

# ***What Taste and Perfume Add to the Political Interpretation of the Kantian Aesthetic Judgment by Arendt and Deleuze***

Isabelle Rieusset-Lemarie\*

*University Paris I Pantheon – Sorbonne*

ABSTRACT. H. Arendt paved the way to the political interpretation of the Kantian aesthetic judgment. She put the stress on two issues that we develop in this paper: first, the political horizon of the world citizen linked with the enlarged mentality based on the role of *Einfühlung* in the second maxim of *sensus communis*; second, the privileged role of the reflecting judgment in matters of deliberation facing political crisis. But Arendt's depreciation of Taste and Smell as "private senses" prejudiced the magnificent way she opened. First, we must take into account not only the anchorage of the aesthetic judgment in Taste but also the privileged role of Smell in the reflecting judgment as it was highlighted by Albert le Grand. Moreover, we show that the political incidences of the judgment of taste can't be totally intelligible without underlining the political incidences of the culture of taste as it appeared, specifically, in the ending part of the Greek banquet devoted to the tasting of wine: the symposium. We decipher in the culture of wine (from its Egyptian and Greek sources to contemporary incidences) not only the reflecting judgment leading to the "enlarged citizenship" fitting the political incidence of the "enlarged mentality", but also the political role of Joy. This analysis converges with the Spinozian interpretation of the judgment of taste developed by Deleuze that leads him to underline the political role of Joy as it is opposed, by Spinoza, to sadness and passivity, which paved the way to slavery. Then the determinant role of pleasure as a privileged access to freedom which was hinted by Arendt in the judgment of taste can be re-examined by the light of the role of both free pleasure and shared pleasure (linked with joy). Hence the prominent

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\* Email: irieusset@orange.fr

political role of empathy underlined by Arendt in the “enlarged mentality” is enlightened in a more general perspective underlining the political role of empathy for joy.

## ***1. Arendt’s Political Interpretation of the Kantian Aesthetic Judgment.***

### *1.1. The Crucial Role of “Enlarged Mentality”*

Hannah Arendt paved the way to the political interpretation of the Kantian aesthetic judgment:

“It is in an article by Arendt entitled “Freedom and Politics”, published in 1961, that we first encounter the idea that Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* contains the seeds of a political philosophy”. (Beiner, 1992, p.101)

Arendt (1961, p. 207) is conscious that this idea “is seldom mentioned in works on Kant”. Yet, it is a “fact<sup>1</sup>”, not a mere assumption. In Arendt’s view, the crucial political relevance of the *Third Critique* is based on “that wider manner of thinking which is political thinking par excellence, because it enables us to “put ourselves in the minds of other men”” (Arendt, 1992, p. 102). We clearly decipher here the “enlarged mentality”, namely the second maxim of the “sensus communis” which is based on *Einfühlung*. Arendt showed us how an aesthetic concern can turn into something that conveys the political incidence embedded in the Kantian “world citizen”:

“The “enlargement of the mind”/.../is accomplished /.../ “by putting ourselves in the place of any other man.”(Kant 1790, §40)/.../ Hence, critical thinking, while still a solitary business, does not cut itself off from “all others”. To be sure, it still goes on in isolation, but by the force of imagination it makes the others present and thus moves in a space that is potentially public, open to all sides; in other words, it adopts the position of Kant’s world citizen. To think with an enlarged mentality means that one trains one’s imagination to go visiting. (Compare the right to visit in *Perpetual Peace*.)” (Arendt, 1992, pp. 42-43)

<sup>1</sup> “That the first part of the latter [Critique of Judgment] is, in reality, a political philosophy is a fact that is seldom mentioned in works on Kant”. (Arendt, 1992, p. 101).

Arendt's concept of "potential public space" is one of her major, whereas unnoticed, contributions. It shows the actual process by which an aesthetic experience turns out to be a potential political one. But the faculty of imagination "to go visiting" is of crucial meaning as well. It depicts the ability of the enlarged mentality to "go abroad" in order to encounter the universal figure of alterity embodied in the face of the foreigner.

It is important to take into account the fact that, in Kant's view, *sensus communis* is not reducible to an adjacent set of remarks in the *Third Critique*. Kant (1790, §40) writes: "one could attribute the name *sensus communis* to Taste".

### 1.2. Arendt's Depreciation of Taste

This crucial sentence in the *Critique of Judgment* cannot escape notice and was commented on by Arendt<sup>2</sup>. However, she is reluctant to the fact that Kant referred to this faculty by the word of "Taste":

"This kind of judgment has, ever since Gracian, been called Taste, and we recalled that the phenomenon of taste was what actually led Kant to produce his *Critique of Judgment*; in fact, as late as 1787, he still called it a *Critique of Taste*. This then led us to ask ourselves why the mental phenomenon of Judgment was derived from the sense of taste and not from the more objective senses, especially the most objective of them, the sense of sight. We mentioned that taste and smell are the most private of the senses; /.../Hence we may be tempted to conclude that the faculty of judgment is wrongly derived from this sense." (Arendt, 1992, pp. 66, 68)

