

# **“THE SECOND PART OF MORALS”: KANT’S MORAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO HIS METAPHYSICS OF MORALS**

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## **THE BIRTH OF ANTHROPOLOGY**

In a letter to his former student Marcus Herz in late 1773,<sup>1</sup> Kant writes:

This winter, for the second time, I am giving a lecture course on anthropology, which I now intend to make into a proper academic discipline. . . . The intention that I have is to disclose through it the sources of all the sciences, the science of morals, of skill, of social intercourse, of the method of educating and governing human beings, and thus of everything that pertains to the practical. . . . I include so many observations of ordinary life that my listeners have constant occasion to compare their ordinary experience with my remarks and thus, from beginning to end, find the lectures entertaining and never dry. In my spare time, I am working on a preparatory exercise for students out of this (in my opinion) very pleasant empirical study (*Beobachtungslehre*) of skill, prudence, and even wisdom that, along with physical geography and distinct from all other instruction, can be called knowledge of the world (10: 145-46).

Kant taught his anthropology course twenty-four times – every winter semester from 1772 until his retirement in 1796. A companion course in physical geography – which he had first offered in 1756, and out of which the anthropology course to some extent grew – was offered in the summer semesters. By nearly all accounts, the anthropology lectures – which, as Kant indicates in his letter to Herz, were intended to be “entertaining and never dry” – were extremely successful and popular. Reinhold Jachmann, for instance, a former student of Kant’s who himself audited the anthropology course, writes in his 1804 biography of Kant that these lectures afforded a welcome opportunity to see

the lofty thinker travelling about in the world of the senses and illuminating people and nature with the torch of an original reason. . . . His astute observations, which were stamped with a deep knowledge of people and nature, were clothed in a delivery filled with wit and geniality, which charmed every listener. . . . It was a joy to see how the young men there enjoyed the new view concerning human beings and nature which was opened up for them, and next to them sat . . . learned and knowledgeable men of affairs. . [who] also found nourishment for their spirit.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Werner Stark argues that “this letter can be dated, more precisely, to October 25, 1773.” See “Historical Notes and Interpretive Questions about Kant’s Lectures on Anthropology,” in Brian Jacobs and Patrick Kain, eds., *Essays on Kant’s Anthropology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

<sup>2</sup> Reinhold Bernhard Jachmann, *Immanuel Kant geschildert in Briefen an einen Freund* (Königsberg, 1804), in *Immanuel Kant: Sein Leben in Darstellungen von Zeitgenossen. Die Biographen von L. E. Borowski, R. B. Jachmann, und E. A. Wasinski*, ed. Felix Groß, reprint (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1993), p. 118.

Similarly, a visiting general from Holland offered a compelling tribute to Kant's anthropology lectures, when he remarked later in his *Memoirs* that "it is there that I acquired the principles which have since served to direct me in my relations with men; and I have recognized their justice by the felicitous application which I have often made of them."<sup>3</sup>

The larger cultural context behind Kant's anthropology course is of course the birth of the social sciences in late 18<sup>th</sup> century European thought – a huge topic about which much continues to be written.<sup>4</sup> That Kant played a pivotal role in contributing to the birth of anthropology as a modern academic discipline is beyond dispute. However, in discussing Kant and anthropology, it is important to note that his own conception of what anthropology should be differs both from that of many of his contemporaries as well as successors. In other words, Kantian anthropology, to a significant extent, is a unique field of study that should not automatically be equated with non-Kantian anthropologies.

## MAIN FEATURES OF KANTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY

Briefly, the main features of Kantian anthropology may be summarized as follows:<sup>5</sup>

*An Empirical Science.* In the previously cited letter to Herz, we saw that Kant characterized anthropology as an empirical study or observation-based doctrine – a *Beobachtungslehre*. Similarly, in the *Collins* lecture transcription, which dates from Kant's first course in winter 1772-73, he announces in the opening sentence that "the science of the human being (anthropology)" is based on "observation and experience" (*Beobachtung und Erfahrung*) (25: 7). In agreeing with Hume that "the only solid

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<sup>3</sup> Dirk van Hogendorp, *Mémoires du Général Dirk, publiés par son petit-fils M. le Comte D. C. A. van Hogendorp* (La Haye, 1887), p. 15. Reprinted in Kant, *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, ed. Karl Vorländer 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (Hamburg: Meiner, 1980), p. 331. (Translation by Claudia Schmidt, in her "Comments on Papers by Patrick Kain and Sean McAleer," delivered at the North American Kant Society session of the APA Pacific Division Meeting, March 2002.)

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., Keith M. Baker, "The Early History of the Term 'Social Science'," *Annals of Science* 20 (1964): 211-226; *Inventing Human Science: Eighteenth-Century Domains*, eds. Christopher Fox, Roy Porter, and Robert Wokler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); *History of the Human Sciences* 6.1 (1993) [special issue on "Origins of the Human Sciences"]; and – for a recent study that examines in detail Kant's role in the development of anthropology – John H. Zammito, *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). Zammito refers to a wealth of secondary literature in his discussion. However, Herder is clearly the hero in his story: "I will argue that while the precritical Kant exercised a seminal influence on the emergence of the new disciplinary discourse, the critical Kant systematically subordinated anthropology to metaphysics in a way that ran against the grain of anthropology's disciplinary ambitions. Indeed, as the discipline struggled toward actualization, both in substance and in name, it was Herder who proved ultimately its most fertile proponent" (p. 3).

