

A galaxy of discontent

Una galaxia de descontento

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Abstract

Many claim that we live in the age of anger. Anger, hatred, and even resentment seem to prevail in all social strata and in all countries, and mark an atmosphere of conflict, disunity, fragmentation, and social anomie during a time of significant change. The global social transformations we are witnessing seem to underlie this historical phenomenon, where the bonds of solidarity and union among individuals and peoples play a diminished influence in the behavior of individuals and groups. Great transformations are always accompanied by great suffering as well as hope and expectation. We often see more of what is lost rather than what is gained, because what is lost is well known and visible, while what will be gained in the future is uncertain, unclear in anyone's mind, often an unexpected consequence of conscious actions that are affirmed in the short term and can lead to a worsening but also an improvement in the way we live in the world.

Keywords: Anger; Hatred; Resentment; Social transformations; Global world.

Resumen

Muchos afirman que vivimos en la era de la ira. La ira, el odio e incluso el resentimiento parecen prevalecer en todas las capas sociales y en todos los países, y marcan una atmósfera de conflicto, desunión, fragmentación y anomia social en una época de cambios significativos. Las transformaciones sociales globales que estamos presenciando parecen ser la base de este fenómeno histórico, en el que los vínculos de solidaridad y unión entre individuos y pueblos tienen una influencia disminuida en el comportamiento de los individuos y los grupos. Las grandes transformaciones siempre van acompañadas de un gran sufrimiento, así como de esperanza y expectativa. A menudo vemos más lo que se pierde que lo que se gana, porque lo que se pierde es bien conocido y visible, mientras que lo que se ganará en el futuro es incierto, poco claro para la mente de nadie, a menudo una consecuencia inesperada de acciones conscientes que se afirman en el corto plazo y pueden conducir a un empeoramiento pero también a una mejora en la forma en que vivimos en el mundo.

Palabras clave: Ira; Odio; Resentimiento; Transformaciones sociales; Mundo global.

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Many claim that we live in the age of anger (Mishra, 2017). Anger, hatred, and even resentment seem to prevail in all social strata and in all countries, and mark an atmosphere of conflict, disunity, fragmentation, and social anomie during a time of significant change. The global social transformations we are witnessing seem to underlie this historical phenomenon, where the bonds of solidarity and union among individuals and peoples play a diminished influence in the behavior of individuals and groups. Can we glimpse some explanations?

First of all:

For the first time in history all peoples on earth have a common present: no event of any importance in the history of one country can remain a marginal accident in the history of any other. Every country has become the almost immediate neighbor of every other country, and every man feels the shock of events which take place at the other side of the globe (Arendt, 1968, p. 83).

Peoples are no longer separated as they once were by different cultures and different histories, or rather these different cultures exhibit a shared element, grounded in the aspirations for freedom, independence, prosperity, and justice that are alive today, in various forms around the world. These ideals have seemed to be within everyone's reach, especially since the turning point following the fall of the Berlin Wall, and not only for the peoples of Eastern Europe, but globally. Different lifestyles and cultures are now comparable with each other, they are no longer insular as in pre-modern societies: there is a common standard of measurement among peoples, the old lexicon that distinguished between developed and underdeveloped peoples no longer holds.

Many peoples in different ways have independently approached modernity and this has raised many expectations. As noted by Indian historian Dipesh Chakrabarty, there are many modernities; they cannot all be traced back to European modernity, which should therefore be "provincialized", confined to its historical and geographical origins, and not regarded, as in the past, as a universal standard (Chakrabarty, 2000). Above all,

through the possibility of comparison with other cultures, there has been a realization, even in the marginal areas furthest from modernization, that inequalities and social hierarchies are not natural, are not something to be accepted as destiny, but on the contrary have a historical origin and arouse expectations of freedom, independence and equality and justice that are felt by all as inalienable. Today with advanced globalization, information technology and social media, the phenomenon is highly visible.

So where does the anger come from? Those who expect freedom observe that inequalities persist and new ones arise. The opening made possible by the fall of the Berlin Wall has disappointed many, as noted by brilliant Indian author Pankaj Mishra in his recent *Age of Anger*: new inequalities emerge, rendering the aspirations of many futile. There are many unmet expectations, too many frustrated hopes; the promise of equality contrasts sharply with disparities in power, status, and well-being. The virtual proximity enabled by social media makes real distances unacceptable. Everyone has come to understand that they deserve a lifestyle equal to others, but this is only possible for a few, and the reaction against the resulting injustice does not generate genuine collective movements but rather individual frustrations.

