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Department of Philosophy

University of Fribourg

Avenue de l'Europe 20

1700 Fribourg

Switzerland

Internet: <http://www.eurosa.org>

Email: secretary@eurosa.org

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From Ethics to Aesthetics
On an Aesthetic Sense in Kant's Philosophy of Religion

Daniel Kuran⁶⁷

Fundamental Theology / Department of Systematic Theology and Ethics
Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Vienna

ABSTRACT. In this essay, I take my starting point from Kant's *Religionsschrift* (1793) and the related essay "The End of All Things" (1794). In both texts, Kant takes ethics as his primary starting point and develops a specific view of religion under the auspices of practical philosophy. Inevitably, however, aesthetically relevant categories appear, as Kant had previously developed them in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790): the two basic motifs of aesthetic judgment, the beautiful and the sublime, and the activity of imagination (as a productive faculty of cognition) that is no longer conceptually regulated. The purpose of this contribution is to show that while the ideal of a purely rational religion can never be fully reconciled with the course of historical religions, Kant applies aesthetic categories in approaching this ideal. In other words, Kant's *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* contains potentialities for an understanding of religion that he hints at – without pursuing them further – in his writing on religion, which remains more oriented towards his practical philosophy. This unusual reconstruction of Kant's ethically coded philosophy of religion from the standpoint of aesthetics reveals how lines of connection between aesthetics and religion can be seen in Kant's work. These lines of connection can be further pondered with Kant and beyond Kant. In a spectacular shift from ethics to aesthetics, the authors of the *Oldest Systematic Program of German Idealism* (1796/97) – among them Hölderlin – determine the highest act of reason to be an aesthetic act. This means entrusting aesthetics with a greater significance of its own, which is able to illuminate a dimension of religion that eludes both a theoretical and a practical approach.

⁶⁷ Email: daniel.kuran@univie.ac.at

1. Introduction

Given that this paper was a contribution to the panel discussion on “aesthetic approaches to religion”⁶⁸ at the annual conference of the European Society for Aesthetics, the reference to Immanuel Kant might not be obvious. Kant is the author of one of the most influential philosophies of aesthetics – presented in his *Critique of the Power of Judgment*⁶⁹ from 1790. Additionally, Kant is well known for his philosophy of religion, developed in his writings on *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*⁷⁰ from 1793/4. However, Kant’s approach to religion is first and foremost an ethical approach rather than an aesthetic approach. Kant critiques religion by referring to practical reason, practical principles and the moral law. The question of God is expelled from the realms of theoretical reason and relocated within the boundaries of practical reason alone. Kant’s aesthetics, in contrast, deals with the beautiful, the sublime, aesthetic judgment and related issues, but religion is not an important topic in his philosophy of aesthetics: As far as the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* is concerned, the question of God remains a question of ethicotheology, but not a question of aesthetics.⁷¹ Therefore, the question arises as to whether an aesthetic approach to religion can be found in Kant at all.

In the following remarks, I will not try to put forth the thesis that Kant, against all evidence, developed an aesthetic theory of religion. However, I want to demonstrate that Kant’s

⁶⁸ This paper is thematically related to the contribution within this volume by Jakob Deibl: “From infinite rapprochement to the open. From Kant to Hölderlin”. The first paper on Kant is meant to uncover a train of thought that is continued by Deibl’s contribution on Hölderlin.

⁶⁹ Immanuel Kant (2000), *Critique of the power of judgment*, edited by Paul Guyer, translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. Hereinafter referred to as Kant (2000), §, original page number.

⁷⁰ Immanuel Kant (1996a), “Religion within the boundaries of mere reason”, in: Immanuel Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, translated and edited by Allen W. Wood and George Di Giovanni (The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1996, pp. 55-215. Hereinafter referred to as Kant (1996a), original page number.

