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IMMANUEL KANT

(1724–1804)

Heinrich Kanz

Kant was born, spent his working life and died in Königsberg (now Kaliningrad). About 90% of the town was destroyed in 1944–45 and neither the house in which he was born nor that in which he died remain standing today. There is a Kant Museum in the university and a well-tended grave behind the ruins of Königsberg cathedral, which may be perceived at one and the same time as a memorial and as a monument to the spirit of reconciliation in the prevailing world situation today. Here the visitor may pay pious tribute to one of the greatest German philosophers since the Age of the Enlightenment. Kant must surely rank among the most eminent proponents of European philosophy writing in the German language since the eighteenth century.

Experts in the history of German education describe the eighteenth century as ‘the age of pedagogics’. Kant, like many others, turned his attention to education, but his significance in this particular sector can only be appreciated against the more general background of his philosophy. His true place therefore lies in the history of a ‘pedagogical philosophy’ or a philosophy of education in all its aspects. Scheuerl’s famous portrait of the *Classical exponents of pedagogics* therefore omits Kant, though he is mentioned in the introduction¹ along with Luther, Melanchthon, Friedrich August Wolf and Schiller. It may well be that this interpretation of the classical exponents of pedagogics draws too sharp a distinction with the underlying science of philosophy. Other pedagogical traditions do, however, make explicit reference to the importance of Kant in this area. ‘Kant and pedagogics’ was one topic dealt with in 1954 by the well-known existential ‘pedagogical’ philosopher Bollnow², who has drawn attention to an unbroken line dating back from twentieth century pedagogics to Kant himself.

One major task facing us today is to create spiritual reconciliation between the continents of the world. But that is only possible by defining the profile and true historical identity of particular groups or regions such as Africa, America, Asia, Australasia or Europe. From the European standpoint, this requirement means that Europeans must make reference to their human responsibility for others and for themselves, and reinterpret their own history in such a way that both its negative and positive factors are placed in their true perspective. What is more, each continent must make its own pluralistic, individual and concrete contribution to the new world ethic. We must therefore examine Kant’s relevant intellectual achievements in Europe in the wider context of equal partnership in a future world society, with particular reference to education. Our profile of Kant as an educator will therefore be structured in five parts: biographical data; his educational statements; methods; the impact of Kant’s works; and Kant’s lasting achievements, which will also be our conclusion.

Biographical data

From our modern intellectual standpoint, Kant is perceived in three different ways: firstly the Kant of philosophers,³ secondly the Kant of the world scientific audience⁴ and thirdly the Kant of educational experts and scientists.⁵ To provide a clear illustration of Kant's educational qualifications and relevance, it is interesting to consider some aspects of his professional career with a bearing on education.

Immanuel Kant was born in Königsberg on 22 April 1724.⁶ His parents belonged to the lower middle class. They brought him up in such a way that their son remembered them with a 'feeling of the utmost gratitude' and confirmed that he could have received no better moral education. He acquired the basic skills of reading and writing in the Hospital School in the suburbs of Königsberg. He went on to attend the Collegium Fridericianum Grammar School, where the emphasis was placed on Latin, Greek (The New Testament) and theology or religion whose constant presence in the teaching syllabus and school life seemed to him oppressive, but at the same time laid the basis for his subsequent personal religiosity, founded on a rational sense of responsibility. In 1740, at the age of 16, Kant was admitted to the University of Königsberg, where he came into close contact with the philosophy of Leibniz. Thereafter he acted as a private tutor to boys under the age of 12. In 1755 he graduated in Königsberg, qualifying in the same year as a university teacher with his dissertation on 'New light on the first principles of metaphysical cognition'. As a *Privatdozent*, or unsalaried lecturer, he analysed the work of Newton, Hume and, above all, Rousseau who, in his own words, had 'put him on the right track' and sparked off 'a revolution in his personal thinking'. His lectureship, partly financed by a post of assistant librarian in the Königsberg Royal Library, ended in 1770 when he was appointed to a full professorship of logic and metaphysics. (The subject of his inaugural dissertation was 'On the form and principles of the world of the senses and reason'). Kant's professorial career made him one of the leading German-language intellectuals. In the course of his intensive experience of scholarly life (he was also rector of the university in 1786 and 1788), he wrote the philosophical works which proved to be milestones of his era (see the lists of his works).

In his confrontation with the cultural opinion-shapers in the Europe of his day, he wrote his famous 'Answer to the question: what is Enlightenment?' in 1784, along with many other lesser contributions. He gave his last lecture in 1796. Kant died in 1804. His last words are reported to have been: 'It is good'. He had previously overcome his fear of death through a theistic religious dimension.

A tentative overview of Kant's intellectual endeavours under a few key headings can best be arrived at by quoting the questions put by him in 1793 which were destined to become world-famous: What can I know? What am I to do? What may I hope? What is man? Kant adopted a wide-ranging and critical approach to the problems reflected in those questions on two different planes of thought:

Firstly, through an enlightened positive interpretation of human reason, he made a rational personal assessment of the human potential and limitations of reason. This explains the extraordinary critical 'modesty' and confinement to the potential experiences of all human beings (or phenomena) in the *Critique of pure reason* that reduces ideological sophisms *ad absurdum* and points out that scientific knowledge of things in themselves (*Noumena*) is unattainable.

Secondly, Kant did not remain content with a somewhat reticent assessment of human reason, but went on to identify possibilities for a moral dimension of freedom, immortality and religious fulfilment for man. In his *Critique of pure reason* written in 1781, Kant himself expressed his 'unwavering' belief in the 'existence of God and a future life'.⁷ However, according to Kant, the belief in 'God, freedom and immortality', which brings happiness to man and fosters world peace, cannot be rationalized, indoctrinated and turned into an ideology (or 'dogma'). He therefore issues a critical

warning against the supposition that this belief might be proved. Were that the case, man's intellectual freedom could not exist. In that spirit, Kant criticized reason in the Preface to the second edition of his *Critique of pure reason* in 1787. 'I therefore found it necessary to abolish knowledge in order to leave room for belief',⁸ that is, to pave the way for corresponding moral certainties in human existence. Pure reason holds out the 'prospects of articles of faith'⁹—no more and no less.

