<sup>25</sup> What is more, in an Aristotelian evaluation of this reconciliation referring to the notions like *phronesis*, since the rationality and morality of an action can only be determined a posteriori, while the irrationality of an external desire or motive is determined internally, the rationality of an idea can only be understood when applied to praxis. Therefore, it would not be wrong to argue that these nature(s) (internal and external) are essentially linked and that the relation and simultaneous transition between them is the chief determinant of both.

<sup>26</sup> Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.131

sublime<sup>27</sup>. In the third *Critique*, all these direct and immediate characteristics of the sublime are presented as negative and unimportant by Kant because they display nothing purposive in their nature, since they have proved entirely irrational and have forced the mind to abandon direct sensibility.

On the other hand, thanks to this abandonment of direct sensibility and understanding the sublime produces a relation between human sensibility and understanding and human ideas and reason<sup>28</sup>. Kant introduces the faculty of judgment as an intermediary faculty relating the particular to the universal, the sensible to the supersensible, and the microcosm to macrocosm<sup>29</sup>. In other words, when one makes a judgment about the things and forces in nature (including oneself and all human beings), one unconsciously universalizes the particulars, reshaping, categorizing and hence transforming them into Ideas<sup>30</sup>. In *Observations* Kant rhetorically declares that *the sublimity is not the essential characteristic of a moral feeling, but rather the latter acquires sublimity by way of its universalization*. However, in the third *Critique*, he replaces the ‘feeling of the sublime’ with the ‘judgment of the sublime’, which requires the intervention, and ultimate dominion of the faculty of Reason and which, due to its initially supersensible and consequently rational character, involves a stronger possibility of universalizability.

## VII. The Nietzschean Dionysian as a Theory of Cosmological Aesthetics representing the Transition

Arguments:

*I. The Dionysian is the symbolic representation of the universally valid and entirely senseless pure cosmic forces (The Cosmological Argument)*

*II. The Dionysian is an Aesthetic Theory linking Nature (physis) to Human Nature (ethos) (Argument regarding the Aesthetic Character)*

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche proposes his thesis concerning the sublime function of the Dionysian representations in Greek Tragedy. In doing so, following the romantic view, he begins with the abovementioned necessary dissolution of the “rationally driven and sensibly judging” individual in the supersensible underlying natural unity of the Will (as the Dionysian art). He thus attributes a purely cosmological essence to the latter confirming the necessity of the individual’s (or

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<sup>27</sup> *ibid*, p.134

<sup>28</sup> As Zammito rightly emphasizes, “now we can fully appreciate how profoundly Kant intended his claim that the essence of the sublime was its aspect of “relation,” i.e., the relation of the sensible to supersensible” (Zammito, John. H., *The Genesis of Kant’s Critique of Judgment*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992, p.283)

<sup>29</sup> “The concept which originally arises from the power of judgment and is proper to it is that of nature as **art**, in other words that of the technique of nature with regard to its particular laws” (Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, Introduction, p.10)

<sup>30</sup> In *Observations* Kant directly and unsystematically identifies the sublime with the moral, exalted, virtuous, honorable, dutiful action and the good will insofar as they are built upon proper universality<sup>30</sup>. In another part of the same essay, he claims: “... true virtue can be grafted only upon principles such that the more general they are, the more sublime and noble it becomes” (Kant, Immanuel. *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, trans. J. H. Goldthwait University of California Press, 1960, p.60)

hero's) self-negation for the affirmation of the metaphysical existence, even though he tries to avoid the inevitable realization of irredeemable suffering in the world that was represented by Schopenhauer. The second half of *The Birth of Tragedy* in general where he overtly endorses the Schopenhauerian metaphysics, Nietzsche contradicts some of the general aspects of his theory of the Dionysian. This reduction of the real life to a metaphysical one leads to the simplification of his aesthetics. In this way, Nietzsche's Dionysian comes to define the truth as hidden, above and beyond human life and the forces affecting it, as in the discourse of the static Christian god or Indian Buddhism. The second contradictory claim is the *justification of life* through the dissolution of the hero under the metaphysical will, truth or Nature beyond the human imagination, which requires us to negate our life and the forces affecting it as a whole in order to create a portrayal of that life beyond and unchanging realm of forms.

