

“INSTINCT, THAT VOICE OF GOD” ROUSSEAU’S INFLUENCE ON KANT’S INTERPRETATION OF THE GENESIS

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I would like to discuss the philosophical reinterpretation of the biblical stories in Kant’s philosophy of history by exploring his interpretation of the Genesis from the perspective of the conflict between natural instinct and human reason. It is widely known that Kant liked reading Rousseau’s works, *Emile*, *The Social Contract* etc. and that he was influenced by them in his anthropology, philosophy of law and philosophy of education. However, Kant’s struggle with Rousseau’s philosophy of history, especially in his interpretation of the Genesis in the essay *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* [*Muthmaßlicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte*] of 1786, has rarely been investigated. Yet I argue that Rousseau’s concept of the transition from the natural state into the state of society influenced Kant’s interpretation of the Genesis and that the emergence of a consciousness of time plays an important role in the civilization process in Kant’s philosophy of history. I want to begin (1) by analyzing the significance of Kant’s *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* and will then attempt (2) to explain, step by step, the implementation of reason, as opposed to instinct.

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE *CONJECTURAL BEGINNING OF HUMAN HISTORY*

In the 1790s Kant published two important works on theology: *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* [*Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*] (1793) and *The Conflict of Faculties* [*Der Streit der Fakultäten*] (1798). But already in 1786, between the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), he had published his interpretation of the Genesis in the January issue of the *Berlinische Monatsschriften*, under the title of *Conjectural Beginning of Human History*. Weyand regards the essay of 1786 as a “transition

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document" to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790) because it is here that a new aspect in Kant's philosophy of history appears clearly for the first time². According to Weyand, this is the commencement of the connection of pure natural teleology with moral teleology; Kant begins to untie his philosophy of history from the exclusive binding to providence or to the wise intention of nature. The explication of this issue will be delivered later in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*³. In my opinion, Kant refers to two philosophers in his essay *Conjectural Beginning of Human History*, namely Herder and Rousseau⁴. It is widely known that Herder studied Rousseau's philosophy and adopted his criticism on culture⁵. Kant was motivated to write the *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* by the contemporary debates on the history of humankind with Herder⁶. His influence on Kant's philosophy of history has already been discussed and examined in detail by John Zammito⁷ and Karl Ameriks⁸. Therefore in the following, I want to concentrate on Rousseau's influence on Kant's considerations about the beginning and the development of the human species in the *Conjectural Beginning of Human History*.

The *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* is characterized by several aspects. On the one hand, by a discussion of Rousseau's historical and philosophical considerations in *Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality among Men* (1755), on the other hand, by an evaluation of the civilizing process thereby opposing Rousseau's opinion. Moreover, Kant embeds his philosophical historical argument in a philosophical reconstruction of the biblical stories. Kant's *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* impressed many of his contemporaries. The editor of the *Berlinische Monatschriften*, Johann Erich Biester, wrote to Kant:

This [sc. the *Conjectural Beginning of Human History*, M.T.] is a piece of the most sublime and the noblest philosophy, which is truly built and exalts the soul. It was always such considerations with which most of all I wanted to busy myself, but for which I rarely found the stimulation. You [sc. Kant, M.T.] bring us to a high point of view from where we can see the whole in its entirety and where the greatest contradictions unite in harmony. It is a precious gift you give the public through our journal [...]. (Biester's letter to Kant of 8th November 1785, Br AA 10.417, Nr. 231, my translation)

² WEYAND, Klaus: *Kants Geschichtsphilosophie. Ihre Entwicklung und ihr Verhältnis zur Aufklärung*. Kantstudien Ergänzungshefte 85, Köln: Kölner Universitäts-Verlag, 1963, p. 134.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Rousseau is mentioned explicitly (AA 08: 116.07 ff.). Kant's writings will be cited according to *Immanuel Kant's Gesammelte Schriften* hg. von der (Preußischen) Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin: Georg Reimer, später Walter de Gruyter, 1900 ff.

⁵ See CASSIRER, Ernst, *Kant and Rousseau. Gesammelte Werke*, Hamburger Ausgabe, 26 vols., Hamburg: Felix Meiner, hg. von Birgit Recki, 2007, vol. 24, p. 491-541.