Kant thus articulated the concept of human freedom in unmistakably clear terms; in his view, human dignity makes the recognition of that freedom an inherently subjective matter. He made that point with particular force in his *Critique of practical reason* (1788). The 'conclusion' to that work begins: 'Two things fill my mind with ever-growing wonder and awe, the more often and persistently I turn my thinking to them: the starry firmament above me and the moral law within me'.¹⁰

Kant's educational statements

The emphasis on subjectivity is a fundamental principle of education in the modern world. Applying that principle, the actors involved in the process of education and upbringing are defined as subjects who must not make use of one another as 'instruments.' The fact that all men are subjects who should not exploit each other as means to an end would seem to be the quintessence of Kant's philosophy. For that, modern European education owes him a debt of gratitude in the general world context. If we go on to apply Kant's philosophy to education and inquire into its educational significance, we shall, however, not have to deal solely with the educational statements that are immanent in Kant's philosophy. We shall also need to make reference to his explicit educational statements.

The leading German intellectuals of the eighteenth century had a number of well-known organs of publication at their disposal, such as the *Berlinische monatschrift* [Berlin monthly], in which they engaged in a lively exchange of views on all topics of current interest, including that of education and schooling. In 1776–77, writing in the *Königsberger gelehrten und politischen zeitung* [Königsberg scholarly and political journal], Kant set out his views on the famous 'Philanthropin' reforming school in Dessau, to which he ascribed a cosmopolitan, revolutionary and continental significance. 'Each ordinary being, each individual citizen of the world, must have an infinite interest in gaining familiarity with an establishment which is laying the foundations for a whole new order of things'. Basedow's Philanthropin School in Dessau, 'must of necessity attract [...] the keen attention of Europe'. In the well-ordered countries of Europe, an 'early revolution' must be put in hand in the shape of school reform. This reform had been set in motion and was admirably exemplified by the 'Dessau Educational Institute (the Philanthropin)'.¹¹

Kant gave verbal expression to the didactic relevance of his university teaching duties. He took great pains to adopt a pedagogical attitude towards his audience. This is made clear by the announcement of the nature and purpose of his lectures in 1765/66. His listeners were to be trained to become comprehending, reasonable and scholarly persons. The young people entrusted to him must be 'taught to acquire a more mature insight of their own in future'.¹²

Kant gave lectures 'on pedagogics'¹³ in the 1776/77 winter semester, in the 1780 summer semester and in the 1783/84 and 1786/87 winter semesters. He did not himself publish the text of these lectures, although Rink did so at the publishing house of Nicolovius in Königsberg in 1803. It is reasonable to suppose that these texts contain Kant's fundamental thinking on educational topics.

As a professor in the philosophical faculty, he was required to give lectures on education from time to time. For this purpose he was able to draw on the *Handbook of the art of education* by Bock, a counsellor of the consistory and a former colleague. The extent to which he did so is an academic question that must in part be answered by considering the generality of his thinking. Rink's edition of

Kant's 'Pedagogics' deals in condensed form with various strata of his presentation. A reading of these texts immediately reveals the problems pertaining to the pre-critical and critical phases. The texts set out in an exemplary fashion the basic views of Kant, the philosopher, on education in the context of the material available to him and of his discussions with contemporary intellectuals.

A comparison of the educational statements contained in the compulsory lectures 'on pedagogics' with other opinions on education put forward in Kant's contemporaneous or later writings is revealing. For this purpose we may draw, in particular, on lengthy and shorter publications with an ethical, aesthetic, historical, anthropological and theological content. Apart from sections of his classical works, (i.e. the three critiques, see references, p. 806), relevant publications include 'The idea of a general history for the purpose of a citizen of the world' (*Berlinische monatsschrift*, 1784), 'The presumed beginning of the history of mankind' (*Berlinische monatsschrift*, 1786), 'What is Enlightenment?' (*Berlinische monatsschrift*, 1784), *Perpetual peace*, (1795) and 'Anthropology from the pragmatic viewpoint' (1798).¹⁴ Interest also attaches to the explanations to be found in his fundamental text on religious philosophy 'Religion within the limits of pure reason' (1793), for example, his comments on the problem of good and evil in man and on the way in which education responds to this problem.¹⁵ He writes as follows on this point: 'What man is, or may be destined to become, in the moral sense, good or evil, is of *his own* making, both now and in the past'.¹⁶

The literary form of the printed version of the lecture 'On Pedagogics' (1776/77, 1780, 1783/84 and 1786/87) (see Note 5) available to us today differs from that of other works by Kant. Its editor, Rink, arranged for the publication of a series of juxtaposed axioms, aphorisms and ideas rather than a systematically structured text. This accumulation of notes on education and pedagogics can, however, be used as a source from which to derive viewpoints that may be defined constructively today and from which a conflict with the views on education held in Kant's own day emerges.

Some of his educational ideas, assumptions and reflections from which positive suggestions with a bearing on the global structure of education advocated today can be derived, will now be discussed below. Any endeavour to establish an internal order among these fragments would, however, appear to place excessive demands on the original and must remain more a matter of interpretation. Nevertheless, a number of thematically relevant questions do arise to which answers may be found in the text itself: What is education? For whom is education directed? How can education, which leads to enlightened reason as a source of peace, be imparted or received?

WHAT IS EDUCATION?