⁷¹ Clearly, Kant’s aesthetics is also relevant for his dealing with religious concepts such as God and the highest good, insofar as his aesthetics, respectively his concept of beauty, allow for a perception of the world as purposive. Therefore, his aesthetics, together with the *Critique of Teleological Power of Judgment*, plays a key role in bridging the gap between the realms of theoretical and practical reason, as argued by Appelqvist. Cf. Hanne Appelqvist, “Kant on Religious Faith and Beauty”, in: Henrik Rydenfeld, Heikki J. Koskinen, Mats Bergman (eds.), *Limits of Pragmatism and Challenges to Theodicy*, Acta Philosophica Fennica vol. 95 (2019), pp. 203-211. However, aesthetics and religion are *only* connected through ethicotheology. Religion is foremost an ethical and not an aesthetical topic for Kant. Therefore, religious concepts hardly play any role in the text of the *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment*.

philosophy of religion contains fragments of an aesthetic approach to religion. Kant faces the problem of the relation between the enlightened ideal of a purely rational religion and concrete historical religions, and his approach to religion is determined by the question of how to approach the ideal of a rational religion. In this approach to religion, Kant does not so much introduce as almost stumble upon the most important categories of his aesthetics – the beautiful and the sublime – and he recognizes their explanatory power with regard to the relation between religion and reason. However, these transitory appearances of aesthetic categories within religion remain fragments or traces of a possible aesthetic approach to religion, which Kant does not pursue further. Consequently, religion remains a topic of practical philosophy for Kant. In what follows, I suggest that Kant’s aesthetics in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* – even if it was written before his philosophy of religion – points beyond Kant and his practical philosophy.⁷² Kant’s theory of aesthetic judgment introduces a third way between theoretical and practical reason. Aesthetic judgment is neither guided by the quest for knowledge about the objective world nor by the inner duty to realize objective moral principles. In contrast, it relates to the “feeling of pleasure and displeasure, by means of which nothing at all in the object is designated, but in which the subject feels itself as it is affected by the representation.”⁷³ It is neither the relation of knowledge to an object nor the pure self-relation of the subject, but rather the way in which the subject *as* being affected by something else, by a representation, feels itself.⁷⁴ This self-relation of the affected subject can neither be fully grasped by theoretical nor by practical concepts, inasmuch as it exceeds our purely conceptual regulation of the world. Reducible neither to theoretical nor to practical reason, this third dimension of our relation to the world influenced the successors of Kant, who worked their own way through and beyond Kant’s primacy of practical philosophy. As I will argue at the end of this talk, for the authors of the *Oldest Systematic Program of German Idealism* aesthetic categories will play a much

⁷² In this respect, I follow a thesis put forth by Johann Kreuzer, who argues that Kant’s third critique is not simply the mediation of his theoretical and practical critiques, but also goes beyond some of the restrictions of Kant’s theoretical and practical philosophy. Cf. Johann Kreuzer (2001), “Ästhetik als Ethik. Überlegungen im Anschluss an die ‚Kritik der Urteilskraft‘“, in: Valérie Lawitschka (ed.), *Turm-Vorträge 5 (1992-1998). Hölderlin: Philosophie und Dichtung*, Tübingen – Eggingen 2001, pp. 7-23.

⁷³ Kant, 2000, §1, p. 204.

⁷⁴ For a corresponding interpretation of Kant’s aesthetics and the impact this thought had on Hölderlin see: Jakob Deibl (2019), “Ästhetik – Poesie – Religion. Eine Verhältnisbestimmung im Ausgang von Hölderlins theoretischen Schriften mit einem Ausblick auf die Elegie ‚Heimkunft‘“, in: Wolfgang Braungart / Joachim Jacob / Jan-Heiner Tück (eds.), *Literatur/Religion. Bilanz und Perspektiven eines interdisziplinären Forschungsgebietes* (Studien zu Literatur und Religion, Bd. 1 / Studies on Literature and Religion, Vol. 1), J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart 2019, pp. 57-84.

more important role in approaching religion. In the context of the 21st century, a vast number of people in increasingly secular societies are no longer interested in religious traditions as objective knowledge about the world or as the main resource for ethical guidance, that can be based on secular reason alone. At the same time, religious traditions invented aesthetic programs that are still part of an artistic heritages. Religions can be recovered as aesthetic phenomena not only in the sense of being works of art, but also in the sense of the aesthetic forms which allow the subject to feel itself as being affected by the world. For this purpose, Kant's thought contains possibilities for approaching religion by means of aesthetic categories.