<sup>5</sup> Kant's conception of anthropology did change a bit over the years, and even his final statements on the topic remain broadly programmatic and underdeveloped. But even today, defining "anthropology" appears to be a somewhat perilous undertaking. Clifford Geertz begins his essay "The State of the Art" by remarking: "One of the advantages of anthropology as a scholarly enterprise is that no one, including its practitioners, quite knows exactly what it is" [*Available Light: Anthropological Reflections on Philosophical Topics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 89]. Small wonder, he adds, that the discipline suffers from "a permanent identity crisis" (p. 89). Cf. also William Y. Adams, who writes: "Whatever our discipline [of anthropology] is, it is certainly not the orderly, coherent, and dispassionate science that some of our members aspire to. On the contrary, the historical evidence suggests that anthropology is both more and less than a science" [*The Philosophical Roots of Anthropology* (Stanford: CSLI Publications, 1999), p. 416].

foundation we can give to this science [of man] itself must be laid on experience and observation,”<sup>6</sup> Kant is also in broad agreement with most of his contemporaries who contributed to the development of modern anthropology. At the same time, for a philosopher who, after his “critical turn” in 1770, is known above all for his defense of “pure” reason – i.e., a kind of reason that is “*absolutely* independent of all experience” (*KrV* B 3) – this empirical orientation should also serve to warn us that determining how Kantian anthropology does (or does not) fit with the rest of Kant’s philosophical project is no easy matter.

*A cosmopolitan science.* Somewhat in tension with the previous claim that anthropology is to be a *Beobachtungslehre* is Kant’s conviction that it must also be *cosmopolitan* in scope. Kantian anthropology aims at “knowledge of the human being as a *citizen of the world*” (*Anth* 7: 120; cf. *Geo* 9: 157). Anthropology on his view should be “not a *local* but a general anthropology. One becomes acquainted in it not with the condition of human beings but with the nature of humanity, for the *local* characteristics of human beings are always changing, but the nature of humanity does not” (*Friedländer* 25: 471). Kantian anthropology is thus primarily not a description of specific groups of human beings but of human nature in general (cf. 25: 471). Furthermore, Kant does not believe that the way to arrive at a knowledge of human nature is via induction – working up from particulars to universals. Rather, “*general* knowledge always precedes *local* knowledge here, . . . in the absence of which all acquired knowledge can yield nothing more than fragmentary groping around and no science” (*Anth* 7: 120). “A local knowledge of the world, which merchants have” must rest on a “general knowledge of the world;” if we are to arrive at reliable “rules for acting in common life” (*Pillau* 25: 734). This latter knowledge is to be arrived at not just by reflecting critically on the human behavior that one witnesses in one’s local community, but also by analyzing “plays, novels, history, and especially biographies” (*Pillau* 25: 734; cf. *Menschenkunde* 25: 857-88, *Mrongovius* 25: 1213, *Anth* 7: 121). For Kant, our deepest interest in studying ourselves and other human beings is thus not to revel in human difference but rather to discover “what the members of the human species have in common.”<sup>7</sup>

*A pragmatic science.* As is well known, Kant advocates anthropology “from a *pragmatic* point of view.” In calling his method pragmatic, he intends first and foremost to differentiate it from *physiological* approaches championed by Ernst Platner and others. In his earlier-cited letter to Herz, Kant criticized Platner’s “eternally futile inquiries as to the manner in which bodily organs are connected with thought;” adding “my plan is quite different” (*ganz anders*) from his (10: 145).<sup>8</sup> Twenty-five years later, in the Preface to his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, he summarized the differences between the two approaches by saying that physiological anthropology “concerns the investigation of

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<sup>6</sup> David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, rev. P. H. Nidditch, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978) p. xvi; cf. 273.

<sup>7</sup> Allen Wood, “Kant and the Problem of Human Nature,” forthcoming in Jacobs and Kain, eds., *Essays on Kant’s Anthropology*. Zammito, in his defense of Herderian particularism, objects strongly to this cosmopolitan feature of Kant’s anthropology. Kant, he complains, “was totally committed to a preemptive, metaphysical prescription of human nature” – one that was allegedly not reached “through a consideration of human variety” (*Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology*, p. 299).

<sup>8</sup> Platner was author of the popular book *Anthropologie für Ärzte und Weltweisen* (Leipzig, Dukische Buchhandlung, 1772), which was reviewed by Herz (himself a practicing physician) in the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 20 (1773): 25-51. See also Zammito, *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology*, pp. 250-53. For discussion of the history and meanings of the term “pragmatic,” see Gudrun Kühne-Bertram, “Aspekte der Geschichte und der Bedeutungen des Begriffs ‘Pragmatisch’ in den philosophischen Wissenschaften des Ausgehenden 18. und des 19. Jahrhunderts,” *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 27 (1983): 158-186, esp. 162-65.

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” (7: 119). Essentially, physiological anthropology is the predecessor to what is later known as *physical* anthropology; whereas Kant’s pragmatic anthropology is the progenitor of various philosophical and existentialist anthropologies, all of which assume that human nature is (at least in part) self-produced by free action. The human being, as Max Scheler will assert later in his 1928 work, *Man’s Place in Nature*, is not only an animal being but also a “spiritual being” that is not entirely “subject to its drives and its environments. Instead, it is ‘free from the environment’ or, as we shall say, ‘open to the world.’”<sup>9</sup> Here too though, this commitment to studying the human being “as a free acting being” stands in a certain tension with the assertion that anthropology is to be a *Beobachtungslehre*.

