

On Kant's Genealogy of Morality

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Efforts to interconnect Kant's 'conjectures on the beginning of human history' with his anthropological insights, reflections and lectures, should unveil, in the context of his understanding of a life adequate to man, the inner necessity of establishing morality as a steadiness of good character. It is Reason that, after gaining dominance over drives in a historical turnover, takes over their role, thus turning life into a continuous activity based on a power of desire. One always desires a new, different state, as pain delivers an impetus to desire. The goals of desire, by being both determined and unattainable, insure continual desiring and thus a permanent state of satisfaction with life, as man is exempted from facing the lifelessness of boredom. Asceticism, which protects us from the saturation with pleasures of living, and the idealization of bliss, as a state entirely extraneous to worldly life, are the two preconditions that need to be met for the goals of desire to be unattainable. Only the steadiness of a good character can guarantee a somewhat stable "inner order" in a man, and this order requires specific goals, namely, the limitations of will in accordance with rational principles. The perfection of man is in the building of such a character, for this is the origin of the feeling of dignity, the origin of the endless ascending of living, and withal the permanent satisfaction with living. As for the motivation to live exactly such a life, its precondition is a fervent hope in realization of the "system of the proportional bliss", which could be insured only by a scientifically persuasive self-legitimation of reason. From today's point of view, one could not state that we succeeded, in Kantian sense, in avoiding states of lifelessness, and their consequences.

«Der Mensch ist ein Gaukler von Natur und spielt eine fremde Rolle... Das Blendwerk hört durch dessen Einsicht nicht auf.» (Refl. 60) But: «Ohne Blendwerk verliert das Leben allen Reiz» (Refl. 538).

«Das Frauenzimmer beweist am besten, dass der Mensch für die Freuden des Lebens gemacht sei, zur guten Laune, und weder zur Gravität noch Ängstlichkeit.» (Refl. 548)

«Die Männer erholen sich bei ihnen von den öffentlichen Angelegenheiten. Sie bringen auch in die menschlichen Dinge die Kleinigkeit eines Spiels, wie es wirklich beschaffen ist, und mässigen die übergrosse Wichtigkeit...». Because, for women «die Idee vom Ganzen ganz und gar keine bewegende Kraft hat. [...] Sie sehen es für Thorheit an, sich um etwas mehr als seine eigene Angelegenheit zu bekümmern.» (Refl. 571).

Deception, therefore, brings charm into our life, and man is a conjurer by nature, even if he sees

through deception. But men are by gender divided into beings occupied with themselves and the petty joys of playing games, and beings who are inspired by the idea of wholeness to carry out public deeds considered to be more than important. The last group occasionally relaxes accompanied by members of the opposite sex.

No, the above mentioned quotations are not taken from Nietzsche's work: they had been noted down about a hundred years before, and later on published under the title *Reflexionen Kant's zur Anthropologie*¹. Kant is focused on human life ranging from truth to deception; from things too important, related to solemnity and anxiety, to, on the other hand, joy, good mood and playing games; from commitment to the idea of wholeness and public acts to the commitment to oneself and one's own private affairs. The historical genesis of such a living experience, so familiar to the western tradition from ancient times, Kant exposes concisely «on the wings of imagination accompanied with

reason», in his short work from 1786 entitled *Mutmasslicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte (Conjectural Beginning of Human History)*, which is supported by the first six chapters of the first Book of Moses from the Old Testament. The work² deals with the history of the development of freedom («eine Geschichte der ersten Entwicklung der Freiheit»), but not in its external course and manifestations, but with the development of freedom within the human nature («aus ihrer ursprünglichen Anlage in der Natur des Menschen»). (*Mut. A2*)

Originally, states Kant, man was, like all other animals, a simple part of the history of nature created by God: guided exclusively by his instinct seen as «God's voice», he felt well.

What does living under the exclusive power of *instinct* actually mean? In his later work *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht (Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View)* Kant defines instinct as «die innere Nötigung des Begehungsvermögens zur Besitznehmung

ihres Gegenstandes, ehe man ihn noch kennt».³ (B 226, A 225) To be under the power of instinct means, therefore, to be forced from within, in a mysterious way, to desire the possession of things with which one is not acquainted at all, that is to say to be generally deprived of possibility, as well as of necessity, to take any personal stand or to make any decision of one's own.

