



**Cosmopolitanism in Kant's *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*:
Regulative Ideas and Empirical Evidence**

*El cosmopolitismo en la Antropología en sentido pragmático de Kant:
ideas reguladoras y evidencia empírica*

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Abstract

With this paper I analyze Kant's account of the human vocation to cosmopolitanism discussed in the last section of the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (7:321-333) and show how Kant's notion of cosmopolitanism requires the cooperation of pure reason and pragmatic anthropology. My main thesis is that pure reason provides regulative ideas, thereby maintaining a foundational role, and pragmatic anthropology provides empirical evidence, thereby reinforcing the theoretical and practical status of reason's ideas. In developing my analysis, I argue that Kant reframes the question 'What is the human being?' in a non-essential way, foregrounds a moral practical concern, and assigns freedom an unprecedented role. Finally, I relate my analysis to two questions frequently discussed in Kant scholarship, namely the problem of whether the *Anthropology* has only a pragmatic or also a moral scope and the problem of the relation between the *Anthropology* and Kant's critical system.

Keywords

Cosmopolitanism, Pragmatic Anthropology, Pure Reason, Freedom

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Resumen

Con este artículo analizo la discusión de Kant sobre la destinación humana al cosmopolitismo en la última sección de la *Antropología en sentido pragmático* (7:321-333) y mostro cómo la noción de cosmopolitismo requiere la cooperación de la razón pura y de la antropología pragmática. La tesis principal es que la razón pura proporciona ideas reguladoras, manteniendo así una función fundacional, y la antropología pragmática aporta evidencia empírica, reforzando así el estatus teórico y práctico de las ideas de la razón. Al desarrollar mi análisis, sostengo que Kant replantea la pregunta "¿Qué es el ser humano?" de una manera no-esencial, pasa a primer plano una perspectiva moral y asigna a la libertad una función sin precedentes. Finalmente, relaciono mi análisis con dos cuestiones ampliamente discutidas por los investigadores Kantianos, a saber, el problema de si la *Antropología* tiene sólo un alcance pragmático o también moral y el problema de la relación entre la *Antropología* y el sistema crítico de Kant.

Palabras clave:

Cosmopolitismo, antropología pragmática, razón pura, libertad

Introduction

Kant scholarship on cosmopolitanism exhibits a curious peculiarity: the study of Kant's anthropology is commonly considered indispensable to the study of his cosmopolitanism, and yet his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*¹ is noticeably underexamined.² This is odd for at least two reasons. First, one could expect to gain a better insight into Kant's anthropology precisely by examining this 1798 compendium that Kant himself compiled and furnished with a *Preface* after having lectured on the subject twenty-four times.³ Second, the last section of the *Anthropology* is a dense discussion culminating in the claim that cosmopolitanism is the vocation of the human species. At the same time, two reasons could explain why the *Anthropology* has been neglected as a source worth examining vis-à-vis Kant's cosmopolitanism. From the political and legal point of view, Kant does not offer any detail on the formation, organization, and preservation of the cosmopolitan order, thus referring back the reader to his previous writings. From the point

¹ Henceforth I refer to the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* also as published *Anthropology*, to distinguish it from the student lecture notes, or as *Anthropology*, to distinguish it from Kant's anthropological thought in general.

² Three exceptions are Zöller (2011), Loudon (2011, pp. 78-90), and González, who shows how "the entire work is devoted to exploring the difficulties and promoting the conditions for a cosmopolitan citizenship" (González 2011, p. 79). I would like to thank my two blind reviewers for their helpful remarks and for drawing my attention to the monograph by Ana Marta González and the volume edited by Gualtiero Lorini and Robert B. Loudon.

³ On Kant's anthropology lectures in general and the origins of the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* in particular see Brandt (1999, pp. 7-48), Stark (Jacobs and Kain 2003, pp. 15-37), Loudon (2000, pp. 62-74), and Wilson (Lorini and Loudon 2018, pp. 11-28). For a detailed overview of Kant's lecturing schedule see the website *Kant in the Classroom. Materials to aid the study of Kant's lectures* (<https://users.manchester.edu/FacStaff/SSNaraqon/Kant/Home/index.htm>).

of view of philosophy of history, Kant seems at first glance to offer nothing more than a summary of his earlier accounts on the mechanics of human antagonism.

Nevertheless, there are strong reasons to include the examination of the *Anthropology* in the study of Kant's cosmopolitanism. One strong reason is to fill a gap in the relevant scholarship. One stronger reason is that examining Kant's account of cosmopolitanism in the *Anthropology* advances the debate on some crucial problems frequently discussed by Kant interpreters. The strongest reason, however, is that in the last section of the *Anthropology* under the heading *The character of the species* Kant assigns cosmopolitanism and freedom a more prominent role than in his other writings on cosmopolitanism.

With this paper I analyze the last section of the published *Anthropology* (7:321-333)⁴ and (a) show how Kant's notion of cosmopolitanism requires the cooperation of pure reason and pragmatic anthropology. In so doing, I argue that Kant (b) reframes the question 'What is the human being?', (c) foregrounds a moral practical concern, and (d) assigns freedom a more prominent role than in his other writings on cosmopolitanism.

In the first paragraph I substantiate my contention about the relation between Kant's account of cosmopolitanism and the question 'What is the human being?'. In the second paragraph I analyze the last section of the *Anthropology* and show that Kant's account of cosmopolitanism requires the cooperation of pure reason and pragmatic anthropology, has an eminently moral focus, and assigns freedom an unprecedented role. In the third paragraph I relate my analysis to two questions widely discussed in Kant scholarship, namely the problem of whether the *Anthropology* has only a pragmatic or also a moral scope and the problem of the relation between the *Anthropology* and Kant's critical system.

1. Reframing the question 'What is the human being?'

In the *Anthropology* cosmopolitanism takes on a more prominent role than in Kant's previous writings, because under the heading *The character of the species* Kant implicitly but demonstrably tackles the question 'What is the human being?'. I discuss this section of the *Anthropology* in more detail in the next paragraph. For now, it might suffice to say that Kant reframes this question as question of the character of the human species, specifies it in terms of the vocation of the human species, and concludes that the human species is characterized by its vocation to cosmopolitanism.

