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Moving Around the Question of the Human. Was Kant an Anthropological Philosopher?

Abstract: On the anniversary of 300 years since the birth of one of the world's most influential philosophers, Immanuel Kant, we are still moving around the four key questions that he posed in his *Logic*. The question whether Kant was or was not an anthropological philosopher is closely related to the discussion about the significance of his lectures on anthropology that were later collected and published in the book *Anthropology from the Pragmatic Point of View*. Here, the opinions of researchers and commentators vary, as much on the significance of the text as on its compatibility with Kant's other significant writings. Humanity has, for Kant, a certain purpose that is articulated in the human nature and both ethics and anthropology have the same task; to contribute to the fulfilment the purpose of humanity as a whole.

Key words: anthropology, categorical imperative, cosmopolitanism, free will

Abstrakt: Pri príležitosti výročia 300 rokov od narodenia jedného z najvplyvnejších svetových filozofov, Immanuela Kanta, sa stále pohybujeme okolo štyroch kľúčových otázok, ktoré položil vo svojej *Logike*. Otázka, či Kant bol alebo nebol antropologický filozof, úzko súvisí s diskusiou o význame jeho prednášok o antropológii, ktoré boli neskôr zozbierané a publikované v knihe *Antropológia z pragmatického hľadiska*. Tu sa názory bádateľov a komentátorov rôznia, a to tak na význam tohto textu, ako aj na jeho kompatibilitu s inými významnými Kantovými spismi. Ľudstvo má pre Kanta určitý cieľ, ktorý je artikulovaný v ľudskej prirodzenosti, a etika aj antropológia majú rovnakú úlohu: prispieť k naplneniu cieľa ľudstva ako celku.

Kľúčové slová: antropológia, kategorický imperatív, kozmopolitizmus, slobodná vôľa

Introduction

On the anniversary of 300 years since the birth of one of the world's most influential philosophers, Immanuel Kant, we are still moving around the four key questions that he posed in his book of *Logic*: "What can I know?; What should I do?; What may I hope for?; What is a human being?"¹ No matter how old these questions are, they remain current up until the present time. No matter how exhaustingly Kant, and many others after Kant, were trying to answer them, they remain unsolved till now, just like the essence of the human being itself. The first three questions that naturally lead to the fourth one, to the question of a human, are constitutive of the proof of almost eternal movement around and towards the human without the perspective of finding the final, forever valid answer. The essence of the human is in constant movement and so are the four Kantian questions and yet in their circular repetitions throughout the centuries, they represent four solid circles centered around one stable point. That point is the picture of a human being, whose outlines have been boldly painted at the beginning of the Enlightenment era and followed by anthropologists, philosophers, psychologists, medical doctors, and sociologists ever since.

Long before empirical anthropology was founded, the first anthropological movement in modern times began with the Enlightenment emancipation of the human from the divine with the raising effort of philosophers to create the picture of a human that would not be a mere corporeal image of God. Although Kant does not entirely belong to this group of thinkers and his perception of what is human does not entirely fall out of the theological world view, at least when it comes to theology within the frames of pure reason, he becomes clearly aware of the fact that the theological definition of human is not universal enough to define the whole of the human being and absolutely insufficient to describe the modern human as a being whose home is situated in the cosmopolis. The new, cosmopolitan location and the recognition of rational abilities and individual capabilities by Enlightenment philosophers stand not only at the beginning of the four Kantian questions, but also at the beginning of his *Anthropology from the Pragmatic Point of View*.

¹ Kant, I., 1819. *Logic*, trans. by J. Richardson. London: W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, Stationery Court, p. 30.

I.