This creates emotional disorientation, an abrasion of nerves and sensitivities that has made the transition to modernity very difficult for some peoples who until recently lived in pre-modern rural conditions, as well as for the underprivileged in Western countries. We are witnessing a change in the emotional regime (Reddy, 2001), in the structures of feeling and thinking about the world. The global awareness of the right to a dignified life makes the struggle against blatant injustice very harsh. Anger, hatred, and resentment spread, not only in the West. To navigate this great transformation, it is necessary to make some distinctions. Anger, hatred, and resentment are part of a single galaxy of discontent, but to derive more precise insights, we can attempt to distinguish and understand how these phenomena are connected to the

struggle for justice. I will begin with anger, then move on to its distinction from hatred, and finally to resentment.

In anger, something matters to us

Anger has a bad reputation; it is often associated with aggressive behaviors, a propensity for conflict, and violence. It frequently accompanies unpleasant subjective sensations, can have negative effects on individual health and social integration, and has been closely monitored since antiquity. It is often considered the archetype of every negative emotion, one that disrupts reason, drives us toward uncontrolled behaviors, and produces negative social effects. Seneca, in his *De Ira*, describes it as a passion contrary to human nature, a “brief insanity”, a mental illness arising from a misjudgment that leads to a perversion of reason, a loss of control that destroys social relationships and brings humanity to ruin. Christian culture follows this path by placing anger (or *ira*, in ancient language) among the seven deadly sins, viewing it as a general container of emotions and behaviors that are entirely negative and directly opposed to the idea of the evangelical good.

But not everyone, in ancient as well as modern times, up to the most recent research, shares this totally negative judgment. We know, for example, that in the Old Testament the wrath of God does not play a negative role and is often associated with the quest for justice within the troubled love affair between god and the chosen people. Let us also not forget that it is with the wrath of Achilles that Western literature was born; the Iliad represents it within an archetypal framework of human relationships, complex and conflicting, from which the rational subject gradually takes shape. Furthermore: A phenomenology of anger is present in all the great ancient and modern philosophical systems, from Plato and Aristotle to Thomas to Descartes to Hobbes, and it is often regarded, for better or worse, as the central passion of the human psyche, as a place where many of the primary psychic drives converge and define certain aspects of

civilized living. Identifying it with aggression and condemning it outright fails to understand many aspects of the human quest for justice to which it is related.

Many contemporary studies provide a multifaceted picture of it. Neuroscience and philosophy highlight how anger, like other emotions, is not only a subjective upheaval in our relations with the world that threatens to undermine our ability to act rationally, but also a tool for knowing the world, alerting us to distressing situations in which our dignity is called into question and injustice risks prevailing (Giacomoni; Valentini; Dellantonio, 2021). After all, the recent trend, even in neuroscience, is toward the rehabilitation of all emotions, reinterpreted today as intelligent reactions to the perception of value and not as mere disturbances or threats to the priority of reason.

One can start with a famous definition of anger found in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, which is also considered a landmark by studies today:

Anger (*orge*) may be defined as an impulse, accompanied by pain, to a conspicuous revenge for a conspicuous slight directed without justification toward what concerns oneself or toward what concerns one’s friends. If it is a proper definition of anger, it must always be felt toward some particular individual e.g. Cleon, and not ‘man’ in general. It must be felt because the other has done or intended to do something to him or one of his friends. It must always be attended by a certain pleasure – that which arises from the expectation of revenge (Aristotle, 1924, p. 1378a30).

First of all, anger is not considered a sort of reflex that automatically and uncontrollably triggers without any awareness, but is defined as a complex reaction to what is perceived as an unjust lack of respect. It involves a multifaceted feeling, where pleasure or pain coexist, a lucid evaluation of what happens, and an awareness of one’s social role. All this occurs in the public sphere, as is clear from that adjective “conspicuous”: the reaction of anger occurs in the city, concerning the public esteem of someone that is called into question by an outrage, an offense, in general, by the failure of

the mutual recognition pact among citizens, which undermines or destroys the integrity of the public image or dignity of the protagonist.

