

Kant between politics and poli(ethics). Kant between. Kant in between. Kant is between. Kant as between. Kant (as) between. Have we mentioned them all? There are at least five possibilities. Possible impossibilities. Possible im-possibilities. The fact (if we are enough brave to say that horrible word „fact“) is that Kant has always been between. Not just in that banal sense of being in the space bordered by two extremes. Kant was outside but between. Between rationalism and empiricism. Between Descartes and Hegel. Between Dante and Rosa Luxemburg. Between “poli” and “(poli)”. He was “poli” between. In the multitude of being(s) between. Precisely because of that in Kant’s works we can find specters, both past and present forms of absence. Of absent presence. Kant lacks ghosts, but not specters. His works are cemeteries of the difference between plastic representation and linguistic reference. Consequently, perpetual peace is perpetual because it is not perpetual. Kant is not an issue for philosophy, Kant is a victim of language, the language, the only language that he could apprehend and thus convict himself to the destitute and hopeless repetition of what can be called today (and we should say “adieu” to Derrida for this term): lyconomy.

Before we address particular questions of Kant’s moral and political (anti)philosophy, there is an urgent need to discuss the title of this conference. Namely, to say “pragmatist Kant” means to judge him, to say whether he is pragmatist or not. If we will judge Kant, we must judge him with his own notion of judgment. Certainly, that notion is a judgment without concept, as Rancierre puts it. So, to judge Kant as pragmatist, means to judge him without the concept of pragmatism, to use the master signifier which transforms the empty field of signifier into a powerful domain of signified. Pragmatist Kant does not necessarily mean that Kant is pragmatist or that Kant can be pragmatist or even that „pragmatist” is an adjective. Pragmatist Kant is contingent as every other linguistic reference. On the basic level of syntactic and semantic interaction, the same value is in the following statement “Kant Pragmatist”. To deny the last sentence means to stay incarcerated in logocentrism. To take “pragmatist Kant” for granted is to create a “logocentric Kant”, Kant between anything and everything, Kant of liberal democracy, paradoxical Kant. It is suitable here to quote Ludwig Klages: “A man who cannot climb a tree will boast of never having fallen out of one”. When we apply it to our (t)issue: a man who does not have enough courage to deconstruct and bury Kant will tend to justify himself by putting Kant in a pragmatist perspective. Pragmatist Kant, let it be.

Saying Pragmatist Kant equals to saying Kant the Grasshopper. Kant the Roof. Kant as a Tree. Not only don’t we judge because we do, but we also re-appropriate what has never been „owned” by Kant. Saying that something is Kant’s, that Kant is something without the (im-)possibility of being else or, far more cruelly, without the im-possibility of not being precisely that something – all this shows us that we seek the un-presentable-to-come, namely: Justice. For, what would Justice be if it did not re-invent itself in re-inventing the Law? A passage not to be left out anymore. That is why we proudly say: Deconstructionist Kant. May Rorty be with us.

Kant between polipolitics and poliethics. For, no politics without polipolitics. Isn’t it so? Kant between politics and poli(e)thics, that’s why we are here. Politics and polithics, without this difference which is precisely the difference in similarity (and viceversa), I would not talk today. No Kant without polithics. And that is why Hannah Arendt is wrong about him: she is wrong because of being right. The ghost and the specter of the im-possible deconstruction is what makes us deconstruct. Even if we do not

do. We do because we do not. If we did, we would do what Kant did, which is perfectly legitimate. And lyconomic. And legal. But now we seek justice, democracy and deconstruction. We seek them till we do not find them where we are. In Heidegger's words: let us go where we are. The longest path to overcome. Still, the shortest one to be found. The shortest (is) the longest. If one plus one is at least three, than we cannot say at least without at least the im-possibility of at least. Which means that one plus one is equally at least one hundred thirty five. The ghost and the specter of Kant are about to come. They come because they do not, to the extent that they remain just a promise. Which is im-possible. The very moment I organise a conference on Pragmatist Kant, I legitimise and de-legitimise myself as the ghost and the specter of Kant. In other words, this definite article the, altogether with the ghost and the specter, all of them are singular plural. Singular (is) plural.

As our title suggests we will try to deconstruct Kant's position on the relationship between ethics and politics. But that is the final aim. In order to arrive there, we must examine dubious ideas of universal history, perpetual peace, enlightenment, human nature and the notion of rights and duties. Hannah Arendt was not right in saying that Kant's political philosophy does not exist since he wrote Political writings during the last years of his life, affected by mental retardation and dementia. All the given terms, ideas and coherent reasoning in Kant's Political writings leave the impression of a comprehensive referential frame. To conclude, Kant's political philosophy exists, but it is dangerous and wrong from the first word. The very first word. We will try to highlight some of the misconceptions as well as to show how Kantian legacy affects us all even today.

