CHAPTER 5

The anthropology of cognition and its pragmatic implications

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The aim of this chapter is to bring to light the anthropological dimension of Kant's account of cognition as it is developed in the *Lectures on Anthropology*. I will argue that Kant's anthropology of cognition develops along two complementary lines. On the one hand, it studies nature's intentions for the human species – the 'natural' dimension of human cognition. On the other hand, it uses this knowledge to help us realise our cognitive purposes – the 'pragmatic' dimension of human cognition. Insofar as it is intended for us as embodied human agents whose cognition takes place in the empirical world, it is concerned with the knowledge of the natural subjective conditions that help or hinder our cognition. Therefore, far from portraying human beings as disembodied pure minds, Kant's account not only acknowledges the empirical, contingent and messy features of our cognition, it also helps us become better, more efficient knowers.

Yet the idea that Kant's anthropology of cognition has a pragmatic dimension turns out to be problematic. For whilst pragmatic anthropology is defined as 'the investigation of what he as a free-acting being makes of himself, or can and should make of himself' (A 7:119), by contrast with acting, cognising seems to be beyond the realm of voluntary action. However, I will show that Kant's account of cognition makes room for a form of epistemic control that is sufficient to account for the possibility of its pragmatic dimension. I will conclude by drawing the implications of my interpretation for our overall understanding of Kant's account of cognition.

1. Nature's intentions for human cognition

As Kant often notes in his anthropological works, there is a great variation amongst human beings' cognitive talents – there are the great geniuses who 'take new paths and open new prospects', the mechanical minds who advance 'slowly on the rod and staff of experience', the universal mind who 'grasps all the various sciences', the superficial mind 'who knows the

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139176170.007

Table 5.1. *Varieties of understanding (VA*-Friedländer *25:538–44)*

Superior understanding	Inferior understanding
Adroit (swift and ingenious)	Obtuse (slow and oblivious to fine differences)
Common (judges concretely)	Stupid (lack of natural understanding)
Correct (originates concepts)	Simpleminded (lack of natural understanding)
Mature (guided by another)	Immature (without another's guidance)

titles of everything but not the contents', the architectonic mind who 'methodically examines the connection of all the sciences and how they support one another', the natural minds who think 'out for themselves', and the gigantic erudite mind who misses 'the eye of true philosophy' (A 7:226–7).[1] Although for Kant transcendental structures are common to all human beings (and some even to all rational beings), their empirical expression takes many different forms within what is generally called 'the mind': 'Under the mind, one thinks of the ability to think for oneself, and this includes sound understanding, and the faculty and possession of a correct power of judgment' (VA-*Mrongovius* 25:1308).[2] For instance, Table 5.1 presents the remarkable diversity of cognitive abilities afforded by the empirical realisations of the transcendental faculty of understanding.

Other types of cognitive variations amongst human beings include variations in the following empirical abilities: self-consciousness, the ability to foresee and remember, the ability to carry out extended logical inferences; developmental variations: cognitive development, variations over time within the lifespan of an individual; and cultural variations: variations in cognitive cultures, historical environment and geographical setting.[3]

[1] See also 'Minds differ greatly in their ability to answer all three of these questions', '*What do I want*? (asks understanding). *What does it matter*? (asks the power of judgment). *What comes of it*? (asks reason)' (A 7:227–8).

[2] As Schmidt has shown, 'These transcendental structures are expressed within the subjectivity of an empirical human individual as the configuration of his or her self-consciousness, external senses, inner sense, imagination, and understanding as epistemic faculties. However, these faculties also have an empirical operation in each human being, in response to specific intuitions, and these empirical operations reflect the differences among individuals in their experiences, capacities, and talents' (Schmidt (2008), 472). Contrast with Catherine Wilson's claim that 'Kant was incapable of registering particularities of mentality other than negatively': 'either human reason and action are to be discussed in extra-empirical terms, or human cultural, psychological and physical diversity are assessed as departures from an idealized and dematerialized norm' (Wilson (1997), 264–5).

[3] Respectively in A 7:130–4, 161–2, 182–9, 227, 127–8, 131–40, 162–5, 226, 311–20, 321–33 and 226.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139176170.007

Whilst there is no space to discuss the detail of these variations here, the aim of this section is to focus on their cause and function. According to Kant, the cognitive diversity that human beings exhibit is to be attributed to nature's intentions for the human species: 'nature must have furnished the human being with this [cognitive talents and gifts]' (A 7:220). To make sense of this claim, we must begin by understanding nature's purpose behind human beings' diversity in general: 'From various circumstances . . . we can discover certain predispositions from time to time and infer from them what nature's goal for humanity is' (VA-*Pillau* 25:839). As I will argue, the diversity of human beings' cognitive talents should be interpreted as nature's means to secure the cognitive survival and progress of the species.