At least two pieces of textual evidence justify interpreting the question on the vocation of the human being as meant to address the question 'What is the human being?'.

⁴ References to Kant's works are to the volume and page number of the *Akademie Ausgabe*: Immanuel Kant, *Gesammelte Schriften*, edited by the Königlich- Preußische (now Deutsche) Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin 1900-. References to *The Critique of Pure Reason* are to the pagination in the (A) and (B) editions. For the citations I have used the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*.

The first evidence is a letter that Kant wrote to the theologian Carl Friedrich Stäudlin on May 4 1793, five years before publishing the *Anthropology*:

The plan I prescribed for myself a long time ago calls for an examination of the field of pure philosophy with a view to solving three problems: (1) What can I know? (metaphysics). (2) What ought I to do? (moral philosophy). (3) What may I hope? (philosophy of religion). A fourth question ought to follow, finally: What is man? (anthropology, a subject on which I have lectured for over twenty years). (9:429).

Kant's explicitly linking the question 'What is man?' with anthropology as the subject on which he has "lectured for over twenty years" is a strong indication that the *Anthropology*, i.e. the compendium that he published five years after the letter to Stäudlin, is concerned with the question 'What is man?', however reframed or specified.

The second textual evidence is the compendium of Kant's logic lectures published in 1800, commonly known as *Jäsche Logic*. There Kant famously writes:

The field of philosophy in cosmopolitan sense can be brought down to the following questions:

1. *What can I know?*
2. *What ought I to do?*
3. *What may I hope?*
4. *What is man?*

Metaphysics answers the first question, *morals* the second, *religion* the third, and *anthropology* the fourth. Fundamentally, however, we could reckon all of this as anthropology, because the first three questions relate to the last one. (9:25)⁵

Here too, two years after the publication of the *Anthropology* Kant continues assigning the question 'What is man?' to anthropology.

However, with reference precisely to Kant's letter to Stäudlin, Reinhard Brandt maintains

that pragmatic anthropology is not to be understood as answering the question discussed again and again since Plato, namely the question about the essence of the human being [*Wesensfrage des Menschen*]. To be sure, the subject on which Kant in 1793 had lectured over twenty years (i.e. since the winter semester 1772-1773) was indeed anthropology [...], but it is not the anthropology of the fourth question.⁶ (Brandt 1999, pp. 16-17).

On my reading, Kant's explicit link between the fourth question and his lectures is too strong an evidence to doubt that the *Anthropology*, the compendium of his own lectures which he himself authors and provides with a preface *ad hoc*, addresses the fourth

⁵ Unless otherwise specified, all emphases in the present and following quotations are Kant's.

⁶ My translation.

question. Furthermore, Kant insists on the link between the fourth question and anthropology also in his 1800 *Logic*, that is to say, after the publication of the *Anthropology*. Therefore, I think that the *Anthropology* does indeed deal with the question ‘What is the human being?’, but that it does so, as remarked by Brandt, in a non-essential way. Thus, Kant holds on to the fourth question, but he reframes it in a non-essential way. On Kant’s reframing the question from an essential to a non-essential standpoint Alix Cohen convincingly states that

the question addressed has in fact shifted from defining the human being in terms of what he *is* [...] to defining him in terms of what he *does* [...]: the question ‘what is the human being?’ is redirected at what he *does* as opposed to what he *is* [...], an enquiry about essence thus being substituted for an enquiry into meaning. (Cohen 2009, pp. 59-60).

If the question of the vocation of the human species discussed in the *Anthropology* reframes the question ‘What is the human being?’ singled out in the *Logic*, and if the answer is cosmopolitanism, then there can be no comprehensive understanding of the human being in the Kantian sense without the cosmopolitan perspective discussed in the *Anthropology*.

Nowhere in Kant’s previous writings is the link between being human and being theoretically and practically committed to cosmopolitanism more prominent than in the *Anthropology*. In Kant’s other writings cosmopolitanism is brought into play to alternatively fulfill either a theoretical or a practical function⁷, and answers questions alternatively of either philosophy of history, or philosophy of nature, or political philosophy.⁸ Only in the *Anthropology* the leading question is explicitly focused on the human being, namely, on what it means to be human. Furthermore, as I discuss in the next paragraph, nowhere in his other writings does Kant depict human progress toward cosmopolitanism as less nature-steered and more manmade than in the *Anthropology*.

2. The human vocation to cosmopolitanism

Before analyzing Kant’s account of cosmopolitanism, I provide as framework a brief outline of the *Anthropology*’s subject matter, method, and aim, postponing a more detailed discussion of these matters to the next paragraph.

Kant defines the *Anthropology*’s subject matter as “the investigation of what [the human being] as a free-acting being makes of himself, or can and should [*soll*] make of himself”.

⁷ On the alternatively theoretical or practical status of the idea of progress toward cosmopolitanism in Kant’s writings see Pauline Kleingeld (1995 and 2001). For instance, in *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* and *Critique of the Power of Judgment* the idea of progress leading to cosmopolitanism serves to fulfill the theoretical function of, respectively, conferring order to the apparent chaos of history and assuming a final single end of nature. Instead, in *On the Common Saying: That may be Correct in Theory, but it is of no Use in Practice*, the idea of progress toward cosmopolitanism serves the practical function to prevent moral despair.

⁸ For instance, the leading question in *Idea for a Universal History*, *Critique of the Power of Judgment* and *Toward Perpetual Peace* pertains respectively to Kant’s philosophy of history, of nature, and of politics.

(7:119). Its method consists in the empirical observation of “this or that [...] human quality of practical relevance” (7:121), and its aim is the application of “knowledge and skill for the world’s use”, namely “for [the human being’s] purposes” (7:119). So, for now it might suffice to say that the published *Anthropology* presents an empirical discipline which observes how human beings generally behave and act, assesses human behavior and conduct relatively to their results, and indicates how to orient and re-orient behavior and conduct so as to be conducive to the agent’s ends.

In the following analysis of Kant’s account of cosmopolitanism in the last section of the *Anthropology* I show at which junctures pragmatic anthropology in cooperation with pure reason becomes a discipline which not only assesses behavior and conduct relatively to just any end that agents may have but also prescribes specific ends that agents ought to have. Following Kant’s *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*, I refer to the former ends as pragmatic and to the latter as moral.