Arendt's depreciation of Taste and Smell as "private senses" prejudices the magnificent way she opened by underlining the political incidences of Kant's aesthetic judgment. This devaluation of Taste and Smell compared

<sup>2</sup> "After this we find a clear distinction between what usually is called common sense and *sensus communis*. Taste is this "community sense" (*gemeinschaftlicher Sinn*), and sense means here "the effect of a reflection upon the mind". This reflection affects me as though it were a sensation, and precisely one of taste, the discriminatory, choosing sense. "We could even define taste as the faculty of judging of that which makes generally communicable, without the mediation of a concept, our feeling [like sensation] in a given representation [not perception]. (<Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, § 40)" (Arendt, 1992, pp. 71-72).

with Sight pertains to the traditional philosopher's "anosmia" which is stigmatized both by C. Jaquet (Jaquet, 2010) and M. Tafalla (Tafalla, 2012).

Either you can say with Arendt (1992, p. 68): "The basic other-directedness of judgment and taste seems to stand in the greatest possible opposition to the very nature, the absolutely idiosyncratic nature, of the sense itself"; or you can say with Raphaël Lellouche that the dialectic of Taste and Smell is the agent of *sensus communis* in which communities converge, because it is only by putting in common what is the most private that true communities can be generated<sup>3</sup>. Intimacy is part of citizenship, as it is manifest in many contemporary artworks, especially in Netart.

But Arendt was led to overcome her prejudice against Taste and to provide some answers deconstructing her own objections. However we may decipher in her demonstration her temptation to assimilate subjective and private senses as opposed to objective and public ones. The risk is to reduce the crucial subjective quality of the aesthetic judgment to a mere idiosyncratic characteristic, as it is manifest in her words:

"As for common sense: Kant was very early aware that there was something nonsubjective in what seems to be the most private and subjective sense. This awareness is expressed as follows: there is the fact that, in matters of taste, "the beautiful, interests /us/ only in society /.../ /Man/ is not contended with an object if he cannot feel satisfaction in it in common with others" (Kant, 1790, §41). /.../Or: "In matters of taste, we must renounce ourselves in favour of others" /.../. Finally, and most radically: "In Taste egoism is overcome"; /.../We must overcome our special subjective conditions for the sake

<sup>3</sup> Raphaël Lellouche: "Peut-on ne pas être "Lévinassien"?", Jeudi 19 mai 2005 (<Metula Nexs Agency): «Il y a ainsi une phénoménologie de Hubertus Tellenbach qui analyse "l'atmosphère" relative au goût et à l'olfaction. La dialectique de la gustativité et de l'odorat comme facteurs du "sens commun" (*sensus communis*) dans lequel fusionnent les communautés, parce que seule la mise en commun de ce qui est le plus privé engendre les vraies communautés. L'atmosphère - à la différence de l'espace de la visibilité où chacun peut mutuellement être vu et voir, s'entre apparaître, mieux que l'"ambiance" sonore ou musicale, et avant la caresse réversible du tact et l'étreinte des corps- communise le plus privé; le jugement de goût (Urteil des Geschmacks) dérive du partage de ce qui est relatif à chacun - privé (la cavité interne). Le parfum "exprime" le corps propre et crée en même temps la communion en enveloppant dans une "atmosphère" commune, plus profonde que tout échange linguistique. Parce que ce sont des sens de la proximité ».

of others. In other words, the nonsubjective element in the nonobjective senses is intersubjectivity. (You must be alone in order to think; you need company to enjoy a meal.) ”. (Arendt, 1992, p. 67)

We must stress two objections.

Firstly, intersubjectivity is not a “nonsubjective element”, as put by Arendt, insofar as subjective does not mean an autarkic idiosyncrasy. Moreover, in Kant’s view, subjective is not opposed to universal; it is, on the contrary, the determinant structure on which is based the possibility of a universal “without the mediation of a concept”.

Secondly, we don’t agree with the reductive opposition claimed by Arendt. Either you can say with Arendt that Taste and Smell are socializing senses, notwithstanding the fact that they are idiosyncratic, private senses, or you can say that Taste and Smell are socializing senses precisely because they are senses which involve the most subjective part of humans.

Hence, Taste and Smell imply another conception of social link and citizenship, which deconstructs the dualistic frontier between public and private...

Yet, we agree with Arendt on this matter: “you need company to enjoy a meal”.

### *1.3. The Reflecting Judgment: from its Roots in Sagacity to its Political Relevance.*

In banquets, taste is involved, firstly, as a sense. But scientists recently discovered that, in what we call taste, the sense of smell is preponderant, thanks to the retronasal way (Rozin, 1982).

We must have in mind the exemplary phrase of Albert le Grand, commenting Aristotle’s *De anima*<sup>4</sup>: “smelling is feeling and judging smell”.

Significantly, the amazing power of smell to perceive a radically new fragrance (without pre-programmed encoded means in order to decipher it) was underlined by contemporary scientists<sup>5</sup>, not by searchers in aesthetics. Smell is the sense of Reflecting Judgment par excellence. In matters

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the comment to Aristotle’s *De anima*, written by Albert le Grand in the XIIIth century : « *odorare est sentire et judicare odorem* ».

