

UDC 1(091)

O. M. KORKH^{1*}, V. V. KHMIL^{2*}^{1*}University of Customs and Finance (Dnipro, Ukraine), e-mail korh54@gmail.com, ORCID 0000-0001-7175-5011^{2*}Ukrainian State University of Science and Technologies (Dnipro, Ukraine), e-mail broun79@gmail.com, ORCID 0000-0003-4710-6681**Kant's Philosophy and the Idea of the Self-Made-Man**

Purpose. The authors of this article set the main purpose of understanding the ideological potential of Kant's philosophical heritage from the viewpoint of its influence on the spread and legitimization of the self-made man idea in the worldview transformations of the modern world. **Theoretical basis.** Historical, analytical, and hermeneutic methods became fundamental for achieving the goal. The study is based on Kant's works, as well as on the works of modern researchers of his ideological heritage. **Originality.** The analysis shows that the idea of the Self-made-man, which originated in the ancient world and gradually spread in the Western culture of the Middle Ages, early Modernism, and especially the Enlightenment, receives significant additional impulses in the context of Kant's rethinking of the metaphysical foundations in the theory of knowledge and morality. Perhaps, the systematic theoretical substantiation of people's abilities to use their own mind, their intellectual, and therefore moral autonomy, and freedom of will as the fundamental principles of personal Self-determination and Self-realization became the most important consequence of this rethinking. This, in turn, became the theoretical and moral-legal basis for further legitimization in the modern and postmodern world of the ideal of a person who creates oneself. **Conclusions.** The importance of Kant's philosophy in the context of idea generation of the self-made man is hard to overestimate. It is entirely imbued with a leitmotif appeal to the individual to have the courage to use his/her own mind, to be independent and self-sufficient in assessments, choices, and actions, and therefore also responsible for their consequences, in the end, to be primarily an end, not a means. Thanks to this, a person, according to Hegel, finds an unconditionally strong and stable center in oneself. In fact, by strengthening the position of human-centric philosophy, as well as the moral and legal foundations of liberal humanism, Kant's ideas provided further ideological legitimization in the orientation of an objectively growing individual towards actively placing Self-reliance and Personal responsibility on one's own destiny as the key principles of the Self-made-man concept.

Keywords: Kant's philosophy; intellectual and moral autonomy; self-defined personality; the Self-made-man idea

Introduction

Despite all the contradictions and diversity of the modern world, general trends are noticeable in its development associated with the expressive autonomization of goalsetting and ways of personal Self-identification. In particular, we are talking about a rather pronounced spread, and among representatives of different cultures and strata, of the idea of "Self-made-man", that is, "a person who created oneself". This is evidenced by the rapid increase in the number of descriptions of success stories of various celebrities; and a clear increase in the popularity of all kinds of methodological instructions and pieces of training such as "how to achieve success" or "how to become the creator of your own destiny"; and dissemination of relevant theoretical research in the field of pedagogy, psychology, sociology and philosophy. And such demand is by no means accidental. It is a completely natural consequence of the person's essentially archetypal intention for self-determination and self-realization, which acquires special actualization in modern conditions and shows that the modern person is becoming more and more "adult", that is, according to Kant, one who dares to act according to his/her own reason, excluding guardianship of anyone (Yermolenko, 2020, p. 10). According to our belief, substantiated in several publications, the understanding and philosophical and legal legitimization of this intention begins in Antiquity, continues in the Middle Ages, and acquires special depth in

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modern times (Korkh & Antonova, 2023). An important role in this process belongs to Immanuel Kant, whose 300th birthday is being celebrated by the civilized world. And it, it seems, consists not only in worthy fascination with the personal life example of Kant, who, having turned from a semi-impoverished home teacher into the master of the thoughts of many contemporaries and successors, literally created himself. The content of his entire philosophy, according to the correct opinion of Friedrich Schiller, is expressed in the words "define yourself". Kant's philosophy is literally imbued with the ideas of self-determination and self-government. However, the understanding of exactly what potential lies in Kant's ideas in terms of the spread and legitimation of the "Self-made-man" ideal remains, in our opinion, almost unarticulated (unfortunately, we could not find special studies on this issue), but therefore, it is mostly superficial and intuitive. And this is despite the enormous volume of Kantian literature created over the past centuries. Only among domestic researchers of Kant's spiritual heritage, who had relevant publications in recent years, we can mention A. Dakhniy, A. Yermolenko, V. Kozlovskiy, A. Malivskiy, V. Proniakin, V. Tabachkovskiy, V. Terletskiy, V. Chorniy, and many others. The bibliography of foreign publications devoted to the analysis of Kant's ideas is generally immeasurable. Kant's restrained attitude to such a significant event of the Age of Enlightenment as a moral justification of egoism complicates the above-mentioned understanding. In the context of legitimizing the idea of the "Self-made-man", this aspect is quite important, since, according to Viktor Kozlovskiy (2023), all actions of a person, his/her political rights, values in general, and moral imperatives in particular, had to be checked for their compliance with the particular interests of a person which (compliance) only gave them moral sanction and legitimacy (p. 440).