Following this introduction, I will proceed in three steps. In the first step, I will interpret a passage from the third part of Kant's *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, in which the motif of the beautiful appears. In the second step, I will add a reading of a passage in Kant's related text, *The End of All Things*⁷⁵, in which the sublime occurs in relation to apocalyptic themes. In the third and last step, I will refer to Kant's *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment* in order to show that Kant's aesthetics contains potentials that point beyond the restrictions of Kant's own practical philosophy and therefore his own perspective on religion. This can be exemplified best in Kant's concept of aesthetic ideas, in which the hierarchy of reason and imagination is almost turned upside down. My conclusion will be that Kant opens up the possibility of a redefinition of the relation of aesthetics and religion for his successors.

2. A “beautiful ideal” to be found in historical religion

A large part of the third section of Kant's *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* is dedicated to the relation between a philosophical ideal of religion, on the one hand, and concrete historical religions, on the other hand. A purely rational religion, based on reason alone, would have to be a universal faith including all humankind and built upon moral principles alone instead of contingent historical content. Historical faith, in contrast, is always incomplete, particulate and based on contingent revelations instead of reason. This tension

⁷⁵ Immanuel Kant (1996b), „The end of all things”, in: Immanuel Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, translated and edited by Allen W. Wood and George Di Giovanni (The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1996, pp. 221-231. Hereinafter referred to as Kant (1996b), original page number.

between an ideal and a historical reality is also a tension between reason and the sensible world. Whereas no historical faith can live up to the ideal of a universal religion, Kant nonetheless states the following in a passage I consider important:

[Y]et, because of the natural need of all human beings to demand for even the highest concepts and grounds of reason something that *the senses can hold on to* [Sinnlichhaltbares], some confirmation from experience or the like (a need which must also be seriously taken into account when the intention is to *introduce* a faith universally) some historical ecclesiastical faith or other, usually already at hand, must be used.⁷⁶

In this passage, Kant acknowledges a fundamental human need to demand something that the senses can hold on to, even for the highest concepts of reason, even if - which Kant makes very clear on every occasion – there can be no sensual representation of a concept of reason.⁷⁷ Still, in this passage, Kant states that this need has to be taken very seriously when approaching the ideal of a rational, that is a universal, faith. Because of this need to have something for the senses to hold on to, a historical faith has to be employed. The ideal is in need of a deficient historical religion as its vehicle in order to approach the religion of reason within history. Therefore, in the sensory world, a universal faith can never be introduced immediately. Kant supposes that within history the pure ideal can never fully be reached; there can only be a continuous approximation towards this ideal. Even if Kant suggests that there is a continuous approximation in time, it only leads to infinite progress. The ideal of a rational religion can never be reached in time because it is based on freedom, which is a concept of reason that transcends the chronological causality of time. Therefore, even in approaching this ideal, it remains “still infinitely removed from us”⁷⁸, as Kant points out. The rational religion of reason and historical faith can never be fully reconciled.

However, this still leaves one dimension of the historical representation of the progress of religions untouched. Kant turns to that dimension at the very end of the third section of his philosophy of religion, where he is dealing with eschatological ideas. In eschatological (and apocalyptic) narratives, the historical representation of religion itself transcends time and

⁷⁶ Kant, 1996a, p.110.

⁷⁷ As an example, concerning the idea of freedom, Kant writes in his *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment*: “For the *inscrutability of the idea of freedom* entirely precludes any positive presentation [...]” See: Kant, 2000, § 29, p. 275.

⁷⁸ Kant, 1996a, p.132.

history. This leads to a slight shift in the constellation between the faith of reason and historical faith because historical faith itself contains the idea of an end of history. In reconstructing this eschatological narrative (Kant thinks of the Christian narrative here), the overall critical tone of Kant regarding historical faith changes for a moment and makes room for appreciation. In the following passage Kant even speaks of this narrative as a *beautiful idea*:

This representation in a historical narrative of the future world, which is not in itself history, is a beautiful ideal of the moral world-epoch brought about by the introduction of the true universal religion and *foreseen* [*vorausgesehen*] in faith in its completion – one we do not *see directly* [*absehen*] in the manner of an empirical completion but *have a glimpse of* [*hinaussehen*] in the continuous advance and approximation toward the highest possible good on earth (in this there is nothing mystical but everything proceeds naturally in a moral way), i.e. we can make preparation for it. The appearance of the antichrist, the millennium, the announcement of the proximity of the end of the world, all take on their proper [gute] symbolic meaning before reason. And at the last of them, represented (like the end of life whether far or near) as an event which we cannot see in advance, expresses very well the necessity for us always to be ready for it, yet (if we ascribe to this symbol its intellectual meaning) in fact always to consider ourselves as actually the chosen citizens of a divine (ethical) state.⁷⁹

