

# A DEFENCE OF KANT'S BIOLOGICAL MODEL FOR THE HUMAN SCIENCES

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The possibility of a Kantian human science is, so to speak, ruled out a priori for a number of reasons:

1. Kant's paradigm of science is based on the model of physics, requiring that the phenomena under consideration be mathematisable.
  - Yet, insofar as human phenomena are not mathematisable, the human sciences are denied the status of 'science' in the Kantian sense.
2. Kant's paradigm of knowledge demands universality and necessity.
  - Yet, insofar as human phenomena are particular and contingent, the human sciences cannot give rise to 'knowledge' in the Kantian sense.
3. Kant's transcendental idealism denies the possibility of a science of the intelligible.
  - Thus, the human sciences cannot talk about 'freedom' and 'moral agency' in the Kantian sense.

Whilst these claims are all true, I believe that they do not entail that Kant does not talk about the prospects of the discipline of the human sciences. For, Kant's works on biology, anthropology and history suggest that the epistemic model on which his account of the human sciences is grounded is not actually threatened by the claims listed above. This is because:

1. Kantian human sciences are not mathematical disciplines modeled on physics.
  - Rather, they are based on the reflective model of biology.
2. Kantian human sciences do not aim to deliver knowledge that is true or false.
  - Rather, they have the pragmatic aim of helping human beings realise their purposes.
3. Kantian human sciences do not have anything to say about the intelligible.
  - Rather, their moral relevance consists in making human beings more morally efficacious.

The key is to formulate within a Kantian framework what we can and cannot know about human beings, and how we can and cannot know it. A crucial corollary of this enquiry is of course to address the issue of the purpose of these sciences, in particular in the context of Kant's ethics; this issue is particularly relevant to Kant's account insofar as he qualifies the human sciences as 'pragmatic' disciplines.

To this effect, in the first section, I will show that Kant's anthropology is modelled on his philosophy of biology due to the fact that the development of the human species shares a number of peculiar features with the functioning of organisms, these features entailing important methodological characteristics. In the second section, I will defend this claim by addressing a number of issues that have been raised by Robert Loudon in his contribution to this volume. Finally, I will discuss a difficulty that is entailed by Loudon's interpretation of Kant's anthropological project. Namely, pragmatic anthropology is methodologically and metaphysically incompatible with the claim that human beings are causally determined.

## 1. KANT'S BIOLOGICAL METHOD FOR ANTHROPOLOGY

The first part of my claim is that Kant's anthropology is modelled on his philosophy of biology. As is now well known, the guiding principle at the basis of Kant's biological method, which is based on the a priori principle of teleology in order to maximise the intelligibility of the world, is the following:

everything in the world is good for something, [. . .] nothing in it is in vain; and by means of the example that nature gives in its organic products, one is justified, indeed called upon to expect nothing in nature and its laws but what is purposive in the whole. (KU 250 [AA 05:379])

This principle is based on the model of an organised being understood as a natural purpose: 'An organized product of nature is that in which everything is an end and reciprocally a means as well' (KU 247–8 [AA 05:376]). For, organisms are the beings 'which thus first provide objective reality for the concept of an end that is not a practical end but an end of nature' (KU 247 [AA 05:375–6]). With this principle in hand, Kant proceeds to his anthropological enquiries by applying the teleological maxim to human actions in the form of the following principle: "Everything in the human world is good for something or other", which in turn gives rise to the concepts of means/ends and defeating/fulfilling a purpose.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, teleology has a crucial role to play in anthropology: it supplies the a priori principles and maxims with which we can investigate the human world. It is a heuristic principle indispensable for confronting experience with a set of questions and for organising empirical data.