For Greek culture, if a person is threatened or there is a public lack of respect, an appropriate form of anger is a normally expected and morally appropriate reaction. Aristotle will say in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that only slaves, i.e., those who lack the guiding principle underlying autonomy and individual responsibility, do not respond with anger to a lack of regard. Only someone who considers themselves inferior and fears the superior does not defend their humiliated integrity.

Naturally, we speak of an appropriate form of anger, just in timing and manner, for the right time and against the right person, not of unjustified and misdirected outbursts of anger. What matters is that, for Aristotle, anger has good reasons – the offense is undeserved. In fact, the focus of anger concerns something precious, something that matters to us; it does not concern trivialities or superficial aspects but captures the essence of the citizen, their respectability. For this reason, it is accompanied by the pain of someone who sees their value diminished, as in contempt, or of someone who is offended, i.e., humiliated in their prerogatives and feels shame, or of someone whose aspirations are hindered.

Pain accompanies all those cases where my individual projects – or those of the people I care about – are obstructed by the actions of an adversary and my capacity for free action is hindered, threatened, or denied, i.e., when I suffer an injustice. Furthermore, it is added that we become angry when we suffer, and those who suffer is so because they aspire to something (Aristotle, 1924, p. 1379a10). The individual aspiration of the citizen is the essential point of view. The capacity for action is the central perspective: happiness for Aristotle consists precisely in being able to achieve the goals of life, in knowing how to realize one's nature, and if this is hindered, the essence of the person is called into question, the possibility of a fulfilled and full life, where aspirations can correspond to the realization of the individual life project. This is

why, Aristotle says, people with many unfulfilled desires, people who are weaker and more exposed, are easier to anger often becoming wrathful, that is, systematically reactive. Certainly, the thought – thought and not realization – of revenge is accompanied by pleasure, as in all those cases in which one imagines the realization of a desire, in this case the reintegration of one's own lost dignity or even the suffering of others.

But it is a subject on which his analysis is less thorough, focused instead on the pain – almost a wound – that offense or outrage inflicts on the individual, who thus feels the need to reconstitute the integrity of his or her individual actions and the social image thus lost. In this cultural context, therefore, anger has good reasons and aims for justice; it is not aggression and destructiveness, but on the contrary a search for respect and an effort to restore the challenged personal value, a legitimate tool for defending one's individual integrity, ethically justified. So it can be concluded that anger is aimed at changing the situation that originated the disrespect, it activates to ensure that the behavior of the one who has offended changes and restores dignity to the one who has been hurt. More than a desire for revenge, it is a genuine search for justice, in which individual merits are recognized and the pact of mutual recognition is restored to its foundational value for social relations.

However, one might ask, as Martha Nussbaum does in *Anger and Forgiveness*, whether the focus of anger is instead precisely revenge, which increases its moral problematic nature (Nussbaum, 2016). From a normative point of view, it can be observed that anger is always at risk because it contains a desire to be repaid, a desire for retribution, which requires the suffering of the offender for its satisfaction. The desire for revenge contains the idea of balancing between the offended and the offender, a restoration of equilibrium at a different level, where the suffering endured by the offended is repaid with equal suffering from the offender. This reaction, in reality, has no rational justification but is rooted in a sort of magical thinking that presupposes a kind of cosmic balance between the

offended and the offender: the logic of revenge would be based on this irrational idea of the equity of suffering distribution. The suffering that the offended party wishes upon the offender cannot actually remove the pain experienced, especially in case of blood revenge.

In this sense, the spiral of revenge prevents peace; for this reason, the vengeful instinct must be disciplined. Only an anger that is oriented towards the future and does not aim at the impossible reparation of harm can play the positive role of signaling that certain values we care about are threatened. This can motivate us to pursue justice and deter others from violating our rights. Only in this sense can anger prevent violent acts, and it does not oppose the logic of forgiveness and reconciliation. This element was already present in Greek tragedies, in the *Eumenides*, when the logic of revenge is overcome by that of justice, through the establishment of a court to judge the crimes of the Atreids, by Athena.