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Chandler Burr (2004, p. 15) : "Si le fonctionnement du système digestif est limité mais immédiat, celui du système immunitaire se veut illimité. Il accepte tous les nouveaux arrivants, mais exige un minimum de temps pour le faire. /.../Supposons qu'une

of perfume, you don't need a previous rule or concept in order to perceive, judge and adopt the radically new<sup>6</sup>. E. Roudnitska has observed in matters of perfumes this public's good reaction to novelty that W. Benjamin valued in the audience of the seventh art<sup>7</sup>.

It is well known that Kant opposes reflecting judgment to the deductive model of determining judgments. But it is still unnoticed that reflecting judgments have something to do with abduction as opposed to deduction. In deduction, you just subsume a case under a previous rule. In abduction, and in reflecting judgment as well, there is no previous rule under which you can subsume this particular case. In abduction, facing a strange case, you have to make the hypothesis of a new law with regard to which this case could be relevant. Peirce (Boudon, 1990, p. 142) and Habermas<sup>8</sup>

âme généreuse vous tendre une molécule de borane. Pointez votre nez et, sans la moindre hésitation, vous parvenez à lui trouver une odeur. Quoi d'étrange à cela? Simplement que les boranes, issus de manipulations chimiques, ont vu le jour dans des laboratoires au début du XXe siècle et non dans la nature, ce qui n'empêche pas de réaliser l'impossible et de les sentir. En fait, il n'existe pas de molécules humainement détectables que l'on ne puisse sentir dans l'instant. D'où le mystère qui entoure l'odorat. Bien que l'évolution vous prive de récepteur correspondant à la forme du borane, vous parvenez à le percevoir immédiatement sans recourir à un délai de plusieurs jours /.../. Semblable au système immunitaire en ce qu'il est illimité, l'odorat, comme la digestion, opère instantanément."

<sup>6</sup> Cf. E. Roudnitska (1991, p. 142): « *Scandal, Rumeur, Prétex*te /.../ La structure même de ces parfums, l'impression olfactive qu'ils me laissèrent quand je les sentis pour la première fois, correspondraient plutôt à l'effet que l'on a voulu désigner par le terme impropre de "disharmonie". C'est à dire qu'après tout ce que j'avais senti jusqu'alors, j'éprouvai presque un haut-le-corps. Et pourtant très vite je dépassai ce sentiment, je découvris, grâce à une vision globale, synthétique, du parfum, la beauté de la nouveauté de ces formes; je compris que c'étaient des œuvres d'arts authentiques. Le public s'est comporté de la même façon. En moins de deux ans, ces parfums étaient adoptés, ce qui explique pourquoi je proteste quand on accuse le public d'incompréhension ».

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Walter Benjamin (1991, p. 161): "La reproduction mécanisée de l'œuvre d'art modifie la façon de réagir de la masse vis à vis de l'art. De rétrograde qu'elle se montre devant un Picasso par exemple, elle se fait le public le plus progressiste en face d'un Chaplin. Ajoutons que, dans tout comportement progressiste, le plaisir émotionnel et spectaculaire se confond immédiatement et intimement avec l'attitude de l'expert. C'est là un indice social important. Car plus l'importance sociale d'un art diminue, plus s'affirme dans le public le divorce entre l'attitude critique et le plaisir pur et simple. On goûte sans critiquer le conventionnel - on critique avec dégoût le véritable nouveau. Il n'en est pas de même au cinéma".

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Jürgen Habermas (1976, pp. 147-148): "L'abduction est la seule forme

valued abduction precisely because it has a heuristic role in scientific discoveries. Serendipitous discoveries, in scientific domains, mean that you need abduction<sup>9</sup> and sagacious observations as well (Walpole, 1960).

To be sagacious means to be “of keen and farsighted penetration of judgment /.../ indicating acute discernment<sup>10</sup>”. Etymologically, sagacity means, “to have a good nose” like a dog. Hence the general acceptance of sagacity: “a gift for nosing, finding, things out”. Sagacity is an art of smell. “To have a nose” helps to perceive the radically new but also to guess unknown things, to scent out unprecedented outcomes. The faculty of foresight is one of the meanings of sagacity. Sagacity fits the art of foresight: politics.

In political matters, you need the art of judging and foreseeing events. This is why reflecting judgment, which has something to do with the deliberative faculties of smell and taste, is of precious help in political deliberations. Arendt showed that reflecting judgment is required when you face the critical political concerns of totalitarianism:

“There are two main sources for assessing the impact the Eichmann trial had on Arendt’s concept of judging: a lecture “Personal Responsibility under Dictatorship”, published in *The Listener* in 1964, and a Postscript added to the second (1965) edition of *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. The question that lies at the heart of these two pieces is whether we are entitled to presuppose “an independent human faculty, unsupported by law and public opinion, that judges anew in full spontaneity every deed and intent whenever the occasion arises.” /.../What had been demanded in both the Eichmann and Nuremberg trials was “that human beings be capable of telling right from wrong even when all they have to guide them is their own judgment, which, moreover, happens to be completely at odds with what they must regard as the unanimous opinion of all those around them... Those few who were still able to tell right from wrong went really only by their own judgments, and they do so freely; there were no rules, to be abided by,

d'argumentation qui élargit notre savoir; elle est la règle selon laquelle nous introduisons de nouvelles hypothèses. Dans cette mesure, seule la pensée abductive fait avancer le processus de la recherche”.