The knowledge to be gained from pragmatic anthropology is also to be distinguished from what Kant disparagingly calls *scholastic* knowledge. At the beginning of the *Mrongovius* lectures, he states: “There are two ways of studying: in school and in the world. In school one learns scholastic knowledge, which belongs to professional scholars; but in dealings (*Umgang*) with the world one learns popular knowledge, which belongs to the entire world” (25: 1209). Pragmatic anthropology aims at a popular knowledge which is designed to be “useful not merely for *school*, but rather for *life*, and through which the accomplished student is introduced to the stage of his destiny, namely the world” (*Racen* 2: 443n.). In the case of scholastic or theoretical anthropology, one understands events and people because one has observed them as a spectator; in the case of pragmatic anthropology understanding is reached through participation (cf. 7: 120). The physician Platner, Kant states in the Introduction to the *Menschenkunde* lectures, has merely “written a scholastic anthropology” (25: 856; cf. 1211). The scholastics did produce “science for the school,” but it was of “no use (*nichts nutzen*) to human beings.” Pragmatic anthropology, on the other hand, aims to promote “enlightenment for common life” (*Aufklärung fürs gemeine Leben*) (25: 853).

Pragmatic anthropology, unlike physiological and scholastic anthropology, is *useful* anthropology. But useful in what way? One sense in which it is useful is that we can apply it to ourselves in order to change ourselves. The physiological anthropologist who studies human memory investigates the natural causes of memory, but in doing so he remains “a mere observer and must let nature run its course.” The pragmatic anthropologist, on the other hand, takes these same observations “concerning what has been found to hinder or stimulate memory in order to enlarge it or make it agile” (7: 119). Pragmatic anthropology thus carries with it a strongly practical intent.

A second sense in which pragmatic anthropology is useful is that it contributes to our prudence or *Klugheit*. Prudence is defined in the *Groundwork* as “skill in the choice of means to one’s own greatest well-being” or happiness (4: 416; cf. *KrV* A 806/B 834). Pragmatic anthropology strengthens this skill insofar as the knowledge of human nature we acquire from it enables us to use other human beings effectively for our own purposes. Thus in the *Menschenkunde* Kant states that pragmatic anthropology “makes us prudent: it is a knowledge of the art of how one human being has influence on another and can direct (*leiten*) him according to his aim. One calls all practical knowledge of the human being ‘pragmatic’ insofar as it serves to fulfill our overall aims. . . . Every doctrine of prudence is pragmatic” (25: 855; cf. 7: 322, *Vigilantius* 27: 482).

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<sup>9</sup> Max Scheler, *Man’s Place in Nature* (1928), trans. Hans Myerhoff (New York: Noonday Press, 1961), p. 37. Scheler was one of the key figures associated with 20<sup>th</sup> c. German philosophical anthropology. Other important voices include Helmuth Plessner and Arnold Gehlen.

## MORAL ANTHROPOLOGY

But there is another fundamental dimension of Kant's anthropology – distinct from all of the above, harder to locate and articulate, and (as a result) more controversial – *moral* anthropology. In his *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant writes: “The counterpart (*Gegenstück*) of a metaphysics of morals, the other member of the division of practical philosophy as a whole, would be moral anthropology” (6: 217). Elaborating a bit on these two parts of practical philosophy in one of his ethics lectures, he states:

The metaphysics of morals or *metaphysica pura* is only the first part of morals – the second part is *philosophia moralis applicata*, to which the empirical principles belong. . . . Moral anthropology is morality applied to human beings. *Moralia pura* is based upon necessary laws, and hence it cannot be founded upon the particular constitution of a rational being, such as the human being (*Moral Mrongovius II* 29: 599).

In his writings and lectures on ethics after 1770, Kant repeatedly invokes the term “anthropology” when describing this second, empirical part of ethics. Often, as in the previous two citations, the favored phrase is “moral anthropology;” sometimes it is “practical anthropology” (*Gr* 4: 388), and sometimes it is simply “anthropology” (*Gr* 4: 412, *Collins* 27: 244, *Mrongovius I* 27: 1398). This frequent employment within Kant's practical philosophy works of the term “anthropology” as a shorthand means of referring to “the other member of the division of practical philosophy as a whole” gives readers who turn to his anthropology lectures a thoroughly legitimate expectation that the details of Kant's *philosophia moralis applicata* will finally be addressed in some detail.

At the same time, many scholars flatly deny that any such moral anthropology is to be found anywhere in Kant's anthropology lectures. Reinhardt Brandt, for instance, co-editor of the recent German Academy edition of Kant's *Lectures on Anthropology*, holds that “pragmatic anthropology is not identical in any of its phases of development with the anthropology that Kant repeatedly designates as the complementary part of his moral theory after 1770” (25: xlvi).<sup>10</sup> More recently, an American scholar has announced confidently that “the great promise of a ‘moral anthropology’, included in every one of Kant's writings in ethics, was never fulfilled” in any of his anthropology courses.<sup>11</sup>

My own view is that Kant's anthropology lectures do contain a distinctively *moral* anthropology. Granted, when one turns to his anthropology lectures with the specific aim of tracking the details of “the second part of morals” it is easy to get frustrated. For nowhere in any of these lectures does Kant explicitly and straightforwardly say anything like the following: “I shall now discuss in detail what (in

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<sup>10</sup> Brandt repeats this claim in “The Guiding Idea of Kant's Anthropology and the Vocation of the Human Being,” forthcoming in Jacobs and Kain, *Essays on Kant's Anthropology*. Ironically, his co-editor Werner Stark takes a quite different position on the relationship between Kant's ethics and anthropology. In “Historical Notes and Interpretive Questions about Kant's Lectures on Anthropology,” he writes: “For years now, the two editors of volume 25 of the Academy edition have disagreed about the role and relevance of anthropology. In contrast to Reinhard Brandt, I am of the opinion that an internal, positive relationship exists between Kant's lectures on anthropology and his moral philosophy; more precisely, that the notes of the lectures *indicate* some such relationship” (forthcoming in Jacobs and Kain, *Essays on Kant's Anthropology*). Stark's position is similar to mine, though our reasons for asserting a relationship between Kant's anthropology and ethics differ. I agree with Brandt's claim that pragmatic anthropology “is not identical . . . with” moral anthropology. As I have already indicated, moral anthropology is rather a subdiscipline of the broader field of pragmatic anthropology. But Brandt rejects this more modest claim as well.

