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Kant, Herder and Anthropology

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Abstract: This study explores the philosophical contributions of Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottfried Herder to the field of cultural anthropology. It examines Kant's idealism and transcendentalism, which provided a universal perspective on culture and influenced various anthropological concepts. The research addresses the criticisms of Kant's views on race and gender, highlighting the evolution of his thoughts in response to emerging scientific disciplines. Additionally, the study delves into Herder's role in shaping modern cultural studies, emphasizing his opposition to Enlightenment universalism and his introduction of cultural relativism. Herder's ideas on the uniqueness and dignity of different cultures are analyzed, illustrating their impact on the development of cultural anthropology. The paper concludes with the discussion of the ongoing relevance of Kant's and Herder's philosophies in contemporary anthropological discourse.

Keywords: Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottfried Herder, cultural anthropology, Enlightenment, philosophy of culture

Introduction

In situations when a cultural anthropologist arrives at an Amazonian tribal settlement or a high school teacher in the suburbs of Paris opens the school year, both experience "culture shock" and are confronted with two sets of challenges. First, they have to "take off the glasses of ethnocentrism," to acknowledge and understand the local culture as a whole – not to qualify the culture, its spiritual and material manifestations, in the mirror of their own culture. The recognition of the autonomy and uniqueness of culture on ethnological grounds is the Herderian motive of cultural relativism. The second task that the cultural anthropologist or even the teacher must confront is understanding the rational and moral manifestations of the culture under scrutiny within the global idea of humanity, that is in terms of understanding the Kantian paradigm. With this example, I want to illustrate the two-dimensionality of understanding culture in the scientific and in the everyday life of a contemporary man.

Although neither the anthropologist nor the teacher may have the knowledge of Kant's and Herder's philosophies, they use concepts and move within the semantic and methodological framework of their science which has a strong basis precisely in the heritage of the German Enlightenment. In this study, I make an interdisciplinary excursion into the cultural sciences and the disciplines of anthropology, and attempt to analyze and determine the influence and impact of the two paradigms of culture, namely Kant's and Herder's, on these sciences. Despite the complicated structure of the anthropological sciences and their partial isolation from philosophy, and despite the different scholarly definitions of the American, British or German anthropological traditions, we will try to identify the influence of Kant's and Herder's concepts of culture and their connections to the foundations of anthropological disciplines. It is necessary to emphasize again one historical connection: both Kant and Herder conceived their philosophical theses at the time when the attention of human sciences was shifting from physical (biological) anthropology to cultural anthropology, and later to social, archaeological anthropology and others.

Kant's and Herder's themes, such as interest in language and artistic expressions of cultures, global reasoning, critique of colonialism and imperialism, and philosophy of history, contributed to changing the course of scientific interest in human beings from a biological perspective to cultural and universal interest in humanity. Kant, and in this case especially Herder,

can be said to have revolutionized human sciences, analogically with Charles Darwin and his theory of biological evolution a century later.

It can be said that the main strands of modern cultural anthropology, such as evolutionism, diffusionism, configurationalism and structuralism, are the products of the German cultural revolution and reflect Enlightenment philosophical paradigms – in some cases Kant's and Herder's. The validity of all these anthropological approaches proves that the two ideological foundations coexist in different relative contexts in theories.

Kant and Herder do not have a coherent philosophy of culture or a comprehensive anthropology in this sense. Thus, they are not anthropologists in the modern sense. This study is concerned with identifying those philosophical elements of their theories that are reflected in various areas of modern anthropology (including philosophical anthropology). I recognize that such a broadly defined task cannot be worked into a single study. Therefore, I choose a reduced selection of references that connect modern anthropology with the thought of Kant and Herder.

Our thinking has one serious critical limitation. It is the general scientific limitation of science as a Eurocentric science. The Western, European or Enlightenment background of science (and the background of the cultural sciences) is a well-known fact. In the natural and technical sciences, it does not constitute a problem. It is, however, a problem in cultural sciences. The definition, reflection and comparison of cultures are based on the historical foundation of European science, and thus against the background of Western culture with its ancient and Christian determining foundations. I mention this primarily because Europe's opening up to the world, in other words, the shift from Eurocentric to global thinking, takes place in the second half of the 18th century – at the time of Kant and Herder.[1]

It is the methodological paradigm of all anthropological research. Despite the declared objective scientific approach, it is hard not to look at non-European cultural settings through European (Western) eyes. This paradigm expects and assumes that other cultures adhere to specific European standards derived from philosophy, ethics, religion, economy, everyday customs and traditions of European cultures. I think that Kant's apriorism and Herder's cultural pluralism partially reduced Eurocentrism and could be inspiring even today in terms of theoretical and scientific reflection on global cultural issues.

