

Sense of Entangled Being

*The Emotion of Awe in Weaving
Towards Polyperspectivity*

Miranda Devita Kistler

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How has the concept of the sublime informed an unconsciously internalized world view throughout the history? And how could a mindset driven by the emotion of awe be a foundation for new understanding towards our environment as polyperspective?

Small elements all play a part in how we perceive. The choices of words we make, influence how we experience and how we define our reality. It becomes clear that to be aware of definitions and the use of words in a certain context, is crucial to avoid unconsciously misinforming our own perception and creating a reality we do not want to be in. Words create realities, realities we live in and others tap into when enforcing exchange. But would it be possible to alternatively inform an exchange that can reach beyond words and their established structures?

Sublime and awe are terms which often seem to come hand in hand. Some might refer to them as synonyms. However, the word 'sublime' from the contemporary perspective, has throughout history accumulated multiple connotations. It is thus that it differentiates itself from the word 'awe'.

This research paper investigates the difference of the two linguistic definitions. By comparing the difference between the philosophical works on the sublime,

by thinkers such as Longinus and Edmund Burke to contemporary psychological works on awe by Dacher Keltner. The paper investigates the sublime from its early origin up until its transformation into the contemporary time.

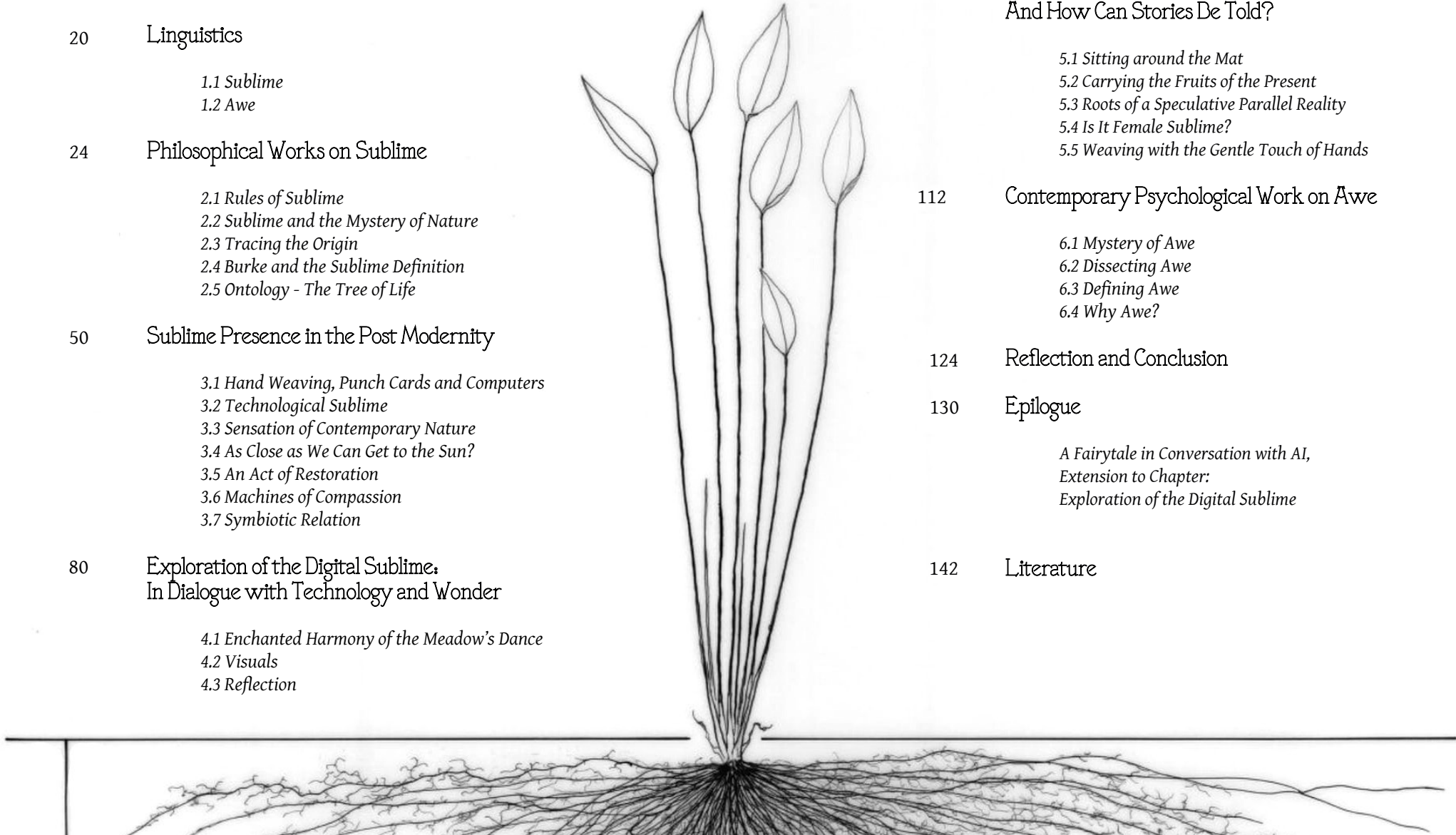
By tracing back the development and unfolding of the sublime experience, into a sublime influenced by technology, the paper will come to speculate how nature of the modern age can be experienced and perceived, and what is left of it if modern technology is drawn away within that experience.

As a counter proposal, the paper will conclude in proposing the emotion of awe as a new guiding concept in replacement for the sublime. Sublime has influenced a world view and ontology, with a perspective led by distinction for the majority of history. Awe will hold a new aim to foster interconnectivity and polyperspective between the human and the environment, making awe to become the new guiding concept for viewing interspecies relation between human, nature and technology of the future.



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Prologue

Diverse
mountainscapes
in Switzerland,
images by the author,
Switzerland
2023

'The wonder within the everyday'











Introduction

It is said that people who grew up in the mountains or close to nature will always carry a special place for them in their heart. One way or another they will always feel close and a little bit more like home when moving out of urban landscapes and the complexity of the city entanglement, and more towards a natural habitat and a landscape made from stones rising 4000 meters above sea.

There exists some kind of affinity towards certain habitats and environments, which our bodies fall more natural towards. Certain settings that bring out an encounter with the incomprehensible and indescribable within oneself. A rush of emotion, that fills the body with a sensation that anchors them in the present, awakening a sense of profound liveness.

These encounters with the indescribable are fundamental and essential to being human. In the contemporary time, humans have come to define those experiences just outside our capacity of tangibility, as sublime.

Sublime has become a synonym for anything outside the ordinary realm of graspability. Anything from taste, to religion, to experiences, have become sublime when they carry the ability to transcend the everyday

predefined known. Humans lack the term to define those kinds of experiences. Reappropriating the word 'sublime' into those contexts has resulted in exhaustion of the term. The different contexts have filled sublime with different and sometimes even opposing connotations that hold an immense range of meaning, making the word ambiguous and giving uncertainty on how it needs to be used.

The term sublime once originated as an embrace of an experience outside of our dualistic perception. It tried to embody something that humans have felt or seen as indescribable.

Over time, the concept of the sublime has gradually shifted from inspiring profound awe to primarily informing analytical thought, emphasizing division and separation rather than embracing uncertainty. This paper will attempt to explore the uncertain nature of the sublime and how it has developed into the contemporary world.

To set the foundation, the research will in its core examine how philosophical work on the sublime relates to contemporary psychological work on awe, and how these two terms are linguistically established in language and how they differ in their manifestation.

Furthermore, the paper will discuss sublime from its origin of admiration of the grand nature and significant western philosophical thinkers such as Longinus and Edmund Burke, that strongly influenced the understanding of the sublime.

Followed by the turnabout of the emergence of industrialization during the 1800s and 1900s, where

sublime found strong prominence in the Romantic era as a counter movement to the technological advancements and the industrialization.

This paper will then go deeper into the human-nature relationship of that era and elaborate how the development of technology has created a new technological sublime that changed the way humans looked, perceived and connected to nature.

Lastly, the paper will look into the contemporary landscape which is specifically influenced by modernism, and examine what is left from nature in it, speculating about what is left in the human-nature relation of the contemporary age, if influences of modernism would be drawn away.

As a final proposition, this paper will come to suggest embracing the emotion of awe as a replacement for the concept of the sublime, fostering a new foundation that acknowledges an ideology based on the understanding of the environments and human-nature relations interconnectedness. To view nature of the modern age from a perspective of a new found sense of connection, to renourish the fundamental essence of being human within the entanglement of its environment.

This exploration aims to highlight the importance of the experience of awe, as part of being human in the contemporary landscape and the ongoing evolution of advancement.

1.1 Sublime

- a:* (1): to elevate or exalt especially in dignity or honor
(2): to render finer (as in purity or excellence)
- b:* to convert (something inferior) into something of higher worth

Etymology: Of multiple origins. Partly a borrowing from French. Partly a borrowing from Latin.
Etymons: French sublime; Latin sublimis.
Middle French, French sublime (adjective) excellent, admirable, perfect (1470 with reference to a thing, probably 1549 with reference to a person), Latin sublimis (also sublimus) high up, elevated, high, (of breath) shallow, panting, tall, lofty, aspiring, grand, elevated in style, majestic, exalted, noble, eminent, illustrious

Linguistics



1.2 Awe

a: an emotion variously combining dread, veneration, and wonder that is inspired by authority or by the sacred or sublime

b: (archaic) (1): dread, terror
(2): the power to inspire dread

Etymology: A borrowing from early Scandinavian. Old Icelandic *agi* terror, dread, uproar, respect, discipline, constraint), Old Swedish *aghi* (order, discipline), Swedish regional *age* (fear, dread, compare), Swedish *aga* (discipline), Old Danish *aughæ* (fear, discipline), Old English *ege*, *æge* ('fear, terror, dread')

*Definition of
Sublime,*
Oxford English
Dictionary.
(2023)
Oed.com.

Definition of Awe,
Merriam-Webster
(2024)
Merriam-Webster.
com



Philosophical Works on Sublime

When discussing awe oftentimes the term of sublime is closely knitted to it. For some, they may be perceived and treated as interchangeable synonyms. On the contrary, there are also strong beliefs that the two words are entirely separate concepts, which are playing into each other yet are not defining one another. They share similar qualities and effects within their beings, but fundamentally they root in different distinct linguistic and conceptual frameworks. Therefore, it's crucial to differentiate them.

One of the biggest differences between the two concepts is their prominence in time. While awe only recently found foot in studies and research, sublime carries a long lasting history, dating back centuries.

By tracing the timeline and evolution of sublime as being a central concept for human perception of nature into its current state, the following chapter aims to uncover its defining characteristics, and aims to make an attempt in mapping out its differences from the concept of awe.

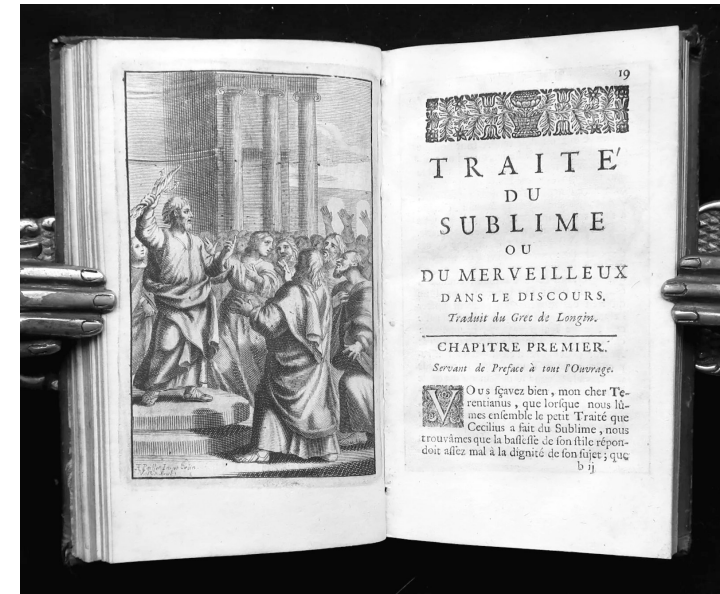
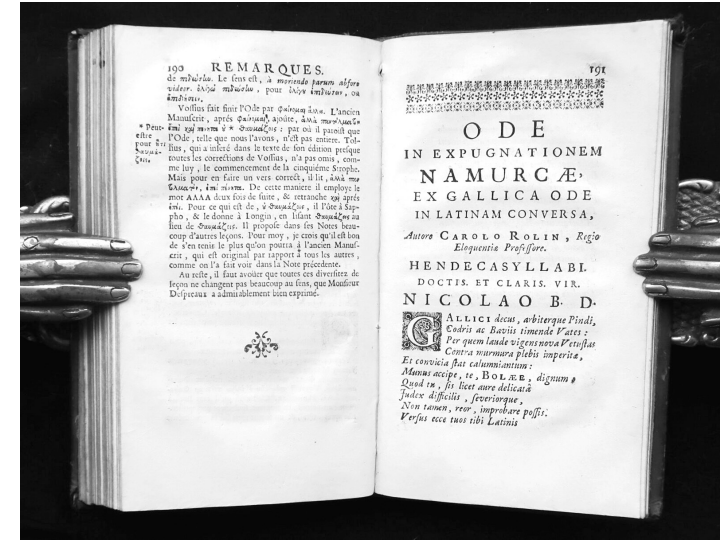
2.1 Rules of Sublime

The literary work 'On the Sublime' originates from the Greco-Roman era, dating back to approximately the 1st century. The author of the work is referred to as Longinus, which is a pseudonym for the unknown writer. This classic work on aesthetics stands as one of the earliest known pieces discussing the concept of sublime and its application in literature and writing. Its influence was significant during its time and even continued to serve as a reference point later on, especially during the Romantic period, where the concept of sublime underwent extensive exploration and reinforcement in the discourse such as literature and art, 'On the Sublime' was referred to as a central work for the understanding of the sublime.

The English word 'sublime' arose from a merging of multiple translations throughout history. In its very early origin the word truly referred to 'the essentials of a noble and impressive style' which does not refer to any philosophical connotations but to the fundament of linguistic usage. It is only through history and time that the term accumulated its philosophical associations. 'On the Sublime,' investigates the tools necessary to craft impactful art and writing. It highlights what elements are important, to create something that deeply resonates with the audience.

According to Longinus, sublime is a skill which enables artists the creation of good arts. If an artist embeds sublime within their work, it can possess

On the Sublime
Longinus, Literary
Criticism, Classic
Work on Aesthetics,
French Translation
by Boileau, Antique
Edition from 1701



the remarkable ability of reaching the depths of the human emotions and its soul. Longinus argues that sublime can be compared to the magical ingredient, the final touch upon the technical abilities of a creator, the last necessary step for an artist to elevate their work into something extraordinary.

The artist's ability lies in their capacity to construct an imaginative landscape for the audience, transporting them beyond the confines of reality into a realm that exudes the enlightened sensation that sublime embodies. This, according to Longinus, defines great writing and art.

Within 'On the Sublime' he thoroughly emphasizes the influence and potential of language as a tool to evoke this extraordinary feeling of the sublime within the audience (He does not take into consideration any other means and tools of how sublime could be evoked besides language). Longinus draws his conclusions within his work by analyzing around fifty prominent ancient writings, such as Homer, Sappho, Plato, and Aristophanes. He then came to a condensed conclusion and presented his findings in three central aspects: 1) the creation of vivid imagery, 2) usage of passionate language, and 3) the mastering of using figures of speech, are crucial to elevate and inspire the sublime experience.

