Kant's Anthropology as a Theory of Integration[1]

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Introduction

Although Kant did not have much original to say about the human *body*, he did have highly original and influential ideas about the nature of the human *species*. Before Kant, two divergent approaches to humankind had dominated the intellectual landscape. On the one hand, one would try to understand human nature by focusing on the immaterial soul, the latter taken to be that which is uniquely endowed with reason (an approach prominent in rational psychology as well as Leibniz-Wolffian substance metaphysics and theology), On the other hand, by contrast, one would try by focusing on the physiology of the human body and its unique features (as it is done in natural history and medicine). Kant rejects both. Direct knowledge of the soul is impossible, he maintains, on the grounds that it does not fulfill the transcendental conditions of knowledge that he has demonstrated to be the case in his critical philosophy; and merely observational knowledge of the physiology of the *homo sapiens*, as we call it today, is meaningless as long as it remains disconnected from the means and

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ends of our moral agency, that is, our *humanity*.[2] Our humanity, which is to say our capacity to set ends and act to pursue them, is one of the three predispositions that Kant identifies as constituting the human being, next to our mere inborn animality, which we share with animals, and the moral personality that we cultivate individually.[3] It is thus this property of humanity, i.e. moral, goal-oriented agency, that is alone common to all humans and that defines not only what is unique to humans.

This framework, however, puts Kant's conception of anthropology as the science of the human being in a bind: it is neither physiology nor ethics, but it still needs to regard human agency with an eye to our natural, 'given' nature and to our moral ends as that which determine what is to count as genuinely human or humane actions performed by us, as opposed to when we behave according to our merely animal needs and desires. However, before examining Kant's anthropology more closely, it is relevant to note that the conception of anthropology in the Enlightenment is notoriously ambiguous.[4] This also holds for Kant. While, for him, anthropology is clearly a worthy scientific enterprise in a wider sense (see Anth, AA 07: 120; see also V-PP/Powalski, AA 27: 121), it falls not within the range of a *formal* science, like physics (Anth, AA 07: 121). In a similar vein, neither is it 'proper' philosophy inasmuch as it entails observational knowledge and is not fully defined by a priori concepts. And whereas Kant's assessment of other sciences and disciplines is often brief and concise, his take on anthropology, its means, aims, and methods, is rather convoluted and unclear.[5] Consequently, there has been much debate about whether or not Kant's theory of human nature is philosophical, empirical, or a mixture of both, and, additionally, about how much of a

[2] Of course, Kant's take on the explanatory capacity of physiology is more complex than that, but we do not need to deal with these details for the purposes of the current paper. For more on the matter, see, for example, Kant's early letter to Markus Herz from 1773 (Br, AA 10: 145f.) and Sturm, 2008, 2009.

[3] Here, I will not discuss the details of particular predispositions beyond the three basic dispositions toward animality, humanity and personality. This has been done elsewhere and by others. See especially Wilson, 2006b, chap. 3, but also Allison, 2002; Horn, 2011; Kleingeld, 1995; Louden, 2011; Wehofsits, 2016.

[4] For he multiple dimensions of anthropology around the turn of the 18th century, see Linden, 1976.

[5] On the apparently disorganized character of Kant's anthropology, cf., e.g., Kim, 1994, p. 13f. and 148.

role his theory of freedom plays in it.[6] It perhaps comes at no surprise that some philosophers, as Schleiermacher had already put it in his 1799 review of Kant's book, find the *Anthropology* to be nothing more than a "collection of trivialities"[7] – in short, a series of seemingly random observations stitched together without any proper systematic structure so that they have no philosophical significance whatsoever. Nevertheless, since such an assessment puts Kant's anthropology at odds with the strong emphasis that he usually placed on systematicity, it might be wise to be avoid being to rash in passing judgment on the work.

Thus, the question arises: What kind of knowledge does Kant's anthropology produce? This question, prominently raised by Foucault (Foucault, 2008), is of importance for understanding Kant's broader systematic philosophy, since it also concerns the role anthropology plays within it. The literature offers us an unusually broad spectrum of answers to this question, ranging from "it neither belongs to philosophy in a strict sense, nor is it articulated as a system based upon an idea of reason" (Brandt, 2003, p. 85) to it is "philosophy in the cosmopolitan sense and according to the world concept [*Weltbegriff*] is only made possible by anthropology" (Louden, 2021). Clarifying the type and function of anthropological knowledge will help us gain a better understanding of anthropology and its relation to 'armchair' philosophy done a priori. Only then may we find the resources necessary to counter Schleiermacher's accusation.

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[6] Some (such as Brandt, 1994, Wilson, 2014) have argued that Kant's anthropology is dominated by an empirical approach, while others (e.g. Funke, 1975, Cohen, 2009) argue in favor of a non-empirical interpretation since the *Anthropology* has to entail a normative theory of freedom. The other question, namely how the anthropological project relates to the rest of Kant's philosophy, is even more debated. One interpretation proposed by Patrick Frierson sees a rather *academic* project weighed down by the sheer amount of meaningless and unorganized tidbits of knowledge about the human being, tidbits added for the sole purpose of attracting popular attention, but the core of which is essentially a theory of human freedom (see Frierson, 2010). By contrast, Reinhard Brandt repeatedly insists that pragmatic anthropology is not philosophy at all (Brandt, 1994; Brandt and Stark, 1997), and John Zammito similarly suggests that it has little to do with Kant's critical philosophy (Zammito, 2002). Astrid Wagner suggests that the gap between the *Critiques* and the anthropological project can be bridged by a theory of freedom and aesthetics (Wagner, 2012). And according to the interpretation developed by Günter Zöller, the anthropological project is designed to supplement the a priori principles of Kant's critical philosophy (Zöller, 2011), all the while also emphasizing the primacy of understanding the principles of freedom over the appearance of freedom (Zöller, forthcoming). Robert Louden even goes so far as to argue that it provides the grounding for Kant's philosophy (see Louden, forthcoming). For a useful perspective on this debate, see Wilson, 2006a, p. 43 ff.

[7] Cf. Schleiermacher, 1998, p. 16.

To this end, I will propose a reading of Kant's anthropological project that emphasizes the role of teleological judgments and explanations plays within it. First, I will take a look at a certain type of teleological knowledge that Kant calls 'prudence' and that consists in finding the appropriate means for an end. Second, I will use this to flesh out my interpretation of Kant's anthropology as a theory of integration, i.e. as a meta-discipline that strives to unite several distinct disciplines by means of teleological judgments. Third, I will then reconsider what prudence means within this broader, integrative context and, as a consequence, how Kant systematically reframes anthropological prudence within a broader systematic context and in opposition to mere observational physiological knowledge.