We entitled our work in this way just because we had to have a title: deconstructing Kant's position means at least two problems for us. Firstly, it is not us who deconstruct: even better, it is us who de-deconstruct while deconstructing. No deconstruction without de-deconstruction. Secondly, deconstructing Kant's position would mean that there is a position of Kant's. A sort of a precise geometrical figure brimming with content. It is not so simple and this is why Hannah Arendt can state that there is no political philosophy in Kant. Which enables us to say the opposite. Which, again, enables you to say whatever you want. Which means that Kant's position, rather than being posited (fixed), is posited (proposed). Kant's position is to-come. Kant's position is im-possible. Kant is deaf.

If, according to Hannah, there is no coherence and cohesion in what we label as Kant's Political Philosophy, this does not mean that nobody can find it. These characteristics of Kant's work we analysed are familiar to us and we apologise for that. We apologise because they remain im-possible.

To sum up, we will try to show why Kant's political philosophy is dangerous and cruel. It is because it is perfectly innocent and innocuous. Once again, without this im-possible possibility, we would not be here today.

Welcome and welcome us.

Kant was obsessed with universality. Everything must be universal, inherent to anyone and everyone, in order to be right, good, beautiful, sublime. Consequently, history must be universal to be the

right history. The biggest problem with this idea lies in the hidden transformation of a Universal history, into the Universal history. Man is just part of the system and the only thing that makes him different from others is social antagonism. Man is negatively different from others, he is just a part of the bigger aim, still he can deny some of the features of the system and make himself antagonist to false protagonists of the Universal history. Here we can find a feature of another Kant's idea, the teleological nature. If everything was decided in advance, then Universal history is just a reflection, an archive, a witness of a collective tragedy. Dare to imagine nature with plan, nature with always-already defined goals and we are there to fulfill the demands without any possibility to escape. Kant imagined that world and created Universal history, a trauma which is a vivid simulacra of a freedom, the freedom, freedom. To quote Kant: "Human aim is on the level of humanity, not individual". Certainly, the teleological nature of nature dictates the universalization of aims. But then, what is the position of an individual in the world where he does not have the autonomy over his life, just the lychonomy over the im-possibility of control? Is he just a "sheep who needs sheperd"? Ideas of Universal history which is always particular and personal and the teleological nature confirm this thesis. Kant's definition of Universal history is: "Perfect civic union of the human species". Without opening a rigorous analysis of the singular plurality of "human species", we must notice again that Otherness is brutally sustained. It is a perfect civic union, the perfect civic union, thus created by the notion of one and the final aim of humanity, not individual. The adjective perfect also concerns since something perfect is always in the Kantian world of noumenal, a world not available to our cognition. Kant deliberately puts civic union on an inapprehendable level because it cannot be subject to change, it is always-already determined and man is there just to be antagonist in strictly controlled, Orwellian vision of world.

On other occasions Kant gives antropocentric vision of world. For example: "We have sufficient reason to regard the human being not merely as an end of nature like all other organized beings, but rather as the ultimate end of nature here on earth". Even though human being is antagonistic, irrational and in the permanent state of self-incurred immaturity, he is honored with the status of the ultimate end. That is precisely because he believes in the teleological nature, in Universal history. He is the only being on the planet to do so. And that characteristic is attached to the notion of rationality and human ability to make distinction between good and evil. Here begins moral relativism at its purest. On the one hand, humans are rational beings. On the other hand, what is pertinent to humans is to turn the rationality upside down with their "moral regression". Finally, the big question is why the perfect teleological nature let humans to be irrational? Kant tried to answer: "Humans create aims and ends and as such intentional beings belong to nature." A false autonomy was given, but in Kant, there is always something bigger than individual. In this particular situation, humans belong to nature, but just as creators of aims which contribute to the big final aim of nature, which, again, lies in the root of the teleological concept of nature. You can be a bad man, as long as there is a higher final aim which will overshadow your "badness", as long as there is a perfect civic union that will try to enlighten you by the force of law, by the brute force of ratio. Passivization of humans, of individuals is here covered in the veils of an euphemism, and is totally disclosed in the sentence: think how much you want, just obey.

Another important question in Kant is the question of truth, or, better, Truth. The question of Truth. As though Truth were a conscious subject which can make a question. As if it could be embodied.

As if it existed. Actually, it exists to the extent that it is a ferocious lie. I am lying to you even though I am trying to tell you (the) truth. If it is true that unconscious expresses itself through language, than (the) truth is singular plural. And here lies all the abyss of Kantian poli(e)thics. Alenka Zupančič defined this as 'truthfulness', the will to tell the truth, to be distinguished from the truth itself. If this difference did not exist, we would not quote Alenka and we would not discuss about Kant. Instead, we do discuss because we do not: my death is the structural necessity of pronouncing 'I' and 'me', Derrida would say.