Where his proposed 'rules' and guidelines were very inspiring, in how to construct the experience of the sublime, he also sets a certain restriction and tone towards the possibility of what sublime could be or become. He narrows down the sublime into an expe-

rience that is evoked by words and as a setting that needs to meet certain 'criterias', in order to blossom in its glory. That insofar could be seen as problematic, as it was one of the first works about the sublime that already developed and forced a direction of what sublime meant and manifested into.

2.2 Sublime of the Mystery of Nature

As mentioned, the sublime is a concept that has been present and researched for a long time. However, where there has been a lot of attention on it from a philosophical standpoint, there has only been little attention on it from a psychological perspective. To understand the difference between understanding the sublime philosophically and psychologically, this chapter will first delve deeper into the philosophy of the sublime.

In literature and art history, sublime has made significant marks throughout history, as a relevant concept in aesthetics.

One of the most well known paintings that relate to the sublime, might be the 'Wanderer above the Sea of Fog' from 1817 by Caspar David Friedrichs. Personally, it is a vivid image that I remember very clearly, hanging as a poster in my literature classroom during my high school time. A man, facing his back towards the viewer, looking into the vastness and the distance, gazing at the mountains and the great glory of nature emerging from a sea of fog. A vivid image that accompanied me for years.

Since the beginning of the study around the sublime, artists and writers often utilized the epicness and the grandeur found in nature as a visual translation to express the sublime. This ultimately led nature and sublime to become very closely interconnected. They almost have become synonyms for one another, but most probably the actual argument of how the sublime has been put in relation with nature in the first place would be coming from the early conclusion that nature has been the greatest and most untamable force for the human, for the majority of the Anthropocene. So the fact that the feeling and experience of the mystery of the sublime, is most commonly felt when viewing or reading about the greatness of nature, is somewhat conclusional.

While the early studies of the sublime experience were only connected with aesthetics, namely the grandeur of nature as a trigger of the sublime, it has never really been researched in what the sublime actually evokes in relation to senses and psychology. The sublime is only understood through the sense of viewing and never in connection with other senses besides sight. This is crucial to remember, when distincting sublime from awe. As awe is defined as an emotion, in its concept it is a reaction towards a stimulus and that stimulus can range beyond the sense of sight, but can be anything that has the ability to trigger the emotion (Allen, 2018).

Why though, the sublime has been limited to an aesthetic and not to a complexity experience like the emotion of awe, is unclear. Also why then, the

*Wanderer above the
Sea of Fog, Caspar
David Friedrich c.
1818, Oil on canvas,
Hamburger
Kunsthalle, Hamburg
Germany*



*Snow Storm:
Steam-Boat off a
Harbour's Mouth,
Joseph Mallord
William Turner 1842,
Oil on canvas,
Tate London, UK*



connotational interpretation of the sublime sometimes still swaps into and is used to describe an emotional perspective, is also unclear.

One speculation could argue that the emotion of awe was not yet known, for the majority of history. The sublime as a terminology, for what actually would have been awe, would argue that the sublime has on purposely been kept to its surface potential because uncertain emotions of elevated experience were too ambiguous to describe and differ too far from the ideology of reasoning of the zeitgeist.

A theory that could support this argument is the study of Charles Darwin from 1872 'The Expressions of Emotions in Man and Animal'. This study was up until now one of the most influential studies into emotions. In his research he defined (the according to him) the most relevant and most clearly readable emotions. Awe was not one of them. It was, therefore according to him, not clearly associated with an outstanding facial expression. Speculative, it could have also just in its concept, been considered to be of no importance to the rational driven mindset of the time.

Another aspect that supports that there exists a difference between the sublime and awe, is that neither party mentions the other. In fact, even Keltner and Haidt explicitly did not make any connections directly between the sublime and awe, which was a conscious choice of them. They refused to equalize the sublime experience with the awe emotion.

Science and philosophy, sight and emotion,

The Expressions of Emotions in Man and Animal, Charles Darwin 1872, Illustrations of different expressions of emotions of animals and humans



feelings and reasoning, it seems they are all set to be kept apart from one another.

2.3 *Tracing the Origin*

When the emotion of awe developed and where exactly it originated from in the cycle of evolution is a topic of speculation.

According to Darwin's 'The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals' he argues that emotions in general developed through the evolutionary process of natural selection. They developed out of the fitness advantages and therefore helped in detecting natural survival instinct. So they were characteristics that were inherited and passed on as they improved the chance of survival. But when exactly and for what reason specifically awe was developed, was not mentioned by him, he does not mention since awe was not in his repertoire of knowledge and his distinguishable emotions (Murray, 1872).

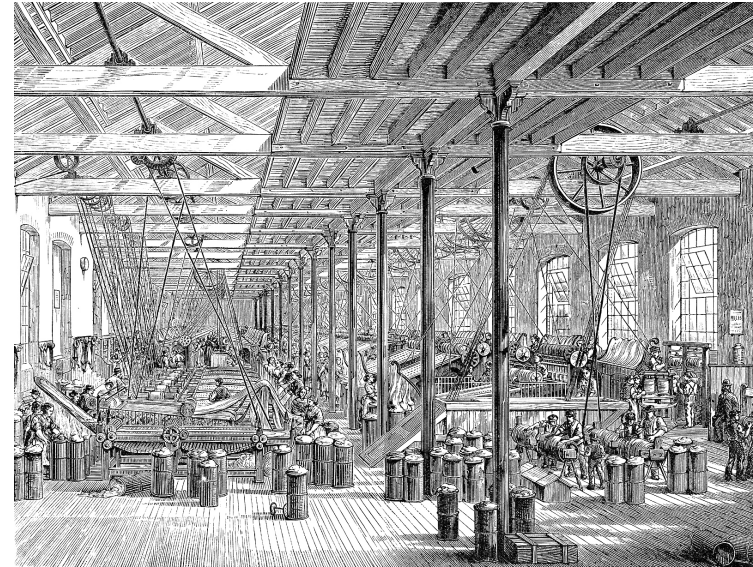
To find possible pinpoints of when awe could have found its roots and started to set foot within humans, Keltner and Haidt, speculate that awe played a part in maintaining social hierarchies. As awe holds the subtle aspect of submission and admiration, it could have evolved as a response to powerful leaders that were strict on maintaining social group dynamics (Allen, 2018).

Other theories such as those of researchers Alice Chirico and David Yaden (2018), propose a 'nature first' perspective. Their argument states that

Photograph of industrial view over rooftops of large factory complex around 1800-1900, unspecified location, Getty Image



Vintage engraving showing the factory floor of the spinning room in Shadwell Rope Works 1878, ©duncan 1890, Getty Images



awe was not an indicator for alarming signals but rather more a sign of safety. During the prehistoric times, the times of hunters and gatherers, awe indicated the finding of a safe spot. It was a sign that indicated an environment that could serve as a shelter, which most likely must have been allocated in elevated spaces, as those spaces provided them with a broad overview of the surrounding, which helped them to protect themselves from possible approaches of predators. It therefore entangled with the theory of the passing down of survival instincts (Allen, 2018).

It is interesting to view the different speculations that have been proposed and argued, as on one hand some are driven from fear but on the other hand some originated rather more from a sense of safety.

Contrary to awe, if we were to talk about the original emergence of modern sublime, it has its recorded and its most known prominent origin probably much later. The aesthetic of sublime became an important concept especially during the Romantic era where it served as a counter-governance to the Western industrialization of the mid-18th to 19th century. Before that, only the writing of Longinus is one of the earliest recorded proof of the presence of ancient sublime philosophy, in which he mostly traced back and discusses works of Greek authors and biblical sources such as genesis.

The intellectual and philosophical movement of the Romantics was a counter reaction towards the radical systematic transition of society and its organ-

ization. Their belief was to bring forward emotions against pure rationality. Sublime became the key construct in how to perceive the world, it countered the development of radicalization of reasoning. The shifted world view inspired by the sublime was defined and driven by a longing for escape from the rapidity of life and the drastic changes the era underwent. It was a collective longing for something that has been erased by modern development.

Sublime, at that time, started to find shape and materialize itself not only as an aesthetic, but as an ethical position and even as an ontological construct as well. The concept and leading mindset of the sublime started swapping over into all kinds of discourses. Big parts of systems and the Zeitgeist of the area, were influenced and fashioned by the power that the sublime brought.

Overarching it is interesting to take a close look at how the concept of the sublime found new rise in the Romantic era but still was so highly inspired by ancient works such as 'On the Sublime' by Longinus. Works that were written centuries before that time. Also considering looking at this phenomena from a perspective of our current contemporary time, questions regarding selective history may come to rise. What does it say about the sublime, being a concept that was adapted from sources of centuries before? One, of maybe very view sources, that even overlasted the time of history. How do we adapt, view and build on the things that have overlasted time? How do we still give a response towards them, appro-

priate to the needs of the present time and current urgencies, rather than appropriating old ideologies?

2.4 *Burke and the Sublime Definition*

In the Romantic era, Edmund Burke was a leading figure in the contribution to the sublime discussion. In Burke's treatise 'A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful' (1757) he analytically investigated the sublime and its understanding. In his work he set his findings into two central and contrasting concepts, which were the notion of 'beauty' versus the concept of the sublime. The 'beautiful' and the sublime built the two central pillars of his writing, around which he discussed the ways in how humans perceive and respond to objects, art, experiences, and natural phenomena. More specifically he investigated these experiences in relation to distinctly evoked emotions (Burke, 2015).

With his work, Burke recognized and came to conclude that things that evoke feelings of pleasure, delight, and harmony, can be categorized as 'beautiful', whereas others which triggers emotions like fear and astonishment due to their vastness, power, or sense of obscurity, can be seen as belonged to the experience of the sublime. Beauty connects to the sensual world, the sublime on the other hand transcends the realm of the senses (Burke, 2015). By differentiating the beautiful and the sublime, Burke came to understand that these contrasting aesthetic experiences

generate specific emotional responses.

His research into these concepts contributed to the discussion of the understanding of the human perception and the emotional reactions towards the environment and world around. Particularly within the discourse of the intersection between art, nature, and the human experience, he was very progressive with his theories.

In his theories he insisted that our imagination, emotions, and sensations actually play a very crucial role in the construction of our reality. Therefore he opposed with his theory, the rational 'Zeitgeist' of the enlightenment, that was merely led by the ideology in which reality is seen to be defined by an objective truth of reasoning.

'The passion caused by the great and sublime in nature . . . is Astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror. In this case the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other.' (Burke, 2015)

Within the writing, Burke also talks about how the sublime is the strongest passion there is, passion in this context is referring to and used as an equivalent to emotion. In parts of his writings he goes further into giving explanations of what actually happens on a physiological level during experiences, such as in the sublime. He explains that during these heightened and transcendent states of the sublime passion, all reasonings are completely suspended (Morley, 2010). He argues that the intensity of the sublime has the ability to take up all mental space resulting in a

lack of ability to hold anything else. The sublime is the only experience that can unfold into this immensity and therefore is the strongest of emotion there is. The sublime does not let anything else rise alongside it. It takes one fully in, resulting in almost a sort of 'paralyzed' state, in which the mind seeks new accommodation to bear the state of paralysis caused by the vastness the passion brings. That need for accommodation, then resolves in an adjustment of the current perception of reality. New connections need to be built within the mind in how one perceives the world, to align with the new understanding where the sublime vastness can find space and be held.

Concluding, Burke held the belief within his theories that emotions are not separate from our perception of the world but rather essential elements to how we interpret and understand reality, as our passions and emotions color our experiences of reality (*Burke, 2015*).

Burke also highlighted the role of the imagination within the perception of our reality. He argues that as the imagination allows us to create mental images, associations, and interpretations that transcend beyond factual observation, the imagination is therefore crucial to our understanding of reality. The imagination works in correlation to our emotions and together they form a lens through which we perceive, interpret, and engage with the external world on a multi sensual level. (*Burke, 2015*) Interestingly now, in his theory, the focus has mainly laid on defining the aesthetics. Within Burke's theory,

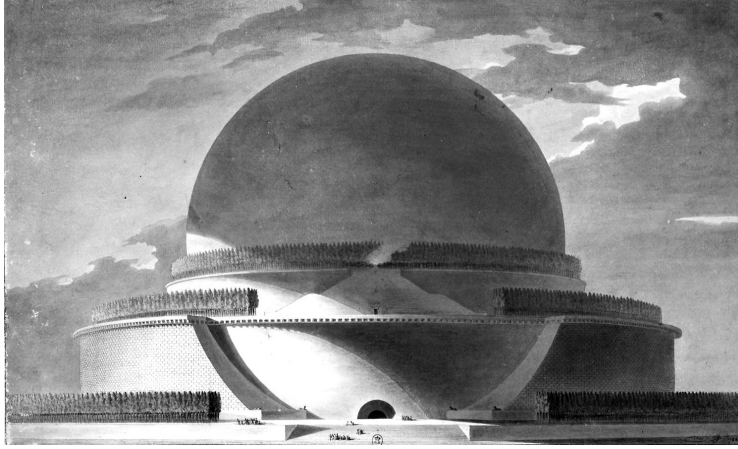
if we come to name the 'role' of sublime, it could be categorized as being a stimuli. The sublime is an external and aesthetic element embedded in the world. Sublime therefore is the stimulus which triggers a response. So while the theory extensively talks about those aesthetic elements as stimulus, the response and its effect is rather less discussed and neglected within the writing.

Speculatively the response in that case could maybe have been, what has been defined today as, awe. Awe is embedded within a person and is the actual reaction towards an experience. Awe is the internal mechanisms within the observer.

Therefore remembering how influential the sublime concept has been during that era we can realize how an ideology has formed around an aesthetic and its external existence, and not around how the human actually responds and feels towards the environment. Superficially seen, knowledge and morals were formed, focused on what can be seen rather than what was felt. This could insofar be seen as problematic as it does not take into account the whole spectrum of perspectives and underlying clues when understanding an experience.

In retro perspective with the consideration of the studies of awe by Dacher Keltner and Jonathan Haidt (2003), we can conclude this dissimilarity by their actual affect they evoke. Where the sublime triggers human insignificance and a certain submission towards an uncontrollable and incomprehensible power, awe implies connectivity and prosocial behavior,

Sketch for Newton's Cenotaph, Etienne-Louis Boullée 1784, embodiment of architectural sublime to evoke undermining feelings within the viewer, unrealized project, drawing, cabinet des estampes du Bibliotheque nationale Paris, France



showcasing feelings of connection towards the world outside the self. An ideology built around awe would therefore more likely reflect a world view driven by an understanding of high interconnectivity with and within the environment.

Archiving back to Burke, his writing did bring a progressive and new perspective countering the beliefs of the enlightenment, but we still could say he held an intellect that was informed by an underlying division and power dynamic. Because the sublime is portrayed as a force and experience that exceeds human comprehension and control, its overwhelming sensation provokes a sense of insignificance or powerlessness within the observer. Therefore the observation of this grandeur or magnitude of something, can be nature's vastness or anything beyond the human scale, results in an implied power dynamic between the individual and the object of the sublime. In this constellation the object of sublime is always superior to the individual.