In the *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, Kant distinguishes between three predispositions of human nature:

1. The predisposition to the *animality* of the human being, as a *living being*; 2. To the *humanity* in him, as a living and at the same time *rational* being; 3. To his *personality*, as a rational and at the same time *responsible* being (RGV 74 [AA 06:26])

The predisposition I want to focus on here is the predisposition to animality, for I believe it is through its analysis that we can reach a better understanding of Kant's biological account of human nature. Kant defines the purpose of this predisposition as threefold:

*first*, for self-preservation; *second*, for the propagation of the species, through the sexual drive, and for the preservation of the offspring thereby begotten through breeding; *third*, for community with other human being, i.e. the social drive. (RGV 75 [AA 06:26])<sup>3</sup>

Kant insists on the fact that these animal predispositions are still at work at the level of civil life: "In the civil constitution of a state, which represents the highest degree of artificial enhancement of the good characteristics in the human species toward final purpose of its destiny, animality still manifests itself earlier and basically stronger than pure humanity" (Anth 244 [AA 07:327]). And decisively, he remarks that what is presupposed for man in the predisposition to animality is in fact identical to what is presupposed for other organisms: the biological determination at work is the same.<sup>4</sup>

Providence refers exactly to that same wisdom which we observe with amazement at work in the preservation of a species of organised natural beings [the human species] that constantly busies itself with self-destruction, and still finds itself always protected. Nevertheless, we do not assume a higher principle in such providential care than we assume to be at work already in the maintenance of plants and animals. (Anth 246 [AA 07:328])

Kant's account of 'Nature's (or Providence's) intentions' for the human species has been the object of numerous debates that I cannot engage with here due to restrictions of space. As is well known, Kant sometimes understands Nature as having providential aspects, and in particular, as designed to allow men to fulfil their moral destiny.<sup>5</sup> This conception of Nature should, I believe, be distinguished from his 'naturalistic' account of Nature according to which it aims at the preservation of the human species.<sup>6</sup> The scope of this paper is strictly limited to the latter – its chief aim is to bring to light the biological dimension of Kant's account of the human sciences. In this sense, for my present purposes, it is sufficient to note that Kant's conception of human nature characterises it as developing certain natural predispositions that aim at the preservation of the species:

Nature has also stored into her economy such a rich treasure of arrangements for her particular purpose, which is nothing less than the maintenance of the species (Anth 225 [AA 07:310]).

In the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, Kant analyses these natural predispositions according to four criteria: person, sex, nation and race. Relative to these criteria, Kant distinguishes between different 'types', as shown in the following chart.

Table 1. Human types

Category	Race	Sex	Person	Nation
Criterion	Hereditary transmitted features	Gender	Temperament	Civil whole united through common descent
Type	White, Negro, Hindu, Hunnish-Mongolian-Kalmuck	Male and Female	Sanguine, Melancholic, Choleric, Phlegmatic	French, English, Spaniard, etc.

Each human ‘type’ is the means to the realisation of a particular purpose that contributes to the realisation of Nature’s overall purpose for the species, as summarised in the following chart:

Table 2. Nature’s purpose for human types

Criterion	Type	Nature’s purpose
Gender	Male, Female	Reproduction and preservation of the human species
Race	White, Negro, Hindu, Hunnish-Mongolian-Kalmuck	Diversity of biological character so as to be suited for all climates
Temperament	Sanguine, Melancholic, Choleric, Phlegmatic	Diversity of human character (leading to social antagonism) which secures civil peace
Nation	French, English, German, Italian, etc.	Diversity of national character (leading to external war) which secures international peace

The prominence of teleology in Kant’s anthropological method, and in particular the fact that Kant encourages anthropologists to assume the same teleological principle used in the investigation of non-human nature, may seem to suggest that far from being essentially pragmatic (and in this sense interested in ‘what the human being makes of himself’), anthropology is rather naturalistic (and in this sense concerned with ‘what nature makes of the human being’). This impression is reinforced by Kant’s various claims about Nature’s purposes for the human species. The worry, then, is that anthropology would really study human beings as determined by nature rather than as free.

However, it is crucial to distinguish between two conceptions of the enquiry into ‘what Nature makes of the human being’: one as the investigation of the mind–body relation (physiological anthropology), the other as the investigation of Nature’s purposes for the human species (natural anthropology). Kant does in fact proceed to the enquiry into ‘what Nature makes of the human being’ in the latter sense. So if one form of the enquiry, namely the investigation of mind–body relations, is vain, another form, that of the investigation of Nature’s purposes for the human species, is legitimate when it is used to improve our pragmatic knowledge of human beings – a knowledge that is necessary for us to use nature, and in particular our nature, to realise our purposes.

