

Kant's Anthropology as a Coherent Doctrine of Man

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Almost all varieties of modern philosophising, including philosophical anthropology, one way or another refer to the ideas of I. Kant. His thoughts and statements about the man just like gems are scattered throughout the philosophical horizon and live (despite the transformations) in the number of ideas, images, trends and concepts, times and generations². Kant, for example, was read by the great Russian classic Lev Tolstoy who emphasized the coincidence of his views on the man with Kant's views. Tolstoy collected and published the aphorisms of the outstanding German philosopher, and when answering the question: "Is Kant's philosophy accessible to a common man and is it possible to popularize it?" – the Russian writer replied that if such statements still did not exist, then they would have been highly desirable.

One of the sources of such a huge influence of Kant's ideas on the intellectual history of mankind is his anthropology as *a general doctrine about the man*³. Kant is often compared to Socrates. The Hellenic sage brought philosophy down, established it on earth, digressed from outer space and concentrated on the man. Kant also starts to philosophise from his famous questions about the Man. For Kant the problem of the man, his self-determination always stood in the first place. Kant reflected on the Universe, the laws of being, knowledge and consciousness with only one goal: so that the man becomes more humane and as much possible keep the human in the man.

The article attempts to identify those conceptual points, which would define the contour of the Kantian anthropologist as an integral study about a human. In

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² See, for example, Belás, L., Andreanský, E., Zácutná, S.: Modern man as a philosophical problem. In: *Filosofskoje obrazovanie*. 2011, №1 (23), pp. 3-20; Motorina, L. E.: A man as anthropological integrity: philosophical reflection. In: *Nova Prisutnost*. 2017. T. 15. № 1., pp. 31-46.

³ See Krotikova, T.: Filosofskaja antropologija Immanuila Kanta i Maxa Šelera. [Philosophical Anthropology of Immanuel Kant and Max Scheler]. In: *Forum molodyh kantovedov*. Moskva: RAN, 2005, pp. 159-166.

this case, we are not talking about a single book or his last work “Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view” (1798)⁴, the anthropological theme is present in all the famous works of Kant that brought him worldwide recognition as a great philosopher, it is also explicitly or implicitly present in his early works, drafts, essays, in personal correspondence.

These concepts of integral Kant anthropology include the following ideas, views and observations:

1. Man is the unity of two worlds. Based on the understanding of the man as a creature belonging to two different worlds - a natural necessity and moral freedom, Kant distinguished anthropology in “physiological” and “pragmatic” senses. The first one explores what “*nature* makes of the human being; pragmatic, the investigation of what *he* as a free-acting being makes of himself, or can and should make of himself” (AA 07: 119)⁵. Explaining this thought the philosopher stressed: “All the interests of my mind (both speculative and practical) are united in the following three questions:

- 1) What can I know?
- 2) What should I do?
- 3) What may I hope?

The first question is purely speculative. [...] The second question is purely practical. As such it may indeed fall within the province of pure reason, but still it is not transcendental, but moral, [...] The third question [...] is simultaneously practical and theoretical, so that the practical leads like a clue to a reply to the theoretical question and, in its highest form, the speculative question” (A 805 / B 833)⁶.

Later on, Kant added to these three questions another one – “What is the man?”, which he declared the main question of philosophy: “The first question is answered by metaphysics, the second one – by morality, the third one – by religion, and the fourth one – by anthropology. But, in Kant’s opinion, in fact all this can be connected to anthropology because the first three questions refer to the last one.”⁷

⁴One can find the most contradictory judgments about this book: some authors consider this work as a result of the creation of the Kantian system (see Guliga, A. V.: *Nemeckaja klasičeskaja filosofija*. [German classical philosophy]. Moskva: Mysl, 1986, pp. 301-313), others estimate it as a non-philosophical addition to the Kantian system (see Vasilyev, V. V.: *Neulovimaja svoboda: problema osnovanij etičeskoj sistemy Kanta* [Elusive Freedom: The Problem of the Foundations of the Ethical System of Kant]. In: *Filosofskaja etika i npravstvennoje bogoslovije*. Izdatel'stvo fonda Christianskaja mysl, 2003, p. 168).

⁵Louden, R. B. and Kuehn, M. (eds): *Kant: Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy), 2006, p. 3

⁶Kant, I.: *Critique of Pure Reason*. Edited by P. Guyer and A. W. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant), 1998, p. 677.