Now, what makes 'truthfulness' so important when talking about The Right to Lie? Well, the fact that it reduces (the) truth to a void to be filled in or not by the Other. And here Kant makes a big mistake: what if a murderer knocked at my door and I said that there is no friend of mine there, what if that friend of mine decided in that very moment to get into my home through a window? It is clear that I spoke (the) truth, but the murderer may not think so. We see in this example that there is no Truth, no truth without the im-possibility of Lie, of a lie. Truth is exactly what vanishes in the relationship between the three characters from our story. Truth is im-possible. As Benjamin Constant says: no society exists where Truth is a duty. The Right to Lie lies (in at least two senses: in the sense of lying and lying-to) in the im-possibility of a Truth.

However, we can observe this dimension in many other Kant's writings. For instance, in his essay on Enlightenment, Kant states that "Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity". Here we should ask before all who decides when we are mature and why we need to imagine this motion as radical where the two extremes cannot coincide at all. Even though they do because they do not, as overripeness is structurally necessary to the ex-pression of maturity. It is clear that we are in front of an example of Hegelian *Aufhebung* here: we have a present that substitutes a present. An ideology which takes control over another ideology. And so on and so forth. No alterity, as can be seen too from the fact that it is just man who can render himself (im)mature.

The Other is out. In Kant's words: "This immaturity is self-incurred if its cause is not the lack of understanding, but the lack of resolution to use it, without the guidance of another". However, what is my own understanding? Is it subject to iter-alteration (itara)? If it is not, then no need to speak of "another", as Kant does; if it is, how shall we imagine the bare, void presence of 'another' with no influence on my 'own' understanding? In other words, how to imagine difference without repetition (G. Deleuze) and transcendental genesis without Alterity (V. Costa, J. Derrida)?

Finally, what consequences do all our observations bring when talking about (perpetual) peace? I wrote (perpetual) peace for one reason: Kant makes a clear difference between "a suspension of hostilities" and "peace"; moreover, he claims that "peace means an end to *all* hostilities and to attach the adjective 'perpetual' to it is already suspiciously close to pleonasm". As we see, for Kant, peace is inherently perpetual. But then, peace *is not* at all. How can we say what is peace if we have just peace (if just peace *is*)? Even Kant says that "peace means *an* end", just an end and not *the* end "to all hostilities". Once again, the unconscious contacts us through language: *an* end cannot be universal. It can, to the extent that it is particular, individual and, as such, chaque fois unique, la fin du monde (every time unique, *the* end of world). Which means that we cannot decide once for all what is peace and what is hostility. We can because we cannot. Such a lyconomy is im-possible.

What is crucial too, is that even when talking about inherently perpetual peace, Kant cannot leave out the question of 'hostilities'. The specter of hostility is what makes us state the following: peace (is) hostility. Or, as Derrida claims in his thesis on Husserl: "The essential of transcendental genesis is to produce the becoming of the Absolute in clear evidence".

To end where it all began: Kant is always between. Especially between rights and duties. A universal term of rights in Kant's philosophy becomes obviously a duty. A duty which negates rights. When rights get to the point of must-be-done (a pragmatist point!), they are not rights anymore. Accordingly, the right to life is transformed into the duty of a certain kind of life, subordinated to the principle of teleological nature. The right to vote is transformed into the duty to respect the civic community. The right to lie is transformed in the duty to tell the truth. All of the mentioned is precisely because the right to ethics is transformed into the duty of politics. Deontos has always been a political category. The mask of democracy cannot help. As Kant said: "Democracy is developed under veils of despotic practice". The right to democracy is transformed into a plastic negation of itself. Who dares wins. To begin where it all ended: Kant is between. Between you and us. Between poli(e)thics and politics. Between pragmatism. Between. There are no extremes without this between. Without any middle. Which is exactly what Kant is as when being between, in the middle, Kant is exactly everything and nothing. Between. The creation of this, perfect, Kantian Kant, should be compared to the cruel action of canting Kant personally.

Writing on Kant, writing *on* Kant, giving lecture on Kant, giving lecture (while sitting) *on* Kant; don't you find this violent? As violent as one may find the aforementioned act of canting a square, that geometric figure Kant must have adored when he became interested in mathematics at a young age... I have never written on Derrida, states J. L. Nancy. And I find it disgusting. Incising Kant or Derrida, but not just because they are Kant and Derrida, writing *on* them, *on* their works; writing *on* the other, incising the other. If we forget all the horror of such a scene, every talk, lecture or writing should be immediately suspended. Suspended by the Demos and continued by he who dared to lose by winning. This is what the duty of Poli(e)t(h)ics is all about.