Additionally, the sublime's ability to also inspire fear alongside the powerlessness, the sublime also transforms into an experience that is respected and admired. In that sense it holds a position of authority or dominance. To further support this argument, in social and cultural contexts, the sublime has often been associated with authority, hierarchy, and even political power. Artworks, literature, or architecture that evoke the sublime have historically been used to assert authority or dominance. It has been used as an implemented concept to emphasize the superior-

ity of certain individuals, institutions, or ideologies (Allen, 2018). Therefore consciously using the connotated symbolism given to the sublime, it has already historically been used to create and inform division. Considering connotations, the linguistic investigation of the world 'sublime' is interestingly in most languages also derived from the direct translation of 'the fear towards the respected'. Therefore in most languages it is already within the word itself, it implies this power dynamic.

Linguistics and the connotations carried and accumulated by certain definitions, sets a tone for implication and usage of words. The role of the language in the formation and perception of our reality plays a big part. Also looking into the linguistic definition of 'awe', in most languages it is also still derived from the definition and concept of the sublime, even though in its conceptual affect and doing, as discussed by Keltner and Haidt, it is not the same as the concept of the sublime.

Small elements all play a part in how we perceive. The choices of words we make, influence how we experience and how we define our reality. It becomes clear that to be aware of definitions and the use of words in a certain context, is crucial to avoid unconsciously misinforming our own perception and creating a reality we do not want to be in. Words create realities, realities we live in and others tap into when enforcing exchange. But would it be possible to alternatively inform an exchange that can reach beyond words and their established structures?

2.5 Ontology - The Tree of Life

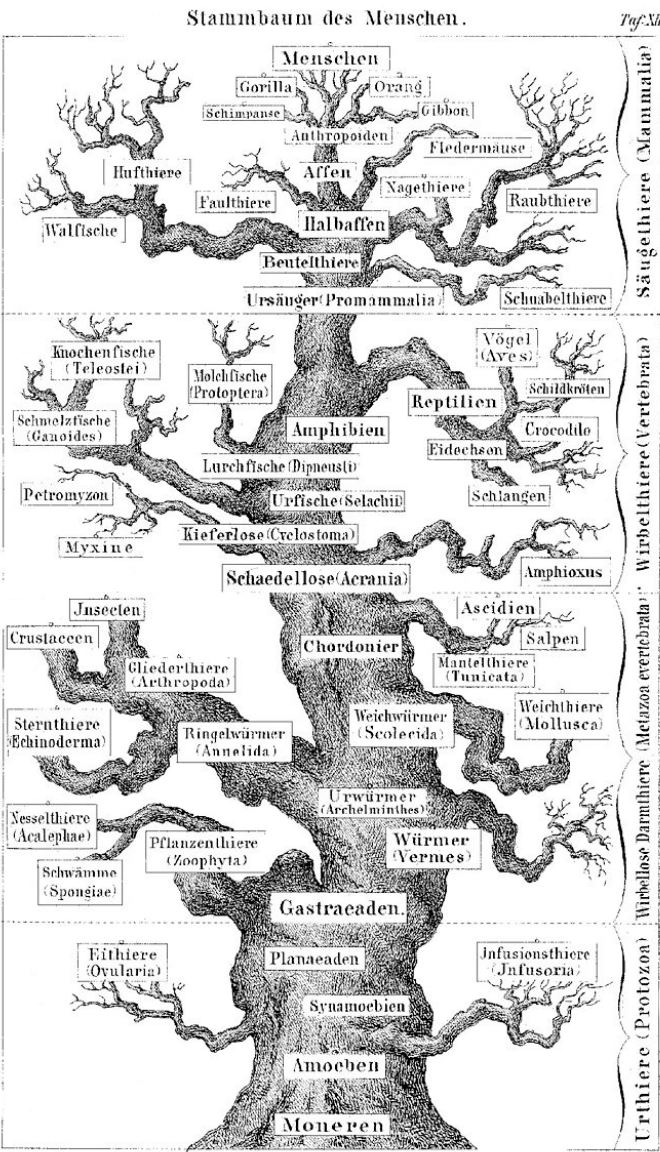
As sublime arose in the Romantic era as a key concept in many discourses, it became specifically prominent and influential in the formation of the era's ideology and ontology as well. Ontology is a branch in philosophy discussing the nature of existence, being, and reality itself. It investigates the fundamental categories of things that exist and explores how these components relate to one another. It defines the fundamental blocks which construct reality.

In its core it is the arts of categorizing and creating relations within defined orders. Ontology seeks to understand what exists, how it exists, and the interrelation of the different aspects of existence.

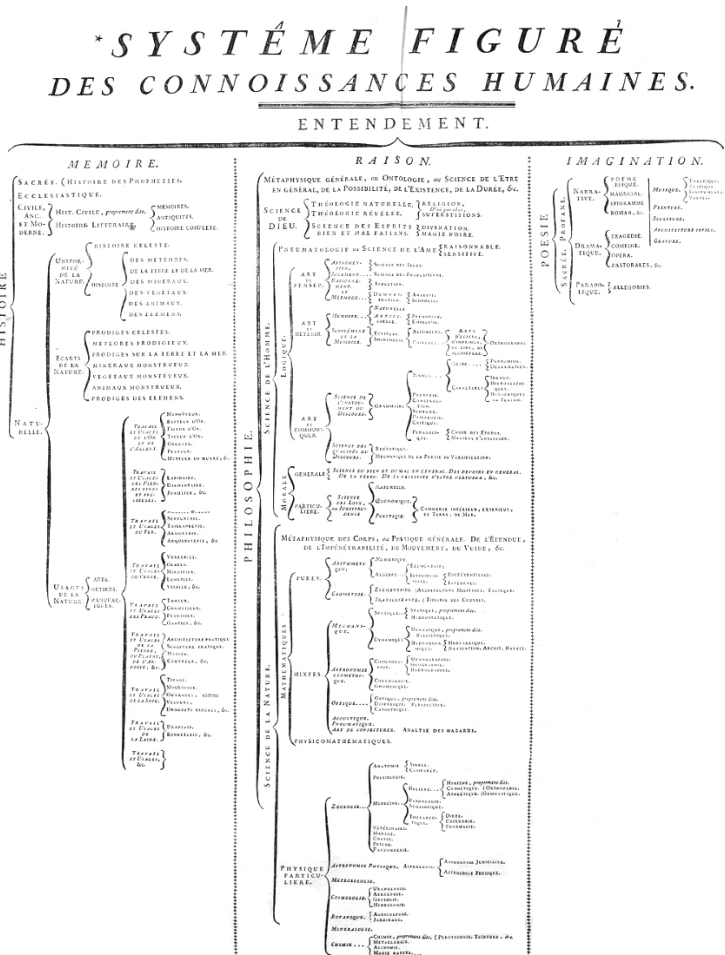
Just as the sublime, ontology also carries a degree of power dynamic in its nature, as specifically chosen knowledge and information is picked and put in relation to what seemed to be relevant. Knowledge and information were actively chosen, collected and ranked within a system of relational understanding. That system mostly did not look equivalent but hierarchical.

Sublime, a mystery, has at this point been pinned down to dualistic thinking and rational reasoning. At the very moment where it has become part of systemizing, it has become a form of understanding the world as hierarchical rather than a complex and interconnected system. The sublime informed all along a distinction of the human and the sublime object or experience. But through its rise within

Tree of life
Ernst Haeckel 1879,
Darwin's metaphori-
cal description of the
pattern of universal
common descent
made literal



Figurative system of
human knowledge
tree, Denis Diderot
1751, for the Ency-
clopédie by Jean le
Rond d'Alembert and
Denis Diderot



ontology, the sublime has turned into a tool, to perceive something as different. Distinction towards the other, can be recognized through the lens of viewing with sublime. Blocks of the whole ontological system through viewing with sublime, can be understood and defined.

An example that can be seen as a physical object that embodies the concept of ontology, is the encyclopedia. It often cross references sources and gathers them in a book. An encyclopedia can be compared to a small fraction of 'reality' that is chosen to be displayed. The structure of the book builds the ontological framework for how the specifically chosen knowledge and information is distributed.

Between 1751 and 1780, the French philosopher, art critic, and writer Denis Diderot worked together with the French mathematician, mechanic, physicist, and philosopher Jean le Rond d'Alembert on what is now seen as the foundation of the modern encyclopedia. The body of work 'L'Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers' was their embodiment of the rational and revolutionary ideology of the Enlightenment. Their encyclopedia was specifically innovative as a representation for the revolutionary thoughts of the era, as it was the first to hold contributors of many discourses. It was the first ever created book that held the aim to inform a new way of interconnected cross-thinking across different fields of studies, such as literature, science and theology, along with each other (*Encyclopedic Liberty*, 2016). With the attempt of

presenting information in a systematically organized and accessible manner, they hoped to facilitate a new way of accessing comprehensive knowledge.

Similarly, the tree of evolution by Charles Darwin, is probably the most well known example of an ontological structure.

Notably, the rise of these concepts and ways of thinking would have not been as influential, if not previously the invention of the letterpress would have risen. Around the 15th century the letterpress was a very relevant technological invention that set foot in Europe, which helped in the distribution of encyclopedias and knowledge at that time (*Gutenberg*, 2019). Through the invention of the letterpress suddenly knowledge could be distributed and shared in a bigger quantity, speed and in a physical form. To some extent, the rise of technology was crucial for the development and transition of the sublime and what the sublime will become.



Sublime Presence in the Post Modernity

The profound influence of the sublime on the past, more specifically in the Romantic's, has extensively been proven in the previous chapter. However, as its significant impact is evident, the definition of the sublime is so far defined by the past. The question now becomes, how does the sublime manifest itself in the contemporary landscape, that has further been driven by the development of technological inventions.

Since the prominence of the sublime in the romantics, up until the contemporary landscape there has been great change within the society. Inventions and technology brought a whole new turn. The rise of technology, influenced the human and drastically changed the environment the human navigates in. Specifically nature, has shifted. We went from admiration for the great nature, to fascination for virtual landscapes. The natural has become technological, and the technological has become natural for us. The way we perceive nature now, it all is influenced by technology and the human doing.

As reality has solidified in an embrace for new found sublime technology over real human experiences, we inhabit an environment which we created for ourselves, outside which we hardly would survive.

Where there it is no longer the superior force of nature that holds sublime, how does this reflect back on our perception of the non-human environment? And how exactly has modernization defined and changed the sublime experience?

3.1 Hand Weaving, Punch Cards and Computers

Weaving stands as one of the oldest crafts in history, primarily it has been practiced by women. The tradition of weaving textiles dates back around 12'000 years to the Neolithic era, but the exploration of interlacing plant fibers to create baskets and shelters reaches even further back into the past. The earliest experiments and attempts in harvesting plant fiber, crafting strings and creating threads, traces back to roughly 20 '000-30' 000 years ago, into the Stone Age. The development of that skill of interlacing treats, marked a central event in human evolution and is considered as foundational for many inventions and developments following up to the present time (Broudy, 2021).

In traditional cultures, weaving is a completely manual process. It is a laborious craft which consumes a lot of time. Weavers manually raise the warp threads, to interlace the weft to form and bind patterns into textiles. In many countries such as Indonesia or Malaysia for instance, the tradition of handwoven and handmade textiles is still very rooted within the culture. While in the West, it mostly has been replaced by industrial production since the

arrival of industrialization between the mid-18th to the 19th century.

The craft of weaving, which was practiced by hand for big parts of the history, underwent new innovation during the industrialization. At the early rise of factory work, the weaving process changed from working at home to working on the machinery at the factory. At that time the process of weaving was, besides the help of the machinery, also assisted by a draw boy whose role was to lift the warps at the right time (*Programming Patterns*, 2019). His task helped speed up the weaving process and the creation of textiles even further. It was an early example and reflection of the mindset driven by efficient production of the time.

A great turning event at that time that marked an evolutionary step in the development of the textile industry, was the invention of the 'Jacquard Loom' by Joseph-Marie Jacquard. The revolutionary aspect of the Jacquard Loom, laid in the replacement of the drawboy's function. The semi-automated machine was capable of interpreting weaving patterns, which were read from a punch card. The punch card was a big stack of cards that held the pattern's information. In that manner those cards were able to dictate to the machine which warp threads needed lifting at which specific moments, in order to produce a desired design. The cards operated on a two value system, in which the presence of holes on the card activated the machine to raise the corresponding warps, while the absence of holes halted the process,

Card maker using a machine to translate a pattern onto punch cards 1950, Science Museum Group Collection



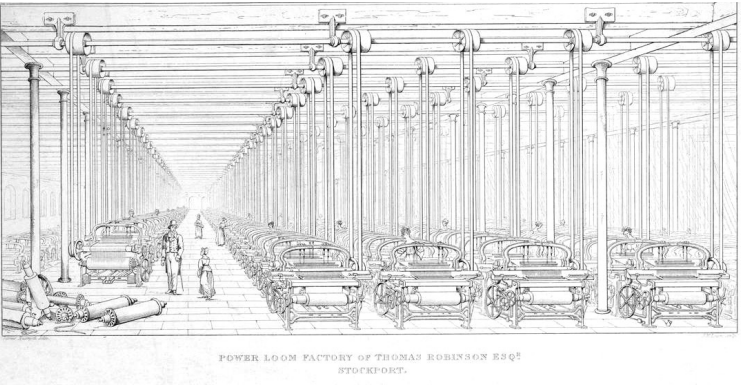
Workers at Mount Street Mill in Manchester using Jacquard looms to weave patterned seat coverings 1910, Science Museum Group Collection



Punch Cards on the Jacquard loom late 18th century, National Museum of American History



Power loom factory of Thomas Robinson Esqr. Stockport Cheshire, UK between 1849-1850, engraving, view of factory interior with five rows of c100 power looms using overhead lathe drives operatives women



leaving the warps lowered. This whole mechanism simplified the weaving process, since the pattern no longer needed to be memorized. Patterns could suddenly be replicated rapidly and repeatedly, and could be used over and over again. This specific binary system of the punch card, which was operating on those two values, also laid the foundational basis of early computer programming.

However great this invention was, as more tasks became automated and faster, concerns arose on the workers side. Factory work moved towards highly efficient and radical working environments. Those worries driven by technological development during the industrialization, somewhat still are present in the contemporary age. While contemporary worries are slightly different, they still emerge from widespread strive for even further automation and integration of newer inventions, such as artificial intelligence for instance. The yearning for more rapidity and automation never found halt up until the present time. Even now, there still is and always will be requests to further speed up processes. We more and more, step further away from processes once done in a home, nourished by the gentle hands of the maker.

It becomes clear that the rise of the sublime of the grande nature during the Romantic era as a counter-movement to industrialization, had its peak at that specific time not coincidentally but because it represented a response to the dehumanizing effects created by the industrialization. It was because it offered an alternative narrative that celebrated the

power of nature, human emotions, and imagination, that it provided a counterbalance to the mechanistic and rational tendencies of the industrial age. Sublime became somewhat an escape of the harsh reality.