The question whether Kant was or was not an anthropological philosopher is closely related to the discussion about the significance of his lectures on anthropology that were later collected and published in the book *Anthropology from the Pragmatic Point of View*. Here, the opinions of researchers and commentators vary, as much on the significance of the text as on its compatibility with Kant's other significant writings. In any case, we cannot deny that the most significant object of Kantian philosophy was the human described from the human perspective in every aspect of his internal and external characteristics in his ability to transcend the geographical, political, cultural, linguistic, and psychological boundaries, but, of course, not almighty, because the human is limited in his knowledge of the thing for itself by his own human nature. Another problem seems to be the form of *Anthropology*, which was designed as a textbook for introductory courses for first-year students. Does that make Kant's anthropological thinking less relevant than his theory of knowledge, aesthetics, or moral philosophy?

"We may also ask", Manfred Kuehn writes in the *Introduction* to the English translation of *Anthropology* edited by Robert B. Louden,

whether a textbook should be measured by the same criteria as an original contribution to philosophical discussion. How precisely can the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* be compared with the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the *Critique of Practical Reason*, or the *Metaphysics of Morals*, for instance? Does the published *Anthropology* give the best possible expression of Kant's fundamental intention? [...] Some philosophical scholars have argued not only that the *Anthropology* does not express Kant's deepest philosophical concerns, but that it is irrelevant to them. Some have even argued that it actually contradicts them. But there are also passages in Kant's work that suggest the opposite view, and so it has also been argued that the *Anthropology* is of central importance to the entire Kantian project. Support for this view can be found in a passage from Kant's *Logic*. [...] Kant then claims that all this can be included within anthropology because the four questions *relate to anthropology*.²

² Kuehn, M., 2006. Introduction. In: Louden, R., ed. *Anthropology from the Pragmatic Point of View*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. xi–xii.

Kuehn, on the other hand, strongly disagrees with that kind of interpretation of Kant's anthropological texts that would intend to put the definition of human into the center of his metaphysics, arguing, similarly to Heidegger, that the question of the human and his intellectual capabilities provides a firm base for the possible foundation and justification of metaphysics. Therefore, Loudon stands in favour of the cosmopolitan explanation of Kant's anthropological motivations and claims that *Anthropology from the Pragmatic Point of View* could as well be called *Anthropology from a Cosmopolitan Point of View*. In my opinion, he is right and I would even go a bit further and say that Kant's intentions, even in his theory of knowledge, aesthetics, or his moral philosophy, might be anthropological overall, as he does not write his critiques for pure reason, for practical reason or for judgement alone, but he is certainly turning towards those ones who have an ambition to become active universal or, in his own words, cosmopolitical citizens. Although Kant never directly addresses the problem of inequality between men and women, in his *Introduction to the Enlightenment*, we can clearly read that Kant does not deny this cosmopolitan citizenship to women, in contrary, men and women equally should be autonomous, independent, and have the courage to use their own reason.

There are many critical voices about Kant's problematic statements as much about people of different ethnicities, as about women. Kant's attempts to understand the place of female citizens within the cosmopolitan society is significantly influenced by his definition of the relationship between the sexes and these are changing with the time in mostly negative way. The texts might also differ a lot from each other. Meanwhile in the *Critique of Judgement*, there is not a single mention of women, and the word *female* is only used once, in the context of an observation of the picture of a beautiful woman,³ there is wide and precisely elaborated chapter on female judgment capabilities in the *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime and Other Writings*, where the words *woman* or *women* are mentioned more than two hundred times.

In the 1760s, Kant's attitudes towards women are articulated in the greatest detail and change the most. His view throughout this period is that the sexes are and ought to be different, that "equality" between men and women is found in a unity within which women are beautiful and

³ Kant, I., 1987. *Critique of Judgement*, trans. by W. S. Pluhar. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, p. 180.

men noble. In *Observations*, Kant's discussion of women is gallant, praising them for their distinctive virtues; and his attitude towards unity with women there is fundamentally positive. However, over the course of *Remarks*, Kant's attitude changes. He focuses attention on marriage and emphasizes woman's distinctive trait as proficiency in illusion, a proficiency that inevitably disappoints. As Kant moves away from marriage in his personal life, so he also dislocates women further and further from the ideal of (masculine) virtue that comes to be identified with the good will as such. *Remarks*, thus, anticipates Kant's eventual treatment of women in *Anthropology* as mere tools by which Nature promotes the twin ends of "preservation of the species" and "cultivation of society and its refinement".⁴

