

The Play's *das Thing*: On the Incommensurability of Arendtian Political Action and the Kantian Sublime

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Abstract

Drawing upon Hannah Arendt's political reimagining of Kant's aesthetics and Kant's analysis of 'enthusiasm' as a modality of the sublime, I demonstrate in this paper how the Kantian sublime is incompatible with Arendt's conception of political action.

Keywords: sublime, beauty, Nazism, politics, Kant, Arendt

Introduction

Jean-François Lyotard, in 'Postscript to Terror and the Sublime', writes that "there is no such thing" as a politics of the sublime. Instead, "it could only be terror".¹ Nonetheless, a number of commentators (including Jacques Rancière,² Gilles Deleuze,³ and Michael Shapiro⁴) have tried to forge a politics of the sublime: a sublime that, rather than being terrifying, instead affords us the opportunity to radically imagine the world anew.

While I do not disagree with analyses and programmes of this sort in principle, I am sympathetic to Lyotard's concerns. It is that sympathy which drives this paper. Drawing upon Hannah Arendt's political reimagining of Kant's aesthetics, Kant's analysis of 'enthusiasm' as a modality of the sublime, and a case study of the Nazi Thingspiel movement, I demonstrate in this paper that the Kantian sublime is incompatible with Arendt's conception of political action.

The Agora

Drawing from the work of Hannah Arendt, when I speak of 'political action', I mean something quite specific: the action of the *vita activa*, or 'politically active life'. I will explain.

In both *The Human Condition* and "Labor, Work, Action", Arendt claims that 'labour', 'work', and 'action' are the three modes that, in the aggregate, constitute our shared existential condition. Labour is the most foundational, being the mode that we share with non-human creatures. Composed of activities like eating, mating, and sleeping, it denotes the cyclical "metabolism between man and nature" through which we guarantee our continued existence.⁵ However, while labour is self-sustaining, it leaves no lasting impression upon the world. The goods of labour, such as they are, are denuded and impermanent. They readily decay or disintegrate into nothingness, reclaimed anew by the world.

The second mode, work, concerns the objects that we make. Unlike (most) other animals, which are without any kind of real material culture, human beings are *homo faber*, or 'man the maker'. The made objects that constitute this material culture serve a dual

purpose. First, they serve to make our lives easier, ameliorating some of our material difficulties, organising our behaviours, and amplifying our capacities in given ways. Second, by virtue of providing these affordances, the objects of our material culture moor us to the world in a way that the products of labour do not. As Arendt writes, “the things of the world have the function of stabilizing human life [...]. Against the subjectivity of men stands the objectivity of the man-made artifice, not the indifference of nature”.⁶

The third and final mode, action, is the realm of the political, of the agora. It is also the existential mode with which the rest of this analysis is concerned. Whereas labour and work are fundamentally private in that they are (under Arendt's conceptualisation) basically solitary activities, they also provide the existential and material foundation whereupon social and political life can take place. Moreover, it is only once our more basic needs are addressed that we can begin to engage seriously in the normative activities that constitute the *vita activa* or ‘politically active life’, both free from “the inequality present in rulership” and free to “move in a sphere where neither rule nor being ruled existed”.⁷ The realm of action is also the realm of newness, of novelty. Because true actors are free of material constraints thanks to the modes of labour and work, actors themselves are fundamentally undetermined. Arendt writes:

[...] the consequences of each deed are boundless, every action touches off not only a reaction but a chain reaction, every process is the cause of unpredictable new processes [...] one deed, one gesture may suffice to change every constellation.⁸

However, while it is *The Human Condition* and “Labor, Work, Action” that contain the most influential descriptions of political action, it is in *Between Past and Future* that Arendt teases out the conceptual mechanisms that underlie it. Building upon Kant's description of beauty in *The Critique of Judgement*, Arendt argues that in Kant's analysis lie the seeds of a normative political programme.