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[1] S. Muthu: *Enlightenment Against Empire*. Princeton University Press, New York 2003.

The Birth of German Anthropology

The birth of German anthropology[2] can be seen in the light of the tension between two important 18th century intellectuals, Kant and Herder.[3] Kant represents universalism, and Herder represents relativism and particularism. Contemporary cultural studies have a distinctly German imprint. Today, if we talk about cultures, cultural manifestations, acculturation or multicultural-ism, we are more or less already in the field of cultural studies, ethnology or ethnography. However, the methodology and terminology of these disciplines have their roots in anthropology, which emerged in Germany in the second half of the 18th century during the period of German idealism and the emerging romanticism. It is at this time that the basic scientific tools, methodologies, objects, and fields of the new humanities are being created, making Kant and Herder philosophically active. At the time when physiological anthropology was still dominant in France, the Göttingen school was being established in Germany[4] in order to explore "Volkunde"[5] (ethnography).

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[2] It is necessary to point out a certain terminological problem with the terms "anthropology" and "philosophy of culture." From today's perspective, even from the perspective of the German Enlightenment, it is not correct to freely confuse and intertwine these fields. Herder and Kant used the term "anthropology," but we do not find the term "philosophy of culture" directly thematized in the texts of our philosophers. Nevertheless, I prefer "philosophy of culture" because in contemporary discourse anthropology is defined differently and evokes something different both in the sense of philosophy (philosophical anthropology) and in the sense of the social sciences as a whole.

[3] J. H. Zammito: *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2002.

[4] In Germany, since the 1860s, the field of Popularphilosophie, heavily influenced by British empiricism, has challenged the deductive premises of philosophy as traditionally practiced, arguing that philosophy should take into account the embodied and sensuous character of human experience. This field found institutional expression in the Goettingen school whose key text is E. Platner's *Anthropologie für Aerzte und Weltweise* (*Anthropology for Physicians and Philosophers*, 1772). The Göttingen School (Ch. G. Heyne, J. G. Eichhorn, Ch. Meiners and others) began to formulate what might later in the nineteenth century be referred to as the science of culture (Kulturwissenschaft). In the introduction to his book, Carhart writes: "Culture entered the circulation of language as a vehicle for several related disciplines that examined human social development from different perspectives." M. C. Carhart: *The Science of Culture in Enlightenment Germany*. Harvard University Press, Harvard 2007, p. 11.

[5] The origin of ethnology as a science is in the work of German scientists from the University of Göttingen, who collaborated with the Russian Tsarist Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg on research on the natives of Kamchatka. In 1740 Gerhard Friedrich Müller used the term "Völker-Beschreibung." In the 1770s (for the first time in 1771), the term

This was the precise moment when Kant and Herder conceived their noetic, ethical, historical and cultural theories.

I want to emphasize that Kant's and Herder's anthropology as a new field of science does not have the parameters of contemporary anthropology.[6] This fact is linked to two important theses, namely that the newly emerging sciences of culture and anthropology are not directly dependent on philosophical anthropology and are created more or less independently but, it should be added, with a certain broader historical-philosophical basis. The second fact is that Kant and Herder were aware of these new scientific initiatives and reflected on them. Herder adhered to them and Kant partially criticized them.

My point is that Kant's and Herder's ideas greatly influenced anthropological and culturalist discourse in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Understanding the relationships between ethnography and cultural or social anthropology without reflecting on Kant's and Herder's concepts is problematic.[7] Herder, in particular, is one of the historical figures most responsible for establishing cultural anthropology as a discipline in its own right. Before Herder's time, anthropology had been conceived as a science more closely related to biology and anatomy. German Idealism and Herder gave anthropology new content as well as concrete philosophical starting points. One can speak of a key transformation of this science. The transformation of anthropology from an empirical study of anatomy to an empirical study of culture also influenced Herder. This is confirmed by his interest in the relationship between mind and language, as well as in history and humanity as such.