Kant's account of nature's intentions for the human species has been the object of numerous debates. As is well known, he often portrays nature as having providential aspects that allow human beings to fulfil their moral destiny: it 'strives to give us an education that makes us receptive to purposes higher than those that nature itself can provide', and in particular 'the subject of morality . . . the *final purpose* of creation to which all of nature is subordinated' (KU 5:433–6, translation modified). Whilst Kant's account of moral teleology is familiar, what is less so is that in his anthropological works, he also portrays nature as aiming at the preservation of the human species and the full development of its capacities: since 'in nature everything is designed to achieve its greatest possible perfection', 'Nature has also stored into her economy such a rich treasure of arrangements for her particular purpose, which is nothing less than the maintenance of the species' (VA-*Friedländer* 25:694, A 7:310).[4] A number of human characteristics, including cognitive aptitudes, are thus defined as being determined, at least partly, according to nature's intentions for the species: 'Innate to human nature are germs which develop and can achieve the perfection for which they are determined' (VA-*Friedländer* 25:694). From the publication of the *Observations* (1764) through the *Lectures on Anthropology* all the way to the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1798), these germs (*Keime*), and natural predispositions more generally (*Anlagen*), are classified under four categories: temperament, gender, nation and race. As shown in Table 5.2, each type within these categories is the means to the realization of a particular purpose that contributes to the realization of nature's overall purpose for the human

[4] For a detailed discussion of Kant's account of nature's intentions for the human species, see Cohen (2009a), Chapter 5, section 1.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139176170.007

Table 5.2. *Human types and nature's purposes*

Criterion	Definition	Type	Nature's purpose
Gender	Sex	Male, female	Reproduction and preservation of the human species
Temperament	Constitution of the body	Sanguine, melancholic, choleric, phlegmatic	Diversity of human character (leading to social antagonism) which secures civil peace
Race	Hereditary transmitted features	White, Negro, Hindu, Hunnish–Mongolian–Kalmuck	Diversity of biological character so as to be suited for all climates
Nation	Civil whole united through common descent	French, English, German, Italian, etc.	Diversity of national character (leading to external war) which secures international peace

species.[5] This purpose is twofold: on the one hand, the species' progress is accomplished through diversity amongst human beings, which generates conflicts that lead to the development of their capacities. On the other hand, its survival is secured because conflicts need to be regulated by civil laws, which leads to peaceful cohabitation.

First, the function of the natural differences between the members of the human species, whether in terms of race, temperament, gender or nationality, is to cause an antagonism that generates the development of their capacities – what Kant usually calls 'unsociable sociability' (Idea 8:20):

> there is a principle of society and of sociability in the human being, but on the other hand also a principle of unsociability and separation of society. Here both principles collide with one another, which is, however, wisely arranged by the Creator . . . This is the Creator's special combination and separation, from which the multiplicity arises, and from which the complete perfection of the human race must afterwards be derived. (VA-*Friedländer* 25:586–7)[6]

For instance, the diversity of temperaments is one of the means nature uses to generate conflict between human beings. Temperaments clash with

[5] I have argued for this claim in Cohen (2006). For an exposition of the evolution of Kant's account of human characteristics in the *Lectures on Anthropology*, see Zammito's contribution in this volume.

[6] See also 'The means nature employs in order to bring about the development of human beings' natural predispositions is their antagonism in society' (Idea 8:20). For a compelling account of the concept of unsociable sociability, see Wood (1991).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139176170.007

each other: the sanguine is opposed to the melancholic, the choleric to the phlegmatic, and temperaments of feeling are opposed to temperaments of activity (see VA-*Menschenkunde* 25:1159; A 7:287). Their antagonism leads them to strive to outdo each other, thus creating the conditions for the development of their natural predispositions by ensuring that they cultivate their capacities. In contrast, the Arcadian shepherd or the South Sea Islander did not confront the problem of antagonism and as a result failed to develop their talents. By leading to the progress of civilisation, unsocial sociability is thus a decisive driving force in the development of human beings' natural dispositions:

> Without this unsociability there would never have arisen a firm civil association, but at most only the arcadian life of a shepherd, i.e. a life full of laziness with the best attitudes, whereby the human being would never be perfected or cultivated and would not be more esteemed than any other animal species. (VA-*Mrongovius* 25:1422)[7]

Yet the force of antagonism needs to be regulated if human beings are to avoid self-destruction. It is the means to this regulation, peaceful civil society, that allows them to secure their survival in a way that is compatible with their ongoing progress:

> unsociability drove human beings into the state where one strove for the belongings of others and thereby came into collision with others, and because of this they were required to elect to adopt a commanding head and in this way to bring the systematic into the civil condition . . . The civil state is therefore the only condition in which all the natural predispositions of the human being can be developed. (VA-*Mrongovius* 25:1423; see also VA-*Friedländer* 25:586; and VA-*Pillau* 25:845)

As a result, human beings' diversity is nature's means to secure both their survival and their progress by compelling them to cultivate their capacities whilst creating the conditions of their peaceful cohabitation: 'The great masterpiece that nature has striven to bring forth through the perfect development of the natural predispositions is the perfect, civil constitution or its agreement with the ends of humanity' (VA-*Mrongovius* 25:1425–6). On this basis, I would like to suggest that the general principle of nature just delineated can be used to account for the diversity of human beings' cognitive