In *The Critique of Judgement*, Kant argues that beauty, properly conceptualised, has four features (what he calls ‘moments’). Briefly, they are as follows:

1. Judgements of beauty are based upon disinterested pleasure, being unmotivated by desire.⁹
2. Judgements of beauty appear rationally motivated in that those judgements look like the normal activity in which we engage when we apply concepts. Nonetheless, this is not the case, because Kant thinks that concepts cannot be fully applied to beautiful things. The tension between the mechanisms of concept-application and the conceptual evasiveness of beautiful things means that beautiful things look rational without being so. Kant calls this feature of beautiful things ‘lawfulness without a law’.¹⁰
3. Judgements of beauty are not premised upon the extent to which something is fit for a given purpose. Nonetheless, beautiful things look as if they have purpose. Consequently, Kant argues that beautiful things possess ‘purposiveness without purpose’.¹¹
4. Finally, judgements of beauty are normative in that they implicitly demand that everyone who perceives the object ought also judge the object beautiful.¹²

All four of these moments, acting in concert, facilitate the most important feature of the beautiful: what Kant calls the ‘free play’ of the faculties. When engaging in free play, Kant argues that the imagination is unconstrained by the limits imposed by determinate concepts because there is nothing, per moment 2 and 3, that tells you what an object is or how it should be used. He writes: “The cognitive powers brought into play by this representation are here engaged in a free play, since no determinate concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition”.¹³

Arendt's insight is that judgements of beauty, as Kant conceptualises them, are relevantly similar to political claims in that both imply the existence of free play. Per moment 1, they must both be disinterested: in the case of beauty, one cannot be a true judge if your interests or desires are capable of impinging upon your judgement; in the case of the latter, participating in the realm of action requires that your interests are addressed within the modes of labour and work. Per moments 2 and 3, both judgements of beauty and political claims exhibit lawfulness without a law and purposiveness without purpose in that there is no set of objective concepts that we can apply, nor is there a set of rules or standards by which they can be assessed. Finally, per moment 4, both judgements of beauty and political claims are normative in that they demand, but cannot guarantee, agreement.

This means, for instance, that saying, "I think that such-and-such is beautiful" is modally equivalent to the claim that, "I think that so-and-so is the best way to live", in that they are both non-binding and normative statements premised upon free play. It also means that both judgements of beauty and political claims are public facts: in order for them to have any normative traction, they both need to be introduced as objects of analysis into the agora. As a consequence, both judgements of beauty and the politics of the agora, Arendt argues, are subsumed within the power of aesthetic judgement: a power that "rests on a potential agreement with others".¹⁴

What it means to engage meaningfully with the normative claims of other people is to enlarge our own mentalities; armed with free play, we are able to liberate ourselves from the blinkers of our own attitudes and inclinations and thus engage in political action. Moreover, with free play, the power of aesthetic judgement is a power that requires constant and careful cultivation, grounded in the common world that we all share. Arendt writes: "In aesthetic no less than in political judgments, a decision is made, and although this decision is always determined by a certain subjectivity, [...] it also derives from the fact that the world itself is an objective datum, something common to all its inhabitants".¹⁵

Arendt is not the only person to have made arguments of this sort: Friedrich Schiller,¹⁶ Herbert Marcuse,¹⁷ and Tobin Siebers,¹⁸ among others, have all pointed out the virtues of Kantian judgements of beauty when seeking to work out how we might adequately conceive of political action in an ideal sense. In all cases, it is the free play implied by aesthetic judgement upon which political action is premised. This is because free play helps us imagine what it is like to be other people, and to conceive of the limitations of our own normative positions. It also serves to guide the process by which we find agreement with one another, collectively discerning the values that we wish to pursue as a polis. Consequently, as a governing principle, free play helps midwife an agora that is pluralistic, democratic, richly interpersonal, and inherently non-coercive. Or, as Tobin Siebers writes:

Aesthetic judgment, then, provides the perfect analogy by which to imagine ideal forms of political judgment. It offers the experience of a free political space, a space of intersubjectivity, in which a multitude of thinking people are dedicated to an open discussion—unbound by previously existing prejudices—and committed to reaching an agreement acceptable to all.¹⁹

Obviously, aesthetic judgement offers a utopian vision of both the material conditions under which political action manifests, and the norms that govern collective decision-making. Nonetheless, from this brief exegesis we can say that political action, even under less-than-utopian circumstances, must permit the possibility of free play. Without it, we lack the conceptual breathing room to make normative and yet non-binding judgements under the aegis of lawfulness without a law and purposiveness without purpose.

