

TRAVELLING WITHOUT CHANGING PLACES: SOME REMARKS ON KANT'S PREFACE TO THE *ANTHROPOLOGY FROM A PRAGMATIC POINT OF VIEW*

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1. INTRODUCTION: AN APOLOGY FOR NOT TRAVELLING?

The history of travel advice literature (known as *ars apodemica*²) in Early Modern Europe has often overlooked the reading of the preface to the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, published by Kant in 1798³. Although this introductory text was subject both to an erudite commentary by Reinhard Brandt (1999) and to a long introduction by Michel Foucault (2008), and although an extensive literature on Kantian cosmopolitanism already exists (see in particular Kleingeld 2012), this preface remains problematic in several respects and only seems to make sense when placed in its exact historical context.

It could be assumed that this text represents a form of completion of what apodemical arts had become around 1800, insofar as it articulates the metaphors of the world as a “school” and as a “stage” – asking about the “use of the world” – and establishes a supposedly obvious link between cosmopolitanism, travels and anthropology – referring to the expected *topos* of the “utility of travel”. But, surprisingly, while we tend immediately to think that anthropology necessarily requires the experience of travel, Kant lists here the reasons why travels can be set aside – or only be considered as an “auxiliary means”. This idea certainly goes with the paradoxical picture of an author who did not stop quoting examples taken from travel literature⁴, and nevertheless appears as the most sedentary ever among philosophers, the one

<https://doi.org/10.36311/2318-0501.2022.v10n2.p123>

who hated change and movement and almost never left the city of Königsberg⁵. Can such an image, however, have any explanatory value?

The first question that arises is the following: does the preface of the *Anthropology* simply correspond to the personal apology of an author who, because he pretended to deliver something about the knowledge of the world and the inhabitant of this world, had to justify his “point of view”, and especially the fact that he did not travel, despite of knowing it was one of the preferred means of anthropology?⁶ We think that this very particular picture of the “traveller of Königsberg” (Crampe-Casnabet 1985) is not only anecdotal or biographical but also involves a philosophical sense.

As Reinhard Brandt said, Kant intends, already from the second page of the preface, to answer the question: “how is it possible to achieve anthropological knowledge of the world without changing places?” (Brandt 1999: 80). And one can see how difficult it was to legitimise an anthropological discourse without having travelled. In fact, Kant argues that before one intends “to broaden the range of anthropology” by travelling, it is first necessary to frequent one’s own fellow countrymen: fortunately, as he adds in a long footnote, a large city such as Königsberg, with its harbour, its university, its government assemblies, can be taken as an appropriate place for broadening one’s knowledge of men as well as of the world. In a word: it is a place “where this knowledge can be acquired without even travelling” (Anth, AA 07: 121.36)⁷. This footnote well and truly contains an apology: the author is perfectly aware that, according to common sense, the knowledge of men cannot be acquired “without even travelling” (Brandt 1999: 80).

There are two competing hypotheses to explain this unusual statement. One could suppose that this paradoxical idea – making an anthropological research without resorting to travel – has to do not only with Kant’s criticism (1), but also with the history of travel theory, and particularly with the travelling method that Rousseau expounds in the fifth book of *Emile* and in *The New Heloise* (2).

(1) The most obvious hypothesis consists in appealing to the metaphor that Kant used in the preface of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* to explain what “criticism” means: it is well known that the metaphor of travel is useful to reveal the difference between the three ages of *dogmatism*, *scepticism* and *criticism*. The dogmatic method, corresponding to an absolute despotism, is a moment of complete sedentary mode of living. On the contrary, the sceptic philosophy is related with a nomadic way of thinking, in which the reason travels without any compass or map. What, then, is the relationship between critical philosophy and travel? The critical philosopher holds in his hands the scientific instruments to explore human faculties and perfectly knows the different ways and places. But does he need to travel? Is it possible to conceive criticism as a way of travelling with an *a priori* plan, or else of travelling “without even changing places”? It seems that empirical travels must be distinguished from a kind of travels appropriate to the work of pure reason. Yet, does a way of “travelling *a priori*” make sense? This difficulty might explain why Kant prefers travel books to travels: the reader, in his office, distances himself from the related facts and manages to avoid the pitfall of rhapsody (Crampe-Casnabet 1985: 3).