The true human history, or the history of freedom, begins with setting in motion the *reason* in man, which also means taking leave from the natural instinct. A newly acquired ability to *choose on his own* not only food but his way of living as well (sich selbst eine Lebensreise auszuwählen) man experienced as a momentary pleasure (das augenblickliche Wohlgefallen), yet very soon it turned into something completely opposite: into fear and anxiety (Angst und Bangigkeit). (Mut. A 7) Since, due to an infinite series of possibilities revealed by facing a great deal of unknown things, and, in addition, deprived of any support of some higher being, man was *unable* to make his choice. Therefore, confused, horrified, and lacking any guidance, he found himself at the edge of an abyss. Or in Kant's words: «Er stand gleichsam am Rande eines Abgrundes; denn aus einzelnen Gegenständen seiner Begierde, die ihm bisher der Instinkt angewiesen hatte, war ihm eine Unendlichkeit derselben eröffnet, in deren Wahl er sich noch gar nicht zu finden wusste.» (Mut. A 7)

The openness to an *infinite* number of options now offered to him, accompanied by the absence of any orientation, goal, purpose, direction, resulting from his lack of knowledge, man experiences precisely as something opposite to feeling good finding himself in the state of deprivation of any possibility of choice: he feels placed in the *middle of nowhere* where all choices, due to their equal uncertainty, sink into the *nothingness*, into an abyss in front of which man finds himself bewildered – for he cannot retreat (because reason, once awakened, cannot be ignored), and he does not know any longer where to proceed.

At this point, the question could be posed: Why proceed at all? And, if so, why not improvise one's own living by throwing oneself into different, unknown, and unpredictable options – and why not discover maybe even a great delight in it all, rather than just stop in front of them filled with fear and confusion?

We will look for the right path to answers in Kant's perceptions of *life as such*. In his *Anthr.*, Kant points out the condition of possibility to feel life in general, and says: «Sein Leben fühlen, sich vergnügen, ist also nichts anders als: sich kontinuierlich getrieben fühlen, aus dem gegenwärtigen Zustande herauszugehen (der also ein eben so oft wiederkommender Schmerz sein muss).» (BA 173) We perceive our life, as well as our satisfaction with living only through the permanent pressure to *leave* whatever point of time we are in. And what drives us continually

to leave the present state? Kant asserts: equally often repeatedly arising *pain*.

Why exactly pain? Kant defines pain as «das Gefühl der Hindernis des Lebens» (*Anthr.* BA 170). And since it is natural that every being wishes to leave as soon as possible such a state of feeling hindrance or obstacle to living, it sets itself in motion, becomes active, and only in the *surmounting* of this state of hindrance it feels life, senses *satisfaction* in the living of life. Thus Kant states: «Der Schmerz ist der Stachel der Tätigkeit und in dieser fühlen wir allererst unser Leben; ohne diesen würde Leblosgkeit eintreten.» (*Anthr.* BA 170) However, the insight into necessity of pain as the spur of activity, which has to appear repeatedly to enable the flow of life, does not explain the fear and the anxiety in facing endless, unknown options in life.

Let us then go one step forward. In one of his anthropological reflections, Kant says that life is moved from the state of lifelessness by «Unruhe des Gemüts», namely by «Antrieb zur Veränderung, Rastlosigkeit, Antrieb zur beständigen Beschäftigung». Even «ruhige Zufriedenheit beruht auf einem unmerklichen Spiel der Veränderungen». (Refl. 344) In other words, not only when we are consciously active, but even in a state of seemingly absolute still contentment, is living based on mental agitation, on the invisible and unyielding interplay of *changes*.

