Ἐπέκεινα
International Journal of Ontology
History and Critics

Jeremy Gauger

The Consolation of History
Kant on Cosmopolitanism

Epekeina, vol. 6, n. 2 (2015), pp. 1-16
Awarded Essays

ISSN: 2281-3209
DOI: 10.7408/epkn.

Published on-line by:
CRF – Centro Internazionale per la Ricerca Filosofica
Palermo (Italy)
www.ricercafilosofica.it/epekeina

The Consolation of History
Kant on Cosmopolitanism

Jeremy Gauger

1. Introduction

In an intellectual climate that has now long been suspicious of grand narratives, the theme of universal history may well seem definitively a thing of the past, thus drawing to a close a tradition of philosophical history that ran a course of several hundred years. Arguably, history largely persists today as a vital concept in philosophical discourse only in a much-inverted fashion, in order to emphasize contingency rather than law, to reject univocal narratives for plural histor*ies*, or to invest history with charismatic rather than scientific authority. Despite a number of clear theoretical and practical gains that have resulted from undermining the synoptic pretenses of systematic attempts to universalize history, we might do well to ask whether some ideological residue of these attempts - and their corresponding anthropologies - nevertheless persist, and further whether an increasingly fragmented politics of identity is adequate to challenge it. Indeed, the very historical forces that made the universal history of humankind such a timely theme in the eighteenth century - the increasingly rapid dissolution of national and cultural boundaries through the widening scope of communication and trade - are more a force today than ever, if not a foregone conclusion.

The global ambitions of the neoliberal order have, since the late 1970s, been couched as championing the cause of the individual under the promise of universal prosperity, and continue to do so in spite of their own contribution to an astonishing gap in the distribution of wealth and the exploitation of «developing» populations.[1] Universal

1. A thorough inquiry into the meaning of neoliberalism is well beyond the scope of this paper. The term is simply used here to designate a concrete set of institutional practices aimed at optimizing the conditions for capital accumulation. I would follow David Harvey in asserting that it is also «in the first instance» - and this shows it to be theoretically much older than the practice we are referring to - «a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced

prosperity is held up as an ideal of historical completeness and human fulfillment that regulates action in a present out of all joint with its explicit aims, demanding that a majority population sacrifice the possibility of their individual flourishing to a concept of the historical essence of mankind, against the very universal and individualist claims upheld by the concept itself. That this situation continues not only to be largely tolerated and sustained, but also actively pursued through interventionist measures like «spreading democracy» suggests that universal history - as an ideal that regulates the sphere of action - retains some traction in the practical sense.[2]

A close look at the historical and anthropological writings of Immanuel Kant, which constitute one of the first attempts at a developed system of universal history, suggests that such history was in the first place conceived of as a species of practical - as opposed to theoretical - knowledge. Kant's own concession that history is unintelligible in its particularity, unless regulated by an essentially moral ideal of historical completeness, shows his position as having abandoned the task of making history an object of the understanding, under the legislation of which it falls in his critical thought, as a series of appearances.

The confidence he shows in these texts - on the eve and in the aftermath of 1789 - in the compatibility between his practical philosophy and the ideals of an emergent bourgeois order, reflects an effort to offer consolation in the present for the ills of war, poverty, and oppression. In this sense, it has absorbed critiques (notably Rousseau's) of a more naïve version of enlightened progress (such as belongs to Voltaire and the *philosophes*),[3] in which such progress is straightforwardly visible in history. However, significantly, what results is an effective sanctioning of competition and war as mechanisms for the eventual flourishing

by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade» (Harvey 2005, 2).

2. This is not to say that ideology outstrips compulsion - economic, legal, military, and otherwise - but merely that the pursuit of, and acquiescence in, this state of affairs rests on a *justification*, and not solely for those in power.

3. Voltaire's article on history in Diderot's and d'Alembert's *Encyclopedie*, for example, illustrates his faith that historical forces - not least the increased exactitude of the written and transmittable historical record - had secured a privileged vantage point for judgment of the past. See Voltaire 1766.

of uninhibited trade, a relationship that subsequent centuries would show operating in the reverse order.