[7] The South Sea Islander 'finds himself in comfortable circumstances and prefers to give himself up to pleasure than to trouble himself with enlarging and improving his fortunate natural predispositions . . . [He] let[s] his talents rust and [is] concerned with devoting his life merely to idleness, amusement, procreation – in a word, to enjoyment' (G 4:423). Through the obstacles they create for each other, they are forced to work and develop their talents.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139176170.007

talents that this section started with. Namely, it should be interpreted as nature's means to secure the cognitive survival and progress of the species:

> By means of the great difference of minds, in the way they look at exactly the same objects and at each other, and by means of the friction between them and the connection between them as well as their separation, nature produces a remarkable drama of infinite variety on the stage of observers and thinkers. (A 7:228)

First, the cognitive differences between human beings lead them to disagree with each other, which ensures the development of their cognitive capacities. Cognitive disagreements drive them to inquire further, seek new evidence and search for additional support for their beliefs in order to win arguments. Thereby, not only do they actually improve their chances of reaching true beliefs and thus cognitive agreement, more importantly, by doing so they also cultivate their cognitive talents. Second, to safeguard cognitive exchanges in spite of ongoing disagreements, they have to be regulated, and the most efficient means of doing so is by agreeing on procedures that allow their co-existence. Common epistemic standards make it possible for their claims, methods and inquiries to be not only evaluated by others but compared to each other. Whilst these procedures may not actually settle disagreements, they provide an epistemic framework within which they can cohabit peacefully. As a result, nature, which 'has arranged nothing in vain' (VP 9:456), can be seen as using the cognitive diversity amongst human beings to secure not only the survival but more importantly the progress of the species towards its cognitive perfection.

However, if cognitive progress is nature's purpose for human beings, the function of their cognitive weaknesses remains to be accounted for. For one may be tempted to think that it would be best realised if they were all endowed with flawless intellects. Instead, as shown in Tables 5.3–5.5, as well as having numerous cognitive strengths, human beings are naturally endowed with a variety of cognitive weaknesses that are associated with their temperament, nationality and gender.[8] Nature has chosen to associate most human types with their own brand of cognitive flaws (apart from, perhaps, the masculine type, which seems to be immune from them) because their respective cognitive strengths and weaknesses are intended to

[8] I choose to leave out the case of races since it is problematic for a number of reasons. In particular, some races seem to lack basic cognitive capacities. For instance, the Hindus 'never raise it up to abstract concepts' (VA-*Menschenkunde* 25:1187), whilst 'insensitive Americans [have] no prospects; even the people of Mexico and Peru cannot be cultivated' and 'self-possessed Indians . . . can progress in art but not in sciences and enlightenment' (Reflexion 1520 [15:877–8]). For a discussion of Kant's account of race, see Cohen (2009a), 38–40; Larrimore (1999); and Eze (1995).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139176170.007

Table 5.3. *Cognitive disparities between temperaments*[a]

Temperaments	Strengths	Weaknesses
Sanguine	Popular, witty, lively	Trivial, thoughtless, disorderly
Melancholic	Profound, original, serious	Obscure, dogmatic, obstinate, punctilious
Choleric	Methodical, precise, keen-witted, orderly	Incorrect, doesn't bear contradiction, dogmatic
Phlegmatic	Sweeping, talented imitator	Laborious, superficial, procrastinator, sluggish

[a] VA-*Friedländer* 25:641, 25:644–7 and VA-*Mrongovius* 25:1237, 25:1373–6.

Table 5.4. *Cognitive disparities between nations*[a]

Nations	Strengths	Weaknesses
French	Daring, inspired, witty	Risk-taking, superficial
German	Methodical, orderly,	Pedant, imitator, lacking judgment to apply rule
English	Insightful, good judgment	Disorderly
Russian	Good apprentice	Immature understanding

[a] VA-*Friedländer* 25:483–5, 25:517, 25:542–3, 25:547, 25:647, 25:659; and VA-*Mrongovius* 25:1264, 25:1296, 25:1301.

Table 5.5. *Cognitive variations between genders*[a]

Gender	Strengths	Weaknesses
Feminine	Shrewd, good at investigating other people, fine in assessing means, talent for ratiocinating in the household	Immature about purposes, delicate, disposed for play, not good at investigating things and objects, agrees with common opinion, lacks wisdom
Masculine	Perfect in the sciences, thinks according to principles	Nil

[a] VA-*Friedländer* 25:543, 25:705, 25:706, 25:722; VA-*Mrongovius* 25:1394.

complement each other in order to form a unified whole, as exemplified by marital union:

> in order for there to be a difference between the two sexes, and in order that a unity would arise from the difference, the man must have strength there where the woman has weakness, and weakness there where the woman has strength. (VA-*Friedländer* 25:702)

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139176170.007

Similarly, knowledge is a collaborative task where various talents are added to the mix that is human cognition. The sanguine may have to suffer thoughtlessness to allow for his liveliness, but it is the perfect complement to the melancholic's profundity. The choleric's keen-wittedness comes together with his dogmatic tendencies, but it is the perfect complement to the phlegmatic's talent for imitation:

> The talents are diverse: there is a critical talent, an historical one, a philological one, a philosophical one, a mathematical and mechanical talent, etc. Whoever is excellent in one talent, is not necessarily for that reason excellent in all of them. For the kinds of cognition involved are diverse. (VA-*Mrongovius* 25:1308–9)

