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Robert R. Clewis

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## THE KANTIAN SUBLIME AND THE REVELATION OF FREEDOM

In this book Robert R. Clewis shows how certain crucial concepts in Kant's aesthetics and practical philosophy – the sublime, enthusiasm, freedom, empirical and intellectual interests, the idea of a republic – fit together and deepen our understanding of Kant's philosophy. He examines the ways in which different kinds of sublimity reveal freedom and indirectly contribute to morality, and discusses how Kant's account of natural sublimity suggests that we have an indirect duty with regard to nature. Unlike many other studies of these themes, this book examines both the pre-Critical *Observations* and the remarks that Kant wrote in his copy of the *Observations*. Finally, Clewis takes seriously Kant's claim that enthusiasm is aesthetically sublime, and shows how this clarifies Kant's views of the French Revolution. His book will appeal to all who are interested in Kant's philosophy.

ROBERT R. CLEWIS is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Gwynedd-Mercy College.

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*per Elisa*

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Conversely, even that which we call sublime in nature outside us or even within ourselves (e.g., certain affects) is represented only as a power of the mind to soar above **certain** obstacles of sensibility by means of moral principles, and thereby to become interesting.

I should like to dwell a little on the last point. The idea of the good with affect is called **enthusiasm**. This state of mind seems to be sublime, so much so that it is commonly maintained that without it nothing great can be accomplished. Now, however, every affect is blind, either in the choice of its end, or, even if this end is given by reason, in its implementation; for it is that movement of the mind that makes it incapable of engaging in free consideration of principles, in order to determine itself in accordance with them. Thus it cannot in any way merit a satisfaction of reason. Nevertheless, enthusiasm is aesthetically sublime, because it is a stretching of the powers through ideas, which give the mind a momentum that acts far more powerfully and persistently than the impetus given by sensory representations. Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (*Kritik der Urteilkraft* 5:272)

The color of the sublime is red. Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (*Kritik der Urteilkraft* 5:302)

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[More information](#)*Abbreviations and notes on Kant's texts*

Except for the references to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, references to Kant are to the volume:page number of *Kants gesammelte Schriften* (KGS), published by the Deutsche (formerly Königlich Preußische) Akademie der Wissenschaften, 29 vols. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1902–). The references to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are to the A and B pagination of the first and second editions, respectively. References to the *Remarks* are to the volume:page number of the KGS followed by the page number in the Rischmüller edition (*Bemerkungen in den "Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen,"* ed. Marie Rischmüller [Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1991]). Translations from the *Remarks* are my own, as are translations from works for which no English translation is listed below. References to the *Observations* are to the volume:page number of the KGS followed by the page in the Goldthwait translation from which I quote (*Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, trans. John Goldthwait [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960]).

The abbreviations below are used to cite Kant's texts; any texts not abbreviated below are cited only by the KGS volume:page number. English translations that are used in citations are listed below. It should be noted, however, that I have occasionally modified these translations. Translations that were consulted but not cited from can be found in the bibliography. Finally, it should be pointed out that bold font is used throughout this book to reproduce Kant's original emphasis.

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| <i>AM</i>  | <i>Anthropologie Mrongovius</i>  |
| <i>AP</i>  | <i>Anthropologie Parow</i>   |
| <i>ApH</i> | <i>Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht. Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View</i> , trans. Victor Lyle Dowdell. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978 |
| <i>FI</i>  | <i>Erste Einleitung in die Kritik der Urteilskraft. Critique of the Power of Judgment</i> , trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews. Cambridge University Press, 2000              |

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- G* *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten. Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor, in *Practical Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press, 1996
- GTP* *Über den Gebrauch teleologischer Principien in der Philosophie*
- IAG* *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht. Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent*, trans. Ted Humphrey, in *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983
- ID* *De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis* [Inaugural Dissertation]
- JL* *Jäsche Logik. Jäsche Logic*, trans. J. M. Young, in *Lectures on Logic*. Cambridge University Press, 1992
- KpV* *Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft. Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Mary Gregor, in *Practical Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press, 1999
- KrV* *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft. Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood. Cambridge University Press, 1997
- KU* *Kritik der Urteilkraft. Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews. Cambridge University Press, 2000
- M* *Menschenkunde*
- MA* *Mutmaßlicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte*
- MS* *Die Metaphysik der Sitten. The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor, in *Practical Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press, 1999
- Obs* *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen. Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, trans. John Goldthwait. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960
- PP* *Zum ewigen Frieden: Ein philosophischer Entwurf. Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Project*, trans. Mary Gregor, in *Practical Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press, 1996
- PPH* *Praktische Philosophie Herder*
- R* *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft. Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, trans. George di Giovanni, in *Religion and Rational Theology*. Cambridge University Press, 1996
- Refl* *Reflexionen*
- Rem* *Bemerkungen in den "Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen"*

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<i>SF</i>	<i>Der Streit der Fakultäten. The Conflict of the Faculties</i> , trans. Mary Gregor and Robert Anchor, in <i>Religion and Rational Theology</i> . Cambridge University Press, 1996
<i>TP</i>	<i>Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis. On the Common Saying: That May Be Correct in Theory, But It Is of No Use in Practice</i> , trans. Mary Gregor, in <i>Practical Philosophy</i> . Cambridge University Press, 1996
<i>VK</i>	<i>Versuch über die Krankheiten des Kopfes</i>