However, Kant also played an important role in this transformation. The development of anthropology from medical science to the study of culture in the work of Herder and Hamann was largely prompted by Kant's critique of Platner's anthropology[8] (the philosophical investigation of corporeality and

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"ethnography" appeared in Germany to refer to (descriptive) research on non-European peoples as "Völkerkunde" ("the study of peoples/nations"). H. F. Vermeulen: *The German Invention of Völkerkunde: Ethnological Discourse in Europe and Asia, 1740–1798*. In: *The German Invention of Race*. Eds. S. Eigen and M. Larrimore. State University of New York Press, Albany 2006, pp. 123–125.

[6] J. H. Zammito: *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2002.

[7] H. F. Vermeulen: *The German Invention of Völkerkunde: Ethnological Discourse in Europe and Asia, 1740–1798*. In: *The German Invention of Race*. Eds. S. Eigen and M. Larrimore. State University of New York Press, Albany 2006.

[8] Ernst Platner (1744–1818) is primarily known as a leading scholar of physiological or medical anthropology, a discipline that emerged especially in the second half of the 18th century and explored physiological explanations of mental processes while preserving the dualistic metaphysics of the time.

the nervous system). Kant advocated "his own approach to anthropology in explicit contradiction to medical or physiological conceptions of human nature."[9] Kant's anthropology does not study what nature has done to the man, but "what man has done to himself or what he ought to do to himself."[10] Thus, one can speak of pragmatic anthropology as promoting practicality, usefulness and prudence.

Kant's noetics and rationalism and Herder's empiricism and particularism have generated some of the methodological and systematic frameworks of modern anthropology. On the basis of the preceding analyses, we would venture to argue that in this way anthropology could be transformed into the study of reason and free agency (Kant) through the empirical study of language and cultures (Herder). In Herder's work, the rehabilitation of anthropology into an empirical discipline capable of drawing conclusions concerning reason meant understanding normativity in accordance with both empiricism and naturalism.[11] Although Kant was the first to use the word "anthropology" in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, paradoxically Herder ultimately set the central course of German anthropology. Herder's contribution to the emerging science of the man or anthropology is based on a departure from metaphysics, deductive philosophy and *Schulphilosophie*.[12]

Two Variants of Kant's Anthropology

In this section I want to define two variants of anthropology in Kant's philosophy. The two variants are distinct from each other, but they have an important place in Kant's philosophy and are related to each other. On the one hand, there is the rationalist approach of criticalism giving way to a pragmatic anthropology and, on the other hand, the empiricist concept of several fragments anticipating the anthropological sciences (the influence of Herder and the new sciences). The two variants are not isolated from each other, but

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[9] R. B. Louden: "Anthropology from a Kantian Point of View: Toward a Cosmopolitan Conception of Human Nature." *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, Part A, 39 (2008), p. 516.

[10] I. Kant: *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, Anth, AA 07: 119.

[11] M. Forster: *Herder's Philosophy*. Oxford University Press, New York 2018.

[12] D. Denby: "Herder: Culture, Anthropology and the Enlightenment." *History of the Human Sciences*, 18 (2005), pp. 55–76.

co-operate together in the overall Kantian legacy. It is, therefore, incorrect to assess Kant's views in isolation. Accusations, such as "Kant's racism," "Kant's world state," or "Kant's inhuman hospitality" are often caused by the interchange of these anthropological approaches.

Just as the Herderian approach affirmed the autonomy of anthropological considerations from philosophy, Kant's opposite approach justified the legitimacy of anthropological questions in philosophy and its history. Due to the Kantian "purely philosophical" approach, anthropology does not completely leave philosophy and creates a firm and fruitful place for itself in the philosophical space. In this section, I analyze Kant's contribution to philosophical anthropology.

The subordination of anthropology and metaphysics in Kant's philosophy during the period of the opposite trend in anthropology "saved" the specifically philosophical inquiry into the man. I think that the origins of anthropology in philosophy are not represented by the fourth question from Kant's *Logic – What is man?*,[13] but paradoxically, Kant's post-critical philosophy. Kant began this defence of the philosophical concept of the man through critical philosophy, but not through the philosophy of history and pragmatic anthropology. Kant himself was a leader in the constitution of anthropology as an academic discipline. Indeed, he was the first academic to offer regular university lectures on the subject. For Kant, pragmatic anthropology is the study of the phenomenal effects of human freedom in the empirical world.