Kant's position carries a twofold consequence that ought to give us pause: On the one hand, it upholds the ideal of a completed history at the expense of all «incomplete» epochs, cultures, classes, etc., to which these latter are sacrificed for the mere promise that, in the long course of time, they will be incorporated into a universal and fully-realized category of humanity. It thus constitutes the domain of the historical as exclusionary. On the other hand, it counsels acquiescence in the process of history by locating responsibility in the individual moral agent alone. The individual subject thus focuses on universality only insofar as this is entailed by its commitment to moral self-improvement, but renounces any direct efficacy in bringing about a better world order, which becomes a species of faith. Like the market, history has to be trusted as being providential, so that the individual can relinquish the whole and focus on itself with either a clear conscience or a willing ethic of work.[4] The philosophical history thus offered proves isolating and disempowering.

2. Kant's universal history

In the ninth, and final, proposition of his «Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim», Kant reflects back on the nature and significance of the philosophical task set forth in his article. This historical undertaking is, in the first place, claimed as a universal one: it is not concerned with this or that particular people or time, but with the entire life of the species as a whole. From this is derived its philosophical - as opposed to empirical - character as history. The point is not to document, or even to interpret, a set of past events, but rather to discern what Kant considers to be the conditions of possibility for the intelligibility of empirical history at all, and this turns out to be a justification of providence, or what he calls «history according to a plan of nature».[5] A philosophical history for Kant, then, is rooted in a teleology that makes the course of past events intelligible in the present

4. The classic example of the market as the paradigm of coinciding self-interest is, of course, Adam Smith's notion of an invisible hand. See Smith 1981, 456.

5. Kant 2007b, 118.

with reference to their final future end. But perhaps the most perplexing element in this final proposition is the claim that the attempt itself assists in the realization of nature's plan.

I have already suggested some of the general consequences of the regulative completeness of this teleology. The task here is to draw these out more precisely by understanding how this philosophy of history relates to the rest of Kant's critical thought and what philosophical aim it contains, with the intention of raising the question whether Kant adequately answers to the requirements of a universal history. This is done with an ear to the criticisms of Kant's one-time promising acolyte turned public critic and adversary, Johann Gottfried Herder. Herder's chief objection is that individual human happiness is effaced in the emphasis on the total life of the species, and that any worth in non-European and past cultures is devalued by his progressive orientation toward the cosmopolitan condition.[6]

The chief questions to raise, then, are: What concept of universality is being employed by Kant here, and in what relation to the individual? How does he conceive of the cosmopolitan condition - the end toward which nature works - and in what relation to cultures therein excluded? And, to return to the point of departure, how does he finally conceive of his philosophical attempt as contributing to nature's purposes?

3. Nature and providence

Before taking up these three questions, however, some preliminary remarks are necessary on the nature of Kant's historical project as presented in the «Idea» article. Its opening statement works to exclude anything metaphysical from the domain of history, following a line of thought found in the first *Critique* and developed in the second, namely, that however much human beings may possess freedom of will, their actions themselves belong to the realm of appearances, like all natural phenomena. They are thus subject to the universal laws of nature that are, for Kant, legislated by the understanding. Moreover, since history is made by many individuals, it is the product of innumerable wills realizing as many different desires. The only way to understand history

6. A brief summary of Herder's direct criticisms may be found in Allen Wood's introduction to Kant 2007c, 122.

- which for Kant is to discern order and purposiveness in it - would be to either treat it as the product of a single will (as providence), or to find a purposiveness in the complex aggregate of actions (as nature).

The assumption of providence may well be present in the search for historical purposiveness in the realm of appearances, but Kant's critical thought clearly rules it out of the domain of attainable knowledge. That is to say, we are forbidden insight into the divine plan as such, even though the concept of purposiveness that is operative in the alternative may itself be derived from the notion of a divine will in nature. Consequently, it is entirely with the appearances of human actions that his philosophical history is interested. History is said to be «concerned with the narration of these appearances»,[7] and while Kant does not dwell on what he understands narrative to be, it is fairly clear from the context that he means a representational arrangement of events that is able to account for their origins and the end toward which they move.