Purpose

Given this, *the main purpose* of this article is to understand the ideological potential of Kant's philosophical heritage from the viewpoint of its influence on the legitimation and spread of the Self-made-man idea in the worldview transformations of the modern world.

Statement of basic materials

The dominance of private interests, personal initiative, free competition inherent in the modern world, and the gradual emancipation of the individual from church and corporate dependence, demanded a new morality that would legitimize these realities and begin, according to the correct opinion of Charles Taylor (2013), with the individual, the protection of their rights, the central point of which there is freedom (p. 274). At the same time, such morality should not be based on the external regulation of a human act, which limits and even deprives it of its proper moral and therefore responsible character, but primarily on the *personal choice and responsibility of the individual*. However, is it possible for a person to have support for one's actions in oneself, and not in the usual "demands of nature", "age-old traditions" or God's commandments? Reflections on this fundamental question determined the entire architecture of Kant's philosophy, the greatness of which, according to Vittorio Hösle, is that, unlike others, including the Enlighteners, who sought the support of morality in the specified heteronomous factors, Kant appeals to reason. Exactly mind that must answer the question "What should I do?" and justify not subjective and particular, but objective and therefore universal morality (Hösle, 2003, p. 25). However, this, in turn, required a preliminary critical analysis of the cognitive capabilities of the mind itself.

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Such an analysis was especially necessary in view of two essentially mutually exclusive epistemological positions at the time, represented, on the one hand, by the traditional Christian thesis about the corruption and powerlessness of the human mind, and on the other, by the excessive epistemological optimism of Enlighteners. Sharing the original ideas of enlighteners and considering knowledge as an activity that proceeds according to its own laws, and the cognizing person who not only determines the method of knowledge but also constructs (including using one's own creative imagination and intuition) his/her subject, Kant undoubtedly strengthens the idea of *intellectual autonomy of the individual*. In the context of our study, this is extremely important, since this idea is a cornerstone in substantiating the individual's ability to judge with their *own* mind, and therefore to rely on their *own* decisions in the most important issues of life. However, this was also facilitated by Kant's clearly skeptical attitude towards any cognitive radicalism of the Enlightenment. According to the fair opinion of the authors, "Kant overcomes the Enlightenment temptation to absolutize the power of human reason and emphasizes its limitations" (Malivskiy & Yakymchuk, 2022, p. 148). He believes that despite the obvious achievements, the human mind is clearly not all-powerful in the realm of questions that go beyond the phenomenal world, that is, related to the understanding of the world of noumenons. Here nature, Kant (2004) ironically, endowed us with the ability for such comprehension only as a stepmother (p. 162). And that is why, according to the philosopher, a characteristic feature of speculative knowledge is complete contradiction and hypotheticality.

However, by limiting the claims of the speculative mind to knowledge about things extremely important for every person (freedom, God, immortality), the philosopher directly or indirectly pushes him/her to break with the authoritarian style of thinking and sets up a critical attitude towards the absolute truths established by anyone. In the end, he leads to *independent* conclusions, assessments, and decisions that are not limited by anyone, not even God(!). After all, according to Kant, any (whether positive or negative) God's intervention limits the freedom of the individual and thereby deprives his/her actions of morality. It is from here that Kant's (1994) call leit-motif to the individual dares to use *one's own reason*.

The recognition of intellectual autonomy quite naturally initiates the recognition of the *autonomy* or *Self-legitimacy of the will*, i.e. the individual's ability to *Self-government*. Kant substantiates the possibility of such a capacity by the fact that a person simultaneously belongs to "two worlds" – the phenomenal (given to us in our senses) world, where, of course, natural determination operates, and the noumenal (only conceivable) world of things in themselves, in which the person's mind *attributes to oneself* what should happen. It is here that the individual, guided by his/her mind, can *independently determine and establish the laws of own existence*. Analytics, according to Kant (2004), indisputably proves that "pure reason can be practical, that is, it can by its own, independently of everything empirical, determine the will, and proves this by a fact... namely, autonomy in the basis of morality, which it directs the will to actions" (p. 48).

