

Kant and the Philosophy of History – A Research at the University of Prešov

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Abstract: The article presents the characteristics and evaluation of the research activities of individual members of the research project VEGA “Kant and the Philosophy of History” realized at Faculty of Arts of the University of Prešov in Slovakia. Between 2018 and 2021, the members of the research team participated in and organized scientific events related to the project and they presented the results of their research in the publications that are presented in detail in the text.

Key words: Kantian research, philosophy of history, practical philosophy, Slovak Republic

Kant a filozofia dejín: Výskum na Prešovskej univerzite v Prešove

Abstrakt: Predložený text predstavuje charakteristiku a zhodnotenie vedecko-výskumnej činnosti členov grantového projektu VEGA „Kant a filozofia dejín“, ktorí sa v rokoch 2018 – 2021 na Filozofickej fakulte Prešovskej univerzity v Prešove okrem výskumu, okrem organizovania vedeckých podujatí spätých s projektom a účasti na nich vo výraznej miere venovali prezentácii svojich výsledkov v publikačných výstupoch, ktoré predložený článok približuje.

Kľúčové slová: kantovský výskum, filozofia dejín, praktická filozofia, Slovenská republika

The text focuses on the results of Kantian research, which was carried out at the Institute of Philosophy at the Faculty of Arts, University of Prešov between 2018 and 2021 as a result of the research project VEGA 1/0280/18 *Kant and the Philosophy of History* supported by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. The project has been built on the scientific research of Kant’s philosophical legacy, which has a long tradition at the Uni-

versity of Prešov thanks to Ľubomír Belás who devoted his career to building a Kantian research centre there. The project's aim was to show Kant's patient and consistent involvement in human endeavour for morality, virtue and life in a cultivated society, and rehabilitate him as a philosopher of history (being, for a long time, in the shadow of Hegel) who is recognized, renowned, popular and especially topical.

All eight members of the research team have long been dedicated to specific areas of Kant's practical philosophy and in the project they focused on issues of philosophy of history in political and social philosophy, philosophy of culture, philosophy of education as well as in connection with current philosophical topics such as cosmopolitanism or postmodern morality. Despite the diversity of research topics of the members of the research team, several main goals had been set in the project plan focusing on the following areas: issues regarding the philosophy of history, rehabilitation of Kant as a philosopher of history and comprehensive interpretation of his philosophy of history, analysis of Kant's philosophy of history in various philosophical traditions and its topicality nowadays. Public presentation of the results of the research was in the form of active participation in international conferences and congresses and publications in the form of monographs, scientific articles in journals and proceedings.

The main credit for starting the project belongs to Ľubomír Belás, who was the principal investigator of the project during its first two years. In 2018, together with Ľudmila Belásová, he published an article focusing on the reception of Kant's philosophy in Slovakia after WWII. The paper *Reflexionen der Philosophie Kants in der Slowakei 1945–1989*¹ was based on the assumption that after the war there would be an increased interest in Kant in Slovak intellectual circles (similarly to the situation in the Czech Republic). However, this was not true, and the authors provide a thorough analysis of potential reasons as well as an evaluation of the works on Kant and translations of his works published in this period.

As early as 2018, two papers related to the project were published in the Polish journal, *Sofia*. Sandra Zákutná's article *Politická filozofia Immanuela Kanta* [*Political Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*]² focuses on political issues in Kant's philosophy and aimed to present Kant as a practical thinker who presents a realistic assessment of politics, including political practices far from

¹ Belás Ľ., Belásová, Ľ.: *Reflexionen der Philosophie Kants in der Slowakei 1945–1989*. *Studia Philosophica Kantiana*, 7(1), 2018, pp. 30–55.

² Zákutná, S.: *Politická filozofia Immanuela Kanta*. In: *Sofia: Pismo Filozofów Krajów Słowiańskich*. Rzeszów: Uniwersytet Rzeszowski, 2018, pp. 141–151.

the idea of perpetual peace. Peter Kyslan's article *Immanuel Kant a kultúrny rozmer spoločnosti* [*Immanuel Kant and the Cultural Dimension of Society*]³ defines the cultural dimension of society in Kant's philosophy followed by a confrontation with the contemporary idea of multiculturalism and claims that the universalist character of Kant's concept of culture has the potential to be a philosophical reflection of our culture. In the same year, Peter Kyslan published the monograph *Fenomén kultúry vo filozofii Immanuela Kanta* [*The phenomenon of culture in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant*]⁴ that focused on an interpretation and updating of Kant's philosophy of culture and defines the problem area of the following research in the form of Kant's philosophy of culture and philosophy of history.