The eschatological, narrative of the completion of history, which is not in itself history, is appreciated by Kant in this passage. Certainly, reason does not depend on such mysticism since, for reason, everything on earth proceeds naturally and since belief in the end of the world it is by no means necessary for moral action. But still, this representation of the end of the world has a proper (in the original Kant writes “good”) symbolic meaning before reason, because it presents an unforeseeable end which expresses the timeless necessity of reason to act morally at all times. Although there can never be a direct sensual representation of concepts of reason, there can be symbols that are an analogy for reason. The end of the world, the completion of history and the dawn of the kingdom of God are not objective realities, but they are – as Kant states earlier – “a symbolic representation aimed merely at stimulating hope and courage and effort in achieving it [...]”⁸⁰ These symbols are aimed at stimulating or animating those faculties of the subject that are also affected by moral ideas. It is not accidental that Kant speaks

⁷⁹ Kant, 1996a, pp. 135f.

⁸⁰ Kant, 1996a, p. 133.

of a *beautiful* ideal in this context when we consider that in his aesthetics he wrote that “the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good”⁸¹. The beauty of this ideal of the end of history lies in the fact that it animates those forces of the subject that are not themselves necessary for morality, but which necessarily accompany every act of morality. The end of the world is not objective knowledge, not a theoretical truth, but it is not necessary for practical reason either. *Therefore, Kant applies aesthetic categories to grasp the rational potential of religious representations.* Like the beautiful in the critique of the judgment of taste, the ideal of the completion of history is not objective knowledge referring to an empirical reality. Empirically we can neither foresee an end of history nor can there be an objective divine providence in history. Rather, the subject’s gaze is turned away from empirical objects, and in the *unforeseeable it sees something* that has to do with its own moral nature. This contains a *glimpse (hinaussehen)*, rather than a direct view, of the completion which the subject can only realize by its own action. That this is a beautiful ideal means that it is accompanied by a feeling of pleasure in the subject when affected by the representation of the completion of the highest good, even if this feeling is neither objective knowledge nor a practical necessity.

3. A frighteningly sublime thought

It seems that Kant was interested in the eschatological (respectively apocalyptic) idea of the end of the world also after completing his philosophy of religion. In the short text entitled *The End of All Things*, published by Kant in 1794 only a few months after the first edition of his philosophy of religion, Kant again investigates the idea of the end of time. In this case, Kant engages with the darker (this time, more apocalyptic than eschatological) side which this idea, beginning by describing the end of all time in reference to the sublime:

This thought has something horrifying about it because it leads us as it were to the edge of an abyss: for anyone who sinks into it (“But in that earnest place/ him who holds nothing back/ Eternity holds fast in its strong arms.” Haller); and yet there is something attractive there too: for one cannot cease turning his terrified gaze back to it again and again (*nequeunt expleri corda tuendo.* Vergil). It is frighteningly *sublime* partly because it is obscure, for the imagination [Einbildungskraft] works

⁸¹ Kant, 2000, § 59, p. 353.

harder [wirkt mächtiger] in darkness than it does in bright light. Yet in the end it must also be woven in a wondrous way into universal human reason, because it is encountered among all reasoning peoples at all times, clothed in one way or another.⁸²