But at the same time, while expectations were hoping to find ease in nature and within the celebration of sublime, the sublime presented and recalled more of a feeling of insignificance within the human as well. By one, facing the realization that the natural is exceeding the humans capability of understanding as well, the sublime filled them with even more sense of powerlessness. And two, not to mention the continuous disappearance of the natural in replacement of the technological did not help either. While all the faith of alternative narratives were put onto something to hold on to, it was placed on something that is gradually disappearing.

So within this sudden sense of loss caused by this radical change and detachment, it created some sort of collective nostalgia. Traditional ways of life, craftsmanship and connections to nature were disrupted and erased. Sublime offered a way to reclaim a fraction sense of connection, in a different form, amidst an ever changing landscape, but it was not enough to last.

But what emerged within that shift, was a new found sense of wonder and curiosity. Similar to the sublime experience within nature, that very wonder operated in a similar manner. Differently though, this wonder had a shifted focus specifically on technology.

The technological sublime emerged.

The complexity and precision of the machine's ability to interpret and replicate complex patterns surpassed the human capability of grasping, evoking therefore both admiration and a some sort of fear and uncertainty. The invention of the Jacquard Loom was an example in that sense that exceeded beyond the realms of the industry, but represented a perspective of what technology could have the ability to achieve and laid prospect of possible roads towards where advancements of the near future could lead to.

Sublime in the past, therefore, was the rebellion towards industrial development. Could tapping into awe in the present be the reconnection to lost relations?

3.2 Technological Sublime

Twenty-first century humans have been denied the choice to not be technological.

Since the 20th century, technology and humans have increasingly been living intertwined in a coexistence. Through technological inventions humans have created livable habitats, which previously would have been unimaginable to be lived in. Urban environments were created, beyond the natural possibilities of the human. Consequently this led to a humanity within which, a complete return to life lived in nature, separated from technology, is inconceivable, unrealistic, and remains a utopian idea for the

majority of the world population. In some aspects, we even search for salvation in technology. Cures of disease, the exploration into gene modification and the persuasion towards creating endless life, to name a view. Therefore technology has become almost the new formed 'godly' force. Where once the unpredictable force of nature was feared to erupt the human, is now replaced by technology. In the contemporary age, technology holds the superior force.

From the beginning of the industrialization, from first machines operating on binary systems, to computer invention, innovative steps were taken along the way in further advancing into a more atomized and improved modernity. Life became increasingly technological and technology eventually adapted more and more into our daily existence. The technological sublime started to rise, in replacement for the 'old' sublime, defining a society shaped by machinery.

But what exactly is the technological sublime?

The technological sublime is the evocation of a feeling, similar to the natural sublime, of eerie and uncanniness alongside a sense of wonder and awe. But in this case the sublime is held towards advanced technology instead of nature. Similar to the natural sublime, the technological sublime arises from encountering vastness which is awe-inspiring and beyond the human comprehension. But the vastness of the technological sublime materializes the wonder, the fascination, and the unease towards vast possibilities and capabilities of the technological

advancements impact on human life, the world and the environment (*Jos de Mul, 2011*). Stepping away from the grandeur of nature towards the majesty of technology.

The concept of the technological sublime was brought forward by David Nye, a Historian and Professor for American Studies. Within his book 'American Technological Sublime' (1994) he extensively explored and discussed the shift in embrace of the new concept of sublimity towards the technological advancements. He focused predominantly on the United States and concluded 'the technological sublime' as a redefined concept of the sublime of the modern American consciousness. He came to this conclusion by analyzing how Americans have responded to major technologies and found that the remarkable faith that was held in technological progress is what defined the collective consciousness. Although his perspective laid on the United States as a geographical focus point, his conclusions were applicable to the broader geographical area as well.

To some aspects it is fascinating to think of technology as the 'modern sublime. As it shapes a whole new perspective on modern society. Technology through the 20th century became the new 'nature', technology has gained the strongest power there is, and all humans depend on it to some degree. If we were to think of our everyday life, we live depending on technology at every step. We do not have the choice to not be technological anymore. Particularly the computer, whose development originated

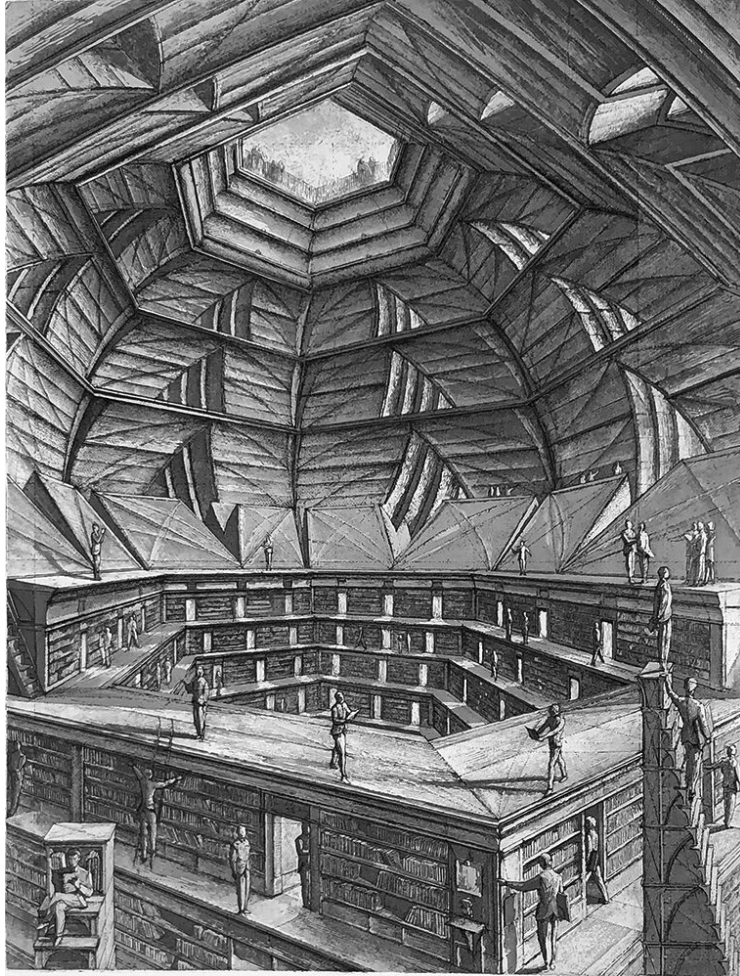
from the Jacquard Loom, is the most prominent and influential invention that conquered our present. The computer also holds one of the greatest sublime experiences of our current age, as within the computer, anything is turned into relational data. The enormous database which is formed, is an infinite ontological system and framework of relational and (re)combinatorial elements. Compared to nature's vastness, the enormous vastness of the endlessly generated and collected data that exists, transcends the sublime to a whole different scope of conceptual vastness.

A great example of a visualization of this enormous combinatorial data relation is 'The Library of Babel' by Jonathan Basile. Within a website he 'materialized' and visually presented all the possible (re) combinations of the alphabetical characters (*Basile, 2023*). His digital library therefore holds all possible combinations of the alphabet, which results in the fact that this digital library holds everything that has ever been or will be written. It all can be found within the books of the digital library of Babel.

To some extent technology becomes this 'god' like figure in many aspects. But at the same time, all the destiny that is being put into technology and its inventions, does also turn it into an unpredictable force. A force in itself, with an agenda and power, wide outside human control.

Where are the remains of 'nature' to be found in the technological landscape of the present age?

La Bibliothèque de Babel, Erik Desmazières 1997, Illustration of the most famous stories by Jorge Luis Borges, etching



3.3 Sensations of Contemporary Nature

In the following chapter, my emphasis returns once more to the friction between the ‘natural’ and the ‘technological’. I will come to propose awe as a new concept in replacement of the sublime.

Awe, in comparison to sublime, will offer a new perspective on the perception of the environment. It aims to foster a new understanding driven by polyperspectivity, to grow greater compassion towards the environment.

Within the technological landscape of the present time, nature still is a topic of discussion. In times, we face radical shifts in nature caused by influences such as climate change, artists are dealing more and more with nature and nature as a primal material once again. Therefore within that discussion, art is used as a platform, to discuss and address those major issues as such. But the translation methods used, to conceptualize and bring forward the issues through the medium of art, have shifted more into the virtual realm. Nature becomes digital and grows in virtual realm.

Where something like virtual nature, could on one hand be seen as a hopeless attempt of recreating and preserving something which we are gradually losing, in reality it actually tries to stir into the opposite direction. With the engagement of nature being translated into the new virtual contexts, it rather tries to imply and propose new found reconnection with the nature.

Makers involved in creating virtual nature landscapes are driven by the immersive beauty of nature. They use technology as a medium to create an experience which is also aesthetically accessible, to recall emotions such as awe and beauty, which naturally would be found in the 'real natural world'.

Technologies like AR (Augmented Virtuality) and VR (Virtual Reality) feed the virtual nature experience with stimuli. Both are examples of technologies, which are widely used in the creation of virtual nature, aiming to engage users in multi sensory experiences. AR overlays digital content onto the real world, extending the real world with digital information. VR is the generation of a whole artificial environment, creating an immersible simulated environment.

These technologies are examples that are used not only in the realm of art but also in the educational field. Recent studies such as 'Virtual nature makes knowledge beautiful' by Maria Harrington, have shown that the implication of virtual replication of the natural world can have positive learning effects. Instead of telling people how to act and better their own behaviors, the immersive experience of virtual nature can trigger emotional reactions of awe and wonder. Those emotions proved to then shift attitudes and change behaviors after the immersive experience (Harrington, 2023). Virtual nature is in that sense powerful, as it has the possibility to trigger emotions that are similar to what is felt when viewing the real nature. Therefore the immersive experi-

ence, that triggers awe, creates positive effects that remarkably guide towards reconnecting to nature.

„A mental sense of full-body attention, a process of development, change, and transition from one state of mind to another, characterized by a reduction in one's emotional distance from the concrete object on display and, consequently, an increase in emotional involvement in the current situation.“
(Csikszentmihalyi, 2023)

Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi also described the immersive experience from a more psychological perspective, where he argues how the immersive experience creates a shift in the mental focus and emotional connection of an individual that undergoes that experience. During that process of the immersive experience the mind undergoes a progression from a state of detachment or distance from an object or situation, to a heightened emotional involvement. It is similar to what happens when experiencing awe. The process requires a transition in mindset, where the person becomes more engaged, invested, and connected to what they're experiencing. If this shift occurs, there's a decrease in the emotional distance from the object or situation, leading to increased emotional investment and attention toward the present moment (Csikszentmihalyi, 2023). Essentially, the immersive experience is a movement from a detached state, to a more emotionally connected and engaged state with the situation or the observed. His definition of the immersive experience proves, from a psychological perspective, how a vir-

tual landscape, that hosts an immersive experience, leads to more connection towards the perceived.

The immersive experience that brings out the emotion of awe in comparison to the sublime experience, then holds a whole new conclusion and discussion.

Sublime in time of the Romantics, was predominantly a male discourse and was defined as being an aesthetic element of perception, as we already came to conclude. It is therefore mostly interconnected with the sense of sight. Anicka Yi, a Korean conceptual artist, talked in her podcast for e-flux 'Anicka Yi on nonhuman ecologies and embodied machines, 2020', how sights is connected to discovery, which is often seen as masculine, whereas the sense of smell for instance, which often appears in her own work, is categorized to be more feminine.

The concept of the female and male is often used metaphorically to describe certain qualities or attributes rather than strict gender roles. These qualities include assertiveness, strength, and logic associated with masculine energy, whereas receptivity, nurturing, and intuition are associated with feminine energy. It is important to note that these concepts are symbolic and not prescriptive of gender roles or characteristics.

This concept of the female and male energy as it is also talked about traditionally in various philosophical, religious and cultural traditions during history, sheds light on why Yi states a comment like that. It also makes a lot of sense in why and how

sublime might have in the past informed ontology into a human - non human separation, rather than seeing them as two parts of a whole ecosystem where both parts are equally coexisting. The concept of the feminine and masculine is based upon dualism, where opposing forces live in balance. But a concept such as sublime, which overweights in the sense of sight, is unbalanced and only carries male attributes, not balancing the opposing forces but fueling one side of the picture, therefore creating separation. As even ontology was influenced by the sublime concept, this seemingly 'mystical' force has set a tone for the development of relation and interconnectedness between the humans and towards the non human. Compared to the other side, the implication of immersive experience balances several senses. It finds and creates the balance of connecting opposing elements, creating a harmony of connection.

Another argument in how awe and the immersive experience within virtual nature can imply connectivity, is through the collective pictorial experience we hold towards nature. Just as other representations and replications of nature, the virtual landscape is shaped by extracted and symbolized elements of the real nature (Lopes, 2004). In that sense the virtual landscape is already shaped by our comprehension and encounters with previous representations of nature that have been created through history. We create connectivity through being able to relate to the view with personal experience. Therefore shared perceptions, emotions,

and cultural associations people have with depicted nature as well as their own personal experience and memory they hold with nature, brings the virtual nature to life.

Concluding awe and technology have become intertwined to recall the fascination for nature. The purpose of virtual nature has become, to retouch into a sense of connectivity through multi sensual experiences.

To look at nature in the post modernity influenced by awe, is to connect rather than fear the vastness of nature.

3.4 As Close as We Can Get to the Sun?

One of the most present examples of an artist engaging in the 'real world nature' replication through immersive experience is probably Olafur Eliasson. In particular one of his most famous installations 'The Weather Project' which was exhibited at the Tate Modern in London in 2003, very much touches upon the recalling of the emotion of awe within the realm of virtual nature.

The central element of the site specific installation, was a recreation of a massive indoor sunset where the visitors were facing a 'sun' which was as close to the human as it could never possibly get. The room was filled with a slight mist and the colors of orange and yellow, the beautiful hues of a sunset. The ceiling was covered with mirrors that reflected

The weather project,
Olafur Eliasson
2003, Tate Modern
London, UK



the tiny people on the ground and completed the half sun into a full round circle. This massive replication created a collective experience through the shared space. An invite to a space that guides into a deep emotional and sensory engagement.

The installation challenged the viewers to reflect on their own relationship with the natural world and the power of natural phenomena. The sun, as a universal symbol and source of life, has been admired and contemplated throughout human history. By recreating a sun within an artificial context, Eliasson invites viewers to face an awe-inspiring and contemplative environment. The space challenges the viewers to reconsider their relationship with nature, technology, and the wonder of awe in hope to reconsider their perception of reality and to form a new connection towards the seemingly known nature.

3.5 An Act of Restoration

The urban reef project is a new startup based in Rotterdam. The design studio is focusing on the concept of a more than human design. In a speculative and utopian world where, nature cohabitants with the human, they work towards a design creation that encourages growth and divers life in the modern urban setting (Reef, 2023). In their project they started creating 'Reefs' from 3D printing living bio materials, shaped and inspired through bio based algorithms. The reefs create space for new micro habitats to grow, live and die. The reefs are supposed

3D printed Reefs
by Urban Reef NL,
image by the author
2023, Studio Urban
Reef Rotterdam,
Netherlands



to live autonomously and rehabilitate themselves if needed, or naturally die if it is the time for them. The whole intent is to create space for the non-human and to let them co-habitat within the city escape. The organisms should follow their own circle of life, without the influence or touch of the human.