Pragmatic knowledge and prudence

As many researchers have noted,[8] teleological judgment is the form of the argument Kant employs in the *Anthropology*. It allows the anthropological observer to understand the ways in which our various capabilities and faculties may be used to fulfill their purpose, and, consequently, the role they might play in our vocation. I will get back to this later in more detail, so now a brief overview needs to be enough. When Kant famously defines the object of pragmatic anthropology as what the human being "as a free-acting being makes of himself, or can and should make of himself" (Anth, AA 07: 119), it is clear that he is attempting to connect two different approaches to human nature with each other. The first one, what human beings *can* make of themselves, deals with the capabilities, faculties, and internal germs and predispositions, just as well as their internal and external limitations. This includes two different aspects of our 'given' nature: our first, biological nature, and our second, culturally acquired nature. In this context, the topic is the nature and scope of our capacities and faculties. The second approach, what human beings *should* make of themselves, deals with the application of ethical considerations to this development and unfolding of our potential, thereby dealing with human nature from the vantage point of freedom. Here, the *appropriate* use of faculties is examined. This introduces normativity which comes two-fold: Kant

[8] See Cohen, 2009; Frierson, 2010; Louden, 2002; Wilson, 2006b, for example.

considers natural purposes as well as intentional purposes which ideally should align.

However, human capabilities that can and should be developed come in many different shapes and forms, they may be bodily as well as mental. In contrast to mere physical processes that can be easily explained by the reductive principles of mechanism, the workings of the human mind, the purposes of the human body, and the structures of human behavior cannot be reduced to a few quantifiable factors. They are inherently muddled, multi-layered and complex – they are even 'open' to a great variety of uses (see Kant's discussion of the nature of the human hand in Anth, AA 07: 323, for example). Owing to this fact, we cannot deduce teleological knowledge from superior principles or by reducing it to quantifiable factors, but we can only obtain it through experience. Let's look at this more closely, first at intentionally pursued purposes and then at natural purposes.

Kant often differentiates "knowledge of the world" [*die Welt kennen*] from knowledge that allows us to "have a world" [*die Welt haben*]: "The first only understands the play [*Spiel*], of which it has been a spectator, but the other has participated in it" (Anth, AA 07: 120; see also V-Anth/Collins, AA 25: 9; V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 854f.). The latter type of knowledge is the type developed by anthropology. Therefore, knowledge of the nature of human beings has a distinct place and function within the broader system of our (possible) knowledge as comprising not merely observational or theoretical knowledge, but rather also participative, namely, gained by participation and aimed at facilitating participation. This latter is what Kant calls 'pragmatic' knowledge, i.e., knowledge directed at purposeful implementation.[9] Pragmatic anthropology can thus relates itself to our actual motivations and incentives and our means to pursue them, which means that it also deals with the respective imperatives of skill that allow us to allocate a

[9] Thomas Sturm suggests that the mid-century conception of pragmatic *history* might have had some influence on Kant's concept of pragmatic anthropology (see Sturm, 2008). However, this should not be misunderstood as an application of transcendental philosophy, which is, by its own definition as a *meta*-theory of knowledge, not something that can be just applied to any situation directly, at least not in the same way as 'merely' theoretical knowledge. As Günter Zöller cautions: "The dimension of application so stressed by the anthropological apologists of Kant risks reducing Kant's non-empirical double theory of nature and freedom ('pure philosophy') to mere preliminaries for an empirically enriched account of situated and socialized subjectivity. In the process, the practical tends to collapse into the pragmatic and the categorical into the conditional." (Zöller, forthcoming.)

spectrum of certain means *appropriately* to our ends and aims when it comes to human interactions (cf. GMS, AA 04: 415; see also V-Met/Mrong, AA 29: 766). This difference in ends and ways of possible implementations is used again and again by Kant to differentiate between specific types of knowledge. Take for example, the following passage:

> Knowledge of the human being is twofold. Speculative knowledge of the human being makes us skilled and is treated in psychology and physiology, but practical knowledge of the human being makes us prudent; it is a knowledge of the art of how one human being has influence on another and can lead him according to his purpose. (V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 857)

Anthropology is, therefore, not a formal science, but it is also not a mere heuristic either. As it is put bluntly in the *Anthropology Friedländer*: "To observe human beings and their conduct, to bring their phenomena under rules, is the purpose of anthropology" (V-Anth/Fried, AA 25: 472). Such rules need to be chosen and employed in accordance to the respective situation and they can then be used for explanation and prediction, which can in turn be used for manipulation. This should not be understood as if Kant wants the readers to become 'puppet masters' of their fellow neighbors, but rather simply to be able to successfully navigate the social world. (I will discuss a few examples later.)

This approach focused on interaction and applicability goes along with a teleological framing of the knowledge of our species, which is conceived not so much in terms of ethics, psychology, nor physiology, as it is in terms of vocation [*Bestimmung*]. The term 'vocation' denotes both the way we are, as embodied beings, internally directed towards an end, namely the full realization of our humanity, and the end toward which we are directed by nature / God (which Kant often uses as synonyms). The precise notion of the vocation of humankind is notoriously unclear. Occasionally, Kant suggests that it will be the cosmopolitan society of all of humankind, or the religious community under God. However, for the purpose of this paper, a detailed discussion of this notion within the context of the broader work of Kant can be avoided. Here, it suffices to say that the vocation of humankind is to fully develop humanity, i.e. our capability to act freely. More precisely, in the *Anthropology* the vocation of humankind consists in three tasks: within a society, human beings should *cultivate* themselves, i.e., to develop their talents; *civilize* themselves, i.e.,

develop their social predispositions and, in particular, the habit of acting in favor of the greater good; and *moralize* themselves, i.e., subject themselves fully under the moral law (Anth, AA 07: 324f.).[10] These may not be the conscious goals of human agents, but these are the purposes for which nature/ God has given us our human predispositions – and we can understand our given nature from the vantage point of judging it in its adequacy to its tasks.

These tasks unfold those inborn 'germs and predispositions' of ours that are uniquely connected to our humanity, thereby contributing to the self-constitution of our humanity.[11] As such, this permits us to bring forth our common humanity within our individual, moral personalities. The teleology embedded in our species thus provides us with functional dispositions and an overall functional arrangement of our animal and human features. These, in turn, provide a standard for the measure and evaluation of our conscious use of these dispositions and features and thus help us understand how our individual purposes can be aligned with the purposes of our 'given' nature and the overall purpose of our species. Ideally, our natural purposes would match our natural inclinations that are aimed at providing happiness. Understanding such a teleological system of purposes and ends constitutes a system or 'doctrine' of prudence (KrV, A 800/B 828). Such a doctrine of prudence cannot be a proper ethical guide to make moral decisions, as its laws build on contingencies, especially the contingent facts of human nature. However, it allows us to understand how our motivational inclinations fit together into a pragmatic system that is united under the idea of happiness. From an ethical point of view, we should follow our duties and not strive for happiness, since the latter would not be fully rationally defensible; but from an anthropological point of view, our observed inclinations can be made sense of as leading us to happiness.[12] The means that we use for our individual purposes may be determined by particular circumstances, and thus anthropology may never come to a conclusion in its task to understand the variety of

[10] For a more detailed take on Kant's distinction between culture, civilization and morality against the backdrop of the science of Kant's age, cf. Wilson, 2014.

[11] For the biological 'grounding' of the self-realization of humanity, see, for example, Cohen, 2006; Kleingeld, 1995; Louden, 2012; Mensch, 2013.