<sup>11</sup> Zammito, *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology*, p. 301; cf. 298, 348.

my writings on practical philosophy) I call “moral anthropology” or “the second part of morals”, showing how this second, empirical part relates to the first, non-empirical part of ethics, and why ‘anthropology’ in my particular sense of the term can be said to constitute this second part.” Also, there exists no one central text in the Kantian corpus that is devoted specifically to moral anthropology. Although Kant wrote bits and pieces about this crucial dimension of his ethics in a variety of works, it unfortunately remained in an unfinished and not entirely systematic state at his death. To track his moral anthropology accurately, we therefore need to pick up the pieces – looking not only at the various versions of his anthropology lectures, but also at relevant remarks made elsewhere (e.g., in his writings on history, education, religion, and ethics). The appropriate parts of all of these texts need to be re-examined from the perspective of Kant’s own self-declared division of practical philosophy, and then brought together into a coherent doctrine, if we are to arrive at a textually-grounded account of the second part of morals.

But while we unfortunately do not find a comprehensive, systematic articulation of “the counterpart of a metaphysics of morals” within any of Kant’s anthropology lectures (or anywhere else in his writings), it is definitely the case that they reverberate strongly with multiple moral messages and implications. Rather than continually bemoaning the fact that the anthropology lectures do not provide us with an explicit, systematic, and detailed account of “the other member of the division of practical philosophy as a whole, . . . moral anthropology,” I suggest that we turn to the more constructive task of clarifying and integrating these moral messages. Although Kant nowhere hands over to readers a single, complete, tidy package of moral anthropology, I believe that a bit of careful detective work can nevertheless lead us to some fulfilled hopes regarding Kant’s *philosophia moralis applicata*. Given Kant’s repeated conviction that the disciplines of practical philosophy and anthropology “are closely connected” (*hangen sehr zusammen*), and that “morality cannot exist (*nicht bestehen*) without anthropology” (*Collins 27: 244*), it behooves us to try and make sense of the project.

What then are the major moral messages in the anthropology lectures? In my own examination of these texts, the following three main themes stand out:

1) *Making morality efficacious in human life*. In his brief description of moral anthropology in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant states that it deals with “the subjective conditions in human nature that hinder people or help them in *fulfilling* the laws of a metaphysics of morals” (6: 217, cf. *KrV A 55/B 79*). One primary goal of Kantian moral anthropology, in other words, is to find out more about human beings and the contexts in which they live in order to make morality more efficacious in human life. For the most part, Kant accentuates the negative here, focussing on those empirical factors in human life that hinder them in acting on *a priori* moral principles. This hindrance project, though not systematically presented, is definitely multi-dimensional and involves looking empirically at different areas and aspects of human life.<sup>12</sup> For instance, on the *psychological* front Kant asks: What emotions and inclinations are

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<sup>12</sup> Heidegger, in “The Idea of a Philosophical Anthropology,” writes: “Since anthropology must consider man in his somatic, biological, and psychological aspects, . . . the content of such a science is not only vast but also fundamentally heterogeneous. . . . Anthropology becomes so comprehensive that the idea of such a science loses all precision” [*Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. James S. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), p. 216.]. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, first published in 1929, was dedicated ‘to the memory of Max Scheler’ (iv, xxii). Scheler died in 1928, shortly after completing the ‘rough, fragmentary draft’ of *Man’s Place in Nature* (xiv – cf. n. 9, above). In pointing to the fundamentally heterogeneous quality of anthropology, Heidegger in effect underscores the ‘permanent identity crisis’ of anthropology to which Clifford Geertz has drawn attention (cf. n. 5, above). At the same time, because Kant’s own psychological, biological, political, etc. queries

human beings characteristically subject to that tend to make it difficult for them to act on moral principles? From an *epistemological* perspective, he asks: What is it about humans' general cognitive situation that tends to make it difficult for them to understand and act on *a priori* practical principles? From a *biological* standpoint he investigates basic facts about human growth and development, with an eye toward moral education – when and how to most effectively introduce moral considerations into a child's life, etc. And from a *political* perspective he asks: What political factors in modernity tend to hinder the formation and development of a cosmopolitan moral community?

