

The Rise and Origin of Kant's Lectures on Anthropology

Kant published the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* at the end of his teaching career after having lectured on anthropology for twenty-three and one-half years.¹ We know from student manuscripts of his lectures that Kant published pretty much the same material that he had been lecturing on during those years. This agreement between the book and his lectures permits the conjecture that Kant's intentions for the book would be consistent with his intentions for his lectures.² Fortunately, we have explicit statements about what Kant intended for his lectures on anthropology.

Kant began lecturing on pragmatic anthropology in the winter semester of 1772–73,³ during the eighteenth year of his teaching at Königsberg University. At that time anthropology was not an independent discipline and Kant was one of the first to lecture on it within the well-established faculty of philosophy.⁴ In a copy of one of his earliest lecture notes that we have, Kant claims that “the knowledge of human beings is called by the general name of anthropology, which is not being lectured on in any other discipline [*Akademie*].”⁵ He lectured, then, on anthropology consistently for twenty-three and one-half years until he retired. The lecture proved to be very popular, frequented even by Kant's colleagues. He averaged thirty to fifty students a semester with a high of seventy in 1791–92.⁶

Kant's interest in anthropology did not suddenly begin in this winter semester, however. Kant also lectured on the theme of anthropology in his metaphysics lectures as early as 1762.⁷ From the Johann Gottfried von Herder papers, which are the notes that Herder took while he was a student of Kant's from 1762–64, we read “Kant's doctrine. . . . The Metaphysic contains 1. Anthropology, 2. Physics, 3. Ontology, 4. The origin of all things, God, and the world, therefore theology.”⁸ Although by “anthropology” here Kant means little more than empirical psychology, he does call it “anthropology” even then. More decisive, though not the only decisive factor for the formation of Kant's interest in anthropology, were his lectures on physical geography, which he held regularly, mostly in the summer semester, from the beginning of his docent years at Königsberg University in 1755–56. With the exception of one year, winter semester 1758–59, he held this lecture every year inclusive of 1796.⁹

In Kant's article "On the Different Races of Human Beings," which appeared as his announcement of his lectures on physical geography in the summer semester 1775, he closely associated the two lectures, physical geography and anthropology, under the name of "*pragmatische Weltkenntnis*." This *Weltkenntnis*

serves to procure the *pragmatic* element for all other acquired sciences and skills, through which they become useful not merely for the *school*, but rather for *life*, and through which the accomplished student is introduced to the stage of his destiny [*Bestimmung*], namely, the *world*.¹⁰

Cosmopolitan knowledge could be gained in a two-part lecture course in which the fields of nature and human beings were covered, first, by physical geography, and, then, by anthropology. The purpose of the two courses was not just to introduce the students to the scientific facts of outer and inner nature, but also to help them orient themselves in relationship to the world as physical and cultural. In other words, the intent was not only to make them scientifically competent, but also to prepare them for social, pragmatic, and practical realities.

THE PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY LECTURES AND THE ORIGIN OF THE ANTHROPOLOGY LECTURES

Kant explicitly associates his lectures on anthropology with his lectures on physical geography, and so it is illuminating to consider his intent for the physical geography lectures. The intent he had for the lectures will clarify what he means by cosmopolitan knowledge. The *Entwurf und Ankündigung eines Collegii der physischen Geographie* (1757) served as the introduction to Kant's lecture on physical geography, and from a censure mark it has been dated as April 13, 1757.¹¹ It announced and introduced his lectures for the summer semester 1757. This announcement states Kant's intentions for physical geography as well as his understanding of what is included under the title of physical geography. In this first announcement he wants to make physical geography into a genuine science and the interest in his students' development is not yet stated. In the later announcements, from 1765 and 1775, Kant makes clear that the purpose of the physical geography is to civilize young students to become "citizens of the world." However, we do not find this intention in this first announcement. Nor does Kant refer here to "cosmopolitan knowledge" either:

The information which is useful here is dispersed in many and great works, and there is still no one textbook by means of which

this science could be made fitting for academic use. For that reason I resolved right at the beginning of my academic career to lecture on this science in special lectures following the direction of a summary sketch. I carried this out to the satisfaction of my students in a half-year course of lectures. Since then I have expanded my plan considerably.¹²

Kant's first intention for the physical geography lectures seems to have been purely scientific, that is, to make a more certain knowledge of believable travel accounts, and to make this into a legitimate academic course of study.¹³ Only one year later, however, after one semester of the course, he had learned how interesting it was for the students, how pleased they were, and then he hints that because of this he has extended his plan. This could well refer to his future intention for the physical geography as "cosmopolitan knowledge." The development of physical geography from a scientific interest to a worldly interest was dependent on the reactions of the students. Otherwise, Kant could never have known that its real nature was to be "popular." When he asserted in 1775 that the two sciences, physical geography and anthropology were popular, it was after two decades of experience with his physical geography lectures and two years experience with the anthropology lecture.

Kant's fascination with anthropology or the nature and characteristics of human beings can already be seen in the *Entwurf*:

The animal kingdom, in which human beings will be viewed comparatively with regard to the differences of their natural form and color in different regions of the earth. . . . I shall lecture on this first of all in the natural order of classes and finally cover in geographic survey all the countries of the earth, in order to display the inclinations of human beings as they grow out of the particular region in which they live; the variety of their prejudices and types of thinking, in so far as all of this can serve to make human beings more intimately acquainted with themselves; and in order to give a brief idea of their arts, commerce, and science, an enumeration of the . . . products of the various regions, their atmospheric conditions, etc.: in a word, everything which belongs to physical geography.¹⁴

Kant was not only intrigued by the external differences in the races, and how the various customs arose depending on the specific climates, but also by the inner differences, prejudices, and ways of thinking. This knowledge was not just of scientific worth, but also must be used for the purposes of self-knowledge. Clearly the desire to make "human beings more intimately acquainted with themselves" counts as an interest in making human beings more aware of "knowledge of the world" or cosmopolitan knowledge in the sense that Kant later used it.