(2) However, there is another possible hypothesis. Or more precisely: the first hypothesis does not go without the other. Indeed, Kant's position about the use of travelling can be seen as an answer to the question posed by Rousseau at the beginning of the chapter "Of travels" in *Emile*: "Hence there is another way of stating the question about travel: 'Is it enough for a well-educated man to know his fellow-countrymen, or ought he to know mankind in general?' Then there is no place for argument or uncertainty" (Rousseau 2009: 641). Unlike Rousseau, Kant answers that it may be enough to frequent one's own fellow-countrymen and to read travel books. This does not mean that he disagrees with the Genevan philosopher, but rather that he completes or develops to the very end the latter's thesis⁸.

2. KANT AND ROUSSEAU

The second hypothesis, which is somewhat underestimated, requires attention. It should be recalled that in Rousseau's *Emile* the purpose of travels was the "knowledge of man in general", which was made possible by the adoption of an "abstracting" point of view. We read, in the first book of *Emile*: "We must, then, generalize our views and consider in our pupil abstract man, man exposed to all the accidents of human life" (2009: 167). Rousseau wanted to consider "man in general", leaving aside the particular properties that refer to each individual in real existence. He did not mean that there was such a thing as an "ideal" anthropology resting on a so-called "essence of man": on the contrary, the only worthy anthropology was built on an intellectual operation, removing the accidents to get the "abstract" man, insofar as the purpose of such an anthropology was to set up the conditions of possibility of freedom. This is why Rousseau, on the subject of travel, was already in opposition to the apodemic tradition: the travel that Emile had to undertake had nothing more to do with the educational "fashion", which aimed to bring up what the philosopher called a "bourgeois", but it clearly had to bring up a "citizen".

This represents a turning point for the history of travel theory, whose outcome is a definition of cosmopolitanism as a mental representation: one can apprehend his position in the world as one of many possible positions. Emile well demonstrates that seeing oneself as a citizen of the world entails seeing all the others as actors in the "world's play". And when Rousseau claimed that "to travel for the sake of travelling is to wander, to be a vagabond. To travel to inform oneself is till to have too vague an aim. Instruction which has no determined goal is nothing" (2009: 646), he only required his traveller to have an "*a priori*" plan in order to undertake his travel successfully; to put it another way, his observation had to be less descriptive than normative. And Rousseau added: "Before observing, one must make some rules for one's observations. One must construct a standard to which measurements one makes can be related" (2009: 650), foreshadowing a kind of "Critical travel".

This being reminded, we must ask ourselves what is the link between the preface of the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* and the anthropology Rousseau defines in *Emile* and *The New Heloise*. Kant asserts that the "knowledge of man" involves the "knowledge

of the world”, even though the man is only a part of the world. The preface thus sets as an object of study the man considered as “an inhabitant of the world”: the purpose is to give a doctrine of the knowledge of man considered from the pragmatic point of view (and not from the physiological one), with regard to what man “makes”, “can make” or “should make” of himself (“*macht, oder machen kann und soll*”) and not with what nature makes of him¹⁰. The question of the *essence* of man is thereby replaced by the question of *sense* (Goyard-Fabre 1997: 87): from this point, we already know that Kant’s anthropology will have to do both with geography and history, space and time, as it considers the destination of man (Crépon 1996: 163). This is nothing but a way of subordinating the “is” to the “ought”, or the descriptive and empirical dimension to the normative one, such as in Rousseau’s anthropological analysis. Yet, Kant’s pragmatic anthropology is not a “practical” anthropology: it does not consider man as a purely free subject. Indeed, the philosopher does not mention only two but three modalities (i.e. “*macht, oder machen kann und soll*”), as the pragmatic anthropology lies in this problematical oscillation, or this “grey area” between them: it is not a description of the world, nor a theory of moral action, but it refers to this indefinable “making something of one’s own” (Brandt 1999: 63).

Kant then admits that this anthropological study seems to involve the use of travels, or even – which is a notable reservation – “the reading of travel books”, since travels appear for the common sense as the preferred means of broadening (“*Erweiterung*”) the range of anthropology. At this point, the author articulates the most important notions of the apodemic tradition and, paradoxically, tries at the same time to justify the subsidiary or unnecessary nature of travels: the world conceived as a “school” and as a “stage” (which is reminiscent of the *topos* of the *theatrum mundi*), and man considered as a “citizen of the world” are all issues that revolve around a polarity between closeness and distance, local and general, which echoes the most traditional theories of travel while at the same time denying them. What we need to understand is why Kant appeals to these *topoi* and yet sets aside travels as far as he is concerned.