In each case, part of the task within this efficacy project includes not only the initial identification of the relevant human hindrances to morality but also the formulation of species-specific strategies for responding effectively to them. For instance, in his analysis of human psychological hindrances to morality, Kant tends to focus on the prevalence of egoistic motives in many different areas of human life (*Anth* 7: 127-30, *Pillau* 25: 735, *Menschenkunde* 25: 859-61, *Mrongovius* 25: 1215-20, *Busolt* 25: 1438-39). And while he sometimes (e.g., *Gr* 4: 424) seems resigned to the fact that many human beings will continue to act on egoistic motives throughout their lives, he also formulates a multi-pronged institutional strategy for diminishing the influence of egoism. For instance, in considering “the education of the human race” (*Anth* 7: 328), Kant sides with Basedow and the Philanthropin Institutes, praising them in one of his lectures as “the greatest phenomenon that has appeared in this century for the improvement of the perfection of humanity” (*Friedländer* 25: 722-23). What he admires most about their plan of education is its stress on the inculcation of “cosmopolitan dispositions” in students. In attempting to develop these dispositions in students, Kant adds, “an interest in the best for the world (*das Weltbeste*) must come to pass. One must make children familiar with this interest so that they may warm their souls with it. They must rejoice at the best for the world even if it is not to the advantage of their fatherland or to their own gain” (*Päd* 9: 499). Similarly, in his discussions of religion he points to religious institutions as means of promoting a universal ethical commonwealth, insisting at one point that a victory of good over evil is “not otherwise attainable” except by the establishment and spreading of a commonwealth of virtue as represented by “ethical communities or ‘visible’ churches” (*Rel* 6: 94). Also, on the secular front, the compulsion of civil laws and the civilizing influences of the arts and sciences all act together as quasi-moral veneers that help discipline our emotions and make us less partial toward our own personal interests (cf. *Anth* 7: 324, *Frieden* 8: 375-76 n.). None of these institutional strategies can guarantee that human beings will stop acting on egoistic motives, but together they do constitute what Kant calls “a great step *toward* morality (although not yet a moral step)” (*Frieden* 8: 375-76 n.).

Kant's basic answer to the question concerning epistemological hindrances is that human beings have a “discursive, image-dependent understanding” (*KU* 5: 408). As a result, “with the human being the invisible needs to be represented through something visible (sensible)” (*Rel* 6: 192). His subsequent advice to practical moralists concerning strategies for combating this hindrance is to find concrete ways to make the message of pure ethics graspable by human beings – through relevant aesthetic experiences, religious symbolism, etc. In aesthetics, for instance, our experiences of both the beautiful and the sublime serve as palpable symbols of the morally good (cf. *KU* 5: 351, 267-71). And in religion, because of “the natural need of all human beings to demand even for the highest concepts and grounds of reason something that *the senses can hold on to* (*etwas Sinnlich-Haltbares*), some confirmation from experience

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into human nature are united by a *moral* intent (viz., how can we make morality more efficacious in human life?), the moral or practical dimension of his pragmatic anthropology does not suffer from the ‘heterogeneity’ defect.

or the like, . . . some historical ecclesiastical faith or other, usually already at hand, must be used” (*Rel* 6: 109).

Concerning the biological issue, Kant focuses on human beings’ radical dependence at birth and on the related fact that, to a much greater degree than other animals, they require enormous expenditures of care, nurture, training, enculturation, and education in order to develop their natural capacities. Here the popular caricature of Kant as a defender of radical autonomy requires serious revision. Particularly in our early stages of development, we human beings are made by others much more than we make ourselves. As Kant notes in his *Lectures on Pedagogy*: “The human being can only become human through education. He is nothing except what education makes out of him” (9: 443). This biological fact of human dependence is one of the key reasons why Kant places such high hopes on education: “Behind education there lies the great secret of the perfection of the human race” (9: 444; cf. *Collins* 27: 470-71). Kant’s basic strategy for responding to the human fact of dependence involves a plea for serious educational reform. Schools “must be transformed” (*umgeschaffen*) along the lines advocated by Basedow and his fellow Philanthropinists; indeed, what is called for is “not a slow *reform* but a quick *revolution*” (*Phil* 2: 449).

Finally, when viewing human beings from a political perspective Kant concludes that the modern invention of the nation-state is ultimately an impediment to true moral community. By encouraging citizens to place their country’s interests above the moral imperative to treat all people as ends in themselves (cf. *Gr* 4: 429), nation-states inevitably promote war and colonialism. As is well known, Kant’s strategy for responding to this human hindrance toward morality is to advocate the growth of an expanding league of nations *via* international law. The goal is not a single world-state where all nations are “fused into a single state” (*Frieden* 8: 354), but rather a voluntary and gradual coming together of independent nation-states into one international organization without sovereign powers. The dual hope is that such an arrangement will still allow sufficient room for human local attachments, customs, and cultural differences, while also providing the necessary legal and political mechanisms to insure “perpetual peace.”

This first task within Kant’s moral anthropology – finding ways to make morality more efficacious in human life – bears a strong analogy to the first sense in which pragmatic anthropology is *useful* anthropology. The point there, if you recall, was that we can use knowledge about ourselves in order to change ourselves – e.g., improve our memory skills. The analogical point in moral anthropology is that we are to take our empirical knowledge of human beings and then use this knowledge to make ourselves into morally better people. Moral anthropology is thus also a type of useful or practical anthropology, but now the uses to which it is to be put stand under a moral rather than merely pragmatic imperative.

2) *Weltkenntnis*. In my earlier contrast between pragmatic and scholastic anthropology, I stressed that one of Kant’s primary aims in his anthropology lectures is to impart a kind of informal popular knowledge that will be “useful not merely for *school*, but rather for *life*” (*Racen* 2: 443n.). This *Weltkenntnis* or world-knowledge is pragmatic and useful, but here too, there is a specifically moral dimension to it as well. Without *Weltkenntnis*, moral principles cannot be intelligently applied in human contexts. As Kant notes at the beginning of the *Collins* lectures, it is precisely due to the lack of *Weltkenntnis* “that so many practical sciences, for example, moral philosophy, have remained unfruitful. . . . Most moral philosophers and clergymen lack this knowledge of human nature” (25: 9). Or, as the *Collins* ethics lecture has it,



People are always preaching about what ought to be done, and nobody thinks about whether it can be done. . . . The pulpit orations on the subject are very empty, if the speaker does not simultaneously attend to humanity. . . . Therefore one must know of the human being whether he can also do what is required of him (27: 244).