However, then Nietzsche regrets his Schopenhauerian argument for the individual's self-negation in the process of his reconciliation with the metaphysical unity of Nature and theorizes his own idea of the Dionysian, beyond the limits of Schopenhauerian aesthetics. Rather, his concept of the Dionysian represents the aesthetic affirmation of human life by means of natural forces and human will (mainly will to live and will to power) that actually are the sublime components of it<sup>31</sup>. Actually we can also trace his life-affirming aesthetic thought, which aims at the reconciliation of the phenomenal and metaphysical, in *The Birth of Tragedy* where he talks about the origins of the gods. He construes the representation of the sublime in art as the saviour of life owing to its redirection of the terrible forces of nature to an aesthetic form<sup>32</sup>. Thereby even the early conception of the Dionysian stands for the only bridge between these naturally separated worlds. This correlation between the human and metaphysical realm can only be constituted by the Dionysian half-human and half-god satyr which represents the godly features of the human nature and human features of the gods<sup>33</sup>. Hence, Nietzsche locates this metaphorical representation of the satyrs in between the phenomenal and metaphysical world as an intermediary realm that generates an aesthetic unification.

Nietzsche theorizes his own conception of the Dionysian, beyond the Kantian Sublime and the Schopenhauerian reconstruction of it. While for Kant, since nature itself is unattainable, we have to and can only identify and examine nature in its phenomenal representation without really knowing its essential sublimity. At this point, Nietzsche also claims that we cannot "know" the essential truths of the Nature but he adds that at least there is an achievable "*middle world* between beauty and truth... The world reveals itself in a playing with intoxication, not in complete entrapment by it"<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> "How differently Dionysus spoke to me! How alien to me at that time was precisely this whole philosophy of resignation!" (Nietzsche, Friedrich. "Attempt at Self-Criticism" in *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, ed. Geuss and Speirs, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p.10)

<sup>32</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich. "Birth of Tragedy" in *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, ed. Geuss and Speirs, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p.40

<sup>33</sup> In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche puts this as follows: "...what he (the Greek) saw in the satyr was the original image (*Urbild*) of mankind, the expression of man's highest and strongest stirrings, an enthusiastic celebrant, ecstatic at the closeness of his god (Dionysus)", he "was something sublime and divine; and he was particularly bound to seem so to the painfully broken gaze of the Dionysian man...(whose) eye dwelt in sublime satisfaction (ibid, p.41)

<sup>34</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich. "Dionysian Worldview" in *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings* ed. Geuss and Speirs Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p.130

The formation of Nietzsche's conception of the Dionysian is apparent in the concluding dialogue between Nietzsche and Dionysus in *Beyond Good and Evil* in which he restates Dionysus as the tempter god who can descend and tempt human souls and encourages them to explore their inner nature (as the representations of the moving forces in nature), to "make them stronger, more evil and more profound than they are"<sup>35</sup>. Late Nietzschean aesthetics is mainly grounded in his argument that all metaphysical deities result from the transformation of human sense-intuitions into highest spirituality from which the real joy in life arises and by which human existence is justified. And Nietzsche defines this highest aesthetic achievement of human kind as the aesthetic transfiguration or deification of human nature. Nietzsche, in the end, seems to argue that the metaphysical transformation of the phenomenal is simultaneous with the phenomenal transformation of the metaphysical, and both processes require aesthetic motivation and insight represented by the tragic sublime or the Dionysian.

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche explicitly disapproves of the conception of beauty in contemporary aesthetics, which has entirely ignored the emphatic qualities of the beautiful, and the sublime<sup>36</sup>. Nietzsche furthers his critique of the weaknesses of the rationalist and objectivist accounts of aesthetical education in the following section where he confronts it with the true art, tragedy, which celebrates its rebirth with Goethe, Schiller<sup>37</sup> and Wagner: "We understand why such debilitated education hates true art, for it fears that it will be destroyed by it"<sup>38</sup>. The "true art" for Nietzsche is evidently the Dionysian or the tragic art, the art that destroys the veil of beauty and depicts the ugly, formless, unmediated forces inherent in human nature. Then he accuses the contemporary aesthetics of misinterpreting tragedy as the result of the triumph of the universal moral order and thus of lacking the ability to provide a serious analysis of human sense-intuitions and drives represented in the tragic art: "they (aestheticians) never tire of characterizing the true essence of tragedy as the struggle of the hero with fate, the triumph of a universal moral order"<sup>39</sup>. This critique is mainly directed against the Aristotelian conception of tragedy and the sublime in Kantian aesthetics, which is associated with tragedy (in the *Observations*) and used as the primary link between morality and aesthetics via the faculty of Reason. Nietzsche defines the morally sublime as impure due to its **resulting appeal** to the territory of ethical condolence through the feelings it evokes such as pity and fear. However, he builds his aesthetics neither on an antithesis of the moralizing tendency in art nor on *l'art pour l'art* which would render art and life purposeless and pointless. Rather, in

