

Kant's Theory of Emotions

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In recent decades, Kantian scholarship has gone through an “empirical turn,” especially in the English-speaking world. Although this phenomenon has sometimes resulted in studies that overlook consider properly the transcendental nature of Kantian philosophy, it is undoubtedly noteworthy, since it has cast light on some aspects not adequately explored. As a result, increasing remarkable attention to Kant’s account of emotions, and its relation to anthropology, morals, and aesthetics, could be reported in the last times. The new book, edited by Mariannina Failla and Nuria Sánchez Madrid, aims to encourage this field of study, joining Kant’s account with contemporary debate as well. *Kant on Emotions* provides a well-balanced analysis divided into three sections, which combine a traditional analysis of Kant’s account (Section 1: *Mind, Moral Agency, and Emotional Normativity*) with approaches that engage Kant’s philosophy in dialogue with contemporary thought (Section 2: *Critical Emotions: On Kant’s Aftermath*) and recent viewpoints in the philosophy of mind (Section 3: *Kant’s Emotions and Contemporary Philosophy of Mind*).

In a footnote of *What Does it Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?*, Kant expresses the belief that reason itself does not feel, but rather that it produces feeling through inner drives as a “subjective need” (WDO 08: 139-140). On that account, the authors analyse, according to different perspectives, how reason itself can stimulate the human being to

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achieve the different purposes of the faculties of mind, through emotions, needs, and passions.

An account of Kant's theory of human agency in the light of the "emotional turn" is offered in the first section of the book. Nuria Sánchez Madrid (in *Kant's Emotional Normativity and the Embodiment of Reason: Interests, Reflection, and Feelings*, pp. 9-23) explores Kant's considerations of those emotions that could be regarded as a way of promoting an enduring dominance of reason over desires and inclinations. Although Kant refuses every attempt to configure the principles of practical philosophy starting from human empirical aspects, he also states that "the counterpart of the metaphysics of morals [...] would be moral anthropology, which, however, would deal only with the subjective conditions that hinder men or help them in fulfilling the laws of a metaphysics of morals" (MS 06: 217). The difficulty of defining the meaning of the term emotion, because it includes a wide set of affective states, does not preclude the possibility to use *emotions* "to support higher faculties of mind in their ability to improve and fully develop the moral performance of the human agent" (p. 11). Furthermore, Sánchez Madrid wisely highlights how psychoanalytical findings of the twentieth century were already somehow in embryo in Kant's account of emotion, since he shows to be aware that emotional states do not overlap with the conscious agency of the subject.

Ana Marta González (*Unpacking Moral Feeling: Kantian Clues to a Map of the Moral World*, pp. 25-43) aims to attention to the connection between practical reason, moral feeling, and the empirical accomplishment of moral law. Starting from what Kant claims in *What Does it Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?* (in particular in the footnote at WDO 08: 139-140), this chapter casts the light on moral sentiment, considered an impulse to morality, in that reason, under the influence of the moral law, feels called to moral action. As a result, González analyses the role played by moral feeling as a tool for executing the moral law in the empirical realm. Because the moral feeling only represents a *principium executionis*, and never a *principium iudicationis*, is necessary to take a step forward to claim that moral feeling plays a role in orientating ourselves in moral matters. The author believes that to do so is necessary to look at what Kant claims especially in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, where "the cartography of moral life around the logical requirements of the categorical imperative for human beings" (p. 41) is presented.

Mariannina Failla proposes an original and interesting analysis of Kant's account of emotions. In *Edenic Animality, Self-Sustenance, Loving and Dying: Corporeal Biological Needs and Emotions in Kant* (pp. 45-54), she investigates the joint between emotions, sentiments, instincts, and moral action with the fruitful help of the Kantian reflections on the beginning of history. Therefore, she shows how Kant's considerations about the Holy Scriptures are grounded in ethical and anthropological interests, and how they can represent a psycho-corporeal genealogy of moral agency.

Outlining past philosophical systems to show their reflections more effectively, there could be the risk of mistakenly ascribing the views of philosophers to traditions they never actually identified with. The English moral philosopher Bernard Williams, in *Shame and Necessity* (1993), claims that Kant dismisses the role of shame, considering it as a heteronomous element that does not deserve proper consideration. However, Ana Cristina Falcato's interesting analysis (*Kant and the 'True Shame Instinct': Notes on the Future of the Human Species*, pp. 55-67) of textual sources ignored by Williams (see Ethics' courses in the 1760s) elucidates the Kantian thought about the role played by the shame on the improvement of human beings. In addition, Falcato explores Kant's view on the role of shame in connection with the relationship between the sexes, expressed especially in the third chapter of *Observations of the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*.

The contribution by Maria Borges (*Passions and Evil in Kant's Philosophy*, pp. 69-83) casts light on the relationship between passions and evil. The *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* asserts that both affects and passions impede the sovereignty of reason, yet their difference is accurately explained. Moreover, Borges explores further these two states, as they are considered in the *Religionschrift*. Finally, she proposes an original solution, which goes beyond Kant's philosophy, to overcoming evil: an ethical community.