Let us go further into the analysis of the text. Pragmatic anthropology is defined as a “knowledge of the world” that must come after “schooling” – according to the thesis of almost all apodemic arts. This opposition between the “world” and the “school” was already developed in a preparatory text, when Kant asserted that “all human beings receive a twofold education: 1. through school 2. through the world”. In the former, they are “merely passive”, as apprentices. In the latter, they are themselves “playing” (as partners) in the “great game of life” (HN, AA 15: 799-800). Foucault considered that this opposition between “the books of school” and “the book of the world” was what make the *Anthropology* “a book of daily exercise”, the “practice” of a culture already given in advance – and not a simple history of cultures. He thereby insisted on the fact that the pragmatic anthropology inseparably implies “the analysis of how man acquires the world” (referring to the notion of “*mitspielen*”) and, at the same time, “the synthesis of the prescriptions and rules that the world imposes on man, which train him, readying him to take control of the game (“*das Spiel verstehen*”)” (Foucault 2008: 53-54). Admittedly, the notion of “*Spiel*” is particularly important, as the passage from nature to culture (or rather from “*l’homme de la nature*” to “*l’homme de l’homme*”, as Rousseau would say) seems to hinge on it; but in our opinion, the key concept contained within the notion of “*Spiel*” is the one of “*point of view*”:

taking care to distinguish between “knowledge of the world” (“*die Welt kennen*”) and “use of the world” (“*die Welt anwenden*”), Kant implicitly refers to the metaphor of the *theatrum mundi* and highlights the clear difference it establishes between the *actor* and the *spectator*:

In addition, the expressions “to *know* the world” and “to *have* the world” are rather far from each other in their meaning, since one only *understands* the play that one has watched, while the other has *participated* in it. – But the anthropologist is in a very unfavorable position for judging so-called *high* society, the estate of the nobles, because they are too close to one another, but too far from others (Anth, AA 07: 120. 9-15).

“Knowing the world” may be equivalent to “understand it as a spectator”, while “having the world” would imply something like “participating in the game”: what is crucial is the change of perspective or viewpoint. Then, what matters to Kant is to distinguish the concept of “world” from the one of “high world”. The anthropologist’s point of view is not suitable for the “high world” or “high society”, or the estate of the nobles, because in this “high world” men are close to one another but too far from the rest of humanity. The knowledge of the world, unlike the knowledge of the high society, implies an homogeneity of the distances separating men from one another: in other words, the world of the pragmatic anthropology is the one in which men are related by the same distance and stand close in a way. As previously noted, the man of the pragmatic anthropology is neither the man of nature nor the free subject, but he is precisely the man considered as “an inhabitant of the world”, as involved in the “world’s play”. In this regard, it may be recalled that in Rousseau’s *Julie or The New Heloise*, Saint-Preux, in reference to his own travel, opposed two points of view:

Thus I am beginning to see the difficulties of studying the world, and I do not even know what vantage point I must adopt to know it well. The philosopher is too far away, the man of the world too close. The one takes in too much to be able to reflect, the other too little to evaluate the overall tableau. The philosopher studies separately every object that attracts his attention, and being unable to discern either the connections or the relations with other objects outside his ken, he never sees it in its place and grasps neither its reason nor its true effects. The man of the world takes in everything and has time to reflect on nothing [...] (Rousseau 1997: 201-202).

What mattered to Rousseau was to show how the two operations of “seeing” and “thinking” had to be simultaneous, the “spectacle” of the world demanding a “continuity of attention” (*Ibid.*). Then he explained what being a “spectator of the world” means:

It also seems to me that it is folly to try to study the world as a mere spectator. He who pretends simply to observe observes nothing [...]. One sees others acting only insofar as one acts oneself; in the school of the world as in the school of love, one has to begin by practicing what one wants to learn (*Ibid.*).

Saint-Preux’s letters are structured by a series of oppositions between inward and outward life: the traveller must both withdraw and engaged into the world, holding an unsustainable role. So, the “ideal” travel seems to require an impossible simultaneity.

This comparison with Rousseau could explain a difficulty concerning Kant's preface. One might indeed be surprised by the fact that Foucault identifies a "lacuna" in Kant's work: according to him, the *Anthropology* seems unexpectedly to ignore the theme of the man living in the world, and "the majority of the analyses [...] are undertaken not in the cosmopolitical dimension of the *Welt*, but that other – interior – dimension of the *Gemüt*" (Foucault 2008: 55). Is it so surprising? It is most likely because there is no such thing as an opposition between these two dimensions. Does not the tension between the "*Welt*" and the "*Gemüt*" simply lie in what Kant means by "citizen of the world"?