2.1 The human being as the *animal rationabile*

In the last section of the *Anthropology*, entitled *The character of the species*, Kant sets out to define the human species.

His point of departure is the definition of human being as a “*terrestrial* rational being” (7:321). Once reason has been “stated and used as a basis for distinguishing” the human species in the “system of animate nature” (ibid.), a further step is required. In fact, Kant is not interested in reiterating the commonplace of the human being as *animal rationale* but rather in elucidating what does it mean to be an inhabitant of the earth endowed with reason. The task of defining the character of the human species amounts then to describing what its being endowed with reason implicates.

To provide this description Kant employs the Aristotelian method commonly known as ‘defining by *genus proximum* and *differentia specifica*’. This method consists in describing the character of a species (its *differentia specifica*) by comparing it to a different species (*tertium comparationis*) within the same family (*genus proximum*). The difference between the *tertium comparationis* and the species to be defined is what makes up the *differentia specifica* and, with it, the identification of the character of the species at issue. That Kant employs the Aristotelian method is clear from the outset: “In order to indicate a character of a certain being’s species, it is necessary that it be grasped under one concept with other species known to us.” (ibid.). Therefore, in order to define what characterizes a species, one needs subsume it under the correspondent family (the *genus proximum* referred to by the operation of “grasping under one concept”) and then compare it with a different species within the same family (the *tertium comparationis* referred to as “other species known to us”).

Kant’s task, as seen above, is not to justify the definition of the human being as the animal endowed with reason, but rather, taking this definition as a point of departure, to describe

what having reason involves for the human species. The Aristotelian method requires then to define the *differentia specifica* of the human species' reason by subsuming it under the correspondent *genus proximum* and comparing it with a *tertium comparationis*. The *genus proximum* would be a species of "rational beings in general" (ibid.), and the *tertium comparationis* would have to be a non-terrestrial rational species, which poses pragmatic anthropology a problem, since "we have no knowledge of non-terrestrial rational beings" (ibid). As a result, pragmatic anthropology is faced with the problem of the missing *tertium comparationis*: "if we are comparing a kind of being that we know (A) with another kind of being that we do not know (non-A), then how can one expect or demand to indicate a character of the former when the middle term of the comparison (*tertium comparationis*) is missing to us?" In light of this Kant states, "it seems [...] that the problem of indicating the character of the human species is absolutely insoluble, because the solution would have to be made through experience by means of the comparison of two species of rational being, but experience does not offer us this". (ibid).

Kant must thereby deal with a methodological dilemma: he can either remain within the empirical boundaries of pragmatic anthropology and give up reason as the human *differentia specifica* or overstep the boundaries of pragmatic anthropology and seek for a non-empirical *tertium comparationis*. The first option is not viable, since reason has already been singled out as the human distinguishing feature. The second option would be problematic, since it would amount to stating that pragmatic anthropology cannot provide a definition of the human species from within its own boundaries. Kant chooses this second option and recurs to a *tertium comparationis* which is not empirical but borrowed from pure reason, namely "the idea of possible rational beings on earth" (7:322).

This is the first juncture at which pragmatic anthropology and pure reason cooperate, and this cooperation is rendered necessary by the theoretical insufficiency of pragmatic anthropology. Pragmatic anthropology is insufficient since it cannot provide a rational *tertium comparationis* from within its empirical boundaries, and this insufficiency is theoretical in that it concerns something that one wants to know.

To illustrate how Kant operates with his non-empirical *tertium comparationis*, I first quote his definition of human being and then show where pure reason comes into play to remedy pragmatic anthropology's theoretical insufficiency.

After stating the problem of the *tertium comparationis* Kant writes:

Therefore, in order to assign the human being his class in the system of animate nature, nothing remains for us than to say that he has a character, which he himself creates, in so far as he is capable of perfecting himself according to ends that he himself adopts. By means of this the human being, as an animal endowed with the capacity of reason (*animal rationabile*), can make out of himself a rational animal (*animal rationale*). (7:321).

This two-sentence definition is very dense and requires some unpacking. First of all, reading Kant's conclusion in the second sentence, so much is clear: having reason (being an *animal rationabile*) and being rational (being an *animal rationale*) are not the same thing. Having reason means having the capacity to become a being who acts according to reason. Conversely, being rational does not simply mean being endowed with reason but actually acting according to reason. Since Kant speaks of being rational as something that the human being can make himself become, it follows that the human being is not yet rational (which also explains why Kant could not be satisfied with the commonplace-definition of the human being as rational being, namely as already being rational). In sum, the second sentence contains three propositions: (1) having reason is different from being rational, (2) the human species is not yet rational, and (3) the human species is capable of becoming rational by its own efforts. What does it take for the human species to progress from its current condition of potential rationality to a condition of actual rationality?

Kant opens the second sentence with "by means of this" (*wodurch*), thereby signaling to have explained, or at least outlined, how the not yet rational human species can become rational by its own efforts. To follow Kant's argument, let us start with the qualification of 'character'. Since the human being is said to give himself a character "in so far as [*indem*] he is capable of perfecting himself", character must be the capacity to perfect oneself. In light of the conclusion drawn in the second sentence (the human species is capable of becoming rational), this perfection must be the completion of reason's developing process. Being rational must therefore mean having brought to completion reason's developing process. The means of such development must reside in the capacity to choose some ends over others, as indicated by the specification "in so far as he is capable of perfecting himself according to ends that he himself adopts". This is the juncture at which pragmatic anthropology's pragmatic scope comes to include moral concerns. That the ends in question are not just any pragmatic ends but also include moral ones is indicated by their being linked to the human species' perfection, i.e. with normativity: Kant is not talking about just any ends that agents may have but about specific ends that agents ought to have. The agents ought to have specific ends, i.e. those conducive to the completion of reason's developing process.

Piecing together the analysis of Kant's two-sentence definition of the character of the human species, it emerges that the human species' character is human reason's developing process, a process that the human species drives forward by its own efforts through the pursuit of ends, some of which are moral. Thus, to progress from its current condition of potential rationality to a condition of actual rationality, the human species ought to freely adopt and pursue specific ends, some of which are moral.

