

Kant's Logic of the Pathological: Aesthetics and Politics

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The guiding thread of this thematic dossier devoted to ‘Kant’s Logic of the Pathological: Aesthetics and Politics’ invites one to follow and examine a subtle web of imperfect analogies that produce an inter-expressive relationship between an aesthetic community and a political community. The underlying assumption proposes that the creative or poetic *Logos* of the community encloses and discloses several layers of *Pathos*, namely ‘the most violent inclination of all,’ that is to say, the passion of freedom. Indeed, paragraph 82 of the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* focuses ‘On the inclination to freedom as a passion,’ describing the ‘natural human being’ (*Naturmensch*) as inhabitant of a Hobbesian scenario in which the natural concept of justice entails a reciprocal claim to freedom, and hence a state of continuous warfare (AA 7: 268-269). As naturally obscure and primordially common representations, the idea of freedom and the idea of justice (and right) merge originally together, whereas all limitation or constraint or hindrance imposed on freedom constitutes the very essence of injustice. Consequently, Kant endorses the firstness of *pathos* in the genesis of both personhood and sociability, reconnecting the history of psyche and polis. Now, the aesthetic genius can be considered as the most passionate of all free beings capable of self-organization, and the artworks that emerge from the creative genius reveal not only the productive intensity of freedom but also its

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perfectibility towards truth and beauty, validated by the *sensus communis*, the judgment of taste, shared by a community. This is why in her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* H. Arendt locates aesthetics at the heart of politics, through the communality and communicability of taste, the togetherness of feeling and judging the beautiful. Unsurprisingly enough, the powers of imagination are nurtured by the intimate *commercium* that binds together the praxis of inventing, judging and feeling, and thus the formative efficacy of imagination plays a central role in interweaving the texture of political life. Probably the most paradigmatic case of the psycho-political efficacy of *pathos* resides in the Kantian portrayal of the affect of enthusiasm shared by the spectators of the French Revolution (see *Conflict of Faculties*, 2nd Part, §. 6; AA 7: 85-86). This disinterested enthusiasm testifies, according to Kant, to a universal moral community that transcends the borders of States and enjoys every progressive movement towards the fulfilment of republicanism and peace.

Texts that integrate this thematic dossier deal with diverse issues at the intersection of aesthetics and politics, and thereby try and contribute to the study of the conditions of possibility of a social community. They unveil some of the Kantian subtlest paradoxes or hidden dynamic antinomies that bind together the naturally pathological powers of mankind with the rational duty of accomplishment of its moral and cosmopolitical self-determination.

Maria Borges, in her article entitled '*Emotion and the beautiful in art*,' revisits the Kantian classification of emotional processes that include affects, moral, feelings, and passions, in order to elucidate what emotions, if any, are mobilized in aesthetic judgment and in aesthetic experience, broadly conceived. Her analysis demonstrates that a strict formalist perspective is confronted with serious limitations, especially in the realm of music. Therefore, she seems to endorse a hybrid interpretation of Kantian aesthetics, partly formalist and partly expressivist, entangling the structure of shapes with the force of qualities (intensive qualities, as it were).

Virginia Figueiredo proposes a metaphorical and analogical question to open up an inquiry concerning the nature of aesthetic creativity: '*Does a genius produce his artworks like an apple tree, its apples?*,' and thereby she offers a careful and audacious examination of a fundamental isomorphy underneath the productivity of life in general and of artistic

personalities in particular. Her interpretive hypothesis asserts that the universal spontaneity of *natura naturans* reveals itself in the concrete singularity of an artist; the subjective process of creation with its material uniqueness espouses the transcendental poetry of life.

Daniela Angelucci's contribution, '*From the Sublime to the Monstrous. Two Interpretations of Kant,*' instead of considering Kant's concept of sublime as such, as do many scholars, presents a linguistic analysis of two of the main aspects of the Kantian sublime: the monstrous and the prodigious, and from then proceeds to show how these can be disruptive regarding one's ability to represent. Namely, Angelucci's theory is that both the monstrous and the prodigious, in its sublime manifestation, bring about fear and astonishment that provoke not only a break in one's regular representative activity, but greatly challenge it, thereby enabling new thoughts and cognitive experiences.

Martín Fleitas González, in an article entitled '*A Kantian Sovereignty of Attention as a Therapy for Mental Illnesses,*' dwells on the topic of attention both as an original constituent of knowledge, and, yet, as a possible contributing factor for mental illnesses. Namely, by considering the role of attention in various dimensions of Kant's thought, the author is led to conclude that a frail attention is linked to many disturbances of the soul, which, in turn, results in a cognitive deficit. This can only be countered by what the author deems a 'sovereignty of attention,' a Kantian ideal that stands as the ultimate proof and solution for the aforementioned problems.

Serena Feloj's study on mental illness, '*A Sick Imagination: Pathologies and Errors in Judgment,*' reflects on the hiatus between reason and absence of reason. The author hereby challenges Foucault's well-known position, which separates the worlds of folly and science, or madness and mental illness, by defending that the transition from madness to mental illness, as operated in the 18th century, does not exclude elements of contact between rational knowledge and the definition of psychopathy. This the author does with the help of several Kantian texts, especially the *Anthropology*, which prove the aforementioned opinion.

We wish you all a most enjoyable reading.

The editors