Kant is *not* recommending here that people try to derive principles about what morally ought to be done from empirical knowledge of human nature and behavior. To do so would be to violate his own commitment to a foundational pure ethics whose principles “must not be sought in the nature of the human being or in the circumstances of the world in which he is placed” (*Gr* 4: 389). But he is saying that we need to know something about the specific agents to which these principles are to be applied, as well as about the contexts in which they live and act. Without this latter empirical knowledge, the former *a priori* knowledge “is merely speculative, or an idea; so the human being must at least be studied afterwards” (27: 244).

In the *Groundwork*, Kant emphasizes that “morals needs anthropology for its *application* to human beings” (4: 412). Morals needs anthropology, he adds, because its *a priori* laws

require a judgment sharpened by experience, partly to distinguish in what cases they are applicable and partly to provide them with entry (*Eingang*) to the will of the human being and efficacy for his fulfillment of them; for the human being is affected by so many inclinations that, though capable of the idea of a practical pure reason, he is not so easily able to make it effective *in concreto* in the conduct of his life (4: 389).

In other words, human beings need *Weltkenntnis* in order to make morality work effectively in their own lives. Human beings cannot simply jump unaided into pure ethics; background knowledge of their own empirical situation is a necessary prerequisite if the principles of pure ethics are to be of any use to them. In order to apply the categorical imperative to human situations, one needs relevant empirical knowledge about human beings and the circumstances in which they live. A second key goal of Kantian *moral* anthropology is thus to help human beings “feel the progress of the power of their judgment” (*KpV* 5: 154). This task is carried out in the anthropology lectures through the imparting of *Weltkenntnis* to listeners. Some of this *Weltkenntnis* will be used for pragmatic, non-moral purposes (e.g., using our knowledge of others to help us get what we want in a business transaction); but some of it will be used for distinctly practical, moral purposes (e. g., keeping our knowledge of human inclinations in mind as we design social policies and institutions).

3) *The Vocation of the Human Species*. Finally, a third way in which Kant’s anthropology lectures contribute to a distinctly *moral* anthropology lies in their remarks concerning the vocation (*Bestimmung*) of the human species. Here Kant is trying to provide his audience with a moral map: a conceptual orientation and delineation of where humanity as a species is headed. As his friend Moses Mendelssohn remarked: “I posit, at all times, the *Bestimmung* of the human being as the measure and goal of all our striving and efforts, as a point on which we must set our eyes, if we do not want to lose our way.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Moses Mendelssohn, “Über die Frage: was heist aufklären?” *Berlinsche Monatsschrift* 4 (1784): 193 -200, reprinted in Ehrhard Bahr, ed., *Was ist Aufklärung? Thesen und Definitionen* (Stuttgart: Reclam: 1974), p. 4. The issue of the “*Der Mensch und seine Bestimmung*” was one of the defining themes of the German Enlightenment. In addition to Mendelssohn and Kant, other important voices that contributed to the debate include Leibniz, Wolff, Johann Joachim Spalding, and Thomas Abbt. See, e.g., the readings in Part I of Norbert Hinske and Rainer Specht, eds., *Die Philosophie der deutschen Aufklärung* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1990).

However, with Kant the qualification “as a species” is crucially important. Unlike Mendelssohn and most of his contemporaries (but, at least in this respect, closer to later German thinkers such as Feuerbach and Marx), Kant’s discussion of the vocation question focuses exclusively on the human species *as a whole* rather than on its individual members. Non-human animals attain the purpose of their existence as individual specimens, but humans only achieve their *Bestimmung* within the species, as part of humanity considered as a whole. As Kant states: “it must be noted that with all other animals left to themselves, each individual reaches its complete *Bestimmung*; however with the human being only the *species* reaches it; so that the human race can work its way up to its *Bestimmung* only through *progress* in a series of innumerable many generations” (*Anth* 7: 324). Also, as the end of the quoted remark indicates, there is a strong *historical* dimension to Kant’s position on the vocation question. Humans achieve their *Bestimmung* collectively, as members of a species, but also over the course of “innumerable many generations,” through the process of “cultivating,” “civilizing,” and “moralizing” themselves by means of the arts and sciences (cf. *Anth* 7: 324).

The strong teleological thrust of Kant’s discussion of the human *Bestimmung* is yet another indication that Kantian anthropology is not entirely an empirical *Beobachtungslehre*. For the notion of purposiveness itself is, as he reminds us in the third *Critique*, “a special *a priori* concept that has its origin strictly speaking in the reflecting power of judgment” (5: 181). Also, we pursue our *Bestimmung* as free beings – we are not irrevocably fated or causally determined to achieve it. Whether we will actually reach a stage where all human beings are “cosmopolitically united” (*Anth* 7: 333) depends on what we choose to do. So again, while Kant – unlike many contemporary anthropologists – is convinced that all human beings do share a common nature, and that it is the job of philosophical anthropology to investigate this nature, at bottom he views our nature as open-ended: it is our nature to work collectively toward a *Bestimmung* that depends on our own free choices.