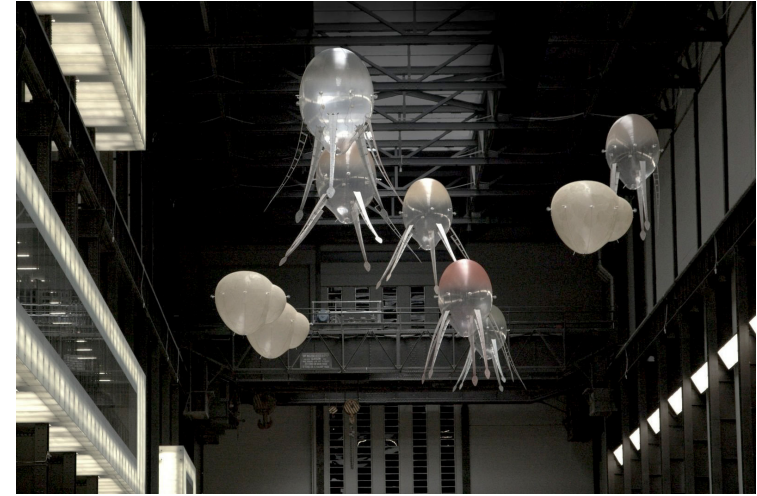
Their project is interesting in the technological sublime discussion, as being a society of technology, we cannot go around and take the choice to not be technological anymore. Going back to a prehistoric way of life would simply not be realistic. What we can do though, is use the knowledge and technology to change the way we use them. Where technology became natural for us, Urban Reef design brings it one step further by letting the technology be taken back by the natural. By creating reefs through 3D printing they use their knowledge and abilities to create a piece which is supposed to be living independently again. Through using technology they create something, which is given back to the natural and its own natural clock of developing itself.

It is a form of awe, where awe for nature is used to inspire the action of sharing and giving back. To create new symbiosis of interconnected human-non human relation.

3.6 Machines of Compassion

How is sublime and awe not only found in nature but in technology as well?

*In Love with the
World, Anicka Yi
2021, Tate Modern
London, UK*



Artist Anicka Yi, is a Korean artist working in New York. Her work discusses the intersection between the realm of plants, humans, animals, technology and machines. She collaborates with researchers to explore politics and culture. She often addresses senses and perception through 'biopolitics of the senses.' By merging biology and technology into art she challenges the distinction made between organisms and machines, as well as the distinction the human made of himself as superior to other forms of life (Yi, 2022). With her work she questions how awe can be found in modern technology.

One of her works which was exhibited at the Tate Modern in 2021, is the work 'In love with the world'. Yi often questions the things around her and this work is particularly interesting in relation to the technology-nature debate. With a focus on the human-machine relationship, she thought about why the human feels so alienated by machines. Machines are created by humans and should enrich our lives but in reality they make us feel more detached. Through the work 'In love with the world' she created floating machine organisms which in their creation resemble organisms and our own human nature. With these organisms, she questions what a more compassionate existence between machines, humans and nature could look like and how they can cohabitate in a more compatible future with each and one another.

The flying machine organisms are unique. They are driven by their own sense of being. What Yi calls

'artificial life simulation' is a software which allows each organism to create their own personality. By flying them, they create their own responses towards their surroundings and they develop their character based on those interactions and influences.

Through seeing the machine's organism and being, she says, we are able to relate and connect to them. As a response we therefore react to those machines in awe, wonder and fascination rather than fear. She found that through giving the machines personalities we become compassionate and share understanding.

With this work Yi encourages the change of machine development with more integration of awe rather than fear, to enforce a more gentle relation towards the technological, to make us more connected and create more unity between the different forms of life.

3.7 Symbiotic Relation

'Is It Alive?' was an exhibition that was on show just recently at the Textile Museum in Tilburg, Netherlands. The exhibition explores the intersection of technology, art, and biology through innovative textile installations.

The exhibition challenged traditional notions of what constitutes 'life' by showcasing artworks, which blur the boundaries of the organic and the artificial through interactive artworks. The works explore the creation of machines with organic traits.

I am storm, Studio Drift 2023, Textilmuseum Tilburg, Netherlands



The aim of the artists was to create machineries that resonate with humans, by forging emotional connections through the implementation of organismic qualities within technology.

In the exhibition 'Is it alive?', the work 'I am storm' by Studio Drift is the first work upon entering the exhibition space that the visitor is confronted with. The work consists of several human sized moving grass elements that are placed in the constellation of a field. The objects are made out of woven textiles and machineries, that pick up on movement of the room. Within the work, the visitor walks through the field and takes the role of the wind. Through their movement, they activate the installation and the grass elements start swaying back and forth. The artwork draws from the inspiration of the wind as a crucial element that thrives the ecosystem.

The work is inspiring as it not just functions as an immersive experience to view nature, but it actively engages the viewer and makes them part of the whole interplay of the piece. Therefore the interaction between the human and the installation is what brings the whole work to life. The visitor becomes the wind, who's movement the grass detects. In return, the work touches the viewer emotionally. At first it is not necessarily noticeable that the machines pick up on the visitor's being, but once it is understood, the whole work transforms into a beautiful conversation, almost like a performance between machine and human. The visitor becomes part and a necessity for the piece to thrive and be-

come alive.

The work replicates symbiotic interconnection. The grass would not sway without the viewer and the viewer would not realize the interplay if they would not immerse themselves into the wonder and awe recalled by the work to truly listen to it.

Therefore the work speculates upon how a symbiosis with the remains of nature in the digital age of the contemporary can look like and how the attention towards nature can be recalled and restored.



Exploration of the Digital Sublime: In Dialogue with Technology and Wonder

The following chapter, will delve further into the question of whether the sublime can be found within technology itself and what form and shape it might take in such a context. Through a dialogue with AI, the chapter will unfold in a fairytale that tries to bring out the wonders of sublime. Traditionally associated with nature and the divine, can it also manifest through the expression of technology? How would technology express the feeling of sublime?

The story will draw inspiration from Longinus' work 'on the sublime' to create a vivid narrative that brings the reader into a realm where the sublime is tangible. The story will hold a tapestry of awe-inspiring beauty as the foundation upon which the tale itself will unfold.

The tale itself will talk about a world in which two seemingly contradictory elements coexist in a delicate symbiosis to reflect the oppositional emotions that exist within the experience of the sublime.

Therefore the story will question how technology gives voice to the sublime and how does the story reflect on the sublime discussion of the modern age?

4.1 Enchanted Harmony of the Meadow's Dance

*In a meadow ablaze with golden light,
Where wildflowers sway, a mesmerizing sight.
Butterflies dance on the breeze's gentle song,
A tapestry of color where hearts belong.*

In a realm where the sky met the earth in a kaleidoscope of hues and the whispering winds carried secrets from distant lands, there existed a wondrous meadow. Within this enchanted meadow, two opposing forces, as ancient as time itself, dwelled in harmony, their symbiotic dance giving birth to marvels beyond imagination.

At the heart of the meadow stood the oak, its gnarled branches reaching toward the heavens, while its roots delved deep into the earth's embrace. The oak was the embodiment of strength and stability, its towering presence a testament to the enduring power of nature.

Opposite the oak, nestled in the shadows cast by its mighty boughs, lay the crystal snow. Here, delicate crystals of every hue shimmered and sparkled, catching the light of the sun and moon in a dazzling display of radiance. The crystal snow was a beacon of beauty and fragility, its ethereal forms a stark contrast to the oak's rugged grandeur.

For ages, the oak and the crystal snow existed in perfect composure, their energies intertwining to create a symphony of wonder that captivated all who ventured into the meadow. But as the ages passed, a

darkness began to seep into the meadow, threatening to disrupt the delicate balance that sustained the realm.

Slowly, imperceptibly at first, the life force of the meadow began to wane. The leaves of the oak withered and fell, and the crystals of the snow dulled and lost their luster. As despair spread like a creeping vine through the land, it seemed as though the magic of the forest was fading into oblivion.

Yet, just when all hope seemed lost, a whisper echoed through the meadow, carried on the gentle breath of the wind. It was the voice of a child, filled with wonder and curiosity, calling out to the meadow with eyes wide with amazement.

In that moment, something miraculous occurred. The oak stirred from its slumber, sending forth new shoots and leaves that shimmered with vitality. And from the depths of the crystal snow, a symphony of light erupted, casting a dazzling array of colors that danced upon the meadow floor.

As the child beheld this wondrous sight, a smile spread across their face, and in that smile, the magic of the forest was reborn. For it was in the simple act of rediscovering the wonders of nature that the symbiosis between the oak and the crystal snow was restored, filling the meadow once more with awe and enchantment.

And so, as the sun dipped below the horizon and the stars twinkled overhead, the meadow echoed with the laughter of the child and the song of birds, a testament to the enduring power of wonder and the timeless beauty of the sublime.

4.2 Visuals

„The top of a glacier during sunset with a field with one single blooming tree”



Generated Images
by DALL-E 3
AI System





4.3 Reflection

As technology can work as an extension and something that can develop ideas into automated making, it carries much potential into bringing out sensation and stories. Technology can help extend ideas but it can not create the idea itself. As AI literally translates the prompts given, it often time literally implements the prompts into the desired context. It is rather difficult to have it translate and interpret the prompt into creating a story that actually embodies the prompt elements.

The language becomes flat, using fancy words to describe the simplest of things. It kills the transmission of the feeling and rather acts as an information carrier vessel. Therefore the creation of the marvel, is still rather guided by the person giving the prompt and the creation of a 'good' fairytale can only happen in conversation.

Wonder and sublime I do believe can be found within technology, but it will always still be with the hands of the prompt giver that sublime can be created from technology. Additionally, especially sublime always is subjective. If the experience of the mysterious would be objective, I have no doubt the AI could create a fairytale that is wonderful. But as the indescribable, untangle, and mysterious feeling of the sublime is subjective in its essence, it can not be grasped fully without the guidance of the maker, as the maker and the reader need to experience to the feeling of sublime.

It might be that this incapability within technology can be resolved but as for this moment it still needs a thinker behind it. If we compare the examples of the previous chapter, it is also only through the collaboration between technology and the artist that sublime can be recalled. I therefore see this rather proven with this story, that sublime can not be created out of pure technology.

So then what does it mean to tell a story in the contemporary time, where a story only truly can be told with the presence of storyteller and maker? What could a story of the contemporary look like if technology does not take part in it at all. What would the story be, that is told?



What Does It Mean to Tell Stories And How Can Stories Be Told?

For a long time in history the telling of stories happened predominantly through mouth to mouth. Only after the invention of the letterpress, invented around the 11th century in China by Bi Sheng and further developed in the 15th century in Europe by Johannes Gutenberg, words became reproducible in the way we know it today (*Gutenberg, 2019*). Even more extreme and elevated to a new innovative realm has it transformed through technology and AI.

In the following chapter I want to reach back on this notion of shading light on alternative ways of storytelling and how they can inform the concept of awe. How can awe as a new concept be shared and told and how does it indicate polyperspectivity?

Awe is something which we can find everywhere if we look close enough. It is told through different stories and it is individually subjective to everyone. More importantly though, it emerges from our observation and willingness to understand. Awe means to actively and consciously listen beyond words. It is about leaving space for ambiguity, to accept different perspectives of the obvious and known. Awe is fundamental to the being, a tool to open up and challenge the known perspectives that are present in our

minds of how we perceive our environment. But why would we care? It is through awe that we learn to understand different perspectives and realities, and it is through understanding those alternative perspectives, that we can create honest compassion and connections that ground us and make us feel more close and connected with what surrounds us.

The following examples are works that challenge the known. Some linger around the topics of post-human ecology; other examples question the seemingly known from a cultural perspective, uses weaving and treats literally and metaphorically as a tool, to form new connections.

As my own take on this I want to look at the works to draw new meaning and connections for awe. Awe as a possible tool to create and weave new connections that can reach beyond the human and eventually I want to come to define awe in new terms and interpretation.

5.1 Sitting around the Mat

Before stories were told through words, they were shared through visuals. The oldest form of storytelling are cave drawings, closely followed by woven textiles. In cultures like in Indonesia very specific textiles carry very specific stories and meanings. For instance in the traditional Batik of Indonesia each pattern carries a specific meaning, a belonging, a narrative. The same goes with the traditional weavings from Malaysia and the Philippines for instance.

But weaving in a broader sense is used to create various things, not just textiles. From mats, to baskets, to containers, to cleaning tools and many more.

The work TIKAR/MEJA is a work by Malaysian artist Yee I-Lann. In her work she uses the technique of weaving as a tapestry for the story of the table (Meja). Her work talks about how during the pre colonial time the word for table in the south-east asian countries did not exist. It was only during colonization where the table was introduced as a more 'mannered' way of eating and sitting. Before tables, people used to sit and eat on mats. In her work she uses the comparison of the mat and the table, as a metaphor to shed light on the internalized ways of how people's identity and language were forced and shaped. Only through the introduction of the table, the word 'meja' (*from portuguese and spanish word for table, mesa) grasped existence within their 'reality'. She talks about this as a very violent way of shaping people internally and subconsciously. According to her, the table is more violent than an army with guns, as the word 'meja' told and pointed out to the natives, so deeply who they are, who they are not, and who they should be and become.

I-Lann uses the technique of weaving as a platform to tell a story of a perspective which has been suppressed and not reconsidered. She tells the story, with both perspectives involved. The technique of the mat, to connect to the origin and the imagery of the table on the mats, as the shape shifted 'ideal'. I-Lann often uses elements of composition and sym-

TIKAR/MEJA, Yee I-Lann in collaboration with communities from the Malaysian state of Sabah in northern Borneo 2020



Tikar, image by the author 2023, Solo Indonesia



Tikar, image by the author 2023, Solo Indonesia



bolism to evoke an emotional response in the viewer. Her work is seemingly simple but draws and touches upon deeply rooted issues.

Her work carries a certain sense of awe within it. It balances oppositions and contradictions within the work and it transcends the seemingly known into a more complex realm of reality. The presentation of 60 'tables', sinks into the viewer as a big army of seemingly innocent tables, but leaving the viewer with certain unease.

TIKAR/MEJA lets rise to alternative stories, to re-examine the seemingly known. To protest against the set reality and ideal. The work weaves perspectives and 'new' connection, towards the ancestry of its cultural origin.

5.2 Carrying the Fruits of the Present

The essay 'The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction' (1989) by Ursula K. Le Guin, is a speculative fabulation that challenges the way we could reimagine history and its societal development. In her essay she zooms into the prehistoric time where humans were gathered and hunters.

The hunters used the spear as the main tool to navigate and provide, whereas the collectors used the basket to carry and store their findings. The spear, within the essay, leads as a metaphor of a more linear and hierarchical view of history. The spear was guided by the hero.

The carrier bag on the other hand represents a nurturing approach. Instead of focusing on the hero's conquest, the basket embraces gathering, collecting, and sustaining. The symbolism of the carrier bag encourages a shift in perspective, suggesting a reevaluation of storytelling and history to include narratives that highlight nurturing, gathering, and the collaborative aspects of human existence. It challenges the dominance of the hero's journey narrative, and proposes an alternative lens through which human culture and evolution could be looked at with more collectivity (Guin, 2019). An ideology that is deeply entangled within and connected in a circular shape.

She creates new strings and possibly new forms of understanding and reimagining the truth of history, which has been set into stone since prehistoric time.

