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## **Kant's Concept of Enlightenment: Individual and Universal Dimensions**

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In this essay I plan to outline two dimensions within Kant's concept of the Enlightenment: the individual and the universal.

First I will demonstrate a traditional interpretation of Kant's idea of the Enlightenment based on the context of his essay 'An Answer to the question: What is Enlightenment?' Then I will show the importance of the Enlightenment on a specifically individual level. I will emphasize the difference between the internal and the external motivational impulse of a human being to be enlightened. I will demonstrate that the fact of an external motivation to the Enlightenment contradicts Kant's teaching about the universal character of human nature.

After that I will underline the significance of Kant's concept of the Enlightenment on a universal level. Giving a brief summary of Kant's philosophy of history I will show the role of the Enlightenment in life of people on their way to the 'perpetual peace', a 'world-civil society', and a cosmopolitan world order within Kant's philosophical system. Finally I will argue that Kant's concept of the Enlightenment should become one of the main principles of the doctrine of international cooperation in the twenty-first century.

### **1. Introduction**

Immanuel Kant is probably the most important philosopher of the past 2,000 years. He lived near the end of the Enlightenment, a European cultural movement that spanned the

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eighteenth century. Enlightenment figures such as Voltaire and David Hume sought to replace the traditions and superstitions of religion and monarchy with a world-view that relied primarily on the powers of reason. Kant's work belongs to this tradition. His three *Critiques* investigate the scope and powers of reason and emphasize that the proper study of metaphysics is our own rational faculties, not the sort of theological questions that occupied earlier generations.

The Enlightenment drew from, and furthered, the development of the new science that had begun during the Renaissance and inspired the republican revolutions in France and America. Kant was at his most productive around the time of these two great revolutions, but as he spent his entire life in eastern Prussia, he was largely untouched by the world events unfolding around him. Nevertheless, he wrote a number of important essays on political questions, particularly one discussing the possibility of perpetual peace.

Kant's influence has been immense. No philosopher since Kant has remained entirely untouched by his ideas. Even when the reaction to Kant is negative, he is the source of great inspiration. German idealism, which arose in the generation after Kant, draws heavily on Kant's work even as it rejects some of his central ideas. Similarly, the tradition of analytic philosophy, which has dominated the English-speaking world for the past century, takes its start from Gottlob Frege's criticisms of Kant.

In this essay we will try to investigate Kant's attitude towards the Enlightenment process beginning from its traditional interpretation based on the context of Kant's essay 'An Answer to the question: What is Enlightenment?' (Kant 1983: 29-37). It will be shown that there are at least two dimensions within Kant's concept of the Enlightenment:

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individual and universal. Both of the interpretations will be based on the understanding of the main principles and aims of Kantian philosophy as a whole system.

## **2. The traditional interpretation of the idea of the Enlightenment within Kant's philosophical teaching.**

While analyzing Kant's idea of the Enlightenment within its individual and universal dimensions it is important to reveal the essence of its traditional interpretation based on Kant's fundamental essay 'An Answer to the question: What is Enlightenment?' (Kant 1983: 29-37). It should be considered in the context of the intellectual atmosphere that prevailed in Europe in the eighteenth century.

By that time in Germany, as well as in France, England, and Scotland, the process of the Enlightenment was already wide-spread. However, there was still no consensus on a fundamental theoretical level about the answer to the question 'What is Enlightenment?' This problem was raised for the first time in France by Diderot in 1755 in the 5th volume of his *Encyclopedia*. In Germany, it becomes a matter for discussion only in the 1780s, on the eve of the French Revolution.

The thing is that Kant gives his answer to the question 'What is Enlightenment?' from a point of view completely different from the vision of his contemporaries. His intellectual position was presented as original and rather sophisticated. His way of thinking reached Berlin from distant Königsberg, but that had little to do with the debate conducted by his colleagues in the capital of Prussia. Kant makes an appeal for freedom of thought because: 'When one does not deliberately attempt to keep men in barbarism, they will

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gradually work out of that condition by themselves' (Kant 1983: 33). This idea has saved the life of the Kantian interpretation of the Enlightenment, while all the rest discussed in the 1780s had to disappear in the crucible of history.

Kant characterizes the world historical process as a plan of Nature intended for the human race, for the full development of all the best human abilities. He defines the Enlightenment as a turning point, one of the most exciting stages of the development of human mind. In revealing its essence as another mechanism for overcoming the natural status between individuals and for achieving a society of world-citizens, he elucidates the fundamental *principles* that should guide people towards achieving the Enlightenment.