Kant subscribed to the fundamental pedagogical position that education is imperative for the development of mankind. Precisely because all human beings have 'such a strong inclination to freedom', they must be 'accustomed from an early age to accept the dictates of reason' (1963, p. 10). Man (as a collective designation) is that which education makes of him and nothing more. 'It will be noted that man is always educated by other men who have themselves been educated previously' (p. 11). Education may be viewed firstly in empirical terms, that is, in the manner in which the educational process takes place in a given real situation; secondly, it must be considered in its anthropological profundity and with reference to its normative idea. Here it will be noted that 'an idea is nothing other than the concept of a perfection which has not as yet been experienced' (p. 12).

The idea of education is a yardstick for the practice of education. It permits a critique of education and a critique of schools and training. Even if it has not yet been put into practice, or has only been done so in its basic principles by a process of approximation, the 'idea of an education that develops all the natural gifts of man' appears to contain the 'truth'.

The provision of true and good education ‘holds the great secret of the true perfection of human nature’ (p. 12 et seq.). Kant finds it ‘delightful to imagine that human nature can be increasingly enhanced through education and that education can be shaped in a manner which is appropriate to mankind’ (p. 12). Educational planning must therefore follow a ‘cosmopolitan’ (p. 15) spirit with a commitment to all that is ‘best in the world’ (p. 15).

‘Good education is itself the source of all that is good in the world’ (p. 15). Therefore we arrive at the conceptual principle that ‘children must not be educated simply to achieve the present level but towards a possible better future level of the human race, in other words taking account of the idea of mankind and the universal destiny of man’ (p. 14).

One of Kant’s objections to the type of education given in his day, for example within the family, was that parents generally only brought up their children to equip them to ‘fit in with the world as it is today, however bad it may be’ (p. 14). Good education, on the other hand, is capable of bringing about a gradual improvement in the world. It is a task for many successive generations, each of which can take individual steps towards the perfection of mankind, towards a ‘better proportioned and expedient development’ of all natural human inclinations. Individual happiness and misfortune thus genuinely depend on the individuals themselves. ‘Education is therefore the greatest and most difficult problem with which man can be confronted, since insight depends on education and education in its turn depends on insight’ (p. 13). Kant assigned pedagogical activity a position among cultural activities, seen as a reflection of the totality of the human being, in such a way as to establish a direct relationship between education and political activity: ‘Two inventions of man must surely be viewed as the most difficult: the art of government and the art of education’ (p. 14).

Kant names the following as the main tasks for education: (a) disciplined thinking; (b) creation of a cultivated outlook; (c) enhancement of civilization; and (d) imparting moral rectitude (p. 16 et seq.). He believed that education in his day took care of the first three of these tasks, but complained that ‘we are living in an age of discipline, culture and civilization but the age of moral rectitude still lies in the distant future’ (p. 17).

Kant’s fundamental way of thinking can be perceived in this definition of the fourth main function of education which is often misunderstood through an incorrect use of the moral concept; it implies a commitment to a future world ethic. Moralization means that the persons who are being educated must develop an attitude so as to choose ‘good purposes only’. ‘Good purposes are those which necessarily secure universal approval and may at the same time be the purposes of everyone’ (p. 17). The educational processes which seek to promote the ‘moral character’ of children and young people have a moralizing function. This character is indissolubly bound up with the dignity of all human beings and must therefore be interpreted in anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist and anti-élitist terms as referring to the ‘citizen of the world’. Children must be educated to perform: (a) their duties to themselves; and (b) their duties to others.

‘The duty to oneself, however, resides in the fact that the human being preserves the dignity of mankind in his own person’ (p. 51). In all his actions, the child or the person to be educated must have in mind the fact that ‘the human being bears within him a certain dignity that makes him more noble than all other forms of life’. His ‘duty’ is to ‘see to it that this dignity of mankind is not belied in his own person’ (p. 50).

The notion of duty to others implies that: ‘Respect for, and compliance with, the rights of men must be imparted to the child at a very early age’ (p. 51). For example, Kant instructs a richer child to show the same human respect to his poorer coevals as to others like him.

Given the limited space available to us here, we can only mention among Kant’s many other significant statements on education the fact that the principle of obedience in education is always

applied in the context of enlightened reason. In the final phase of education, duty, obedience and reason are combined as follows: ‘Adopting a particular course of action from a sense of duty means obeying the dictates of reason’ (p. 46).

FOR WHOM IS EDUCATION INTENDED?

Two levels of statements must be considered here: firstly, statements on human beings in general which are applicable to all age-groups, and, secondly, statements relating to children and adolescents who are not yet adults. We shall comment briefly below on these two aspects.

Human beings (in general) bear within them all the necessary attributes for good. ‘Man must first develop his attributes for good; providence has not imparted them to him in a definitive form. Man must better himself, improve his level of culture and, if he is bad, acquire morality’ (p. 13). A human being may be ‘highly cultivated physically [...] and have a highly trained intellect, but his morality may be low and he may still be an evil creature’ (p. 33 et seq.).

The true nature of a man is reflected in certain forces of the mind and understanding. Kant states by way of example that ‘understanding means recognition of general principles. Judgement is the application of the universal to the particular. Reason means the ability to perceive the relationship between the universal and the particular’ (p. 36).

The nature of the child is manifested in many individual observations and — by deduction — in instructions for education. For example, children must be neither over- nor understretched, depending on their age. ‘A child must only be as clever as a child’ (p. 47). The essential nature of the child is distorted by precociousness or slavery to fashion: ‘Children must also be open-hearted, their gaze as bright as the sun’ (p. 47). ‘Assuming that the child has a natural inclination to go its own way, which may be assumed to be only most exceptionally what is wanted, the best attitude to adopt is this: if the child does nothing to please us, we in turn shall do nothing to please it’ (p. 42 et seq.). ‘Neither should children be intimidated’ (p. 41). ‘They must not try to reason out everything’ (p. 41). ‘It is extremely harmful to accustom the child to treat everything as a game’ (p. 35).