[12] If duties would conflict with happiness, we would still be obliged to follow our duties at the expense of our happiness. But that Kant seems to assume that this would not be the case. – While happiness as the highest motivational end plays a significant role in Kant's ethical theory, I will have to ignore it here for sake of brevity and consistency.

culturally determined self-realization and self-expression; as long as the human being is a 'crooked timber', as Kant famously calls us in the *Idea for a Universal History* (8:23), there will always be room for a better understanding of ourselves for the sake of moral self-improvement and thus a genuine interest in others and ourselves.

The knowledge thus gained in anthropology as envisaged by Kant is not a technical, mechanical *skill*, but rather *prudence* to the extent that we are able to develop ourselves better and exert better judgment in a greater variety of situations, better in the sense of more aligned with our very vocation. While ethics provides us with criteria for evaluating the ends that we should pursue, prudence offers us a perspective on the necessity and adequateness of various real-life means to be used in pursuing said ends. As Kant states the matter in the *Groundwork*, one such imperative of prudence is: "who wills the end also wills (necessarily in conformity with reason) the sole means to it that are within his control" (GMS, AA 04: 417). Consequently, ethics requires prudence for the sake of its applicability. And since we are, by virtue of Kant's so-called 'formula of humanity,' commanded to act for the sake of humanity in our person and in all other persons, we also need to further those means that bring forth our humanity and that of other persons.

However, such a broad ethical take is of little use here. We usually do not follow reason and our duties to the full extent of our rational capabilities. We thus have to assume a different perspective on ethics capable of accounting for the improvement of our behavior and the principles of our agency. What is instead needed is a science of empirically grounded rules in accordance to with normative principles that can help us *orient* ourselves in the social world by means of *prudence*: "if we wish to take a step into the world, we must learn how we are to become prudent" (V-Anth/Mensch, AA 25: 855). Prudence goes along with orienting ourselves in the social world since it allows us to connect our subjective motivations and needs with objective facts in an efficient and purposeful way. In doing so, prudence takes our empirical desires and other people's abilities into account because it sees us as the imperfect beings that we are (in contrast to Kantian ethics, which conceives us as mere rational subjects). Further, we are prudent when we are able to use this knowledge of other people for our satisfaction (see GMS, AA 04: 415-6; cf. KrV, A 800/B 828). For this, we must not only judge their contingent properties and the possibility to use them as means; we must also prioritize some, thereby introducing

some kind of *instrumental* or *technical* hierarchies that will ultimately result into a fully fledged doctrine or system. Prudence thus needs to subject instrumental or technical reason under itself. This is the kind of judgment that only anthropology can provide – a coordinated system of means and ends for the sake of our orientation in the social world.

Prudential rules have, by themselves, no decisive normative force for our actions and our ethical deliberations, since proper normativity can only be conveyed by unconditioned ends – everything else is conditioned technical normativity that still has to be subjected under unconditioned ethical normativity. Looking at the diverse textual evidence regarding Kant's use of the term 'prudence', we see that Kant only occasionally distinguishes between 'wisdom' and 'prudence.' This can make some cross-reading confusing. In some passages, Kant indicates that wisdom is not a typical knowledge of some fact, but rather a kind of knowledge that situates said knowledge within a broader context of purposeful application and the satisfaction of human desires. He distinguishes between *skill* that consists in the nexus of knowledge and ability; *prudence*, the application of using one's skill for one's own benefit; and *wisdom*, which defines the final purpose of all prudence. Wisdom lays bare the ends *of our human nature* and the way all other teleological judgments relate to it (e.g. Refl 1508, AA 15: 820). Thus, wisdom and prudence can occasionally conflict with each other: Using prudentially exerted judgments, we acquire the means of manipulating others, namely money, authority, and honor (Anth, AA 07: 241). But since neither relates to our final motivational end of happiness and our moral end of humanity, they cannot be reasonably justified and are therefore externally posited ends that we have not approved by our autonomy; by means of wisdom, henceforth, we disdain both in favor of greater autonomy, as this is where the proper value and dignity of humanity lies (see below, chap. 3.1 and chap. 3.2).[13] Prudence should lead to wisdom by means of evaluating our prudential knowledge from an ethical perspective.

When viewed through the lens of prudence, the human will is conceived of as if it were produced naturally rather than by free decision or ethical deliberation. That being said, this does not negate the teleological nature of the will; instead, it allows us to consider ourselves as *not* fully subjecting ourselves to the moral law, taking ourselves as

[13] For an analysis of Kant's concept of wisdom, see Wilson, 2006b, p. 83 ff.

beings that are occasionally driven by irrational impulses and desires. The idealistic view of pure subjects that is developed in the three *Critiques* is thus supplemented by expanding our *ethical* self-understanding in terms of humanity into the realm of experience. As Steven Palmquist puts it:

> To be prudent is to consider how one's will (i.e., one's free volition) can be used to satisfy the natural *requirements* associated with one's embodiment (i.e., one's natural inclinations), yet without contravening the moral law. As such, prudence holds the status of being a 'subjectively *necessary* purpose'. (Palmquist, 2015, p. 62, emphasis added)

In other words, prudence is necessary *for us* as embodied beings to the extent that we need to navigate our impulses and immoral incentives, as well as the messiness and chaos of the interpersonal world. In this regard, anthropology can help us draw the situationally appropriate consequences of our moral judgment. By way of illustration, take the following case: lying to protect a friend from a murderer is wrong, and murdering an innocent person is *equally* wrong, due to the fact that Kant's ethics allows for no differentiation of degrees of evil or wrongful actions, only binary judgments. Both the actions of lying to protect a friend and murdering an innocent person are unjustifiable, irrational, and morally wrong. However, they are both products of very different characters, i.e., established or 'crystallized' patterns of behavior. It is on the strength of such considerations that I am entitled to claim that different characters warrant me interacting with them differently and they entice me to have different expectations of their future behavior – characters being indicative of the ends a person has adopted (see Anth, AA 07: 321). When we are thinking about how our society should look, we have to consider which types of character will blossom and which will wither in our current or any future society. Understanding my reactions and the way my agency will elicit certain responses is therefore not a mere matter of *technical* reasoning in the relevant circumstances. Having a broad and general grasp of such a connection between ethics, inborn properties, feelings, moral self-constitution, and character formation is crucial knowledge for a wide array of other topics and themes, from law-making and politics to pedagogy and child-rearing, from economic thinking to matters of war and peace. Here, the pragmatic question of the application and applicability of ethical norms comes into focus. To quote Kant:

> How should one behave, for example, toward human beings who are in a state of moral purity or depravity? toward the cultivated or the crude? toward men of learning or the ignorant, […] and so forth? These questions do not yield so many different kinds of ethical obligation (for there is only one, that of virtue as such), but only so many different ways of applying it (corollaries). Hence they cannot be presented as sections of ethics and members of the division of a system (which must proceed a priori from a rational concept), but can only be appended to the system. Yet even this application belongs to the complete presentation of the system. (MS, AA 06: 486f.; cf. GMS, AA 04: 412)