First, there is the principle of judgement based on one's own reason. Kant shows that before the Enlightenment humanity was not used to applying its rational capacity independently. In his opinion, people have previously been unable to use their intellect without guidance from someone else. He defines such a condition as 'tutelage' (Kant 1983: 35) and explains its characteristic feature as 'willing to remain for a lifetime adolescent' because of 'laziness and cowardice' (Kant 1983: 34). Moreover, Kant says that tutelage is exhibited most shamefully in respect to the sciences and the arts.

The Age of Enlightenment, in the opinion of Immanuel Kant, has made possible a new type of culture based on the ability to form reasonable judgements, the ability to use your own intellect without guidance from the other people. Hence, Kant says that 'Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed tutelage' (Kant 1983: 29) which produces a 'true transformation of the way of thinking' (Kant 1983: 31). The ability to form judgements for oneself is a fundamental characteristic of a human 'adult', guided by the

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rule 'Sapere Aude!' - 'Have the courage to use your own understanding!' (Kant 1983: 29), marked by Kant as the motto of the Enlightenment.

Second, there is the principle of free rational judgment. Kant argues that freedom is a necessary condition for the implementation of the Enlightenment process intended to transform the way people think. He also notes that: 'It is more nearly possible, however, for the public to enlighten itself; indeed, if it is only given freedom, enlightenment is almost inevitable' (Kant 1983: 36). The task to provide people with this freedom belongs to a new type of society that Kant calls 'a society of world-citizens'. Moreover, the philosopher regards the restriction of freedom of judgment as a restriction of freedom in general, and declares it a major crime against humanity.

Third, there is the principle of freedom and obedience. Kant's arguments about the need for restricting freedom must be of particular interest. In his opinion, not all kinds of freedom can be useful for the Enlightenment process and not every restriction of freedom prevents people from being enlightened. Speaking about the problem of the co-existence of civil and spiritual freedom, Kant concludes that the more civil liberty people get, the less spiritual freedom is left for them, and vice versa. Further, Kant makes a distinction between the 'public' and the 'private use of reason' (Kant 1983: 31), and attributes to them varying degrees of freedom. By the public use of one's reason he means that use 'which a man, as *scholar*, makes of it before the reading public' (Kant 1983: 31). For Kant the public use of reason is an expression of spiritual freedom, exemplified by the relationship between a scientist or academic and his readership. As far as its private use is concerned, Kant calls it a 'use which a man makes of his reason in a civic post that has been entrusted to him' (Kant

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1983: 31). Under the private use of reason Kant understands reasoning concerning matters of an 'official' character, and believes that its degree of freedom should be limited for reasons of compliance with the official order. So, Kant comes to the conclusion that for an enlightened state the private use of freedom is not acceptable, and puts forward the following formula which describes the proper condition of affairs: 'Argue as much as you like, and about what you like, but obey!' (Kant 1983: 31).

It should be added that Kant considered his age to be not yet 'enlightened' because 'it is still far from true that men are already capable of using their own reason in religious matters confidently and correctly without external guidance. Still, we have some obvious indications that the field of working toward the goal [of religious truth] is now opened. What is more, the hindrances against general Enlightenment or the emergence from self-imposed tutelage are gradually diminishing. In this respect this is the age of the Enlightenment and the century of Frederick [the Great]' (Kant 1983: 33).

Defining Enlightenment as a mechanism for overcoming the natural state of the people, the German thinker aims to answer the question of how pure reason can determine the human will. Since it does not contain anything empirical, and human actions are always based on empirical assumptions and are intended to achieve the objectives of the empirical world, pure reason must act on its own fundamentally different level, prescribing the necessary laws for action. The necessity of empirical behaviour is always hypothetical, that is, it always aims to achieve a particular, meaningful purpose. Therefore, from Kant's point of view the law of pure reason cannot contain anything empirical and generally cannot contain any specific content. Consequently, the subject for which pure reason legislates

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must be only its form. This explains Kant's formulation of his famous, fundamental law of pure practical reason, according to which a person should act so that the maxim of his or her will at all times could also be set as a principle of universal law. Therefore, the moral law is certainly important for every rational being, or, in other words, the law is certainly important for each person to the extent that he or she is guided by reason. Kant is well aware of that fact that human actions are determined most of the time by their empirical motives, and above all – by human egotism and selfishness in their very different ways. Moreover, Kant has no illusions about the fact that this circumstance can be fundamentally changed because it is only holy people who ultimately are capable of acting always in accordance with the moral law and solely on the basis of pure reason. However, every person has the ability to control his or her actions, which requires only the freedom to make decisions, supported by the process of Enlightenment in society.