Consequently, free play is a necessary condition that must be met before we are able to engage in the kind of political action that Arendt describes.

The Sublime

But what of the Kantian sublime and its relation to Arendtian political action? Although the sublime escapes easy definition, we can describe it as a species of spiritual grandeur that evades any serious attempt to make sense of it. Shared amongst accounts of the sublime is a view that the sublime is all at once a feeling of commingled delight, joy, terror, and dismay in the face of overwhelming power. Consider, for instance, the terrific and tremulous beginning of Rainer Maria Rilke's *The Duino Elegies* (for my money one of the most sublime poems ever written):

Who, if I cried out, would hear me among the angels'
hierarchies? and even if one of them pressed me
suddenly against his heart: I would be consumed
in that overwhelming existence. For beauty is nothing
but the beginning of terror, which we are still just able to endure,
and we are so awed because it serenely disdains
to annihilate us. Every angel is terrifying.²⁰

Despite the vast preponderance of both analyses and expressions of the sublime (and fittingly, given the literature that we have covered thus far), it is Kant's analysis that has proven the most influential. He defines the sublime as a kind of experience that profoundly exceeds our capacity to make sense of it. As he writes in *The Critique of Judgment*, the sublime is "the mere capacity of thinking which evidences a faculty of mind transcending every standard of sense".²¹ It is the feeling we experience when our *a priori* forms of sensible intuition—that is, our intuitions of space and/or time—are violated. These intuitions, he claims, can be violated in two different ways: via experiences of overwhelming power (what Kant calls the 'dynamical' sublime) and experiences of overwhelming space (what Kant calls the 'mathematical' sublime).²²

As Jean-François Lyotard argues, Kant's sublime rests on the perceived tension between 'imagination' (the intellectual capacities that organise and make sense of what we perceive), and rationality (that which sets the conceptual limits upon what we believe can be the case). So, while my reason might tell me that something very large or very powerful is bounded in some way if only for the reason that *all* things are bounded in some way, my imagination is incapable of discerning *where* and *how* that thing is bounded.

This tension—what Lyotard calls the 'differend'—is "the heart of sublime feeling: at the encounter of the two 'absolutes' equally 'present' to thought, the absolute whole when it conceives, the absolutely measured when it presents".²³ It is as a consequence of this incommensurability that the sublime makes obvious the torn and ragged edges of our conceptual capacities, and in so doing offers a "transport that leads all thought (critical thought included) to its limits".²⁴

In making clear the inadequacy of our senses and the incommensurability of those senses with reason, the Kantian sublime also makes clear to us the powers of our cognitive abilities. Faced with a sublime thing, all you can do is know that you are *not* that thing. For Kant, this is the location of true sublimity: faced with an experience of excess, we are able, if nothing else, to affirm our own selfhood. Although very small and powerless, we have power enough to individuate, experiencing a kind of joy in our unconditioned and wild experience.

The word 'unconditioned' is important because it gives Kant room to tie the sublime with the good. Faced with the differend between imagination and rationality, we are left free and adrift of preconceptions and inclinations. This, Kant thinks, naturally puts us in a perfect position to discover the moral law outlined elsewhere in his philosophical programme, and thus be better able to act in service to the good. Our inclinations and preferences, having been humiliated by the sublime into the experience of empowered joy, open us to the possibility of acting according to ideal, 'unconditioned',²⁵ non-sensuous principles. In this way, Kant's account of the sublime clearly illustrates his Enlightenment commitments: after all, for all the sublime's grandeur, it really only serves to reinforce the power and acuity of unconditioned intellect.