Anthropology is there to help us applying our ethical judgment of what is right and wrong to our perceptions of the actions of *other* people. This is one of the ways anthropology is supposed to complement ethics. Expressed in another fashion, any conception of what *ought* to be done needs to be complemented by what *can* be done (cf. V-Mo/Collins, AA 27: 244; V-Mo/Mrong, AA 27: 1398; see Louden, 2002, p. 8). But this should not be confused with technical knowledge, which consists in a formulaic sequence of conditionals that is relevant to us only insofar as it is relevant to the pursuit of our ends. Pragmatic anthropological knowledge should rather be understood as a set of guidelines for understanding the reasons behind human actions: humans are motivated by general human drives and desires, by particular societal norms, and by individual experiences. Anticipating these motivational structures, such as those of reward and punishment, of incentives and social inhibitors, of psychological forces and legal constrictions, etc., allows us to better guide other people for our own benefit. In this manner, understanding human beings requires us to apply different *types* of knowledge – including but not limited to technical, natural, psychological, ethical – to our observations.

It is precisely due to this requirement of appealing to a plurality of types of knowledge that the following criticism of Kant's anthropology has become so mainstream ever since Schleiermacher's fateful review: it is nothing more than a mixed bag of very different things lacking a common thread. However, in what remains I will argue that what is often seen as a weakness of Kant's anthropology is, in fact, its strength: if we read it with teleological judgments in mind, this heterogeneity can be turned into a unity by being integrated into a more comprehensive whole.

To accomplish this, I will argue that Kant here provides a 'theory of integration' by means of which different fields of knowledge of human nature (and their relevant disciplines) can be put in relation to

each other and provided with some unifying principles – a type of *meta-perspective* on different disciplines, comparable to the role evolutionary theory plays in relation to the different disciplines of biology or the life sciences. By adopting such a meta-perspective, my argument goes on to contend that while we cannot as such *explain* human agency, explanation for Kant meaning a deduction from superior principles, we are nonetheless capable of providing a standard for evaluating an *appropriate* and *successful* use of our human faculties. This is what I will call 'making sense' of human nature. Besides being an applied science, Kant's anthropology *also* works as a *theory of integration* that relates different other fields of inquiry to each other. While this may not have been Kant's explicit intention, adopting such a perspective does help us develop a reading that turns the aforementioned weakness into strength.

Kant's anthropology as a theory of integration

What is a theory of integration? Let me illustrate this by means of an example. The notion of a theory of integration is occasionally used to describe the structure of Darwin's evolutionary theory (for instance, in Lefèvre, 2008). Lefèvre argues that Darwin's account of evolution is distinguished from other, earlier theories, such as Lamarck's, because Darwin not only provides a theory of how species change over time, but also a framework for integrating different biological ideas and approaches into a more comprehensive framework that itself produces an integral whole. Before Darwin, what is nowadays called 'biology' or 'life sciences' consisted of a large variety of separate fields of research including anatomy, biochemistry, early cellular biology, ethology, physiology, physical geography, pre-Darwinian theories of evolution, as well as theories of inheritance, phylogenesis, ontogenesis, and morphology. As a result, Darwin's theory of evolution, especially in its later integration of Mendelian theories of inheritance, *not only* contributed to a specific discipline, namely the science of the evolution of species, but it *also* provided an integrative meta-theoretical framework whereby the discoveries and approaches of all of the disciplines mentioned above could be seen through the light of some core principles, such as mutation, inheritance, and natural selection. This enables us to 'cross-reference' the facts uncovered by different disciplines with each other and simultaneously to explain them through

the lens of the insights gained by other fields: thanks to Darwin, questions concerning morphology can be answered with respect to physical geography; anatomical differences can be explained by theories of inheritance as well as by a teleonomic explanation of certain successful strategies of behavior; and so on. Entire branches of biology, such as phylogeny (the study of the develop and diversification of a species of organisms, i.e., patterns of intergenerational changes and the relation of different species to common ancestors), rely on the principles of evolution as their mode of explanation(principles like mutation and natural selection); and the phylogenetic model of a common origin of different species can, in turn, be used to make sense of different, but similar morphological types in different species, their corresponding genetical markers, and relevant behavioral aspects—all this making it so that phylogeny, morphology, genetics, and ethology can 'cross-reference' each other within the framework supplied evolutionary theory.

The geneticist Theodosius Dobzhansky's famously put this integrative power of the theory of evolution into words in the title of his seminal paper "Nothing in Biology Makes Sense Except in the Light of Evolution" (Dobzhansky, 1973). The different biological disciplines – once again, anatomy, physical geography, genetics, etc. – provide some descriptive and taxonomical knowledge, but they fail to 'make sense' in and of themselves. This is because only evolution gives us the resources necessary for answering questions concerning the 'why?' (i.e. the functional 'what for?') of their subject matters in a meaningful way. Without the theory of evolution, biology is just "a pile of sundry facts, some of them interesting or curious but making no meaningful picture as a whole." (Dobzhansky, 1973, p. 129) This seems to be a widespread consensus of evolutionary theorists at the end of the 20th century. As Ernst Mayr puts it: "There is not a single Why? question in biology that can be answered adequately without a consideration of evolution." (Mayr, 2001, p. xiii) This is, ultimately, a rephrasing of Dobzhanski's famous statement – 'making sense' means answering 'why?'-questions in an adequate, i.e., empirically testable way by considering an overarching framework of integrative principles. For example, physiology and physical geography have discovered and classified certain structural differences in appearance and behavior. Take that fact that certain birds with certain beaks eat certain nuts. It is only with the rise of evolutionary theory that one could explain *why* said beaks are

formed *for* the task of breaking open these specific nuts and how such a trait, derived from a predecessor species, may have changed over time to be *better* at this task.[14]

Keeping the foregoing in mind, I now wish to propose a reading of Kant's anthropology in analogy to the role of evolutionary theory in biology. In a structurally parallel manner, Kant, too, is trying to 'make sense' of human nature, the basic philosophical drive behind this approach being that, without teleological and normative assessments, anthropology would equally remain a mere observation-based theory (what Kant derogatively calls a '*Beobachtungslehre*', see Kant's 1773 Letter to Markus Herz, Br, AA 10: 146). Similarly, different observations of human behavior and our faculties provide descriptive knowledge or may even be explained by causal influences (as Kant does in the *Physical Geography*), but these observations fail, in and of themselves, to explain the 'why?' and 'what for?' of both our behavior and underlying faculties. Without a decisive method of understanding by means of purposiveness, the biological science of Kant's day would remain a mere project of description and classification that is neither useful nor does it allow for a proper, deeper understanding of the human being. Such a project is confined to cataloguing observations.