⁷Kant, I.: *Logika*. Posibije k lekcijam [Logic. A Handbook for Lectures]. In: Kant I.: *Traktaty i pisma*

Kant was convinced that the main task of philosophy is to know and understand life, and “[a]ll cultural progress, by means of which the human being advances his education, has the goal of applying this acquired knowledge and skill for the world’s use. But the most important object in the world to which he can apply them is the human being: because the human being is his own final end.” (AA 07: 119)⁸. So, according to Kant, a person lives in two worlds: phenomenal and noumenal. On the one hand, he is a phenomenon, a cell in a sensual world that exists according to its laws in the strict determination. But, on the other hand, he is noumenon, a supersensual being that is subordinate to the ideal. Hence, the person has two characters: empirical created by the environment, and noumenal, intelligible, as if characteristic of it from the inside. Are they related to each other? Or the intelligible character is something beyond understanding that does not manifest itself in the imminent world?⁹

“How is freedom possible for the man?” – this was one of the main and most difficult questions for Kant. But where is it? Kant said that we could not find it in the world of ‘events’, the man is only free in the world of the ‘things as themselves’. Calling this freedom ‘elusive’ a modern researcher in the history of foreign philosophy Vasiliev analyses in detail the ‘difficulty’ that, in his opinion, Kant faces. Vasiliev says: “And we have a contradiction: we can and cannot act as free creatures. It seems that this is exactly the main problem of Kant’s ethics. One cannot say that Kant avoids this difficulty. On the contrary, he in every possible way accentuates it and tries to find a solution in distinguishing the ‘intelligible’ and ‘empirical character’ of a person. An empirical character is a combination of natural causal relationships that form the phenomenal life of one or another individual. The intelligible character expresses the noumenal side of human life, reveals it as a free being. Kant’s idea is that noumenal freedom and phenomenal necessity can be combined under the assumption that the free choice made at the noumenal level is precisely what forms the empirical character of the person. Although all of his actions are mechanically determined, the laws and nature of this determination are specified by his free choice. Kant had serious hopes for this decision, although he agreed that it could not fully satisfy our mind... There is no consistent exit, with moral freedom remaining, from it. And sometimes Kant himself said that the difficulties mentioned are ‘insoluble’. What does this mean? Perhaps, we are talking about some miscalculations of Kant who could not create a coherent theory of freedom? Looking closely, however, we will notice

Moskva, 1980, p. 332.

⁸ Loudon, R. B. and Kuehn, M. (eds): *Kant: Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, *ibid.*, p. 3.

⁹ Quote from the book. Guliga, A. V.: *Nemeckaja klasičeskaja filosofija*. [German classical philosophy], *ibid.*, p. 122.

that the contradictory nature of the Kant's perspective is rather the evidence of its fundamental nature and speaks in favor of Kant. In fact, what is so bad in the contradiction? And if so, then "the best theory of freedom must be recognized as the one in which the inevitability of the contradictions concluded in this concept is shown with the greatest conviction"¹⁰. Quite a large quotation from the work of the modern author makes it possible to analyze and correlate, on the one hand – the *interpretation* of how Kant understood freedom; on the other hand – how *Kant himself understood the relationship between the intelligible and empirical character of the man*, and how this relationship manifested itself in a specific act, behavior generally. That's the whole point, Kant wrote, that in the behavior of a person the connection between two characters is realized. This is the basis for a person's "sanity" of the person, their responsibility. To save "freedom" Kant introduces the problem of the ideality of time. Time, according to Kant, is the order of phenomena in nature, over which no one is powerful, this is an unconditional connection of states, and freedom requires the manifestation of the will of the man. Therefore, if time is inherent in things, Kant argues, freedom is impossible. Only because in the intelligible world, according to Kant, there is no unconditional interconnection of causes and effects, there is no time, causality of a special kind is possible – "through freedom", which only makes a person a moral being. In nature, the same reasons necessarily lead to the same actions. A person can review what they have done and, although the conditions have not changed, act differently¹¹. "[T]he action is ascribed to the agent's intelligible character; [...] regardless of all empirical conditions of the deed, is fully free, and this deed is to be attributed entirely to its failure to act" (A 555 / B 583)¹². In the "Social Contract" Kant continues to deepen and vary the problem of freedom, considering the dependence of one person on another. In any case, Kant points to the regulative role of reason in determining actions, in the realization of the connection between two characters: the intelligible and the empirical, where, according to Kant, there is *a particular kind of causality* – "through freedom".