Part of the task of this third “moral map” dimension of Kant’s practical anthropology involves marshalling empirical evidence in support of the claim that the human race is *in fact* making moral progress, as well as to determine which social institutions and cultural tendencies will best further this tendency. (This latter project is similar to that part of the earlier-discussed “efficacy” aim which formulates species-specific strategies for responding to human hindrances to morality. However, now the aim is to find appropriate means for promoting a goal to be achieved *in the future*, rather than means for responding to a *present-day* hindrance.) Concerning empirical evidence of moral progress, Kant asserts in several places that “one can give much evidence (*manche Beweise*) that the human race in its entirety has in our age, in comparison with all earlier ones, actually moved forward toward the better” (*Gemeinspruch* 8: 310; cf. *Ende* 8: 332, *Streit* 7: 84). Unfortunately, he does not elaborate here on what precisely the empirical evidence in support of this claim is – perhaps assuming that its truth is so obvious to his Enlightenment audience as to not need support. But elsewhere Kant offers his most famous example of the moral progress of modernity – the “universal yet disinterested sympathy” expressed by spectators of the French Revolution, an attitude that indicates a new way of thinking; one which, owing both to its universality and impartiality, demonstrates “a moral character of humanity, . . . a character which not only permits people to hope for progress toward the better, but is already itself progress” (*Streit* 7: 85).

As for the second issue, determining which social institutions and cultural tendencies will best further moral progress, Kant remarks in several places that “if the human race is to come closer to its *Bestimmung*, this will require a perfect civil constitution, good education, and the best concepts in

religion” (*Pillau* 25: 847; cf. *Menschenkunde* 25: 1198, *Mrongovius* 25: 1427). Concerning the first means, the task is to develop republican forms of government “where each citizen must so to speak have his own voice” (*Mrongovius* 25: 1427); i. e., where all citizens are involved in the process of making laws, and where the freedom, equality, and independence of every member of society is respected (cf. *Gemeinspruch* 8: 290). In *Toward Perpetual Peace*, Kant states that the “first article for perpetual peace” is that “the civil constitution in every state shall be republican” (8: 349). Kant holds that republican forms of government are superior to all others, and also urges us all to work for the requisite political reforms, in our own countries as well as elsewhere.

Concerning the second means, improvements in education, we saw earlier that Kant was a strong supporter of Basedow and the Philanthropist movement. The specific aspect of Basedow’s program that most appealed to Kant in the context of humanity’s *Bestimmung* was Basedow’s goal of educating students to become “citizens of the world.”<sup>14</sup> In his *Lectures on Education*, he states:

Parents usually care only that their children get on well in the world, and princes regard their subjects merely as instruments for their own designs. Parents care for the home, princes for the state. Neither have as their final purpose the best for the world (*das Weltbeste*) and the perfection to which humanity is destined (*bestimmt*), and for which it also has the disposition. But the design for a plan of education must be made in a cosmopolitan manner (9: 448; cf. *Menschenkunde* 25: 1202).

Concerning religion, the third means to achieving our *Bestimmung*, religious discipline is also needed, “so that what cannot be achieved by external coercion can be effected by *internal* constraint (the constraint of conscience)” (*Anth* 7: 333n.). As we saw earlier, what Kant calls the “visible churches” of the various world religions are themselves charged with inculcating this constraint of conscience through the establishment and spreading of a universal commonwealth of virtue. The promotion of this universal commonwealth of virtue is “a task and a duty of the whole human race to establish” (*Rel* 6: 94).

## ASSESSING KANT’S MORAL ANTHROPOLOGY

I have argued thus far that – contrary to the claims of many critics and commentators – Kant’s anthropology lectures do contain a distinctively *moral* anthropology, a moral anthropology that does indeed function as “the counterpart of a metaphysics of morals, the other member of the division of practical philosophy as a whole” (*MdS* 6: 217). In closing, I would like to step back from the phenomenon a bit, commenting briefly on what seems to me to be most significant as well as most problematic about Kant’s moral anthropology.

First, the rightful readmission of the second part of morals into Kant’s system of practical philosophy entails multiple re-conceptualizations concerning the nature and aim of his moral theory – re-conceptualizations which themselves result in a stronger and more viable moral theory. For instance, *contra* Hegel and countless other critics, Kant does not reduce ethics “to an empty formalism.”<sup>15</sup> Rather,

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<sup>14</sup> Johann Bernhard Basedow, “Rede für das pädagogische Philanthropin in Dessau” (Dessau, 1775), p. 5; cited by Michael Nidermeier in “Campe als Direktor des Dessauer Philanthropins,” in *Visionäre Lebensklugheit: Joachim Heinrich Campe in seiner Zeit*, ed. Hanno Schmidt (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996), p. 46.

<sup>15</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, eds. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970), § 135.

Kant agrees with Hegel that “education is the art of making human beings ethical” (*sittlich*),<sup>16</sup> that human beings need a variety of well-functioning institutional supports in order to achieve moral community, that experientially-honed judgment skills are necessary for the proper application of abstract principles to individual cases, and that moral ideals which are not empirically informed will prove to be impotent in practice. More generally, Kant’s ethics is much more cognizant of the biological facts of human dependence and of the resultant need for extensive institutional supports in developing moral dispositions than its common caricatures suggest.

Second, restoring Kant’s impure ethics to its rightful place within his practical philosophy also enables us to place him much more comfortably between his empiricist predecessors as well as his later German critics in the history of modern European moral thought. Like Hume, Kant also sought to “march up directly . . . to human nature itself”<sup>17</sup> in his studies of ethics. Like the German romantics, Kant also stressed the importance of aesthetic experience and culture (*Bildung*) in the creation and promotion of human moral community.<sup>18</sup> And like Hegel and Marx, Kant also viewed human history as the progressive realization of freedom in the world.<sup>19</sup> In short, the restoration of the second part of morals within Kant’s practical philosophy results in a much more contiguous history of modern practical philosophy. Once Kant’s impure ethics is restored to its rightful place within his practical philosophy, we find a stronger current of naturalism within his ethical theory than has previously been acknowledged; a current that in turn nurtures the more earth-bound and historicized forms of idealism that follow Kant.