Kant communicates his intentions for a course of lectures on physical geography. It will describe the world from its bare natural constituents, typography, and physical characteristics, but all of this must also be from the perspective of a traveler and not just from the perspective of an indifferent scientist:

Physical geography considers merely the natural constitution of the globe and what is found on it: the oceans, solid ground, mountains, rivers, atmosphere, human beings, animals, plants, and minerals. All of this, however, not with that completeness and philosophical exactitude in the parts which is the business of physics and natural history, but with the reasonable curiosity of a traveler, who seeks everywhere the noteworthy, special, and beautiful, compares the collected observations, and considers its plan.¹⁵

The popular nature of the physical geography lecture is already foreshadowed in the description of its guiding interest as that of a traveler's. Travelers can be any one, and travelers are clearly interested in knowledge of the world, and not just in scientific facts that will advance a scientific perspective or hypothesis. The people that would have interest in his lecture would be enlightened, not just scientific:

The reasonable good taste of our enlightened times has supposedly become so universal that it can be presupposed that only a few people could be found, who would be apathetic about knowing the peculiarities of nature, which the globe also contains in other regions, which is found outside of their horizon.¹⁶

Scientific interest is of "no small advantage," but Kant mentions this only after the first claim that physical geography ought to be of interest to all enlightened people. Therefore, we can assume that the seeds of his later account of the physical geography and anthropology as "knowledge of the world" are already present even in this earliest of his announcements. Kant's point that pragmatic anthropology should not be from a physiological perspective is foreshadowed here as well. Physical geography is not meant to be a description of the world as a scientist would view it, but rather geography is to be viewed in its purposiveness.

From the *Nachricht von der Einrichtung seiner Vorlesungen 1765–66*,¹⁷ we gather more information about what Kant intended for these lectures in physical geography. According to Kant:

When I recognized immediately at the beginning of my academic lecture [career] that a great negligence existed among young students, that they learned early to reason, without possessing sufficient historical knowledge, which could take the place of [lack of] experience: I

formed the resolution to make the history of the current condition of the earth or geography, in the broadest sense, into a pleasant and easy summary, which could serve to prepare them for practical reason, . . . I called such a discipline . . . Physical Geography.¹⁸

Kant not only wrote about the primacy of practical reason within his theoretical scholarship, but he also believed it and practiced it in concrete life. In his teaching, we see Kant concerned about the development of practical reason, and not just theoretical reason, in his students. He originally thought he could best accomplish this through his lectures on physical geography. Later, he realized that knowledge of relations between people was also necessary for the development of practical reason, and he added his lecture on anthropology to the disciplines whose purpose it was to impart knowledge of the world.

For Kant, the discipline of physical geography was not far from what we call “physical geography” today, because it was not only physical, but also moral and political; it dealt not only with the Earth, but also human beings who inhabit the different parts of the Earth. Kant wanted to consider the human being in terms of what differentiated him morally from the manifold of natural properties, but at the same time he wanted to view the human being as an object of experience in the world, and not as the speculative subject, that is suggested by his later critical philosophy.

He wanted to distinguish between the outer physical world and the inner moral world of human beings without being driven into the inner world of psychology. In order to do this he had to avoid using the scholastic distinction between the soul and the body. Instead, he pictured the human being as a natural being who is a member of the world. As G. Gerland puts it, the human being should “be considered only as a natural object, only cosmological-pragmatic, . . . only as an object of outer senses, as an object of experience . . .”¹⁹ In associating the anthropology with his geography lectures, Kant made clear that anthropology did not belong to empirical psychology, or psychology of the inner soul of human beings. Its main concern was with the outer world and outer behavior.²⁰

At the time of the writing of the *Nachricht* (1765–66), Kant's interest in anthropology was still developing, but he already had a very strong interest in his students and in their acquisition of pragmatic knowledge of the world. He saw the failing of scholastic instruction in that it taught the students to be clever in the use of reasoning without setting limits to that knowledge or showing how it could be used for life. In the *Nachricht*, Kant referred sarcastically to the “loquaciousness of young thinkers, who are blinder than any other self-conceited person, and as incurable as ignorance.”²¹ Most of his students would not go on to be academics or professors, and therefore needed to learn to apply what they learned to their future professions, as well as to the

society in which they lived. He noticed the problem of application especially in relation to his ethics lectures since

all instruction of youth has this difficulty by its very nature, that one is obliged to hasten on the years with insight and should give such knowledge, that in the natural order of things can only be understood by a experienced and tried reason, without waiting for the maturity of understanding.²²

Kant gave his lectures, first, on physical geography and, later, on anthropology, in order to make up for the lack of historical and social experience in his students, since this knowledge can normally only be anticipated in adults with age and life experiences.

The *Nachricht* contains the second announcement of Kant's lectures on physical geography, and it announces his lectures on metaphysics, logic, and ethics as well. In his introduction to the separate disciplines he articulates clearly, for the first time, the problem young students face in the university. They are expected to learn the concepts and ideas way beyond their own emotional and developmental maturity. As a result, they tend to imitate learnedness, but lack the emotional and experiential background that would make this knowledge applicable to their lives.