It should be emphasized that, according to Kant, Nature wants people to be enlightened about how to use freely the ideas of pure reason in empirical conditions, i.e. to act in accordance with the categorical imperative. As a result, Kant anticipates the full development of the best qualities of an individual as a representative of a human race. And even if the 'society of world-citizens', determined by reason, can never be achieved, it should still be an ideal purpose for us, meant for creating the most favourable conditions for the existence of civilization in the future. Therefore, the process of the Enlightenment cannot be reduced to simple historical and political action. The process is important within itself: a person should enlighten him- or herself, rather than the educated elite enlighten uneducated people. Moreover, a human intention towards Enlightenment comes from the

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trouble [*die Not*] people cause for each other without proper guidance by the laws of Reason. Ultimately, this situation will force people to create a legal civil order in which they will be able to enlighten themselves. After all, the implementation of a permanent Enlightenment process promotes the highest value of a human being - his or her dignity which in Kant's philosophy of history is directly related to the implementation of morality, of the categorical imperative, and the establishment of a 'society of world-citizens'.

### **3. Kant's idea of the Enlightenment on the individual scale.**

In order to get the full understanding of Kant's idea of the Enlightenment it would not be enough to investigate its traditional interpretation based only on Kant's essay 'An Answer to the question: What is Enlightenment?'. To depict fully its meaning within Kant's philosophical teaching, the idea of the Enlightenment needs to be considered on not just a universal but also an individual level. In this section we will reveal the essence of the controversial character of the Enlightenment process on the individual, transcendental, and empirical scale. For this purpose we will need to explicate Kant's concept of the universal character of human nature.

#### **(a.) Kant's teaching about the universal character of human nature.**

It is well known that the question 'What is a human?' plays a fundamental role in the Kantian philosophical system. The answer to this question can be summarized in Kant's teaching about the universal character of human nature. The essence of this teaching will be analyzed further.

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Speaking about human nature in general, one must admit that almost all the researchers somehow touched upon this problem during different historical periods. Thus, in pre-Kantian philosophy European thinkers were mostly concerned with the issue of whether a man is by nature a good or, on the contrary, an evil being. Some philosophers (for example Hobbes) argued that human beings are evil by nature, so that civilization and civil society are given to them to restrain their evil inclinations. Other philosophers (like Rousseau, for instance) were convinced that human beings are originally good and all the evil comes from the perversion of the human nature. The third group of philosophers believed that human beings are neither good nor evil by nature, but they would become one or the other depending on the social environment. This, in particular, was the point of view of the French materialists of the eighteenth century.

Where the Kantian doctrine about the universal character of human nature is concerned, it doesn't belong to any of those trends shown above. Kant rather argues that a human being has an opportunity to be moral *a priori*, but he or she has to develop this skill during all their life. In essence, one can distinguish two levels in Kant's teaching about the universal character of human nature: the epistemological and the ethical.

**(b.) The epistemological level.**

On the epistemological level Kant shows that it is the knowledge *a priori* that makes a human different from all the other creatures in the world. Thanks to the discovery of *a priori* forms of sensibility and reason Kant develops his doctrine which will be later called the 'Copernican revolution'. According to this idea objects must conform to our knowledge

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but not vice versa. This thesis means that a number of fundamental characteristics of objects depends on the nature of our (human) cognitive abilities. It also means that any object of our knowledge must obey the universal forms of sensibility and reason, as a condition of the possibility of human experience. Kant's concept of space and time, the theory of the deduction of categories and the theory of imagination and schematism play here the fundamental role.

Moreover, the notion of the transcendental unity of self-consciousness and the transcendental unity of apperception, this central element of a human nature on its transcendental level, creates a background for our understanding of human nature. Ascribing the ability of reason to the synthesis of categories, Kant is able to explain the unity of consciousness of a thinking subject. He declares that the 'transcendental unity of self-consciousness' is given us *a priori*, which means that it doesn't need to be proven. He also calls this 'subjective unity of consciousness' which has an *a priori* character – 'the supreme principle of any cognition' (Kant 1998b: 183).

Apart from that, Kant develops his theory of *a priori* ideas of pure reason (cf. *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Transcendental Dialectic, Book I, Section II) (Kant 1998b: 399-405). These ideas act as a regulator of moral activity and people's behaviour. The fact that they are equally common to all the members of the human race regardless of their traditions, religious beliefs, and customs, proves the possibility of the universal character of human nature. Following this statement Kant creates his ethical concept which is based on the notion of the categorical imperative.