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<sup>35</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil*, ed. Horstmann and Norman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p.177

<sup>36</sup> "What a spectacle our aestheticians present as they lash about, with movements that are to be judged neither by the standard of eternal beauty nor of the sublime...an aesthetic pretext for their own sober-sided, impoverished sensibility" (Nietzsche, Friedrich. "The Birth of Tragedy" in *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, ed. Geuss and Speirs, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p.94)

<sup>37</sup> Nietzsche's attitude about Schiller and Romanticism as a whole is very controversial. Generally, on the one hand, he confirms that Schiller enriches and develops the aesthetics in German culture; on the other, he disapproves of Schiller's appreciation of Kantian ideal that the aesthetic education of individuals must lead to the transformation from the "Natural State into a Moral one" (Schiller, Friedrich, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967, p.13)

<sup>38</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich. "Birth of Tragedy" in *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, ed. Geuss and Speirs, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p.97

<sup>39</sup> *ibid*, p.105

the *Twilight of the Idols*, he explicitly announces art as “the great stimulus to life”<sup>40</sup>. This must be considered as the representation of the artist’s most basic inspirations that are rooted in the senseless cosmic forces represented by the Dionysian. But, due to the senselessness of the forces, the tragic artist must communicate the ugliest, harshest, most questionable, and fearful aspects of life so as to create a moving, disturbing and purposeful art which can stimulate the spectator’s understanding and imagination, projecting a middle world in which the chorus resides<sup>41</sup>. The tragic art and artist (either as an idea or a person) the purest representation of the transition between the natural forces and concepts of human life, it is the sublime bridge hanging over a steep canyon separating the microcosm from the macrocosm, the humanity from the universe; it is the reminder of the *a priori* interconnectedness of reason (as the devise for the uncovering of nature) and nature (as the reason-giving dynamic whole).

## Conclusion

The main argument defended in this paper can be summarized thus: Transition is what makes the stratum sensible, and the substratum supersensible. For the forces in nature can only acquire meaning and identity through the supersensible concepts of understanding, and these concepts of understanding are alive and substantial insofar as they continue to represent these forces. Transition is thus the principle from which both the cosmic forces and aesthetic concepts derive. *And this transition is only apprehensible because it functions simultaneously. The reason for this simultaneity is that neither metaphysical nor physical, neither the noumenal nor the phenomenal exist independently of their reciprocal transition and of a mind that initiates or apprehends this transition, for their primary qualities derive from this very process.* There is no static atemporal being but rather only the moving forces and the processes deriving from their mutual agitation. So “is” does not refer to a *what* but rather to a *how*, not to any original being but to the ways and processes of the apprehension of forces and composition of concepts. An analysis of *logos* is an examination of how questions, it is the very process of unearthing the underlying transitions.

Neither a purely empirical science (e.g. modern physics), nor a purely metaphysical thinking (e.g. monotheistic religions) alone can explain the nature of things. But, we propose that they are not directly dependent on each other, for they are themselves the product of the *transitions* between cosmic forces and human concepts as they are formed and reformed according to these transitions. While we cannot think of Nature and its component forces without the process of conceptualisation, we cannot have meaningful or artful or moving concepts that are active in communication or language once we empty their natural content away or cut off their roots in the moving forces in nature. In the end, it is much less important to intuit *what* is in transition than to determine the laws, rules or principles of this transition because the *transition* itself is the phase where the *a priori* forces find their meaning and thus a body of definition as pure concepts. In that sense, it is not the metaphysical principles of nature that define the transition, but the transition defines these seemingly separate realms of thought since the principle of transition itself determines the ways the forces

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<sup>40</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich “Twilight of the Idols” in *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, ed. Ridley and Norman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p.204

<sup>41</sup> *ibid*, pp.204-205

of nature are apprehended and aesthetic and ethical concepts are understood and defined. As Greek tragedy was born from the spirit of Dionysian aesthetics, Nature is apprehended through the representation of its sublimity. Similarly, the human being and his concepts of understanding are the products of the ways of apprehension and conceptualisation of the cosmic forces.

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