3. WHAT DOES "CITIZEN OF THE WORLD" MEAN?

When Kant states that anthropology, as a "knowledge of the world", is a knowledge of man and not a knowledge of things, he is only saying that it is related to cosmopolitanism. Pragmatic anthropology contains knowledge of the man as a citizen of the world. What does it mean? First, we can understand it negatively: it means that the knowledge of "human races" does not matter for the pragmatic, but only for the "theoretical" knowledge of the world, and that man will be considered as he belongs to a *universal* domain. But this universal will not be that of the moral city of spirits (otherwise the anthropology would be named "practical"), nor that of the civil society formed by the subjects of law (otherwise it would be named "juridical"). What does the expression "citizen of the world" encompass in this text?

Foucault aimed to link up the project of the *Anthropology* to the one of the three *Critiques*: he concluded that anthropology, spreading out in history, faced in its way the universalism of the critical part of Kantian philosophy. But he added that, as it regards men as citizens of the world, the *Anthropology* would introduce the concept of an "*extensive*" rather than normative universality. According to Foucault, while the imperative universality of moral law is known by each individual when it comes to pure moral, this question no longer arises when it comes to history, but is replaced by the question of whether men, in their differences, all over the world, participate equally to the same promise of political and human freedom.

We shall agree that the "citizen of the world" is not the moral subject, but it nevertheless seems difficult to admit, as Foucault does, that the pragmatic anthropology would abandon, in a way, the normative dimension. The difference between the normative and the imperative, on the one hand, and the descriptive and extensive, on the other hand, should not be confused with another difference, just as much significant in this text, between "*individual*" and "*species*". If the pragmatic anthropology refers to the study of man as a citizen of the world, it is less because of the refusal of a form of normative universality than because, as Simone Goyard-Fabre states, "the cultural destination of man cannot be deciphered at the level of individual, but only [...] through 'human species', which has many implications, insofar as it imposes the methodological need to look at things from all the 'human genus' (*Gattung*) point of view" (Goyard-Fabre 1997: 85). And it could be assumed that this passage from individual to species

is precisely what makes an individual practice of travel *useless*, since travelling would be an *infinite* task. Once more, this seems to be reminiscent of the question Rousseau put in *Emile*:

But if one wants to study men, is it necessary to roam the entire earth? [...] Is it necessary to know all the individuals to know the species? No. [...] To become informed, it is not sufficient to roam through various countries. It is necessary to know how to travel. To observe, it is necessary to have eyes and to turn them toward the object one wants to know. There are many persons who are informed still less by travel than by books, because they are ignorant of the art of thinking; because when they read, their minds are at least guided by the author; and because when they travel, they do not know how to see anything on their own (Rousseau 2009: 641-642).

Yet, whereas in Rousseau the methodical travel was still considered as a step in the formation of *Emile*, Kant regards personal travel as useless, because it is precisely impossible for an individual to visit the whole world and achieve this work. We can refer to a remark Kant made in the introduction of his *Geography*:

One should only care for his own experience; but this one is not enough to know everything; indeed, the man goes through and only see a small portion of time during which he experiences a few things by himself; regarding space, however, even though the man travels, there are many things he cannot himself observe or perceive; that is why one has necessarily to resort to the others' experiences. Yet these latter have to be reliable, and that is the reason why experiences that have been written down are preferable to those that have only been expressed orally (PG, AA 09: 159. 6-13).

The cosmopolitanism that is in question in this text is not a moral cosmopolitanism – according to the concept inherited from stoicism and claiming that all men form a universal community thanks to their reason – nor a legal cosmopolitanism, but a cosmopolitanism to which Rousseau paved the way, which rests on an empirico-transcendental study of “human being”. Pauline Kleingeld is right to show that “cosmopolitanism”, in the late eighteenth century, is not “a single encompassing idea”, but comes in at least six “varieties” (Kleingeld 1999), and that the word “citizen of the world” is used for very different philosophical projects. But one might even ask whether the notion of cosmopolitanism that is at stake in the preface comes under her classification, since she focuses her attention on the late eighteenth century German cosmopolitanism and consequently leaves the Rousseauist source behind. Yet there might be a specific cosmopolitanism related to the anthropological project.

We know that Kant has attached great importance to anthropology, as he has attributed to it the fourth critical question: metaphysics deals with the first question (the question of knowledge), moral with the second one (the question of duty), and religion with the third (the question of hope), but all these questions have to relate to anthropology, as if the fourth question (the question of human being) should in the end support all the others.