Now Kant's problem is that such an account presupposes the ascription of purposiveness to nature, a theme that he would subsequently take up in his third *Critique*. The top-down legislation of the understanding, which governs knowledge of the natural world, is inadequate to this task, which requires a power of judgment as its ground. As developed later, this purposiveness involves the regulative positing of a will in nature:

> An object or state of mind or even an action... is called purposive merely because its possibility can only be explained and conceived by us insofar as we assume as its ground a causality in accordance with ends, i.e., a will that has arranged it so in accordance with the representation of an end.[8]

The merely regulative function of purposiveness here grounds the intelligibility of nature as an empirical whole, over against the transcendental totality for which the legislation of the understanding suffices. History too, as we have seen, belongs to empirical nature in its infinite variegation, but, as something uniquely human, it poses special problems for the purposive causality just described.

7. Kant 2007b, 108.
8. Kant 2000, 105.

For Kant, the concept of an animal - to take a more complex example from the natural world - can be made intelligible to us through purposiveness, if we observe how its instincts orient its responses to the world in a regular, if not always identical way. This animal reproduces, and its offspring meet their environment with the same instinctual patterns, and to this extent the individual and the species are coextensive. The individual animal develops its latent predispositions toward a realization that instantiates the full concept of the species. The concept formed on this basis may be said to formally cause the animal, insofar as its possibility is grounded on the sort of thing that it becomes.

The human being, however, possesses reason, and since this means that there is a mediation between its instincts and its actions, no such individual regularity is to be observed.[9] This could be characterized as the notion of freedom *from*, because the suspension of action in the face of instinct means that the human being is not determined by natural causes in the same way as the animal. At the same time, neither has the species as a whole achieved freedom *for*, as a rational self-legislation in accordance with the moral law, which would just be the realization of a cosmopolitan condition.

Against this theoretical background, one of the «Idea» article's introductory statements becomes a bit clearer:

> Since human beings in their endeavors do not behave merely instinctively, like animals, and yet also not on the whole like rational citizens of the world in accordance with an agreed upon plan, no history of them in conformity to a plan (as e.g. of bees or of beavers) appears to be possible.[10]

History, for Kant, therefore appears to originate in the emergence of a species that has the capacity for freedom from the external plan of nature's purposes, and to move toward the full development of a pure self-legislation, which would return human action to a natural intelligibility, and which thus possesses a natural purpose as a movement, though only in a circumscribed view of the totality.

9. Cf. the definition of the practical concept of freedom in the third Antinomy from the first *Critique*: «Freedom in the practical sense is the will's independence of coercion through sensuous impulses» (Kant 2003, 465).

10. Kant 2007b, 108.

Either side of this movement (the purely natural-instinctual and rational citizenship) would appear to be rationally intelligible both individually and universally. But everything in between is historical, and Kant takes pains to describe how messy and unintelligible it is in its particularity. If history is to be intelligible as such, it needs a view of the whole, of providence.[11] But because it takes place in the realm of appearances, as actual human actions, Kant wants to seek the principle of history in nature itself and not the assumption of providence or divine will; it is in this sense that he sees universal history as providing a *justification* of providence. The capriciousness of individual actions - coupled with the fact that they are irreducibly individual, not coordinated with each other - rules out seeking rational purpose on the level of the individual. It is on this basis that he turns to the «play of the human will *in the large*», in order to «discover within it a regular course».[12]

Unlike the animal, which realizes the full concept of its species in each individual, Kant sees the human being as only progressively realized. This is tied to his conception of enlightenment, which is explored in the «Idea»; however, it is also the crucial way in which he thinks history can answer to what he described as the fundamental concern of philosophy in its cosmopolitan sense, the question «What is man?»[13]

4. Universality

In exploring Kant's operative notion of universality in this text, it is helpful to consider the standpoint of the historical individual, that is, one who has not fully developed their rational powers. In the third proposition, we learn that

11. In obtaining this view of the whole, universal history would seem to circumvent the irreducibly perspectival nature of empirical history: «The laudable circumspectness with which one now writes the history of one's time, naturally brings everyone to the scruple as to how our later posterity will begin to grasp the burden of history that we might leave behind for them after a few centuries» (Kant 2007b, 130).