A methodical mind such as the choleric's may not be capable of creative leaps like the sanguine, just as the reliable judgment of the English may be incapable of the inspired insights of the French. But from 'the standpoint of the great portrait of human nature' (Beo 2:227), nature has intended to realise the cognitive unity of the species by spreading out cognitive talents amongst various types of knowers:

> through what means is the greatest unity and social union possible? Not through uniformity, but through difference. True union is based on the lack [of something] by one party, and possession of it by the other party. If that is now combined, then a whole of the complete, friendly union arises. (VA-*Friedländer* 25:702)

However, whilst the collaborative dimension of human knowledge accounts for the variety of cognitive strengths and weaknesses, why has nature chosen not only to create obtuse, stupid, simpleminded or immature minds, but also to make clear minds 'fairly common', acute power of judgment 'a greater rarity', and inventive judgment 'very rare' (A 7:227–8)? Surprisingly perhaps, Kant approves of the fact that great minds are in short supply: 'very few human beings think this way [well-grounded thinking, which is the finest mode of thought], which is also actually good' (VA-*Busolt* 25:1482). For nature cannot count on people having the right kind of principles, whether theoretical or practical:

> There are very few people who conduct themselves in accordance with principles, which is on the whole good, since it is so easy to err with these principles, and then the ensuing disadvantage extends all the further, the more general the principle is and the more steadfast the person who has set it before himself is. (Beo 2:227)

Nature can more reliably attribute the finest minds to a chosen few and assign the rest a supportive role in the equilibrium of the species – and this

is true of cognition as well as more generally. The progress of cognition is only a small, albeit important, part of the overall progress of the species. Whilst it is accomplished most notably by great minds such as Newton, Linnaeus or Galileo, cognitively weaker minds carry out other dimensions of human progress through their own brand of skills:

> Genius can be opposed to the mechanical mind. Genius creates epochs; however, the mechanical mind is still more useful, since it creates regular order. A mechanical mind is commonplace. Genius appears to be based on a kind of disproportion in the cognitive power. (VA-*Mrongovius* 25:1312)

Human beings have a variety of needs beyond cognitive ones, and they can be best addressed by those who may lack cognitive skills but excel in other domains. Different talents, or lack thereof, fulfil different functions in nature's scheme so that what looks like a weakness at the level of an individual turns out to be a strength at the level of the species: 'the greatest ills arise when one thinks consistently with false principles. They nonetheless remain of great importance' (VA-*Busolt* 25:1482). For instance, as Kant writes in the case of imperfections due to gender:

> We now come to an instance [the difference of the two sexes] where very many apparent imperfections, which have their basis in nature, appear to us, and where philosophy must be employed in order to see that these imperfections are purposive and have to do with nature. (VA-*Friedländer* 25:697)

Since we should 'expect nothing in nature and its laws but what is purposive in the whole' (KU 5:379), nature's seemingly counter-productive distribution of cognitive strengths and weaknesses is the means to its overall aim, the progress of human cognition.

2. The pragmatic dimension of Kant's anthropology of cognition

However, the realisation of nature's aim requires more than the mere existence of the diversity of human talents; these talents need to be cultivated, and it is our responsibility to do so above and beyond the effects of natural antagonism:

> nature has after all placed the germs in these plants, and it is merely a matter of proper sowing and planting that these germs develop in the plants. The same holds true with human beings. Many germs lie within humanity, and now it is our business to develop the natural dispositions proportionally and to unfold humanity from its germs and to make it happen that the human being reaches his vocation. (VP 9:445)

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139176170.007

According to Kant, we have to develop, cultivate and strengthen our natural capacities, as expressed in the maxim 'Cultivate your powers of mind and body so that they are fit to realise any ends you might encounter' (MS 6:392–3).[9] We not only can but ought to cultivate our minds in some way, and this is so in spite of the fact that, as I have shown, we have no control over the kind of cognitive talents we are naturally endowed with.

Rather than leaving us alone with this task, Kant's lectures on anthropology provide the empirical knowledge we need to succeed and reach our vocation. Whilst nature creates our dispositions according to the purposes it sets for us, in order to realize our perfection we need to know how to best develop and utilize them. In this sense, Kant's anthropology of cognition develops along two complementary lines. On the one hand, as I have spelt out in the preceding section, it studies nature's purposes for the human species – the natural dimension of human cognition. On the other hand, it uses this knowledge to help us realise our cognitive vocation – the pragmatic dimension of human cognition. This pragmatic dimension consists in spelling out the natural subjective conditions that help or hinder our cognition, thereby enabling us to become more cognitively efficacious. To illustrate this claim, I will examine the case of human temperaments.