The pragmatic point of view thus seeks to answer the broad question: “what is human being?”. The problem can be formulated in plain terms: *how can we talk about man “in general” while we observe men in all their differences?* Such a question appears as a methodological problem, reminiscent of the one posed by Rousseau. The movement prescribed by Kant to broaden the range of his anthropology becomes clearer and seems to take the shape of a chiasm:

one has to begin with the study of “close”, not “distant” things, and yet with the “general”, not “local” knowledge. It is first necessary to frequent one’s townsmen and countrymen, to acquire knowledge of man “at home”, “if one wants to know what to look for abroad, in order to broaden the range of anthropology” (Anth, AA 07: 120.19-21). In other words, travelling cannot be considered as a “starting point” for pragmatic anthropology, and here *Kant plainly refuses to resort to “empirical travels”*. Going to observe men in their diversity, without having beforehand determined the system of measurement of this observation, would make the project of such a pragmatic anthropology impossible; or better: it is necessary to consider men as citizens of the world because it is necessary to submit the observation of the particular to a universal rule. It is thereby to be remarked that, according to Kant:

About the one who has travelled a lot, they say that he has seen the world. But the one who wants to benefit from his travel must have formerly outlined a plan and not confine himself to watching the world as an object of the external sense (PG, AA 09: 157.19-24).

As Rousseau, Kant asserts in the introduction of the *Geography* that the world corresponds to the “stage” where all our experiences take place. But he repeats that travels demand a lot of time before the final aim is achieved, and that they remain completely useless if one has not formerly *exercised his judgement*. On the contrary, *travels could be very useful for a theoretical anthropology*, since such an anthropology describes and explores what nature makes with human beings. The pragmatic anthropology takes an opposite direction, which is the one of the empirico-transcendental: before a travel proves to be successful, one must have acquired knowledge of man. Without such a method, or without such a plan, “the citizen of the world remains very limited with regards to his anthropology” (Anth, AA 07: 120.22-23). The notion of “limit” (*Schrank*) refers implicitly to the limit of an empirical approach, which would not determine *a priori* what pertains to “human being”. Therefore Foucault’s idea of an “extensive universality”, or even of a “concrete universal”, to qualify this kind of cosmopolitanism, is fairly unconvincing. As we said before, the Kantian method here proceeds from a dialectic of “closeness” and “distance”, of “general” and “particular”. This is why Kant asserts that:

General knowledge (die Generalkentnis) always precedes *local knowledge (die Localkenntnis)* here, if the latter is to be ordered and directed through philosophy: in the absence of which all acquired knowledge can yield nothing more than fragmentary groping around (*als fragmentarisches Heruntappen*) and no science (Anth, AA 07: 120. 23-26).

Thanks to Reinhard Brandt’s commentary, we know that this distinction between general and local knowledge can be found in the prolegomena to the Anthropology Pillau (1777-1778):

(1) A local knowledge of the world, which merchants have, which is also called empirical. (2) A general knowledge of the world, which the man of the world has, and which is not empirical but cosmological. Local knowledge of the world is tied to place and time, and gives no rules to a person to act on in common life. He who becomes acquainted with the world through travel has only this knowledge of it, which, however, also lasts only for a while, for when the behaviour in the place where he has been changes, then his knowledge of it also ceases (V-Anth/Pillau, AA 25: 734).

Actually this distinction was even made before, since Kant states in the Anthropology Parow (winter 1772-1773) that:

Some may recite philosophical propositions, yet they have never felt the sublime of philosophy. It goes with such a man as it goes with a man who went in many countries, but has never seen a map of these countries; this one will tell what he saw here and there, but he will never acquire a complete concept of the region and of its location [...]. Some sciences, such as geography and astronomy, are constituted so that one has to go from the whole to the parts (V-Anth/Parow, AA 25-1: 354).

The same movement is described in the preface of the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*: travels are a “difficult” and thus “dispensable” means to improve anthropology, since the appropriate method for anthropology requires to go from the “whole” to the “part”, instead of gathering the scattered elements of a knowledge meant to become general. The general knowledge is the knowledge of man as a citizen of the world, whereas the local knowledge is an empirical one, proceeding by “fragmentary groping”, the “groping” being opposite to the systematic and unitary aspect of science. To put it simply, *travel is worthwhile only if the traveller already knows what must be observed*. As a matter of fact, this is what Kant states in the essay *On the use of teleological principles in philosophy* of 1788, when he replies to Georg Forster that he does not care at all for “the mere empirical traveller” in these terms:

[...] it is undoubtedly certain that nothing of a purposive nature could ever be found through mere empirical groping without a guiding principle of what to search for; for only *methodically* conducted experience can be called *observing*. I do not care for the mere empirical traveller and his narrative, especially if what is at issue is a coherent cognition which reason is supposed to turn into something for the purpose of a theory. Such a traveller will usually answer when asked about something: I would have been able to notice that if I had known that I was going to be asked about it. I am ever thankful for the purely empirically minded traveller and the story he tells, especially when he provides us with coherent knowledge of things that reason can make use of for the purpose of theory (ÜGTP, AA 08: 161.9-17).