On the basis of an analysis of the controversy over Herder, it can be said that, alongside Herder's great victory, Kant's no less significant achievement was that he preserved the kind of questions about the man that modern philosophical anthropology would later ask. Kant is to be credited with the fact that, despite the new scientific tendencies of empiricism and practicism, he was able to justify the problem field and the disposition of enquiry for future philosophers who would use the word "Man" with a capital "M" and the word "Culture" with a capital "C." The concept of culture, as an abstract idea with universal validity, builds on Kant's perspective. If these two concepts of culture seek a transcendental path, a metaphysical ground, a biological determinant or a social constant, or empirically explore universals in cultures, they continue the Kantian quest to understand humanity in unity and within objectively given philosophical definitions. Of course, critics of Kant's universal paradigm, such as M. Foucault, the author of *Introduction to Kant's Anthropology*, have also succeeded in this direction of philosophical reflection on the man and have made a significant contribution to the anthropological lineage in the history of philosophy.

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[13] I. Kant: *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, Anth, AA 08: 25.

It can be said that Kant's transcendentalism made it possible for the Baden neo-kantians – W. Windelband and H. Rickert – to realise their work in the field of axiology and philosophy of culture. Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms is also characterized as a journey "from the critique of reason to the critique of culture."[14] It can even be said that the traditionally designated philosophical anthropologists – Max Scheler, Arnold Gehlen and Helmuth Plessner – were only able to realise their more or less empirically oriented concepts of culture and the man thanks to a strong theoretical-philosophical (metaphysical) background. The tendency of Kant's philosophy of culture is gradually being overcome by modern science and the emergence of capitalism and industrialisation. Within the parameters of modern times, in which the individual is increasingly distanced from his or her unified human culture, it is no longer possible to think in a completely Kantian way.

The legacy of Kantian idealism and transcendentalism was to preserve a philosophical universal perspective towards culture, to speak of an a priori culture,[15] and to create an interesting human-oriented part of philosophy, in which arose, for example, the concepts of homo faber (Bergson, Scheler), homo symbolicus (Cassirer), homo economicus (Mill), homo ludens (Huizinga), and also the famous superman (Nietzsche). These concepts are radical, ideological, even perhaps totalitarian, and in this sense they are often criticized and rejected, but they bear witness to the philosophical desire for ontological certainty in the fragmented culture of modern times. This kind of anthropology is based on a general definition of the man and applies it to particular historical or cultural realizations of human freedom.

The second empirical variant of Kant's anthropology has elements of non-philosophical modern anthropology. The interest in a Kant's "second" anthropology is a complicated initiative. This type of reflection on culture and the man has been subjected to strong criticism and marginalization of Kant's anthropological writings. His reflections on races, genders, nations, and cultures have been labeled as contradictory to his philosophy, and have been rigorously rejected. The division of races, the characterization of peoples, the consideration of women, the condition of hospitality, and the limitation of migration appear to us from a current perspective as inhumane and unacceptable.

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[14] S. Truwant: *Cassirer's Transformation of the Critique of Reason into a Critique of Culture*. In: *Cassirer and Heidegger in Davos*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2022, pp. 47–61.

[15] S. Luft: *The a Priori of Culture: Philosophy of Culture Between Rationalism and Relativism. The Example of Lévi-Strauss' Structural Anthropology*. In: *The Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer*. Eds. J. Tyler Friedman and S. Luft. De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston 2015, pp. 381–400.

How is it possible that a philosopher of human dignity and universal law could speak of a superior white race and of women as inherently troubled, weak and passive beings? It is extraordinarily difficult to defend Kant on the subject of sexism and racism. To justify it in the way that it is a contemporary approach would be somewhat tactical and insufficient from our position, since in other cases we want to actualize Kant's ideas. In earlier writings, for example, Kant "seems not to want to know that he might be wrong. That women were really capable of thinking and not just reacting to things emotionally or merely on the basis of their 'inclinations.'"[16]

From this point of view, it can be said that when Kant spoke of humanity, he always meant specifically the male part of humankind. It is not possible to "cut out" the problematic parts of Kant's philosophy. We need to try to explain their place. Looking comprehensively at Kant's works and his philosophical development, it can be said that Kant changed his views on race, slavery and colonial themes, and partly on the "gender problem." The anti-imperialist and cosmopolitan elements of the 1780s overcame and rejected the reflections on nations and races that were present, for example, in *The Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*.