12. Kant 2007b, 108.

13. Kant 1992, 538.

> nature has willed that the human being should produce everything that goes beyond the mechanical arrangement of his animal existence entirely out of himself, and participate in no other happiness or perfection than that which he has procured for himself free from instinct through his own reason.[14]

That reason, and the freedom it entails, are what separates the human from the animal has already been established, but here there is a further denigration of the animal within the human. Kant appears to consider mankind, in the imperfection of their incomplete state, as an admixture of instinct and reason. Insofar as something is done out of instinct, it is merely animal and cannot be the source of a human satisfaction or happiness. Replacing instinct with rational motives, however, seems to gradually satisfy more human conditions, so that in the long run we might eat, not out of hunger, but because the realization of reason and freedom require the nourishment of our bodies, and copulate, not from sexual impulse, but for the preservation of the species that - as a whole - can alone realize our own humanness.

This emphasis on reason, as the only faculty that endows our lives with a specifically human value, raises the production of things out of oneself above the satisfaction of needs that such activity ostensibly serves. Thus Kant claims that «the invention of [the human's] means of nourishment, his clothing, his external safety and defense..., all gratification that can make life agreeable, all his insight and prudence and even the generosity of his will, should be entirely his own work»,[15] and that from these cruder constructions he can progress to «the height of the greatest skillfulness, the inner perfection of his mode of thought, and...thereby to happiness».[16]

What is significant here is that the refinement of the faculty of reason itself is the goal, and the source of happiness insofar as it can be obtained, while our animal needs are no more than an occasion for the exercise of this reason. Indeed, if we managed to arrange our lives such that we could comfortably meet our needs - without advancing the cause of enlightenment - we would fundamentally fail to justify

14. Kant 2007b, 110.
15. Kant 2007b, 110.
16. Kant 2007b, 110.

our human existence, as evidenced in Kant's well-known remarks on the inhabitants of Tahiti.[17]

This is problematic primarily because of the way that Kant ties the human being specifically to reason, and only reason, the full realization of which is its vocation. Yet this cannot be the achievement of the individual, but rather only of the species as a whole: «Nature perhaps needs an immense series of generations, each of which transmits its enlightenment to the next, in order finally to propel its germs in our species to that stage of development which is completely suited to its aim».[18] Thus whatever an individual, or group of individuals within a given historical moment, may achieve, it is only of value within the context of the movement of the species as a whole. Indeed, Kant describes the impulse toward a philosophical history as deriving from indignation at the nonsensical course of human affairs, which exhibit so much folly that «one does not know what concept to make of our species, with its smug imaginings about its excellences».[19] Again, it appears that the question of what a human being is cannot be answered with reference to an individual exemplar, since no rational aim can be presupposed therein.

5. Cosmopolitanism

If Kant believed that it is necessary to look to universal history for the concept of human being, this is because such a concept encompasses the full realization of all its latent predispositions, something that - given his view of reason - is the outcome of an ongoing historical task. As the very first proposition in the text states, «All natural predispositions of a creature are determined sometime to develop themselves completely and purposively».[20] Since this is impossible within the life span of an individual member of the human species, the teleology of the human being for Kant must be drawn from an extrapolation of its essential

17. Kant 2007c, 142.

18. Kant 2007b, 110. It is especially here that Herder's more holistic conception of reason, as being inscribed in concrete human practices and not intelligible as an isolated faculty, begins to make Kant's view look like reason's trans-individual hypostatization of itself.