But what happens if the sublime experience does not open us to unconditioned and non-sensuous principles? The answer lies in what Kant calls 'enthusiasm'. At least on the surface, enthusiasm is indiscernible from the sublime. To be enthusiastic for something, using the Kantian nomenclature, is to be gripped by an unrepresentable idea, or a set of unrepresentable ideas, much larger than yourself. The effect of these ideas persists across time in a way that overrides our preferences or inclinations. Or, as Kant writes, "from an aesthetic point of view, enthusiasm is sublime, because it is an effort of one's powers called forth by ideas which give to the mind an impetus of far stronger and more enduring efficacy than the stimulus afforded by sensible representations".²⁶

However, this is not to say that enthusiasm and the unconditioned sublime are identical. Sublime feeling is a consequence of the rational process by which we individuate in the face of overwhelming phenomena. As a consequence, it is a product of 'reason'; that is, a product of our "faculty of principles", of which "the unconditioned is the ultimate goal at which it aims".²⁷ Meanwhile, Kant argues that enthusiasm is not and cannot be unconditioned. Instead, while enthusiasm shares some common features with the sublime, it is better understood as one of the ways in which the moral law can be connected with feeling; it is "the idea of the good connected with affect".²⁸

As distinct from 'passions', which can be mastered, Kant describes 'affects' as emotional states that do not permit the possibility of self-reflection.²⁹ Instead, Kantian affect is an instance of pure, unreflexive, and unmediated *feeling*; certainly not the product of the unconditioned 'faculty of principles'. He writes: "every affect is blind either as to the choice of its end, or, supposing this has been furnished by reason, in the way it is effected".³⁰ Enthusiasm then, as "the idea of the good connected with affect", is a merely *aesthetic* expression or modality of the sublime: a sublime stripped of reason and, consequently, moral valence. Moreover, although it may take the form of the good, this form is purely accidental; there is nothing that guarantees that enthusiasm will be good, because it is insufficiently unconditioned to make the relevant moral judgements.

All of this means that enthusiasm walks a narrow and dangerous path. Although fully capable of adhering to the moral law (and indeed, Kant is actually quite optimistic about the good-making potential of enthusiasm, as he explains in *The Conflict of the Faculties, in Religion and Rational Theology*),³¹ it is dangerous because we cannot ensure that it will. It is mercurial, wild, *delirious*.³² It is also socially efficacious. Whipped into a mad, affective, unreflective frenzy by some set of unrepresentable ideas, an enthusiastic polis can become unmoored from the moral law and descend into a potent kind of madness, seeking to bring those unrepresentable ideas into actuality. As Lyotard writes:

Enthusiasm is a modality of the feeling of the sublime. The imagination tries to supply a direct, sensible presentation for an Idea of Reason. [...] It does not succeed and it thereby

feels its impotence, but at the same time, it discovers its destination, which is to bring itself into harmony with the Ideas of Reason through an appropriate present.³³

The Thing

An example of enthusiasm in action might be helpful. Rising above Heidelberg, on the north side of the Neckar river, is the 'Heiligenberg': in English, the 'Holy Mountain'. At the peak of the Heiligenberg is a large public amphitheatre made from grey stone blocks. Designed by Hermann Alker and completed in 1935, the Heidelberg Thingstätte possesses the heavily, masculine grandeur of so many public buildings from the Nazi era. Capable of holding some 20,000 people, it is also an excellent example of the architecture of the 'Thingspiel' movement (1933 to 1937).

Although a cognate with the standard German word *Ding* (which along with English 'thing', Dutch *ding*, and so on, refers to a thing or an object), the German word *Thing*—derived ultimately, like *Ding*, from the Old Norse *þing*—refers to a particular kind of communal assembly: "a gathering", in the words of Martin Heidegger, "and specifically a gathering to deliberate on a matter under discussion, a contested matter".³⁴ These assemblies functioned as both social and judicial gatherings: places where seasonal celebrations would occur and public judgements be rendered. Adopted into the milieu of Nazism, the word *Thing* developed distinctly racialist overtones. In connoting "the sacred assembly site of the pre-Christian Germanic tribes", as Glen Gladberry writes, a *Thing* in Nazi parlance was transformed into a place where "the racially unified people (*das Volk*) passed judgement".³⁵

It is in light of this cultural inheritance that theatre scholar Carl Niessen first put forth the notion of a *Thingspiel*: that is, a 'Thing play'. In a speech delivered in 1933, he presented the *Thingspiel* as a new and uniquely National Socialist *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art), uniting both performance and politics. In this way, it was hoped that *Thingspiele* would prove an appropriate expression and encouragement of the *Volksgemeinschaft* in a way that democracy did not.