⁶ Kant was inspired, as Vorländer claims, by Herder's writings on the biblical accounts regarding the origin and the beginning of the history of mankind. See VORLÄNDER, Karl, *Immanuel Kant. Der Mann und das Werk*, Wiesbaden: Fourier, 2003, I, p. 317-323; HERDER, Johann Gottfried von, *Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Humanity* (1784-1791) [*Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*], in: Werke in zehn Bänden, Band 6, Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, hg. von Martin Bollacher, 1989; WEYAND, 1963, p. 35; FRANK, Manfred/ZANETTI, Véronique (Hg.): *Immanuel Kant. Schriften zur Ästhetik und Naturphilosophie. Text und Kommentar*. 3 vols., Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2001 (1996), vol. 3, p. 1130. According to Weyand, especially the 10th Book of Herder's *Ideas* stimulated Kant.

⁷ ZAMMITO, John: *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992, ZAMMITO: *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002.

⁸ AMERIKS, Karl: "Das Schicksal von Kants Rezensionen zu Herders *Ideen*", in: Otfried Höffe (Hg.): *Immanuel Kant. Schriften zur Geschichtsphilosophie*, Berlin: Akademie, 2011, p. 119-136.

After reading Kant's essay, on 15th January 1786 Johann Georg Hamann, too, could not but write to Jacobi that "this dearest bubble of our Kant shall uplift (improve) Herder"⁹. In the summer of 1789 Friedrich Schiller, in his lectures on universal history, based his description of the ancient state of humankind on Kant's *Conjectural Beginning of Human History*¹⁰.

Now let us go to the actual contents of the *Conjectural Beginning of Human History*. Kant starts by comparing his conjecture on the beginning of human history with a "pleasure trip":

[...] since here I am venturing on a mere pleasure trip, I hope I may ask the favor to be allowed me to make use of a holy document as my map, and at the same time to imagine that my trip, which makes on the wings of the power of imagination, though not without a guiding thread attached by reason onto experience, might follow the same trajectory which that document contains in a historically prescribed manner. (MAM AA 08.110 f./163-164)¹¹

Why "a mere pleasure trip" [Lustreise]? Kant regards his "conjecture" not as "a serious business" (MAM AA 08: 109.24/163), but as a movement of the imagination which grants "the recreation and the health of mind" (ibid., 23-24/163)¹². While history can provide a real message and make it plausible, his pleasure trip "must not make too high claims on assent" (ibid., 21/163). The term "to venture on a mere pleasure trip" means, in my opinion, to interpret history with help of imagination, yet to reach the level of a historical investigation and to confirm sketched histories in the Bible. To use the Bible as a "map" and even to examine it is quite a problematic task for Kant. Therefore he says: "I am venturing"¹³. He was aware that he would get into conflict with the church (and the state) because of his interpretation of the Genesis. So he called, in my opinion, his interpretation of the Genesis ironically "a pleasure trip". Furthermore, as to the quotation above, it should be remarked that Kant uses the term "the wings of the power of imagination" which he dismissed as insufficient when reviewing Herder's *Ideas for the philosophy of the history of humanity* by arguing that

philosophy [...] should guide him [sc. Herder, M.T.] to the completion of his enterprise not through hints but through determinate concepts, not through conjectured but observed laws, not by means of a force of imagination given wings whether through metaphysics or through feelings, but through a reason which is expansive in its design but cautious in the execution. (my emphasis, M.T.)¹⁴

Hence in the quotation above from the *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* Kant must have thought about Herder and wanted to annoy him by showing that only he himself is

⁹ See VORLÄNDER, 2003, I, p. 325.

¹⁰ Ibid. See also SOMMER, Andreas Urs: "Felix peccator? Kants geschichtsphilosophische Genesis-Exegese im *Muthmaßlichen Anfang der Menschengeschichte* und die Theologie der Aufklärungszeit", *Kant-Studien* 88 (1997), p. 190-217, here p. 190.

¹¹ KANT, Immanuel: *Conjectural Beginning of Human History*, translated by Allen Wood, in: *Anthropology, History, and Education*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, edited by Günter Zöllner, Robert B. Loudon, 2009 (2007), p. 160-175. The page number of the English translation by A. Wood has been added after the page number of the Akademieausgabe.