19. Kant 2007b, 109.

20. Kant 2007b, 109.

predispositions, and the representation of this is the cosmopolitan, the rational citizen of the world.

Before considering the nature of this representation, whether regulative or constitutive, it is significant to look at the relation that obtains between it - as an indeterminately future state - and the human being in its past and present states. While well-being is systematically denied to the individual human as a goal of its nature, there is a corresponding valorization of work as a means of becoming worthy of well-being, a motivation denominated by Kant in the phrase «rational *self-esteem*».[21] As indicated above, the production of things out of oneself gives rise to a gradual refinement of the faculty of reason, in which the individual can do no more than offer a small contribution to the process, and yet this constitutes its sole connection to its own humanness. Whatever the individual may hope for in its own life appears to come from a self-sacrifice to the process of history, a process that is consequently subordinated to the ultimate perfection of the species as a kind of purgatory:

> The older generations appear to carry their toilsome concerns only for the sake of the later ones, namely so as to prepare the steps on which the latter may bring up higher the edifice which was nature's aim, and that only the latest should have the good fortune to dwell in the building on which a long series of their ancestors (to be sure without this being their aim) had labored, without being able to partake of the good fortune which they prepared. But as puzzling as this may be, it is yet necessary once one assumes that a species of animals should have reason, and, as a class of rational beings who all die, while the species is immortal, should nevertheless attain to completeness in the development of their predispositions.[22]

Not only does Kant present the task of individuals - as well as, indeed, whole cultures and epochs - as having no intrinsic worth aside from what they contribute toward the perfection of the species, but he acknowledges that this is a consequence of locating the human's essence in reason (and a very particular conception of reason at that).

If this portrayal of hard work and self-sacrifice, as earning for oneself a greater degree of humanness than those who are simply

21. Kant 2007b, 110.
22. Kant 2007b, 110-111.

content (who are thus no better than «domesticated beasts»),[23] seems patently bourgeois, it merely prepares the centerpiece of the argument, which places the principle of historical movement in selfish antagonism. Kant's principle of «unsocial sociability»[24] arises from what he posits as two obvious components of human nature: an inclination toward community, and a tendency to individualize oneself. Since the notion of an end in history revolves around a reconciliation of these two competing propensities, one might think that both sides of the human thus conceived are given equal treatment. Yet, much to the contrary, Kant clearly favors the autonomy of the individual as the more important principle. Not only does he seek the possibility of authentic community solely as a consequence of self-interest, but what notion he does have of the socialization of the human being is merely defined negatively as a constraint on individual freedom.

In other words, although the goal of making the human's sociability compatible with individual freedom seems to grant intrinsic worth to both aspects, Kant conceives of the former purely as being of service to the latter. Community as such is not only never a goal, but is suited only to animals and consequently less than human, while the preservation of individual autonomy is paramount. Regardless of the uses to which he puts them, Kant's presuppositions here are clearly Hobbesian in origin.[25]

He regards community as arising in the first place only on account of the advantages it offers to rational self-interest, and not as a positive human propensity. He sees its continued value as maximizing individual freedom through constraints on incursions made against this freedom, for «the human being is an *animal which*, when it lives among others of its species, *has need of a master*».[26] And finally, he considers the ultimate problem to be one of the infinite regress of this authority,

23. Kant 2007b, 112.

24. Kant 2007b, 111.

25. With the caveat that for Hobbes, the human's propensity for socialization is not natural, but an artificial means of better realizing the individual's selfish proclivities. The point is that, although Kant claims that sociability also belongs to human nature, his actual arguments show his position to be much nearer to that of Hobbes.