Why this? Because, says Kant, «wir haben einen unmittelbaren Trieb nicht bloss zu Gegenständen, sondern zur Veränderung ihrer Empfindungen. Unter dem Titel der Unruhe werden alle namenlose Schmerzen verstanden.» (Refl. 344) In his *Anthr.*, Kant distinguishes two kinds of that painful, nameless restlessness that drives to the permanent alteration of the sensing of things, namely to activity: «Wen endlich auch kein positiver Schmerz zur Tätigkeit anreizt, den wird allenfalls ein negativer, die lange Weile, als Leere an Empfindung oft dermassen affizieren, dass er eher etwas zu seinem Schaden, als gar nichts zu tun sich angetrieben fühlt.» (BA 172)

According to Kant there are two kinds of goading to activity: *positive* pain, which means dissatisfaction with a present state that instigates one to particular positive activities, and *negative* pain, namely a void of feeling, emptiness, «prolonged unfilled time» (die lange Weile), often so unbearable, that it drives one to act unconditionally, regardless of the cost: one feels compelled to do something to harm himself rather than do nothing at all. Even in his author's copy of *Anthr.*, Kant mentioned «Abscheu am empfindungsleeren Dasein (horror vacui).» (BA 172, footnote)

Let's pose the question: Where does the affection with fear and anxiety in the state of indecisiveness in its facing endless options of freedom belong: to the positive or to the negative pain? Was it meeting an obstacle to

living, or a void of feeling? An indication towards the answer is offered by Kant when he states that living as an activity, Tätigkeit, is actually the same thing as Begehungsvermögen, the appetitive power, containing passion (Leidenschaft) as well as desire (Begierde), inclination (Neigung), and wish (Wunsch), including – in a larger sense – emotional agitation (Affekt). (Refl. 400)

Significantly, in *Anthr.* Kant opposes desire (Begierde) defined as «die Selbstbestimmung der Kraft eines Subjekts durch die Vorstellung von etwas Künftigen, als einer Wirkung derselben» and wish (Wunsch), namely «das Begehren ohne Kraftwendung zu Hervorbringung des Objekts». Then he distinguishes two kinds of «empty wish» (leere Wunsch), and later on – in this context the most important – „peevish wish“ (launische Wunsch) as «unbestimmte Begierde (appetitio vaga) (in Ansehung des Objects), welche das Subjekt nur antreibt, aus seinem gegenwärtigen Zustande herauszugehen, ohne zu wissen, in welchen es denn eintreten will», and adds immediately : «den nichts befriedigt». (B 202, A 203)

Could it be that living, already at the *first* stage of the development of reason, faced the *negative* pain, that caused a peevish wish, something that cannot satisfy, for one desires to leave a present moment without knowing where to move – which, consequently, does not constitute a true, towards positively determined activity, namely towards living itself directed desire? The lack of knowledge, that left instincts undisturbed, now becomes fatal for the being that has just begun to rely on reason: it faces man with the emptiness of feeling, with *lifelessness*, for it cannot direct the desire. Therefore, it seems that identifying and distinguishing between different options in choosing a way of living is a condition for breaking the deadlock in life, namely for starting a satisfactory way of living!

Let us take a look at what this *second* stage of reason, which is at the same time the first step in man's independent choosing, consists of. That was, according to Kant, «ein kleiner Anfang, der aber Epoche macht, indem er der Denkungsart eine ganz neue Richtung gibt». (Mut. A9). Self-awareness, says Kant, previously limited to overcoming the beast and opening the freedom of choice, now, in its second stage, brings to consciousness the *domination of reason over drives*. The first phase of this second stage constitutes the *refusal* of drives – first of all of the sex drive – in their natural raw state, namely the *idealizing* of sensual stimuli, for example the elevation of lust into love, or giving rise to the sense of beauty. By doing this, Kant states, one does not do away with drives – on the contrary: «Denn eine Neigung dadurch inniglicher und dauerhafter zu machen, dass man ihren Gegenstand den Sinnen herrscht, zeigt schon das Bewusstsein einiger Herrschaft der Vernunft über Antriebe.» (Mut. A8).

Consequently, at first, reason withholds drives their object, and by idealizing it, by postponing and modifying the gratification of drives, it makes them allegedly *more delicate* and *longer lasting*. In this manner, reason proves its superiority over drives and brings it to man's consciousness – so, as a result, man observes himself more and more convincingly as a primarily rational and not predominantly natural being. In this matter, one question still remains open: Whence has reason adopted these guidelines, namely, what is the *source* of its orientation regarding the carrying out of a particular – and it must always be a particular – withholding and idealization?