But there are situations in which anger can play a different role and reconnect in another way with the quest for justice. In the context of struggles against racism in the U.S., anger takes on other meanings: as African American philosopher and activist Myisha Cherry writes in the essay *The case for rage* (Cherry, 2021), anger can be a formidable weapon in the battle against racism and its manifestations and not a vice or morally problematic behavior to be feared or avoided. Anger, if well managed, can provide in fact, a crucial reserve of energy and motivational drive to fight injustice: it is not in principle a violent and ethically condemnable impulse, but an appropriate and highly motivating reaction to discrimination, which does not call for punishment of the offender, but for a change in his attitude if he recognizes the reprehensible character of his action and acts differently.

The purpose of this righteous anger is thus not that of revenge but to renegotiate a power relationship, reconstituting a balance on a new basis and avoiding a situation of injustice that affects everyone. That is why anger of this kind, as distinct from other inappropriate ones, implies an

optimistic attitude, typical of those who fight for an improvement of the situation and not for individual revenge. Anger is the active attitude opposed to the renunciation of those who back down because they think a context of injustice is unchangeable and instead harbor resentment and resentment within themselves, that is, unexpressed anger that can explode at the wrong moment as uncontrolled violence and this one is truly destructive. In today's American anti-racist struggles – Black Lives Matter and others – a certain level of violence is certainly present, a violence that can alienate other social strata from a desired solidarity, but the transition from the acquiescence that has characterized black people for centuries to a mobilization for justice can also positively make use of well-managed and not purely aggressive anger.

Hatred is metaphysics

An essential point for understanding whether a good use of anger is conceivable is the ability to distinguish it from hatred. On this Aristotle had already pointed out that getting angry at someone for a lack of respect is a situation in which cause and effect are well recognizable: the offense and the reaction are definable in time and space. If, on the other hand, the negative attitude extends to a group (e.g., thieves or informers) what is targeted is not a behavior, the specific action of an individual, but a permanent trait of that group, something that by principle defines it and does not change (Aristotle, 1924, p. 1382a5).

As contemporary Israeli philosopher Aaron Ben-Ze'ev states, while anger is a specific negative emotional attitude toward the behavior of someone who has committed an injustice at a specific time and place, hatred is a global negative emotion toward someone – the enemy – who we believe possesses fundamental negative elements that cannot be modified (Ben-Ze'ev, 1992). Anger, even if violent, presupposes the possibility of a different outcome of the current action, the modification of the behavior of the aggressor who might be moved to acknowledge that he or she is wrong, whereas

hatred is a long-term attitude that targets permanent negative traits of the object and often arises without a personal offense producing it. Thus, the difference lies in this: anger affects what one does, a behavior that can change, and hatred affects what one is, the nature of an individual, which is unlikely to change. Consequently, the hater wants the enemy to cease to exist, wants to eliminate him from the world.

In the case of anger, it is possible to identify specific actions aimed at changing the behavior, actions that can then be judged by their degree of effectiveness in achieving the result. In the case of hatred, the goal is actually unattainable and therefore entirely contradictory, unless one imagines a “final solution” for a people, which we have already seen historically backfire on those who organized it. Hatred does not carry with it a real strategy with possible success, because history has proven time and again the impossibility of the total destruction of a people. Hatred presupposes a kind of metaphysics, implies the claim to know the essence of the enemy and desires its elimination, somewhat as in the case of the current Russian ruling group, which is also explicitly expressed, in a Dimitri Medvedev’s speech, as hatred of the West and desire for its elimination. It is clear that in this case no political action that adjusts means to ends is possible, because the ends are unattainable and the means will therefore always be inadequate. In no case can a strategy driven by hatred be realistic.

Some empirical research conducted in recent years during the Arab-Israeli conflict has reached similar conclusions: it has been observed that anger can certainly drive people to behave aggressively but, if separated from hatred, it can paradoxically strengthen the motivation to foster reconciliation and peace, since it is directed at contingent actions and not at elements considered unchangeable by the adversary. If one assumes that the rival group’s behavior can change, the energy of anger can function as a driving force for action to correct the offender’s behavior through strategies that renegotiate the relationship between the two adversaries. If, on the other hand, it is assumed

that the rival group cannot change, behaviors will radicalize and peace will become impossible.

Eran Halperin, an Israeli psychologist and colleagues for example did an interesting experiment on 262 Israelis in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict immediately prior to the 2007 peace summit. Before the experiment, they were asked to indicate their level of hatred toward the Palestinians and their willingness to negotiate a peace with them. Participants were then asked to read a magazine article (believed to be genuine) that induced anger but not hatred toward their opponents, and it was seen that those who had initially shown low levels of hatred assumed attitudes that were more supportive of negotiation because it referred to behaviors that were believed to be modifiable through it as specific and contingent and not to the nature of the enemy itself that was considered unchangeable (Halperin *et al.*, 2011).