Reduction of female citizens to a beautiful and cultivating part of the society, where merely the judgment of taste is requested or applied and their exclusion from any intellectual activities is presented, for example, through the famous exclamation: "A woman who has a head full of Greek, like Mme. Dacier, or who conducts thorough disputations about mechanics, like the Marquise du Chatelet, might as well also wear a beard; for that might perhaps better express the mien of depth for which they strive."⁵ However, Kant's argumentation in *Anthropology*, where he is trying to reduce women to mere tools of species preservation, as some authors are suggesting is slightly problematic. Meanwhile, on page 204 of *Anthropology*, Kant writes about the relationship between the sexes and its task in the preservation of the human species, but he includes into this assumption both men and women. Although on page 207, he already speaks about "the preservation of the species"⁶ and "the cultivation of society and its refinement by womankind"⁷ as two most significant roles of the female part of the society.

Kant's concerns about the true position of a women in the cosmopolitan society come partially from the contemporary picture of women in society⁸ and partially from his own experience. Being in the dependent

⁴ Frierson, P., 2011. Introduction. In: Frierson, P., Guyer, P., eds. *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime and Other Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. xxxiv.

⁵ Kant, I., 2011. *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime and Other Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 36–37.

⁶ Kant, I., 2006. *Anthropology from the Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. by R. Louden. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 207.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ See Kant, I., 2011. *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime and Other Writings*, p. 11–65.

position from men, women cannot become equal citizens of the world. They should be able to use their own reason and reach a certain grade of autonomy, but without threatening the intellectual position of man. Despite this not being an entirely applicable condition, Kant is very well aware of the problem that the dependence of women on men is caused by their relationships. If marriage is the only remedy to secure the female existence and beauty the only way to get it, then the relationship between men and women might create an illusion of love and affection. This illusion might not only disappear after the relationship becomes approved by the church authorities, but it causes an unequal partnership in which both are unfairly dependent on each other, women materially and men emotionally. For this reason, more autonomy for women would be more than desirable, if not for the sake of their world-citizenship then at least for more authentic relations between the sexes.

From this point of view, the characteristic of the cosmopolitan citizen is the characteristics of the human in general and it represents the pragmatic application of the transcendental principles previously explained in in *Critiques* or in *Metaphysics of Moral*. Although Kant's understanding of the practical concept of the human might, as Kuehn explains, seems "peripheral"⁹ at first sight or unable to play any significant role in the foundation or justification of his main philosophical principles, he adds that

[t]his is not just an argument against the fundamental importance of anthropology to Kant's enterprise; it is also an argument against anyone who would claim that Kant's anthropological considerations are so peripheral that they would not be missed if they had not survived. I would argue that they would be missed in so far as they add a certain dimension to the "cosmopolitical sense" of Kant's entire philosophy. Even if the published *Anthropology* were to express this dimension only imperfectly, it might give significant clues about how we should or should not conceive of it.¹⁰

The assertion that Kant's thinking in all its parts, the epistemological, the aesthetical, the metaphysical, and the ethical as well, has been strongly cosmopolitan is not entirely new and has been profoundly elaborated in one of Ursula Reitemeyer's papers presented at one of the Kantian conferences in Prešov.¹¹ It is pertinent, then, to take a closer look at

⁹ Kuehn, M., 2006. Introduction, p. xiii.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Reitemeyer, U., 2012. Kant's Bildungsgeschichtlicher Entwurf der Moderne in weltbürgerlicher

the cosmopolitan and anthropological character of Kant's philosophy. For Kant, similarly to other thinkers from the Enlightenment period or from German Idealism, especially Hegel, philosophy does not have its final objectives in itself, but is aimed to serve the cultivation of the human. The courage to use our own reason should be discovered and further developed in education, understood as formation or cultivation in the broadest meaning of the German concept of *Bildung*. In the case of Kant, equally to Hegel, who is, therefore, in his own philosophy education appropriating the Greek concept of *paideia* and the Latin concept of *cultura*, *Bildung* should lead the student to freedom, autonomy, and healthy self-confidence. An educated human being should become an entirely developed individual. The aim of education of the human is understanding and development of human nature. Kant formulates it explicitly in his *Anthropology from the Pragmatic Point of View*. He claims:

All 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. – Therefore, to know the human being according to his species as an earthly being endowed with reason especially deserves to be called knowledge of the world, even though he constitutes only one part of the creatures on earth.¹²

Despite the not yet developed empirical anthropology, Kant is, as a big admirer of natural sciences, already applying its perspectives in his own pragmatically grasped anthropological teaching, however, only as one of the possible research directions, emphasizing that his own way will be different. He writes:

A doctrine of knowledge of the human being, systematically formulated (anthropology), can exist either in a physiological or in a pragmatic point of view. – Physiological knowledge of the human being concerns the investigation of 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.¹³

Absicht. *Studia Philosophica Kantiana*, 1(1), pp. 10–22.

¹² Kant, I., 2006. *Anthropology from the Pragmatic Point of View*, p. 3.

¹³ Ibid.

Therefore, it is exactly the point of freedom, the opportunity to make out of himself what the human can or should be which is the moment that connects Kant's anthropology to the rest of his philosophy. No matter if we are talking about the period between 1773 and 1785, when the application of purely rational moral rules conditioned by the free will of human and thus anthropologically can be seen, or about the period after 1785, when Kant tries to leave anthropology completely behind and build his system of morals on the concept of virtue, which means overcoming the inclinations that are rooted in human nature. Meanwhile, in the first period, Kant is following an example of Aristotelian ethics based on practical wisdom that enables him to make decisions about the concrete use of rationally given moral rules. In this period, Kantian ethics still contains two parts, the theoretical, purely rational system of moral rules, and the empirically anthropological conditions of their practical application in the situations of everyday life. During this time, the verbs *can* and *should* represent the same goals based on the execution of free will. Louden articulates it in the following way: "Kant says that ultimate moral achievement cannot be expected of any one individual, but only of the species as a whole. Morality and anthropology thus lead to political and historical considerations, to questions about what the ultimate destination of the human race is".¹⁴ Humanity has, for Kant, a certain purpose that is articulated in the human nature and both ethics and anthropology have the same task; to contribute to the fulfilment the purpose of humanity as a whole.

II.

This, however, changes after 1785, when Kant excludes from his moral philosophy the final goal of human beings and stops caring about the future of humankind. Instead, he adopts the position of the metaphysics of morals and starts working strictly on its principles and maxims. Even before Kant gets on his way towards the rehabilitation of metaphysics, on which he does not entirely destroy it, but he indeed deforms the possibilities of metaphysical thought, he already attributes to reason and intellect the primacy of moral justification. However, by that time, there is still some place left for free will as a tool for putting the intellectually justified moral rules into practice. Not only does he recognize the anthropological base of free will, but he also admits the existence of some

¹⁴ Kuehn, M., 2006. Introduction, p. xv.

sort of moral sense, despite all the emphasis on the deep rational roots of morality. Kuehn explains it in the following way:

Even though Kant believed in 1773 that “the highest ground of morality is intellectual,” he also thought that it needed “primary springs of the will,” which were *not* intellectual. He takes this position also in the lectures on ethics delivered during the summer of 1775. We need both moral motivations and purely intellectual principles to judge whether an action is moral. There must be a *principium di iudicationis* that is objective, and a subjective principle that motivates us, a *principium executionis* that is related to human nature and sensibility. Kant explicitly argues that the latter is to be found in a moral sense. And this is the domain of empirical psychology and is concerned with the “sources of all the sciences that are concerned with morals, with the ability of commerce, and the method of educating and ruling human beings, or all that is practical”. Kant’s anthropology originates thus from a new conception of the metaphysics of nature and the metaphysics of morals. Both call for an empirical counterpart. Anthropology is to contain moral psychology or the discussion of “the primary springs of the will”.¹⁵