The second phase of this second stage brings forth the epochal turnover in feeling and thinking: the biblical fig leaf, namely good manners imbued by modesty, including «suppression of everything that could stir up *deprecation* (Verhehlung dessen, was Geringschätzung erregen könnte)» inspires others to *respect* us – and that is the basis of all sociability, and, at the same time, «the first hint of the formation of man into an ethical creature (den ersten Wink zur Ausbildung des Menschen, als eines sittlichen Geschöpfes).» (Mut. A9)

In the second phase the issue is achieving a direction of activity from the sphere of interpersonal relations, from the sphere of sociability: man wants to be respected by others and, therefore, he agrees to further *restrictions of his natural spontaneity* – to avoid everything that could cause an underestimation of oneself by others, which means he agrees to subordination to their value judgments. It follows that, the power of reason creates idealized constructions, of which the most important one is the feeling of *shame*. These are constructions commonly accepted by people as signposts that get them off the pathless state and direct them towards two particular options: towards the establishment of sociability and morality.

However, is this not still the case of what may be perceived as at least a hidden and undesired influence of some *irrational* powers? This way of reasoning remained *beyond* Kant's horizon: it seems that before his eyes lay only the power and superiority of an *exclusively self-reliant* reason. Why and to what end there exists such inclination towards the independency of reason and radical extraction of natural spontaneity, and, on the other hand, towards a social consensus as the criterion of the quality of life? An insight into the next step of reason will perhaps bring the answer closer.

The *third* step Kant considers to be more important and calls it «the most crucial characteristic of the human excellence (das entscheidendste Kennzeichen des menschlichen Vorzuges)». Namely, through it man achieved the ability of «premeditated expectancy of future events (die überlegte

Erwartung des Künftigen)», i.e., the imagining of the distant future as if it were the present («die kommende, oft sehr entfernte, Zeit sich gegenwärtig zu machen»), and the ability to «prepare himself for distant goals, in accordance to his determination (um seiner Bestimmung gemäss sich zu entfernten Zwecken vorzubereiten)». (Mut. A 9)

Man's essential orientation towards the *future*, because of its unpredictability – except the certainty of death – will be «the inexhaustible source of worry and sorrow» (Mut. A 9): it will impose unto him the *fear of death* as well as an inclination towards consolation in the hope of living in his descendants, very often accompanied with the wish to be in *paradise*, namely to go back to the initial state «of motionless inactivity and constant tranquility (ruhige Untätigkeit und beständigem Frieden)» (Mut. A 12). Kant brings us back to the topic of time, but now focused on the relationship between the reason or consciousness and time itself. The background of the afore outlined man's attitude towards the future, namely of his being imbued with fear, hope, and the vision of bliss, Kant discloses only after thirty years of teaching anthropology. In *Anthr.*, he states: «Wir sind aber unaufhaltsam im Strome der Zeit und den damit verbundenen Wechsel der Empfindungen fortgeführt. Ob nun gleich das Verlassen des einen Zeitpunkts und das Eintreten in den anderen ein und derselbe Akt (des Wechsels) ist, so ist doch in unserem Gedanken und dem Bewusstsein dieses Wechsels eine Zeitfolge. (BA 169) Soon after that he continues: «...die Zeit schleppt uns vom Gegenwärtigen zum Künftigen (nicht umgekehrt), und dass wir zuerst genötigt werden aus dem Gegenwärtigen herauszugehen, unbestimmt in welchen anderen wir treten werden, nur so dass er doch ein anderer ist, das kann allein die Ursache des angenehmen Gefühls sein.» (BA 170)

Consequently, only the *consciousness of a temporal sequence as the alteration of different feelings*, as a coercion to pass from the one moment of time into another – regardless of what kind, the only important fact being that it is *different* than the present one – could cause agreeable feelings; and that is what we search for in the future.