<sup>9</sup> For the study of the links between Serendipity and Abduction cf. Rieusset-Lemarié (1999).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1977. Springfield: G. & C. Merriam Company.

under which the particular cases with which they were confronted could be subsumed. They had to decide each instance as it arose, because no rules existed for the unprecedented” ”. (Beiner, 1992, pp. 97-98)

When you have no preconceived rules to judge an unpredictable political crisis, you need the faculty of reflecting judgment in order to deliberate. But deliberation sometimes needs the *potential* public space to become an *actual* one.

## **2. Enlarged Citizenship, Culture of Wine and Joy**

### *2.1. “Euprosyne” and “Enlarged Citizenship” in the Greek Symposium*

Banquets were that kind of “deliberative communities”. Historians (Orfanos, 2003) tell us that banquets were the place to deliberate on political issues. In this antique context, we must focus upon a specific kind of banquet, the Greek *symposium*, because it paved the way, if not to the Kantian world citizen, at least to what I call “enlarged citizenship”, open to foreigners.

In antique Greek banquets (Schmitt Pantel, 1992) there were two moments: the first one, dedicated to the consumption of meat was called the *deipnon* and the last part, dedicated to the consumption of wine, was called the *symposium*.

In antique Greece, the *deipnon* is the citizen rite par excellence. Significantly enough, the members of pythagorician and orphic congregations refused to eat meat. That meant, for the other Greeks, that they banished themselves from the citizen’s community. It was their choice. But as regards foreigners, it was not a matter of choice. We must recall that the Greek citizenship excluded foreigners, slaves and women as well...

As far as the foreigners were concerned, the *symposium* was an exception. In this specific ritual moment, consecrated to the tasting of wine, foreigners were welcome. It is said that the habit of improvising poems during the *symposium* had its roots in the “laws of hospitality” and was invented in order to let the foreigners tell their story and their genealogy (Vetta, 1996, p. 171).

The *symposium* even assumed a role of deliberative community as regards political issues (Vetta, 1996, p. 173). The members of the *symposium*

exercised their judgment of taste upon wine, but also upon the poetic creations of the table companions. And, significantly enough, this faculty of judgment applied to political issues as well.

Hence the question is: why did the dedication to wine make the *symposium* a privileged moment for deliberative faculties? Part of the answer lies in the crucial Greek notion of *Euphrosyne*. It designated this special mood of joy, generated by wine, which makes deliberative faculties easier. For the ancient Greeks, *Euphrosyne* was a civic virtue. In this specific context, it designated the power wine has of opening the mind (Vetta, 1996, p. 170).

This ritual use of wine opened the mind to face aesthetic and political matters that require reflecting judgment because no preconceived rule could be referred to, in order to judge these strange issues.

*Euphrosyne* generated by wine opened the mind to the ability of improvising, of facing unpredictable matters, of giving strangeness a favourable reception, and of giving strangers a friendly reception.

Under the reign of *Euphrosyne*, wine culture predisposed to the reflecting judgment of taste, which opens the mind both to strangeness and to strangers. This specific moment dedicated to wine culture, led ancient Greeks to an "enlarged citizenship" instead of excluding strangers.

## 2.2. *Enlarged Citizenship and Wine Culture: a Garden of Washington D.C.*

This culture of wine also proved its efficient ability of opening mentalities in contemporary contexts. I analysed in a previous article (Rieusset-Lemarié, 2009) a peculiar incident, which was told in a webzine as follows:

"A group of friends in Washington, D.C., were enjoying /.../ fine cheeses, and a bottle of the Chateau Malescot /a famous French wine/, when a man wearing a hood burst in. Pointing a gun at the head of a guest, he said, "Give me your money, or I'll start shooting." Up to this point, the robbery was proceeding in the traditional manner, but then guest Christina Rowan said, "We were just finishing dinner. Why don't you have a glass of wine with us? /.../ Amazingly, he agreed and sampled the Chateau Malescot St-Exupéry <sup>11</sup>".

<sup>11</sup> Cf. "A wine so good it may turn your robbery into a group hug" , (<http://www.loweringthebar.net/2007/07/a-wine-so-good-.html>)

We can imagine the tension awaiting the boy's reaction to the wine. But Christina Rowan had reasons to be confident. In her view, this wine was not a mere agreeable drink but something like an artwork able to sollicitate a judgment of taste, involving the postulation of this kind of universal adhesion inherent to the beautiful. What happened afterwards? The *Washington Post*<sup>12</sup> related the scene as follows. After having tasted the wine the boy said: "'Damn, it's a good wine!'. And he added: 'I think I may have come to the wrong house,/.../ putting his gun away.'" And "After a little more wine, and some Camembert", he said: "Can we have a group hug?" The five adults surrounded him, arms out". Hence the title of the webzine relating the scene: "A wine so good it may turn your robbery into a group hug". That is not the usual way of treating juvenile delinquency. Grounded upon the efficiency of the judgment of taste, the political concern of the "civic peace" doesn't follow the usual repressive pattern.

