

vide a feeling of the beautiful, and the object, which occasions the feeling, seems in the end unrecognizable to the concept. In sublime feeling the tension works in the opposite direction. The concept places itself out of the reach of all presentation: the imagination founders, inanimate. All of its forms are inane before the absolute. The "object" that occasions sublime feeling disappears: "nature as sinking into insignificance before the Ideas of reason" (105; 101).

Thus two aesthetics can be described on the basis of these two tensions, two aesthetics that are always possible, that always threaten art, periods, genres, and schools whatever they may be, a figural aesthetic of the "much too much" that defies the concept, and an abstract or minimal aesthetic of the "almost nothing" that defies form. To assimilate the two because both suppose a tension would be to abandon all critical rigor and to succumb to the transcendental illusion that confuses understanding with reason. Both are still aesthetics. Furthermore, one could not move into another family, nor could one localize them in another faculty's territory, in ethics, for example, save through another illusion. I say this because many readers of the "Analytic of the Sublime" think they discern in sublime feeling a kind of ethical atavism, a shadow cast by moral feeling on presentation (thus obliterating it). Kant himself invokes *Achtung*, respect, which is the result of moral law, to designate the relation that thinking has with "the thing" in sublime feeling. No doubt, but he also writes "admiration" (91; 88), which is not a term that belongs to a moral terminology. We will explore this case further (see Chapter 7).