When does the enjoyment set in? In *Refl.*, Kant states: «Das Leben selbst fühlen wir nicht, sondern die Beförderung oder Hindernis desselben.» (Refl. 319) Hindrance is, as we have already seen, the source of displeasure, even pain; therefore, only the life being *promoted* can be the source of *enjoyment*. Thus, in his lectures⁴ Kant said to students: «Das Gefühl des Lebens an sich ist also kein Vergnügen, sondern das Gefühl von der Beförderung des Lebens.» (Kow. p. 177/8) But again, not before his *Anthr.* he reveals insights that guided him throughout the entire so called critical period. He says: «Auf welchem Wege

man aber auch immer Vergnügen suchen mag: so ist es [...] eine Hauptmaxime, es sich so zuzumessen, dass man noch immer damit steigen kann; denn damit gesättigt zu sein, bewirkt denjenigen ekelnden Zustand, der dem verwöhnten Menschen das Leben selbst zur Last macht und Weiber, unter dem Namen der Vapeurs, verzehrt.» (BA 179)

A life in which there is no place for the possible *increase* of enjoyment, in which saturation sets in, hence becomes a heavy burden to men and wistfulness to women. Why so? Because in this case the feeling of dissatisfaction with the present state drives one to pass into a new state which, because of the saturation with pleasure, cannot give any new satisfaction; therefore, all possible new states become just the prolongation of the old state of dissatisfaction that was supposed to be forsaken. Consequently, the consciousness of a temporal sequence disappears – for one is permanently tied to an identical state – and the feeling of living disappears as well: for one neither meets nor overcomes hindrances, thus living is neither hindered nor promoted.

Isn't that saturated life inevitably and repeatedly – just like the one imbued in absolute ignorance when confronting endless options – facing the moment of time extended so that it does not pass into another one (die lange Weile), in which all feelings cease, and which leads to lifelessness? But what Kant cares for is the fundamental *protection* of living in general from that lack of knowledge as well as the saturation, from the repeated confrontation with lifelessness, or, in other words, he cares for the nurturing of the permanence of the pulsation of living between the positive-painful feeling of hindrance and the pleasant feeling of overcoming of it in the progression of living. Hence, Kant's most important goal now is how to ensure the *continuity of the pulsation of living*: that means how to «measure it out for oneself» in the way that when passing from one moment into another, there is always some room for the transition to a really *new, different* state, and, in doing so, acquire a new experience of enjoyment. In *Anthr.*, he offers a recipe: «...das Ausfüllen der Zeit durch planmässig fortschreitende Beschäftigungen, die einem grossen beabsichtigten Zweck zur Folge haben (vitam extendere factis = das Leben durch Taten zu verlängern), ist das einzige sichere Mittel, seines Lebens froh und dabei doch auch lebensatt zu werden.» (BA 175) On the other hand, he told his students: «Wer nicht Langweile haben will, muss sich Zwanggeschäfte auferlegen. Ihr kann niemand entrinnen, der immer geniessen will.» (Kow. 244) The unflinching means for the permanent achieving of contentment with life and fulfillment is the *progressive, self-coercive busyness* in accordance with some *plan*, consistently directed towards some *grand goal*.

Isn't this exactly what Kant was talking about in the reflections found in the beginning of this paper, where he mentioned exceedingly important public deeds inspired by the strength of the insight into the idea of wholeness, extremely difficult deeds, typical for men, from which pause could be found, for example, in the deceptive charm of living, or in light-hearted cheerfulness of women? One thing is indisputable: a permanent exposure to the charms of play and trickery as a way of escaping the state of boredom (die Langweile) is *unable* to ensure a permanent contentment with life: such a life is, in its momentary rises and falls, entirely dependent upon *external* coincidences. Thus Kant, while offering advice to his students, says: «Standhaftigkeit gefällt und ist wünschenswert. Das gesetzte Gemüt bewundert jeder... Der gesetzte Mann aber hängt nicht vom Zustande ab... Er besitzt sich selbst.» (Kow. 180/181) Perseverance and a lawful composure of the soul are, hence, something desirable and amazing: they are the inimitable constitutional elements of the conditions of the possibility of the permanent contentment, simply because they take man away from his dependence on external circumstances, «Tyrannei des Schicksals» (Kow. 181), and enable him to guide his life, through exercising *self-control*, in a way that he constantly progresses towards a postulated goal.