It is possible to suggest that the change in "cultural" optics was a product of Kant's small writings and motivated by Herder's writings and the new field of the sciences of human beings. At the same time, it must be said that in broader appreciation of Kant's philosophy as a whole, it is also possible to defend Kant against his "sexist" attitude. According to M. Baron, "Kant's whole philosophical theory was much more progressive than he himself was."[17] We can certainly criticize what he wrote about women in *Reflections*,[18] but I don't think it undermines his philosophy. It must be taken into account that in his ethical theory he considered women as equal to men in terms of moral responsibility. In *An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?*, he speaks of active citizenship and also counts on women. This is confirmed by a completely different rhetoric in *Anthropology*, when he speaks of "the culture of society and its improvement through femininity."[19] Kant distinguishes the characteristics of men and women, but emphasizes the necessity of the difference of these natures and speaks of the natural complementarity in marriage and in society. One may even encounter the view that, just as

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[16] P. Kleingeld: "The Problematic Status of Gender-Neutral Language in the History of Philosophy: The Case of Kant." *The Philosophical Forum*, 25 (1993), pp. 134–150.

[17] M. Baron: *Kantian Ethics and Claims of Detachment*. In: *Feminist Interpretations of Kant*. Ed. R. M. Schott. Pennsylvania University Press, Philadelphia 1997, p. 147.

[18] I. Kant: *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen*, Beob, AA 02: 205-243.

[19] I. Kant: *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, Anth, AA 07: 306.

the idea of the cosmopolitan transcends racial, national, and cultural differences, Kant's anthropological constant of the man as a moral subject who is not determined empirically or physically, but as one who understands his own nature, can open up the current liberal debate on gender.

It is worth mentioning that in anthropology there are statements that cannot be accepted from the perspective of feminist philosophy, for example, the weakness of women in public life and the natural adaptation to life in the home.[20] My intention is to use the example of the second variant of Kant's anthropology to confirm the fact that Kant's anthropological themes develop in connection and parallel with the three *Critiques*. Changes in Kant's views can also be indirectly linked to the developing sciences of culture.

Kant's later cultural-anthropological and social-anthropological views are always based on his moral theory, which is his philosophy of history and his theory of Bildung.[21] It was only by the practical verification of the metaphysics of morals in the philosophy of history and in the philosophy of culture that he was forced to change earlier controversial opinions.

Cultural Anthropology and Herder

The next part of the paper introduces Herder as the founder of the modern line of cultural studies. On the one hand, it is concerned with defining Herder's place in the history of the cultural sciences and in anthropology. In fact, it is even more than that. The motif of a historical rethinking of contemporary discourse recurs here. Thus, on the basis of a more detailed reflection, it is possible to disrupt the traditional understanding of the problems, concepts and questions of the phenomenon of culture.

On the basis of the two fundamental determinations of Herder's philosophy of culture – Geist philosophy (particularism) and anti-Enlightenment affection – I will attempt to determine Herder's rightful place in the history of anthropology. Anthropological sensibility is often seen as a product of opposition to Enlightenment universalism. Herder, and even more so the Herderian line of philosophy of culture, attempted to

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[20] I. Kant: *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, Anth, AA 07: 209.
[21] S. Zákutná: "Sebaporozumenie v Kantovej teórii svetoobčianstva." *Filozofia*, 78 (2023), p. 466.

overcome Enlightenment universalism in its defined domain, much more forcefully than, say, postmodernism or communitarianism. According to R. A. Shweder and R. A. Levine, it is an anthropological romantic revolt against the Enlightenment that is based "on a view of cultural practices as symbolic, expressive, and essentially arbitrary and irrational."[22]

Herder is often cited as "the forerunner of modern cultural relativism, in which cultures exist in the plural."[23] In his *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (1774), Herder radically opposes Enlightenment teleology and writes: "The history of mankind is not the history of one single culture becoming better and better – it is the unfolding of many different human worlds."[24] He rejected Kant's notion of race and instead introduced the concept of Volk (nation), as articulated in *Ideen*, where he states: "Nur durch Volk, Sprache und Geschichte kann der Mensch verstanden warden"[25] – emphasizing that the human being is to be understood only through people, language, and history. Many basic cultural terms, including Zeitgeist and Volksgeist, have Herderian origins.