¹² In *Anthropology* Note Nr. 562 (AA 15: 244) pleasure trip and hunt are seen as a distraction.

¹³ Brandt discusses the question whether Kant is venturing on a pleasure trip (Lustreise) or an air journey (Luftreise). See Brandt, Reinhard: "Philologisch-philosophische Antithesen", *Kant-Studien* 96 (2005), p. 235-242.

¹⁴ KANT, 1785, *Rezensionen von J. G. Herders Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, AA VIII 55, 28 f.

capable to interpret the biblical stories and research the beginning of the history of humankind with the help of imagination and reason.

II. INSTINCT VS. REASON

The main subject of the essay *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* is the development of human history as a struggle between instinct and reason¹⁵. So in this essay Kant criticizes Rousseau's thesis that the stepping out of the Garden of Eden does not mean any improvement of the individual but that it leads to the decline of individuals and humankind¹⁶. Kant, however, following the account of the Genesis and describing the beginning of human history and the process of the development of reason according to this source, claims that reason should overcome instinct, which he considers to be the "voice of God" (MAM AA 08: 111.4/165), and take the lead. In the following we shall see in detail how Kant interprets the Genesis.

Kant begins with the "existence of man" because this is regarded as the absolute beginning which "is capable of no derivation by human reason from previous natural causes" (MAM AA 08: 110.7-10/164). The first man was able to stand on two feet, to walk and to speak (see MAM AA 08: 110.28-30/164). Furthermore he could think. He had to acquire skills by himself which required his decision to do something or not to (MAM AA 08: 110.30-111, 3/164-165). He and his female companion were living in the Garden of Eden as a couple. They lived by instinct, but with skills. Kant says: "instinct, that *voice of God* which all animals obey, must alone have guided the novice [sc. the first man, M.T.]" in the beginning (MAM AA 08: 111.4-5/165). It is remarkable that the instinct is equated with the voice of God¹⁷. As Andreas Urs Sommer notes¹⁸, Rousseau uses a similar expression in the first book, chapter VIII in *The Social Contract*:

The transition from the state of nature to the civil state produces a very remarkable change in man, by substituting in his behavior justice for instinct, and by imbuing his actions with a moral quality they previously lacked. Only when the voice of duty prevails over physical impulse, and law prevails over appetite, does man, who until then was preoccupied only with himself, understand that he must act according to other principles, and must consult his reason before listening to his inclinations.¹⁹

Kant must have read these lines because he knew almost all of Rousseau's works. I claim that Kant was inspired by the analogy of "the voice". It is even more striking that Kant

¹⁵ See my early study on this subject in my dissertation, TANAKA, Mikiko: *Kants Kritik der Urteilskraft und das Opus postumum. Probleme der Deduktion und ihre Folgen*. Dissertation, Marburg 2004, p. 200-203. <<http://archiv.ub.uni-marburg.de/diss/z2007/0699/>>

¹⁶ See WEYAND, 1963, p. 131.

¹⁷ In *The Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* Kant grades the instinct between "propensity" [Hang] and "inclination" [Neigung]: "Zwischen dem Hange und der Neigung, welche Bekanntschaft mit dem Object des Begehrens voraussetzt, ist noch der *Instinct*, welcher ein gefühltes Bedürfnis ist, etwas zu thun oder zu genießen, wovon man noch keinen Begriff hat (wie der Kunsttrieb der Thieren, oder der Trieb zum Geschlecht)". (AA 6: 28-36/ 34-Fn.)

¹⁸ SOMMER, 1997, p. 204.

¹⁹ ROUSSEAU, Jean-Jacques: *The Social Contract*, in: *The Social Contract and The First and Second Discourses*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, edited and with an Introduction by Susan Dunn, 2002, p. 166.

mentions God only once in his interpretation of the first three chapters of the Genesis, and then only by an analogy: the voice of God. God appears neither as creator nor as judge²⁰. We can assume that it is Kant's intention to explain the beginning of human history without God's intervention. Thus his fundamental intention becomes clear: philosophy is to have primacy over theology.