More significantly, what I decipher in this scene is the enlarged mentality of wine culture, able to open the circle to a stranger and to initiate him to civic virtues, thanks to the practice of judgment of taste. From the *symposium* up to now, wine culture proved its privileged access to "enlarged citizenship", under the reign of *Euphrosyne*.

In our contemporary society, the role of joy as a citizen virtue is denied. Yet, it is a crucial role. Before studying in which manner Spinoza and Kant paved the way to the significant political role of joy, we must scrutinize how it was already underlined in Ancient Egypt through the deity Hathor.

### 2.3. *Hathor, the Goddess of Joy: the Civic role of Wine and Metamorphosis.*

In Ancient Egypt, Hathor was the Goddess of Joy and of Perfumes.

She was the tutelar deity of the legendary "Land of Punt". Hatshepsut's tremendous expedition to the Land of Punt in order to bring back perfumes to Egypt showed the crucial role of perfumes in this civilization, which was "perfume-dependant" not only for aesthetic virtues but for sacred purposes, and political equilibriums as well. Hathor was the Mistress of the Laboratory of Edfou (Aufrère, 1998) in which the metamorphic power of perfumes was effective in their ability of giving life both to the dead and to the statues of gods.

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. Alisson Klein, "A Gate-Crasher's Change of Heart", *Washington Post*, July 13, 2007.

We must keep in mind that perfumes played a central role in antique civilizations that did not dissociate Art, Sacred and Politics. All these functions were part of the vital power of Eros, namely the power of metamorphosis. When you mention Art or Eros in this antique context, it does not mean the specific isolated function to which they have been reduced in our contemporary cultures. It means what I call “Enlarged Art” and “Enlarged Eros” in a holistic view where Sacred, Politics, Art and Eros are woven in their manifestation as a “total social fact”. The “enlarged mentality” consists here in letting each domain “go visiting” other domains in order to overcome the artificial boundaries that have isolated them.

Like Dionysus, Hathor is related to metamorphosis and to wine. But wine, as it was the case in the *symposium*, is not a factor of excess but, on the contrary, an agent of civic peace, as it is manifest in the mythical story of Sekhmet.

In order to protect the Pharaoh against his enemies, the deity Hathor turned into Sekhmet, a bloodthirsty lioness. To pacify Sekhmet, festivals were celebrated, so that this warrior mood would come to an end. During these festivals, the Egyptians danced and played music to soothe the wilderness of the goddess and ritually drank quantities of wine to imitate the drunkenness that stopped the wrath of the goddess. These festivals commemorated the soothing of Sekhmet back into her counterpart, Hathor. One of the versions of the myth tells us how the God Thoth sought to end the terror of Sekhmet: “The God Thoth devised to combine wine and magical herbs to look like blood. He laid his concoction outside of the city where Sekhmet was dwelling, /in order/ that she might drink and calm her bloodthirsty ways<sup>13</sup>”.

Thanks to this wine, the metamorphosis turned the bloody Sekhmet into the pacific deity Hathor, goddess of Beauty, Love, Musical Arts and Perfume. All these elements converge into the civic virtue of Joy of which she is the tutelary Goddess.

Hence the function of this deity was political in times of war (by the protection the Pharaoh against his enemies) and in times of peace as well, through the civic role of Joy. But the faculty of metamorphosis of this

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Kasey Conder, « The Mysteries of Hathor-Sekhmet » (Presented for the Temple of Isis Utah and Aspern Grove May 9th, 2009 at the Old Fellow Hall) (<http://www.isis-seshat.com>)

Goddess played another political role in her ability to “go abroad” and adapt herself to foreign countries.

“The Lady of Byblos” stood for the antique Egyptian goddess Hathor, and was revered as such throughout the ages by numerous pharaohs (Jidejian, 2000). The “Lady of Byblos” embodied Hathor but also inherited from the Mesopotamian Goddess of War and Love, namely Inanna, which has been called later on Ishtar. The Phoenician city of Byblos inherited the hierogamic rites recalling the sacred union between Inanna and Dumuzi. Later on, in Byblos, the two divinized characters of this sacred union were renamed Aphrodite and Adonis. In this Phoenician culture, the purpose of this sacred union was mainly political. The most important function of the goddess was to protect the City and its King whose power was confirmed by his symbolic sexual union with the statue of the Goddess.

The historical role of Pygmalion as a Phoenician who became king of Cyprus inherited this Phoenician tradition and played a crucial role in the cult of Aphrodite and her statues in this island in which she is supposed to be born (Karageorghis, 2005). The myth of Pygmalion and his descendants is of great importance both on aesthetic and political levels.