There is thus a very straightforward way of understanding Kant's claim about Nature's purposes for humankind. Namely, from a pragmatic point of view, the human being is a biological organism as well as a free intentional being. And our everyday life is full of instances of Nature's constraints on us: for instance, we have to sleep to survive. This fact does not mean we are not free. Clearly, it means that we are not free to stay awake for the whole duration of our lives. But it does not mean that we are completely determined either. For there are many different ways of fulfilling our natural needs, and we are free to do so the way we please. The different ways we choose to fulfill our needs are in fact the very expression of our freedom. For instance, in the case of sleep, we can do so through siesta, power naps, late morning lie-ins or early bedtimes. In this sense, the original worry disappears since there is no difficulty in saying that anthropology studies human beings as free, and at the same time that it studies the ways in which Nature restricts or affects their actions. In fact, since freedom is in many ways constrained by human nature, anthropology should study these constraints. This requirement is particularly pressing insofar as Kant's anthropology has a pragmatic intent. For, the study of what constrains human action will be necessary to the elaboration of useful anthropological guidance.

Having delineated Kant's account as I understand it, the aim of the following section is to turn to some objections.

## 2. DEFENCE AGAINST LOUDEN'S OBJECTIONS

In his paper 'Kantian Anthropology: A Science Like No Other', Robert Louden questions the approach I have defended by pointing to a number of issues that may seem to go against it. My aim in this section is to address what I take to be his two main points: first, the causal determinism at work in anthropology; and second, its pragmatic nature. I will discuss them in turn and attempt to show that they do not threaten my interpretation if they are interpreted in the right context.

Louden's first claim is that 'Anthropology's job, as Kant sees it, is to find causal connections between human inclinations, passions and thoughts on the one hand and the resulting actions that stem from them on the other, and he clearly views anthropology as an explanatory science here.' (Louden (this volume). On this basis, he suggests that this "should give pause to recent claims that [...] Kantian anthropology is modeled not "on physics" but rather "on the reflective model of biology" and that it does "not aim to achieve knowledge that is true or false."' (Louden (this volume). So, let's pause and consider Louden's claims. I will argue that whilst I concur with the first one, I disagree with what he takes to be its implications for my interpretation.<sup>7</sup>

Let's begin by clarifying the discipline Louden brings attention to, namely the explanation of the 'causal connections' between human psychology and the actions that stem from them. This discipline, I believe, is the domain of what Kant sometimes calls empirical psychology. Louden is of course right that there is a clear sense that anthropology includes empirical psychology – both methodologically, philosophically, and historically.<sup>8</sup> However, I

believe that it is more important to emphasise what differentiates them rather than what they have in common. To understand this claim, let's look at Patrick Frierson's recent work, and in particular his *Kant's Empirical Psychology*.

Frierson's insightful study convincingly argues that "Overall, not only unpublished lectures but also published writings, and in particular his main *Critiques*, justify the possibility of an empirical psychology. Such a psychology would investigate the human mind in terms of natural causal laws that, in principle at least, would be capable of perfect predictive success. The primary data for this psychology would come from introspective investigation through inner sense" (Frierson (2014): Introduction/XX).<sup>9</sup> Human beings are moved psychologically by motives, thoughts, desires, inclinations and so on. They have a faculty of desire, a power "to be, by means of one's representations, the cause of the objects of those representations" (MS 376 [AA 06:221]). As Frierson points out, all of this is compatible with a thoroughly causal account of the origin and nature of these intentional states: intentions and their effects are just as empirically-determined as one's brute urges. As a result, 'human actions are determined just as much as every other natural occurrence in accordance with universal laws of nature.' (LaG 108 [AA 08:17])<sup>10</sup> In other words, psychological explanations, as natural-mechanical-causal accounts of the empirical world that include the human mind, can account for the appearance of human intentionality entirely through efficient causality.

However, contrary to empirical psychology, which studies human beings in terms of their psychological nature, Kant's pragmatic anthropology adopts as its starting point the fact that they are the only beings that act according to the purposes they set for themselves.