In *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose* of 1784, Kant claims that it is nature that forces human beings to step out of the raw natural state dominated by discord and to enter the legal status and establish society. By contrast, in *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* the state of nature is described as a state of mankind enjoying family unity²¹ and plentiful food and living in a mild climate without care and effort (MAM AA 08: 110.7-22/164). Thus, the state of nature is equated with Paradise, and if people obey the "voice of nature", they are satisfied (MAM AA 08: 111.18-19/165) just as Rousseau describes "natural man" in his *Second Discourse*.

According to Kant, it is reason in man himself that forms the causes for conflict between men and drives them out of Paradise. In this sense the expulsion from Paradise must be considered as a step forward for humanity, but not as a punishment. Reason, says Kant, begins to "stir" and to free man from ties to nature and animal instinct in four steps²². These four steps of the development of reason are as follows:

1. Firstly, man is primarily directed by the instinct for food, but reason in him begins to stir, and he discovers in himself the ability to choose freely with the help of imagination and the ability to make a decision. Then he decides to "extend his knowledge of the means of nourishment beyond the limits of instinct" and eat the forbidden fruit (MAM AA 08: 111.22-24/165). By "the limits of instinct" Kant means the prohibition by God. However, it is quite strange that the serpent which tempts Eve with the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge (Genesis 3:1) doesn't appear in Kant's interpretation. By contrast, man decided by himself to eat it. Kant says: "it is a property of reason that with the assistance of the power of the imagination it can concoct desires not only *without* a natural drive directed to them but *contrary* to it" (MAM AA 08: 111.26-28/165). He obviously regards the sin of man as the result of reason's fight against natural instinct. Adam was not misled by a woman (or a serpent), but chose a struggle with instinct.
2. In the second step reason develops in relation to the sexual instinct. Kant says, "[t]he human being soon found that the stimulus to sex, which with animals rests merely on a transient, for the most part periodic impulse, was capable for him of being prolonged and even increased through the power of the imagination [...]" (MAM AA 08: 112.31-34/166). Yet the object of the imagination should be "withdrawn from the senses" so that "the boredom" can be prevented (*ibid.*, 36-37/166). Thus Kant regards the fig leaf (Genesis

²⁰ Sommer rightly claims: "Bezeichnend für Kants Lesart von 1. Mose 2-3 ist – und nicht zuletzt deswegen auch die Schlangenwindung bei der Frage nach dem Woher des Menschen – das Wegfallen der eigentlichen Hauptperson im biblischen Bericht: Gott tritt weder als Schöpfer, noch als Gesetzgeber auf – präsent ist er nur auf dem Umweg des Instinct[es], diese[r] *Stimme Gottes*" (SOMMER, 1997, p. 204.).

²¹ Kant assumes that all human beings descend from only one pair, Adam and Eve (AA 08: 110.17 f./164).

²² WEYAND, 1963, p. 135.

3:7) as the product of a great “manifestation of reason” (MAM AA 08: 113.1-2/166). Under the influence of imagination reason can control the animal desire and thus motivate man to find love and taste of beauty (ibid., 9-10/166). Moreover, “*propriety* [Sittsamkeit], [...] as the genuine foundation of all true sociability, gave the first hint towards the formation of the human being as a moral creature” (ibid., 11-15/166).

3. In the third step, “foreseeing the future”, especially with regard to descendants, the individual is subordinated to the genus, and humankind as a species is the subject of reason’s concern (MAM AA 08: 113.19-114, 2/167). Hobbes, already, regarded the concern for the future as an important characteristic distinguishing human beings from animals: he describes man as “an animal which hunger in future makes hungry” (Hobbes, *De homine* X, 3)²³. Rousseau, however, skeptically views the emergence of the awareness of time and the related provision for the future and regards it as harmful. He writes in the second book in *Emile*:

Foresight! Foresight, which takes us ceaselessly beyond ourselves and often places us where we shall never arrive. This is the true source of all our miseries. What madness for a fleeting being like man always to look far into a future which comes so rarely and to neglect the present of which he is sure.²⁴

Furthermore, in *The Second Discourse* Rousseau takes the view that natural man (homme sauvage) lacks the awareness of time. Rousseau’s natural man fears only two evils, pain and hunger²⁵. But the awareness of time does not play a role yet, for the wild man does not think about dinner having eaten in the morning. The awareness of having a future belongs to the anthropological definition of (rational) human being. Hence the concern about the future leads to the securing of private property. Rousseau concludes: “He [sc. natural man, M.T.] had in his instinct alone everything requisite to live in a state of nature; in his cultivated reason he has barely what is necessary to live in a state of society”²⁶. The escape from Paradise is not an improvement for the human species, but an expression of their decline.