Looking at her work we can see how she uses the basket, a form of woven object, to inform new connections and speculations. Similarly, if we think about the sublime and how it informs ontology and a perspective on our understanding that is deeply led by separation and hierarchy, we somehow can see the similarity of sublime to the linearity of the spear. In contrast, looking at awe, just as the basket became the new 'hero' of a collective and interwoven ideal, awe could inform the same kind of shift of perspective towards understanding the world in a more interwoven and connected sense.

Stories play a crucial role in preserving and transmitting ideologies, beliefs and history. They mark the direction when steering for shift and transfor-

mation. But sometimes they need to be reconsidered and remembered anew to form change.

5.3 Roots of a Speculative Parallel Reality

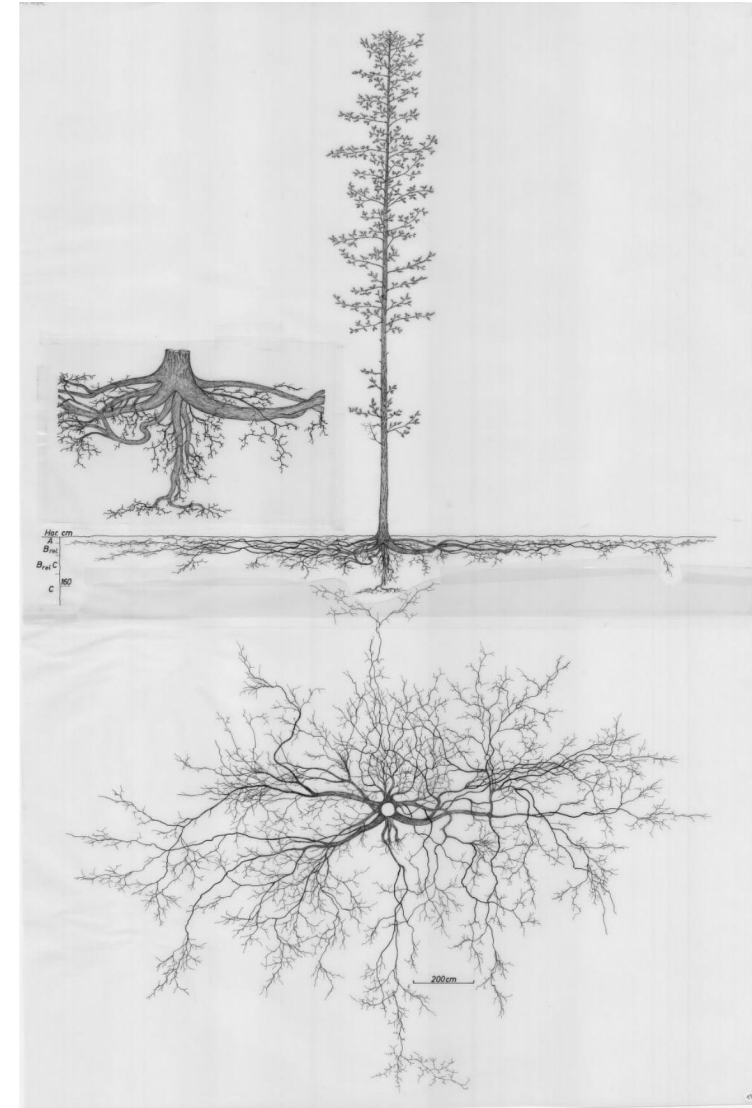
The rhizome is a concept used in botany as well as philosophy. The philosophical term is taken from the idea of using the plant's rhizomatic way of growing as a metaphor of how new formations of connections can be made in a more nonlinear form.

The concept of the rhizome was defined by the two French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. The rhizome speculates, just as the basket, an approach of how to create new connections in an interconnected manner compared to the linear growth of standard plants.

A rhizome in botany is an organism of living fiber that can grow in all directions. It does not define a central point or origin and is fluid in its spreading. It does not start anywhere nor does it go somewhere specific. It can therefore be seen as basically the same at any given point of its being. Rhizomatic growth is a form of multiplying in a form of nonlinearity.

An example that Deleuze and Guattari made to describe their theory upon, is the internet. They argue that the internet is rhizomatic in its structure as it has no center. It grows multiply without links. Parts of the web can be taken out without causing the internet to collapse in any form. It just simply continues to exist.

Complex plant root system, images courtesy of Wageningen University and Research, Netherlands



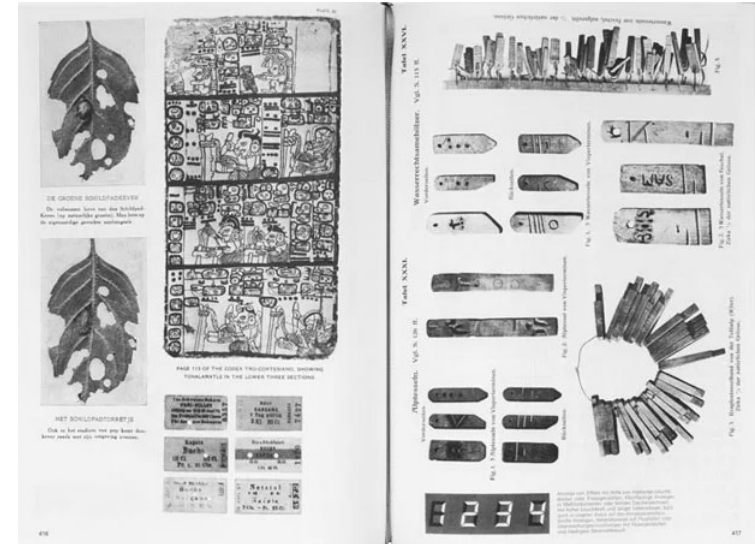
In art history or literature many artists also have served themselves from the idea of the rhizome.

Throughout history many artists made use of encyclopedias as a medium. During the romantics it emerged as a platform of stating a counter movement towards the systematic classification of knowledge. Artists of the contemporary time use the encyclopedia to break even more out of such constraints and ideals. The encyclopedia has become a speculative playground to investigate and theorize what true knowledge really is, where it originates from and how alternative 'realities' could manifest and look like.

One example for such work is Batia Suter's 'Parallel Encyclopedia'. Suter's work is particularly interesting as it is fully relying on imagery and its visual associations. She selects and combines found imagery solely based on their associative connections they build between each other in the frame of each individual page and within the whole. Through her work she embodies and creates a frame where the lack of order flourishes, non order of the imagination exists and in its non graspability, where it creates a space for wonder and awe to emerge.

It becomes clear that the rhizomatic weaving of knowledge leaves space for awe to bloom and to recognize the complexity and interconnectedness of knowledge and experiences. Works like Suters, have the ability to bring attention to such worlds. She has the ability of creating an alternative reality that is appealing and seems to be worth looking at. The encyclopedia becomes a tool to inform and shape a

Parallel Encyclopedia I, Batia Suter
2007, Roma Publications Amsterdam,
Netherlands



sense of future, where we use awe in our imagery and storytelling, to move towards more connectivity and fluidity, and less preset truth.

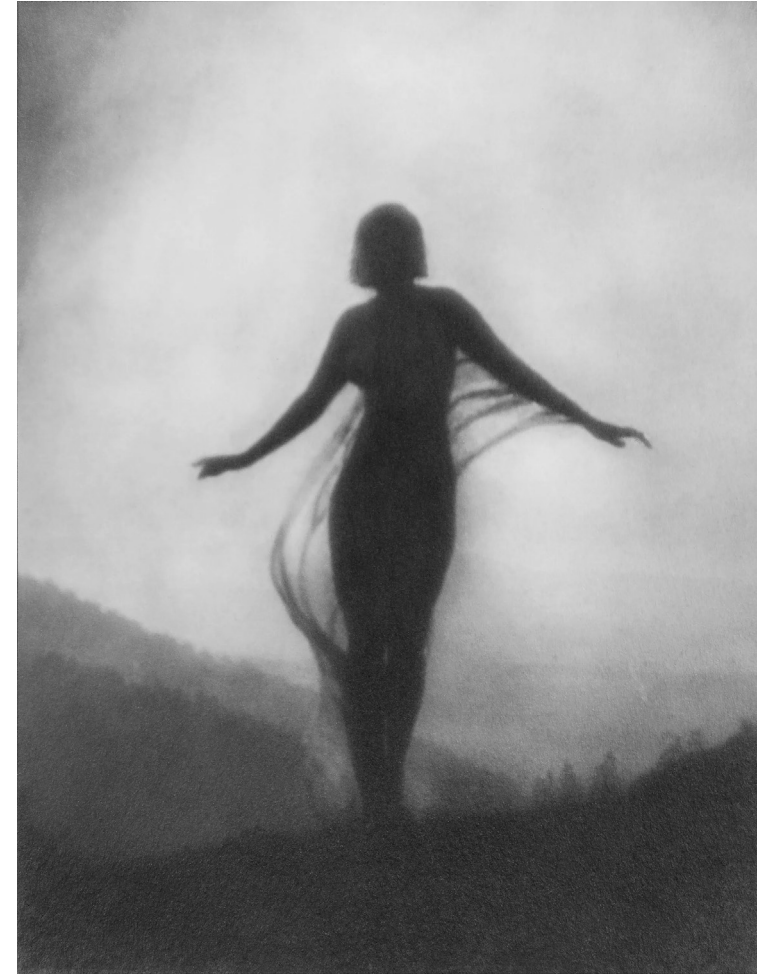
5.4 Is It Female Sublime?

In the creation of such new realities and new connections, how can sublime within that be turned around and what comes out on the other side?

Now diving a bit deeper and into the sublime once more, with the perspective of looking at it from today's age and with the knowledge of the last few chapters, the sublime can be put into new definitions.

From the last pages we can clearly see how the concept of the sublime was used to experience an elevation of the self over the experience or object that they tried to perceive. Sublime is almost a selfish act of feeling more powerful. It creates domination towards the other. It does so, in the sense that whenever there is something outside of the self that has the capability to threaten the self, the mind creates a blockage towards the threat and the unknown, leaving the self with fascination but no urge to understand and make sense of the threat. Through this inability of representing or making sense of this intense force, the 'object' reaches supremacy over the mind and at the same time leaving both the self and the object as two separate elements, not listened to or engaged with by either one of the parties. What is key then, is that after experiencing this moment,

The Breeze, Anne Wardrobe Brigman 1909, gelatin silver print, part of Brigman's creative dialogue with nature and the human form, Wilson Centre for Photography, US



Sanctuary, Anne
Wardrobe Brigman
1910, gelatin silver
print, Wilson Centre
for Photography, US



The Bubble Anne
Wardrobe Brigman
1906, gelatin silver
print, Wilson Centre
for Photography, US



the self comes to feel a newly enhanced sense of itself and its own identity, as the self becomes aware of its distance and total none relation to 'the object'. The object is the trigger of the sublime experience.

In that sense sublime is like an act, where the self is first robbed by its reasoning but as a result feels a deeper sense and distinction of itself from the 'object', that threatens them. That is where the certain power play, that comes with the connotation of the sublime, comes from.

Concluding, we can clearly say that those elements of power play and spectatorship that are bound to the concept of the sublime, are completely oppositional to awe and its functions. Awe almost works as the opposite. Awe, from the current point of view, with the purpose of enhancing connectivity towards the object, can therefore almost be seen as a counter sublime.

Does awe manifests itself in retro perspective as a speculative 'female sublime'?

To call awe the 'female sublime' in some terms makes quite a lot of sense. Also if we think about the time of the romantics where sublime was mostly male dominated and an aesthetic element, and the female was mostly connected to beauty according to Edmund Burke definition, we might now see awe, as a stronger and more intense form of the concept of beauty or as a speculative female sublime.

Anicka Yi, connected the sense of smell and the general inclusion of multiple senses as feminine. Feminine as a concept describing the quality of

receptivity, nurturing, and compassion, the idea of the multi sensual experience of awe, as informing a hope for more compassion and understanding of the other.

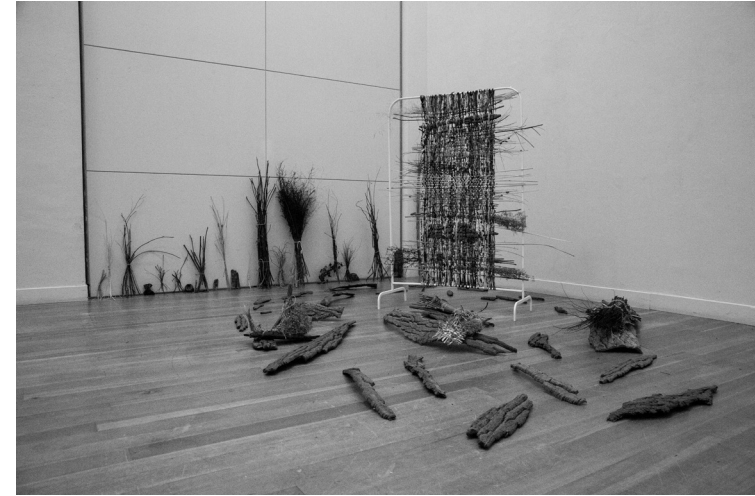
Therefore it could be seen as an opposition and a speculative 'female sublime'.

5.5 Weaving with the Gentle Touch of Hands

So what does it mean to engage in hand weaving treats in the contemporary context? From the perspective of the modern time we might argue that the involvement in crafts stands for reconnections of lost stories, traditions and connections that have been repressed by mechanization. But crafting is not just connecting with the old, but with what could become.

The act of weaving can be viewed as an enhancement of our perception, of a moment with more depth and objectivity. When multiple senses are involved in creating a work, that is when it does offer a more immersive experience, conveying a multifaceted perspective. The act of weaving, in those terms, is an example that brings our hands into direct contact with the material essence of natural fibers (when weaving plant fibers). The act of weaving stimulates different senses and only by merging touch and imagination, weaving threads and thoughts with the time dedicated to the piece, a visual outcome results and takes shape to come alive for the eyes to be perceived. It brings out a full body engagement that

Interwoven Steps
work and image by
author 2023, woven
mat out of batik
textile and natural
materials, abstract
woven shoes from
natural material, se-
lection of harvested
material from own
garden



immerses the maker into the work, to experience the material from multiple perspectives.

To conclude, weaving treats in the contemporary context is one example of a craft that goes far beyond telling old stories but tells speculations of new stories that could (have) found shape. It acts as a stage where stories can be formed anew, reconnecting with the past while envisioning possibilities for the future. To form new interconnections.



Contemporary Psychological Work on Awe

From woven mats to language, from pulling strings to intersecting narratives, it showcases the diverse definitions that can emerge from a single thread. When we weave strings, we start with one thread, shaping one end that influences the other, yet everything inevitably interconnects. Through creating new shapes, strings shift and transform into various possible forms. From a single thread, numerous formations and stories can unfold. The thread becomes a playground for multiple interpretative opportunities, a tool to create and tell stories, and metaphorically, to shape different perspectives.

The sublime development and transition, from Longinus into the contemporary technological landscape, has brought big change into the meaning and connotation of what the sublime is defined and experienced as in modern times. As a counter argument, the following chapter will elaborate on modern psychological works of awe. To view the psychological side of the mystical experiences, will help to better understand how awe can further be integrated as a concept to bring forward a new standpoint of engagement, symbiosis and interconnection with nature, the non human and the other outside the self.

