

## **Kant's Aesthetics: Life and Animation**

Conference, NOVA University of Lisbon, 20-21 March 2023 – in person

Keynote Speaker:

Alix Cohen, University of Edinburgh

Organisers:

João Lemos, NOVA University of Lisbon

Rachel Siow Robertson, University of Cambridge / The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion

Conference Theme:

The feeling of life (*das Lebensgefühl*) is a central concept in Kant's aesthetic theory. Indeed, Kant begins the *Analytic of the Beautiful* by indicating that in the judgment of taste "the representation is related entirely to the subject, indeed to its feeling of life, under the name of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure" (KU, 5: 204, §1). In the *Analytic of the Sublime*, he adds that the beautiful "directly brings with it a feeling of the promotion of life", whereas the feeling of the sublime "is a pleasure that arises only indirectly, being generated, namely, by the feeling of a momentary inhibition of the vital powers and the immediately following and all the more powerful outpouring of them" (KU, 5: 244-245, §23).

Similarly, the closely related notions of animation (*Belebung*) and animating (*beleben*) are central to Kant's account. He repeatedly speaks of the animation of the mind or the cognitive faculties, and in one section of the *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment*, namely §49, he writes of the spirit as the "animating principle in the mind", as well as of the "animation" of the soul, works of art, and ideas of reason (cf. KU: 5, 313-317, §49).

In comparison with other topics that occupy recent secondary literature on Kant's aesthetics, studies of the feeling of life and the related notions of animation and animating are of a relatively small number. Among the few studies which focus on (or make interesting mention of) these notions, influential accounts include Choi & Cohen (2021), Fugate (2018), and Makkai (2021), as well as Caygill (2000), Makkreel (1990), and Zammito (1992).

It is the main aim of this conference to consider the roles that the feeling of life, as well as the related notions of animation and animating, play in Kant's aesthetic theory.

We welcome contributions which help to spell out these notions, as well as contributions which make use of these notions to clarify and solve other issues within Kant's aesthetics. Papers that address this topic in accordance with the framework of Kant's critical system are particularly encouraged.

Submission of Abstracts:

Titles and abstracts in English (max. 500 words), prepared for blind review, must be emailed as one document to [joaolemos@fcsb.unl.pt](mailto:joaolemos@fcsb.unl.pt) or [rsr35@faraday.cam.ac.uk](mailto:rsr35@faraday.cam.ac.uk) by 31 October 2022. A second document with a short biographical note in English (max. 250 words) must be sent in the same email. Notices of acceptance will be sent out by 11 November 2022.

Language:

If you wish to give a talk in a language other than English, please note that an English version of the paper must be provided upon acceptance, to be projected during your presentation

More Information at:

[kantaesthetics.weebly.com](http://kantaesthetics.weebly.com)

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