Kant objected to the imitation of learnedness, because it interfered with real learning. Students learned the scholastic methods and logic all too well, but much too quickly for their slower developing judgment. Teaching methods, in part, are to be blamed for successfully developing students' reasoning without giving them the proper experience or context in which to use it correctly. When one considers the early Enlightenment philosophers in Germany, the name of Christian Thomasius (1655–1728) comes to mind as a philosopher who had already distinguished between university learning and learning derived from experience. In the *Einleitung zu der Vernunft-Lehre*, Thomasius distinguished carefully between learnedness that is gained from experience [*Gelährheit*]²³ and learnedness that is gained from concepts in the schools [*Gelehrtheit*].²⁴ Thomasius criticized *Gelehrtheit* because there were often no practical applications for the subtle distinctions advanced in the schools. The court philosophy he proposed instead was a kind of practical philosophy directed toward the world and not toward the school.²⁵ In other words, he dedicated himself to developing a popular philosophy in much the same way as Kant. In chapter 6, I will argue that Kant's distinction between cosmopolitan philosophy and scholastic philosophy mirrors this distinction from Thomasius.

Kant sees the teacher's task in this that she/he should be concerned about "forming first the informed person, then the judicious and finally the scholarly person in their students."²⁶ The goal is not just to make students

skillful in scholastic methods, but also to guide them so that they “become more skillful and more prudent for life.”²⁷ Kant’s emphasis on developing judgment in his students is the key to understanding what Kant intended with his lectures on anthropology.

By this point, Kant has been teaching barely ten years, but his experience with students has developed and he sees the failings in the academic system. The students are mostly taught thoughts but not to think. This is especially dangerous or useless for those who will go back into the world, since their knowledge will prove useless, if they have not learned to apply it. To remedy this situation he suggests that students, “should not learn *thoughts*, but rather to *think*; they should not be *carried*, but *guided*, if it is desirable that they should be skillful in the future at thinking for themselves.”²⁸ Thinking for oneself is one of the great impulses of the early German Enlightenment of Thomasius and his students.

In this passage in the *Nachricht*, “skillful” means the ability to apply the knowledge one acquires. Kant is not referring simply to the skill in applying the knowledge for academic contexts, but also to the ability to apply it “prudently” [*klug*]. For the first time, an essential element of his later thinking about pragmatic anthropology enters the picture, and this not just in the context of physical geography but also in relation to all academic lectures which he held.²⁹ One of the main goals for Kant’s lectures on anthropology was to teach his students prudence and wisdom, both of which required broad historical knowledge of human nature. Prudence and wisdom cannot be taught, however, in the same way that one informs another person of facts.

The problem of inexperienced young students requires a teaching style that guides students to “philosophize,” rather than informing them of the history of “philosophy.” Even at this point Kant expresses a theme that he will often refer to in his reflections and even in the first Critique. Philosophy and the historical sciences require a type of knowledge of the world that is at the same time knowledge of one’s own nature. In contrast to the mathematical sciences, the historical sciences are dependent on “one’s own experience or on foreign testimony.”³⁰ Knowledge of the world has to play an important role for all the historical sciences and not just anthropology. Here philosophy is also counted as a historical science, which can either be memorized or really learned in that one can then philosophize.

Already in the 1760s, Kant was interested in anthropology, though he did not have a lecture course about that yet. He dealt with the theme, nevertheless, in his other courses. He considered anthropology not only in his lectures on metaphysics, but also in his lectures on ethics and physical geography. Even in the ethics at this period, he was not concerned with bare formalism, but also with “the realities of the human nature which it purports to guide.”³¹

Kant states explicitly, in this announcement to his lectures, that he is interested in human nature since “in the doctrine of virtue I always consider historically and philosophically what *happens* before I point out what *ought to happen*.”³² This method is the method of pragmatic anthropology, since it teaches first what has happened in providence or nature, and then what human beings can conclude about their place in the universe based on this knowledge. The point that Kant makes here had already been made by a Thomasiaus student, Christian August Crusius (1712–1775), whose *Anweisung vernünftig zu leben* (1744), was written in the Thomasiaus initiated tradition of a theory of prudence [*Klugheitslehre*]. Crusius writes in the first chapter, “one must first recognize how the will is constituted and works before one can adequately explain how it should be.”³³ Kant does not acknowledge Crusius as an influence, but he knows Crusius well and mentions him forty-three times in his various works, especially in his early works. Interestingly, Kant calls him the “well-known” Crusius.³⁴

In the introduction to the physical geography lecture itself, we see that Kant was not only interested in the extraordinary and peculiar aspects of the Earth, but also in the relationship of the whole Earth to human beings. He claims he wants to make the first part of the physical geography, which concerns the peculiar aspects of the Earth, shorter in order to make room for the other parts, which concern the Earth’s relationship to the human species:

Since then I have gradually expanded this sketch, and now I plan to broaden out in that I abridge those sections [some] more which concern the physical peculiarities of the Earth, in order to gain time for lectures about the other parts of [physical geography] which are even more generally useful. This discipline will be a *physical, moral and political* geography, wherein first the peculiarities of *nature* in her three kingdoms will be pointed out, but with the selection of those among the uncountable others, which [arouse] universal intellectual curiosity [*Wißbegierde*] through the charm of their rarity, or also through the influence which they have on governments by means of commerce and trade. . . . The *second* section considers *human beings* on the whole earth, according to the manifold of their natural characteristics and the differences among them, what is moral about them; . . . a very important consideration. . . .³⁵

More and more Kant concentrated on the anthropological aspects of physical geography and consequently his theory of providence developed at the same time, because it is what defines the relationship of the human being to the whole of nature. Kant’s theory of the human being is developing here from a purely cosmological being to a pragmatic-moral being, who lives on the Earth and has a relationship to the events of nature.

