

## **A Comparative Study of the Relationship of Kant's Theory of the Sublime with Paintings Related to the Images of Mary and Christ in the Byzantine and Gothic Periods\***

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### Abstract

The sublime is at the heart of Kant's aesthetic philosophy. According to Kant it refers to infinite and infinite conceptions such as time, death, space, and the spiritual world; it refers to greatness that is superior to any comparison and beyond any deduction. This marvelous greatness can be attributed to moral action, the grandeur of pure thought, or the greatness of natural lords, such as the enormous storm or ocean of infinity, and even the greatness of a work of art. The research is based on a descriptive-analytical method with inductive reasoning and data is collected via library research. The results of the study demonstrate that the theory of the sublime is best presented in the religious church art; moreover, the paintings of the Gothic period compared to the Byzantine period is a representative of this art that undoubtedly remarks Kant's theory of the sublime.

### Research questions:

1. When did Kant's theory of sublime emerge and in what arts was it manifested?
2. In the paintings of which era did the theory of sublime become evident and what triggered it?

### Research aims:

1. To examine Kant's theory of sublime and its relation to art and paintings associated with St. Mary and Jesus Christ in the Gothic and Byzantine periods.
2. To investigate the occurrence of the sublime theory in Church art.

**Keywords:** Sublime theory, Kant, Gothic painting, Byzantine painting, religious art.

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\* This article has been taken from the doctoral thesis of the author: "visual literacy in Gothic painting based on Kant's philosophical system (the concept sublime)", Azad Islamic University of central Tehran, Iran.

## **Introduction:**

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was one of the greatest European philosophers and had a great influence on his subsequent thoughts. According to Kant, the sublime is an infinite and revenues not to the exterior but to an inner mental state. Kant, influenced by Longinus III, a literary critic of ancient Greece, who believed that by provoking intense emotions an intense amount of thought is created that emphasizes the influence of perfection, abstraction, and the transitional power of sensory perception. For Kant, any expression of emotion that provokes fear is a sublime source. His analysis of the sublime emphasizes its emotional power, its excessive energy and its irresistible physical effects, which are not logically understood but push our mental capacities to the limit. Kant highlights nature in the first place and draws attention to the dramatist outlook of our exposure to its potential resources (skyrocketing mountains, devastating storms or magnificent oceans). The act of seeing and the state of being attentive is vital here; though sublime and painful, the encounter with that instinct of "self-protection" raises the physical resistance to the threat of destruction in the face of resistance.

Kant emphasizes the sublime as a conceptual problem that results from the subject's irresistible experience of nature. In his opinion, the sublime is a feeling that resists the play. However, what makes Kant's natural supremacy aesthetic experience is its participation in the spiritual process by which the individual expresses his activity and control over nature. In Kant's theory, the emergent sensory urgency faces natural challenges, and goes beyond the expression of the imagination. He lists examples of threatening cliffs, volcanoes, tornadoes, boundless oceans and huge rivers. But the process of distress has finally been controlled and tamed as it was before. The reactions of the mind to the greatness and power of nature are the result of rational understanding (concepts such as eternity, infinite, and totality), and in the face of the turbulent emotions and self-reinforcing forces of one's moral consciousness that is reinforced. However, the conceptual work that is the subject of the discussion is only well understood when the relationship between imagination and understanding collapses and the ability to judge is compromised. Reaching the perilous points of extreme boundaries and instability of shapes, one experiences the transient moments of loss of independence (suspended judgment and understanding) that reflect what Burke and Kant call "negative pleasure".

Longinus writes of the sublime: "The sublime is a song that arises from a great mind. So it is somewhat without a word, in a bare and meaningless way often arouses our surprise, because the very idea itself is great ... big words can only arise from those who think theirs are heavy; then the words of the glorious majesty can only be found on the lips of men of transcendent spirit ... The soul is lifted up in true sublimity, lifts up a proud boast, as if he himself had heard what he had heard has created it" (Kant, 2013: 30). The following will, of course, address how the sense of sublimity can be found in religious art with a sense of grandeur and horror and at places have mutual implications.

Philosophy such as Longinus, Burke, and Banckant have been debated in the field of sublime philosophy, and post-metaphysical philosophers such as Lyotard, Derrida, and Adreno have focused on one's encounter with others in the experience of the sublime. Burke and Kant's concept of sublime has evolved throughout history from a philosophical structure to an aesthetic one, and has found its way into the works of artists to contemporary scholars such as Eugene Schinkel. But the present study seeks to characterize Kant's sublime theory in the paintings associated with the depictions of St. Mary and Jesus Christ in the Byzantine and Gothic periods. Moreover, according to the resources in hand, there seems

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to be no consistent research in this regard. A descriptive and analytic methodology is carried out in this study and data is collected by library and digital research. The researcher describes and explains the reasons for the problem and then analyzes its reasoning in different ways to gain access to research questions.

## **Conclusion**

The sublime, in contrast to the aesthetic judgment that the beautiful face reveals the appearance, the sublime is not a characteristic of the natural world, but a mental feeling in which the mind, with a superior sense of great, vital and fearful, and not out of fear but also out of respect approaches human greatness and dignity; a dignity that creates a sentimental emotion and makes the human nature more ethical and moral.

The sense of human dignity that comes from feeling superior can only be achieved by reason (ethics) and rational ideas, because it is the attraction of ideas of reason that drives the imagination to transcend sensory boundaries and standards. Kant thus relates aesthetic reflection to rational thought in the sublime. Reflecting on the tangible nature and moving towards the transcendence of the ideas of reason, the sublime affirms nature's connection to morality, thereby filling the gap between Kant's philosophy of cognition (trust) and faith (reason). Thus, in addition to the aesthetic aspect of the sublime, the sublime has a very special place in the philosophy of Kant's art, both as it serves as a tool of reason and as it fills the gap in the system of cash philosophy. As mentioned, the sublime refers to the greatness that is superior to any comparison and beyond any deduction.

As a result, we consider it an art that best exemplifies the effects of fear, awe, greatness, authority, and superiority, and the category of the sublime is governed by an art that conceives of infinite notions such as space, time, Spiritual world, death and mortality refer to. However, the best representative of the sublime can be considered the religious art of the churches, as it best exemplifies the sublime effects. The best example of this is the wall paintings of murals in the Gothic period, such as Joto, which are in fact sublime reminiscences about transcendental realities.

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