How can a child be educated to acquire that enlightened universal reason which promotes the cause of peace?

In this context, Kant advocates the ‘judicious’ further development of the ‘art of education or pedagogics’ (p. 14) in order that it may be ‘transformed into a science’ (p. 14). In addition, the true problems of education must be recognized, problems which are only apparent, being rejected in a spirit of criticism of ideologies. Kant examines *inter alia* the questions of compulsion in education, learning methods and the notion of duty.

The central issue from the angle of *compulsion in education* is that of deciding how the obedience to legal constraints and those of society, without which life is impossible, can be reconciled with the ability of the individual to ‘make use of his personal freedom’ (p. 20). Unless the child feels the ‘inevitable resistance of society’ from an early age, it can know nothing of the difficulty of self-preservation and personal independence. As a solution to this problem, Kant indicates three pedagogical rules of conduct for the progressive development of freedom:

1. The child must be allowed to enjoy every possible freedom from infancy, except in things where it may do harm to itself and provided that it does not inhibit the freedom of others through its actions.
2. The child must be given to understand that it can only achieve its own objectives if it also permits others to achieve theirs.

3. The child must realize that it is under an obligation to make use of its freedom and that it is being educated in such a way that it may one day attain freedom, i.e. will not be dependent on the care of others (see p. 20).

The nature of the problem of discipline in this context is that the child must always remain aware of its own freedom when disciplinary measures are taken, without obstructing the freedom of others (see p. 29). Children should be accustomed to work without having to abandon play. In brief, 'education must be made obligatory without becoming a form of slavery' (p. 35).

In his discussion of learning methods, Kant reminds us of the following basic concepts: 'The individual learns most thoroughly and best retains those things which he learns, as it were, for himself' (p. 40). 'The principal need is to teach children to think' and not to train them like animals. Learning to think can best be achieved using the Socratic method and not by what may be termed the mechanical-catechetic method. 'The education of the future must be based on the Socratic method.' Although children cannot gain an understanding of the central propositions without external help, 'it must nevertheless be recognized that the perception of reason cannot be drummed into them, but must be arrived at from within themselves' (p. 40). The Socratic method must also be the foundation of the mechanical-catechetic method that is 'exemplary' for the presentation of revealed religion with its historical references.

Kant formulated many meritorious statements with a practical relevance to education in everyday pedagogical language in his lectures. They assume a central position between the extremes that were highlighted in his day, for example, the contrast between play and work, freedom and compulsion, etc. Finally, importance attaches here to the reference to the compulsory, character and conscience-forming dimension of education. Duty, action stemming from the centre of consciousness and character stability are not opposing counterparts to the 'joy of the heart' which comes about when the individual has nothing for which to reproach himself (p. 59). Inclination, interest and pleasure are not forbidden in Kant's scheme of things. However, they must be relativized in relation to the commitment of the individual to love of other human beings and to the well-being of all men.

Kant's theory of duty was deeply rooted in his notion of world citizenship. It is worth dwelling for a moment on a quotation from his work that is thrown into particular relief by the movement towards world peace that we are witnessing today:

An action must seem worthwhile to me not because it corresponds to my own inclinations, but because it reflects my duty of neighbourly love for others and also my awareness of world citizenship. The nature of our own soul requires us to take an interest 1. in ourselves, 2. in others with whom we have grown up and then 3. we must also show an interest in what is best for the world. Children must be familiarized with this interest which will be a source of warmth for their own souls. They must take pleasure in that which is best in the world, even if it does not correspond to the advantage of their own fatherland and does not bring them personal profit (p. 59).

METHODS

The research instruments available to contemporary science are many and varied as a result of a long process of historical development. Their professional orientation in different areas (nature, the intellect, society, etc.) and their modern designations (e.g. phenomenological, empirical, dialectic) cannot readily be extrapolated to earlier periods in history. A few designations, making allowance as far as possible for the self-awareness and method of expression of Kant's own age, therefore seem in order here.

The term 'transcendental-critical' is incontrovertibly the main formula used to define Kant's method of philosophical research¹⁷. As he himself states, Kant overcame the 'dogmatic sclerosis' of

methods and contents of earlier philosophy and discovered his own method of philosophical reflection which made him one of the central figures of world philosophy. The implications of this for education in his own time were indicated by Kant in his explicit educational statements after his critical change of position, and also in the pedagogically relevant content of his philosophy. Reduced to a brief formula, it might be stated that, by drawing a distinction between ideas and the material of 'empirical' research, Kant paved the way for one fundamental position of modern enlightened educational science that starts out from the principle of the freedom of its subjects. Even if there had been no notion of freedom before him, that freedom has existed as a normative idea since Kant's day, unaffected by all negative empirical factors and realities of repression.

As the founder of German idealism, Kant confined scientific knowledge to its own specific subject area without abandoning the 'non-empirical' ideas inherent in human existence. On the contrary, he sought to provide an intellectual prop for human freedom of thought by critically illustrating, on the one hand, the impossibility of proving the supreme values of mankind by the resources of empirical science since such proof, if it were adduced, would abolish human intellectual freedom, while on the other hand calling 'transcendental-phenomenological' attention to the dignity which is a characteristic of all human existence and deserving of critical comment.

Beyond the transcendental-critical research method and its universal application in non-philosophical areas, Kant also made use in his pedagogics of traditional means of acquiring knowledge, such as observation, the study of literature and consideration of the opinions of enlightened contemporaries whom he quoted (Basedow, Rousseau). The teaching methods used by Kant in the university study context of his own day made him much sought after as a teacher and counsellor of his own students.

The impact of Kant's works

Our subject here is 'Kant as an educator'; that being so, our description of his impact will be confined to a few areas of educational theory and practice. These can be classified under the headings of basic education, family education, school education, university education, general adult education and senior-citizen education, against the background of the different phases of German and European history.