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**(c.) The ethical level**

In fact the Kantian ethical position on the universal character of human nature radically differs from the beliefs of Hobbes and his predecessors. All of the pre-Kantian thinkers speak about human nature postulating its essential features as inborn, immutable, and completely independent from the reason and will. According to their teaching human beings have no control over their nature.

Kant analyzes these ideas and shows that if we consider human nature as objectively good or evil we cannot consider a person to be responsible for his or her actions. This means that only freedom must determine human activity and each person must determine whether his or her nature is good or evil. Otherwise a person can be neither good nor evil-minded.

At the same time Kant considers a human being to belong to two different worlds: the phenomenal and the noumenal. As an empirical being a person is entirely determined by the laws of nature. It means that a person doesn't control his or her actions: deprived of free will, he or she is, therefore, essentially insane. A human being is just a phenomenon of nature, subject to its inexorable laws.

On the other hand, human beings are 'things in themselves' [*Dinge-an-sich-selbst*] that cannot be subject to the laws of nature. They are endowed with reason and do not depend on sensuality and environmental conditions. Real human beings can be responsible for their actions because they have free will and, therefore, can make themselves either good or evil-minded.

Furthermore, because all human actions are determined in the natural world and

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therefore are not free, Kant introduces the concept of a 'transcendental subject' the function of which is, regardless of the empirical circumstances, to determine human behaviour.

Some human actions are consistent with the moral laws, while others represent a deviation from them (i.e., evil actions). The notion of a transcendental subject reveals a complicated indirect relationship between people's inclinations that cannot be simply determined by their motives. Thus, according to Kant human behaviour should not be a direct response to the empirical situation. Between the empirical situation and human action there must always be the activity of practical reason with its ideas of the highest good and moral duty. These ideas must be the basis for public morality and people's social behaviour.

In other words, the ethical essence of Kant's teaching about the universal character of human nature is based on the idea that human beings are subject to the natural as well as the moral world. Kant justifies the fact that a person has the ability to be moral only if he or she makes a free moral choice.

To sum up, on the one hand Kant reveals an epistemological mechanism that makes it possible to create the world of nature by means of human intelligence. On the other hand, Kant shows how individuals can create themselves. Choosing the transcendental ideas of pure reason as a regulator of their behaviour, individuals thus show their ability to make a free choice in favour of moral behaviour, each one demonstrating in this way his or her difference from the animal world.

However there's still a contradiction in Kant's teaching about the universal character of human nature. It becomes transparent when we speak about the internal and external motivation impulse of an individual towards the process of Enlightenment. Let's

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take a look at it more precisely.

**(d.) The Contradiction between the internal and external motivation impulse of an individual towards the process of Enlightenment.**

Analyzing Kant's teaching about the universal character of human nature it is essential to pay attention to one unresolved contradiction within this concept. As it was shown above, Kant proves the possibility of moral self-improvement on an individual level. Pure reason is tended to create the absolute synthesis of all the empirical knowledge. The result of such a synthesis is a set of transcendental ideas which serve as a moral regulator of a human being's activity. If a man acts in accordance with these transcendental ideas he becomes capable of breaking the chain of cause-and-effect thus showing his independence from the world of physical nature.

However, the German philosopher deliberately ignores the problem of a mechanism that would possibly influence a person to choose moral behaviour. This idea might be urgent in view of the problem of moral politicians and political moralists. If all the people have free will to act according to the categorical imperative, why do some of them still prefer to stick to their natural inclinations rather than to rational (moral) norms? At first sight it looks obvious that the only thing we need to do is to work out a mechanism that would help people to follow the moral rules. However, thinking in this way we forget that it is only free will and free independent choice that can make an individual different from the entire animal world. The implementation of such mechanisms would only manipulate people's decisions, thereby suppressing their mental activity and leaving no chance for the

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freedom of choice.

The same controversy can be observed within the process of Enlightenment when we speak about the necessity of educating people in the different spheres of their life. According to Immanuel Kant, Enlightenment is man's release from 'tutelage' (Kant, 1983: 29). Enlightenment is the process by which the public could rid themselves of intellectual bondage after centuries of slumbering. After providing a careful analysis of the causes why tutelage occurred, he proposes the requirements for Enlightenment. He wants the public to think freely, act judiciously, and be 'treated in accordance with their dignity'. 'Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another. This immaturity is self-imposed when its cause lies not in a lack of understanding, but in the lack of resolve and courage to use it without guidance from another. "*Sapere Aude!* [dare to know] Have courage to use your own understanding!"—that is the motto of enlightenment' (Kant 1983: 29).