[T]he materials for an anthropology [. . .] the method of their use in attempting a history of humanity in the whole of its vocation [. . .] may be sought neither in metaphysics nor in the cabinet of natural history specimens by comparing the skeleton of the human being with that of other species of animals; [. . .] that vocation can be found solely in [human] actions, which reveal his character. (RezHerder 134 [AA 08:56])

Hence, Kant's anthropology is 'pragmatic' in the sense that it studies the human being not through what he thinks (empirical psychology), but through what he does 'as a free-acting being': 'it observes solely the actual behaviour of man' (Anth 231 [AA 07:119] and V-Eth 42 [AA 27:244]).<sup>11</sup> More precisely, the object of anthropology does not consist in his actions per se, but insofar as these actions reveal what Kant calls 'character', which encompasses the 'rules which that behaviour obeys': 'anthropology is concerned with subjective, practical rules.' (V-Eth 42 [AA 27:244]) Therefore, there is a sense in which there are distinct disciplines at play here, at least in terms of their subject. Although I would want to go much further than this and claim that they also, and more importantly, differ in terms of their methodology – as I have tried to argue in the first section of this paper.

Louden's second point has to do with the pragmatic nature of anthropology. On my interpretation, the fact that Kant's anthropology is a pragmatic discipline sets it apart from other, non-pragmatic sciences. For, the claims of pragmatic anthropology are literally practical – they comprise advice, recommendations, counsels, guidance, warnings and even

admonitions. In this regard, it should be noted that Kant's *Lectures on Anthropology*, on which his published *Anthropology* is based, were intended to teach students how to apply what they learnt at university to their future profession as well as to the conduct of their life in general. In other words, these lectures, which arose from the *Lectures on Physical Geography*, were meant to show students how to use their knowledge and talents as 'citizens of the world'.

The physical geography [course] which I [Kant] am announcing hereby belongs to an idea which I make myself of a useful academic instruction and which I may call the preliminary exercise in the knowledge of the world. This knowledge of the world serves to procure the pragmatic element for all otherwise acquired sciences and skills, by means of which they become useful not merely for the school but rather for life and through which the accomplished apprentice is introduced to the stage of his destiny, namely, the world. (*Of the Different Races*, 97 [AA 02:443])

To accomplish this task, Kant focuses on knowledge 'of practical relevance', that is to say knowledge that is useful to one's conduct in life (Anth 233 [AA 07:122]). This knowledge has an extremely broad scope: it discloses 'the sources of all the [practical] sciences, the science of morality, of skill, of human intercourse, of the way to educate and govern human beings, and thus of everything that pertains to the practical' (Br 141 [AA 10:145]).

Kant in fact begins his *Anthropology* with an explicit reference to its aims: Pragmatic knowledge of the human being is 'the investigation of what he as a free-acting being makes of himself, or can and should make of himself' (Anth 231 [AA 07: 119]). This fundamental claim needs unpacking. The 'make' points to the descriptive part of Kant's project (i.e. what men actually make, or have made, of themselves). The 'can make' refers to the realm of possibility (namely the scope and limits of the human being's influence on himself), whilst the 'should make' indicates the prescriptive part of Kant's project, which encompasses the whole realm of human action – that is to say its technical, prudential and moral dimensions.

Therefore, the uniqueness of the approach of the human sciences lies in their commitment to investigating human phenomena for the purpose of understanding others and interacting with them both prudentially and morally. Far from merely presenting theoretical observations about the human world, they are value-embedded disciplines that play the crucial role of providing a map for human beings to orientate themselves in the world and realise their purposes.

Whilst Loudon acknowledges the pragmatic nature of anthropology, he questions whether it is unique to it and sets it apart from other disciplines. As he writes, "is not science too a value-embedded and morally guided enterprise? [...] we can't claim that Kantian anthropology is not a science simply because it is a value-embedded and morally guided enterprise. For this is also true of physics, Kant's paradigm of science." (Louden (this volume). This is an important point, for behind it lies a disagreement about what is entailed by the fact that anthropology is a pragmatic discipline. There are a number of epistemic values and norms that ought to apply to any scientific investigation and more generally to all of our beliefs. In this sense, cognition is normative – although crucially, the norms are grounded on epistemic values.<sup>12</sup> They are thus different from the values that pragmatic anthropology aims to realise,



and which include prudential and moral values. Anthropology for Kant is a pragmatic project directed from within towards human cultivation, civilisation and moralisation.