Finally, in the section on the physical geography in the *Nachricht*, he explains again that he saw at the beginning of his teaching years

a great neglect among young people who study, consists primarily in that they learn early to reason speciously [*vernünfteln*], without possessing sufficient historical knowledge, which could take the place of experience [lack thereof].³⁶

Thus, Kant decided to make the history of the present condition of the Earth or geography, in the broadest sense, into a pleasant and understandable study of the Earth, which would serve to prepare his students for practical and prudential reason.

One of the major impulses, which inspired Kant in the development of his pragmatic point of view, came from the concern for his students' maturity. He saw clearly their need for a more historical and worldly perspective. He could not give them the wisdom that only age could bring, but he tried to give them the expanded historical horizon that would make them more adept at using their knowledge in the world and more competent to make sound judgments about themselves and their world.

THE DEBATE CONCERNING THE ORIGIN OF KANT'S ANTHROPOLOGY LECTURES

With "Von den verschiedenen Racen der Menschen," we have reached the end of our history of the origin of the anthropology lectures. This essay served as an introduction to and announcement of his lectures on physical geography and anthropology for 1775. Although the anthropology lectures had already begun a few years earlier, this is the first official announcement that we have. That Kant chose to talk about race anthropology as an introduction to both lectures shows the intimate relationship between physical geography and anthropology. The anthropology begins where physical geography ends; the different climates and environments, explored in physical geography, explain the different kinds of human beings in the world, but the inner germs and natural predispositions, explored in anthropology, explain why the human being can adapt itself to the different climates and environments.

In this essay, Kant propounds not only a Darwinian-like thesis that the species adjusts itself to fit the environment in which it lives, but he goes one step further and asserts that the human being can adjust to any different environment, because it has many different germs in it that can be unfolded out of it. There is a twofold thesis here: (1) the human being can adjust itself to almost any climate is an indication that human beings were meant to exist

in all climates and environments, (2) this ability to accommodate indicates that there are all different types of germs in the human being planted by providence, which providence intends to unfold in human history. The human being

was destined for all climates and for every soil condition; consequently, various germs and natural predispositions must lie ready in him to be on occasion [*gelegentlich*] either unfolded [*ausgewickelt*] or restrained [*zurückgehalten*], so that he would become adapted to his place in the world and over the course of generations would appear to be as if native to and made for that place. And with these notions, we would like to go through the whole human species in the whole wide world and adduce purposive causes of its variations therein, in cases where the natural causes [*natürlichen Ursachen*] are not well recognizable, and, contrast, adduce natural causes where we do not perceive the purposes [*Zwecke*]. Here I only note that *air* and *sun* appear to be those causes which deeply influence the generative power and produce a lasting development of the germs and predispositions, i.e., are able to establish [*gründen*] a race;³⁷

In the *Racen*, Kant introduces for the first time the distinction between germs [*Keime*] and natural predispositions [*natürliche Anlage*]:

The grounds of a determined unfolding [*Auswicklung*] which are lying in the nature of an organic body (plants or animals) are called germs [*Keime*], if this unfolding concerns particular parts; if, however, it concerns only the size or the relation of the parts to one another, then I call them *natural predispositions* [*natürliche Anlagen*].³⁸

These are the clues Kant uses to read the purposive intent of nature for the species. He differentiates between germs and predispositions, and this is important for the later development of his anthropological teleology, which is concerned with the development of the natural predispositions. The very fact that Kant's anthropology is teleological in nature indicates, however, that the origin of the ideas in his lectures and the book is from some other source than the psychology section of his metaphysics lectures. The teleological nature of physical geography lectures and the purposiveness Kant seeks in natural environments as they affect human beings casts more light on the origin of the ideas of anthropology, than does the rise of anthropology out of the psychology section of his metaphysics lectures as several interpreters maintain. In the previous section, we have only dealt with the rise of the anthropology lectures. We have not yet addressed the origin of the ideas. In this section, I will lay out the debate as it has developed in the secondary literature. Then I will address a promising new line of interpretation.

In German secondary literature, there is a great debate about the origin of Kant's lectures on anthropology. There are two opposing arguments, (1) the anthropology lectures have their origin in the empirical psychology section of Kant's metaphysics lectures; or (2) that the lectures arose out of Kant's works in cosmological-geographical works and lectures.³⁹ While Erich Adickes, Norbert Hinske, Paul Menzer, Emit Arnoldt, and Reinhard Brandt argue the former position, Wilhelm Dilthey, Benno Erdmann, and G. Gerland maintain the latter position.⁴⁰ G. Gerland refers to the *Entwurf* as proof that Kant's interests in geography and different parts of the world developed into his interest in race anthropology and his interest in the different developments of the essentially same humanity.⁴¹ Race anthropology is a fundamental part of anthropology. Kant's *Racen* is the key connection between physical geography and anthropology. The concern for outer differences that the races present is a characteristic of anthropology and not of psychology.