This humanity who has become rational by its own efforts is precisely "the idea of possible rational beings on earth" that serves as *tertium comparationis*. As we will see in the third section of this paragraph, this is a teleological regulative idea which pragmatic anthropology borrows from pure reason to define the human species, namely to explicate

what does it descriptively and normatively mean to be a terrestrial being endowed with reason.

The task ahead is to elucidate reason's developing process, i.e. the process through which the human species gives itself its character by choosing and pursuing specific ends including moral ones. What do humanity's point of departure, its development process, and the final development stage consist in? These questions bring us into Kant's account of the human species' predispositions and the summation of the results of pragmatic anthropology.

2.2 The sum total of pragmatic anthropology

On Kant's account, the human species' point of departure are nature-given predispositions which force it to achieve his reason's potentiality by both setting pragmatic and moral ends and developing pragmatic and moral means.

According to Kant, the human species is characterized by three predispositions which are nature-given and empirically identifiable as distinguishing the human species from all other living beings. Kant qualifies these predispositions as technical, pragmatic, and moral. The deeper sense of these predispositions' being specific human is that they reveal that the human being, unlike irrational beings whose ends and means are mechanically determined by instinct, is predisposed by nature to make free use of his reason to establish and pursue his own ends. In other words, although his predispositions are given to him by nature without any effort on his part, they both enable and require the use of reason to set and pursue freely chosen ends, some of which are moral.

The technical predisposition includes the aptitude to manipulate things and pragmatic anthropology discovers it by observation of the human build. As Kant states, by "the form and organization of his *hand* [...], nature has made the human being not suited for one way of manipulating things but undetermined for every way, consequently suited for the use of reason". (7:323). The human underdetermined build causes the multiplication *ad infinitum* of possible means and, consequently, of possible ends. This condition both enables reason to pursuit virtually infinite ends and requires reason in order to coordinate and choose among them.

The pragmatic predisposition is the human aptitude "to become [...] a well-mannered (if not yet moral) being destined for concord" (7:323). As discussed in *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* under the concept of 'unsocial sociability', whereas the need to enter into society is nature-given, the pragmatic skills which make the association tolerable, and the moral principles which make a civil constitution possible, are acquired through the use of pragmatic practical and of pure practical reason.

The moral predisposition is defined as the consciousness to be "subject to a law of duty" (7:324). Since Kant's discussion of the human predispositions aims at describing not an

already achieved condition but rather the preconditions of a developing process, I think that the consciousness at issue is best understood as the empirically identifiable human aptitude and aspiration to act from duty according to duty as discussed in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. An indication of this is the fact that Kant at first justifies identifying morality as a human predisposition recurring to two tenets of his pure practical philosophy, namely the “power of practical reason” and the “consciousness of freedom of [the human being’s] power of choice” (ibid.). However, he then clarifies that these elements address the “intelligible character of humanity as such” (ibid.), which intimates that they cannot be used as arguments within the methodological constraints of pragmatic anthropology. And in fact, Kant reiterates that pragmatic anthropology is concerned with the “sensible character” (ibid.) of the human species, namely with what can be observed, which is only the external conduct. So what can pragmatic anthropology observe with regard to the moral predisposition of the human species? Following Kant, it can abundantly observe evil actions, but also something pointing to the human aptitude and aspiration to morality. The latter observations are, I think, the same kind of observation argued for in the *Groundwork*. When Kant writes that the human being “sees himself in this consciousness, even in the midst of the darkest representations, subject to a law of duty”, he is echoing his scoundrel-argument from the *Groundwork*. There Kant uses as a common sense argument, namely as something commonly observable, that “[t]here is no one - not even the most hardened scoundrel [...] who, when one sets before him examples of honesty of purpose [...], does not wish that he might also be so disposed”. (4:454). Thus, pragmatic anthropology yields from within its methodological boundaries the conclusive result that the human species exhibits both evil actions and a moral aptitude revealed by the human aspiration to act morally.

After having introduced the “the idea of possible rational beings on earth”, defined the human character as human reason’s developing process, and outlined the three human predispositions, Kant sums up the results of pragmatic anthropology:

The sum total of pragmatic anthropology, in respect to the vocation [*Bestimmung*] of the human being and the Characteristic of his formation, is the following. The human being is destined [*bestimmt*] by his reason to live in a society with human beings and in it to *cultivate* himself, to *civilize* himself, and to *moralize* himself. (7:324).

This claim seems quite abrupt and unwarranted: Kant seems to be taking stock of both the human species’ character and pragmatic anthropology’s total achievements without having yet substantiated “the idea of possible rational beings on earth” and even adding the new concept of vocation. What does it mean that reason destines the human species to moralization? And how can pragmatic anthropology, an observation-based discipline, make conclusive claims about a potential state which, by definition, cannot be observed?

Putting together Kant’s definition of the human species’ character and his assessment of the total result of pragmatic anthropology so much is clear: according to Kant the human species progresses from its current condition of potential rationality to a

condition of actual rationality through the development of its natural predispositions. This developing process is somehow driven forward by human reason itself and requires human association as the framework within which the human species perfects its ends and means.

The task of the subsequent pages of the *Anthropology* is then to elucidate the concepts of vocation and of “possible rational beings on earth”. This brings us into Kant’s account of the human species’ cosmopolitan vocation with its theoretical and practical import.

2.3 The experience of all ages and all peoples

After summing up the results of pragmatic anthropology, Kant returns to the concept of character and elucidates the concept of vocation (*Bestimmung*).

He defines character as “that which allows [a living being’s] vocation to be cognized in advance” (7:329), and vocation as that which is reached “through the appropriate [*zweckmäßig*] development of all predispositions of [a living being’s] nature” (*ibid.*). So, “vocation” is the final stage of the proper development of human predispositions, and “character” is confirmed as the potentiality which, once identified, allows knowing the final stage of reason’s developing process. Here Kant describes the character of the human species in terms of cosmopolitan vocation:

The character of the species, as it is known from the experience of all ages and by all peoples, is this: that, taken collectively (the human race as one whole), it is a multitude of persons, existing successively and side by side, who cannot *do without* being together peacefully and yet cannot *avoid* constantly being objectionable to one another. Consequently, they feel destined by nature to [develop], through mutual compulsion under laws that come from themselves, into a *cosmopolitan society (cosmopolitismus)* that is constantly threatened by disunion but generally progresses toward a coalition. (7:331).