On the one hand, these issues demand from an individual a certain amount of free will so that he or she has the courage to use his or her own understanding. On the other, the process of the Enlightenment is impossible without external motivation induced by other people thus suppressing an individual's free will. Moreover, the antinomial character of Kant's teaching about the Enlightenment can be clearly seen in his thesis 'Argue as much as you want and about anything but obey!' (Kant 1983: 31). Consequently, an individual can produce free will and think for him- or herself as a human being different from the animal world only on the theoretical level. As far as empirical reality is concerned, there will

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always be someone who will restrain our free will for some reason or another.

Such theoretical inclinations in all Kant's works can be explained only in one way. It is well known that eighteenth-century Germany was marked by socio-economic and political conflicts. The German Enlightenment could not openly disapprove of the real things that were happening in the country during that time. That is why most of the philosophers had to express their criticism with the help of theoretical philosophical constructions. From the height of metaphysical contemplation they supported the idea of the unity of the nations while their condemnation of the German governmental system could only be veiled and appeals for its destruction were absolutely impossible.

So we must strictly differentiate between Kant the empiricist and Kant the metaphysician. This is a criterion for analyzing Kant's attitude not only towards the universal character of human nature, the problem of war and peace, the French revolution, but also towards the understanding of the process of the Enlightenment within its individual and universal dimensions.

As has been noted, Kant does not introduce to his reader the idea of a mechanism for influencing individual choice towards either moral actions or the process of Enlightenment. The paradox is that as soon as we start manipulating an individual's will, that individual loses his or her freedom of choice and, therefore, his or her dignity. Only free moral choice can make an individual different from all living beings. After all, Kant has shown how majestic and powerful people can act according to the categorical imperative and that free will both constructs the essence of the universal character of human nature and determines society in its development.

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#### **4. Kant's concept of the Enlightenment on the universal level**

In the previous sections we have revealed the essentially antinomial character of Kant's teaching about the Enlightenment on an individual level. In order to demonstrate the universal meaning of Kant's teaching about the Enlightenment it is vital to study his philosophy of history. It is within Kant's vision of the direction of the development of humankind that the role of the Enlightenment for all the people in the world becomes evident. Moreover it becomes possible to justify Kant's idea of the Enlightenment as one of the universal values as well as one of the main principles of the doctrine of international cooperation in the twenty-first century.

##### **(a.) Kant's philosophy of history.**

According to Kant's teaching humanity arises together with people's capacity for rational (moral) behaviour. Taking this criterion as the background of our theoretical reconstruction we can distinguish three periods in the history of human society:

- (i) the dominance of the condition of nature when people are only at the start of developing their tendency to moral behaviour;
- (ii) the confrontation between savage and reasonable (moral) human nature;
- (iii) the prevalence of reasonable actions over people's savage inclinations and the establishment of a legal 'society of world-citizens' and 'perpetual peace' in the world.

A point often overlooked is that Kant considered moral and political processes to be the main moving force of human history. The interdependence of these two factors has a

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direct impact on how history proceeds. On the one hand, it is practical reason that determines the universal character of human nature and makes it possible for all humans to act in accordance with the categorical imperative. On the other, a political process in society aims to create legal conditions that permit people freely to follow the categorical imperative in their daily practice. Moreover, Kant shows the possibility of a 'world-civil society', where in a distant future the need for a legal regulation might be dismissed, in which people will be guided solely by moral norms.

Accordingly, Kant's philosophy of history evinces anthropological and socio-political aspects. Anthropological aspects include:

- (i) morality as a transcendental feature of all human beings;
- (ii) Enlightenment as a fundamental regulator of an individual's moral behaviour;
- (iii) human dignity as an indicator of human moral behaviour.

Socio-political aspects include respectively:

- (i) the idea of 'perpetual peace';
- (ii) the idea of a 'society of world-citizens';
- (iii) the idea of a cosmopolitan world order.

Another key point is that Kant was the first one to reveal the *a priori* character of knowledge about the future. This means that any philosophical-historical model is always transcendental and that its implementation depends on people's good will and good intentions. With this in mind, the fact that we didn't observe moral progress in the past doesn't prove that it is impossible in the future. Therefore, the idea that the future of humanity depends on the free will of individuals makes Kant's philosophical-historical

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model highly anthropocentric.