### 3. THE CONDITIONS OF POSSIBILITY OF A PRAGMATIC DISCIPLINE

Louden argues that “Anthropology, as an empirical science, deals with observable aspects of human thought and action, and in its quest to bring them under rules it operates on the assumption that these phenomena – like all other phenomena in nature – are determined according to universal causal laws.” (Louden (this volume)). But he does not consider the implication of this claim for the methodology and the aim of anthropology. For, if anthropology presupposes that human beings are causally determined just as any other object in the natural world, it would seem to entail that it is not free and thus that there is not point in recommending particular courses of action (as is the purpose of pragmatic anthropology). In other words, the very discipline of pragmatic anthropology is methodological and metaphysically incompatible with the claim that human beings are causally determined.

The issue at stake is that of the relevance of the very discipline of pragmatic anthropology: if it is to be morally relevant, it can only function under the presupposition that empirical factors do impact on (and perhaps even determine) our ability to make choices. Yet being a prescriptive, forward-looking discipline, it has to work under the assumption that we are ultimately free and responsible for our choices.<sup>13</sup> In this sense, either temperaments do have an impact on our choices, in which case we are not working under the presupposition of freedom, or we are completely free from any empirical determination, in which case the claims of anthropology become irrelevant to our moral choices. Whichever way we go, it seems that we have to give up one of Kant’s claims – either freedom or the moral relevance of anthropology.

However, I believe that this dilemma is in fact based on a misunderstanding of the kind of claims that can be made from the practical standpoint. For, when I deliberate under the assumption of freedom, it certainly does feel like I am nevertheless affected by my desires, passions, interests and so on – in other words, nature. So even from a practical standpoint, I have to take into account parts of the naturalistic account of my self (my temperament, my desires, my emotions, my interests, etc.). But the crucial point is that doing so does not amount to presupposing that I am not free; it does not entail that empirical elements do in fact determine my choice. Rather, it amounts to seeing myself as an empirical being who is nonetheless free. Acting under the idea of freedom requires me to understand my experience of deliberation (which includes my temperament, my desires, my emotions, etc.) as compatible with the possibility of freedom, although I can neither know nor understand how I can be both empirically affected and yet free. As Kant writes,

[I]t is impossible to explain the phenomenon that at this parting of the ways (where the beautiful fable places Hercules between virtue and sensual pleasure) the human being shows more propensity to listen to his inclinations than to the law. For we can explain what happens only by deriving it from a cause in accordance with the laws of nature, and in so doing we would not be thinking of choice as free. – But it is this self-constraint in opposite directions and its unavoidability that makes known the inexplicable property of freedom itself. (MS 512fn [AA 06:380])



This is precisely the locus of the fundamental and necessary mystery of freedom: it cannot be known, but adopting the practical standpoint is nothing but presupposing that when I act, I can be affected by empirical elements whilst being ultimately free to choose against them. Insofar as I have to assume that these elements affect me but do not determine my choice, I have to presuppose that I could always have acted otherwise, despite the fact that it is necessarily incomprehensible to me.

In this sense, freedom cannot be known in the way that we 'know' natural events or objects. Kant provides arguments for the claim that freedom and its relationship with natural causation is incomprehensible, and that moreover, we do not in fact need to comprehend it. For instance, 'reason would overstep all its bounds if it took it upon itself to explain how pure reason can be practical, which would be the same task as to explain how freedom is possible. [...] where determination by laws of nature ceases, there all explanation ceases as well' (GMS 104–5 [AA 04:459–60]). Similarly, 'it is impossible for us to explain, in other words, how pure reason can be practical, and all the pains and labor of seeking an explanation of it are lost. It is just the same as if I tried to fathom how freedom itself as the causality of a will is possible. For then I leave the philosophical ground of explanation behind and I have no other.' (GMS 107 [AA 04:461–2]; see also KrV 532ff. [A532/B560ff]). Thus, the idea of freedom only offers a guiding idea rather than a competing understanding of action. It is never meant to be on a par with naturalistic explanations.