Kant’s discussion of the human vocation to cosmopolitanism both echoes themes presented in previous writings and revisits them crucially. I will briefly sketch what Kant reiterates, i.e. the natural mechanics of antagonism, and focus instead on what is new, i.e. the unprecedented role assigned to human freedom.

As we have seen, Kant defines a species’ vocation as the completed development of its predispositions. In so doing, he presupposes the classical principle according to which nature does nothing in vain and reiterates what he had stated in his 1784 *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim*: “All natural predispositions of a creature are determined sometime to develop themselves completely and purposively”. (8:18). Thus, each predisposition has a purpose⁹. In the case of the human species, the predisposition on which Kant focuses is reason, since reason both distinguishes the human species in “the

⁹ In Ansgar Lyssy’s words: “Kant adheres to the idea that nature, including human nature, is essentially economical—everything has a place and purpose.” (Lorini and Loudon, p. 83).

system of animate nature” and participates in each of the three predispositions identified by pragmatic anthropology.

If a species' vocation is the completed development of its predispositions and the human species' most relevant predisposition is reason, then the human vocation is the stage at which reason will have fully developed. The human species' vocation is a state of things in which reason informs human conduct throughout (the final moralization broached in the previous paragraph), which according to Kant is a condition of thoroughgoing peace from principles of reason. This condition is the “idea of possible rational beings on earth” which Kant at the beginning of the section had indicated as the rationality toward which the human species can and ought to progress and which he now specifies as cosmopolitan society.

Thus a condition of thoroughgoing peace from rational principles is the final stage of human reason's developing process and, with it, of the human species' progress from its current condition of potential rationality to a possible condition of actual rationality. This is the end which all human agents ought to have and to which all stages of development ought to be compared.

As for the progress from the current condition of potential rationality to a condition of actual rationality, i.e. from the species' mere predispositions to its vocation, Kant brings into play the natural mechanics of antagonism. Since Kant here reiterates a well-known tenet of his anthropological thought, I limit myself to saying that nature forces the human species to live according to ethical and juridical rationality by putting it through the tribulations produced by ethical and juridical irrationality.

Thus far, the *Anthropology* does not add anything new to Kant's previous accounts of the human species' progress toward cosmopolitanism: now as then the rational predisposition of the human species destines it to establish a thoroughgoing condition of peace as the framework of moralization and the dynamic conducive to this end is the mechanics of antagonism. However, the *Anthropology* does also say something new: the role of human freedom in the face of the natural mechanics of antagonism is much greater than in Kant's other writings. At least, here Kant's account leaves no doubt that the human species' progress toward cosmopolitanism is to be thought of as the result of the free activity of rational agents over the course of innumerable generations, as opposed to being nature-steered or due to a superhuman rationality.

Like in his previous writings, Kant refers to the human species' progress toward cosmopolitanism employing terms like “wisdom of nature” (7:329) or “education from above” (7:328), thus suggesting a limited active involvement of the human species in its own developing process. However, as we will presently see, this apparent uniformity of language is deceptive.

From his 1784 *Idea* through to his 1798 *The Conflict of the Faculties*, Kant describes the human species' progress toward cosmopolitanism as willed by nature or brought about by divine wisdom. In the *Idea* he repeatedly insists on assuming a "plan of nature":

Here there is no other way out for the philosopher [...] than to try whether he can discover an *aim of nature* in this nonsensical course of things human; from which aim a history in accordance with a determinate *plan of nature* might nevertheless be possible even of creatures who do not behave in accordance with their own plan. [my emphasis]. (8:18).¹⁰

In his 1795 *Toward Perpetual Peace* Kant seems to attribute nature a will which, for good measure, forces human beings to act upon duty by overriding human will and making human agency superfluous:

When I say of nature, it *wills* that this or that happen, this does not mean, it lays upon us a *duty* to do it [...] but rather that nature itself *does* it, whether we will it or not. (8:365). Nature *wills* irresistibly that right should eventually gain supremacy. What we here neglect to do eventually comes about of its own accord, though with great inconvenience. (8:367).¹¹

Finally, in his 1798 *The Conflict of the Faculties*, Kant subjects human progress to cosmopolitanism to a higher, superhuman, wisdom:

considering [the] infirmity of human nature [...], the hope for its progress is to be expected only on the condition of a wisdom from above (which bears the name of providence if it is invisible to us). (7:93).¹²

It is precisely this kind of language that has caused scholars to question the consistency of Kant's philosophy of history and moral philosophy: if nature wills and acts in ways that override human will and make human agency superfluous, what is left of the autonomous agent of Kant's moral philosophy, i.e. an agent who is moral precisely because her reason can will by transcending nature, as opposed to being forced or superseded by nature?

Although it is possible to show that Kant's philosophy of history is generally in keeping with his moral philosophy¹³, the way Kant explains his terminology in the *Anthropology* may prevent any such doubts from arising in the first place. Whereas he indeed reiterates that the human being can expect his progress toward a thoroughgoing peaceful order "only from *Providence*, that is from a wisdom that is not *his*" (7:328), he in the same breath clarifies that this wisdom is "an impotent *idea* of his own reason" (ibid.). By comparing a

¹⁰ Additional passages of the *Idea* either mentioning a plan of nature or attributing nature a will are e.g. at 8:21 ("nature wills"), 8:25 ("a guiding thread of nature attached to wisdom"), 8:27 ("hidden plan of nature"), 8:29, and 8:30.

¹¹ The whole *First Supplement: On the Guarantee of Perpetual Peace* is an account of nature's intentions, volitions, and provisions as regards the human species' progress toward cosmopolitanism.

¹² In his 1793 *On the Common Saying* Kant tethers human progress to a "supreme wisdom" as well (8:310).

¹³ Since I cannot summarize the relevant arguments in the space of this paper, I refer to Pauline Kleingeld (1995 and 1999) and Barbara Herman (2009).

non-human wisdom with a human impotent idea Kant is not contrasting human impotence with divine omnipotence to leave up to the latter the human species' progress. The impotence of the human idea of providence simply means that the human species does not progress toward its cosmopolitan vocation by preparing a step-by-step plan or by purposively coordinating to the cosmopolitan end the efforts of all nations and generations. The more important aspect is not the idea's impotence, i.e. its incapacity to provide a coordinated plan, but rather the idea itself, i.e. the fact that the human species does have at its disposal an idea toward which to orient its efforts.