Such a context of thinking about man's orientation toward the future as the third and the crucial step in the development of reason imposes three unavoidable questions:

1. Is it possible to ensure the *lifelong* contentment, namely the lifelong advancement of living?
2. What force or power can *sufficiently* encourage man, as a «conjurer» by nature, to be persistent and consistent in his efforts to reach high goals?
3. What does it really mean to be *lawful*, to have a lawful composure of the soul (das gesetzte Gemüt)?

ad 1. The final goal and achievement of man's aspirations has always been called *bliss*. In his lectures, Kant defined bliss (Glückseligkeit) as «Zufriedenheit der Summe aller Neigungen», but he immediately added something odd: «Wenn man sich alle Vergnügungen des Lebens entbehrlieh macht, aller Glückseligkeit desselben entsagt, so vergrössern alle Vergnügen unsre Zufriedenheit und tragen mehr zu Glückseligkeit bei...» (Kow. 183) Further on he said: «Glückseligkeit ist also eine Idee von etwas, dem wir nachjagen, was aber wir noch nicht erreicht haben. Denn wäre dies schon geschehen, so könnte man es nicht mehr Glückseligkeit nennen.» (Kow. 186), and concluded: «Zufriedenheit muss gesucht werden in dem Vermögen, entbehren zu können.» (Kow. 186) In reflexion 343 Kant is more explicit: «Wir fühlen nur die Vermehrung oder Verminderung... Daher ist es nötig, sich etwas zu versagen, damit man etwas zu steigern habe.»

Hence, bliss has to be principally *unreachable*, to be, with good reason, called bliss. And the ability to refute, to deny one's own enjoyments itself increases the feeling of contentment with life and of the proximity of bliss. But in *Anthr.*, Kant is even more radical: «Im Leben (absolut) zufrieden zu sein, wäre tatlose Ruhe und Stillstand der Triebfedern, oder Abstumpfung der Empfindungen und der damit verknüpften Tätigkeit. Eine solche aber kann eben so wenig mit dem intellektuellen Leben des Menschen zusammen bestehen, als der Stillstand des Herzens in einem tierischen Körper, auf den, wenn nicht (durch den Schmerz) ein neuer Anreiz ergeht, unvermeidlich der Tod folgt.» (BA 175)

Bliss as a motionlessness in an absolute satisfaction is hence equal to *death* – for, according to Kant, life is equated with activity, Tätigkeit, or Selbsttätigkeit (Ref. 317), in which the enjoyment is always mixed with the painful dissatisfaction with a present moment, as the spur of activity. Isn't it now, on the basis of what has been said, clearer why exactly the idealization derived from denial was man's first signpost? It was precisely the precondition of the possibility of the permanent advancement of living, and consequently the durability of contentment as well: on the one hand, the constant postponing of the fullness of satisfaction, to avoid the feeling of saturation and to enable the continuity of the regular exchanges of pain and enjoyment, and, on the other hand, setting up sufficiently high ideals to remain unreachable during man's lifetime, but at the same time considerably influential – as Kant says elsewhere – in a «regulatory» way. Thus, to avoid facing the emptiness of feeling, when one acts in a confused manner spurred by the negative pain, bliss is offered as something that is from the perspective of living, as necessarily painful acting, attractive exactly as an opposition to any kind of pain – and, at the same time, as something that is itself, paradoxically, equal to death. But it is precisely this *motionlessness*, the inactive nature of bliss that guarantees its *unachievability* during man's lifetime – for they are mutually exclusive.

ad 2. How to ensure man's persistency and consistency regarding high goals? In *Anhr.*, Kant says: «Das gründlichste und leichteste Besänftigungsmittel aller Schmerzen ist der Gedanke, den man einem vernünftigen Menschen wohl anmuten kann: dass das Leben überhaupt, was den Genuss desselben betrifft, der von Glücksumständen abhängt, gar keine eigene Wert, und nur, was den Gebrauch desselben anlangt, zu welchen Zwecken es gerichtet ist, einen Wert habe, den nicht das Glück, sondern allein die Weisheit dem Menschen verschaffen kann; der also in seiner Gewalt ist.» (BA 182/183) Therefore, life becomes valuable in accordance with the purposes towards which it is directed, and only if it is guided towards them not by chance, but through the wisdom which lays in the hands of man. Only a *self-controlled* person of calm and sensible composure can persistently and consistently lead himself towards particular

purposes. Hence: «Man muss niemals aus seiner Fassung gebracht werden» (Ref. 412) – in other words, one should not expose himself to affection and passion. For in affection one is «ausser sich gesetzt», and imbued in passion (Leidenschaft) is «seiner selbst nicht mächtig» (Ref. 407).