Clearly opposed to Rousseau’s opinion Kant regards the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, who are to suffer from hard work and painfully bearing children, as a development of the human species whose members foresee death after an arduous life with fear, yet hope

²³ HOBBS, Thomas, *Vom Menschen, Vom Bürger*, hg. von Günter Gawlick, Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1994, p. 17.

²⁴ ROUSSEAU, Jean-Jacques: *Emile or On Education*, translated by Allan Bloom, New York: Basic Books, 1979, p. 82 <<http://archive.org/stream/RousseausemileOrOnEducationbloom/Rousseau-Emile>> (accessed: 20 April 2013). Rousseau continues: “It is a madness all the more destructive since it increases continuously with age; and old men, always distrustful, full of foresight, and miserly, prefer to deny themselves what is necessary today so as not to lack it a hundred years from now. Thus, we are attached to everything, we cling to everything – times, places, men, things; everything which is, everything which will be, is important to each of us. Our individual persons are now only the least part of ourselves. Each one extends himself, so to speak, over the whole earth and becomes sensitive over this entire large surface. Is it surprising that our ills are multiplied by all the points where we can be wounded? How many princes grieve over the loss of a country they have never seen? How many merchants are there whom it suffices to touch in India in order to make them scream in Paris?” (ibid., p. 82-83).

²⁵ ROUSSEAU, Jean-Jacques: *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Mankind*, in: *The Social Contract and The First and Second Discourses*, 2002, p. 97: “He knows no goods but food, a female, and rest; he fears no evils but pain, and hunger; I say pain, and not death; for no animal, merely as such, will ever know what it is to die, and the knowledge of death, and of its terrors, is one of the first acquisitions made by man, in consequence of his deviating from the animal state”.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 104.

that their offspring might “have it better” (MAM AA 08: 113.37/167). This prospect is the only comfort and reassurance that they have.

The fourth and last step which reason took is described as follows. Reason allows man to use all animals and plants as means and thus to regard himself as the end of nature. With regard to the role of God in the philosophy of history, God is rarely mentioned in Kant’s interpretation of the Genesis. The following example makes Kant’s intention apparent. Paraphrasing Genesis 3:21 Kant writes in the fourth step that man said to the sheep: “Nature has given you the skin which you wear not for you but for me, then took it off the sheep and put it on himself” (MAM AA 08: 114.6 ff./167). This is a reinterpretation of Kant. For Genesis 3:21 reads: “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them”²⁷. Kant replaces God with the intention of nature, i.e. the development of man with the help of reason. Furthermore, man must realize that other people must be regarded as an end, too. This aspect causes the necessity to establish a legally constituted society (see MAM AA 08: 114.3-19/167).

Summing up the development of mankind with the help of reason we can say that in the first and the second step the immediate and current interests and needs of the individual are man’s main focus of attention. Only in the third step the consciousness of time is acquired due to which the concern about the future becomes a decisive motive for human actions. This is a turning point in Kant’s philosophy of history. For in the fourth step reason forces man to undergo a moral development, i.e. to establish a society²⁸. For in order to care for the future, human beings need mutual recognition and the effective administration by law which the state of nature cannot guarantee – but which only a civil society is capable of. In this way reason releases man from the secure “womb of nature” and sends him into a legal relationship with other people, even though “so much worry, toil, and unknown ills are waiting for him” in this relationship (MAM AA 08: 114.29-35/168). This development occurs under the “directing of reason”. Thus Kant regards the development process of human history as “the transition from the crudity of a merely animal creature into humanity, from the go-cart [Gängelwagen]²⁹ of instinct to the guidance of reason – in a word, from the guardianship [Unmündigkeit] of nature into the condition of freedom” (MAM AA 08: 115.11-17/168)³⁰. It should be stressed that the freedom of man coincides with the ultimate purpose of nature, i.e. “the moral vocation of the human species” (MAM AA 08: 118.1 f./171).