However, it was the journalist and *Reichsdramaturg* Rainer Schlösser, in cooperation with dramatist Eberhard Wolfgang Möller, who really codified the *Thing* play. Combining oratorio, procession, pantomime, and dance, and inspired by the neopagan dramas of Ernst Wachler, the intention behind a *Thingspiel* was to forge drama and völkisch ideology into a single coherent form: a mystery play "using appropriate material to create a total work of art that is close to the people", as Martin Swales and Karl-Heinz Schoeps write, providing "mystical underpinnings for the new state".³⁶

As William Niven observes, if Modernist drama is an exercise in defamiliarisation or 'making strange', then *Thingspiele* "aimed at refamiliarisation". Indeed, he writes, "actors and audience were as one, participants in a dramatic acting out of the German soul".³⁷ It was to be the ultimate artform: a "syncretic experience of inimitable immensity".³⁸ Nor was this lost on the playwrights themselves. As *Thingspiel* writer Richard Euringer claimed, the point of a *Thing* play is "[c]ult, not 'art'".³⁹ Or, as Schlösser declared:

*The longing is for a drama that intensifies historical events to create a mythical, universal, unambiguous reality beyond reality. Only someone who knows this longing will be able to create the cultic people's drama of the future.*⁴⁰

This mythic impetus means that *Thingspiele* share a cluster of thematic and narrative features—although, as Niven points out, working out what is and isn't a *Thing* play is a

matter of some conjecture.⁴¹ Each is filled with lamentations that the steely and Romantic German spirit has been harmed by the degeneracies of the Weimar Republic (whether Jewish, socialist, internationalist, liberal democratic, feminist, or otherwise); each presents the thesis that the true German spirit can only be restored via a robust commitment to National Socialism; and each argues that once these problems are addressed, there will be “a coming together of all classes, whose differences are forgotten as they recognize what they have in common, namely their Germanness”.⁴²

As part of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, it was deemed that these performances required custom-made venues; when attempting to forge a cultic vision of the German ethnostate, not just any old tat will do. And so, in line with both Niessen’s initial vision and the Romantic font from which *völkisch* ideology emerges, the Nazi Propaganda Ministry began building *Thingplätze* (‘Thing places’) all over Germany, in sites invested “with the same sacred spirit which was felt had been associated with the ancient *Thing*”.⁴³

The Heidelberg Thingstätte is one such *Thingplatz*. Although other *Thingplätze* certainly trump it in terms of size, its location bestows upon it an undeniable grandeur: built at the apex of the Holy Mountain, with Heidelberg laid out like a medieval jewel on the Neckar below, the sense of drama is palpable. And indeed, it appears to have been thought equally impressive at its unveiling in 1935. Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, speaking at the opening, described the Thingstätte as “National Socialism in stone”; indeed it gave “a living, tangible, and monumental expression” to the Nazi concept of life.⁴⁴

In short, these plays present a sublime vision, both of the German state and of Germanness itself. The Romantic heroes of *Thingspiele* are subsumed into the overwhelming will of the nation: a nation forged from ‘authentic’ blood and soil, rather than from the thin and toothless legalisms of liberal democracy. Moreover, because members of the audience were expected to participate in *Thing* plays, this exercise in nation-building was to be shared by all present: a vast and mythic call to action intended to blunt any response but uncritical devotion:

Our German land needs deeds,
Enough words have been spoken.
Germany, you most beautiful of lands,
It is to you we dedicate the work of our hands!
We serve you with the spade,
Because we are soldiers, work soldiers.⁴⁵

As a consequence, *Thingspiele* are an excellent example of objects capable of stimulating—and indeed, designed to stimulate—feelings of Kantian enthusiasm. They offer a conditioned form of the sublime, premised upon a mythic, cultic, unrepresentable vision of a Germany that is founded upon a deep and ineffable ontology.