Kant also terms this idea of reason "education from above" (ibid.), but this "above" is not meant to allude to superhuman intentions or activities. It is rather the impersonal notion of the circumstances that arise when human beings live together not according to rational principles: it is the mechanically unavoidable tribulations deriving from irrationality which persuade human beings to organize their coexistence according to principles of reason. That nature has no special plan for the human species and that the setting up of the cosmopolitan order is to be considered as the result of human activity is stressed by Kant through his definition of providence:

Providence signifies precisely the same wisdom that we observe with admiration in the preservation of a species of organized natural beings, constantly working toward its destruction and yet always being protected, *without therefore assuming a higher principle in such provisions than we assume to be in use already in the preservation of plants and animals.* (7:328).¹⁴

Thus, unlike in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, in the *Anthropology* the human being is neither the ultimate nor the final end of nature.¹⁵ All that the human species effortlessly receives from nature are its three predispositions and the circumstances that arise within an irrational coexistence. The progress from this irrationality to the humanly possible rationality has to be driven forward by the human species itself, or, in Kant's words: "[a]s for the rest, the human species should and can itself be the creator of its good fortune" (ibid.). Contrasting the developing process of irrational beings with that of the

¹⁴ My emphasis.

¹⁵ Cf. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*: "[the human being] is the ultimate end of the creation here on earth" (§ 82, 5:426). "War [...] even though it is an unintentional effort of humans [...], is a *deeply hidden but perhaps intentional effort of supreme wisdom* [...] to prepare the way for the lawfulness together with the freedom of the states" (§ 83, 5:433. My emphasis). "[T]he human being is the final end of creation [...] to which the whole of nature is teleologically subordinated" (§ 84, 5:435-6).

By contrasting the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* with the *Anthropology* I do not contend that Kant in the latter rethinks the role of reflective judgment set forth in the former. My objective is rather to underscore that Kant in the *Anthropology* adopts a language which leaves no doubt that the human being is the only subject capable of willing and acting from principles and intentions. As a result, in the relevant discussion of progress toward cosmopolitanism, Kant solely and unambiguously entrusts the human species with the task of its own progress. For a detailed account of the role of reflective judgment in Kant's philosophy of progress, including the *Anthropology*, see González 2011, *Culture and Mediation*. In particular, she accounts for what she terms Kant's naturalistic, moral, and critical approach to nature, and shows how critical judgment acts as an intermediary between empirical observations and regulative ideas.

human species, Kant explicitly highlights that “[w]ith irrational animals this [...] is the wisdom of nature” (7:329), whereas the human species brings about its development “by its own activity” (ibid.). Human beings are not made moral and rational by nature independently of human willing and agency. They rather make themselves moral and rational receiving as point of departure nature-given predispositions and freely orienting their development to the normative end of the human vocation to cosmopolitanism: “they subjugate themselves only according to laws they themselves have given, and they feel themselves ennobled by this consciousness; namely of belonging to a species that is suited to the vocation of the human being, as reason represents it to him in the ideal”. (7:329-330).

After indentifying cosmopolitanism as both the human species’ vocation and the ultimate result of pragmatic anthropology, Kant questions his own account to make it more plausible.

Since human beings are endowed with reason and therefore escape a determination by solely mechanical causes, their vocation cannot really be cognized in advance from their predispositions. As Kant points out, the human vocation to cosmopolitanism is in itself an idea, “but not a constitutive principle (the principle of anticipating lasting peace amid the most vigorous actions and reactions of human beings). Rather, it is only a regulative principle [...]”. (7:331). At this juncture pragmatic anthropology and pure reason cooperate again, but this time it is pragmatic anthropology that remedies pure reason’s insufficiency, an insufficiency of both theoretical and practical nature. The final stage of reason’s developing process, namely cosmopolitanism, is not a prediction of the future but rather “a prospect that can be expected with moral *certainty* (sufficient certainty for the duty of working toward this end)”. (7:329). This certainty is, then, not a theoretical one: neither pure reason nor pragmatic anthropology can predict cosmopolitan society like pure reason can, in its scientific application, predict the outcome of mechanical actions and reactions. This certainty is rather moral because, due to the human predispositions, one can assume that the human beings, “[w]ith the advance of culture”, will respond to the “ill which they selfishly inflict on one another” (ibid.) by committing to cosmopolitanism. Reason’s idea provides a regulative principle, which is morally certain enough “to pursue this diligently as the vocation of the human race, not without grounded supposition of a natural tendency toward it”. (7:331).

What makes this presuppositions grounded is precisely pragmatic anthropology, which provides reason with empirical evidence validating its regulative principle. Kant establishes cosmopolitanism as pure reason’s regulative principle to morally obligate the human species to pursue it, since only a principle derived by pure reason can obligate universally and objectively. He then employs pragmatic anthropology to also obligate subjectively. By searching and finding in the empirical history of the human species elements which validate reason’s principle, Kant calls forth all individual human beings to actively commit to working toward cosmopolitanism. In Kant’s words: that this condition

will come to be, “cannot be inferred *a priori* from what is known to us about [the human being’s] natural predispositions, but only from experience and history, with expectation as well grounded as is necessary [...] to promote [...] this goal with all prudence and moral illumination (each to the best of his ability)”. (7:329). Pragmatic anthropology validates pure reason’s idea by both making it subjectively obligating and supplementing its theoretical status, i.e. providing that empirical certainty inaccessible to pure practical reason.

By way of conclusion: in the final section of the *Anthropology* Kant reframes the question ‘What is the human being?’ from an essential to a non-essential perspective, because the human being is not the animal that ‘is’ in a certain unchangeable way. On the contrary, the human being is the animal that ‘becomes’ by actively and freely progressing to what his natural reason destines him: a condition of thoroughgoing peace from principles of reason, which Kant terms cosmopolitanism. This is a theoretical and practical idea of human reason itself which on one side orients human efforts envisaging the final stage of human reason’s developing progress and on the other stands in need of being theoretically and practically reinforced by some evidence provided by pragmatic anthropology. In light of the cooperation of the foundational activity of pure reason and the evidence-gathering activity of pragmatic anthropology Kant concludes that the human species is “a species of rational beings that strives among obstacles to rise out of evil in constant progress toward the good”. (7:333).