Since, as already suggested, each type of temperament comes with its own brand of cognitive strengths and weaknesses, the knowledge of our temperament is a crucial help to the progress of our cognition. It enables us not only to be conscious of the pitfalls we face, but also to know how best to use our strengths and improve upon our weaknesses.[10] For instance, as Kant writes:

> The question thus is, what is better, to carry out one's work in a short time, in order to have the remaining time entirely for leisure, or to carry out the same work very gradually over a long time, without having time left over for leisure? The difference is based on people's temperaments. (VA-*Friedländer* 25:488)

[9] See also 'the human being has a duty to cultivate the crude predispositions of his nature, by which the animal is first raised into the human being. It is therefore a duty in itself. But this duty is a merely ethical one, that is, a duty of wide obligation' (MS 6:391–2). Being a wide duty, it can be realised in many different ways, and it is up to us to choose the form and the extent it should take, for 'no rational principle prescribes specifically *how* far one should go in cultivating one's capacities (in enlarging or correcting one's capacity for understanding, i.e., in acquiring knowledge or skill)' (MS 6:392). Note that the limits and aims of the cultivation of the mind remain open-ended insofar as it is 'not possible to determine what degree is required for the average of the sound understanding and sound reason, and of all the powers of mind' (VA-*Friedländer* 25:548).

[10] See for instance VA-*Friedländer* 25:522, VA-*Mrongovius* 25:1275, and A 7:186.

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139176170.007

First, negatively, since depending on our temperament we have the tendency to make certain kinds of error, have weak capacities or even lack certain powers (see Table 5.3), knowing our temperament can make our cognitive endeavours more reliable by pointing to potential pitfalls. The awareness of our cognitive weaknesses thus enables us to be more responsive to them and thereby less likely to fail or err. It reveals domains where our temperament is pointing in the direction of error (for instance, the melancholic is dogmatic), and, conversely, domains where our temperament is pointing away from error (for instance, the choleric is precise). On the basis of this knowledge, the melancholic should be mindful of the fact that he might be blind to other points of view, whilst the choleric can safely rely on the details of his calculations. Similarly, since the sanguine is witty and lively of spirit but lacks profundity, he should be attentive to the fact that his cognitive endeavours will require 'more investigation and seriousness' (VA-*Friedländer* 25:641, 25:644–7; and VA-*Mrongovius* 25:1237, 25:1373–6). Or to take an example that Kant is particularly keen on, people's capacity for memory will exhibit different strengths and weaknesses depending on their temperament:[11] 'Sanguine people have an adroit and vivid memory, phlegmatic people have a slow and lasting (*tenax*) memory. Choleric people have a memory that is faithful but does not grasp easily (*non capax*). Melancholics have a vast and faithful memory' (VA-*Mrongovius* 25:1276). On this basis, the phlegmatic should not rely on memories that he acquired too quickly, whilst the melancholic can. Taking account of it in their cognitive endeavours will make them more efficient, more reliable and generally more successful.

Second, positively, being aware of our temperament is helpful to determine the course of action that is best for our cognition: which talent needs cultivating, which capacity needs improving, which endeavour we should engage in and which we should avoid. For instance, since the melancholic, whilst profound and serious, lacks a certain 'liveliness of the spirit' (VA-*Friedländer* 25:641), he should avoid disciplines that require it, such as scientific popularisation.[12] By contrast, the sanguine is particularly

[11] Famously, it is the example he uses to illustrate the purpose of pragmatic anthropology in the *Anthropology*'s introduction: 'if he uses perceptions concerning what has been found to hinder or stimulate memory in order to enlarge it or make it agile, and if he requires knowledge of the human being for this, then this would be a part of anthropology with a pragmatic purpose, and this is precisely what concerns us here' (A 7:119).

[12] 'He who determines his horizon aesthetically seeks to arrange science according to the taste of the public, i.e., to make it *popular*, or in general to attain only such cognitions as may be universally communicated, and in which the class of the unlearned, too, find pleasure and interest' (VL-*Jäsche* 24:40–1, original emphasis).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139176170.007

well suited to it since he is lively and witty. Moreover, since certain temperaments have the tendency to weaken the use of particular capacities, specific cognitive measures can be taken to strengthen them. For instance, since choleric temperaments are more prone to passions than others, Kant recommends that they refine them so as to improve their capacity for self-control. Similarly, phlegmatics should work on their short-term memory by recording little and striving to remember many things, whilst cholerics should develop their speed by using the understanding to help remember topics and frameworks (VA-*Mrongovius* 25:1275).

Needless to say, I could list many other examples from Kant's *Lectures on Anthropology*. But I believe that what I have argued so far suffices to conclude that the anthropological knowledge of temperaments, and of the empirical features of human cognition more generally, is essential to the successful realisation of our cognitive endeavours.[13] Of course, it does not entail that we cannot possibly realise them without it, but rather that this knowledge enables us to be more efficient and reliable knowers. However, as I will discuss in the following section, the idea that Kant's anthropology of cognition has a pragmatic dimension turns out to be problematic.

3. The condition of possibility of the pragmatic dimension of Kant's anthropology of cognition

As exemplified by my account of temperaments in the preceding section, Kant's conception of anthropology is literally practical: since one 'calls all practical knowledge of the human being "pragmatic" insofar as it serves to fulfill our overall aims', 'Anthropology is thus a pragmatic knowledge of what results from our nature' (VA-*Menschenkunde* 25:855–6, VA-*Friedländer* 25:471).[14] It comprises advice, recommendations, counsels, guidance, warnings and even admonitions as to how to develop and apply our capacities and skills in the most efficient ways, including cognitive ones. In particular, it identifies the different types of cognitive derangement that

[13] For a sceptical take on the usefulness of these typological descriptions, see Zammito's contribution: 'it was not clear how much value in the world these typologies might have had for his students' (p. 239).