The origin of Kant's *Anthropology* was initially debated between Wilhelm Dilthey and Erich Adickes as they discussed the placement of the *Anthropology* in *Kants gesammelte Schriften*.⁴² In the seven letters they exchanged, both editors wanted to place the *Anthropology* based on their understanding of its systematic position in Kant's works. Dilthey argued that the anthropology lectures arose out of Kant's work in cosmology and physical geography, and he concluded that the *Anthropology* should be printed with Kant's *Physical Geography*. Adickes responded that the anthropology lectures arose out of the empirical psychology section of Kant's metaphysics lectures.

Despite Dilthey's success in convincing Adickes, the *Anthropology* and the *Physical Geography* were printed in separate volumes. The debate about the origin of the anthropology lectures, nonetheless, extends further in Benno Erdmann, Emil Arnoldt, Norbert Hinske, and currently Reinhard Brandt.⁴³ Erdmann argues the origin of the lectures from the physical geography lectures. Arnoldt, Hinske, and Brandt maintain the connection between Kant's anthropology lectures and the *psychologia empirica* of the Wolffian Alexander G. Baumgarten (1714–1762), whose text Kant used for his metaphysics and anthropology lectures. Hinske's position is based on the argument that Kant was already lecturing on anthropology in the metaphysics lectures in the place of empirical psychology. This is certainly true. With Hinske we can conclude that Kant's anthropology lectures began already in the metaphysics lectures and then they became a self-sufficient course of lectures. But that only, at most, supports the idea that Kant's metaphysics lectures gave rise to his anthropology lectures, it does not support the idea that the anthropology lectures originated in the metaphysics lectures. Kant was lecturing on physical geography along with the metaphysics lectures. The increasingly human-centered

geography lectures could just as well have influenced Kant's development toward anthropology. Further, the experiential and enlightenment content of the *Anthropology* so far exceeds what was contained in Baumgarten's *psychologia empirica* that it is evident that some other strand of tradition was influencing Kant than just the Wolff school. I have already pointed out several key ideas, which Kant shares in common with the Thomasius school who saw themselves in conflict with the Wolff school.

Currently Reinhard Brandt appears to be following the arguments of the Arnoldt and Hinske tradition of interpretation on the origin of the anthropology lectures. In the first section of his introduction to Kant's *Lectures on Anthropology*, volume 25 in Kant's *gesammelte Schriften*, entitled "The Origin of the Pragmatic Anthropology Lecture" Brandt appeals first to the letter Kant wrote to Marcus Herz (1773) in which Kant explained his plan to develop an anthropology completely unlike that of Ernst Platner's *Anthropologie für Ärzte und Weltweise* (1772). Brandt then dismisses what Kant has to say in that letter because he claims Kant actually intended a speculative empirical psychology that corresponds to Baumgarten's *metaphysica* in his first lecture (Collins 1772–73, vol. 25). He proceeds then to argue that for Kant, the empirical psychology was freed from metaphysics and in doing so became its own lecture series. Brandt presents the origin of the anthropology lecture as developing out of the empirical psychology of Baumgarten's *metaphysica*. Brandt also extensively quotes Christian Wolff's (1679–1754) *Ausführliche Nachricht von seinen eigenen Schriften*, in order to establish a correspondence between Baumgarten (Wolff's student) and Kant.⁴⁴ It is true that both Wolff and Kant have put the empirical psychology before the other parts of the metaphysic lectures for much the same reasons, as Brandt maintains, but that only says that Wolff influenced Kant's metaphysics lectures; it does not establish that Wolff influenced his anthropology lectures. Brandt concludes his section on the origin of the anthropology lectures with a refutation of Benno Erdmann's position that the anthropology lectures arose out of the physical geography lectures. He believes that the lectures arose out of a dismembering of the empirical psychology from the metaphysics lectures: "there was never [as Brandt claims] a discussion of a parallel origin out of the physical geography."⁴⁵ In contrast, I have attempted to show that Kant not only associated physical geography with his anthropology lectures, but that he also progressively included anthropological considerations in his geography lectures. It appears more credible to believe the anthropology originated in the physical geography lectures than that it originated out of the empirical psychology section of Kant's metaphysic lectures. However, I am willing to concede that when Kant banned empirical psychology from his metaphysics

lecture it did give him an opportunity to deal with that same material, which was anthropological, in a separate course, which he then called "anthropology" rather than empirical psychology.

Anthropology, for Kant, is more than empirical psychology.⁴⁶ This next section will try to point out some of the concepts at stake in Kant's understanding of anthropology and the possible sources that define the origin of the content of the anthropology lectures. These concepts and sources make it clear that Baumgarten's *psychologia empirica* gave at most the form of the lectures, but not the content, since it is clear that in the first half of his lecture, which we know from the students' notes, he did borrow the faculty psychology of Baumgarten that dealt with cognition and appetitive powers.