There are good reasons for arguing that Kant's project of anthropology is a theory of integration. It has a double function with respect to other disciplines, just like the Darwinian theory of evolution has with respect to other biological disciplines. On the one hand, anthropology now joins the ranks of other disciplines 'as an equal', disciplines such as ethnology, gender studies, history, literary studies, physical geography, psychology, sociology, political theory, etc. (or, as we call them nowadays, simply the 'humanities', with the addition of certain biological approaches that may pertain to the aforementioned disciplines). On the other hand, it also provides a unifying theoretical

[14] To be clear, a purpose (e.g., the purpose of a beak being to break open certain kinds of nuts) may be said to define the phenotype and the corresponding genetics of an organism, but this cannot be taken in the sense of a backwards-directed causality or in the sense of some immaterial purpose that somehow 'caused' material changes. In evolution, explanations rely on teleonomy, which means things are treated *as if* they have an inborn teleology but no claim is made that there are, in fact, proper final causes in them, inasmuch as the underlying physical process is nothing but 'blind' mechanism; the idea being that, given a sufficient amount of time, the principles of mutation and selection of the 'fittest' usually result in material changes that can be plausibly conceived of as a process of an optimization or adaptation of a species of organism to its respective environment. In short, evolution allows us to make teleological explanations without assuming that organisms are, in fact, governed by an inherent purpose. For a useful discussion, see Dennett, 1996.

framework that consists of certain theoretical notions in virtue of which one can relate the findings of different disciplines to each other. Within the *Anthropology*, we can identify several of these core principles, which are mostly discussed in other writings and which form the *philosophical* backbone of an otherwise empirical science:

- the unity of knowledge and consciousness by means of the representation of the 'I';
- the vocation of humanity;
- the separation of the three faculties;
- the idea of germs and predispositions with their respective natural purposes;
- and the formation of character, i.e., a structurally emergent disposition toward certain types of agency, depending on external and internal incentives and obstacles under which germs and predispositions are enacted upon and thereby unfold.

The unity of consciousness provides the ultimate principle and epistemic 'anchor' for anthropology since it provides the decisive criterion for distinguishing between humans and animals, as well as being that which allows us to develop self-understanding and self-control in the first place. The vocation of humanity provides us with natural ends and the certainty that all aspects of our given nature have a purpose by appeal to which we can judge the adequacy of the use of our own dispositions. Our vocation also provides a generally useful way of arranging our cognitive faculties and our bodily predispositions that can be used for of the sake of self-cultivation and self-discipline.

By dint of such a framework, the knowledge developed in the other disciplines that deal with the human being can be by explained with regard to its purposiveness or by teleological judgment, at least insofar as we are concerned not so much with the products of the human spirit's endeavor, but rather human spirit itself. With anthropology, we are able to 'cross-reference' the facts uncovered by different disciplines and explain them through the lens of the insights of other fields. This is done by means of the teleological judgment of free agents, which, in contrast to mechanical explanations, does not care so much about the heterogeneity of the different fields in which cause and effect or means and ends are understood. For example, money does not mechanically 'produce' happiness and to assume that it does can easily lead into a

category mistake; however, it is nonetheless perfectly rational to say that I am striving to earn more money as a means to make myself happier.

As a possible objection, one difficulty for reading Kant's anthropology as a theory of integration might stand out immediately: few of the disciplines just mentioned existed as such in Kant's time. But this can be taken to be taken as one of the primary reasons why the *Anthropology* seems to be such a heterogeneous mess of disjointed observations: it provides unity to fields that were, at Kant's time, even less developed than biology was at the time of Darwin. Kant might not have done so intentionally, just like Darwin might not have intended to unify the different biological sub-fields. That being said, the lack of such an intent would not, in any way, diminish the meta-theoretical impact of their respective approaches.

As Alix Cohen has emphasized, one major methodological strategy employed in Kant's anthropology consists in using certain established patterns of agency that defeat the actual purpose of human nature to flesh out the *actual* purposeful uses that benefit our vocation.[15] As differences between these patterns are observable externally, the object of anthropology is, in principle, *other* people. This has a twofold implication: first, we need to adopt a second-person perspective on other people, and, second, we also need to observe people from different origins or in different social strata to get better insight into human nature in general. Researching the life and thought of a specific group, defined by its social standing and/or its location, will offer only a 'mesoscopic' picture of specific character traits – a study of a social milieu can be seen as a *case study* of humanity. Anthropology thus ties together ethics with biological considerations and social and political ideas, including ideas concerning pedagogy and history. But it is not only useful for identifying corollaries to the ethical system and applying them by giving or clarifying the material content of our volitions; its teleological structure also allows us to provide a unifying structure for different types of knowledge we can have of the human being.

Let's now discuss this approach more closely. For anthropology, our main motivation considered is asserting influence on other people for our own sake. This purpose of anthropological inquiry then ties together with our natural purposes, given to us by means of our

[15] See Cohen, 2009, p. 35ff.

vocation, as well as our normative constraints and duties, given to us by means of ethical reasoning. Our ethical norms and duties are derived from the unconditioned moral law, as a consequence of which they must also apply to anthropology as an enterprise of scientific self-interest, which is not unconditional; however, our ethical norms and duties have difficulty being applicable without the knowledge gained from anthropology. This is not a *circulus vitiosus*: unconditional ethical norms require anthropology only for the purpose of applicability, but not *per se*.

But this is not all. We can still distinguish different forms of teleological elements that are at play *within* human nature. This has been done by Holly Wilson, who has worked out the following four forms. (1) Nature as a whole is guided by a system of providence, in which each species has its place. (2) The germs and predispositions intrinsic to the human species are embedded in our nature, but they do not all develop fully and automatically, so that humans have to develop them purposefully. (3) Nature's plan for human beings is something that can only be fully developed in the species, since the individual will always fall short of it. (4) People cannot develop their capabilities by themselves, but need be sociable, while at the same time displaying unsocial or anti-social tendencies that are also part of our animal nature and, accordingly, need to be overcome (Wilson, 2006b, p. 38ff.).

Understanding these teleological forms not only allows us to *use* our faculties, predispositions, character traits, and occasionally even our moral shortcomings as a means for an end, it also allows us to put our biological nature and our mental capacities into relation with the societal environment in which they must be developed and exercised. With the notion of a unified and unifying purpose for all of humankind and our epistemic self-interest in understanding how other people can be manipulated, these teleological principles provide Kant with the general framework in which the adequacy and general purposiveness of certain aspects of the human life can be judged against other aspects. The teleonomical (i.e., pseudo-teleological) aspect of adaptation in the theory of evolution is here supplanted by the teleological aspect of the adequateness of predispositions, but besides that, both adaptation and the adequateness of our means (in terms of germs and predisposition) allow us to think of the general purposiveness of basically all our 'given' features and everything we do. For evolutionary theory, behavior, bodily features, diversity of phenotypes, etc., can be 'made

sense of' with regard to adaptation and the role it plays in survival and procreation; for anthropology, behavior, bodily features, mental capacities, diversity of characters, etc., can be 'made sense of' in regard to the role they can play in morality, self-realization, and self-cultivation.