Moral imperative and the nature of human based free will still represent two complementary parts of human ethical behaviour, although Kant’s belief in the capacity of free will situated outside the area of moral duty seems to become weaker. In consequence, the role of free will as the willingness to put moral behaviour in practice is decreasing accordingly as the concepts *rational* and *moral* become almost synonymous. This movement can be traced above all in the *Groundwork on the Metaphysics of Moral*, where the moral sense or moral feeling almost disappears in favour of the rationally and transcendently grounded categorical imperative. Although anthropology does not disappear entirely from Kantian thinking, it is pushed from the centre of moral theory to the epistemological periphery to the even more distant place than the category of taste with its very low cognitive value, to the territory of pragmatic, empirical approach. “In 1785, he was convinced that anthropology and metaphysics of morals have nothing in common and should not be mixed”.¹⁶

The contradictory diversified and partially unpredictable character of human nature, particularly in case of an individual, convinced Kant about the unsustainability of free will within his anthropology and made

¹⁵ Kuehn, M., 2006. Introduction, p. xix.

¹⁶ Ibid.

him move his metaphysically understood morality onto the, for him, much safer ground of rationality. This, in his opinion, was something the whole humankind had in common and would be able to practise in the same way according to the same, universally and neutrally formulated categorical imperative, if only everybody could and would follow his instructions about the courage to use its own reason. In this moment the words *could*, *should*, and *would* seem to fuse in order to become one solid expression of obligation in free will and vice versa. As the task of anthropology, with its content of human potential disappears, the traces of human free will start to melt down within the space of moral obligation. We ought to act and behave in a certain way, because we can and if we can, then we ought to do so. Kant argues in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Moral*:

Since my aim here is properly directed to moral philosophy, I limit the proposed question only to this: whether one is not of the opinion that it is of the utmost necessity to work out once a pure moral philosophy which is fully cleansed of everything that might be in any way empirical and belong to anthropology; for that there must be such is self-evident from the common idea of duty and of moral laws. Everyone must admit that a law, if it is to be valid morally, i.e., as the ground of an obligation, has to carry absolute necessity with it; that the command ‘You ought not to lie’ is valid not merely for human beings, as though other rational beings did not have to heed it; and likewise all the other genuinely moral laws; hence that the ground of obligation here is to be sought not in the nature of the human being or the circumstances of the world in which he is placed, but a priori solely in concepts of pure reason, and that every other precept grounded on principles of mere experience, and even a precept that is universal in a certain aspect, insofar as it is supported in the smallest part on empirical grounds, perhaps only as to its motive, can be called a practical rule, but never a moral law.¹⁷

As a consequence, according to some authors,¹⁸ Kant’s moral theory after 1785 entirely loses its anthropological and pragmatic character, when the pragmatic of human nature and free will based motivation to the common good is replaced by exclusively rational motivation and the re-

¹⁷ Kant, I., 2002. *Groundwork on the Metaphysics of Moral*, trans. by A. W. Wood. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p. 5.

¹⁸ See for example: Baron, M., 2002. Acting from Duty. In: Wood, A. W., ed. *Groundwork on the Metaphysics of Moral*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, pp. 92–110. See also Kagan, S., 2002. Kantianism for Consequentialists. In: Wood, A. W., ed. *Groundwork on the Metaphysics of Moral*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, pp. 111–156.