Kant's pedagogical influence must, of course, be seen in the context of his significance as the founder of German idealism (in the history of philosophy), as the leading critical figure in the Prussian branch of German enlightenment in the eighteenth century (in the history of the moral sciences) and as a European intellectual of world rank (in the history of education and culture). Without looking into the question here as to which contemporaries and which historical phases or centuries (eighteenth to twentieth) have given a correct interpretation of Kant, it is still possible to highlight the impact of his educational theories from two angles: firstly, from the angle of its positive connotations and, secondly, from that of its negative attributes.

Since we have no specific empirical evidence in the above theoretical and practical subject areas, reference will be made instead to a few key words, such as enlightenment, the individual, the ethic of duty and world peace.

In terms of educational history, Kant is an accepted exponent of enlightenment who is described, for example, in all the relevant German school textbooks, as the source of the spirit of enlightenment conceived in the international sense. His answer to the question as to the meaning of enlightenment, namely that each individual must find the courage to make use of his own understanding despite the obstacles of cowardice and idleness, also defines the horizon of enlightenment in our reunited Germany today.

The concept of the individual has a history of philosophical, juridical and theological meanings. Moreover, at all stages of German general education since the days of Kant, the term 'person' has reflected the fact that each human being is an 'end in himself', that is, that regardless of his class, world view, religion, race, nation, etc., and of all the obstacles standing in his way, he is from the start of his existence a reality in his own right and with his own dignity. With Rousseau, Shaftesbury and Leibniz, Kant is a source of the idea, present in European teaching syllabuses down the centuries, that 'the inclinations and forces dormant in the individual must be allowed to unfurl freely, viewing the individual not as a means but as an end in himself, as a being in whose spontaneity our trust must be placed'.¹⁸

Kant's ethic of duty is the subject of controversy among professional philosophers. However, in Kant's pedagogical statements, for instance, when he posits the idea of a duty to love our fellow men and the need to train the individual to resist egoistic consumerism and nationalistic isolation, the aspect of all-round education is particularly prominent. Kant's categorical imperative, which states that all men are obliged to act in such a way that the principles of their actions may be binding on all other men, contains an explicit and implicit reference to a humanity which spans the world and places all men on an equal basis. Modern interpreters of Kant's concept of duty note with astonishment the course taken by the history of the ethic of duty in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, i.e. after his death. More recently, the true nature of Kant's thinking has been reconstructed, while the extraordinarily erroneous nature of the previous interpretation with its formalistic and nationalistic contours is coming increasingly to be recognized.

A positive reconstruction of the Kantian notion of duty from the educational angle was undertaken by a leading pedagogical expert in the days of the Weimar Republic and in the first phase¹⁹ of the creation of the Federal Republic in the years between 1949 and 1959, Eduard Spranger, who detected a Prussian tradition deserving of intellectual recognition dating back to Friedrich II. The latter was said to have done his duty in his own day and expected his successors to do likewise. Spranger finds it impossible to imagine a educational commitment to the good of all men throughout the world against egoism, all kinds of addictions and other negative factors without having regard to the concept of duty which he even uses against Humboldt who 'merely seeks an organic experience of his own innermost inclinations'.²⁰

Another positive assessment of Kant has been made in the area of theoretical and practical peace education, in so far as the latter has taken on board ideas from his philosophical draft 'on eternal peace'.²¹ Here Kant speaks out against those who are 'mouthpieces of the prevailing violence'.²² He envisages a future union of politics, justice and an ethic of peace. 'Justice must remain sacred to man, however great the sacrifices to the prevailing violence which this may entail'.²³ It is a 'duty, even if justified hope also exists' to advocate the notion that 'eternal peace based on what have previously been called peace treaties (which are no more than truces) is not an empty idea but a task which must be gradually attained by moving constantly closer to the underlying objective (because the periods in which such progress is made will, it is to be hoped, follow in more rapid succession)'.²⁴

In many respects, Kant lived on in the theoretical pedagogics of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Scarcely any 'classical exponent of education' has been able to get by without quoting Kant. What is more, a scientific orientation or the school making direct reference to Kant grew up and became known as the neo-Kantian transcendental philosophical school. This school took Kant's philosophy in its idealistic fundamentals as the yardstick of pedagogical thought processes. This educational current, incorporating the notions of a subject, I myself, conscience, a dialogue, etc., therefore developed what became known as the normative dimension of education which seeks to preserve human dignity everywhere and at all times. Alfred Petzelt and his pupils impressively represented this trend of thinking after the Second World War.²⁵

The negative connotations to the name and work of Kant reside in the general context of Prussian militarism, notions of duty which have proved hostile to life itself at different times in German history, the mental perversion of National Socialism, etc. As evidence of this, it is worth quoting the opinion of a student who was executed because of his resistance to Hitler. On 22 August 1942, Hans Scholl wrote the following words which contradict Spranger's interpretation of Friedrich II of Prussia quoted above: 'How small must a people which calls Friedrich II "Great" itself be? That people fought for its freedom against Napoleon only to choose Prussian slavery instead'.²⁶ Hans Scholl's interpretation of Kant follows on from the ideas of his intellectual mentor, Theodor Haecker, who wrote: 'The link between duty and verbiage represents the true dehumanization of man. But it is a feature peculiar to Prussian Germans who were its inventors'.²⁷ Haecker views Kant's German idealism as a 'Prussian matter'. Hans Scholl's letter to Rose Nägele München of 25 January 1942 takes the same line: 'What evil can be traced back to Kant's categorical imperative! Kant, toughness, Prussianhood—the death of all moral life!'²⁸

Kant's lasting achievements

Without reference to the history of the impact of Kant's thinking in the narrower and broader sense and to the existing contradictory images of his work, we shall conclude by attempting to interpret his importance in such a way that his possible contribution to the moral and normative development of a future world society will be demythified from the philosophical and pedagogical perspective in a quasi-ideogrammatic manner, while at the same time highlighting a number of constructive points. Four viewpoints may be taken as the basis for more detailed reflection.