Thus, the problem of freedom occupies a central place in the anthropological concept of Kant, its relevance increases with the intensification of the contradictions between man and nature, the contradictions between civilizations, nationalities, religions, countries and peoples. Kant sees freedom as a universal law, only based on which all relations of people, nations, states, having different, and sometimes opposing in direction values, meaningful orientations, motives

¹⁰ Vasiliev, V. V.: *Neulovimaja svoboda: problema osnovanij etičeskoj sistemy Kanta* [Elusive Freedom: The Problem of the Foundations of the Ethical System of Kant], *ibid.*, pp. 184-187.

¹¹ Kant, I.: *Kritika čistogo razuma* [Critique of Pure Reason], *ibid.*, pp. 475-484.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 488.

and goals can be formed.

2. Man and nature is an independent concept of the Kant's anthropological doctrine, for the man as "his own last goal" is involved in another more inclusive integrity-nature. Kant sees nature as an infinite creation that encompasses all creatures brought to life by its inexhaustible wealth. "From the most sublime class among thinking beings to the most despised insect, not one link is indifferent to it; and not one can be absent without the beauty of the whole, which exists in their interrelationship, being interrupted by it." (AA 01: 354)¹³ The man is so busy with himself – Kant observed, as if he was making instructions to us, today's inhabitants of the planet – that he considered himself the only goal of God's destiny, as if they meant only him when they were establishing laws governing the world. We know – he argued – that the totality of nature is the subject of divine wisdom and predestination. We are part of it, but we want to be the whole.¹⁴ In lectures on anthropology Kant said that the world is not a mass of wreckage, it is a kind of unity, a whole, and if so, then there must be *a single goal from the past to the future* (italics done by the author). For Kant, the main question was whether the person is the bearer of such a goal.¹⁵

Defining man as the last "goal for himself", Kant emphasizes the need for unity of the goal of the man and the goal of the world itself, for any development from its point of view makes sense if development is guided by a common goal from the past to the future. However, over time, nature loses for the man a status of a supernal entity; it becomes for the man an object of use and transformation. From the moment when a person turns into a subject and the world – into an object (M. Heidegger), the man is in the illusion as if nature exists only for the person to know and transform it endlessly. But the world has its own goals, and in order to understand them, a person, in Kant's opinion, needs to learn to "ask the world the right questions", it means that he needs to try to penetrate the goals of the world itself. He wrote: "Reason, in order to be taught by nature, must approach nature with its principles in one hand, according to which alone the agreement among appearances can count as laws, and, in the other hand, the experiments thought out in accordance with these principles - yet in order to be instructed by nature not like a pupil, who has recited to him whatever the teacher wants to say, but like an appointed judge who compels witnesses to answer the questions he

¹³ Kant, I.: Universal natural history and theory of the heavens or essay on the constitution and the mechanical origin of the whole universe according to Newtonian principles (1755). In: Watkins, E. (ed.) *Kant: Natural Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant), 2012, pp. 182–308, here p. 297.

¹⁴ Quote from Gulyga, A.: *Kant*, Moskva: Molodaya Gvardiya, 1981, p. 37.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

puts to them.” (B xiii)¹⁶. These words of Kant sound like a testament to humanity to reconsider its relationship with nature. Man can no longer exist outside nature as a whole being a lord, a transformer and a master. The person's prospects are related to the fact that he must return to the world, conforming his actions with the laws of nature, find in it his place and the “new house”. Perhaps this home will become the world in both its meanings: the world as the Universe and the world as Consent. It is necessary to overcome the idea of man's domination over nature, to overcome the motive of the “technocratic will to complete reorganization, to the new creation of the Earth and the whole cosmos by the hands of man.”¹⁷ Such a “technocratic will” (P. Gaidenko) is dangerous because it invisibly forms in a person *no perception of everything that exists in itself*, that does not depend on a single individual or, moreover, acts as a supra-individual entity – space, nature, God, moral norms, cultural and religious traditions, having according to Kant, the force of universal legislation.

3. On the role of unconscious ideas in cognition – this concept was expressed by Kant initially in several lines of the entry work of 1764, but the idea of “dark” or “vague” ideas is present throughout his work when he talks about common sense, intuition, productive imagination as spontaneity, as a worker tool for the synthesis of sensuality and reason. Kant assigns a special place to the theme of “dark ideas” in his final work “Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view”.