However, this still leaves our problem untouched, for if the two-standpoint interpretation is effective in making sense of the relevance of empirical facts about the self whilst preserving the possibility of freedom, it does not account for the moral relevance of anthropology. Rather, it defines empirical claims about the self (for instance, 'my choleric temperament makes it hard for me to control my emotions') on a par with other facts about the empirical world: for instance, that 'I am a body that acts in space and time', 'this person is my father', 'if I hit the ball, it will have these effects', and so on. There is no doubt that all these facts are relevant to my decision-making process insofar as they inform me about the world in which my actions take place. But the difficulty pointed to at the beginning of this chapter is precisely that certain facts about the world, namely facts about my empirical self, seem to have a special status vis-à-vis my decision-making process. Can this special status be accounted for? On the basis of the two-standpoint account just delineated, we have to conclude that this knowledge is no more (although no less) relevant to moral agency than any other empirical claim about the world – which means that it is not ultimately morally relevant. This conclusion is satisfactory on many levels, for, not only does it account for the relevance of anthropology to human deliberation, it does so whilst maintaining that this relevance is not ultimately moral. But although it remains within the limitations of Kant's theory of freedom outlined in Section 1, it is bound to disappoint those who were hoping for a more robust moral account of the role of anthropology.

However, I believe that this demand for robustness can in fact be met if we further refine our account of the standpoint that the human sciences adopt. As I have just argued, from the standpoint of the rational deliberating agent, anthropological claims are not morally relevant. Yet my suggestion is that from the standpoint of the human deliberating agent, an embodied

agent who acts in the empirical world, anthropology is morally relevant because it identifies the form his exercise of autonomy should take at the empirical level. This type of guidance is necessary for human beings because of what is usually called the opacity of motivation, that is to say, the fact that I can never know whether I have ever met moral demands: As Kant writes, human beings ‘can never, even by the most strenuous self-examination, get entirely behind [their] covert incentives’ (GMS 61 [AA 04:407]). This opacity entails that I do not know, and can never know, what an autonomous choice or a virtuous act looks like from an empirical perspective. Empirically, all actions appear the same insofar I have no insight into maxims and motives, whether my own or others’. For instance, I cannot know whether the shopkeeper is acting from duty when he gives the right change to his customers (GMS 53 [AA 04:397]).

However, the aim of the pragmatic standpoint that anthropology adopts is precisely to compensate for this opacity: its moral relevance consists in teaching us a certain way of thinking about how we, free beings, should act in the empirical world.

Insofar as it is a forward-looking, prescriptive discipline, it instructs the deliberating agent that he should choose to be polite and to control his choleric temperament since these actions are the forms assumed by the exercise of autonomy in the empirical world. Thus, self-control, control over one’s emotions or temperament, does not provide an understanding of what freedom really is, for we can never hope to understand such a thing; rather, it represents the only way we can conceive of how an autonomous being should act in the empirical world.

In other words, my suggestion is that the demand for robustness can be addressed by arguing that anthropology is morally relevant in the sense that it teaches the deliberating agent ways in which his freedom should be exercised at the empirical level. It is directed at agents who act in the empirical world and who need guidance as to what form their autonomy should take in the world in which they act and their actions have their effects – that is, what they should make of themselves in this world. Thus, empirical facts about myself are morally relevant to my exercise of freedom because exercising self-control, mastering all the elements that constitute my empirical self, is nothing but how I must understand the realisation of my autonomy at the empirical level. This is why anthropology can be prescriptive and action-guiding without threatening the presupposition of freedom. Its prescriptions are relevant insofar as they are addressed to an agent who is embodied, who ‘feels nature’s push’ whilst he deliberates, despite the fact that he deliberates under the idea of freedom. In other words, for Kant, from the practical standpoint, the exercise of our rational and moral capacities is experienced ‘as empirically embodied’ (i.e. as taking place together with the experience of nature’s push) rather than happening in some timeless inaccessible world. In fact, the practical standpoint never implies that I do not see myself as an empirical being acting in an empirical world. It merely implies that I must see myself as an empirical being who views himself as acting freely.