[14] 'The second part of knowledge of the world is knowledge of human beings, who are considered inasmuch as their knowledge is of interest to us in life. Therefore human beings are not studied in speculative terms, but pragmatic, in the application of their knowledge according to rules of prudence, and this is anthropology' (VA-*Friedländer* 25:470). See also VA-*Pillau* 25:733; VA-*Collins* 25:9; VA-*Menschenkunde* 25:853–4; and VA-*Mrongovius* 25:1209. This knowledge has an extremely broad scope: it discloses 'the sources of all the [practical] sciences, the science of morality, of skill, of human intercourse, of the way to educate and govern human beings, and thus of everything that pertains to the practical' (C 10:145).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139176170.007

afflict the faculties of human cognition and suggests various ways of overcoming them. For instance, it examines the decreasing, weakening and entire loss of the senses and the soul's weaknesses and illnesses with respect to its cognitive faculty.[15] It recommends numerous ways of improving the use of cognitive faculties: memory, sensory perception, understanding, judgment, reason, imagination, wisdom and so on:[16]

> The particular culture of the powers of the mind . . . includes the culture of the cognitive faculty, of the senses, of the imagination, of the memory, of the strength of attention and wit, in short what concerns the lower powers of the understanding . . . as concerns the higher powers of understanding, they include the culture of the understanding, of the power of judgment, and of reason. (VP 9:475)

It is thus one of the aims of Kant's anthropology of cognition to instruct us how to cultivate our cognitive capacities so as to make the best use of them – note that Kant repeatedly talks of 'the use of understanding and reason' (VA-*Mrongovius* 25:1261), 'the use of reason' (VA-*Friedländer*, 25:545; VA-*Busolt*, 25:1481), 'the *use of the understanding*' (VL-*Jäsche* 9:74, original emphasis) or the 'purposive use of [the faculty of cognition]' (KU 5:295).

However, the idea that Kant's anthropology of cognition has a pragmatic dimension is problematic. For whilst pragmatic anthropology is defined as 'the investigation of what he as a free-acting being makes of himself, or can and should make of himself' (A 7:119), cognising by contrast with acting, seems to be beyond the realm of voluntary action:

> In most cases, such a procedure of giving our approval, or withdrawing it, or holding it back[,] does not rest at all on our free choice, but rather is necessitated through and by the laws of our understanding and our reason. (VL-*Blomberg* 24:156)

Whether we believe, what we believe and why we believe are not up to us since the idea of the will controlling beliefs makes no sense: 'The will does not have any influence immediately on holding-to-be-true; this would be quite absurd' (VL-*Jäsche* 9:74). If this is correct, it entails that we have no control over much of our cognition. Yet without some degree of control, the possibility of a pragmatic dimension of Kant's anthropology of cognition is in jeopardy: 'If we do not have [the powers of the mind] under the control

[15] VA-*Friedländer* 25:499–502, 25:544–5; VA-*Mrongovius* 25:1302–8; A 7:165–75, 7:202–21.

[16] Respectively in VA-*Friedländer* 25:521–4, 25:499–502, 25:541–4, 25:515–21, 25:545–54, 25:514–5, 25:621–2; VA-*Mrongovius* 25:1273–7, 25:1253–5, 25:1296–302, 25:1263–72, 25:1258–62, 25:1296–7; A 7:182–6, 7:149–51, 7:162–6, 7:197–202, 7:167–74, 7:228–9. For details on the improvement of the general cognitive faculty, see Schmidt (2004).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139176170.007

of the free power of choice, all provisions for such perfection are thus in vain' (VA-*Friedländer* 25:488). How can we hope to perfect our cognitive capacities or develop our cognitive talents if we have no control over our cognition, whether in terms of processes, operations, or faculties? The aim of this section is to show that Kant makes room for a form of control that is sufficient to account for the possibility of a pragmatic anthropology of cognition.

To begin with, Kant acknowledges that we do have control over the inquiries that give rise to our cognitive judgments: 'Holding-to-be-true pertains to the understanding, but investigation to the faculty of choice' (VL-*Dohna-Wundlacken* 24:736).[17] It is up to us to determine whether to investigate a matter, how deep, for how long, what direction the inquiry takes, when we are satisfied with the results, and so on:

> although approval does not depend *immediate* on men's choice, it nevertheless often does depend on it *indirecte*, *mediately*, since it is according to one's free wish that he seeks out those grounds that could in any way bring about approval for this or that cognition . . . it still requires closer direction of choice, will, wish, or in general of our free will, toward the grounds of proof. (VL-*Blomberg* 24:158, original emphasis)

Although beliefs differ from actions in some respects, acquiring beliefs entails the same processes as choosing how to act. They both require acts of the will, whether it is deliberating, weighing up options, or selecting the course of action that is best suited to our ends. As exemplified by scientific investigations, we can control the understanding, albeit indirectly, to the extent that our cognitive inquiries are led by the will: 'Insofar as the will either impels the understanding toward inquiry into a truth or holds it back therefrom, however, one must grant it an influence on the *use of the understanding*' (VL-*Jäsche* 9:74, original emphasis). Moreover, we have the capacity to control and withhold approval: 'In *suspensio judicii* there lies some freedom' (VL-*Blomberg* 24:736). Kant calls it a form of freedom because it is the capacity to resist the influence of inclinations on judgment, a capacity akin to the will's independence from the determination of desires.[18] Inclinations hinder cognition just as they hinder morality, as suggested by the analogy between the cause of moral vice and that of false belief:

[17] See also '*Judicia reflectentia* are those which introduce investigation, which show (1.) whether a matter needs investigation, (2.) how I ought to investigate a matter' (VL-*Dohna-Wundlacken* 24:737).