spect of transcendently given, pragmatically neutral moral law. However not just the motivation to good deeds, but also the understanding of the concept of pragmatic changes in late-period Kant. Kuehn is pointing at the fact that the concept “pragmatic” not only means an opposite notion to the scholastic, highly academic style of lecturing and writing, but on the area of ethics, it means practical personal motivation, which, contrary to the rather subjective and barely controlled impulse, represents an objective cause that does not exclude the motive of moral good, an idea that later American pragmatists developed into a theory of self-forming moral learning,¹⁹ thereby moving far beyond Kant’s *a priori* moral rationalism. By that time, pragmatic and moral motivations do not exclude each other and are considered as almost synonymous expressions.²⁰ This is also the case of critical theory, where, two extremes ought to be avoided “the hyperbolic belief in the unlimited power of philosophical reason and inevitable moral and societal progress on one hand and on the other the wholesale rejection of rational argumentation and reason-giving as attainable ideals of moral and civilizational advancement”.²¹ With the turn that comes after the *Groundwork on Metaphysics of Moral*, pragmatic imperative is not categorical anymore, it becomes conditioned and hypothetical and is of no more use for the pure moral.²² This might bring one to the assumption that Kant’s moral theory has its aim in creating a perfect, virtuous being without any particularly human weaknesses or motivations, a being that is fully obedient to his duties and to the categorical imperative. Having said that, where is the place for reflection? Why would Kant, a philosopher with so much courage to use his own reason, discourage his contemporaries from doing the same? Not only is the rationally grounded moral law not immune to any sort of reflection, so is the formulation of the categorical imperative itself, logically clear yet very general, provoking and challenging us in the discussion about its concrete practical application in the everyday life. Allen Wood articulates it precisely:

¹⁹ See Dorstewitz, P., 2020. Provinces of Imaginative Intelligence: A Taxonomy. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 56(4), pp. 600–619.

²⁰ Kuehn, M., 2006. Introduction, p. xxi. For a critical review of Kantian ethics from a pragmatist perspective, see e.g. Švihura, L., 2021. Postmoderná morálka a Kantova etika. *Studia Philosophica Kantiana*, 10(2), pp. 21–41. By the same author, see: Švihura, L. A., 2023. Let’s Make Morality Great Again: Etika pragmatizmu v službách morálky. In: Maco, R., Rozemberg, A., eds. *Etické teórie – neetická prax*. Bratislava: Slovenské filozofické združenie pri SAV, pp. 94–104.

²¹ Dunaj, L., Mertel, K., C., 2022. Introduction. In: Dunaj, L., Mertel, K. C., eds.: *Hans-Herbert Kögler’s Critical Hermeneutics*. London, New York: Bloomsbury Academic, p. 1.

²² *Ibid.*, xxii.

If we rest our theory of duties on FH,²³ as Kant actually does in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, then we have to admit that the fundamental principle of morality yields no universal decision procedure for all cases. Moral deliberation generates moral rules applicable in particular cases only in a loose fashion, leaving (as Kant himself says) considerable *playroom* for individual discretion and judgment. It will also depend heavily on what Kant called “*practical anthropology*, that is, on our fallible, constantly changing, and always deeply problematic knowledge of what human beings and the human predicament are like (both in general and under specific social and historical conditions). A major source of error here is a common misconception about what moral theory is for, and especially about the function of the fundamental principle in such a theory. The function of a fundamental principle can never be directly to settle difficult moral issues; it can serve only to provide the right general framework in which moral rules and controversial issues should be raised and discussed. Even then, any formulation of it must be regarded as provisional—an object of constant critical reflection and continual reinterpretation and rearticulation.²⁴

Kant’s ethics is not virtue ethics. It does not contain any ideals of the virtuous behaviour as can be observed in the ethical rigorism of Plato.²⁵ Despite the universal, objective, and rational principles represented by moral law, it does not contain any specific rules for their practical application, but reliable points of orientation. Marchevský argues “that philosophy should not have the character of a doctrine. The role of philosophy is to protect science from metaphysical speculation, preserve its scientific nature, and guard the boundaries of science”.²⁶ These points must be based on reason and serve the common good, but the way they are put in practice, is always the matter of individual decision in a given situation. This common good, according to Stachoň, “for as many people as possible is expected as a standard behaviour in politics”²⁷ or ethics. From this point of view, Kantian ethics seems to be rather an Aristote-

²³ The Formula of Humanity as End in Itself: “Act so that you use humanity, as much in your own person as in the person of every other, always at the same time as end and never merely as means”.