In 2019, Peter Kyslan focused on Kant's *Conflict of the Faculties* and in the article *Spor fakúlt a úloha filozofickej fakulty* [*The Conflict of the Faculties and the role of the Faculty of Philosophy*]⁵ in the journal *Studia Philosophica Kantiana*. He attempts to update Kant's views in relation to the current problematic situation in humanities. In the same year, Sandra Zákutná published the article *Kant in the Context of 18th Century Philosophy of History*⁶ that focuses on the philosophy of history as one of the leading tendencies in Enlightenment philosophy and deals with Kant's model of philosophy of history through the issues of human progress in history, the role of citizens and the portrayal of possible future history.

In 2020, Ondrej Marchevský joined the research team and, with his predominantly historical-philosophical works, he paid attention to Kant's reception in the Russian environment with the emphasis on the philosophy of history. Ondrej Marchevský's first publication was the book *Kant v Rusku (ne)milovaný* [(*Un*)beloved Kant in Russia]⁷ as a result of his long-term interest in the study of selected Russian reflections on the philosophical work of Immanuel Kant. The monograph provides an excursion into important historical contexts of Kant's research in the Russian philosophical and intellectual environment, and it points out the significance of Kant's legacy in the process of shaping Russian philosophy of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century.

Peter Kyslan in the paper *Kantova kozmopolitná výchova ako reakcia na*

³ Kyslan, P.: Immanuel Kant a kultúrny rozmer spoločnosti. In: *Sofia: Pismo Filozofów Krajów Słowiańskich*. Rzeszów: Uniwersytet Rzeszowski, 2018, pp. 133–139.

⁴ Kyslan, P.: *Fenomén kultúry vo filozofii Immanuela Kanta*. Prešov: Filozofická fakulta, 2018.

⁵ Kyslan, P.: Spor fakúlt a úloha filozofickej fakulty. *Studia Philosophica Kantiana*, 8(1), 2019, pp. 59–73.

⁶ Zákutná, S.: Kant in the Context of 18th Century Philosophy of History. *Studia Philosophica Kantiana*, 8(2), 2019, pp. 35–44.

⁷ Marchevský, O.: *Kant v Rusku (ne)milovaný*. Červený Kostelec: Pavel Mervart, 2020.

multikulturalizmus [Kant's *Cosmopolitan Education as a Reaction to Multiculturalism*]⁸ in the proceedings of the conference of the Slovak Philosophical Association of the Slovak Academy of Sciences opens another topic of the project, namely, the philosophy of education. The connection between history, culture and education systematizes and clarifies here some of Kant's views and transmits them to today's multicultural reality.

Eva Zelizňaková, who focuses on Kant's philosophy of law and its explanation for today's world, published, in 2020, the article *Súčasná kríza medzinárodného práva vo svetle Kantovej právnej filozofie* [The Current Crisis of International Law in the Light of Kant's Legal Philosophy]⁹. The paper is a response to the current crisis of the international community and international law, which is just one of the many consequences of the ongoing crisis caused by the corona virus pandemic. Tensions between political liberalism, based on individual freedom and equal opportunities within the rule of law, and the economic liberalism of the globalized market require a revision of the fundamental ideas of Kant's legal philosophy and his system of public law in order to remove its instrumentalist distortions.

Peter Kyslan in the article *Kresťanstvo a modely filozofie dejín* [Christianity and Models of the Philosophy of History]¹⁰ presents the important place of theology in the concepts of the philosophy of history of Voltaire, Hegel and Kant and shows that functionality of models of the philosophy of history would be very problematic without a super-personal principle. The paper attempts to show that the Christian evaluation of history and the modern evaluation of subject create conditions for the formation of the philosophy of history.

In 2021, Sandra Zákutná's paper *Kant on Teaching Philosophy and Education in a Cosmopolitan Manner*¹¹ from the 13th International Kant Congress was published. It focuses on Kant's ideas on education and tries to show how they correspond with his vision of cosmopolitanism. The aim of education, also in the form of teaching philosophising, is related to the idea of approaching cosmopolitan condition as a future-oriented project based on human beings represented by moral culture.

⁸ Kyslan, P.: Kantova kozmopolitná výchova ako reakcia na multikulturalizmus. In: *Filozofia, vzdelanie a kultúra vo výzvach súčasnosti*. Bratislava: Slovenské filozofické združenie, 2020, pp. 27–34.