The methodical observation requires a preliminary knowledge of the questions to be answered. This opposition between general and local can be explained by another opposition between two images: the “*terrestrial globe*” and the “*map of the country*”, which corresponds in an interesting way to the opposition between “*general geography*” and “*special geography*” and probably originates with the German geographer Varenius (1622-1650)¹¹. Reinhard Brandt draws our attention on the fact that the *Vollständigen Einleitung Zur Geographischen Wissenschaft*, which was used in Kant’s school Collegium Fridericianum, makes this distinction clear:

Geography is, with regard to its concepts, either *generalis*, which one deals with the globe in general, we use to employ [...] terrestrial globes, either *specialis*, which one deals with particular countries or provinces, and one is use to employ some maps of these countries¹².

This distinction between general and local knowledge of men is reflected in other passages in a further distinction between singular and plural, but also into a fully Rousseauist distinction between “man” and “men”, which is found in the appendix of the *Perpetual Peace*,

when Kant states that the politicians “make a great show of understanding *men* [...] without understanding *man* and what can be made of him”, because “they lack the higher point of view of anthropological observation which is needed for this” (ZeF, AA 08: 374. 4-8). This “*höherer Standpunkt*” reminds of what Rousseau said in the *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, when he stated that when one wants to study men, one must look around one, but that when one wants to study man, “one must learn to cast one’s glance afar”.

4. CONCLUSION: FROM TRAVEL ART TO SCIENCE OF TRAVELLING

It will be objected that it is difficult to assess precisely to what extent pragmatic anthropology has been “influenced” – if this term has any epistemological relevance – by the reading of Rousseau. We know about the admiration Kant had for Rousseau, and the special passion that he devoted to the *Emile* and to *The New Heloise* is well documented¹³. We assume that Rousseau had led his theory of travels to such a “critical” point, that it became possible to conceive the *experience* of travels as a useless practice.

But we may also suppose that the preface of the *Anthropology* is a representative example of what theories of travels had become in the late Eighteenth century: the most important point was the preliminary questions the scientists had to ask the traveller before departure. The authors of such questioning methods aim at meeting the requirements brilliantly uttered by François de Volney, who asserts at the beginning of his *Statistical Question for the Use of Travellers* (1795):

The art of questioning is the art of learning; yet in order to question properly, one must have already an idea of the objects to which the questions reach: children are great questioners; and since they are ignorant, their questions are not well-established nor well-directed. In society, a man often shows the measure of his value by means of a well of badly made question; in the learned world, an essentially questioner class is the one of travellers; that is the reason why their task become more and more difficult as they rise up to less vulgar and more extensive knowledge. Since they experienced these difficulties, a few of them have created research methods in order to relieve their spirit; they have even composed some books containing questions on each matter (Volney 1821: 383)¹⁴.

It is notable that travel is no more the object of an “art” or of a “technique”, but becomes the object of a real “science”, since it is the scientific class (and not the children, as it was often the case) that serves as an example for travellers. The concept of “instruction” replaces the humanist concept of “education”, as the only “useful” travel is no longer a personal and unique experience but a public and collective task. The rhetoric concerning the “citizen of the world” is thus modified: his role is not to live a kind of “cosmopolitan” experience but to advance science for the sake of humanity. At the end of the century, the genre of the “Instruction for travellers” flourishes, with authors belonging either to the circle of the “*ideologues*”¹⁵ or to a new class of philanthropic aristocrats, from France, England or Germany. Authors such as Volney, Cabanis, Michaelis, Savary, or von Berchtold and the baroness Julie de Giovane seem to make the link between the ancient apodemic tradition and the new genre of travel instructions, inspired by

Linné's *Instructio peregrinationis*, published in Uppsala in 1759 (Moravia 1967: 966). They all repeat the same argument: travellers have to prepare their journey and must be entrusted before leaving with public instructions, in the form of very detailed lists of questions. Scientists have to submit questions to the traveller before he leaves, otherwise his travel will be worthless.