One can use many different examples to spell out how this perspective of purposiveness and integrative explanation as a form of 'making sense of…' applies to the many tidbits of anthropological insight discussed by Kant. The discussion of two examples should suffice. The first example we shall look at is where Kant notes that the phenomenon of intoxication "deserve[s] special consideration in a pragmatic anthropology" (Anth, AA 07: 170):

> Partaking in intoxicating food and drink is a physical means to excite or soothe the power of imagination. Some of these, as poisons, weaken the power of life (certain mushrooms, wild rosemary, wild hogweed, the Chicha of the Peruvians, the Ava of the South Sea Indians, opium); others strengthen it or at least elevate its feeling (like fermented beverages, wine and beer, or the spirits extracted from them, such as brandy); but all of them are contrary to nature and artificial. […] However, all of these methods are supposed to serve the purpose of making the human being forget the burden that seems to lie, originally, in life generally. (Anth, AA 07: 169f.)

As we see, Kant starts out with biological knowledge: certain products have a certain intoxicating effect on the human mind. Moreover, it is clear that both knowledge of natural history is involved as well as of human ingenuity in producing, refining or concentrating a desired effect. Both are connected in anthropology to the extent that they can be used or avoided only by knowing their effect. Evidently, more research is needed as the list of substances given is far from complete; Kant merely strives to provide an angle under which both can be discussed. What he is interested in is evaluating the teleology involved in the reason behind intoxication. Speaking of drunkenness, he writes:

> The freedom from care that drunkenness produces, and along with it also no doubt the carelessness, is an illusory feeling of increased power of life: the drunken man no longer feels life's obstacles, with whose overcoming nature is incessantly connected (and in which health also consists); and he is happy in his weakness, since nature is actually striving in him to restore his life step by step, through the gradual increase of his powers. (Anth, AA 07: 170)

Here, natural purposes come into play: life consists in overcoming obstacles. The mere feeling of being able to overcome these obstacles with more ease is illusory, but it is a useful illusion, since it makes the drunkard happy. Thus, the preference for getting drunk may be nothing but a trick of nature, as Kant continues to sketch the different desirable effects that moderate consumption of alcohol can have: it may make people more brave and open up their hearts, which "is an instrumental vehicle of a moral quality, namely frankness" (Anth, AA 07: 171). In certain contexts, sobriety can be socially inappropriate and even prevent joyful social interaction, which in itself is a means for furthering our vocation. In short, anthropology can show us how bodily predispositions (in this case: the predisposition of becoming intoxicated in a certain way) can be used in a particular and appropriate social context (in joyful conversation) for a general moral purpose (frankness, i.e. honesty, which for Kant, is a duty). Here we also see what kind of 'manipulation' or influence is at stake here: the host is influencing the general atmosphere of the dinner party by serving an amount of alcohol that is *appropriate* for both the occasion and the guests.

Now for the second example. When Kant discusses pain, he insists that the feeling of pleasure is necessarily preceded by pain and that pain drives the activity that allows us to feel alive (Anth, AA 07: 230ff.). What he has in mind is an evaluative and motivational perspective according to which we do not only seek to avoid pain but also are able to understand an anthropological framework in which we can accept pain as a necessary evil, that is, as something that has a functional role to play in our lives and, in particular, in our pursuit of happiness and moral self-realization. In the ensuing discussion, Kant names out other, derivative motivations and inclinations that rely on this basic understanding of pain: gambling is addictive for the same reason that theatre plays are so enjoyable, namely, because of the intense interplay between fear and hope; work may be exhausting, but as such it allows us to enjoy the subsequent calm and relaxation (see Anth, AA 07: 232). Here, the prudential perspective adopted enables us to pass an appropriate judgment at the time of pain, something along the lines of: "This will end well, and then I will feel better and I will even *deserve* this feeling because I worked hard for it." Kant does not tell us to feel or think that way since that would be paternalizing; the student of world knowledge [*Weltkenntnis*] needs to come to this conclusion by themselves, which is where anthropology comes in.

Anthropology provides us with a perspective in which the interplay of a certain part of our given nature (our feelings and capabilities involved in feeling pain) and contingent cultural traditions (gambling, theatre, work) can be evaluated and discussed in terms of purposiveness and adequacy. When placed under the overarching end of the vocation of humankind, I can now *make sense* of biological and cultural factors that, taken on their own, seem to be only detrimental or negative for us, but taken from within a broader context can be understood as motivational or as providing criteria for the successful use of our faculties. In short, anthropology can show us how bodily predispositions (in this case: the sensation of pain and the feeling of pleasure that often follows it) can be used in a particular and appropriate social context (e.g. work or theatre) for a general moral purpose (motivation, self-discipline, and establishment of useful habits). Regarding the topic of 'manipulation': understanding that pleasure follows pain and that one can thus turn a painful experience around into one that is ultimately motivational or education or even pleasant, that is an insight that can be of use for theatre authors to write better plays or even for employers to help employees work through difficult and painful tasks.

In the two examples discussed above, a certain similarity to the theory of evolution is apparent. Darwin also strives to explain how certain bodily predispositions (e.g., certain stripes) can prove to be useful in a particular environment (e.g., the grasslands) for a general purpose (e.g., survival and procreation by means of mimicry or camouflage). In both Darwin and Kant, it is not only that explanations span different fields of knowledge, but we also find an unspoken assumption serving as a *guiding principle of inquiry*: we can explain, in general, *all* of our inborn features (bodily and cognitive) and their relation to the environment in this way. Accordingly, while we may not be able to do so now with the amount of knowledge currently available, there is little reason to assume that there are certain aspects of nature (or human nature, in case of Kant's anthropology) which we will never be able to understand in this way.

To be sure, it is not the *Anthropology as a book* that is synthesized into a cohesive, unified system by means of prudence, as the different parts and chapters cannot be *reduced* to one single principle. The three faculties are grounded in the principle of consciousness that allows us to understand human consciousness at least on a formal level, but they are not derived from it, so that a certain formal diversity will irreducibly remain. What I rather have tried to

argue is that using pragmatic (or prudential) anthropology, a rather heterogeneous corpus of knowledge can be seen as integrated into a whole through forming a system of prudential knowledge. According to Darwin, we can understand a great variety of phenomena (from genetics over physiology to ethology and physical geography) through the lens of the teleonomical purposiveness that is provided by natural selection and survival of the fittest; according to Kant, we can understand an even more comprehensive array of phenomena through pragmatic anthropology: from the nature of the senses to cultural variant behavior at dinner parties, from pain sensations to the educational nature of theater plays – such a variety of phenomena can be understood through the lenses of vocational directedness that provides us a unifying interpretative stance that cannot be found anywhere else, neither in physiology or medicine as the life sciences of the human body, nor in any single humanity.