The problem of the “role of unconscious representations” in cognition appeared in the 17th century. The active participant in the discussions was J. Locke, who rejected the possibility of the existence of uncontrolled mental states. Kant did not use the term “unconscious” when he spoke of “dark ideas”: “People have a tendency to jump too readily to conclusions, without paying attention to differing cases and investing the relevant concept with a significance appropriate to each respective instance. This may explain why, in the present case, no attention has been paid to what is probably a great mystery of nature: the fact, namely, that it is perhaps during sleep that the soul exercises its greatest facility in rational thought. The only objection which could be raised against this supposition is the fact that we have no recollection of such rational activity when we have woken up; but that proves nothing.” (AA 02: 290)¹⁸. Kant often made notes in drafts about

¹⁶ Kant, I.: *Critique of Pure Reason*. Edited by P. Guyer and A. W. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant), 1998, p. 109.

¹⁷ Gaidenko, P.P.: *Proryv k transcendentnomu. Novaja ontologija XX v. [Breakthrough to the Transcendent. New Ontology of the XX Century]*, Moskva: Respublika, 1997, p. 479.

¹⁸ Frierson, P.: Inquiry Concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality (1764). In: Frierson, P. and Guyer, P. (eds) *Kant: Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime and Other Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy), 2011, pp. 219–248, here p. 237.

“dark ideas”, which, in his opinion, can be more expressive than the clear ones. Calling such representations as a “midwife of thoughts”, Kant emphasized their connection with beauty, which, he said, must be inescapable, and therefore acts as the third world, a sort of intermediary between the phenomenal and noumenal world.

Problems that already in the XVIII century worried Kant took a definite place in modern heuristics, as well as in the philosophy and methodology of science. A vivid example of the connection between ideas as a continuation of Kant's thoughts about “unconscious representations” is the concept of “implicit knowledge” of the English scientist and philosopher M. Polanyi. He developed the main provisions of this concept in the middle of the last century, when, as it is well known, the idea of “artificial intelligence” aroused scientists' great interest. Working then at Manchester University, where the trend towards mathematization and formalization occupied a large place in research practice, M. Polanyi from the very beginning was highly critical of the idea of identifying mechanical models of thinking with the processes of human thinking. In his discussions with colleagues, he tried to substantiate the thesis about the existence in any knowledge of an essential element of understanding, which, in his opinion, is inherent exclusively in human thinking and which he later called “hidden, implicit knowledge”¹⁹. He came to the conclusion that every member of the scientific community has a personal space for a spontaneous search for a solution to the problem determined by his own intellectual “passions”, which he admits at the moment only implicitly²⁰. M. Grene notes that for M. Polanyi not the very existence of “unconscious uncertainty was important, but how this uncertainty works and what functions it performs”²¹. The main thing for the English scientist was not simply to recognize the existence of “informal” reasonableness, but to explore it as the ability of people. He stressed: “What I know *implicitly*, I know implicitly. This is a modification of my existence, this is personal.”²² Thus, in the objective, natural process of the development of scientific knowledge Polanyi includes a subjective-personal component in the form of “implicit knowledge”. He regards implicit knowledge as a multidimensional structure, where along with purely psychological states (dreams, individual experiences, etc.) there are also “theoretical schemes” that were historically developed in science and assimilated by an individual in their own experience. An analogy with the notion of “scheme” in Kant's works involuntarily comes to mind, which emphasized the difference

¹⁹ Polanyi, M.: *Personal Knowledge*. Chicago, 1958. Ch. V. VI.

²⁰ Grene, M.: Tacit Knowledge: Grounds for a Revolution in Philosophy. In: *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 1977, vol. 8, № 3, p. 165, 168.

²¹ Ibid., p. 165.

²² Polanyi, M.: *Personal Knowledge*, *ibid.*, p. 17.

between the scheme and the image. At the heart of concepts, according to Kant, there are not images, but schemes. He wrote that it is difficult to say how they arise; it is “hidden in the depths of the human soul art, the real tricks of which we are unlikely to ever be able to guess”²³.

The strength of the succession of ideas in science cannot disappear without a trace, as long as the relationship (scientific communication) between the researchers remains, whether it is direct or indirect is not important. In this connection, the well-known Russian scientist V. I. Vernadsky comes to an interesting conclusion: “The consciousnesses of individuals cannot be dissolved completely”, he wrote, “because they are deeply individual, and therefore not permeable to the end. Nevertheless, their strength lies in the fact that they give a constantly new reflection on the newly emerged – even if under their influence – requests... The latter is especially characteristic of classical works that pass from generation to generation and in each generation give birth to their own unique thoughts. Classical works as individual and vivid manifestations of human thought remain untouched against the background of a single scientific apparatus as individual scientific facts”²⁴. This conclusion made by Vernadsky can be fully attributed to the great works of I. Kant and to his personality as well.