Kant does not explicitly identify the philosophical influences that prepared him for the new discipline of anthropology. Besides Baumgarten's *metaphysica* (1739), which Kant used as a textbook for the lectures, Kant claims that his "auxiliary means of building up anthropology, though they are not among its sources," include novels, world history, plays, and biographies, and these latter means could account for the variety of particular observations on human behavior and actions. These secondary sources do not, however, account for some of the most interesting philosophical concepts one finds in the *Anthropology*. The way that Kant uses and defines such concepts as "pragmatic," "wisdom," "thinking for oneself," "prudence," "thinking soundly," "prejudice," and "reflective judgment," though unique in some ways to Kant, are not *sui generis*, but have a historical precedence that can be traced to other philosophical thinkers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries like the Thomasius school.⁴⁷ The Thomasius school developed what was originally called "court philosophy," but which later became a *Klugheitslehre* emphasizing prudence and ethics.⁴⁸

Further, if race anthropology developed out of Kant's physical geography lectures then there is also good reason to believe that pragmatic anthropology also developed out of the physical geography lectures. The final causality of the natural predispositions (animal, technical, pragmatic, and moral) plays an essential role in both race anthropology and pragmatic anthropology. Kant established his position on race that all human beings share the same essential humanity in so far all human beings share the same natural predispositions or germs in their generative power and differ in race only in so far as these germs have developed differently due to natural environmental causes. In other words, races developed because of natural causes that affected not the generative power of reproduction but only the capacity for preservation. Human beings have various capacities for preservation because of the same seeds and predispositions they share in common and their differences arise only due to

different environmental influences requiring differing strategies for survival. The teleological perspective is clear in that it is providence that has outfitted human beings with germs and natural predispositions.

In *Von den verschiedenen Racen der Menschen*, Kant announces that physical geography is a pre-exercise in cosmopolitan knowledge, and this is “that which serves to give a pragmatic [character] to all otherwise achieved sciences and skills, through which they are not merely useful for the university, but also for life.”⁴⁹ The “pragmatic” character of anthropology means that it helps students find their way in life, on the stage of their destiny [*Bestimmung*]. At this point (1775), both physical geography and anthropology belong explicitly to knowledge of the world. They are not simply scholastic studies, but are meant to open the world to students. The world, then, cannot mean simply the physical world, but the world of society and what that means for all human beings.

One of the first interpreters to defend the thesis that the anthropology lectures arose out of the physical geography lectures is Benno Erdmann (1882). Erdmann argued that even the physical geography lectures were motivated by Kant’s interest in anthropology, and not so much an interest in physical geography itself as a scholastic discipline.⁵⁰ Indeed, as early as 1757 in the *Entwurf*, Kant declares his interest in displaying “the inclinations of human beings as they grow out of the particular region in which they live; the variety of their prejudices and types of thinking, in so far as all of this can serve to make human beings more intimately acquainted with themselves.”⁵¹ His interest in human beings is already an interest in anthropology. Further, the point of the view of the traveler is taken by Kant and that is already the sign that he is aiming at cosmological philosophy [*Weltkenntnis*] and not merely science or speculative philosophy.

DID KANT INTEND HIS ANTHROPOLOGY LECTURES TO BE EMPIRICAL PSYCHOLOGY?

Kant’s *Anthropology* has frequently been identified with empirical psychology, and therefore the unique character of pragmatic anthropology has not been given sufficient attention. J. H. von Kirchmann (1869) introduced his *Erläuterungen zu Kants Anthropologie*, with this announcement:

In that Kant excludes physiology [from anthropology], this leaves only psychology, and this alone is not that which forms the object of his work either. With “pragmatic” Kant only wants to indicate that he is excluding the hypothesis, which transcends observation, about the essence of the soul and its elements, and will primarily deal with what is empirical. Since empirical [realities] are partially

dependent on the will, it is possible for human beings to have an formative and bettering effect on them.⁵²

Although part of the character of “pragmatic” is recognized in that it is meant to deal with the will, and thus belongs to practical philosophy, Kirchmann still associates the *Anthropology* primarily with empirical psychology and does not recognize the critical framework, namely, teleological judgment, which is also necessary for organizing empirical observations.

Takiyettin Mengüsoglu gives a more decisive argument for associating Kant's anthropology with empirical psychology, in that its base seems to be faculty psychology:

Because this writing is in the contemporary sense a practical psychology, which treats of human capabilities—divided into lower and higher faculties of cognition—and the character of people, and thus the problem of human psychology according to the then prevalent faculty psychology.⁵³

In other words, according to Mengüsoglu, Kant's anthropology is not much more than a faculty psychology, in which the three most important faculties, the cognitive, the appetitive, and the feeling of pleasure and displeasure are analyzed in the Didactic of the *Anthropology*.⁵⁴ This argument gains credence through Kant's repeated use of the theory of faculties in many of his writings. It is possible, on the other hand, to see the use of such terms as “the powers of the soul” as tools, which form merely the schema or framework for the application of his critical thought.

If Mengüsoglu's argument were extended to Kant's other works, then it would be a basis for criticizing Kant's critical philosophy as well, since Kant also analyzes the faculties of pure reason, understanding, and judgment. Kant admitted that there were necessary concepts in his critical philosophy, which are simply taken over from psychology. He assumed that these concepts were already understood, and he could use them without critically discussing them.⁵⁵ As Friedrich Paulsen sees it, some framework is necessary for the development of the critical system:

The soul has the form and the division of the faculties first into the faculty of knowledge and the faculty of desire, then further into a higher and lower, or mental and sensuous faculty of knowledge and desire. He adopted this scheme and laid it at the basis of his investigations.⁵⁶

In other words, Kant used the scheme of faculty psychology proposed by Baumgarten, Wolff, and Aristotle only as a framework. We have no basis for claiming from this that it also had an essential influence on the content of the

Anthropology any more than we can claim that it had an essential influence on the content of his critical philosophy.⁵⁷