Conclusion

Let’s take stock. Earlier, I argued that free play was a necessary condition for political action, as Arendt describes it, to manifest. Meanwhile, per Kant, we can say that the sublime proper induces unconditioned experience, while enthusiasm constitutes a conditioned experience of the sublime. Is Arendtian political action commensurable with either of these sublimes, whether unconditioned or conditioned? The answer is no, for (at least) three reasons.

First, Arendtian political action is incompatible with the unconditioned sublime due to the phenomenological orientation of Kantian beauty. This is because the experience of

beauty requires an object: some *something* (even if it is a conceptual or abstract something, like 'liberty', or the nation, or the number seven) that serves as the object of attention. However, this condition does not hold for the unconditioned sublime. Because of the incommensurable differend between what we experience and what we conceptualise, an experience of the unconditioned sublime categorically *cannot* have an object. Indeed, experiences of the unconditioned sublime sunder our intentional horizons, leaving nothing in their wake.⁴⁶ This is what Kant means when he says that the sublime is 'unconditioned': it is unconditioned because there is no identifiable object to condition it. Plainly then, Arendtian political action is incommensurable with the unconditioned sublime, for the very good reason that political action of the sort that Arendt describes is premised upon the proper functioning of free play. Given that free play requires an object or objects to function properly, and given that experiences of the unconditioned sublime hinge upon the dissolution of objects, it is obvious that free play and the unconditioned sublime are categorically at odds.

Second, Arendtian political action is also incompatible with enthusiasm, the conditioned sublime. Enthusiasm differs from the unconditioned sublime by virtue of the fact it has an object: it is conditioned by some thing or concept. However, the mere fact that enthusiasm possesses an object does not mean that it is reconcilable with Arendtian political action. That is because the object—in our test case, a mythic, cultic, unrepresentable vision of Germany—is much too vast and incoherent to be adequately conceptualised. This means that it cannot be properly embedded within our *a priori* forms of sensible intuition (such as space and time). It also means that making sense of that object looks nothing like the normal activity in which we engage when we apply concepts, and thus the mythic, cultic, unrepresentable vision of Germany categorically cannot fulfil the condition of appearing lawful without a law. Naturally, both of these conditions must be met in order for free play to be stimulated: a free play that is the foundation of Arendtian political action.

Finally, there is at least one good reason why Arendtian political action is incommensurable with *any* kind of sublime, whether unconditioned or not. Kant's first moment makes clear that beauty is a species of 'disinterested liking', in that an assessment of a beautiful thing is not complicated by or motivated by a desire for that beautiful thing. This disinterest is one of the necessary conditions that need to be met before we can experience free play. Meanwhile, we simply cannot experience sublime things in a disinterested way; although we cannot be afraid when experiencing the sublime, we very much need to understand that sublime things are appropriate objects of fear. As Kant writes, the aspect of sublime things "is all the more attractive for its fearfulness; and we readily call these objects sublime, because they raise the forces of the soul above the height of vulgar commonplace".⁴⁷ This obviously poses a problem for anyone hoping to reconcile the Kantian sublime with Arendtian political action: the manipulative power of the commingled fear and desire that Kant identifies as integral to the sublime is fundamentally incommensurable with the disinterest integral to beauty.

Consequently, and by means of a conclusion: the Kantian sublimations, whether conditioned or unconditioned, are categorically incommensurable with Arendt's conception of political action. Although I don't know if this means that the politics of the sublime "could only be terror", per Lyotard, it certainly problematises any attempt to reconcile the sublime with the democratic potential of aesthetic judgements and free play.