Henry Allison (2011), analyzing Kant's "Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals", argues that the significance of this work is particularly related to the paradoxical thesis that moral requirements can be binding only because they are imposed by a person on *him/herself*. And indeed it is. Exactly freedom of will, Kant constantly emphasizes, is the basis of our *personal dignity* and gives our actions not just a legitimate (that is, acceptable) but also a proper moral character. If such freedom were not possible, Colin McLear (2019) heightens Ellison's opinion, then there would be no hope for conceiving of rational agents as morally responsible but generally for

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the possibility of our status as rational beings (pp. 1-2). It should be borne in mind that Kant *distinguishes*, but *does not oppose*, as is sometimes believed, the legality (a legal form of legitimacy) and morality of an act. Consequently, the desire for Self-determination and Self-realization in the context of Kantian philosophy does not appear as something unacceptable due to its seeming incompatibility with "pure respect for duty". Rather, on the contrary, such an aspiration, according to Kant's logic, should receive an unambiguously high assessment. Given the Protestant context – "reliance on one's own strength" and the principle according to which "God helps those who help themselves" – it can be assumed that such an aspiration is not just legitimized, but essentially sacralized. It is clear that such "sacralization", even in the context of Kant's "reasonable faith", was definitely important in terms of legitimization, and in the future, the legalization of the Self-made-man ideal. In any case, the general pathos of Kant's (2004) assessment of the autonomy of the will is quite unambiguous: "Autonomy of the will is one single principle of all moral laws and the duties corresponding to them; instead, all heteronomy of Self-will not only does not establish any obligation but on the contrary is adverse to its principle" (p. 38).

Of course, the autonomy of the will implies the *reliance of the individual on oneself* (Self-reliance) and one's *Personal responsibility* for the consequences of actions. This was objectively required by the realities in which the Self-determination of the Kantian "rational being" took place. On the other hand, the recognition of the right to Self-determination, Self-reliance and Self-responsibility made any paternalism in the relationship between the individual and society, the citizen and the state, any attempts to determine for the individuals themselves what is useful and what is harmful for them categorically unacceptable. Such a definition becomes the prerogative of the individual her/himself. At the same time, it should be emphasized that the individual's right to free Self-determination in no way means the Self-will of his/her empirical inclinations. After all, the latter, according to Kant, cannot serve as a general basis of morality not only because of their subjectivity and changeability, but also because they often turn the master of these tendencies into their slave, that is, deprive him/her of freedom. Therefore, to be moral, following to Kant, means to be primarily independent and to be guided in one's actions not by empirical inclinations, but by a fundamentally reasonable and universal moral principle, according to which only the freedom that people *can give themselves* can be the basis of their *personal dignity*. In other words, free will and will subject to moral laws are one and the same (Kant, 2005, p. 269). And this freedom is limited by only one requirement, according to which our freedom of action must be compatible with the freedom of action of everyone else. It follows from the reasonable and fundamental in its meaning recognition of each other as the same goal as you yourself. Hence the famous Kantian imperative, which requires that each individual see not only in one's own person, but also in everyone else, first of all, goal in itself, and not just a means of realizing anyone's, even divine, goals (Kant, 2004, p. 146). This means that the individual must recognize the Self-worth and freedom of each person and evaluate his/her own decisions and actions through the prism of this recognition. That is, the criterion of the morality of an individual's actions is the possibility of transforming the rules of own behavior into the principles of general legislation. Hence the unconditional requirement of the categorical imperative: "Act so that the maxim of your will can always rule for the principle of general legislation" (Kant, 2004, p. 35).

Despite the famous formality and abstractness in the requirements of the Kantian imperative, which would seem to make it absolutely unsuitable for use in real rather than hypothetical life situations, exactly they give this imperative true humanism and effectiveness. Kant is fundamentally against any specific and meaningful "recipes" for human action. After all, each person is a

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never-finally incomprehensible combination of the empirical and the transcendental, which tears him/her between the calls of inclinations and the demands of duty, between the desire for personal happiness and the aspiration for moral virtues. And any attempts to find any unconditionally general and unequivocal solution to these personal antinomies are fundamentally untenable. Therefore, the requirements of the Kantian imperative do not claim to be direct instructions for specific life situations. They offer only a general principle, only a general form of personal Self-expression. The very form of general legislation, the philosopher repeatedly emphasizes, should be the most important and direct basis for determining the will (Kant, 2004, p. 48). After all, by indicating only the general principle of actions, and not the actions themselves, it creates the most favorable conditions for truly free Self-determination of the individual. This means that everything, in the end, must be decided by the autonomous will of men, based on their own reason, intuition, and, of course, a sense of duty.