According to Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*, Adonis is the fruit of the descendance of Pygmalion and his statue. The father of Adonis is, according to Ovid, Cinyras, the son of Paphos who was born from the union between Pygmalion and his statue, to which Aphrodite gave life. That means that answering Pygmalion’s prayer by animating his statue, Aphrodite prepared the birth of Adonis. But Aphrodite did not want Adonis only for his perfume-dependent power of metamorphosis. She wanted Adonis to give her a daughter embodying this power of metamorphosis.

### **3. Incidences of the Reflecting Judgment upon Metamorphosis, Joy and Freedom**

#### *3.1. The relationship of Jurisprudence with Reflecting Judgment and Metamorphosis*

In his work untitled *Dionysiaca*, the Greek poet Nonnus<sup>14</sup> tells us the story of the daughter of Adonis and Aphrodite whose name, coined after Berytus, the ancient name of Beirut, is Beroe. This story insists upon a crucial mission of Aphrodite, which is often forgotten: to build new Cities based on the power of Law. In order to fit the crucial project of Aphrodite, Law must include the power of metamorphosis.

Now, what is the part of Law involving metamorphosis? That is the role of Jurisprudence. In order to have this power of regeneration, Law must start by regenerating itself. Hence the role of Beroe is, according to the vows of her mother, to build a City based on the regenerating power of legislation. The myth of Beroe has historical roots. The city of Berytus was internationally famous in the Roman Empire for its school of jurisprudence (Tabet, 2009).

Thanks to the metamorphic capacity of Jurisprudence to adapt, to evolve, Justice is less blind. You need jurisprudence when the ancient laws can't apply blindly and automatically to a new specific case. Jurisprudence means "alteration of the Law by the fact". Jurisprudence introduces innovations into the Law in order to adapt to new singular cases that can't be reducible to the automatic application of previous laws. This is why Jurisprudence has something to do with the reflecting judgment. The singularity of the case can't be subsumed under the rigidity of previous laws. Hence the mission of Jurisprudence is adaptation, evolution, and metamorphosis.

F. Zourabichvili (2009) highlighted the interest of Deleuze for this metamorphic power of Jurisprudence through its perpetual changes. Thanks to this power of evolution, Justice goes back to the faculty of discrimination that founds the faculty of judgment.

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<sup>14</sup> Nonnus Panopolis was a Greek poet who flourished in Egypt in the 5th AD. He was the author of the last of the great epic poems of antiquity, the *Dionysiaca* in 48 books. Book 41 describes the mythical history of Beroe.

### 3.2. *Deleuze: a Spinozian Interpretation of the Judgment of Taste Linked with Joy*

According to Deleuze, the highest degree of the faculty of discrimination is to decipher, not only forms, but also what is happening between two forms, namely the process of metamorphosis from one form to another<sup>15</sup>. Deleuze relates this faculty of perceiving what is at stake between two things to the augmentation of the power of life, in the Spinozian conception, which has influenced Nietzsche. When you augment your power of acting and perceiving, you become able to perceive more and more things and even to perceive the most difficult, namely what is at stake between two things, the passage between two forms.

In Deleuze's philosophy, the discriminant faculty of the judgment of taste is untangled with semiology of metamorphosis. The highest power of perception is to discriminate qualitative differences, namely intensities<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Gilles Deleuze, in *Image Mouvement Image Temps*, Cours Vincennes: Kant, le temps, Nietzsche, Spinoza, 13/12/1983 ([www.webdeleuze.com/php/texte.php?cle=214&groupe=ImageMouvementImageTemps&langues=1](http://www.webdeleuze.com/php/texte.php?cle=214&groupe=ImageMouvementImageTemps&langues=1)):

«Plus ma puissance de vie augmente, plus je suis apte à percevoir et à percevoir plus de choses. Qui a dit ça? Spinoza! Spinoza n'a cessé de dire ça et, c'est sur ce point que Nietzsche dira: je n'ai qu'un prédécesseur, c'est Spinoza /.../ Augmenter la puissance d'exister de telle manière que l'on soit apte et que l'on devienne apte à percevoir le plus de choses possibles. /.../ Percevoir ce qui n'a pas de forme /.../ c'est plus difficile. Qu'est ce que c'est ce qui n'a pas de forme? Par exemple, c'est ce qui est entre deux choses, percevoir entre les choses. /.../ Bon, qu'est-ce qu'il y a à percevoir entre les choses? Est-ce que tout a une forme? Qu'est-ce que c'est de percevoir un nuage? Qu'est ce que c'est percevoir ce qui ne cesse pas de changer de forme? /.../ Mais percevoir l'entre deux choses, percevoir ce qui n'a forme, tout ça, qu'est-ce que ça implique? Ça implique peut-être alors de singulières variations dans la puissance d'exister.»