The main reason the *Anthropology* has this scheme at its base is because Kant almost always used Baumgarten's *psychologia empirica* as the textbook for his lectures.⁵⁸ Baumgarten, who was Christian Wolff's student, appropriated from him this doctrine of the "faculties of the soul." Baumgarten distinguished between the *facultas cognoscendi* and a *facultas appetendi*. The third faculty of feeling which Kant includes in the *Anthropology* was probably first introduced by J. G. Sulzer who distinguished between feeling, willing, and thinking in his treatise for the Berlin Academy (1751).⁵⁹ Norbert Hinske uses this relation to Baumgarten as one of his main arguments for the development of Kant's anthropology out of empirical psychology. Hinske's third thesis about Kant's *Anthropology* reads: "The *Anthropology* is on the whole the philosophy of a discipline in a subordinate position," just like Baumgarten's *empirica psychologia*, which is not concerned with the "nature of human beings," but rather with mere observation.⁶⁰ With this association of anthropology with empirical psychology, Kant's *Anthropology* can then be dismissed as secondary to critical philosophy, and as not answering in any serious way the question it seems to pose for itself: "What is the human being?" Pragmatic anthropology does answer this question however; it does deal with the *Bestimmung* of human beings, in so far as Kant articulates his theory of the four natural predispositions.

We know, further, that the Baumgarten *metaphysica* was used not only for Kant's lectures on anthropology, but also for his lectures on metaphysics, the *philosophia practica universalis et Ethica* lectures, and his geography lectures.⁶¹ In the case of the physical geography, however, he used Baumgarten at the request of his students, because they found it more fundamental, though also difficult.⁶² In F. C. Starke's *Menschenkunde*, we read that Kant used Baumgarten's metaphysical psychology "since there is no other book about anthropology." He takes it only as a guiding thread since it is "rich in material, but very short in follow-through."⁶³ Vladimir Satura does not believe the influence from Baumgarten was great. According to him, Kant used Baumgarten only formally as format for the lectures on anthropology, because Baumgarten lacked richness in observations. He took only those themes from Baumgarten

which interested him, and these form only a stopping point, to which he attached the rich material he collected from other and broader literature or from his own observations and considerations. Baumgarten's empirical psychology is . . . in positive empirical content poor, there was not much left to take from it besides the scheme.⁶⁴

Aloys Neukirchen also thinks that in a “comparison of the pragmatic anthropology, for example, with the empirical psychology of Baumgarten one recognizes without effort how little support he gets with regard to content.”⁶⁵

There is no question that Kant used Baumgarten as he lectured. It was required by the Königsberg University that he supply a textbook, but this is no proof that the whole content of Kant's *Anthropology* was influenced by the content of Baumgarten's *metaphysica*, any more than there is solid proof that it decisively formed his lectures on ethics. He still brought to his lectures his wealth of learning and observations, from the multitude of books he read, as well as from his critical powers of reason.

In the *Nachricht* (1765–66), Kant reports that he will begin his metaphysic lectures with empirical psychology, “which is actually a metaphysical science of the experience of human beings.”⁶⁶ Then in 1773, Kant wrote in his letter to Herz that the empirical psychology contains less since he started lecturing on anthropology.⁶⁷ Paul Menzer takes this as proof that Kant simply brought the overflowing materials from psychology over to his anthropology lectures and this decisively formed the character of pragmatic anthropology. With this

the character of anthropology as an empirical and pragmatic science is finally established, the announcement of the lecture from 1775 also needs the latter expression. The next sequel to the new lecture is [accomplished] in relieving the metaphysics course [of psychology]. . . . Baumgarten's order is retained, and dealt with according to a general division of the mental faculties.⁶⁸

From this Menzer concludes that “the *Anthropology* arose out of the basis of empirical psychology.”⁶⁹ In essence this is also a claim that the *Anthropology* is nothing other than psychology. To check this claim it is necessary to see what Kant says about psychology and anthropology in relation to one another.

First of all, Kant distinguishes between rational psychology and empirical psychology. Rational psychology has as its object the “logical ego,” which is the subject of apperception. It does not consider the soul through experience, but “rather through *principia* of pure reason.”⁷⁰ Or as Kant says in his metaphysics lecture, it is the knowledge of objects of the inner sense, “so far as they are derived from pure reason.”⁷¹ If it were possible to derive knowledge from inner sense, one could conclude that there is good reason for believing that rational psychology belongs to critical philosophy, or at least that it has a chance of becoming a science in a genuine sense. However, since the “I” or ego is empty, we cannot derive knowledge from inner sense, and this method cannot provide the basis for a science.⁷²

Later, in the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant asserts that there is a psychology which as “mere anthropology of the internal sense, i.e., is the knowledge of our thinking self in life,” but even this is empty as theoretical cognition. The most that rational psychology can claim for itself is still based on “a single inference of moral teleology,”⁷³ and therefore it cannot be a genuine science.

Empirical psychology, on the other hand, is knowledge of objects of the inner sense, so far as they are strained from experience. In the precritical period, psychology belonged to metaphysics; after the critical epoch it became separated from rational psychology. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant predicts that psychology will find a place within a complete anthropology.⁷⁴ Empirical psychology, however, cannot qualify as a genuine science because it lacks a pure a priori basis. If rational psychology had qualified, then we would also have a genuine science of empirical psychology, just as we have a genuine science of empirical physics based on a rational physics. Therefore, empirical psychology’s observations are interesting, but we can give them no form, which has a genuine scientific base. There is no critically justified method with which to measure which observations are more important than others.