Notes

- ¹ Jean-François Lyotard, "Postscript to Terror and the Sublime," in *The Postmodern Explained: Correspondence, 1982-1985* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 71.
- ² Jacques Rancière, "Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community," in *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Gregory Elliott (New York: Verso, 2011), 51-82.
- ³ Gilles Deleuze, "The Method of Dramatization," in *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953-1974* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004), 94-116.
- ⁴ Michael J. Shapiro, *The Political Sublime* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018).
- ⁵ Hannah Arendt, "Labor, Work, Action," in *The Portable Hannah Arendt*, ed. Peter Baehr (London: Penguin, 2000), 170.
- ⁶ Hannah Arendt, "Labor, Work, Action", 173.
- ⁷ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago & London: Chicago University Press, 1998), 33.
- ⁸ Hannah Arendt, "Labor, Work, Action", 180.
- ⁹ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, secs. 1-5.
- ¹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, secs. 6-9.
- ¹¹ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, secs. 11-17.
- ¹² Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, secs. 18-22.
- ¹³ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, 45.
- ¹⁴ Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Viking Press, 1961), 220.
- ¹⁵ Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 222.
- ¹⁶ Friedrich Schiller, "Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man," in *Essays*, ed. Daniel O. Dahlstrom and Walter Hinderer, trans. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby (New York: Continuum, 1993), 86-178
- ¹⁷ Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955); and Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978).
- ¹⁸ Tobin Siebers, "Kant and the Politics of Beauty," *Philosophy and Literature* 22, no. 1 (1994).
- ¹⁹ Tobin Siebers, "Kant and the Politics of Beauty", 46.
- ²⁰ Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Duino Elegies & The Sonnets to Orpheus*, trans. Stephen Mitchell (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2014), 3.
- ²¹ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, ed. Nicholas Walker, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 97-98.
- ²² Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, secs. 23-29.
- ²³ Jean-François Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*, trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 123.
- ²⁴ Jean-François Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime: x*.
- ²⁵ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, 101.
- ²⁶ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, 102.
- ²⁷ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, 228.
- ²⁸ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, 102.
- ²⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. Robert B. Loudon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 149
- ³⁰ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, 102.
- ³¹ Cf. Immanuel Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties, in Religion and Rational Theology*, ed. Allen W. Wood and George Di Giovanni, trans. Mary J. Gregor and Robert Anchor (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001).
- ³² Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, 105.
- ³³ Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 165

- ³⁴ Martin Heidegger, "The Thing", in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 174.
- ³⁵ Glen Gadberry, "The Thingspiel and Das Frankenberger Würfelspiel," *The Drama Review: TDR* 24, no. 1 (1980), 104.
- ³⁶ Martin Swales and Karl-Heinz Schoeps, *Literature and Film in the Third Reich* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2004), 153.
- ³⁷ William Niven, "The Birth of Nazi Drama?: *Thing Plays*," in *Theatre Under the Nazis*, ed. John London (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2000), 57-58.
- ³⁸ William Niven, "The Birth of Nazi Drama?: *Thing Plays*", 59.
- ³⁹ Richard Euringer, quoted in William Niven, "The Birth of Nazi Drama?: *Thing Plays*", 58.
- ⁴⁰ Rainer Schlösser, quoted in Martin Swales and Karl-Heinz Schoeps, *Literature and Film in the Third Reich*, 153.
- ⁴¹ William Niven, "The Birth of Nazi Drama?: *Thing Plays*", 59-61.
- ⁴² William Niven, "The Birth of Nazi Drama?: *Thing Plays*", 65.
- ⁴³ Glen Gadberry, "The Thingspiel and Das Frankenberger Würfelspiel", 105.
- ⁴⁴ Joseph Goebbels, quoted in William Niven, "The Birth of Nazi Drama?: *Thing Plays*", 56.
- ⁴⁵ Erich Müller-Schnick, *Soldaten der Scholle*, quoted in William Niven, "The Birth of Nazi Drama?: *Thing Plays*", 65.
- ⁴⁶ Cf. Ryan Wittingslow, "Effing the Ineffable: The Sublime in Postphenomenology", *Techné: Research in Philosophy and Technology* (August 4 2020), doi: 10.5840/techne202082127.
- ⁴⁷ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, 91.