But, is it possible to live entirely beyond sources of passion and affection? From the already mentioned difference between Begierde, the desire that leads to activity, and Wunsch as an empty, pure wish, we may conclude that the vitality of living can be permanently and persistently maintained only by those desires that cause activity, and then only desires of a subject who is, firstly, able to act, secondly, ready to endure the time between desire and its fulfillment, and, thirdly, who knows what he wants, namely someone who does not desire a change for the sake of change, but only the one directed towards a state whose characteristics he knows in advance – in other words: a person who has a *pre-determined* goal, purpose, or point of activity.

Nevertheless, again and again we are faced with the open question: Where has man acquired that orientation from, i.e. that knowledge of particular desirable goals and aims of action? In reflexion 350 Kant poses the question: «Warum das Leben gefällt und die Leblosigkeit missfällt?», and answers: «Da das Wohlgefallen der Grund der Begierden und Tätigkeiten ist, so ist es die Direktion der Kräfte auf die Ausübung des Lebens selbst.» In reflexion 401 he states: «Das Wohlgefallen an der Wirklichkeit des Gegenstandes ist die Begierde. Sie ist auf Tätigkeit gerichtet und nicht auf Vorstellungen möglicher oder erträumter Begierden.» Hence, what Kant calls Wohlgefallen (pleasure, satisfaction, delight) directs one's appetite predominantly towards reality, living, and not towards pure wishes and dreams. But we are still without an answer to the question: towards which specific goals and purposes? However, through this line of inquiry we realize that without the goals and purposes that man considers to be real there can be no long-lasting persistent and valuable activity.

ad 3. It remains to examine what the «lawfully composed soul (das gesetzte Gemüt)» is supposed to be. In reflexion 355 Kant says: «Alle menschlichen Bewegungen sind Zerrüttungen der inneren Ordnung.» Accordingly, in human beings there must be some «internal order» that precedes all life activities, which is permanently being disrupted by them. It's not hard to guess that Kant here speaks of the power of *reason*, which has in the meantime reached the *fourth*, final level of its development. Through it – Kant presumes – man has become aware that *he* was the purpose of all nature, and that all other beings were just a means for the realization of *his* intentions; but at the same time the insight that «in the other man one must see the equal co-proprietor of nature's bounty», this imposes on him restrictions of the will that are necessary for the establishment of society. The point here is

the *full dignity* of man, which excludes him from the other natural beings. Thus, Kant points out to his students: «Jeder wünscht sich lieber ein gesetztes Gemüt, als eine immerwährende Freude. Denn diese ist allezeit unsicher, und es darf sich nur etwas wenig ändern, so ist es mit der Lustigkeit aus. Der gesetzte Mann aber hängt nicht vom Zustande ab. Er ist zwar kein Gegenstand des Neides, aber auch nicht des Mitleidens. Er besitzt sich selbst.» (Kow.181) Later on he adds: «Ein Mensch zu sein, ist wirklich keine so nichtige Sache. Denn nur bloss das Wohlverhalten bestimmt den wahren Wert des Menschen. Daher ist die Rechtschaffenheit das Wichtigste bei ihm. Er muss also moralisch gut leben... Nur allein also im Wohlverhalten liegt die Wichtigkeit des Lebens.» (Kow.182)

To achieve security, to control oneself and to exercise control over nature aside from external circumstances, and, on the other hand, to restrict one's will regarding a fellow citizen in accordance with moral principles, and to see in good manners, in honesty, in uprightness that which is the most important in life – these are, to put it very briefly, goals and purposes imposed on man by his *wholly developed reason*. It embeds them into the human «internal order» in a way that they make man praiseworthy, and life meaningful.

What does this in fact mean? The reason orders to each individual to form a *character*, namely «Wille nach Grundsätzen» (Refl. 479) or «das was alle Neigungen unter eine Regel bringt» (Refl. 487) or, again in other words «allgemeine herrschende Principium in dem Menschen von Gebrauchen seiner Talente und Eigenschaften», characterized by «Festigkeit und Einheit des Principii» (Refl. 495). Thus: «In der Einheit des Charakters besteht die Vollkommenheit des Menschen.» (Refl. 496), and, as the most important for Kant: «Charakter bedeutet dass die Person die Regel ihrer Handlungen aus sich selbst und der Würde der Menschheit entlehnt.»