Anger in this case functions as a kind of engine that amplifies the motivation to correct the offender’s behavior. If it is thought that the rival group will not change its attitude, the behavior is likely to be hardline and uncompromising, while reducing the level of hatred and increasing that of anger the result may paradoxically produce an increase in the propensity to negotiate. In the face of the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the end of which is not in sight, hatred is undoubtedly on both sides, and as long as hatred drives everyone’s behavior, peace will not be attainable. Only by thinking that the opponent can change his attitude and that coexistence between different peoples is possible will a way out be buildable. As long as people think that the other must be eliminated – from the Jordan to the sea, on both sides – no progress will be made.

The poison of resentment

Resentment opens up a broader issue. As Laura Boella makes clear, resentment is not to be considered a negative emotion, but “a pervasive pathology of individual, social and cultural experience. Indeed, it involves the entire emotional life,

impoverishes and withers it by enclosing it in the sphere of the ego, depriving it of its essential reference to others, society, and justice.” (Boella, 2019, p. 19).

In fact, emotions strictly understood have definite characteristics: they are quickly and spontaneously activated, they are short-lived, they have a defined subjective experience, and they have specific and recognizable external expressions, considered by some to be universal. Resentment, on the other hand, is a state of mind in which “an emotion intensifies and penetrates into the depths of the person, moving away from his or her sphere of expression and action. It is not simply the recollection of an emotion experienced, but rather, as the word resentment puts it so well, the tendency to hold, nurture and renew the source of negative mood motions and affections, regardless of their release in new experiences. Resentment is an intoxication of the soul” (Boella, 2019, p. 15) that can become a social pathology.

Friedrich Nietzsche and Max Scheler defined its contours. From Nietzsche’s perspective *ressentiment* is an emotional condition with essentially negative characteristics. It arises among weak and mediocre individuals to whom Christianity has ascribed value (the poor, the last) by giving them, with the idea of equality, equal dignity with others. Resentment is the emotional reaction, the revolt of the “sufferers against the successful and the victorious”: it presents itself positively through the ideas of compassion, love and desire for justice, behind which, however, lies the intention of the reaction of the weak, who seek sublimated revenge through Christ, that revenge which as free people they were unable to carry out. Indeed, resentment arises from what Nietzsche calls a no to life.

While all noble morality grows from a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave morality from the outset says no to an ‘outside’, to an ‘other’, to a ‘non-self’: this is not a creative act. [...] In order to exist at all, slave morality from the outset needs an opposing, outer world; in physiological terms, it needs an external stimuli in order to act – its action is fundamentally reaction (Nietzsche, 1996, p. 27).

It is therefore not an independent and resolute ethical option, what we have seen in the case of anger, but a «passive form of feeling» of a negative reactivity toward a social group capable of seizing for itself a privilege that those without it criticize not on the basis of a different moral criterion, but only insofar as they are excluded from it. A loser’s morality then.

For it does not arise spontaneously from the creative force of higher souls, but as a reaction of the weak against the strong, who are considered evil. It lies at the basis of Christian morality (a slave morality), in which weakness itself becomes value, to preserve life while renouncing its value. It is the so-called ascetic priest the “guilt artist” who transvalues the values by which a people are tamed and made passive. Resentment reinterpreted by the ascetic priest thus produces a morality of control and obedience, the morality of the herd. An unfulfilled desire for revenge and justice produces a psychological disposition to subjugation rather than redemption, to subordination rather than defense of one’s integrity.

Instead, it can be argued with Max Scheler that Christianity is not the religion of resentment. It is the bourgeois morality of mediocrity and homologation that provides the breeding ground for resentment. In this case:

Ressentiment is a self-poisoning of the mind which has quite definite causes and consequences: it is a lasting mental attitude, caused by a systematic repression of certain emotions and affects which, as such, are normal component of human nature. [...] Ressentiment can only arise if these emotions are particularly powerful and yet must be suppressed because they are coupled with the feeling that one is unable to act them out either because of weakness, physical or mental, or because of fear (Scheler, 2003, p. 25-27).