Kant’s *Pragmatic Anthropology*, on the other hand, does not concern itself with “what nature makes out of the human being,” but “what the human being, as a freely acting being makes, or can and should make of itself.”⁷⁵ Kant does refer to anthropology as a science, though it has difficulty in becoming so.⁷⁶ It is empirical, teleological, and ethical and must therefore have an empirical methodology as well as a rational methodology. Anthropology is empirical in so far as its method is based on observations, teleological in that the maxims of teleology are presupposed and used reflectively, and ethical and rational in so far as those observations and reflections are subordinated to the ethical final ends of human existence.

The method of observation, which is appropriate to a pragmatic anthropology, however, cannot be equated with psychology’s methods of introspection or descriptive physiology. In the *Anthropology*, Kant warns that introspection of inner states are not only misleading but also dangerous and can lead to insanity.⁷⁷ Observation is indeed important to the methodology of pragmatic anthropology, but it is not observation of inner life alone, but also of the outer expressions of inner life. The Didactic of the *Anthropology* recognizes both the inner self and the exterior self, while the Characteristic concerns discerning the inner from the exterior.⁷⁸ It is oriented to the world, society and the behavior of human beings, not to inner states and physiological characteristics.

In the *Anthropology*, Kant makes it clear that anthropology cannot be identified either with rational psychology or empirical psychology. Where psychology is concerned with the inner sense, “in anthropology we abstract from the question of whether the human being has a soul (in the sense of

separate incorporeal substance" which is *psychological*.⁷⁹ In contrast to rational psychology, which deals with soul as noumenal, and not as an object of experience, in anthropology, "appearances united according to laws of understanding are experiences, and in discussing how we represent things, we do not raise the question of what they are like apart from their relation to the senses (and so in themselves)."⁸⁰ Anthropology is concerned with "experiences" and objects of experience.

In a reflection on anthropology from 1780s, Kant stresses that

(§ Pragmatic anthropology should not be psychology: in order to research, whether the human being has a soul or what originates in the thinking and feeling principle in us (not in the body), also not the physiology of the doctor: in order to explain the memory from the brain, but knowledge of human beings.)⁸¹

Not only are the methods of psychology and anthropology different, but the ends of the particular scientific procedures are quite different. Where psychology aims at explaining phenomena, anthropology's goal is knowledge of the world. Knowledge of the world must be distinguished from any type of explanation. Knowledge of the world is based on the function of judgment, that is, reflective judgment, whereas explanation is based on the concepts of the understanding, and their schematism through determinative judgment.

The pragmatic anthropologist, according to Kant, seeks to observe the phenomena to find or reflect upon the rules of understanding in them. This is what makes phenomena experience, and not mere occurrence. Anthropology's method requires reflection in addition to observation: ("§ Observation and reflection; the latter: in order to find the rules.")⁸² Therefore, that observation is the method of anthropology, just as it is for psychology, does not allow us to conclude that anthropology is nothing more than psychology, or that every observation is of equal worth.⁸³ Pragmatic means, in the first instance, knowledge, which is useful for the world. Kant did not want to write a physiology nor an anthropology like Ernst Platner's which was merely scholastic. In his letter to Herz, he explained that his plan was quite different.⁸⁴ Kant speaks of pragmatic anthropology as knowing human beings and what can be made of them, and "for [this] a higher standpoint [*höher Standpunkt*] of anthropological observation is required."⁸⁵

The *higher standpoint* of anthropological observation that is contrasted with introspection is achieved through cultural sources. As he says in the *Menschenkunde*, "we have to, therefore, observe human beings"⁸⁶ in all that they do. This can be done by traveling or reading travelogues. Social intercourse "with many circumstances and with educated human beings is a very fruitful source of anthropology."⁸⁷ These sources are not always certain sources

of knowledge, though, since in all human action, incentives are always present and these cannot be seen when they are in play. Therefore, secondary sources of human behavior such as history and biographies can also be helpful. History and biographies cannot serve as first-degree sources since they always presuppose an anthropology for their principles of interpretation.⁸⁸

Pragmatic anthropology as we have already seen, does not have the same pretensions to science as empirical or rational psychology do. It is not a science that seeks to explain, but rather to judge. The observations only have value in that they are interesting and lead to knowledge of human beings and the world. This is the popular and ethical character of the *Anthropology*. Kant wrote to Herz that he was always observing in order to make it interesting for his students:

I stick so unrelentingly to observations of [our] ordinary life, that my listeners never have dry, but rather an entertaining occupation, through the opportunity, which they have for constantly comparing their usual experience with my remarks.⁸⁹

For anthropology, not every fact is important, but rather those facts that bring one to reflect on one's own experience and further one's ability to judge soundly.

Not only from the *Nachricht*, but also from his *Lectures on Education* and from his letter to Herz (1773) do we come to know a Kant who was not just interested in instructing his students in theoretical knowledge, but also in guiding them in historical and worldly interests, so that they could find their place in the world. As early as 1765, he saw his task as that of teaching them to philosophize and to think through the problems for themselves: "In short, he [the student] should not learn *thoughts*, but rather to *think*; they should not be *carried*, but *guided*, if it is desirable that they should be skillful in the future at thinking for themselves."⁹⁰ The teacher should not just teach scholastic or speculative knowledge, since this would mean that the teacher carries the student, but rather the teacher should lead the student to make judgments in relation to the problems of philosophy, the problems of life, and learn to carry that over to the world. Clearly the intent of the anthropology lectures was not to develop cognition as it was to develop judgment. In the next chapter, we will see what Kant means by prudent judgment and how this *Klugheitslehre* informs the idea of a pragmatic, not a speculative, anthropology.