### **(b.) Theoretical remarks on Kant's philosophy of history**

It is important to note that when we speak about Kant's philosophy of history we mean its contemporary reconstruction so that its ideas don't contradict the total Kantian philosophical system. Why does it have to be only a reconstruction? Because Immanuel Kant has not left for us a separate volume of writings titled 'philosophy of history', as Hegel did, for instance. Nevertheless Kant writes about the history of humankind, its goals and moving forces. These ideas can be found practically in all his essays and treatises. If we try to gather them all into one concept we will get a reconstruction of Kant's philosophy of history. It must be basically different from a so-called "reminiscence", a free retelling of the author's thoughts without referring to his conceptual methodological background. The reconstruction of Kant's philosophy of history and its main principles should correlate with Kant's whole philosophical system and must look as if Kant himself would have written it if he had had that intention.

The main stages of human history are described by Kant in his essay 'Speculative Beginning of Human History' (Kant 1983: 38-55). Here the German thinker shows that human rationality was the first step in the development of humankind. It is also vital to emphasize that for Kant the notion of rationality is equal to morality. Human society begins its movement only when people get the ability to think and behave rationally (according to the categorical imperative) and to act morally. As far as the last stage of human history is concerned (the establishment of a 'society of world-citizens), it is described in Kant's essay

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‘Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent’ (Kant 1983: 12-28). Certainly one can find in the contemporary literature such a division of history into stages like those in Kant’s philosophy of history: ‘a natural order; a legal, constitutional state order; a legal, civil world order’. Such a vision of historical development doesn’t contradict a certain model of the philosophy of history. But it does contradict the whole Kantian philosophical system, because Kant’s philosophy is strictly all about reason and how it constructs the empirical and moral world. That is why it would be more correct to classify the stages of history from the point of view of the development of reason (which is the main criterion of the classification) but not from the perspective of the development of political structures. This latter case looks as though Kant might have been interested in political philosophy. But he could not because in the eighteenth century the subject of political philosophy had not yet been formulated. Moreover, as already shown in the previous sections, Kant could not discuss political questions openly because of the political regime in eastern Prussia at that time.

Besides, the classification of history into stages according to the development of reason (morality) reveals more clearly that all knowledge about the future is always given us *a priori*. It means that there must be a final goal in human history which is never to be achieved in the empirical sense but always directs human activity. This knowledge makes the logical step to the last stage of human history possible, namely the stage where there will be no need for legal regulation, the stage where people will be governed by the categorical imperative.

Apart from that, Kant’s philosophy of history has a set of principles that make it

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possible to explicate certain laws of historical development, namely:

(i) A transparent concept of development. Generally speaking, Kant's concept of development is the first theoretical, evolutionary concept in the history of human ideas. Its most important theses are: continuity of the development; gradual changes that come from the course of the interaction of opposing elements; the triadic structure of the evolutionary process: the domination of one of the opposite elements, their existence in relatively the same manner, and the dominance of the second opposing element that initially played a secondary role.

(ii) The principle of moral and social identity. The specifically Kantian understanding of this principle is represented by his anti-natural understanding of the moral and, consequently, the social world. Anti-natural ethical dualism results from the worlds of freedom and of nature, and it belongs to the theoretical core of Kant's philosophical system.

(iii) The principle of a substantial difference between the capabilities of an individual and those of the entire human race. Kant writes: 'In man (as the only rational creature on earth) those natural capacities which are directed to the use of his reason are to be fully developed only in the race, not in the individual' (Kant 1983: 14).

(iv) In his general philosophical system Kant's philosophy of history directly relies on a teleological method. This method complements the metaphysical concept of development since the latter is unable to explain a qualitative change in the link between physical world and social life. It also explains the possibility of self-movement within an organic, as well as within a social system.

All in all in this section we have studied briefly the context of Kant's philosophy of

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history as well as its theoretical propositions. This material will help us to justify the importance of the Enlightenment on the universal level within Kant's teaching. It will also give us an opportunity to show that Kant's idea of the Enlightenment may become one of the main principles of the doctrine of international cooperation in the twenty-first century.

### **5. The Enlightenment in Kant's system of universal values.**

The reconstruction of Kant's philosophy of history makes it possible to explain the system of universal values on the transcendental level. The list given below shows that the Enlightenment is just as important as the other components extracted from Kant's philosophical-historical teaching. The content of Kant's system of universal values is summarized here.