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Deleuze/Spinoza*, Cours Vincennes : the actual infinite-eternal, the logic of relations- 10/03/1981 : "Spinoza tells us /.../ imagine a white wall. /.../ This text can be found in the early work of Spinoza /.../ known by the title the Short Treatise. /.../ Now, if essences are singular, it is necessary to distinguish something on the white wall without the shapes necessarily having been traced. /.../ And my question is this: can I distinguish on the white wall things independently of the shapes drawn, can I make distinctions which are not distinctions between shapes? /.../ Of course, there is another mode of distinction which is what? It is that the white has degrees! And I can vary degrees of whiteness. One degree of whiteness is distinguished from another degree of whiteness in a totally different way than that by which a shape on the white wall is distinguished from another shape on the white wall. /.../ I would say that shapes are distinguished

Deleuze highlights the role of intensities in the philosophy of Spinoza. If you don't experience intensities, you are bound to experience "bad encounters"<sup>17</sup>. Bad or good encounters are what are at stake in matters of judgment of taste according to Deleuze. The mission of reflecting judgments, facing the unpredictable, may take the form of bad or good encounters. In the case of a good encounter you say, "It pleases me". In the case of a bad encounter you say, "It displeases me"<sup>18</sup>.

Then Deleuze examines what is at stake in bad and good encounters if you adopt a Spinozian standpoint:

"Once, only once, Spinoza employs a Latin word which is quite strange but very important: *occursus*. Literally this is the encounter." When I have a good encounter: what happens? I would say that my power of acting is increased /.../When, on the contrary I have an encounter such as the characteristic relation of the body which modifies my compromises or destroys one of my /.../characteristic relations, I would say that my power of acting is diminished or even destroyed. We rediscover here our two fundamental affects /.../: sadness and joy<sup>19</sup>".

Now why is it important to increase our power of acting, namely joy, as defined by Spinoza? Deleuze answers: this is a political concern:

externally, taking account of their common parts. I would say of degrees that it is a completely different type of distinction, that there is an intrinsic distinction. /.../There are degrees which are what, which we call in general: intensive quantities, and which are in fact just as different from quality as from extensive quantity. These are degrees of intensities. "

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Deleuze/Spinoza*<sup>1</sup>, Cours de Vincennes – 24/01/1978: «A power of being affected is really an intensity or threshold of intensity. What Spinoza really wants to do is to define the essence of someone in an intensive fashion as an intensive quantity. As long as you don't know your intensities you risk the bad encounter»

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* : "To the extent that I have affection – ideas, I live chance encounters: I walk in the street, I see Pierre who does not please me, it's the function of the constitution of his body and his soul and the constitution of my body and my soul. /.../ When I say "This one does not please me", that means, literally, that the effect of his body on mine, the effect of his soul on mine affects me disagreeably /.../There is a noxious mixture, as much at the level of the body as that of the soul. It's exactly like this: "I don't like cheese". /.../That means that it mixes with my body in a manner by which I am modified disagreeably".

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

“Spinoza says, in the Theological – Political Treatise, that this is a profound point of connection between the despot and the priest—they both need the sadness of their subjects. Here you understand well that he does not take sadness in a vague sense /.../ sadness is the affect insofar as it involves the diminution of my power of acting<sup>20</sup>”.

Joy is a political value. Spinoza paved the way to a political interpretation of the two opposed affects of Joy and Sadness. Now what is the characteristic of sadness that makes us slaves? <sup>21</sup>. It is passiveness, conceived as the diminution of our power of acting<sup>22</sup>.

### *3.3. Free and Shared Pleasure: Kant and the Political Relevance of the Empathy for Joy*

In a different way, Kant stigmatizes passivity. If the agreeable is not as precious as the beautiful, it is because it is based on an inclination. You are not free with the agreeable. You are just submitted to an inclination. On the contrary, the pleasure that is linked with the Beautiful is free<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Deleuze/Spinoza*, Cours Vincennes – 20/01/1981; “this denunciation which is going throughout the Ethics, namely: there are people who are so impotent that they are the ones who are dangerous, they are the ones that take power (pouvoir). The people of power are the impotent who can only construct their power on the sadness of others. They need sadness. They can only reign upon slaves, and the slave is precisely the regime of the decrease of power (puissance).”

Cf. Gilles Deleuze, “On Spinoza”, in *Lectures by Gilles Deleuze* (deleuzelectures.blogspot.fr/ 2007/02/on-spinoza.html) : “In other words, I am not the cause of my own affects, they are produced by something else: I am therefore passive, I’m in the world of passion. /.../Let’s /.../examine according to the texts what Spinoza calls the slave or the impotent. /.../the resemblances to Nietzsche are fundamental /.../ It is almost like a riddle: for Spinoza, what is there in common between a tyrant who has political power, a slave and a priest who exercises a spiritual power? This something in common is going to make Spinoza say: but they are impotent; it is that, in a certain way, they need to sadden life! /.../Nietzsche will also say things like this: they need to make sadness reign”.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Gilles Deleuze, “On Spinoza”, in *Lectures by Gilles Deleuze, op. cit.*: “Sadness will be any passion whatsoever which involves a diminution of my power of acting, and joy will be any passion involving an increase in my power of acting.”

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Kant (1790, “Analytic of the Beautiful”, § 5): “The agreeable, the beautiful, and the good thus denote three different relations of representations to the feelings of pleasure and displeasure /.../ The agreeable is what *gratifies* a man; the beautiful what simply *pleases*

This is why *sensus communis* must be based on the aesthetic judgment insofar as it enacts a free pleasure, cleaned of all idiosyncratic or sociological determinisms susceptible to induce inclination and to extort approval.