By criticizing culture and sciences Rousseau claimed that the history of humankind was getting worse. In contrast, Kant believes that the history of humankind develops continuously after man’s “first use of reason” (MAM AA 08: 123.17/175). Yet the progress from the worse to the better does not apply to the individual but to humankind as genus. Due to “the *shortness*

²⁷ *The New Cambridge Paragraph Bible with the Apocrypha*, King James Version, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, edited by David Norton, 2005. Kant possessed the bible in translation by Luther, a Basel edition from 1751. See Bettina Stangneth: “Kants Bibel” in: KANT, Immanuel: *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*, hg. von Bettina Stangneth, Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2003, p. 307-308.

²⁸ See FRANK/ZANETTI, 2001, vol. 3, p. 1139.

²⁹ “Go-cart” is not a proper English translation of the German word “Gängelwagen” which is similar to a baby walker.

³⁰ H. B. Nisbet translates this phrase as follows: “his transition from a rude and purely animal existence to a state of humanity, from the leading-strings of instinct to the guidance of reason — in a word, from the guardianship of nature into the state of freedom”, Kant: *Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History*, in Kant: *Political Writings*, 2nd enlarged edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, edited with an introduction and notes by Hans Reiss, transl. by H. B. Nisbet, 172006 (1970), p. 226.

of life" (MAM AA 08: 122.2/174) the individual is incapable of improving himself (or herself) gradually and of continuously regarding morality. But "each of us is for his own part to contribute towards this progress to the best of his ability as called upon by nature" (MAM AA 08: 123.26-27/175).

III. CONCLUSION

Kant's essay *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* marks the turning point at which the role of reason becomes noticeable in Kant's teleological interpretation of history. Not nature but reason should conduct man through the enlightening process. However, we should not forget that Kant shows in the *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* that nature has given reason to man³¹. Nature has created man in such a manner that he becomes conscious of the faculty of reason over time and that he develops the capacity of free choice. It is the intention of nature that human beings dare to use their own understanding and to follow the guidance of reason. The purpose of nature and the ultimate goal of humankind are unified in the culture of human beings and in the moral perfection of the human species which should be pursued continuously.

Kant used the Genesis as a parable to describe the emancipation process of reason. The Fall of Man is indeed a fall for the individual, and the expulsion from Paradise is a punishment. But the philosopher of enlightenment regards man's stepping out of the state of nature by his own reason as a big step for the human species. Therefore the release from "the rule of instinct" and the transition to the "guidance of reason" is the beginning of human moral history. The emergence of time consciousness and of concern for the future in Kant's interpretation of the Genesis plays an important role in the development of the idea of progress during the Enlightenment, which is unthinkable without Rousseau's influence on Kant. Although Kant esteemed Rousseau's critique of culture, he tried to alter Rousseau's concept of the nature of man entirely.

ABSTRACT: In my paper I investigate Rousseau's influence on Kant's interpretation of the Genesis and his philosophy of history. In his essay *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* Kant interpreted the Genesis from the perspective of the conflict between natural instinct and human reason, i.e. the conflict between the theological doctrine and his philosophy of reason. Opposing Rousseau's opinion that man is entirely satisfied with living according to natural instinct, Kant claims that reason should overcome instinct, which he considers to be the voice of God. Man, therefore, should step out of the state of nature (the Garden of Eden) by his own reason, as Kant regards the release from the rule of instinct and the transition to the guidance of reason as the beginning of human moral history.

KEYWORDS: Kant, Rousseau, philosophy of history, Genesis, instinct, awareness of time, Enlightenment.

31 See the third thesis: "Da sie [sc. die Natur, M. T.] dem Menschen Vernunft und darauf sich gründende Freiheit des Willens gab, so war das schon eine klare Anzeige ihrer Absicht in Ansehung seiner Ausstattung" (AA 08: 19, 24-26).

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