The need for personal Self-determination and Self-government becomes even more urgent given the *idea of the autonomy of morality* proclaimed by Kant. Kant rejects the tradition of deriving the latter from the requirements of nature ("empirical inclinations") or religious commandments, since both of them, which are the basis of personal choice, make it non-independent and therefore irresponsible. As for religious faith, it, moreover, violates the proper purity of the moral motive that should lie at its foundation, since it promises the individual a reward – personal salvation. However, true morality and self-interest, Kant insistently repeats, are at least different things. At the same time, due to the limitations of our mind, leaving open the question of the ontological (that is, within the limits of physics and logic) status of God, Kant advocates the need to recognize his existence within the limits of morality. Here, it is necessary to "postulate" his existence, according to Kant, primarily to ensure the effectiveness of a person's moral behavior, since the latter can achieve the highest good only if s/he has ideas about the "highest perfection", the embodiment of which, and therefore the criterion, is God. That is, ideas about God and immortality are considered by Kant (2022) as conditions under which we can only think about the possibility of a lawful use of our freedom (p. 431). The role of God's grace appears in the same limited form. The well-known Kant scholar Allan Wood argues, Kantian autonomy is not incompatible with the idea of grace. However, grace itself should be understood as a complement to, not a substitute for, our autonomous practical principle. That is, even if we anticipate divine help, our autonomous efforts must remain primary and indispensable (DiCenso, 2020, p. 584). Of course, such a "cropped/clipped" status of God, which appears neither as an "object of judgment" nor as a "fact", but only as an "object of faith", is another but very important signal to the individual – have the courage to use your own mind and rely first of all on your own strength! Judging by the results of further historical development, this advice was heard. In view of this, the assessment of Felix Murchadha (2022) seems to be quite correct, according to which the culmination of the birth of the modern individual's understanding and the prerequisites for his/her Self-identification was the emergence of Kant's idea of rational faith.

The influence of Kant's philosophy on the legitimization of the principle of "achieving success by one's own efforts", which is one of the modes of the Self-made-man concept, is rather ambiguous. After all, according to Kant, success, like everything else that does not "follow" from the mere feeling of respect for moral duty, cannot be the basis of a general moral principle. Therefore, the aspiration for success, benefit, etc. is formally denied the status of moral. De facto, however, this further strengthens the general position of the Self-made-man idea, as it leads to the conclusion that everything heteronomous with the individual's free will, especially directed

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against his/her *personal rights*, including the right to Self-government, is harmful, and therefore unacceptable. Moreover, it does not matter whether it contributes to the common good, or the interests of the majority or not. Kant essentially initiates a break with utilitarianism in morality, since the violation of personal rights is always evil for him. The indisputable advantage of independent Self-determination of an individual over personal or public benefit lies precisely in the possibility of its universalization, that is, transformation into the principle of general legislation.

In Kant's opinion, the attempt to universalize a person's tendency to happiness as a moral law is also unacceptable. After all, the morality of this inclination is not unconditional but often depends on a very different understanding of happiness, as well as on whether the actions leading to happiness are consistent with the requirements of duty and moral imperative. However, Kant repeatedly admits that

The difference between the principle of happiness and the principle of morality does not yet mean opposing them, and pure practical reason does not want... for them to be completely ignored when it comes to duty. In a certain respect, caring for one's happiness may even be obligatory – partly because it (these include skill, health, wealth) contains the means for [a person] to fulfill his/her duty, partly because its lack (for example, poverty) contains the temptation to violate one's duty. (Kant, 2004, p. 104)

Quite, in our opinion, it is enough to strengthen the determination of an individual who seeks to achieve success and become happy. Kant's distinction between the dignity of being happy and happiness itself contributes to this. Happiness, as is well known, largely depends on external circumstances, chance, and other factors beyond human control. Whereas moral dignity, which is the only basis for being worthy of happiness, consists in the *autonomy* of the will. That is, every person who has moral dignity has, according to Kant, the dignity to be happy. So, don't miss your chance and be happy! Of course, it is under one condition – your happiness must be your *own merit* and be based on unconditional respect for the moral law. Man, the philosopher claims, "does not deserve any other happiness or perfection, except those that s/he her/himself has *created* (emphasis ours – O. K., V. K.), being free from instinct, thanks to one's own reason" (Kant, 1994, p. 87).