EUROPEAN ENLIGHTENMENT

As one of the major figures of the Age of Enlightenment, he articulated in an impressive and decisive manner its stand against intolerance, indoctrination, cowardice and idleness so that his philosophy is now available to us as a potential contribution to the contemporary development of a positively structured world society. Let us recall once again Kant's concept of the Enlightenment:

Enlightenment means man's emergence from an immaturity for which he has only himself to blame. Immaturity is man's inability to use his reason without the guidance of others. He is himself to blame for that immaturity if it is attributable not to a lack of understanding but to the absence of sufficient resolve and courage to take charge of himself without guidance by others. *Sapere aude!* Have the courage to use your own understanding — such is the byword of the enlightenment.²⁹

Since that definition was first propounded, the concept of enlightenment has undergone a series of formative phases. Reference has been made to a second, third and fourth enlightenment in European intellectual history. Today it is becoming apparent that the return to Kant and hence the reconstruction of his 'evolutionary' concept of enlightenment is an essential task of contemporary intellectuals who have been confronted with the transformation of Europe since 1989.

Kant's quadruple perception of the main tasks of education (discipline, culture, civilization and moralization) must now be reappraised once again in its original terms after a succession of misinterpretations in German education. Kant himself did not want education to be seen as being in conflict with the religious dimension. Nor did he imply support for the inhuman principle of obedience that has been a constant feature of Prussian history. On the contrary, he sought to give expression to the fact that all educational activities must be shaped with reference to the principle of over- or understretching in the various phases of education, in the closest possible concrete proximity to the

axiom of human dignity. In that way a forward-looking reconstruction of moralization might be conceivable as an embodiment of one attainment of the Kantian enlightenment.

THE CONCEPT OF THE INDIVIDUAL

The fact that each human being all over the world and at all times in history represents an elementary individual existence which must be defined by the category of individual purpose, has become since Kant, and through his work, an unmistakable and convincing motif underlying all human actions.

The importance of Kant's notion of the individual for education can be understood more clearly in the context of its role in the development of neighbouring sciences. For example, legal philosophy today embodies the following positive assessment of Kant's thinking:

In his theory of the moral autonomy of man, Kant broke entirely new ground. He replaced the objective material and ethical problem that had run through the whole doctrine of the natural law by the problem of subjective morality. The moral autonomy of man is elevated into a principle of the moral world. The moral person, i.e. not the empirical individual as a part of the world of the senses, but rather 'humanity reflected in his person', has become an end in itself and no longer simply a means to attain other ends. Kant answers the question as to the nature of moral conduct with his famous categorical imperative: 'Act in such a way that the maxims of your will may at all times also serve as the principle of a general law'³⁰.

A number of objections have been raised against this argument by Kant that has made an essential contribution to the philosophical foundation of human rights. The principal objection is that it has been deflected from its purpose by deriving the 'what', (i.e. the ethical content) from the 'how', (i.e. the categorical imperative). However, this criticism is unjustified because it is founded on the erroneous assumption that the 'what' can be arrived at without any subjective element, (i.e. the 'how'). 'However, the "what" cannot be exclusively derived from the "how" as modern functionalism (N. Luhmann) nevertheless supposes'.³¹ Here it is necessary once again to underline the consequences of the concept of the individual: 'Act in such a way that you use humanity in your own person and in the person of any third party at all times as an end in itself and never simply as a means to an end'.³²

THE CAUSE OF PEACE

The absolute duty of all men everywhere and at all times to subscribe to the cause of peace can be traced back historically to Kant's theory of the categorical imperative in its effects on activities designed to attain untrammelled human dignity and in the prospect of eternal peace. Kant gave explicit expression to this point in his lecture on education.

The outstanding suitability of the theory of the categorical imperative to lay the groundwork for a solution to the contemporary problem of peace and the peaceful coexistence of all peoples and cultures (without the negative connotations of 'German' thinkers) can be confirmed by other considerations. The categorical imperative must always be viewed in the context of the basic universal norm of ethics. This has been demonstrated in concrete terms by Mikat in his study on the stabilizing factors in modern marriages. Taking over ideas put forward in scientific discussions, he examines the true basic value of the contemporary ethos of mature freedom of responsibility: the dignity of man as a moral subject and as a person, the unimpeachable dignity of the individual who, on the basis of free self-determination, is able to enact laws as part of a general order of human society.³³

However much man may act as a physical and sensual being, he is still not delivered up to arbitrary forces but is responsible for himself on the basis of reason and freedom, being an end in himself. Each reasoning being, the subject of

all purposes, is thus characterized by an ultimate self-purposefulness and non-availability which constitute the essence of his moral being.³⁴

The categorical imperative and the recognition of the personal dignity of all men in all human fields of action may be seen as two sides of the same coin. The categorical imperative regards individual human dignity as a general guideline of human action. This is the 'basic dignity of all the natural circumstances which support and surround man and also of all his normative manifestations in the socio-cultural context'. Kant was therefore able to formulate in the famous second version of the categorical imperative (see the section on the concept of the individual above) the basic principle of the moral relationship of individual human beings with themselves and with their fellow men: 'Act in such a way that you use the humanity in your own person and in the person of any third party at all times as an end in itself and never simply as a means to an end'.³⁵

The notion that each man is an end in himself, for which the very name of Kant stands today, has acquired great significance for the cohesion of human beings in society in the view of forward-looking interpreters of his work (such as Reiner and Bärthlein).³⁶ It corresponds to basic anthropological needs and enables co-operation between different cultures to be developed. 'The claim put forward by each reasoning being includes a recognition of the same claim by all other reasoning beings, if they are all to be able to coexist simultaneously as such beings'. This is the principle of reciprocity which 'has already left a profound mark on the moral conscience of all peoples in one way or another in the form of the "golden rule" and is given positive expression in the New Testament in the following terms: 'Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so unto them' (Matthew 7, 12).