The second section, *Critical Emotions: On Kant's Aftermath*, aims at considering Kant's theory of emotion from the perspective of contemporary aesthetics. However, the only essay that copes with the Kantian legacy and its interpretation by a contemporary philosopher is that of Daniela Angelucci, "An Emotion That Seems to Be No Play": *Deleuze on Kantian Sublime* (pp. 121-135). As this essay well shows, Kant is a constant presence in Deleuze's philosophy. Although at first Kant is viewed as an enemy, because of his imprisonment within the philosophy of common sense, later Deleuze recognizes his closeness to Kant. Angelucci states that the subject's passivity during the experience of the Kantian sublime—described as a "momentary inhibition of the vital powers and the immediately following and all the more powerful outpouring of them" (KU 05: 245)—is similar to what happens in the case of a cinematographic image, according to Deleuze. The failure of faculties, caused by this particular image, becomes the genesis of the direct presentation of time, and therefore of the contact with thought itself. For this reason, Angelucci concludes by arguing that the Kantian sublime "can be considered a precursor of the crystal-image, that is, the genetic moment of the time-image—one of the most powerful concepts created by Deleuze to describe the accidental beginning of a necessary thought" (p. 135).

The other two essays in the second section deal with two of the most debated topics of Kantian aesthetics, that is the nature of aesthetic pleasure and that of aesthetic normativity. Igor Cvejić, in *Intentionality Sui Generis of Pleasure in Mere Reflection* (pp. 87-106), addresses the well-known dispute about the intentionality or not-intentionality of pleasure in Kant's theory of taste. After rejecting Guyer's and Zuckert's interpretations, the chapter

explores in detail the issue of pleasure in mere reflection. In addition, Cvejić reads the intentionality of the aesthetic pleasure as *sui generis* feeling-intentionality, through which a beautiful object is constituted. A reconsideration of aesthetic normativity is carried out by Serena Feloj, in *Exemplarity Emotions: A Discussion of Normativity in Kant's Aesthetic Judgment* (pp. 107-120). In order to put forward a proposal to the current English-speaking debate about aesthetic normativity, Feloj tries to outline the a posteriori side of the Kantian judgment of taste, whereas Kant had instead investigated its transcendental conditions. As a result, this chapter discusses the normative character of aesthetic emotions in Kant by calling upon the notions of exemplarity, considering Hume's "standard of taste" as well. In doing so, Feloj provides an alternative reading of certain elements of Kant's aesthetics of pivotal relevance in contemporary debate.

The third part of the book (*Kant's Emotions and Contemporary Philosophy of Mind*) focuses on Kant's thought on emotions in light of the contemporary research in philosophy of mind and neuroscience. Pedro Jesús Teruel, in *The Ambiguity of Kantian Emotions: Philosophical, Biological and Neuroscientific Implications* (pp. 139-154), proceeds his original inquiry into the possibilities and boundaries of understanding transcendental philosophy within the natural sciences. Therefore, Teruel is aware of the absence of the current meaning of the term "emotion" in Kant's writing, nonetheless, he aims at showing the link between the Kantian approach to the psycho-physical, embodied side of mood-rooted, pleasure-receptive changes, whose reaction goes beyond the deliberative instances of the individual, and the classic issue of pathos, more closely connected to the Stoic view. As a result, a naturalistic interpretation of transcendental philosophy, and in particular of Kant's reflections on emotion, is given, considering the connection with the brain's functional areas and neuronal facilitation as well.

Calibration Hypothesis: Rethinking Kant's Place for Emotion and the Brain's Resting-State (pp. 155-169), by Dina Mendonça investigates to what extent the predictive mind hypothesis can have its origin in Kant's model of rationality. According to Mendonça, the Kantian view of emotions includes a mediate control over the emotional landscape, in which one of the activities of the brain can be seen as integrating experience and adjusting the subject's general emotional structure to better deal with future experiences. Although Mendonça's hypothesis must be empirically tested, it offers a new examination of the role of emotions in Kant's ethics.

In the last chapter, *Kantian Lange Weile Within the Contemporary Psychology of Boredom* (pp. 171-184), Josefa Ros Velasco retracts some of her past statements about the Kantian approach to boredom. In fact, during the *II Congreso de la Sociedad de Estudios Kantianos en Lengua Española* (2014), she confused the words of Kant and those of Hans Blumenberg: it was not Kant, but Blumenberg who wrote that boredom was a pain that motivated men to action. After an initial attempt to show how Kant offers an ideal critique of the current understanding of boredom as a mental disorder, Ros Velasco, reviewing Kant's *Anthropology*, retraced her steps and realized that Kant considers boredom as a

result of an inability to feel positive pain and his approach could contribute to the present view of boredom as a pathology. In addition, because Kant's approach to boredom is cultural, not neurological, Ros Velasco can analyse in-depth the peculiarities of this account, as it is expressed not only in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* but also in the three *Critiques* and *Mrongovius' Anthropology*, showing how Kant considers boredom a consequence of the socio-economic structure.

The book assumes a broad connotation of the term *emotion*, since there is no trace in the Kantian writings of its direct German counterpart *Emotion*. In fact, in the Kantian corpus, we find many other terms connected to this semantic field, such as *Begierde*, *Neigung*, *Leidenschaft*, *Affekt*, *Gefühl*, *Rührung*, *Motion*, *Erregung*, etc. each of them has a particular meaning, each of which has its meaning, not entirely overlapping to current's one of emotion. As Teruel points out (pp. 139-147), if emotion is an embodied, psychical, and conscious reaction to internal or external solitudes, the term "emotion" must be understood in the proper sense as *Affekt*, arising through bodily and affective motion, which is linked to the sensation of pleasure and displeasure. Nevertheless, giving a broad connotation to the word *emotion*, the book shows the relevance within Kant's conception of the subject of the empirical, effective, and emotional side.

In conclusion, this volume gives a crucial contribution to an innovative approach to an important part of Kant's philosophy. On the one hand, it is analysed the role played by emotions, understood as affective states, in transcendental philosophy. Thus, it is shown the relevance of emotions in the human's attempt to meet the ends of reason. On the other hand, the fruitfulness and richness of Kantian thought are emphasized in the light of contemporary scientific research on moral agency.