As a result, the recommendations of anthropology are not as problematic as they first seemed, for its claims can be unpacked so as to avoid threatening the presupposition of freedom whilst remaining morally relevant to the deliberating agent. The anthropologist whose interest lies in understanding actions according to natural laws (what we could call the ‘natural anthropologist’) operates from a theoretical standpoint that is independent from the idea of freedom.<sup>14</sup> On this

basis, he can legitimately claim to know that, for instance, my choice was caused by my choleric temperament. From a practical standpoint, I can recapture this claim by reformulating it as 'I have to presuppose that I freely chose to let my choleric temperament cause my action' (i.e. I could always have chosen otherwise). And the 'pragmatic anthropologist' whose interest is to offer guidance on human action (which is the type of anthropology Kant is ultimately concerned with) can put forward claims such as 'choose to control your choleric temperament' because self-control is one of the ways of realising autonomy, of exercising freedom, in the empirical world, at the empirical level of human action. Anthropology can legitimately make these different kinds of claims as long as each is understood within the right epistemic context.

Accordingly, on this interpretation, the relationship between freedom and the human sciences has been misconceived, not only because Kant's conception of freedom is particularly problematic, but also, and more importantly, because the role of the human sciences has been misunderstood. For Kant, the human sciences, and anthropology in particular, are pragmatic disciplines; by which he means that they are forward-looking, they are oriented towards human action in the world. This has crucial implications for their relationship to human freedom. For as I have argued, many potential difficulties disappear as soon as we understand how and in what sense Kant's anthropology is forward-looking and prescriptive.

## CONCLUSION

Instead of summarising my argument, I would like to conclude with a final remark inspired by Louden's overall assessment of the function and method of Kant's anthropology. Towards the end of his contribution, he notes that "Part of Kantian anthropology's origin and aim is indeed scientific – and, or so I have argued, it exhibits this concern and aim in a stronger sense than many commentators have realized. But other parts of Kantian anthropology are pragmatic and moral [...] And so in the end, we are left with a discipline that can be kept within the bounds of science by those determined to do so, but one which can also easily break free of these bonds." (Louden (this volume). This description of Kant's project is no doubt insightful, but it raises a worry: doesn't it portray anthropology as a schizophrenic discipline? At once theoretical and pragmatic, deterministic and studying free-acting beings, empirical and moral, how can it remain unified in more than name alone? On Louden's picture, anthropology turns out to be a science that has different incompatible aims and different incompatible methods. Of course, it could well be that these tensions merely reflect the tensions intrinsic to Kant's project. However, my own interpretative project is based on the claim that the overall approach of pragmatic anthropology should not be fragmented, at least not to begin with. For what is needed is a principle unifying all of its different strands.<sup>15</sup> On this basis, by characterising his anthropology as pragmatic, Kant fundamentally stresses the fact that it deals with the field of human action as a whole. Accordingly, I will suggest that its object, its method and its aim are pragmatic in the following senses: first, its object is pragmatic insofar as it studies human beings in terms of their actions in the world, and thus as freely acting beings; second, its method is pragmatic in that it involves interaction as well as observation; and third, its aim is pragmatic inasmuch as it is not only descriptive but prescriptive.

**ABSTRACT:** In *Kant and the Human Sciences*, I present an epistemic model of the human sciences according to which Kant's Antinomy of reflective judgment is the "foremost" "basis of the method of human sciences" (Cohen, 2009, p. 29). In this paper, I set out to defend this model against recent objections. In the first section, I show that Kant's anthropology is modelled on his philosophy of biology due to the fact that the development of the human species shares a number of peculiar features with the functioning of organisms, these features entailing important methodological characteristics. In the second section, I support this claim by addressing a number of issues that have been raised by Robert Loudon in his contribution to this volume. Finally, I discuss a difficulty that is entailed by Loudon's interpretation of Kant's anthropological project. Namely, pragmatic anthropology is methodologically and metaphysically incompatible with the claim that human beings are causally determined.

**KEYWORDS:** Kant - human sciences – anthropology - biology

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## NOTES

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2 See for instance Anth 372–6 (AA 07: 272–5).