²⁴ Wood, A. W., 2002. What is Kantian Ethics? In: Wood, A. W., ed. *Groundwork on the Metaphysics of Moral*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p. 174.

²⁵ Gadamer thinks here the opposite, when he sees in Kant the same sort of ethical rigorism like he sees in Plato. See Gadamer, H.-G., 1978. Die Idee des Guten zwischen Plato und Aristoteles, In: *Griechische Philosophie III. Plato im Dialog*, GW 7 (1991). Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, pp. 128–227.

²⁶ Marchevský, O., 2022. Immanuel Kant “on the Borders” of A. Bely’s Symbolism. *RUDN Journal of Philosophy*, 26(2), p. 431.

²⁷ Stachoň, M., 2021. Kant a problém vztahu stát a občan. *Studia Philosophica Kantiana*, 10(1), p. 83.

lian than a Platonic project and it does not entirely exclude the anthropological orientation in the common ethical practice.

III.

Despite his focus on the principles themselves, rather than on their application, Kant cannot get the question of human nature out of his philosophy. First, because every kind of philosophy and every sort of science were invented by humans for humans with the aim of satisfying vital human needs, hence philosophy, just like science, has *a priori* an anthropological character. Second, even after Kant changed his opinion on the objectives of education, from the development of human nature to its suppression, he still must reflect on it. How would he otherwise be able to write about overcoming the harmful inclinations in human nature through virtuous behaviour, if except for the definition of virtue, he would not have also defined human nature? How can we have some knowledge about anything at all, when we give up the knowledge about ourselves? How can we become cosmopolitan citizens without being first and above all human beings? How can we reach out to people from other foreign countries, if we don't reach out to our neighbours first? Is this not the sense and final aim of Kant's anthropology, when he writes:

Such an anthropology, considered as knowledge of the world, which must come after our schooling, is actually not yet called pragmatic when it contains an extensive knowledge of things in the world, for example, animals, plants, and minerals from various lands and climates, but only when it contains knowledge of the human being as a citizen of the world. [...] Travel belongs to the means of broadening the range of anthropology, even if it is only the reading of travel books. But if one wants to know what to look for abroad, in order to broaden the range of anthropology, first one must have acquired knowledge of human beings at home, through social intercourse with one's townsmen or countrymen. Without such a plan (which already presupposes knowledge of human beings) the citizen of the world remains very limited with regard to his anthropology. General knowledge always precedes local knowledge here, if the latter is to be ordered and directed through philosophy: in the absence of which all acquired knowledge can yield nothing more than fragmentary groping around and no science.²⁸

²⁸ Kant, I., 2006. *Anthropology from the Pragmatic Point of View*, p. 4.

Here it is fair to claim that Kant is not so much concerned about the concrete citizen, as he is concerned about the definition of cosmopolitanism, or much less about an individual, as he is concerned about the humankind and its fulfilment of the criteria of the cosmopolitical existence. However, as the proper knowledge of the human starts with the knowledge of the people in the immediate neighbourhood, and only afterwards should we be able to broaden, step by step, the viewpoint of humanity till we are able to become citizens of the world and see each individual from the cosmopolitical perspective, so this perspective will later provide a very solid anthropological base for any individual development of every human being.

Conclusion

Kant's philosophy is, in every aspect, a cosmopolitan project. Starting with the *Critiques*, moving forward to metaphysics of moral, ending up with *Anthropology from the Pragmatic Point of View*, it is meant to design the universal and generally valid principles and maxims of human knowledge and human behaviour. It would be a misunderstanding to blame late-period Kant for having given up anthropology in favour of the metaphysics of moral or from having given up the human in favour of the universal principles and imperatives articulated in the concepts of moral duty. Principles and imperatives should serve as the solid and secure orientation points for each individual human action, not as a list of exact application of the virtues. Even in times of its critical distance towards human nature, Kant's thinking is constantly circulating around the question of man.

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