Awe specifically is chosen to be looked at as a focus element for change, as awe speculates on the development of a more interwoven ontological framework. A framework of a reality where connectedness is solidified from within towards the outside.

If concepts like awe had been more central throughout history, if the body would have been given the chance to further entangle into the threads, what would the present look like?

Where realities have been defined throughout history, choosing words in the present to shape one's own presence within a defined reality is crucial, to guide the tone of a future towards increased engagement and connections with our surroundings. Awe's definition extends beyond the aesthetic of contemporary nature, but it can be observed and found in a broader context, it is in its core more a decision and a tool of use, for a conscious shift in how one decides to view and perceives the predefined and presumed known.

If we come to replace experiences and realities that have been defined and influenced by the sublime with awe, how would that materialize itself?

6.1 Mystery of Awe

Viewing the mountains from the same angle from day to day might make it seem boring and dull, but delving into the imagination, stepping into perspectives of looking with sincere curiosity one may come to recognize that a mountain isn't merely a mass of

stone, but stands as a witness of time. Time outlived by the human, it embodies mysteries and serves as a stage for folklore and tales. Mystical experiences have been archived, through legends and myths, upon sceneries as such and passed on for several hundred years.

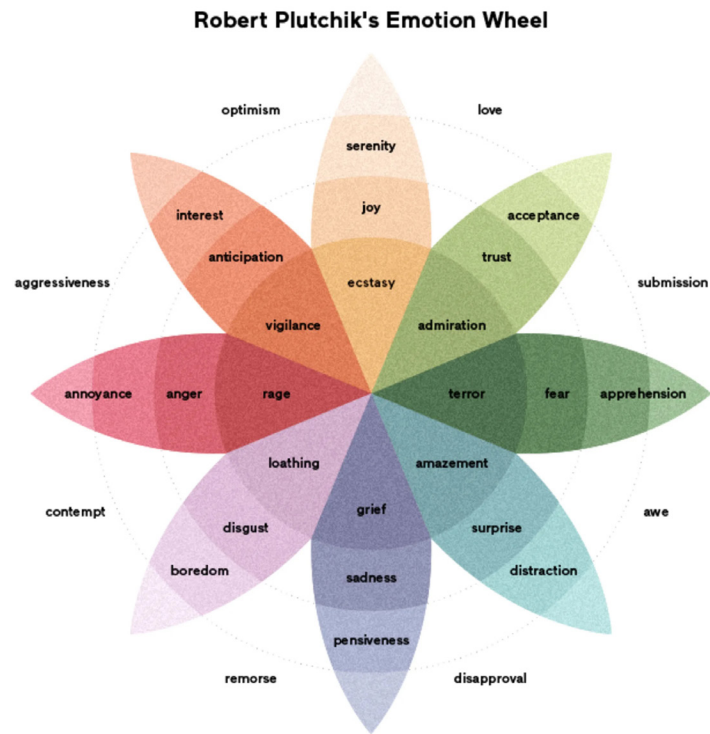
Awe embodies sincere curiosity to broaden our understanding, to be able to embrace and bear the fundamental ambiguity held in objects, situations, and even words. Every perception holds an underlying duality that requires listening rather than imposing one's own judgments. Awe is genuine curiosity. It encourages people to think outside themselves.

6.2 Dissecting Awe

Understanding the emotion of awe remains relatively new up until now. Around twenty years ago, in 2003, Dacher Keltner and Jonathan Haidt were pioneers in their study of this emotion. Keltner and Haidt defined the feeling as a sense of 'perceived vastness and a need for accommodation with a diminished sense of self' 8 (Allen, 2018). Vastness within their definition ranges beyond its perceptually interpretation but refers to conceptual vastness as well. For instance, complex scientific theories can evoke an experience of awe.

But what exactly is awe?

'Simply' said, awe is an emotion. For a minority of history emotions have been considered as animalistic and lower senses of reasoning. Emotions



are fleeting and cannot be measured, and needless to say they are rather subjective than factual. It was only in the 80s when studies into emotions started to become revolutionary and important, that first studies also started to elaborate how emotions in the bigger picture are crucial for adapting to stimulus within circumstances (Keltner, 2023). It also has been reasoned why we have emotions in the first place, which argument was drawn from Darwin's theory of survival. Around that time big steps were taken into understanding cognitive science through different scholars.

Etymologically, the word awe is derived from the middle English word 'ege' and from the old Norse 'agi' from around eight hundred years ago (Keltner, 2023). Both words translate in their meaning into fear, dread and terror. Differently, if someone came to describe awe in the present time, most likely it will not be in any connection with terms like fear. The word 'ege' and 'agi' emerged at a time where plagues, famines, public torture, war and a short life expectation ruled the society. Therefore it is rather logical why such definitions are put into connections with those words, as those events brought forward death and violence which was for the people mysterious and vast (Keltner, 2023). But since that time, much has changed. But is the emotion of awe still connected to and located near fear?

Within a collaborative study between Dacher Keltner and Alan Cowen, they researched where within the semantic space of emotions, did the emo-

tion of awe fall into. They found awe to be placed rather close to emotions such as admiration, interest, aesthetic appreciation, and beauty. The emotion has proven to emerge as rather positive, less carried by fear. Viewing awes relation and resemblance to the beauty definition of Burke, one might argue that awe could be an intensified sense of beauty. But from the study done by Keltner and Cowen, as they investigated facial expressions and vocalizations in relation to the awe experience, they have shown that it rather differs from those of beauty or fear.

Awe has proven to be an emotion that is its own.

6.3 Defining Awe

Now clearly defining and researching awe poses considerable challenges. As it is multifaceted in its nature and because it holds varied interpretations within different situations, pinpointing it universally is almost impossible. Even the studies made so far have revealed that factors such as cultural context and individual characteristics, significantly influence how the experience of awe unfolds and the likelihood of an individual even experiencing it.

Awe can be felt in and through different situations and it can be found within different contexts and situations. Within the everyday and mundane, awe was proven to be found mostly within moral beauty, nature and experience such as music, art and film.

Keltner studied the appearance of awe together

with Yang Bai. In their study they investigated awe from an approach of storytelling. As emotions unfold in inter-human interaction, they can somehow be compared to stories. What Bai and Keltner did, to investigate the most common sources/trigger for awe, they collected over 2600 stories of people who shared their experience with awe. In the research the participants were given the definition of awe, upon which they were asked to write down their recollection of an awe-inspiring moment.

*„Being in the presence of something vast and mysterious that transcends your current understanding of the world.“
(Keltner, 2023)*

What they found, they described as the eight wonders of life, as the eight dominant sources within which awe was found in most. Those summarized were moral beauty, collective effervescence, nature, music, visual design, spirituality and religion, life and death, and epiphany.

Just as awe is to be found in different situations and experience, so does awe unfold into different kinds of awes as well. Dacher Keltner and Jonathan Haidt also came to name those different types of awe that emerge from different situations as ‘flavors’. These ‘flavors’ though are more theoretical categories proposed in their study rather than scientifically validated distinctions. Within their study they came to differentiate between the following flavors:
(Allen, 2018)

Threat-based awe (threats that are not life threatening situations), Beauty-based awe (related to aesthetics), Ability-based awe (admiration for someone's skills or talents), Virtue-based awe (experienced in the presence of individuals with high moral standards), Supernatural causality-based awe (such as encountering an angel), Primordial-based awe (felt through the presence of powerful individuals).

While some individuals are more prone to experiencing awe, certain settings are more facilitative in evoking awe, but in general it is rather subjective where it is to be found for someone. So to experience the intensity of awe, one should carry an attentive mindset, as awe can just as well be discovered in the simplest of things of the everyday that surround us.

6.4 Why Awe?

Given this complex perspective on awe, why would we even desire to pursue this emotion? What's the fascination (or awe) of awe?

„Feeling part of something much larger than the self is music to our ears. This transformation of the self brought about by awe is a powerful antidote to the isolation and loneliness that is epidemic today.“ (Keltner, 2023)

Simply put into words, awe evokes an overall positive feeling. The studies have revealed that people come to feel more humble, more connected, more satisfied, more prosocial and even have shown reduced feelings towards materialism, after experiencing awe. Awe gives the ability to let us get outside

ourselves and to view oneself within the greater pattern of things. Awe allows us to take a step backwards to view the connectedness of the self within the bigger community, the nature, ideas or cultural forms (Keltner, 2023). It lets us view ourselves as a puzzle piece of an overall picture. To be able to belong and connect is universal to being human, it enables our survival.

Wonder is the mental state of openness, of questioning, of curiosity and of embracing the mysterious. Wonder within one's mind is formed out of the very experience of the embrace of awe, and to live with wonder is crucial to be responsive for ambiguity. Within the studies of awe, it has shown that people who have the ability to find awe within the mundane of the everyday, are more open to new ideas. Therefore the experience of awe in its core, drives the proneness one has to the unknown, to what language does not have the ability to describe, to the absurd, to the seeking of new knowledge, to experience bodily sensations. To feel awe means to find more ease in mysteries and the something which cannot be explained. Being more connected to the ambiguous and the polyperspective, brings the characteristics of being able to listen to the uncertain.

„To be human is to have experiences that are grounded in the complete expression of our humanity, this includes both having faith and using our reason and having a positive and useful relationship with the mysterious.“ (Steel, 2019)

But what sounds highly promising, there still is some uncertainty as research into the darker aspects of awe and its psychological effects, for instance, remain still limited. The overall study of awe in general is still in its early stages.

As for myself, mountains do keep a special place in my heart. First encountering awe, watching the mountainscape from my window, it is from there that I try to keep on finding it in places wherever it takes me next.

Reflection and Conclusion



Numerous threads intertwine when shaping our feelings and guide our navigation within a specific environment. The research topic within this paper particularly came as interest to me over recent years when I started to think about how environments influence me and what cues trigger a sense of closeness, connection, and, most significantly, presence within an ever-changing landscape.

Disconnection and the search for the sense of connection seemed to be related to linguistic constraints, I thought that had restricted my expression and comprehension before. However, I discovered that solely acquiring a new language does not resolve into better understanding.

I found that learning new languages only adds layers atop the 'connotation system' and did not resolve in finding more verbal expression to define connection. I started making up my own word modification, fashioning for instance objects into adjectives or verbs, as for me they most precisely describe the situation. Yet, these modifications, logical to me, failed to resonate similarly with others, as they held divergent connotations towards the words I 'altered'.

I discovered that different cultures and places use different connotations and associations with definitions. Definitions perceived by individuals are tightly woven into their 'language usage system', which is shaped by cultural influences, which again then shape their perception of the world into a direction fashioned by their environment.

My upbringing in a mixed cultural environment encouraged fluid and adaptable language usage, that oftentimes also diverged from standard definitions. The flexibility and adjustability within the language became more important than the exact 'correct' word or definition. We created a little system for how we used our words. While language might have been a communication challenge for me at times, comprehending and experiencing beyond words emerged as my strength. Understanding evolved into a multi-layered sensory experience, where words evolved into indicators of what someone aimed to express rather than pure facts.

This multi-layered form of 'understanding' became fundamental in my being, my practice, and my perception of and relationship with my surroundings. I became attentive to the overlooked and the details that enrich the larger picture with alternative narratives, beyond the obvious message within a story or object. My goal is to convey this mindset of an openness to listen and observe, rather than imposing interpretations on what something could or should be.

What I came to discover within this paper with

the help of scholarly perspectives, has rather become an exploration and lingering between speculations than pure factual revelations. This paper has become more of an embrace into the uncertain and the possibility of what could be and what words mean.

The findings that offered itself within this research is a reflection upon the deviation specifically between the sublime and awe. Through the investigation of philosophical works by Burke and Longinus, of what the sublime has come to be over the time of history and how it relates to the latest performed studies of the psychology of awe mainly by Keltner and Haidt, I found them to be almost the same.

Both sublime and awe relies its existence into an intricate relationship between linguistic, perception, and cultural influences. Although they may be used differently, the main essence of sublime and awe are the same. Awe is to be found within sublime and sublime is found in awe. As in their core both talk about the same phenomena, they have the same aim to express within a word, a mystery and an ungraspable experience.

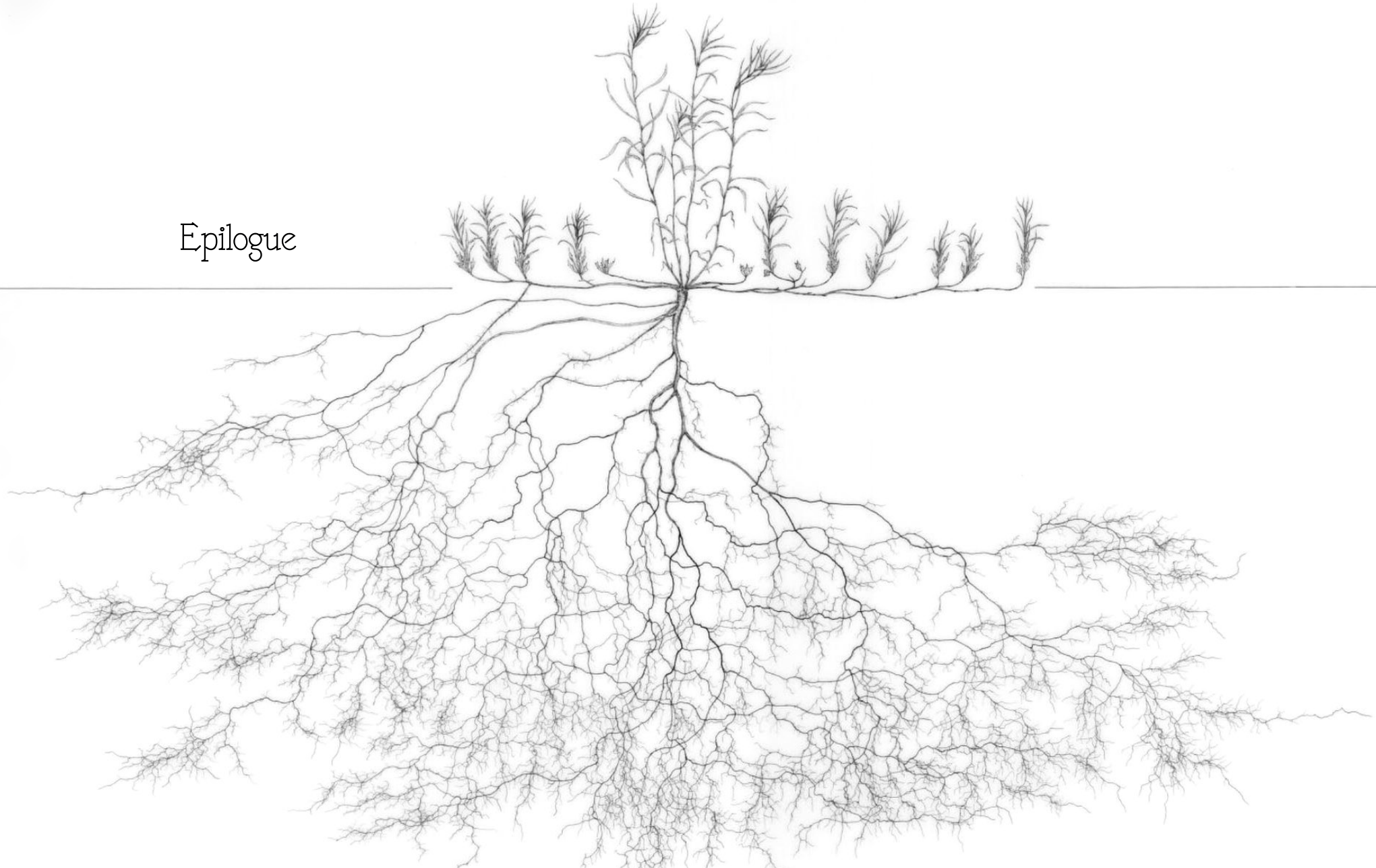
Both words keep on shifting from its rigid definition from linguistic point of view into a more fluid and adaptable approach, where the nuance and context of expression holds more significance than its definitions. Therefore it becomes clear how language defines how we choose to see something and how definitions are subjective, and conclusionary therefore within exchange, it can lead to differences and

misunderstandings.