4. Observations (living contemplation) – as a method of anthropology – this concept is no less significant for the holistic doctrine of the man as an object that cannot be completely objectified. I. Kant not only possessed this amazing gift of “living contemplation”, but also with compelling enthusiasm wrote about this, viewing observations as a special kind of scientific fact: “The field for observations of these peculiarities of human nature is very extensive and still conceals a rich lode for discoveries that are as charming as they are instructive. For now I will cast my glance only on several places that seem especially to stand out in this region, and even on these more with the eye of an observer than of the philosopher.” (AA 02: 207)²⁵. Such “points”, which Kant paid particular attention to, are numerous in his work. These are individuals, temperaments of people, images of men and women, and images of entire peoples. Kant’s observations and conclusions from them are a whole storehouse of wisdom, not yet sufficiently read and mastered as a methodology of philosophical anthropology. At the same time, his description of temperaments, peculiarities of national characters, to which he returned many

²³ Quote from Gulyga, A.: *Kant*, *ibid.*, p. 114

²⁴ Vernadskyi, V.: *Izbrannyye trudy po istorii nauki*. [Selected works on the history of science]. Moskva: Nauka, 1981, pp. 56, 247.

²⁵ Frierson, P.: *Kant: Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime and Other Writings*. Edited by P. Frierson and P. Guyer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy), 2011, p. 13.

times during the course of lectures on anthropology, served as the source of many well-known concepts and directions in the field of physiology, psychology, social psychology, empirical sociology and other sciences.

At first glance, it may seem that the isolation of individual concepts (conceptual points) of Kant's anthropology violates its integrity. But in this case, the integrity of the Kant's doctrine was revealed through the involvement of another more comprehensive whole – Kant himself and his work. I. Kant lived for the man, created for the man, believed in the moral freedom of the man, his beauty and dreamed to bring a person to the Eternal World. He sought the human in the man, realizing that this question has no simple, let alone definitive, answer. On the future of the man Kant wrote: “We are not even properly familiar with what a human being actually is, even though consciousness and our senses should inform us about it; how much less will we be able to imagine what he will become in the future! Nonetheless the human soul's desire for knowledge grasps greedily for this object so distant from it and strives to shed some light in such obscure cognition.” (AA 01: 366)²⁶.

Summary

Kant's Anthropology as a Coherent Doctrine of Man

The paper attempts to reveal conceptual items that can define the profile of Kantian anthropology as a comprehensive study of man. It also points out that anthropological subject is present in all Kantian works, including the fact that it is explicitly and implicitly identified in his early drafts, essays, and personal correspondence. The paper analyses four basic concepts: man as a unity of both worlds, man and nature, the role of unconscious perceptions in cognition and “live intuition” as anthropological method. The author investigates further development of Kantian ideas, findings, and conclusions and emphasises their significance and contribution in the development of anthropological principle in the modern philosophy.

Keywords: anthropology, man, nature, necessity, freedom, implicit knowledge, live intuition

²⁶ Kant, I.: Universal natural history and theory of the heavens or essay on the constitution and the mechanical origin of the whole universe according to Newtonian principles (1755). In: Watkins, E. (ed.) Kant: Natural Science. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant), 2012, pp. 182–308, here p. 307.

Zhrnutie

Kantova antropológia ako koherentná náuka o človeku

Príspevok sa pokúša odkryť konceptuálne prvky, ktoré môžu definovať obraz Kantovej antropológie ako komplexného štúdia človeka. Zároveň objasňuje, že antropológický subjekt je prezentovaný vo všetkých Kantových prácach a je explicitne a implicitne identifikovateľný aj v Kantových skorších prácach, esejach a osobnej korešpondencii. V štúdii je prezentovaná analýza štyroch podstatných konceptov: človek ako jednota dvoch svetov, človek a príroda, úloha nevedomého vnímania v poznaní a „životná intuícia“ ako antropológická metóda. Autorka skúma ďalší vývoj Kantových ideí, zistení a záverov a zdôrazňuje ich prínos a význam vo vývoji antropológického princípu v modernej filozofii.

Kľúčové slová: antropológia, človek, príroda, nevyhnutnosť, sloboda, úplné vedenie, životná intuícia

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