One may nonetheless raise a question: do not these authors develop in this manner a new rhetoric of “progress”, far from the Rousseauist conception we told about? Leopold von Berchtold or the baroness Julie de Giovane, for example, both deliver “methods” or “plans” aiming at bringing to light the public and general utility of travels and the progress they promise for the whole “humanity”. The titles of their works clearly point out their purpose: travels are nothing but a disinterested practice, devoted to the good of humanity and submitted to a method defined by the practice of questioning and statistics¹⁶. In her *Plan to Make Travels Useful to the Culture of Young People who Devote Themselves to the Service of the State*, Giovane states:

The art of observing, which is the basis of all sciences, is also the basis of the science of travelling, and all the rules prescribed by the philosophy, in order to acknowledge the truth of facts, must also be observed by the traveller (Giovane 1797: 74).

Giovane clearly mentions a “science of travelling”. But what is surprising here is the fact that she constantly quotes Rousseau, and enters into an explicit dialogue with him (*Ibid*: 69, 78, 82, and *passim*). Yet, in contrast to Rousseau, she insists on the theme of the “progress of culture”. In her view, the practice of travels is a part of history of cultures, and the history of humanity would even sum up to the history of travels. She therefore begins her *Plan* with these words:

This practice [of travel] is an effect of people culture, and accelerates its progress; in each nation the history of travels is a part of the history of its culture, and the different kinds of travels serve to characterize the spirit of the age in which they were undertaken and to determine the different degrees achieved by human culture (*Ibid*: 1).

And the fact that her historical and prescriptive plan is followed by a “portfolio for the use of travellers” and by a “statistical map” reveals its scientific and public vocation. The development of statistics, which is also found in Volney’s work (Volney who confesses his debt towards his “neighbours of the North”, especially the count of Berchtold, whom he had personally known), is the sign that, in the 1800s, the apodemic art has come to an end. These remarks allow us to understand that Kant’s paradoxical statements about travels are not insignificant and take place within a specific context, paradoxically referring both to Rousseau and to a philanthropic concern for “progress” at the same time.

So, did the *Anthropology* entirely go with the unfolding of the critical system, as Foucault tried to prove in his introduction? We do not claim to solve the matter once and for all. Nor do we pretend to decide the broad issue of cosmopolitanism in Kant’s philosophy. However, we have tried to show that his comments on the use of travel can be settled in a precise historical

context, and at the same time to underline the importance of the famous metaphor he resorted to in the first preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Travelling without changing places, or asking questions “*a priori*” of “professional” travellers: what is at stake here is whether this paradoxical description of a “non-experienced” travel was in the first place a metaphor for the critical philosophy, or rather a topical discourse, typical of the late Eighteenth century, on the unavoidable subject of the “knowledge of man”.

ABSTRACT: Our assumption is that the remarks made by Kant about the “utility” of travel in the preface of the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* fall within the context of modern travel theories, which find their point of completion at the end of the Eighteenth century. According to common sense, travelling abroad has indeed become the privileged means of any anthropological project; nevertheless, Kant regards this practice useless for his own work: this paradox is here taken literally and analyzed. Showing that travels cannot be considered as a necessary “experience” for a pragmatic anthropology, Kant devises a paradoxical “*a priori*” travelling method. Hence, we both challenge the standard internalist interpretation, arguing in particular that this preface has to be enlightened by the reading of Rousseau’s travel theory, and aim at showing that the historically situated question of travels gives a key to understand Kant’s critical system.

KEYWORDS: Anthropology, *A Priori*, Apodemic art, Cosmopolitanism, Criticism, Geography, Rousseau, Travel Theory

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NOTES

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² Between the 16th and 18th centuries a new literary genre emerged in Europe, thanks to authors like Theodor Zwinger, Hieronymus Turler, Francis Bacon, Justus Lipsius and many others. It is named "*ars apodemica*", from the Greek notion of ἀποδημία ("travel abroad") and serves to characterize a series of texts (essays, treatises, prefaces, or letters) whose aim was to define a proper method for travel and to assert travel's utility in general, giving advice on how to "travel well". See the database developed by the Moore Institute at the National University of Ireland in Galway: <https://artoftravel.nuigalway.ie/>

³ Before he wrote the whole text of the *Anthropology*, Kant delivered lectures starting from winter 1772-1773. The publication of this text, shaped and made for twenty-five years, would coincide with Kant's retirement as a teacher in 1797.