The universal character of human nature suggests the existence of a *universal morality* based on the formal principle of the categorical imperative:

a) 'Act only according to that maxim whereby you can, at the same time, will that it should become a universal law' (Kant 1998a: 196). This formula may become one of the fundamental principles of the doctrine of international cooperation in the twenty-first century. It is aimed at preventing the imperial policies of some contemporary states that demonstrate a bad pattern of behaviour to their descendants.

b) Immanuel Kant anticipated the environmental problems awaiting mankind in the twenty-first century. Since the natural world of the individual cannot be perfect, the conflict between humankind and nature can at times lead to crises. Therefore Kant formulated the so-called environmental categorical imperative, the rule of our attitude to nature: 'Every

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rational being must so act as if he were through his maxim always a legislating member in the universal kingdom of ends' (Kant 1998a: 195).

c) 'Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never merely as a means to an end, but always at the same time as an end.' (Kant 1998a: 205). This variant of the categorical imperative appeals for the rejection of the utilitarian attitude towards a human being in the context of contemporary international politics.

The *Enlightenment* plays a fundamental role in achieving peaceful conditions on a planetary level. It is another universal value within Kant's philosophical model. According to Kant, Enlightenment is a permanent process that develops the individual's ability to be guided by the ideas of practical reason in their daily practice. Thus, possessing intelligence is not enough to make moral actions. In this sense every person needs guidance (Enlightenment) which is to teach a person to be brave enough to use their own mind and to be guided in their behaviour by a categorical imperative.

– The idea of *human dignity* justified by Kant may also become a fundamental value of the modern doctrine of international cooperation. According to Kant, a human being as a moral subject is above all price. Such factors as ethical arguments for happiness, sinfulness, etc. are not essential for the recognition of the unconditional value of human dignity. Human dignity is priceless, it cannot be taken away and it does not depend on any social group a person belongs to, whether he is a sinner or a saint, a believer or an unbeliever.

It is vital to note that the concept of human dignity appears today not only as an ethical principle but also as a legal category. A number of mechanisms of international law,

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as well as the constitutions of European countries have introduced the concept of human dignity as a basic principle of all constitutional order. Thus, the protection of human dignity becomes the main criterion for the legitimacy of national political, social and economic interests.

– The idea of a legal ‘society of world citizens’ is considered by Kant as a universal value in the context of his philosophy of history, and therefore, may become one of the principal targets of the doctrine of international cooperation in the twenty-first century. To avoid violation and wars and to end the natural condition of sovereign states, Kant offers a transition to the legal ‘society of world citizens’ in which people should overcome their distrust, their desire for domination and profit, and to accept the status of a cosmopolitan. Thus, a legal ‘society of world citizens’ is the idea of the final form of a human community. It can be at the level of both micro-society that is directly embedded in the structure of civil society and within a particular nation state and public association on the interstate scale. As for the nation state, its task is to mediate between these two extremes and to function to its legal extent in such a system of political relations.

– The project of the ‘perpetual peace’ developed by Kant in the eighteenth century is a universal value for all the people in the world and it should become an integral component of contemporary international relationships. Kant justified the theoretical and practical interdependence needed to achieve ‘perpetual peace’ and the idea of a moral and legal ‘society of world citizens’. He showed that in order to prevent war it is necessary to implement the idea of a legal society on a global scale. Thus Kant opened a new system of legal coordination in which states relate to each other as friends. Rejecting the original idea

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of a state he moved to the idea of a free league of nation-states that would prevent war through the peaceful arbitration of conflicts.

– Kant's idea of a *cosmopolitan world order* may also become a universal value for all the people in the world, as well as a fundamental principle of the doctrine of international cooperation in the twenty-first century. In the context of Kant's philosophical-historical model cosmopolitanism is an integral step towards the realization of the project of 'perpetual peace' and legal 'society of world citizens'. Its adequate implementation means that that society will acquire an international responsibility for the violation of the law in every corner of the planet.

So far as is known, this approach is often criticized by opponents of eurocentrism who stand against imposing the values of the European Enlightenment outside contemporary Europe. Nonetheless the main argument to support this idea is the formality of the categorical imperative and its total detachment from any particular empirical reality. Kant shows the universal character of both theoretical and practical reason without any references to specific behavioural stereotypes in multi-cultural society (which is usually criticized in Kant's ethical system). This may be the reason for assigning to the categorical imperative the status of a universal principle in the context of the modern doctrine of international relationships.

## **6. Kant's idea of the Enlightenment as one of the main principles of the doctrine of international cooperation in the twenty-first century.**

It is widely known that in recent years the interaction between different social

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groups within a nation state as well as on the intergovernmental level have become highly interdependent. Because of that fact an urgent need to review the basic principles of the doctrine of international cooperation has become the priority agenda issue for contemporary humanitarians and scientists.