3. Resuming two problems

As anticipated in the introduction, Kant’s account of cosmopolitanism in the last section of the *Anthropology* can be very helpful in advancing the discussion of two recurring topics of Kant scholarship, namely the problem of whether the *Anthropology* has only a pragmatic or also a moral scope and the problem of the relation between the *Anthropology* and Kant’s critical system.

3.1 Pragmatic practical and moral practical concerns

As outlined in the previous paragraph, pragmatic anthropology is “the investigation of what [the human being] as a free-acting being makes of himself, or can and should make of himself” (7:119), and is concerned with “this or that observed human quality of practical relevance” (7:121). As for the “practical relevance” stressed by Kant, it has been raised the question whether it refers to pragmatic ends only or to moral ends as well.¹⁶ Does ‘practical’ only denote pragmatic issues, as the boundaries of a pragmatic discipline seems to suggest, or does it also signal moral concerns, as it does in Kant’s moral philosophy?

¹⁶ This question is all the more relevant, considering that Robert Louden, the author of the English edition I am following, translates as “what [the human being] [...] should make of himself” Kant’s wording “was [der Mensch] [...] aus sich selber machen [...] soll” (7:119), thereby rendering with *should* the German *soll*, the verb which conveys the imperative character of practical reason as such and encompasses technical, pragmatic and moral imperatives as well.

On Brandt's view, that the *Anthropology* does not have a moral focus is confirmed by both "the part of the *Anthropology* that stands closest to moral philosophy: its claims about character formation (7:291–5)", since "even in the discussion of character, the accent falls on pragmatic interaction" and by the last section, since "the vocation of the human being, is analyzed entirely empirically and as immanent to the world".¹⁷

On the contrary, according to Werner Stark, the underlying moral concern is already mirrored in Kant's lecturing schedule providing for each anthropology lecture a parallel ethics lecture: "[O]nce he began teaching the course on anthropology (winter 1772–3), he never taught ethics again without holding a parallel course on anthropology: No ethics without anthropology! And for the second half of the 1770s it is also: No anthropology without ethics!"¹⁸

This does not mean that anthropology is just another way of treating moral philosophy, but rather that Kant always discusses the human being considering him as made of both the intelligible character discovered by moral philosophy and the empirical character accessible to empirical observation. On Stark's view, what makes anthropology pragmatic in the Kantian sense is precisely the fact that, although as an empirical discipline it deals with empirically observable phenomena, it always keeps in mind that the human being, unlike all other phenomena, has the characteristic of being endowed with an intelligible character as well.

I side with Stark and argue that Kant employs the term 'practical' in both the strict moral sense of his moral philosophy and in the wide sense expected from a pragmatic discipline.¹⁹

According to the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*²⁰ and the *Critique of Practical Reason*²¹, 'practical' in its wide sense encompasses the three aspects of technical ability, pragmatic prudence and moral principles. And indeed, in the *Anthropology*, 'practical' predominantly denotes exclusively pragmatic concerns. In this non-moral sense, Kant remarks, e.g., that the so-called "born poet", lacks *practical* power of judgment, because he ends up depriving himself of the ability "to make [...] such fortune as lawyers". (7:249).

¹⁷ Brandt (Jacobs and Kain 2003, pp. 92-93).

¹⁸ Stark (Jacobs and Kain 2003, p. 23).

¹⁹ For more interpretations reading both Kant's anthropology lectures and the published *Anthropology* as pursuing moral concerns as well see Loudon (2000 and 2011), Frierson (2003), and Wood (Jacobs and Kain 2003, pp. 38-59). Furthermore, Wood and Loudon conclude the *General Introduction* to Kant's *Lectures on Anthropology* maintaining that "the concluding section of the *Anthropology* of 1798, with its discussion of the historical vocation of the human species and its moral destiny, should be enough to justify our dismissing any suggestion that through use of the term "pragmatic" Kant intended to ban moral considerations from his anthropology lectures" (p. 10).

²⁰ See Kant's discussion of the imperatives at 4:413 ff.

²¹ See Kant's distinction between hypothetical and categorical imperatives at 5:20 ff.

However, the *Anthropology* also features a use of 'practical' in the strict moral sense that Kant sets forth in his moral philosophy. With my discussion of Kant's account of the human vocation to cosmopolitanism I hope to have clarified how at crucial junctures the pragmatic practical vantage point yields to the moral practical, namely why the human activity of setting ends cannot be fully described or performed in a merely pragmatic way but requires the employment of reason's ideas for both the setting and the pursuing of specific ends. At any rate, moral practical concerns also emerge before the last section of the *Anthropology*. For instance, disapproving of the saying "honest but stupid", Kant points out, that "honesty (observing one's duty from principles) is practical reason" (7:204). Commenting on a passage where Kant says that the man of character will never be seen as an eccentric [*Sonderling*] since "he bases himself on principles which are valid for everyone" (7:293), Robert Louden remarks that the latter are "of course a reference to the categorical imperative"²² and thereby signal a moral concern.

Like the term 'practical', Kant also employs the term 'pragmatic' in a wide sense. 'Pragmatic' refers to the broader "goal of applying [all] acquired knowledge and skill for the world's use" (7:119). In this sense, 'pragmatic' means both the descriptive aspect of what means are best conducive to whatever end the agent may have and, as I hope to have shown, the prescriptive aspect of what ends each and every agent ought to pursue. Furthermore, the contents of the published *Anthropology* reveal that 'world' stands for a very broad range of what can or ought to be used as a means and what can or ought to be chosen as an end. Surveying the contents of the *Anthropology* it emerges that the scope of both the ends and the means embraces the knowledge and use of things, but also of one's own and others' intellectual, emotional and desiderative features, as well as the human vocation to cosmopolitanism. As a consequence, the concept of world comes to include the totality of human beings in space and time, with their technical, cultural, political and ethical relations with things, themselves and others, thus becoming inseparable from pure practical concerns²³. In this Kantian world of pragmatic practical and pure practical ends, pragmatic anthropology is the observation-based discipline, whose aim is to enable human beings to shape the world's relations so as to be conducive to ends which are also pure practical.