(Refl. 498) The precondition of a valuable life hence is character, closely linked to rules, basic principles, steadfastness and unity, all of which must be derived from a person himself and from the dignity of human kind. Therefore: «Moralität besteht im guten Charakter» (Refl. 519), and in no way in what Kant calls «Gutherzigkeit» or «Gutartigkeit des Herzens», based upon instinct, and not upon any rule set by reason. (Refl. 464)

All in all, in the course of development of reason, that enabled the creation of good character, morality was born!

With just a few steps of further inference, it would be necessary to reach out for the insights into how and at what cost Kant, taking the role of the critical judge and legislator of reason, tried to protect those traits and goals linked with the strength of character from all, primarily cognitive temptations, and, also, how he articulated man's «internal rational order», namely how he set up moral principles as laws in the human soul and suggested the feeling of dignity; then how he tried, by introducing the «system of a proportioned bliss» as well as «disciplining through religion», to encourage man to overcome effectively his naturality by means of his morality; then how he imagined an appropriate social order, namely «weltbürgerliche Gesellschaft» as an unreachable idea and one more regulative principle: all together as a set of different aspects of the endless ascending of living – if not of an individual, then surely of mankind (Kant emphasizes that everywhere) – as a means to ensure the long-lasting durability of man's contentment with life.

To conclude: It could still be that in Kant's philosophizing particular satisfactions in life are not sacrificed to the strictness of morality just for the sake of voluntarily imposed formalism – the manner in which Kant is interpreted too often.

From the exposed genealogy of morality based on the development of reason – in the way that Kant sees it in accordance with how he sees life in general – the implication is that moral strictness is just the unavoidable *means* of reason in the establishment of the unshakable durability of man's contentment with living.

Consequently, isn't it then necessary, in respect to the source of contentment as well as of life itself, in consonance with Kant's understanding of them – to initiate an adequate dialog with him primarily related to the topic of time, or, more precisely, as e.g. Damir Barbarić said at the Kant-congress in Berlin in the title of his paper: isn't «Die Langweile: ein Schlüssel zur Anthropologie Kants?»⁵

What is more, maybe it would not be inappropriate to pose the question: Is not Kant's *entire* philosophizing a well considered and systematically elaborated protection of living from the possibility of facing those disgusting, negative-painful moments of dissatisfaction, which are unable to pass into some other, different from them; hence, they linger endlessly, and through increasing pain and embarrassment, they drive potentially reasonable beings to feel a panicked fear and to escape from emptiness, from the lack of any feeling into a harmful, headless and irrational hurtle, into what may be but a delusion of something just fictitiously new and different?⁶

Regardless to what degree man be the conjurer, wouldn't it be an exaggeration to state that both, we and Kant, have succeeded, and that we of this day, more than 200 years later, have nothing in common with the afore depicted state of the panic-stricken, but not the enchanting, flight into delusion?

Footnotes

¹ In: *Reflexionen Kants zur kritischen Philosophie*, Band 1: *Reflexionen Kant's zur Anthropologie (=Refl.)*, herausgegeben von Benno Erdmann 1882/1884, neu herausgegeben von Norbert Hinske, Stuttgart – Bad Cannstatt 1992. (The abbreviation: Refl. X expresses the ordinate number of a particular reflexion.)

² Kant, Immanuel, *Mutmasslicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte (=Mut.)*, in: Werkausgabe, Bd. XI, herausgegeben von Wilhelm Weischedel, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1977.

³ Kant, Immanuel, *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht (=Anthr.)* in: Werkausgabe, Bd. XII, herausgegeben von Wilhelm Weischedel, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1977.

⁴ *Die philosophischen Hauptvorlesungen Immanuel Kants*, herausgegeben von Arnold Kowalewski, Hildesheim 1965. (=Kow.)

⁵ See *Kant und die Berliner Aufklärung. Akten des IX. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses*, herausgegeben von Volker Gerhardt, Rolf-Peter Horstmann and Ralph Schumacher, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin – New York 2001, Bd. IV, pp. 323-330.

⁶ This topic is systematically elaborated in: D. Ljubimir, „Kantova četiri pitanja“ (Kant's Four Questions), Demetra, Zagreb 2010.