⁹ Zelizňaková, E.: Súčasná kríza medzinárodného práva vo svetle Kantovej právnej filozofie. *Studia Philosophica Kantiana*, 9(1), 2020, pp. 43–52.

¹⁰ Kyslan, P.: Kresťanstvo a modely filozofie dejín. *Acta Patristica*, 11(22), 2020, pp. 92–101.

¹¹ Zákutná, S.: Kant on Teaching Philosophy and Education in a Cosmopolitan Manner. In: Himmelmann, B. and Serck-Hanssen, C. ed. *The Court of Reason: Proceedings of the 13th International Kant Congress*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2021, pp. 1661–1666.

Ondrej Marchevský published the paper *Kantiana in "Voprosy filosofii"*¹² in the important Russian journal *Voprosy filosofii*, which examines the reflections of Immanuel Kant's legacy in the particular Russian academic and intellectual environment. Another of Marchevský's articles, *Ako môže byť poznanie a morálka slobodné? Alebo L.M. Lopatin o filozofickom odkaze I. Kanta* [How can knowledge and morality be free? Or L.M. Lopatin on I. Kant's Philosophical Legacy]¹³, tries to evaluate Lopatin's characterization of Kant's moral theory in the overall history of ethical thinking. In the same year, he also published the paper *K jubileu Kanta inak alebo Kant „na hranici“ symbolizmu A. Belého* [On Kant's Anniversary in a Different Way or Kant "on the Border" of A. Belij's Symbolism]¹⁴ that attempts to disrupt the usual approach to interpreting Kant's philosophical legacy.

A new member of the research team, Lukáš Švihura published the article *Postmoderná morálka a Kantova etika* [Postmodern Morality and Kants Ethics]¹⁵ in which he deals with the characteristic features of postmodern morality, which the author captures through its observers from the ranks of postmodern philosophy, sociology and aesthetics. He emphasizes the character of postmodern morality through the opposing aspects of morality found in *The Critique of Practical Reason* and in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*.

Marek Stachoň is another long-term member of the research team of Kantian projects in Prešov. For several years, he has been strongly engaged in Kant's social theory. He published the paper *Kant a problém vzťahu štát a občan* [Kant and the issue of the relationship between the state and citizen]¹⁶ providing an analysis of the nature of the relationship between the state and citizens in Kant's philosophy and focusing on the positions they have towards each other. He is also the author of *Enlightenment and Social Progress – Back to the Enlightenment*¹⁷ in which he aims to review the issue and return to the roots of reflection on the meaning of enlightenment and progress focusing on Kant and

¹² Marchevský, O.: Kantiana "Voprosy filosofii". *Voprosy filosofii*, 8, 2021, pp. 197–209.

¹³ Marchevský, O.: Ako môže byť poznanie a morálka slobodné? Alebo L.M. Lopatin o filozofickom odkaze I. Kanta. In: *Etické myslenie minulosti a súčasnosti (ETPP 2020/22): etika v 19. a 20. storočí*. Prešov: Filozofická fakulta, 2021, pp. 219–231.

¹⁴ Marchevský, O.: K jubileu Kanta inak alebo Kant „na hranici“ symbolizmu A. Belého In: *Myslieť inak – iné v myslení: zborník vedeckých príspevkov*. Bratislava: Slovenské filozofické združenie, 2021, pp. 83–94.

¹⁵ Švihura, L.: Postmoderná morálka a Kantova etika. *Studia Philosophica Kantiana*, 10(2), 2021, pp. 21–41.

¹⁶ Stachoň, M.: Kant a problém vzťahu štát a občan. *Studia philosophica Kantiana*, 10(1), 2021, pp. 67–86.

¹⁷ Stachoň, M.: Enlightenment and Social Progress – Back to the Enlightenment. *Studia z histórii filozofii*, 4(12), 2021, pp. 43–62.

Rousseau who both think about the question of social progress differently from their contemporaries.

The project and its results bear the strong mark of Professor Ľubomír Belás, who is now retired, but most of the members of the research team were his students and later colleagues. The natural inclination to topics of Kant's practical philosophy of the individual researchers, in accordance with their research focus, represents the concretization of Professor Belás' ideas. The orientation of individual project members in the fields of history, politics, social theory, law, culture, education, ethics and history of philosophy represented by their participation in and organization of scientific events as well as their publications give hope that the project *Kant and the Philosophy of History* has been successful. Further research on Kant's legacy will be elaborated by another VEGA research project focused on Kant's practical philosophy scheduled for the years 2022–2024.

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