Emotions enter into the formation of resentment only when they are followed neither by moral overcoming nor by action, that is, by an adequate expression of emotion in external manifestations, particularly when action is restrained by an awareness of one’s own powerlessness. In general,

resentment corresponds to a deep lowering of the vital sense caused by anxiety that inhibits expression and action. Emotions are removed, but their impulse continues to be present in consciousness while action is restrained. As a consequence, the emotion itself produces inward action, which causes feelings of self-hatred and self-injury, since it is inhibited from an external outlet.

Resentment according to Scheler has its basis in bourgeois morality, born of the idea of equality typical of modernity, within which the only way to distinguish oneself is to compete continuously. Individuals thus define their identity heteronomously by comparing themselves with others, a condition in which they ultimately turn out to be losers and from which arises the idea that it is necessary to lower all values, and not to recognize social hierarchies, simply because one is excluded from them. The quest for justice with which resentment is cloaked is thus only a kind of flattening, standardization, and devaluation of any true ideal, not the active defense of one's own lost dignity.

Emotions, detached from their original objects, develop a kind of poisonous mass, a hotbed that at the moment of decreased vigilance of the higher consciousness, suddenly and violently begins to secrete poison. On the occasion of a violent aspiration for the realization of a value accompanied by the feeling of powerlessness, there arises the tendency to overcome the dissatisfaction caused by the tension between aspiration and powerlessness by the lowering and denial of the positive value of the good that one wanted to achieve and which now appears, in the destructive logic of resentment, insubstantial.

This leads to a profound inner transformation that gives rise to a characteristic falsification of the actual image of the world. Reality as a whole loses its value, the individual and social world is read in a dark and pessimistic key, as something from which nothing can be expected and with which one can only be in total contrast, which excludes any wish for change. Resentment makes it possible to understand how everyday experiences of weakness, of frustration, for example, the tension between

one's aspirations and the inability to achieve them, can lead to the abandonment of the value to which our action originally tended. Bourgeois morality is based on competition in which one feels inadequate or in which one gives up challenges because of the consciousness of one's powerlessness or weakness.

It is a loser's logic that becomes a psychological intoxication: evil turns inward if it cannot express itself outward. The account of the Republican vice-presidential candidate, J. D. Vance, in the book *Hillbilly Elegy* is a good example of this complex psychic and social phenomenon that, in its radical suffering veers toward authoritarian and far-right policies. The description of the decline of the white American proletariat can best be understood through this highly sophisticated reading grid provided by Scheler. But it is not possible to derive from it positive indications for how to emerge from the contemporary crisis and how to defend the democratic system under attack. Resentment appears as an existential option essentially destructive of any possible ideal, and self-destructive to the individual psyche.

Conclusions

Great transformations are always accompanied by great suffering as well as hope and expectation. We often see more of what is lost rather than what is gained, because what is lost is well known and visible, while what will be gained in the future is uncertain, unclear in anyone's mind, often an unexpected consequence of conscious actions that are affirmed in the short term and can lead to a worsening but also an improvement in the way we live in the world.

The negative aspects of emotions are not traceable to a cosmic pessimism in which the ancient sense of community of pre-modern societies appears lost without being replaced by other forms of social relations. In different ways, negative emotions and resentment as the dominant atmosphere of an era are not the last word, renunciatory and passive of the present time. Going through suffering with an active attitude, not giving up pursuing

one's aspirations as an individual or social group, is the right way to be in the world in a transformative phase that, like so many others before it, can lead to a turning point of humanity toward new forms of justice.

Kant allows me to conclude:

Enjoyment is the feeling of life being promoted, pain of its being hindered. But, as physicians too have noted, (animal) life is a continuous play of their antagonism. So pain must precede any enjoyment: pain always comes first. For if the vital force were continuously promoted, though it cannot be raised above a certain level, what could follow but swift death in the face of joy? Again, no enjoyment can follow directly upon another: between one and the other, pain must intervene. Slight inhibitions of the vital force alternate with slight advancements of it, and this constitute the state of health. We mistakenly think that in a state of health we feel continuous well being; but, in fact, it consists in agreeable feelings whose succession is only intermittent (with pain always intervening between them). Pain is the spur of activity, and in it is in activity, above all, that we feel our life; without pain, inertia would set in (Kant, 1974, p. 100).

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