Experts suggest that any doctrine aimed to coordinate the actions of people in society should not simply declare itself scholastically. Evidently it should rather be based on a common understanding of a direction in historical development. The role of estimating the purpose, direction, and the moving forces of humankind belongs to the philosophy of history. This seems to be the dominant argument why we need to extract the fundamental principles of the doctrine of international cooperation from a certain philosophical-historical model. Moreover, a certain philosophical-historical model (in our case-study it is Kant's philosophy of history) must always undergo expert interrogation in ethical, ontological, epistemological, etc., terms. It means that all of the positions about the order of humankind's development are to be proved and justified theoretically (morally) but not postulated scholastically.

While representing Kant's philosophy of history as a background for a contemporary doctrine of international cooperation I mean it to be in opposition to the theories of state cooperation *with an ideological background*.

It is also important to underline that Kant presents a positive perspective for the development of humankind giving people the hope to survive in the future. Moreover, he gives an explanation why it is possible to survive – because of the universal character of human nature that gives people the possibility to be moral. He also shows how to do it in

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the shortest way – to follow categorical imperatives in your daily life.

According to the list of the universal values that were extracted from Kant's philosophy of history it is possible to formulate the main principles of the doctrine of international cooperation in the twenty-first century, namely:

- The principle of the universality of morality based on the formal principle of the categorical imperative.
- The principle of the universality of the idea of the Enlightenment as a permanent process for transforming the categorical imperative into the fundamental regulation of human behaviour.
- The principle of focussing on the idea of human dignity in the national and international legal space.
- The principle of the implementation of the idea of a legal 'society of world citizens' in the global political world order.
- The principle of the focussing on the idea of 'perpetual peace' in the context of a global strategy of the survival of humanity.
- The principle of the implementation of the idea of a cosmopolitan world order within the project of the legal 'world-civil society' and the concept of 'perpetual peace.'

The role of the Enlightenment within this list of principles of the doctrine of international cooperation is hard to underestimate. As shown above, the Enlightenment is a permanent process of the development of individual rational qualities, the mechanism for overcoming the natural inclinations of people on the way to the establishment of the 'society of world citizens'. Enlightenment includes the principle of judgement based on

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one's own reason, the principle of free rational judgment, and the principle of freedom and obedience. In general, Enlightenment is aimed at increasing the capacity of the individual to be guided not only by rational thinking, but also by the ideas of pure reason. Thus, Enlightenment is aimed at developing the ability of an individual to use his or her reason, resulting in people's awareness of the need to follow the moral categorical imperative, to form skills of free thinking, moral choices and behavior. According to Kant, the process of the Enlightenment gives people the possibility to realize that the future of humankind depends only on each and every person in the society. All the contradictions on the international level could be easily resolved as soon as people start avoiding their natural inclinations and begin to use the ideas of practical reason as a regulator of their own behaviour.

## 7. Conclusion

To summarize: we have elucidated the main contents of the Kantian idea of Enlightenment and discovered that its traditional interpretation is based on Kant's fundamental essay, 'An Answer to the question: What is Enlightenment?' According to this essay Enlightenment is a permanent process intended to develop an individual's ability to be guided by the ideas of practical reason in their daily practice. This process includes the principle of judgement based on one's own reason, the principle of free rational judgment, and the principle of freedom and obedience.

Further, in the context of the individual the process of the Enlightenment reveals a contradiction. Since the universal character of human nature involves only the independent

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choice of the individual toward moral actions (including Enlightenment), an external impulse to the Enlightenment can be interpreted as a manipulation of the individual's will, which in turn deprives him or her of the status of being endowed with reason. According to Kant, what makes a human being different from the animal world is the free rational choice of moral action. It means that human beings are only human when they are able to abandon all their bad inclinations in order to act as moral subjects.

On the universal level Kant's concept of the Enlightenment is constructed as a philosophical-historical model and plays the role of one of the universal human values. Guided by the value of the Enlightenment mankind will be able to overcome its tutelage and reach the 'society of world-citizens' in which everyone can freely follow the categorical imperative in their daily practice without violating the freedom of others. This will allow humanity to eliminate the threat of war, terrorism, and armed conflict.

Moreover, Kant's model of the philosophy of history, along with the system of universal values embedded in it, allows us to formulate the basic principles of the doctrine of international cooperation in the context of current events at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Enlightenment plays an integral role in the system of these principles, for it is intended to guide humanity on the way to the 'society of world citizens', 'perpetual peace' and cosmopolitan world order.

Thus, Immanuel Kant has built a metaphysical bridge between the eighteenth century and the modernity showing the way to help people to find the hope to survive.

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