It is in virtue of such a similar assumption that Kant can integrate different types of knowledge into a more comprehensive system: our understanding of inborn capacities is derivable from physiology and psychology, while our understanding of our social contexts can be derived from different sources, which we today would call history, literary studies, ethnology, psychology, gender studies, etc. Individual historical or literary figures can allow us to grasp the moral dimension of certain actions intuitively. Ethnology and gender studies can help us understand the different incentives that different cultures use to solicit certain types of behavior that are deemed appropriate, useful, or morally adequate for those respective peoples or genders and suppress others. Just as evolutionary theory assumes a general purposiveness that would, *ceteris paribus*, produce similar outcomes in similar circumstances, Kant's anthropology, too, assumes a general purposiveness that, *ceteris paribus*, produces similar outcomes in similar circumstances. While evolutionary theory would look for similar beaks for all types of birds that eat similar nuts, Kant's anthropology would look for similar characters, but also similar literature and societal institutions in similar societies or cultural contexts. When these similarities are not found, we are in both cases enticed and guided to look for contextual clues of significant differences that prevent the application of the *ceteris paribus*-clause. For example: genetic properties can be understood in their purposiveness in regard to physiology, physiology can be understood in its purposiveness in regard to its contribution to survival

and procreation in certain environments. Conversely, for Kant, the different aspects and properties of the way the faculties are realized in a human being can be understood in its purposiveness in regard to its successful application in appropriate social contexts, which then can be understood and evaluated (!) in their purposiveness in regard to the cultivation, civilization, and moralization of the human being.

'Making sense' of human nature

Let's get back to the notion of 'making sense' that I have borrowed from Dobzhanski's paper cited above. 'Making sense' means answering 'why?'-questions in an adequate, i.e., empirically testable way by considering an overarching framework of integrative principles. In this section, I will briefly discuss this approach with regard to the general principles that Kant develops for teleological explanations (as far as they are relevant here) and with regard to Kant's take on physiology as being meaningless in itself. On the basis of these two discussions, I will show that prudence, understood as a way of making sense of human nature and as the type of knowledge produced by anthropology, is a concept that possesses a much deeper significance for Kant's overall philosophy, and indeed is more firmly embedded therein, than most researchers have to date claimed.

As for the first point regarding the general principles of teleological explanations, teleological explanations are part of an overarching system. Kant assumes that all human knowledge can be understood as forming a single system, i.e., as an ordered whole in which every part of knowledge has its own role and function. For such a system to be possible, however, we need to additionally suppose that the entirety of knowledge is ordered, i.e., governed by rational principles, since without such a supposition knowledge would fall apart into an arrangement of heterogeneous, unrelated insights.[16] The way the different parts of our knowledge hang together can be understood through the teleological judgments by which we understand how certain

[16] While such a conception of knowledge might be attractive to some more postmodern-leaning philosophers, for Kant this would mean that objective knowledge would be impossible – and since we do in fact have objective knowledge, namely in the realm of mathematics, we already know that objective knowledge in general is possible and hence all knowledge must be understood in terms of systematicity.

aspects of our knowledge can be used in our practical agency. Everything is (or can become) a means for an end and is thereby related to something else from which it is (or can be) explained and/or justified. If our knowledge is to be an ordered whole, then everything must in this way lead up to a highest end, an end that, at the same time, serves as the ultimate goal of nature and as the ultimate goal of all our agency. Within the context of anthropology, the vocation of humankind provides us with an inborn understanding of humanity as the ultimate goal of our actions, which we here conceive as conjoined with our pursuit of happiness (a more detailed explanation of this conjuncture is contained in Kant's philosophy of religion, which falls out of the scope of the present essay). While Kant's critical philosophy provides us with principles for explaining the scope and limits of rationality, we cannot apply the same principles to the embodied human being without further qualifications, because our observation of enacted rationality does not match our normative expectations of how rationality could or should be enacted. In turn, while we can use causal-nomological explanations for natural events, human freedom must be conceived of as undetermined by these principles. Anthropology steps up to bridge this gap.

The contribution of the part to the whole is derived from the functional structure of the arrangement of parts and the role each part plays. Kant does not bother with the details, but subjugates it all under the transcendental notion of nature as a *system*:

> All of the stock formulae: nature takes the shortest route – she does nothing in vain – she makes no leaps in the manifold of forms (*continuum formarum*) – she is rich in species but sparing with genera, etc. – are nothing other than this very same transcendental expression of the power of judgment in establishing a principle for experience as a system and hence for its own needs. (EEKU, AA 20: 210)

In such a system of nature/experience, everything is ordered and nothing is made in vain, i.e., superfluous. We already find such a position anticipated in the early *The Only Possible Argument In Support of a Demonstration of God's Existence*, where Kant discusses the "complex harmony" of all natural beings, their "arrangement," "artificial order," and "usefulness." While Kant consistently acknowledges that active forces in nature follow general laws (e.g. in NTH, AA 01: 221), he also holds up an approach in which the production of forms, properties, and capacities is somehow ordered or at least orderly, such as the replacement of one maladapted species by the production of better ones (NTH, AA 01: 317; see Waldow, 2016).

While the grounding of these principles is very different in his early and later texts, the idea is the same: Kant sticks to the idea of a generally economical and functional arrangement of nature. He even calls it "the general law of nature" (V-Met/Dohna, AA 28: 688).

Within such a whole, we can 'make sense' of ourselves through prudence and this implies understanding our ends and by which means they can be achieved, how our capabilities are purposively realized, and how they relate to our final end. "[F]or the ends of nature one can assume as a principle that nature wants every creature to reach its destiny through the appropriate development of all predispositions of its nature, so that at least the species, if not every individual, fulfills nature's purpose." (Anth, AA 07: 329). Analogous to biology, which can 'make sense' of, say, physiology or ethology by asking for the evolutionary purpose of the physiological property or the behavioral trait under consideration, anthropology can 'make sense' of physiological properties, character traits, behavioral strategies, and the general 'life of the mind' of the human being by looking at the putative purpose of the respective faculty, how adequately it fulfills said purpose, and its (behavioral, emotional or sensual) manifestation. Nothing here is construed as meaningless, even apparently contingent properties like facial structures can be read as indicators of someone's character (Anth, AA 07: 295ff.). And vice versa, we understand the purposes of the faculties by considering their purposive uses and their impact on our lives.[17]

This requires, as Alix Cohen has argued, that we shift back and forth between an inquiry into the nature of our species and an inquiry into the intentions and motivations of the individual (see Cohen, 2009, 2017). It is necessary to study the species to gain insight into our general features and their purposes and we only then we can use this insight to make sense of our individual actions. An individual often does not display (enough) reason, morality, etc., but to the extent that she or he is member of the human species, we can ascribe such to them, at least in the sense of faculties showing a greater or lesser degree of development. But of course we cannot observe the species as such. That would constitute an a priori insight into human nature, something that Kant rejects. Instead, we have to make do with inferential conclusions

[17] Pace Herbert Paton, who has worried that Kant's ethics are based on teleological judgments like those used in the anthropology and the notion of a teleological vocation of humanity (see Paton, 1971, p. 17), the teleological judgment at stake contains only technical, not moral teleology.

based on a sufficiently broad amount of individuals, including people from all over the world. Kant suggests the following: "what meets the eye in individual subjects as confused and irregular yet in the whole species can be recognized as a steadily progressing though slow development of its original predispositions" (IaG, AA 08: 17). (The postulate of a general purposiveness in the world is justified through Kant's account of our faculty of judgment in the third *Critique,* a matter that must be bracketed here as well because it falls outside the scope of the essay.)