26. Kant 2007b, 113.

which is posed by equating the dispositions of nations toward each other with that of individuals.[27]

Thus, when Kant calls the cosmopolitan condition «the womb in which all original predispositions of the human species will be developed»,[28] he makes this universal sociability into a means for the realization of unbounded individual freedom. Cosmopolitanism, as Kant portrays it, is not an end in itself, but a universal condition that is the product of increasing deregulation. War, the expression of inter-state antagonism in a pre-cosmopolitan condition, apparently becomes disadvantageous on account of the obstacles it introduces to commerce, the paradigm case of coinciding self-interest. «If one hinders the citizen who is seeking his welfare in any way he pleases, as long as it can subsist along with the freedom of others, then one restrains the vitality of all enterprise and with it, in turn, the powers of the whole.»[29]

When the cosmopolitan condition eventually removes such hindrances, enterprise will apparently flourish as the expression of individual freedom, and yet measured in terms of the whole. In other words, a state of full humanity would measure its achievement not in terms of what it had gained for each of its individual members, but in terms of what they were able to contribute to the abstract whole.[30] For all of Kant's insistence on the centrality of the individual, this is what ultimately seems effaced in his abstractions of the species in its entirety, whether as the universal ends of history or a final cosmopolitan condition.

6. Philosophical history

Although it seems impossible to finally decide whether Kant considers cosmopolitanism to be a regulative or constitutive ideal (there is

27. Cf. Hobbes 1988, 187-188.

28. Kant 2007b, 118.

29. Kant 2007b, 117.

30. It is worth mentioning, in passing, the similarity that this bears to contemporary views that place a country's economic strength in its GDP, irrespective of the distribution of wealth.

textual evidence to support both views),[31] it is ultimately irrelevant to the critique that I have attempted to initiate. Regardless, the universality of his universal history excludes all historical individuals and its cosmopolitan aim is not really the aim at all. It finally serves a concept of the human being that is unable to award full dignity to any human being (totally unable, on a reading of cosmopolitanism as a regulative ideal). It still remains, however, to make some sense of the enigmatic claim that this history can actually contribute to nature's aims, and for this endeavor the choice between a regulative and constitutive reading is of some importance.

The completion of history and the perfection of the human species for Kant is found in the realization of a perfect state constitution. The problem that such a state poses for humanity is not primarily one of the relations among individual persons but those of states to each other, per his seventh proposition: «the problem of establishing a perfect civil constitution is dependent on a lawful external relation between states and cannot be solved without the latter».[32] The idea of a federation of nations administering justice over sovereign bodies is one of the most familiar from Kant's political and historical writings (primarily from *On Perpetual Peace*), but as a solution it covers over the complexity of the theoretical framework.

Like Hobbes, for whom the relations between individuals in the state of nature were merely a theoretical abstraction from the actual relations existing between sovereign states, Kant considers the problem of war between nations to be that of the persistence of selfish aims even after those of individuals have been checked by their entrance into society with one another. There is throughout a thoroughgoing correspondence between the problem of the individual within the state and the state within the world, which makes the problem of universal peace a paramount concern for the perfection of the *individual* human being. Consistent with the principle of unsocial sociability as the basis for historical movement, he also considers war to be an unwitting mechanism for peace, by eventually wearing out the powers

31. The first proposition (Kant 2007b, 109) would go to support a constitutive reading, for example, while a regulative one could be drawn from the footnote to Kant 2007b, 113.

32. Kant 2007b, 114.

and resources for waging it, driving humanity by necessity into the acceptance of what ought to have been their rational aim.

The achievement of a universal peace thus only answers to the regress of power - the problem to which a world federation is addressed - in nature's long course, in which it seems that the reckless pursuit of war is the most effective mechanism of achieving such a state. In other words, Kant does not appear to consider such peace to be a rational ideal that can guide and orient its own implementation. If it is nevertheless the sort of ideal that orients philosophical history, we merely return to the questions of what this history is and what it is supposed to do.

By far the most perplexing of his statements on this matter, his introductory remarks in the eighth proposition exemplify his seeming desire to both maintain the usefulness of philosophical history in the perfection of the species, and yet to distance it from any direct bearing on human action. There he states «One sees that philosophy can also have its *chiliasm*; but one the bringing about of which is promoted by the very idea of it, though only from afar, so that it is anything but enthusiastic».[33] Philosophy has a vision of the end, very well; but how does this escape being an idle prophecy if it can neither speak to the concerns of moment in the lives of those who think it, nor hold its vision in clarity except as a general arc across an almost unfathomable expanse of time? Kant's ongoing battle against «enthusiasm» seems to underlie his reluctance to grant a straightforward efficacy to philosophical history, but he clearly also considers it of some value to those who engage in it.