[18] Kant sometimes calls our independence from the determination of desires the 'culture of discipline', which 'is negative and consists in the liberation of the will from the despotism of desires, a despotism that rivets us to certain natural things and renders us unable to do our own selecting' (KU 5: 432).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139176170.007

> Deviation from the rules of the pure will constitutes the morally evil, and this arises only when and because other effects of other powers mingle with the otherwise pure laws of the will. E.g.: The inclinations and affects. Just in this way, when foreign powers mingle with the correct laws of the understanding, a mixed effect arises, and error arises from the conflict of [this with] our judgments based on the laws of the understanding and of reason. (VL-*Blomberg* 24:102)

Insofar as they are 'foreign powers', inclinations are the cause of our errors.[19] First, they interfere with the proper functioning of our cognitive faculties and thereby hinder the acquisition of knowledge.[20] Second, they preclude thorough epistemic investigations by giving us an unwarranted feeling of certainty and thereby corrupting our cognitive diligence.[21] Finally, they prompt us to adopt beliefs on illegitimate grounds, for instance because they suit our taste or our wishes.[22] The inclinations are thus an illness of the mind, at least as far as cognition is concerned. They produce illusions, unwarranted beliefs and false cognitions. They give rise to illegitimate epistemic procedures. They interfere with, misguide and distort the operations of our cognitive faculties in their pursuit of knowledge: 'Through these [inclinations] we are transposed into a condition most unsuitable for judging' (VL-*Vienna* 24:842). As a result, a cognitive agent who can control his inclinations is more efficient in the sense that he will be better armed to carry out his cognitive purposes: 'Our perfection consists therein, that we are able to subjugate our faculties and capacities to the free power of choice' (VA-*Friedländer* 25:485–6). This is why an essential part of Kant's anthropology of cognition spells out how to facilitate, enhance and when necessary restore the will's control over our cognitive powers:

> We must therefore always take care to have our mental powers under our control, and this must already occur in early youth. We must thus not let sensibility dominate, but rather discipline it through the understanding, [so] that we can use it if and however it is conducive to our understanding. (VA-*Mrongovius* 25:1231–2)

[19] 'One of the most outstanding causes, however, that very frequently misleads man into making a false judgment, or even into an error, is the *affects*' (VL-*Blomberg* 24:159–60, original emphasis).

[20] For instance, 'Everything that stimulates and excites us serves to disadvantage our power of judgment' (VL-*Blomberg* 24:60).

[21] For instance, 'In young minds this inclination to accept the seeming as true is so great that they find it very hard to withhold their judgment' (VL-*Vienna* 24:860).

[22] For instance, '*inclination* occasions us always to undertake examinations and investigations only from one side, and of course only from the side where we wish that it were so and not otherwise, and thus it occasions us to leave the other side, which might perhaps provide us with grounds for the opposite, completely uninvestigated' (VL-*Blomberg* 24:167, original emphasis).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139176170.007

However, it is unclear that the capacity to resist the influence of inclinations is sufficient to account for the possibility of the pragmatic dimension of Kant's anthropology of cognition. For we need to distinguish between two types of control: the control of cognition from the outside (e.g. whether or not to inquire, what to inquire about, etc.) and the control of cognition from within (e.g. a priori laws, epistemic principles, etc.). Whilst the former is concerned with what motivates cognitive inquiries, the latter alone is strictly speaking cognitive. Yet both are necessary to secure the pragmatic dimension of Kant's account, for the idea of making our cognition more efficient is meaningless if we have no control over the the functioning of our cognitive powers.

Yet although we lack direct control over cognition and its a priori laws, we have indirect control over it through our epistemic principles. This control occurs at the level of the maxims of judgment; that is to say, the rules that are necessary to direct thought in the pursuit of knowledge: 'the issue here is not the faculty of cognition, but the *way of thinking* needed to make a purposive use of it' (KU 5:295, original emphasis). Kant calls it the *sensus communis*, which consists in three 'maxims of common understanding' that spell out universal rules that guide knowledge acquisition in order to avoid 'error in general' (VL-*Jäsche* 9:57).[23] Whilst it is unnecessary to go into the details of these maxims here, what is crucial for my present purpose is that they are second-order epistemic principles whose role is to guide belief-acquisition and cognitive procedures more generally – what Kant calls 'the principles of thinking' (VA-*Busolt* 25:1480).[24] Crucially, all our cognitive improvement requires is the ability to choose our way of thinking, as spelt out by the maxim that commands free autonomous thought: 'The maxim of thinking for oneself can be called the *enlightened mode of thought*' – 'it is only using your own reason as the supreme touchstone of truth' (VL-*Jäsche* 9:57, original emphasis; VA-*Busolt* 25:1481). Thereby we are able to guide the operations of our cognitive powers, which is sufficient to secure the possibility of the pragmatic dimension of the anthropology of cognition. Whether we acquire beliefs according to principles at all, just as which principles we choose to adopt, is under our voluntary control. Of course,