That idea set down in the Christian Bible has universal implications and points of contact with other world religions; it might be formulated as follows in the concepts of European philosophy: 'The constitution of man as a moral subject based on reason and freedom also necessitates the recognition of himself and of all others as a moral object, as an individual person'.³⁷ Anyone who attempts to give practical effect to the categorical imperative and its idea of the individual is bound to touch on problems existing between human beings and nations from the angle of the various legitimate claims of our fellow men.

In the personal moral area, these problems will be offset in that, when the individual fulfils his own needs, he will never use other people as a mere means but will always respect them as meaningful subjects with their own legitimate horizon of demands. The basic ethical norm must therefore always be interpreted as the supreme critical yardstick and moreover permitted to function as a heuristic principle when the concrete necessity arises to orientate human action towards the meaningful success of the individual'.³⁸

The fact that these ideas are no mere theory is confirmed by the homage paid to the categorical imperative by Kurt Huber who was executed by the Nazis and made his last address to the People's Court on 19 April 1943:

What I tried to do was to arouse student circles not through any organization but through the mere force of words, not to perpetrate any act of violence but to gain a moral insight into the serious damage that has been done to political life. A return to clear moral principles, to the constituted state, to mutual confidence between people, is not something illegal but represents on the contrary the restoration of legality. Applying Kant's categorical imperative, I ask myself what would happen if this subjective maxim of my action were to become a general law. There can be only one answer to that question: order, security and confidence would then return to our constituted state and to our political life.³⁹

UNESCO is currently preparing the draft of a 'universal declaration on tolerance' as a contribution to the United Nations Year for Tolerance — 1995. A plea in favour of such a declaration has been drawn

up as a step towards its adoption. The second point of that plea calls upon each and every scientific institution which has at its disposal experts in religious and ethical questions to ‘place their joint creative energies, in conjunction with experts drawn from other religious and ethical institutions, in the service of this world ethos’.⁴⁰ It is hard to imagine how such a cause might be attained without a systematic historical foundation in the personality and work of Immanuel Kant.

Notes

1. H. Scheuerl, (ed.) *Klassiker der Pädagogik* [Classical exponents of education], vol. I, p. 11, München, Beck, 1979.
2. O.F. Bollnow, ‘Kant und die Pädagogik. [Kant and education]’ in: *Westermanns Pädagogische Beiträge* [Westermann’s educational contributions], vol. 6, 1954, no. 2, p. 49–55.
3. To be found, for example, in J Ritter, et al. (eds.) *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*. [Historical dictionary of philosophy] vol 4, p. 1268–72, Stuttgart/Basle, Schwabe, 1976. (A completely revised new edition of: R. Eisler, *Wörterbuch der Philosophischen Begriffe*.)
4. Editions published by the Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft are available: First, I. Kant, *Werke in zehn Bänden*, [Works in ten volumes] (edited. by Wilhelm Weischedel), special edition 1983, in particular Vols. 9 and 10: *Schriften zur Anthropologie, Geschichtsphilosophie, Politik und Pädagogik*. [Writings on anthropology, historical philosophy, politics and education]. Second, I. Kant, *Werke in sechs Bände*, [Works in six volumes] (edited by. Wilhelm Weischedel), reprinted 1983. (Studienausgabe), In particular, vol. 6: *Schriften zur Anthropologie, Geschichtsphilosophie, Politik und Pädagogik*. [Writings on anthropology, historical philosophy, politics and education]. Finally, reference may be made to the basic academic editions: I. Kant, *Gesammelte Schriften*, [Collected writings] (edited by Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, vol. 1–22; Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, vol. 23); Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, vols. 24 et seq.); offprints and reprints as of 1992: Berlin/New York, de Gruyter.
5. The following edition is a landmark for research into Kant’s work for the purposes of educational science: I. Kant, *Ausgewählte Schriften zur Pädagogik und ihrer Begründung* [Selected writings about education and its foundations] (edited by Hans Hermann Groothoff and Edgar Reimers), Paderborn, Schöningh, 1963.
6. The essential work for comprehensive biographical research is F. Gross, (ed.), *Immanuel Kant: Sein Leben in Darstellungen von Zeitgenossen* [Immanuel Kant: his life presented by his contemporaries] with biographies by: L.E. Borowski, R.B. Jachmann and A. Ch. Wasianski. (reprint of the 1912 edition). Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980. See also: *Ausgewählte Schriften ...*, op. cit., p. 175–91.
7. I. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* [Critique of Pure Reason] 1781, 2nd improved ed. (edited. by Karl Kehrbach), Leipzig, Philipp Reclam, 1878, (II: Transcendental Methodology. Second Chapter, third section, ‘On opinion, knowledge and beliefs’). Following German reunification, it now seems appropriate to refer to historically significant unified editions; the relevant Reclam editions of Kant’s work are therefore used hereafter.
8. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, op. cit., p. 26.
9. I. Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* [Critique of practical reason], p. 627, 1788.
10. I. Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*. (edited by Karl Kehrbach,), p. 193, Leipzig, Reclam, 1878.
11. I. Kant, ‘Aufsätze das Philanthropin [Essays on the philanthropists]’, between 1776 and 1777, *Ausgewählte Schriften [...]*, op. cit., p. 61 et seq.
12. I. Kant, ‘Nachricht von der Einrichtung seiner Vorlesungen in dem Winterhalbjahre 1765–66 [Establishment of his lectures during the winter semester of 1765/66],’ *Ausgewählte Schriften [...]*, op. cit., p. 69.
13. I. Kant, Vorlesung über Pädagogik [Lectures on education], *Ausgewählte Schriften [...]*, op. cit., p. 69.
14. I. Kant, ‘Idee einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht’ [Idea of a general history for the purpose of a citizen of the world], *Berlinische Monatschrift*, 1784; ‘Mutmasslicher Anfänge der Menschheitsgeschichte [Presumed beginning of the history of mankind],’ *Berlinische Monatschrift*, 1786, Was ist Erklärung? [What is enlightenment?], *Berlinische Monatschrift*, 1784; *Zum ewigen Frieden* [On eternal peace], 1795; *Anthropologie in praktischer Hinsicht abgefasst* [Anthropology from the pragmatic viewpoint], 1798.
15. I. Kant, *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, [Religion within the limits of pure reason],