3 For an account of the differences between the account of man's natural predispositions in the *Religion* and the *Anthropology*, see WILSON (2001).

4 Note that Kant's concept of biological determination, insofar as it includes domains such as nationality and personality, is notably broader than modern conceptions of the division between nature and culture.

5 See for instance §84 of the *Critique of Judgment* where Kant writes that Nature "strives to give us an education that makes us receptive to purposes higher than those that nature itself can provide". This purpose is "man, the subject of morality, [...] the *final purpose* of creation to which all of nature is subordinated" (*KU*, 321-3 (AA 05: 433-436)). For analyses of the concept of final purpose in relation to that of ultimate purpose, see YOVEL (1980, p. 175ff.), VAN DER LINDEN (1988, p. 134ff.), and LOUDEN (2000, p. 141ff.).

6 These two conceptions of Nature (i.e. naturalistic and moral) are, of course, closely connected, and I would argue that both are present in texts such as the *Idea for a Universal History* and *Perpetual Peace*. Unfortunately, it falls outside the scope of this paper to discuss this claim.

7 Moreover, as Louden himself notes, 'German authors, particularly in the past, have often employed the term '*Wissenschaft*' in a wider sense than the English 'science'.' (Louden (this volume): XX) If this is the case of Kant as well, as I believe it is, then he can *consistently* call anthropology and the human sciences more generally 'sciences' although they are not modeled on hard sciences.

8 For a historically informed discussion of the connection between Kant's anthropology, and his *Lectures on Anthropology* in particular, and empirical psychology, see WILSON (2006, p. 20-26). She concludes that 'Pragmatic anthropology as we have already seen, does not have the same pretensions to science as empirical or rational psychology do. It is not a science that seeks to explain, but rather to judge.' (WILSON, 2006, p. 26). Whilst I disagree with Wilson on the explanatory function of anthropology, I agree with the distinction she draws between the scientific pretensions of anthropology and those of empirical psychology.

9 For an enlightening discussion of the objections against this view, see especially FRIERSON (2014, Introduction). For my response to the objection he raises against my interpretation, see COHEN (forthcoming, 2014b).

10 See also KrV 541 (A549/B577) and KpV 219 (AA 05: 99).

11 As Allen Wood has noted, Kant refers to empirical psychology as the part of anthropology that deals with inner sense (WOOD, 1999, p. 197). This part is distinct from the anthropology that deals with outer sense – or at least, they can be distinguished in principle.

12 I have argued for this claim in a Kantian context in COHEN (forthcoming, 2014a).

13 Patrick Frierson formulates this difficulty in the following way: 'a different problem arises when one seeks to make use of empirical claims about causes of human action from a practical standpoint. The sorts of theoretical claims that have the potential to raise a serious theory-in-deliberation problem are theoretical claims about causal influences on choices, where those theoretical claims are treated as causal claims and the choices are considered as free choices.' (FRIERSON, 2010, p. 103)

14 See, for instance, *Anth* 385–9 (AA 07: 286–91). In this passage, Kant's analysis of temperaments adopts such a theoretical standpoint – it accounts for behaviours as mere effects of temperament rather than freedom.

15 Contrast with the many commentators who have focus on the diversity rather than the unity of the discipline. For instance, according to Patrick Frierson, the adjective 'pragmatic' involves: (1) one's happiness, (2) the whole sphere of the practical, and/or (3) the use of others to achieve one's ends. (FRIERSON 2003, p. 80) Allen Wood highlights four senses of pragmatic: (1) pragmatic vs. physiological, (2) pragmatic vs. scholastic, (3) pragmatic as useful, (4) pragmatic as prudential. (WOOD, 1999, p. 203–5 and 2003, p. 40–42). Finally, Robert Louden distinguishes the following senses: (1) the skilful use of other human beings, (2) the ability to find means for one's happiness, (3) the ability to set one's own ends, (4) man's moral concerns (LOUDEN 2000, p. 69–70). And of course, I do not wish to deny that these various aspects exist within Kant's use of 'pragmatic' – he himself draws these distinctions in a number of places.

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