Third, Kant’s moral anthropology also entails a re-conceptualization of social science. While he endorses modernity’s call for an empirically-grounded “science of man,” Kant clearly rejects Max Weber’s later infamous “requirement of ‘value -freedom in discussions of empirical matters.’”<sup>20</sup> The social sciences as envisioned by Kant were not at all intended to be Weberian value-free undertakings. Rather, they were from the start deeply valued-embedded and morally-guided undertakings. As he remarks in one of his ethics lectures: “The sciences (*Wissenschaften*) are *principia* for the improvement of morality” (*die Verbeßerung der Moralität*) (Collins 27: 462). Knowing ourselves and our world stands under the moral imperative of making ourselves and our world morally better. Ultimately, we seek anthropological knowledge in order to further the goal of creating a moral realm; of constructing what Kant called an *Übergang* (bridge, crossing-over) between nature and freedom. Historically, the Weberian dogma of *Wertfreiheit* has been one of the primary ideologies invoked by social scientists in the scientific legitimization of their enterprise. For those of us who believe that the attempted divorce between science and value has been a mistake, the Kantian project of a morally-guided social science deserves re-examination.

Finally, the second part of Kant’s morals is much less contentious than the first. As a result, even those who object to some or even all aspects of the first part of his morals still have reason to embrace the second. Who (except perhaps the most adamant anti-moralist) would be opposed to making morality

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<sup>16</sup> Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, § 151, Zusatz.

<sup>17</sup> Hume, *A Treatise Concerning Human Nature*, p. xvi.

<sup>18</sup> For discussion, see Frederick C. Beiser, “A Romantic Education: The Concept of *Bildung* in Early German Romanticism,” in *Philosophers on Education: New Historical Perspectives*, ed. Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 284-99.

<sup>19</sup> For discussion of some ways in which Kant anticipates Marx’s materialist conception of history, See Allen W. Wood, *Kant’s Ethical Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 244-49.

<sup>20</sup> Max Weber, “Value-Judgments in Social Science,” in *Max Weber: Selections in Translation*, ed. W. G. Runciman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 81.

more efficacious in human life, to finding ways to sharpen and empirically inform our moral judgment skills, and to constructing a conceptual map to help orient us in our desire to promote moral progress? Nearly everyone, regardless of his or meta-ethical or normative theory commitments, can and should embrace the aims of Kantian moral anthropology.

In sum, the rightful re-admission of the second part of morals into Kant's system of practical philosophy brings with it a host of virtues. The result is a theory which is less formalistic, more empirically informed, more useful in everyday human life, more cognizant of the biological facts of human dependence, more aware of morality's need for well-functioning institutional and cultural supports, more contiguous with naturalistic currents in pre- as well as post-Kantian European moral thought, and less theoretically contentious than the better-known first part of his morals. And it acquires these virtues without caving in to the naturalist or empiricist temptations to which many other theorists have succumbed – temptations that would leave us unable to justify universal moral norms or to explain why we are free in ways that other animals are not. As Kant remarks, “a merely empirical doctrine of justice [or virtue] is a head that may be beautiful but unfortunately it has no brain” (*MdS* 6:230), and “the concept of freedom is the stumbling block for all *empiricists*, but also the key to the most sublime practical principles for *critical* moralists, who thereby see that they must proceed *rationally*” (*KpV* 5: 7).

But none of this meant to obscure the fact that there are many unresolved problems and weaknesses in Kant's moral anthropology. Nowhere is the project carried out systematically or in sufficient detail. For instance, the level of analysis seldom reaches beyond easy generalities concerning the human species as a whole, and fundamental questions concerning the connection between the two parts of morals remain unanswered (e.g., how and why exactly are the recommended institutional and cultural changes to usher in a realm of freedom?). As a result, the usefulness and applicability of his second part of morals is greatly limited. And, as critics never tire of pointing out, Kant's moral anthropology is riddled throughout by inaccurate empirical data – racial, ethnic, religious, and sexist prejudices that should have no part in a moral theory genuinely committed to the proposition that every human being “exists as an end in itself, *not merely as a means* to be used by this or that will at its discretion” (*Gr* 4: 428; cf. *Collins* 27: 462). But these problems notwithstanding, I do hope that I have convinced my audience of the fundamental importance of this neglected part of Kant's philosophical project. Those of us who aspire to construct humanly useful ethical theories need to consider more carefully Kant's convictions that moral theory “cannot exist without anthropology” (*Collins* 27: 244) and that “the metaphysics of morals, or *metaphysica pura*, is only the first part of morality; the second part is *philosophia moralis applicata*, to which the empirical principles belong” (*Mrongovius II* 29: 599). This is not at all to say that the particular *philosophia moralis applicata* that we find sketched in Kant's works is a satisfactory one. It clearly is not. Rather, it remains for us today and in the future to develop a viable moral anthropology from the exploratory and fragmentary beginnings that he has left us.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> This lecture borrows and builds on a number of points made in my book, *Kant's Impure Ethics: From Rational Beings to Human Beings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); as well as in my essay, “The Second Part of Morals,” forthcoming in Jacobs and Kain, eds., *Essays on Kant's Anthropology*. A version of the latter was also given as an invited lecture to the North American Kant Society session of the APA Central Division meeting in Minneapolis, May 2001.