

CRISES OF THE POLITICAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

**Critical perspectives
on the Common World**

Silvério da Rocha-Cunha

Irene Viparelli

Evanthia Balla

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Authors: Silvério da Rocha-Cunha
Irene Viparelli
Evanthia Balla
Paulo Vitorino Fontes
Rafael Franco Vasques

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Preliminary reflections for a biopolitical reading of the “ambiguous dialectic” of Human Rights and Cosmopolitanism

Irene Viparelli

1. Introduction

In the first pages of his *Perpetual Peace*, Kant provides us a classic portrayal of the “virtuous dialectic” between the rights of man, the republican constitution and the establishment of perpetual peace. Thus:

The republican constitution is a constitution that is established, first, according to principles of the freedom of the members of a society (as human beings), second, according to principles of the dependence of all on a single, common legislation (as subjects), and third, according to the law of the equality of the latter (as citizens of the state). [...] Besides the purity of its origin, [...] the republican constitution also offers the prospect for the desired consequence, namely, perpetual peace.¹

Two hundred years later, in his famous essay *Kant's Idea of perpetual Peace: At Two Hundred Years' Historical Remove*, German philosopher Habermas showed why the Kantian hypothesis is actually open to doubt. For Habermas, during the 19th and 20th centuries, the rise of republican states did not engender a “virtuous dialectic”

¹ Immanuel Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, trans. David L. Colclasure (London: Yale University Press, 2006), 74-75.



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