It means that “common world” is not the point for Kant. Arendt’s view may mislead on this matter. There are numerous other ways to build a “common world” even at the scale of the “citizen of the world”. Kant’s purpose is not to build a “common world” at any cost. His purpose is to build a common world based on freedom. That is his major political contribution. Universality must be based on a reflecting judgment because, in that case, judgment is free from the burden of a law or a truth that imposes itself to Reason. Hence the role of the pleasure in the aesthetic judgment, not only because it has a universal postulation, but mainly, because it is free...

Arendt gave a clue to this fundamental role of freedom in Kant’s view in the very last part of her work:

“In the last page of *Willing* we read that even the Augustian theory “is somehow opaque”: it seems to tell us no more than that we are *doomed* to be free by virtue of being born, no matter whether we like freedom or abhor its arbitrariness, are “pleased” with it or prefer to escape its awesome responsibility by electing some form of fatalism. This impasse, if such it is, cannot be opened or solved except by an appeal to another mental faculty, no less mysterious than the faculty of beginning, the faculty of Judgment, an analysis of which at least may tell us what is involved in our pleasures and displeasures”. (Beiner, 1992, p. 90)

According to Ronald Beiner, this intuition enlightens the role of pleasure, in reference with the aesthetic judgment, as a privileged access to freedom. He writes: “The implication is that only by analyzing the faculty that corresponds to “our pleasures and displeasures” can we find a way of

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him; the good what is *esteemed* (approved), i.e., that on which he sets an objective worth. /.../Of all these three kinds of delight, that of taste in the beautiful may be said to be the only disinterested and free delight; for, with it, no interest, whether of sense or reason, extorts approval. And so we may say that delight, in the three cases mentioned, is related to inclination, to favour, or to respect. For *favour* is the only free liking. An object of inclination, and one of which a law of reason imposes upon our desire, leaves us no freedom to turn anything into an object of pleasure.”

embracing human freedom and of seeing it as bearable for natal and mortal beings like ourselves”<sup>24</sup>.

In the horizon opened by Kant, free pleasure would be the best access to freedom. But pleasure, in Kant’s view, must not only be free. It must be shared as well. Kant says that the highest criterion of a civilized nation is that the lightest pleasure increases and deserves value when it is shared<sup>25</sup>.

To share pleasure means giving place to Joy. Joy, as free shared pleasure, is a fundamental “power of acting” which could prove crucial in the political ground. It is here that we find the “seeds of a political philosophy” in Kant’s judgment of taste. The habits of thinking the political foundations in terms of “general interest” seem to tell us that the right political way is to forget our own pleasure and to take into account other people’s difficulties and sadness. The political virtue would be sacrifice. Yet, this way may imply an idealistic ascetic way: the one of the priests, which needs the sadness of their subjects. We must keep in mind the critic

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<sup>24</sup> “In the later formulation, which begins to emerge in the Kant Lectures /Arendt/ approaches judging from a quite different, and much more ambitious, point of view. Here judgment is described as the “opening” or “solution” of an “impasse”. Looking at the final chapter of *Willing*, we are able to reconstruct the nature of this impasse. The guiding concern of this last chapter, titled “The Abyss of Freedom and the *novus ordo seclorum*”, is the problem of human freedom and its relationship to the faculty of willing. The implication is that only by analyzing the faculty that corresponds to “our pleasures and displeasures” can we find a way of embracing human freedom and of seeing it as bearable for natal and mortal beings like ourselves”. (Beiner, 1992, p. 93)

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Kant (1790, § 41): “With no one to take into account but himself, a man abandoned on a desert island would not adorn either himself or his hut /.../. Only in society does it occur to him to be not merely a man, but a man refined after the manner of his kind (the beginning of civilization) – for that is the estimate formed of one who has the bent and turn for communicating his pleasure to others, and who is not quite satisfied with an object unless his feeling of delight in it can be shared in communion with others. /.../And thus, no doubt, at first only charms, e.g., colours for painting oneself /.../, or flowers, sea-shells, beautifully coloured feathers, then, in the course of time, also beautiful forms /.../which convey no gratification, i.e. delight of enjoyment, become of moment in society and attract a considerable interest. Eventually, when civilization has reached its height it makes this work of communication almost the main business of refined inclination, and the entire value of sensations is placed in the degree to which they permit universal communication. At this stage, then, even where the pleasure which each one has in an object is but insignificant and possesses of itself no conspicuous interest, still the idea of its universal communicability almost indefinitely augments its value.”

of this model by Spinoza and Nietzsche.

Now what about the supposed easy way of the empathy for joy? Empathy for joy is the right political way but it is not easy at all. Why? Gérard Jorland (2004, p. 43) answers, following the steps of Nietzsche: “the asymmetry between empathy for joy and empathy for sufferance has been explained by the fact that, in the second case, we feel gratitude to have escaped sufferance, whereas, in the first case, we need, in order to feel empathy for joy, to overcome envy” and resentment.

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