[23] These maxims are: '1. Thinking for oneself. 2. Thinking in the place of another. 3. Always thinking in agreement with oneself' (VA-*Busolt* 25:1480). For other formulations of these maxims, see KU 5:294–5; and A 7:228. For a thorough discussion of the content of these maxims, see McBay Merritt (2011), section 2; Wood (2002), 103; and O'Neill (1989), Chapters 1–2.

[24] In fact, it is the aim of university education to instil students with the correct epistemic principles: 'instruction in universities is properly this, to cultivate the capacity of reason, and to get [students] into the habit of the method of ratiocinating, and to establish the appropriate maxims of reason' (VA-*Friedländer* 25:547).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139176170.007

if we fail to regulate, control or direct our cognitive practices according to the right epistemic principles, our mind stops being its own guide and it produces unwarranted judgments. By contrast, directing our cognitive powers according to rules spelt out by reason is the only means of getting closer to our cognitive perfection:

> The greatest perfection of the powers of the mind is based on our subordinating them to our power of choice, and the more they are subjugated to the free power of choice, all the greater perfection of the powers of the mind do we possess. (VA-*Friedländer* 25:488)[25]

4. Conclusion

This chapter set out to show that there is a crucial anthropological dimension to Kant's account of cognition that has been unacknowledged until now. It consists in the examination of our natural cognitive capacities with the pragmatic purpose of enabling us to become better, more efficient knowers in order to fulfil our cognitive vocation. Therefore, far from portraying human beings as disembodied pure minds, Kant's account of cognition takes into account their empirical, contingent and messy features. These features, I have argued, comprise the subjective dimension of cognition that results from our nature as embodied beings whose cognition takes place in the natural world.[26]

The fundamental implication of my claim for our overall understanding of Kant's account of cognition is that it consists of three parts that are equally essential. First, it spells out the a priori forms of cognition that are valid for all *rational* cognizers (e.g. the fact that reason naturally enters a dialectic). Second, it investigates the a priori forms of cognition that are valid for rational *human* cognizers (e.g. the fact that we do not have an intuitive understanding or that we have a spatio-temporal form of intuition). And third, it examines the empirical conditions that are valid for *embodied* rational human cognizers (e.g. the fact that we have a particular temperament, personal history or set of relationships).[27] In this sense,

[25] See also 'the greatest perfection of man is that of being able to act according to his power of choice, to direct his cognition to an object and again turn away from it. This is also the first condition of all rules and precepts that I should uphold and practise; for if this is missing, I am also not able to direct myself according to rules' (VA-*Mrongovius* 25:1231).

[26] Contrast with 'in the veins of the knowing subject, such as . . . Kant [has] construed him, flows not real blood but rather the thinned fluid of reason as pure thought activity' (Dilthey (1922), viii).

[27] Note that the function of anthropology in Kant's account of cognition is analogous to that of moral anthropology in his ethics. For as I have argued elsewhere, Kant's ethics can be divided along the following lines. First, the project that produces an a priori system of duties for rational

Kant's familiar transcendental account, which expounds the a priori rules of cognition for human *cognizers*, is supplemented by a pragmatic part that expounds the empirical dimension of cognition for *human* cognizers. Whilst the former refers to our transcendental, objective cognitive condition (e.g. we have a discursive understanding, a spatio-temporal form of intuition, etc.), the latter refers to our empirical, subjective cognitive condition (e.g. we have emotions, temperaments, histories and cultures, sets of relationships, etc.).[28] By spelling out the conditions of possibility, function and content of Kant's anthropological account of cognition, I have tried to show that because of our cognitive nature as embodied human beings, we need not only a critique of pure reason, but also an anthropology of empirical reason: a pragmatic account of how we can, should and ought to cognize insofar as we are embodied human beings.

agents in general: by focusing on pure practical rationality alone, it is completely independent of any empirical knowledge of human nature (*Groundwork*, *Critique of Practical Reason*). Second, the project that generates an a priori system of the duties that are binding upon a particular type of agent, namely human agents: by presupposing certain empirical features of human nature and the human world more generally, it is not completely independent of our empirical knowledge of human nature (*Metaphysics of Morals*). And third, the project that examines the worldly helps and hindrances to human moral agency: it spells out the empirical helps and hindrances to moral agency (*Anthropology* and *Lectures on Anthropology*) – what Kant calls 'the subjective conditions in human nature' (MS 6:217). See Cohen (2009a), 89–90.

[28] As Arens has noted, whilst 'Kant's mind model from the *Critiques* was not intended to be pragmatic – it did not accommodate the variances arising from the contact of individual minds with unique historical environments', 'Kant's *Anthropology* added to this ahistorical model the additional dimension of affects, or personal habits of mind conditioned by personal and historical experience' (Arens (1990), 202–3).

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139176170.007