Now, for the second point regard the criticism of physiology mentioned above. As mentioned above, Kant argues that unengaged observation of natural phenomena and speculations concerning their causal arrangement fall short, since they have excluded the observer from it and their purposes. Only by means of understanding *our* purposes we can understand how natural phenomena can be used *for us*. These purposes are ultimately grounded in or going along with our vocation and that an exclusion of them from the science of human nature effectively takes what is *human* in our nature out of the picture. Kant thus concludes that all theoretical speculation about such a kind of physiological knowledge is a pure waste of time (Anth, AA 07: 119). Physiology construed as a dimension of natural history that tries to understand the human body is not *wrong*, but it does fail to *make sense* of anything, since it lacks the appropriate explanation of purposiveness that can only be arrived at from the vantage point of the human vocation. Physiology may provide explanations of purposiveness regarding our animal nature inasmuch as it can emphasize the role certain organic arrangements play in terms of survival and procreation, but that is, at best, only our animal vocation. It is only from within the framework of prudential understanding that can physiology 'make sense.' For that to happen, it requires a deep understanding of the above-mentioned theoretical principles of anthropology and how it itself is to be, with appeal to these, integrated with anthropology: the vocation of humanity, the unity of consciousness, the separation of our cognitive faculties, the concept of teleologically determined germs and predispositions, and an understanding that these germs and predispositions, if shaped by self-discipline and cultivation, can 'crystallize' to determine our behavior in a rigid way, thereby making them into a form of a second nature. None of these principles can be

provided by physiology itself, and they turn it into yet another means to an end.

Let me try to draw some conclusions here. From all this it should be clear that anthropology is a holistic enterprise. Everything in it being interconnected under a primary aim, it also needs to be *context-sensitive* to a certain degree. After all, its object of inquiry is not the individual human being, but rather the individual human being in its social context, particularly to the extent that it takes up certain social roles and conforms to social norms.[18] Beyond this, however, making sense of human nature means understanding the possible role that the features and properties involved in human agency can or should play within the greater whole of humankind. Human beings, just like nature, "must be considered *cosmologically*, namely, not with respect to the noteworthy details that their objects contain (physics and empirical psychology) but with respect to what we can note of the relation as a whole in which they stand and in which everyone takes his place" (VvRM, AA 02: 443).

This ties well in with the idea of a functionally and efficiently arranged whole as I sketched above. The germs and predispositions have a place and a role within the overarching system of nature, as well as within the whole that is an individual organism. In some texts, Kant suggests that germs and predispositions result from an original organization (ÜGTP, AA 08: 179; and KU, AA 05: 372ff.) – but he refrains from further speculations about what precisely the nature of such an original organization might be for it allows us to be reasonable and autonomous. Such an understanding of the organism as a system of purposefully arranged parts is also crucial in the *Groundwork*, where he states: "In the natural constitution of an organized being, that is, one constituted purposively for life, we assume as a principle that there will be found in it no instrument for some end other than what is also most appropriate to that end and best adapted to it." (GMS, AA 04: 395) Kant uses this as a starting-point to argue that reason has as its purpose not only technical use, but first of all *practical* use, i.e., in establishing

[18] To the best of my understanding, in evolutionary theory the inquiry into the individual loses its explanatory capacity because of the informational 'noise' generated by random mutations and equally random contextual factors. Only larger groups or groups composed of many generations can provide patterns that stand out from this noise.

ethical principles. Reason itself is here part of the functional organization of a living being.[19]

By trusting in the economy of nature in general, we come to understand that our nature is designed to "bring about the perfection of the human being through progressive culture, although with some sacrifice of his pleasures of life" (Anth, AA 07: 322). The dispositions of humankind are wisely arranged in such a way that they point in the same direction: towards self-cultivation of humanity. The system of pragmatic ends is mirrored in the economy of nature, or its teleological system, in which every being has its place; hence why Kant occasionally speaks of the wisdom of nature. It is precisely here that the core purpose of the *Anthropology* is formulated: understanding how all human features (such as capacities, embodied desires etc.) come together within a system of means and ends that is designed in such a way that we can use it to bring forth a fully developed (i.e., "perfected") humanity. This includes 'making sense' of negative behavior that goes against the purpose of any specific underlying disposition (e.g. Anth, AA 07: 272). Kant even submits that we can intuitively grasp how all our predispositions and the laws that govern their use fit together in a whole in the cognition of beautiful things: "Beautiful things indicate that human beings [… find the world to be a place] suited to them [*daß der Mensch in die Welt passe*] and that even their intuition of things agrees with the laws of their intuition" (Refl 1820a, AA 16: 127, translation follows Munzel, 1999, p. 306.).

These germs and predispositions have a functional role for the development of the individual, as well as for the species as a whole. Here, the is-ought-disjunction is effectively suspended and we find an embedded normativity in nature, the intrinsic economy of nature: a lion *can* and *should* eat gazelles simply because he *is* a lion because nature is functionally ordered for lions to eat gazelles and gazelles to be eaten by lions. In Kant, this idea is combined with more explicitly creationist vocabulary relating to the vocation [*Bestimmung*] of humankind, whereby certain permissions and obligations follow from the fact that

[19] Apparently, Kant's conception of such an arrangement shifts subtly from a rather rigid preformationism that aims at the conservation of the species and its most decisive traits to a more flexible theory of epigenesis, in which purposive predispositions form organic forces (see Sloan, 2002; cf. Zammito, 1992) But then again, such a precise understanding of how the details and the arrangement of the organic body is shaped is not necessary for philosophy and can be left up to biologists, just like we can understand that a hammer is functionally arranged for the purpose of hitting nails without needing to understand the precise composition of the metal involved.

we are human beings, beings given a distinct purpose, a purpose that it is up to us to realize. However, the purpose for humankind as a whole can conflict with individual ends and we are supposed to subsume our individual ends under the ends of our species.[20] It is Kant's claim that anthropology like the one he proposed should help us navigate this conflict.

[20] For a more nuanced take on the role of self-cultivation of humanity within our pursuit of our vocation, see Lyssy, 2018.

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Abstract: The *Anthropology* has been criticized for the heterogeneity of its content and its 'merely' empirical direction. In this presentation, I want to offer a reading that turns these two features into advantages and also helps us clarify the type of knowledge that anthropology provides. Apart from being an applied science with its unique object, methods, and principles of inquiry, Kant's *Anthropology* also relates different other fields of knowledge and inquiry to each other, i.e., integrates them into a unified whole. Read together with a few ideas from Kant's broader anthropological project, the *Anthropology* can thus be said not only to develop an empirical theory of human nature, but also to provide a meta-theoretical framework concerning the relations between different theoretical ideas of human nature. Teleological judgments and prudential knowledge play a crucial role in this framework, as they allow us to relate different empirical observations and subfields of inquiry to the same purposes. In this regard, Kant's anthropological project bears striking structural similarities to the Darwinian theory of evolution.

Keywords: Anthropology, Humankind, Humanity, Prudence, Knowledge, Theory of Integration.

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