3.2 Pragmatic anthropology and the critical system

Reinhard Brandt's 1999 *Kritischer Kommentar* of the *Anthropology* and Robert Louden's 2000 *Impure Ethics* have rekindled the debate on the relation between Kant's pragmatic anthropology and critical philosophy. The question at issue concerns the possibility to integrate pragmatic anthropology, an observation-based empirical discipline, into critical philosophy, the project of a system of ideas of reason.

²² Louden (2000, p. 77).

²³ Most recently, Robert Louden has maintained that "while pragmatic anthropology can be put to use in many different ways (moral, nonmoral, and perhaps even immoral), Kant is clear in indicating to his readers that he thinks anthropology *should* be put to moral use" (Lorini and Louden, p. 109).

On Louden's view, this integration is possible. His starting points are the introductory sections of the 1785 *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and the 1797 *Metaphysics of Morals*. In the former, Kant articulates moral philosophy into two studies and writes that "the empirical part might be given the special name *practical anthropology*, while the rational part might properly be called *morals*". (4:388). In the latter he writes: "The counterpart of a metaphysics of morals [...] would be moral anthropology, which, however, would deal only with the subjective conditions in human nature that hinder men or help them in fulfilling the laws of a metaphysics of morals". (6:217). Louden terms this moral or practical anthropology 'impure ethics' or 'the second part of ethics', interprets it as concerned with "making morality efficacious in human life" (Louden 2000, p. 13), and locates it in Kant's pragmatic anthropology. According to Louden, if Kant's moral philosophy is constituted by pure and impure ethics, and if the latter is to be fleshed out with the help of pragmatic anthropology, then pragmatic anthropology is part of Kant's critical philosophy. Clarifying that "Kant did not see it as his task to develop a detailed moral anthropology" (Louden 2000, p. 74), Louden concludes that Kant's anthropology lectures "reverberate strongly with multiple moral messages and implications. Our task as readers is to [...] integrate these moral messages into Kant's overall philosophical project [...]". (Louden 2011, p. 52).

On Brandt's view, this integration is not possible for at least two reasons. First, Kant's anthropology lectures neither refer to pragmatic anthropology as the practical or moral anthropology mentioned in the *Groundwork* and in the *Metaphysics of Morals* nor do they feature pivotal terms of Kant's moral philosophy such as 'categorical' or 'imperative'.²⁴ Second, pragmatic anthropology "neither belongs to philosophy in a strict sense, nor is it articulated as a system based upon an idea of reason". (Jacobs and Kain 2003, p. 85). Pragmatic anthropology is "only a systematically formulated empirical science", and, although it employs *a priori* structures, it "tacitly borrows them from the corresponding philosophical disciplines". (Brandt 1999, p. 9).²⁵

On my view, although abundant textual evidence indicates that Kant relates pragmatic anthropology to moral philosophy, pragmatic anthropology is not a system. It nevertheless entertains a close relationship with Kant's critical philosophy, which emerges most clearly in Kant's account of the human vocation to cosmopolitanism.

An example of textual evidence indicating a relationship between pragmatic anthropology and moral philosophy is to be found in the *Anthropology Pillaue*, where pragmatic anthropology is defined as giving "the subjective principles of all sciences. And these subjective principles have a great influence 1) in *morals*, 2) in religion, 3) and in

²⁴ On this argument see Brandt (1999, p. 16).

²⁵ My translation.

education". (25:735).²⁶ Nevertheless, a comparison between Kant's definition of 'system' and the *Anthropology* clearly shows that the latter does not constitute a system. In the *Architectonic of the Critique of Pure Reason* Kant defines a system as "the unity of the manifold cognitions under one idea" (A832/B860). In the last section of the *Anthropology*, discussing the human vocation to cosmopolitanism, Kant does indeed confer unity to the manifold, i.e. the empirical observations of pragmatic anthropology, employing ideas, namely the idea of possible rational beings on earth and the idea of the human species' vocation. But these ideas, as illustrated in the previous paragraph, do not stem from within pragmatic anthropology. Rather pragmatic anthropology requires them to confer unity to its material but borrows them from pure reason. Thus, although Kant draws a link between pragmatic anthropology and morals, this link is not to be understood as stating the systemic character of pragmatic anthropology.

However, there exists a close relation between pragmatic anthropology and pure reason which both grounds their mutual dependency and requires their cooperation. On one side, pragmatic anthropology needs pure reason to attain the ideas capable of bringing unity into its empirical observations. On the other side, pure reason needs the empirical evidence provided by pragmatic anthropology to reinforce the theoretical and practical status of the idea of the human species' developing toward cosmopolitanism. In fact, this is a teleological idea and, as such, "it is nothing but a regulative principle of reason for attaining to the highest systematic unity" (A688/B716). It must not be taken as certain cognition of the future of the species, but rather as a principle to connect the manifold, a principle whose plausibility lies merely in the indemonstrability of the contrary, or, in Kant's words, in the impossibility "to prove in any one case that a natural arrangement, whatever it might be, has no end at all" (ibid.). Thus, cosmopolitanism as teleological principle does not enjoy the status of being a certainty, which becomes troublesome if, as in Kant's case, it serves to both answer the pivotal question 'What is the human being?' and motivate the human species to act in a specific way. At this juncture pragmatic anthropology sets in and provides empirical evidence pointing to the plausibility of the teleological idea, thus reinforcing its theoretical status as principle of knowledge and its practical status as principle of action.

In Kant's account of cosmopolitanism in the *Anthropology*, pragmatic anthropology has to recur to pure reason and pure reason has to recur to pragmatic anthropology. Thus, although pragmatic anthropology is not a system, pragmatic anthropology and pure reason cannot do without each other: pure reason provides ideas, thereby maintaining a foundational function, and pragmatic anthropology provides empirical evidence, thereby reinforcing the theoretical and practical status of reason's ideas.

²⁶ My emphasis. Additional passages establishing, although not further elucidating, the relation between ethics and pragmatic anthropology are to be found, e.g., in the 1773 *Letter to Marcus Herz* (10:145), *Menschenkunde* (25:858), *Anthropology Mrongovius* (25:1212), and *Anthropology Busolt* (25:1436-7).

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