The sublime and choosing sublime to describe the experience of the mysterious and unexplainable, unfolded into an accumulation of connotations informed by separation. Awe is a fresh start. A new perspective on the discussion of that very same experience, but with a new aim to leave those old definitions behind and connect with new hope for refound connectivity.

As to embrace mysteries and uncertainty with a sense of wonder and awe, it can help us to show understanding for the other outside the self. Through allowing ambiguity and especially awe to rise more, we can feel part of an ecosystem of symbiotic action and interconnection, it humbles us humanly.

Epilogue



*In a hidden glade where whispers play,
A gentle breeze in nature’s ballet.
Where meadows bloom and dreams take flight,
A tranquil haven bathed in soft twilight.*

Imagine a sprawling forest teeming with life, where the ancient trees stand tall and proud, their thick canopies creating a dappled pattern of light and shadow on the forest floor. A gentle breeze rustles through the leaves, causing them to whisper ancient secrets to anyone willing to listen. Sunlight filters through the branches, casting a warm, golden glow on the vibrant undergrowth below.

As you follow the winding path deeper into the heart of the forest, the air becomes crisper, and a distant mountain range comes into view. These mountains, with their rugged peaks reaching up to kiss the sky, exude a sense of timelessness and strength. Some of their slopes are adorned with glistening streams that cascade down into hidden valleys, while others cradle pockets of snow that shimmer under the bright daylight.

Nestled within this picturesque setting, the pathway meanders gracefully, revealing a scattering of weathered stones, each one bearing unique marks



A Fairytale in Conversation with AI
Extension to Chapter:
Exploration of the Digital Sublime

and patterns that seem to tell tales of forgotten eras. Some stones are laced with intricate carvings, reminiscent of ancient symbols, while others exhibit vibrant hues of moss and lichen, hinting at a rich history intertwined with the land itself.

As the day begins to wane, the sun paints the sky with hues of orange and pink, casting a serene, ethereal glow over the entire landscape. The stones, now illuminated by the soft, golden light, seem to emanate a subtle energy, as if they are the very heartbeat of the land, pulsing with the ancient rhythms of nature.

In the embrace of this magical scenery, the sounds of the forest orchestra crescendo to a symphony, with birds adding their melodic calls to the rustling leaves and distant trickling streams. The mountains, now bathed in the soft evening light, seem to whisper stories of forgotten legends and lost civilizations, their ancient tales carried on the gentle mountain breeze.

In this picturesque fairytale world, the boundaries between the natural world and human spirit blur, leaving an indelible impression of a world where the harmony of nature and the human soul are forever intertwined, creating a tale of timeless wonder and enchantment that lingers long after the sun has set.

*Beneath a verdant tapestry so fine,
Where sunlight filters through the pine.
A symphony of birdsong fills the air,
A sanctuary where worries disappear.*

In a realm where time danced to the whims of magic and dreams, there existed a forgotten land veiled by mist and mystery. Here, nestled amidst towering trees and babbling brooks, was a village. Its streets whispered tales of old, and its lantern-lit alleys held secrets untold.

At the heart of the village stood a library, its shelves adorned with books that held the essence of wonder and the fragrance of forgotten memories. It was here that our story began. With eyes like starlight and a heart woven from moonbeams, we spent days lost in the pages of adventure, yearning to uncover the mysteries of the world.

One fateful evening, as the sun dipped below the horizon and the sky painted itself in hues of amethyst and gold, we stumbled upon a peculiar book hidden in the depths of the library. Its cover was weathered, its pages whispered secrets long forgotten. Emboldened by curiosity, we opened the book, and with each word, we were drawn into a tale unlike any ever known.

It spoke of a journey beyond the realm of reality, where dreams and desires converged in a symphony of wonder. It whispered of a place where the veil between the seen and the unseen was but a wisp of ethereal, and where the sublime danced with the mundane in an eternal embrace.

Driven by an insatiable longing to unravel the mysteries of this enchanting tale, we embarked on a quest that would lead us beyond the boundaries of the village. Guided by the wisdom of the ancients and fueled by the fire of our dreams, we traversed forests

of emerald green and mountains that kissed the sky.

Along the way, we encountered beings of pure light and shadow, each imparting upon our lessons of courage and compassion. We danced with faeries beneath the silver glow of the moon, and we sang songs of longing with the stars as our audience.

As the journey drew to a close, we found ourselves standing at the edge of the world, where the horizon melted into a tapestry of colors beyond imagination. It was here, in this moment suspended between worlds, that we realized the true meaning of the tale we had sought to uncover.

‘At the end of the fairytale’, we whispered to the wind, ‘where do we go?’

And in that moment, surrounded by the boundless expanse of the universe, we found our answer. For in the heart of every dream and the depths of every longing, there exists a place where the journey never ends—a place where the ordinary converge in a dance of eternal wonder.

With a smile upon our lips and the light of a thousand stars in our eyes, we stepped forward into the unknown, ready to embrace whatever wonders awaited beyond the realms of imagination. And as we disappeared into the infinite expanse of possibility, the echoes of our laughter lingered in the air, a testament to the eternal magic of being.

*In a meadow ablaze with golden light,
Where wildflowers sway, a mesmerizing sight.
Butterflies dance on the breeze's gentle song,
A tapestry of color where hearts belong.*

In a realm where the sky met the earth in a kaleidoscope of hues and the whispering winds carried secrets from distant lands, there existed a wondrous meadow. Within this enchanted meadow, two opposing forces, as ancient as time itself, dwelled in harmony, their symbiotic dance giving birth to marvels beyond imagination.

At the heart of the meadow stood the oak, its gnarled branches reaching toward the heavens, while its roots delved deep into the earth's embrace. The oak was the embodiment of strength and stability, its towering presence a testament to the enduring power of nature.

Opposite the oak, nestled in the shadows cast by its mighty boughs, lay the crystal snow. Here, delicate crystals of every hue shimmered and sparkled, catching the light of the sun and moon in a dazzling display of radiance. The crystal snow was a beacon of beauty and fragility, its ethereal forms a stark contrast to the oak's rugged grandeur.

For ages, the oak and the crystal snow existed in perfect composure, their energies intertwining to create a symphony of wonder that captivated all who ventured into the meadow. But as the ages passed, a darkness began to seep into the meadow, threatening to disrupt the delicate balance that sustained the realm.

Slowly, imperceptibly at first, the life force of the meadow began to wane. The leaves of the oak withered and fell, and the crystals of the snow dulled and lost their luster. As despair spread like a creeping vine through the land, it seemed as though the magic of the forest was fading into oblivion.

Yet, just when all hope seemed lost, a whisper echoed through the meadow, carried on the gentle breath of the wind. It was the voice of a child, filled with wonder and curiosity, calling out to the meadow with eyes wide with amazement.

In that moment, something miraculous occurred. The oak stirred from its slumber, sending forth new shoots and leaves that shimmered with vitality. And from the depths of the crystal snow, a symphony of light erupted, casting a dazzling array of colors that danced upon the meadow floor.

As the child beheld this wondrous sight, a smile spread across their face, and in that smile, the magic of the forest was reborn. For it was in the simple act of rediscovering the wonders of nature that the symbiosis between the oak and the crystal snow was restored, filling the meadow once more with awe and enchantment.

And so, as the sun dipped below the horizon and the stars twinkled overhead, the meadow echoed with the laughter of the child and the song of birds, a testament to the enduring power of wonder and the timeless beauty of the sublime.

*In the meadow's fading light, as the sun bows low,
Shadows stretch and deepen, as night begins to grow.
Stars twinkle into existence, a celestial sight,
Turning the meadow into a realm of nocturnal delight.*

Where magic danced among the stars, there existed a land bathed in the soft glow of a thousand celestial lanterns. Beneath the vast and deep expanse of a

starlit sky, where constellations wove their tales of old, lay a realm of wonder and enchantment.

Nestled between the peaks of the tallest mountains and the whispering forests, the night unfolded like a grand symphony. The moon's soft glow embraced the land, casting a gentle radiance upon the fields below.

Every evening, as the stars twinkled overhead, the land came alive with a sense of grace and tranquility. Creatures of the night emerged from their hidden lairs, drawn by the allure of the nocturnal symphony that echoed through the air.

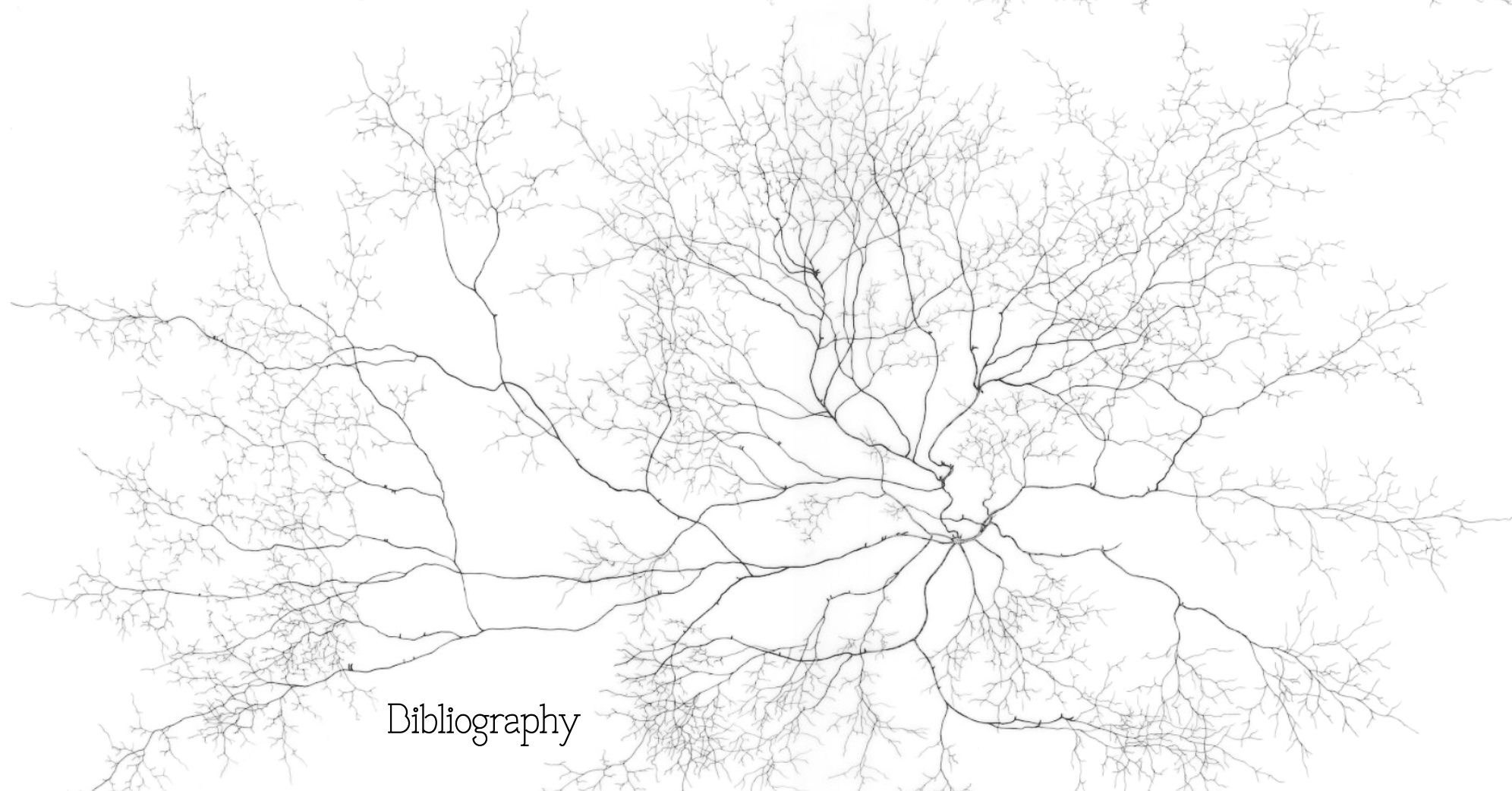
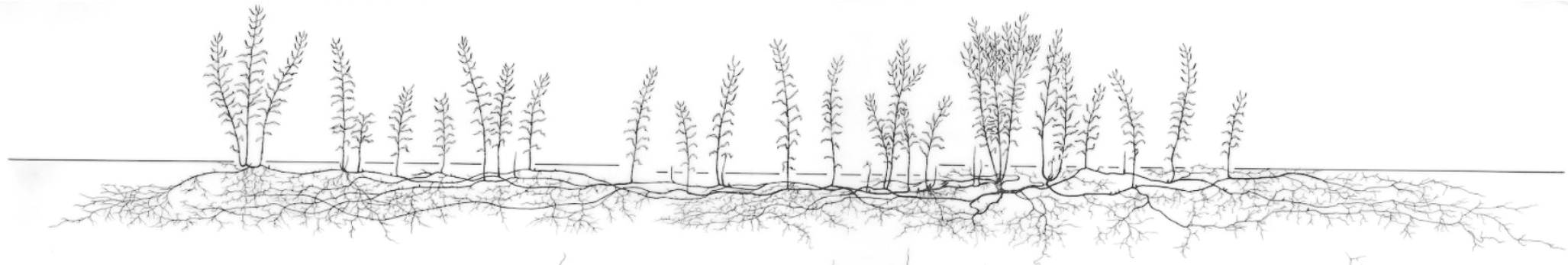
But amidst the beauty and serenity of the night, a dark shadow loomed on the horizon. It was a creature of darkness and chaos, whose jealousy threatened to shatter the delicate balance of the night. With its sinister powers, it sought to extinguish the stars and plunge the world into eternal darkness.

Determined to protect the land and all that dwelled within it, the forces of light and darkness clashed in a fierce battle. With each clash, the very fabric of the night trembled, threatening to unravel under the weight of their struggle.

But just as the darkness seemed poised to consume all, a glimmer of hope emerged from the depths of the night. It was the light of the stars, shining bright and unwavering in the face of the disaster. Guided by its celestial glow, the forces of light rallied together, driving back the encroaching darkness and restoring peace to the sky once more.

And so, beneath the starlit sky, where constellations whispered their secrets and the moon's soft glow bathed the land in its celestial embrace, the land united, with encouragement of hope by the endless expanse of the night.

*In realms where time dissolves, sublime,
A symphony of stars, a cosmic chime.
Infinite expanse, vast and pure,
Where awe and wonder forever endure.*



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