- p. 46 of the 1793 edition (and including the variations of the 1794 edition), Leipzig, Reclam, 1879. (Karl Kehrnbach edition.)
16. Texts from the lecture on Pädagogik [Education], (Kant, *Ausgewählte Schriften [...]*, op. cit.), to which the figures in parenthesis in the following pages refer.
 17. Ritter, op. cit.
 18. J. Dolch, *Lehrplan des Abendlandes: Zweieinhalbjahrtausende seiner Geschichte* [Western curricula: 2,500 years of its history], p. 337, Tatingen, Henn, 1965.
 19. See also H. Kanz, *Bundesrepublikanische Bildungsgeschichte, 1949–1989* [The history of education in the Federal Republic, 1945–1989], Frankfurt/Main, Lang, 1989; H. Kanz, *Deutsche Erziehungsgeschichte, 1945–1985* [German history of education, 1945–85], Frankfurt/Main, Lang, 1987.
 20. U. Henning, *Eduard Spranger und Berlin: Tradition oder Erbe?* [Eduard Spranger and Berlin: tradition or heritage?], p. 5, Berlin, Universitätsbibliothek der Freien Universität, 1992.
 21. See H. Röhrs, *Frieden: eine pädagogische Aufgabe. Idee und Realität der Friedenspädagogik* [Peace: a task for education. Ideas and realities of peace education], Braunschweig, Agentur Pedersen Westermann, 1983.
 22. I. Kant, *Zum ewigen Frieden: ein philosophischer Entwurf* [On eternal peace: a philosophical essay], p. 75, Königsberg, Nicolovius, 1795.
 23. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
 24. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
 25. To be found, for example, in A. Petzelt's work on 'Kant: Das Fürwahrhalten lässt sich nicht mitteilen [Kant: you cannot communicate your belief]', *Einführung in die pädagogische Fragestellung: Aufsätze zur Theorie der Bildung, Teil II* [Introduction to educational inquiry: essays about the theory of education], Part 2 (edited by Wolfgang Fischer), p. 9–61, Freiburg, Lambertus-Verlag, 1963. On the concept of dignity in modern German educational philosophy see H. Kanz, *Einführung in die Erziehungsphilosophie* [Introduction to educational philosophy], p. 100, Frankfurt/Main, Lang, 1987.
 26. H. Scholl, S. Scholl, *Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* [Letters and notes], (edited by Inge Jens), Frankfurt/Main, Fischer, 1984, p. 100.
 27. *Ibid.*, p. 266.
 28. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
 29. Kant, 'Was ist Erklärung?', op. cit.
 30. A. Kaufmann, 'Rechtsphilosophie' [The philosophy of law], *Staatslexikon echt, Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft* [State dictionary of law, economy and society] (edited by. Görres-Gesellschaft), 7th completely rev. Ed., vol. 4, p. 711, Freiburg, Herder, 1988.
 31. *Ibid.*
 32. I. Kant, *Grundlegung der Metaphysik der Sitten* [The foundations of the metaphysics of morals], 2nd ed., Riga, Hartknoch, 1786. (Stuttgart, Reclam, 1952, p. 81.)
 33. P. Mikat, *Ethische Strukturen der Ehe in unserer Zeit* [Ethical structures of contemporary marriage], p. 35 et seq., Paderborn, Schöningh, 1987.
 34. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
 35. Kant. *Grundlegung der Metaphysik der Sitten*, op.cit., p. 81.
 36. Mikat, op. cit., p. 36 et seq.
 37. *Ibid.*
 38. *Ibid.*
 39. In: *Die Weisse Rose. Ausstellung über den Widerstand von Studenten gegen Hitler, München, 1942–43* [The White Rose: exhibition about the student resistance to Hitler, Munich, 1942–43], p. 63. Organized by the Weissen Rose Stiftung München e. V., Genter Str. 13, 8000, München 40, n.d.
 40. *UNESCO heute* [UNESCO today] (Bonn), vol. 39, no. 1, 1992, p. 17.

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1781. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. 2nd ed. 1787. (*Critique of pure reason*, 1950.)

1783. *Prolegomena zur einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können*. (*The prolegomena to any future metaphysic*, 1951.)

1785. *Grundlegen zur Metaphysik der Sitten*. (*The foundations of the metaphysics of morals*, 1969.)
1788. *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*. (*Critique of practical reason*, 1949.)
1790. *Kritik der Urteilskraft*. 2nd ed. 1793. (*Kant's critique of judgement*, 1892, 2nd ed. 1914.)
1793. *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*. 2nd ed. 1796. (*Religion within the limits of reason alone*, 1960.)
1795. *Zum ewigen Frieden*. 2nd ed. 1796. (*Perpetual peace*, 1915, reprinted 1972.)
1797. *Die Metaphysik der Sitten*. 2nd ed. 1798–1803. (*The metaphysic of morals*, 2 vols. 1799, reprinted 1965.)
1798. *Der Streit der Fakultäten* [Faculty Disputes].
1798. *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht abgefasst*. Improved ed. 1800. (*Anthropology from a pragmatic approach*, 1964.)
1963. *Ansgewählte Schriften zur Pädagogik und ihrer Begründung* [Selected writings about education and its foundations], (Edited by H.H. Grootjohf and E. Reimers.) Paderborn, Schöningh.