The concept of Geist (usually translated as "spirit") was widely used in Enlightenment philosophy, but there have been few attempts to define it systematically. It was used variously to express the spirit of the times (Zeitgeist), the national character (Volksgeist), the spirit of groups or society (Gesellschaftsgeist), etc. The Geist concepts were referred to by German Enlightenment philosophers mainly in an attempt to define the German self, that is to identify the essential factor that distinguished Germans from other Europeans. Germans applied the concept of Geist only to themselves and to their own historical and cultural tradition. Nevertheless, they laid the foundation for a more general cultural particularism and relativism, as later philosophers began to apply the concept of Geist to all peoples and cultures of the world.

Herder's "pioneering" or "fatherhood" is often mentioned rather superficially. Now, I want to criticize the claim of Herder's founding merits. We believe that the history of the anthropological sciences owes much to Herder's semantic legacy in culture. It is Herder's philosophical definition of the content and meaning of the term "culture" that played a key role in the transformation of anthropology. Most anthropologists have accepted the view

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[22] R. A. Shweder and R.A. LeVine: *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1984, p. 103.

[23] D. Denby: "Herder: Culture, Anthropology and the Enlightenment." *History of the Human Sciences*, 18 (2005), p. 55.

[24] J. G. Herder: *Johann Gottfried. Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit. Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 5 (1887), p. 8.

[25] J. G. Herder: *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit, Ideen*, IV/5.

that the intellectual roots of anthropology go back to the moral philosophy of the Enlightenment or perhaps to the humanism of the Renaissance.

The classicist line of the history of cultural anthropology defines a turning point with the work of Franz Boas (1858–1942),[26] who moved Germany to New York around 1890. Boas became a professor of emerging anthropology at Columbia University in 1899 where he brought the German term "Kultur" with its 100-year history. For Boas, the concept of „Kultur" represented a dominant point of German thinking from the period of German idealism (derived from Kant and Hegel). This concept was deeply connected with the Romantic reaction (Herder and Hamann) to the rationalism of the Enlightenment. However, Boas's „culture" as a subject of scientific interest was more Herderian than Kantian, more irrational and romantic.

Boas was neither a great innovator nor an original thinker. However, he was a brilliant implementer who brought to America the German traditions of idealist philosophy, particularist ethnography, and professional education – the main principles of Herder's philosophy. The diffusionist Boas described himself as a historical particularist and a cultural relativist. After his own research on Indians and Eskimos, he emphasized the uniqueness and diversity of these cultures. Herder's romantic concept of human difference and his desire to better understand other cultures, theoretically determined the starting points of Boas's work and were practically verified by exploratory visits to specific cultures. Boas, like Herder, emphasized the equality of cultures. This equality was not based on the rationalist universalism of the Enlightenment, but rather on the importance and specificity of each culture and its manifestations. For Boas, the belief in the equality of "primitive" and "civilized" man rested largely on his conviction that the "civilized man" had limited understanding.[27] Boas expressed his disillusionment with the values of Western civilization. It was this disillusionment with modernity that propelled Boas's anthropology in his life. Similarly, it can be said that Herder's critique of the Enlightenment was based on a naive vision of the best culture. In this sense, Herder may have been close to Boas in his critique of and dissatisfaction with the development of Western civilization at that time.

The idea of equality of people and cultures that emerged in the Enlightenment was positive and forward-looking. Philosophers such as Kant

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[26] Franz Uri Boas (1858–1942) was a German-born American anthropologist and pioneer of modern anthropology who has been called "the Father of American anthropology." His work is associated with concepts known as historical particularism and cultural relativism. Among his most important students were the famous anthropologists A. L. Kroeber, R. Benedict, E. Sapir, and M. Mead.

[27] K. Malik: *The Meaning of Race: Race, History and Culture in Western Society*. NYU Press, New York 1996.

believed that social progress could overcome artificial divisions and differences, revealing the basis of humanity's universals. In contrast, Boas's idea of equality of cultures, inspired by Herder, resulted from the belief that such progress was impossible. Humanity was equal not because it was possible to overcome differences, but because every difference was recognized as equal and equally important. Consistently, Boas could not accept the Western idea of progress and, at the same time, accept the equality of cultures.

In the Enlightenment tradition, the application of reason to social problems helped to "dissolve" human differences and ensured that even those who considered themselves "primitive" could enter the "highest places" of civilization. This was the transformative content of Enlightenment universalism. Thus, the Kantian perspective was also important in the birth of anthropology. Conversely, rationalist universalism inspired Boas and others to reject racist social evolutionism, which hierarchized cultures and spoke of superior and inferior ones based on their origins. Boas rejected this kind of racism.