The fact that for Kant this thought has an aesthetic dimension is manifest not only in his quotation of two poets within one sentence, but also in his reference to the sublime. This thought is sublime because it confronts us with a frightening abyss and at the same time attracts us so that we cannot turn our gaze from it. However, what to me seems even more important is Kant's description of the role of imagination in this context. The thought of an absolute end, in which all time has disappeared and with it all empirical content, confronts us with a darkness in which imagination works harder – or, closer to the German original, in which it becomes more powerful – than in bright light. In the abyssal darkness of this thought, imagination gains more power and works more freely than it would when being regulated by a concept, as for example the concept of the highest good. This power of imagination very much resembles one of the central thoughts of Kant's analysis of the aesthetic power of judgment: the freedom of imagination that is not determined by a concept.⁸³ Kant even suggests that this idea of an end of all things is woven into universal human reason, and he presumes that it can be found in one form or another in all reasoning peoples at all times - not only in the Christian narrative, but also in other religions or even in non-religious narratives. Even if a reader of the 21st century cannot so easily affirm this last assumption, nevertheless Kant is explaining something that he takes to be a universal characteristic of human reason by using the category of the sublime. *He is trying to grasp the rational content of apocalypticism by encoding it with aesthetic categories.* In Kant's view, however, this aesthetic content is only connected to practical reason because of its analogy to morality. The idea of an end of time is neither of any theoretical value nor is it a direct, sensuous representation of practical reason. Rather it is only an analogous symbol that demonstrates in a negative manner that the final purpose of practical reason can never be achieved in an infinite progress of time.⁸⁴ It is only a negative symbol for the non-chronological logic of reason, but not a necessary dimension of reason itself.

⁸² Kant, 1996b, p. 327. Vergil, Aeneid: 8,265: "They cannot satisfy their hearts with gazing." Albrecht von Haller, Unvollkommene Ode über die Ewigkeit.

⁸³ See for example: "[...] since the freedom of the imagination consists precisely in the fact that it schematizes without a concept [...]". Kant, 2000, § 35, p. 287.

⁸⁴ Cf. Kant, 1996b, p. 334.

So far, I have reflected on two exemplary cases in which Kant applied aesthetic categories, the beautiful and the sublime, in order to determine the relation between religion and reason and to verbalize the rational content of religious motifs. In the final chapter, I want to prepare a shift of perspective. This shift of perspective is a shift from ethics to aesthetics, which will lead beyond Kant.

4. From Ethics to Aesthetics

As seen above in his philosophy of religion, Kant acknowledges a human need to “demand for even the highest concepts and grounds of reason something the senses can hold on to”. However, this stands in unresolved tension with the fact that no concepts of reason, and least of all of freedom, can have a sensuous representation. This is why aesthetics in Kant can at best contain analogies for practical reason, but these must be carefully differentiated from practical reason at all times. Probably nowhere else does Kant claim this more definitely than in his critique of the aesthetic power of judgment, when he writes: “For the *inscrutability* [*Unerforschlichkeit*] of the idea of freedom entirely precludes any positive presentation [...]”⁸⁵ Here Kant claims that there can never be any representation of the idea of freedom. In this context, freedom means nothing else than the fact that the moral law determines our will immediately without need of any representation of freedom. While this may be perfectly consistent with Kant’s practical philosophy, I want to highlight now that within the same text, the *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment*, Kant also speaks about another kind of freedom. This freedom is something other than the freedom that is only the counterpart of the moral law; it is not freedom understood as a concept of reason but as a certain free movement of the faculties of the subject in the absence of a concept.

This sense of freedom first appears in the analysis of the beautiful when Kant explains that in the judgment of taste the faculties of cognition – imagination and understanding – enter into a free play that is not restricted by a determinate concept.⁸⁶ In a different but related manner, the analysis of the sublime demonstrates how the imagination produces a representation of a magnitude that is beyond any empirical measure, giving us not a sensual

⁸⁵ Kant (2000), General remarks on the exposition of aesthetic reflective judgments, p. 275.

⁸⁶ Cf. Kant, 2000, § 9, p. 217.

representation of ideas but instead letting us feel our own “receptivity to ideas”⁸⁷. The sublime is not a sensuous representation of reason, but it is an animation or a stimulation of our sensitivity to reason. *From this, we can deduce that aesthetic modes, such as the beautiful and the sublime, are not representations of freedom, but rather a free way of representing the world.* In aesthetics the subject is affected by something with which the subject resonates, without immediately turning it into an object of cognition or of practical purpose. This absence of a theoretical or a practical concept does not mean the absence of rules. As Kant makes clear in the dialectics of the aesthetic power of judgment, in aesthetics the power of judgment gives itself its law instead of applying the law of a given concept.⁸⁸ This means that the freedom of imagination is in itself in accordance with the lawfulness of the faculty of understanding. As a result, in aesthetics a transition is possible from the sensible to the moral, that is to freedom, without a leap that is too violent⁸⁹, through freedom of imagination. While Kant’s aesthetics makes possible such a transition from the sensible to morality, I assume that this transition is still defined by a hierarchy that puts morality and practical philosophy in the center and differentiates these from everything else - even if in some passages of Kant’s aesthetics this hierarchy between the sensible and reason is almost turned upside down. This can be observed in Kant’s reflections on aesthetic ideas:

[B]y an aesthetic idea, however, I mean that representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e., *concept*, to be adequate to it, which, consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible.⁹⁰

In passages like this, the field of aesthetics gains more and more autonomy. It is as if aesthetics almost produces its own freedom and even its own idea as a counterpart to the idea of reason. Aesthetic ideas confront us with a representation of imagination that animates our conceptual thought while that representation can never be fully grasped by a concept. When Kant connects aesthetic ideas above all with poetry in the following passage, he may have also had in mind some religious, especially eschatological motifs:

⁸⁷ Kant, 2000, § 29, p. 265.

⁸⁸ Cf. Kant, 2000, § 59, p. 353.

⁸⁹ Cf. Kant, 2000, § 59, p. 354.

⁹⁰ Kant, 2000, § 49, p. 314.

The poet ventures to make sensible rational ideas of invisible beings, the kingdom of the blessed, the kingdom of hell, eternity, creation, etc., as well as to make that of which there are examples in experience, e.g., death, envy, and all sorts of vices, as well as love, fame, etc., sensible beyond the limits of experience, with a completeness that goes beyond anything of which there is an example in nature, by means of an imagination that emulates the precedent of reason in attaining to a maximum; and it is really the art of poetry in which the faculty of aesthetic ideas can reveal itself in its full measure.⁹¹

With regards to this passage, religious ideals could be best described as a form of poetry or as aesthetic ideas, instead of being described in ethical terms. However, in Kant aesthetics is still embedded in a hierarchical architecture of thought in which practical reason has the highest and ultimate position. In this way, in Kant a transition from aesthetics to ethics does not mean that a transition from ethics to aesthetics is possible. Practical reason remains the horizon of Kant's aesthetics. It is only in the successors of Kant that a shift from ethics to aesthetics can be observed. I suggest that the *Oldest Systematic Program of German Idealism*, written in 1797, three years after Kant's philosophy of religion with Hölderlin⁹² as one of its presumed authors, entails such a transition from ethics to aesthetics.⁹³ The beginning of this fragment is still situated entirely in Kant's practical philosophy, but after a few paragraphs it claims that the "highest act of reason" is an "aesthetic act"⁹⁴. Moreover, it claims that not only the multitude, but also the philosopher, needs a "*sensual religion*"⁹⁵.

⁹¹ Kant, 2000, § 49, p. 314.

⁹² Deibl demonstrates that Hölderlin, who at least contributed to the *Oldest Systematic Program* in terms of ideas, had already been familiar with Kant's aesthetics before. Cf. Jakob Deibl (2018), *Fehl und Wiederkehr der heiligen Namen. Anachronistische Zeitgenossenschaft Hölderlins* (ratio fidei, 63) Regensburg, Friedrich Pustet, p. 71.

⁹³ Besides Hölderlin, Hegel is also considered one of the authors of the *Oldest Systematic Program*. Appel demonstrates that Kant's analysis of the sublime was taken up by Hegel in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* in the chapter on *religion*. Cf. Kurt Appel (2022), "Christianity and a New Humanism. Historical-Theoretical and Theological Reflections on the Bible, Hegel and Musil", in: Kurt Appel (ed.), *In Praise of Mortality. Christianity and New Humanism*. Translated by Alex Skinner, Natalie Eder, Rachel Thomas, and Carl Raschke (Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society – Supplementa, Vol. 1), Paderborn, Brill Schönningh, pp. 1-33, here: p. 19. Hegel applies the notion of the sublime in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* in order to describe the first form of religion, which he names "The Luminous Essence". Cf. G. W. F. Hegel (2018), *Phenomenology of Spirit*, edited and translated by Terry Pinkard, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, p. 399.

⁹⁴ Daniel Fidel Ferrer (ed.) (2021), *Oldest Systematic Program of German Idealism: Translation and Notes*, Kuhn von Verde Verlag 2021, p. 23.

⁹⁵ Ferrer (ed.) (2021), *Oldest Systematic Program*, p. 23.

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