⁴ One can be reminded here of the anecdote that Walter Benjamin told in 1931 about Kant: "His assistant, a theologian who did not know how to match philosophy to theology, once asked Kant what he had to read. Kant: 'Read travel literature'. The assistant: 'In the dogmatic philosophy there are things I do not understand'. Kant: 'Read travel literature'." See BENJAMIN (1991) 'Unbekannte Anekdoten von Kant'. *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, Bd IV/2: 809, quoted by BREMER (1988: 63).

⁵ Kant mentions, in a note of the *Anthropology*, the terrible seasickness he suffered from during a crossing between Pillau and Königsberg (Anth, AA 07: 170).

⁶ In this respect, Thomas Bremer's analyses are interesting but rather puzzling, inasmuch as the author tries to understand the psychological reasons why Kant abstained from travelling and then asserts, by way of conclusion, that Kant "wanted to travel", which remains conjectural (BREMER 1988: 73).

⁷ All quotations from Kant's works refer to the volume, page and (when necessary) line number of the Akademie edition, *Kants gesammelte Schriften* ed. Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 29 vols., Berlin, de Gruyter, 1900 –. The translated excerpts of the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* are taken from the text edited by Robert B. Loudon (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁸ We do not pretend to solve the controversial question of the so-called "influence" Rousseau had on Kant (see GEONGET: 1997), but only to show how their works shed light upon each other. Beyond deep differences on decisive points (namely on the idea of progress), we think that there is a strong relationship between them, especially about the "knowledge of man".

⁹ On Rousseau's conception of the use of travel, see MORICE 2013.

¹⁰ As Simone Goyard-Fabre states, according to Kant, one of the three "errors" of the Renaissance humanism, which is still visible in the anthropological essays of the 18th century (for example the ones of Pope and Hume, or Haller and Moscati), consists in placing human beings in "the system of nature" and to set as purposes the "knowledge" of human nature or the place of nature in human beings, according to a naturalist scheme of theoretical knowledge of phenomena. "Such an error takes root in ignorance: the ignorance of the difference between the 'system of nature', which is the reference for the knowledge of things, and the 'system of the world', which is the required reference, as Kant says, to acquire the specific knowledge of human beings" (GOYARD-FABRE 1997: 83).

¹¹ VARENIUS, Bernhard (1650), *Geographia Generalis in qua affectiones generales Telluris explicantur*. Amsterdam: Elzevier. Kant had a copy of this book edited by Isaac Newton (Cambridge: 1681) in his library.

¹² KLEMMER, Heiner, ed. (1994: 51), quoted by BRANDT, Reiner (1999: 74).

¹³ Herder wrote in the *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity* (1793-1797) that: "As well as he had examined Leibniz, Wolff, Baumgarten, Cursius, and Hume, he approached Rousseau's works, which had just been published, his *Émile* and his *Héloïse* [...] works that he particularly appreciated and toward which he turned continuously to find a clear understanding of nature of man's moral value". See *Herders sämtliche Werke*, Berlin: Suphan, XVII: 404, quoted by CASSIRER (2011: 44). To this regard, the *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, in which Kant compares Rousseau to Newton, are often mentioned: "Newton was the first to see order and regularity bound up with great simplicity, where before him disorder and badly matched manifoldness were to be met with, whereas since then comets travel in geometric course. Rousseau was the first to discover under the manifoldness of the available shapes of mankind man's deeply hidden nature and the concealed law according to which providence through its observation is justified. After Newton and Rousseau the objections of King Alfonso and the Manicheans are no longer valid, God is justified, and Pope's teaching is henceforth true" (GSE, AA 02. 58-59).

¹⁴ Volney was asked by the Foreign Affairs Committee to write "a well organised system of questions" for the use of agents living abroad. The latter were considered as "diplomatic and commercial travellers" and thus had to give their spare time to research on the physical and political state of the country and to give some notes aiming at answering the proposed questions.

¹⁵ On the complicated relationship between Kant and the French "Idéologues", see AZOUVI, François & BOUREL, Dominique (1991) *De Königsberg à Paris. La réception de Kant en France (1788-1804)*. Paris: Vrin.

¹⁶ Berchtold's book, dating from 1789, is entitled *An Essay to improve and extend the Inquiries of Patriotic Travellers with further observations on the means of preserving the life, health, and property of the Unexperienced in their journies by land and sea*. The work of Julie de Giovane, published in French in 1797, is entitled: *Plan pour faire servir les voyages à la culture des jeunes gens qui se vouent au service de l'État, dans la carrière politique, accompagné d'un précis historique de l'usage de voyager et d'une table pour faciliter les observations statistiques et politiques; le tout suivi de l'esquisse d'un porte-feuille à l'usage des voyageurs, et de celle d'une carte statistique*.