In his 1911 book, *The Mind of Primitive Man*, he did not question the concept of race or the division of humanity into different races. Rather, he rejected the bases on which such divisions occur and he argued that biological races are distinct from linguistic and cultural ones. These three categories are not interchangeable.[28]

For the followers of Boas, the so-called diffusionists, rituals and habits were essential for the maintenance of society. The diffusionist scientific definition of culture is very close to Herder's paradigm. Culture was not so much synonymous with conscious activity as it was with unconscious tradition. Diffusionists believed in a romantic vision of culture as heritage and a habit, whose role was to allow the past to create the present. Tradition and history affected individual behavior to a great degree. Cultural practices constitute a whole series of established habits. Thanks to them, some necessary activities of everyday life are carried out. For Boas, the particularity of cultures was necessary to maintain social stability. Each society developed its own practices, rituals, and cultural forms that helped to integrate individuals and provided them with the means to interact with the world outside.

The Herder-Boasian inclination opposed the other distinctive anthropological tradition, namely evolutionism. An important ideological source of evolutionism, alongside Darwinism which evolved later, is the Enlightenment. Evolutionism represents the completion of the Enlightenment idea of progress. In addition to the idea of progress, evolutionism is characterized by a hierarchical division of the historical stages of human development.[29]

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[28] F. Boas: *The Mind of Primitive Man*. The Macmillan Company, New York 1938.
[29] V. Soukop: *Přehled antropologických teorií kultury*. Portál, Praha 2000.

One of the leading representatives of evolutionism was E. B. Tylor.[30] There is no doubt that Tylor's definition of culture, and indeed his whole position in anthropology, is influenced by the German idealist tradition. Tylor attempted a synthesis of cultural Darwinism and philosophical idealism. His anthropological studies after his return from Central America were carried out partly in Germany, and Tylor's work was based mostly on German sources. One cannot argue over Kant's direct influence on evolutionist anthropology, but some aspects are purely Kantian. However, I only want to suggest the opposite inclination, which is close to Kantian idealism, namely to the idea of the unity of humanity and immanent evolution. Tylor proposes a holistic version of culture and civilization as a complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morality, customs, and all the other skills and habits that the man has acquired as a member of society.[31] The complexity of the concept of culture and the perfectionism of civilizational development are analogous to Kant's theory of culture and history.

Conclusion

For Kant, "anthropology" was also a broad concept that was used to study humanity as a whole. It included what we would now group as all the human sciences: psychology, sociology, anthropology in the narrower sense, and even some aspects of biology and economics. Kant's anthropology emphasized the "pragmatic point of view." He promoted popular, available knowledge concerning human beings that could be useful.

Similarly, the two variants of the concept of culture are contemplated by F. Manuel in Shapes of *Philosophical History* (1965). He contrasts the French Enlightenment thought with the early 19th century German thought associated with idealism and romanticism. "While the French were writing

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[30] Sir Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917) was an English anthropologist – one of the founders of cultural anthropology. Tylor's views represent 19th century cultural evolutionism. In his works *Primitive Culture* (1871) and *Anthropology* (1881), he defined the context for the scientific study of anthropology on the basis of evolutionary theories. He believed that there was a functional basis for the development of society and religion that he believed was universal. Tylor argued that all societies went through three basic phases of development: from savagery through barbarism to civilization.

[31] E. B. Tylor: *The Origins of Culture*. Harper & Row, New York 1958.

a secular history of man's expanding faculties and outward achievements, the Germans were making a history of introverted man, a religious Protestant world history."[32] Research in anthropological sciences in the 19th century used concepts, such as myth, language, god, soul, body, technology, art, nation, history, and politics. These were concepts that became the subject of clash between Kant and Herder. Their philosophical concepts of culture shifted the focus of attention away from the biological-medical confinement of the man and prepared the terminology for the future development of anthropological sciences. Herder offered empirical-ethnographic variables[33] and Kant offered rational-psychological universals to the discourse.

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[32] F. R. Manuel: *Shapes of Philosophical History.* Stanford University Press, Stanford 1965, p. 66.

[33] "Herder's concept of *Bildung der Menschheit,* crucial to his 1774 text *Auch eine Philosophi der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*, expresses the historical development of cultures as plural, nonlinear, and dignified. His idea that "Jede Epoche ist unmittelbar zu Gott" rejects the Enlightenment hierarchy of progress" (J. G. Herder: *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*. Aufbau Verlag, Berlin 1968, §4).

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