This value seems to lie in its being a consolation for our discontent with providence, the frustration that is prompted by our own inefficacy in the affairs of the world. As Kant remarks in his *Conjectural Beginning of Human History*,

> The thinking human being feels a sorrow, one which can even become a moral corruption, of which the thoughtless knows nothing: namely discontent with the providence that governs the course of the world on the whole, when he estimates the ills that so much oppress humankind, and (as it appears) leaves it with no hope for anything better. But it is of the greatest importance to be *content*

33. Kant 2007b, 116.

> *with providence*... partly in order to grasp courage even among our toils, and partly so that by placing responsibility for it on fate, we might not lose sight of our own responsibility, which perhaps might be the sole cause of all these ills, and avoid the remedy against them, which consists in self-improvement.[34]

The paramount concern for Kant, here as elsewhere, seems to lie primarily in the individual's moral rectitude, which is directly tied to the ability to focus on one's rational self-improvement. This focus isolates the rational element that belongs the species as a whole, and sublimates its energies into piecemeal contributions to the process of history. It urges the individual to be content with the state of the world, since only the hand of providence in the otherwise blind process of history can lift the burden of human oppression.

If, then, we regard cosmopolitanism as an actual state gradually unfolding in history, then it is difficult to square philosophical history's contribution to this process with the means by which history moves forward, according to Kant's view. If we cannot ascribe rational purposes to any individuals in the contributions they make to the species' final perfection, if history is indeed only intelligible *in the large*, as aggregated from innumerable blind human efforts - even if it can be held in the detached gaze of the philosophical historian - then how would a philosophical view of the whole facilitate this purpose? If the endeavor could actually motivate individuals to introduce universal rational purposes toward their own realization as a species, then Kant remains silent or at best obscure on this point.

If, on the contrary, cosmopolitanism is simply posited to make sense of an otherwise senseless sequence of events, to introduce the appearance of purpose into history, then Kant's philosophical history devolves into ideology. His view of human life as more essentially bound to toil and hardship - conceived as products of isolation - than to community, eliminates any possible positive concept of cosmopolitanism as a properly inclusive, universal goal. Thus if his history, as a product of a regulative ideal, is able to open «a consoling prospect for the future»[35] this does no more than rouse one to sacrifice one's animal happiness to the ethic of work that supposedly contributes to

34. Kant 2007a, 173.
35. Kant 2007b, 119.

the object of this hope, to console oneself for the impossibility of living well. It urges the destruction of barriers to self-interest, in the name of freedom, but without any guarantee to the individual that it claims to uphold. In brief, it makes the bourgeois order into a purpose of nature and the task of the individual within history.

Jeremy Gauger
gaugj267@newschool.edu

References

Harvey, D. 2005, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Hobbes, T. 1988, *Leviathan*, Penguin Books, London.

Kant, I. 1992, "The Jäsche Logic", in *Lectures on Logic*, trans. by J. Michael Young, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 517-640.

— 2000, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. by P. Guyer and E. Matthews, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

— 2003, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by N. Kemp Smith, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

— 2007a, "Conjectural Beginning of Human History", in *Anthropology, History, and Education*, trans. by A. Wood, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

— 2007b, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim", in *Anthropology, History, and Education*, trans. by A. Wood, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

— 2007c, "Review of J. G. Herder's Ideas for the Philosophy of the History of Humanity", in *Anthropology, History, and Education*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Smith, A. 1981, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, The Liberty Fund, Indianapolis.

Voltaire 1766, "Histoire", in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, ed. by D. Diderot and J. D'Alembert, Briasson, Paris, vol. 8.