Kant's understanding of the person's morally worthy qualities was also important in terms of legitimizing the value of individual Self-determination. Judging by his works, the cowardice of a person, humiliation, and contempt for oneself have nothing to do with them. Kant clearly likes people who are self-sufficient and independent, who are well aware that personal freedom is the basis of their moral dignity and, therefore, the goal of social life. It is these qualities that create the prerequisites for a person's right and duty to solve his problems on his/her own, guided by his/her mind and not relying on the support of external forces, including God. Hence the com-

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pletely modern, according to V. Kozlovskiy (2023), Kant's definition of Enlightenment "as the duty and right of an individual to act guided by his/her own reason; act independently, without relying on the help of external supports and crutches" (p. 434).

Indeed, in Kant's "An Answer to the Question: What is the Enlightenment?" there is no mention at all of the belief characteristic of the European Enlightenment about the power and ability of human egoism to produce both personal and social good. In light of the dominant instruction to search for unconditional principles of moral behavior, such ignoring is quite understandable. However, it does not contribute too much to men's awareness of themselves as *Homo economicus*, who, worrying about their own benefit, inadvertently contributes to the public good as well. That is, the general Enlightenment recognition of selfish interest as an important factor of social advancement, and hence the prism through which personal ideas and actions should be evaluated, did not find a proper place in Kant's version, which would certainly strengthen the individual's orientation to personal success as one of the modes of the Self-made-man concept. For the sake of justice, however, it should be noted that in certain contexts (in particular, in "Idea of Universal History in Cosmopolitan Plan"), the philosopher admits that if people were not prone to "unsociable sociability" and were not endowed with "ambition, love of power, or money-making", then they would forever remain undeveloped and their movement in the direction of culture would be impossible in principle. Therefore, he blesses nature for the human inclination to competition, envious confrontation, and thirst for possession and domination (Kant, 1994, p. 93), thereby indirectly providing, at a minimum, legitimacy to the "selfish claims" that underlie these inclinations. However, taking into account the fact that Kant (1994) still does not contrast the legality and morality of an act, and our actions are always empirically motivated, it is quite logical for the individual to conclude that his/her aspiration "to build their own well-being in any way they choose, compatible with by the freedom of others" (p. 113), that is, completely moral.

Originality

The analysis shows that the Self-made-man idea, which was born in the ancient world and gradually spread in the Western culture of the Middle Ages, early Modernism, and especially the Enlightenment, receives significant additional impulses in the context of Kant's rethinking of the metaphysical foundations in the theory of knowledge and morality. Perhaps the most important consequence of this rethinking was the systematic theoretical substantiation of an individual's ability to use one's own mind, intellectual, and therefore moral autonomy, freedom of will as the fundamental principles of personal Self-determination) and Self-realization). This, in turn, became the theoretical-moral and legal basis for further legitimization in the modern and postmodern world of the person's ideal who creates oneself.

Conclusions

It is quite obvious that the importance of Kant's philosophy in the context of the formation of the Self-made-man idea is difficult to overestimate. It is imbued with a call to the individual to have the courage to use his/her own reason, to be independent and self-sufficient in assessments, choices, and actions, and therefore also responsible for their consequences, in the end, to be primarily an end, not a means. Thanks to this, men, according to Hegel, find an absolutely strong and stable center in themselves. In fact, by strengthening the positions of human-centered philosophy, as well as the moral and legal principles of liberal humanism, Kant's ideas provided further worldview legitimization of the objectively growing individual's orienta-

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tion towards the active reliance on Self-reliance and Personal responsibility for own destiny as the key principles of the Self-made-man concept.

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Філософія Канта та ідея Self-made-man

Мета. Автори цієї статті ставлять за основну мету осмислення ідейного потенціалу філософської спадщини Канта з точки зору його впливу на поширення та легітимацію ідеї Self-made-man у світоглядних трансформаціях модерного світу. **Теоретичний базис.** Основоположними для досягнення мети стали історичний, аналітичний та герменевтичний методи. Дослідження базується на роботах Канта, а також на працях сучасних дослідників його ідейної спадщини. **Наукова новизна.** Аналіз показує, що ідея Self-made-man, яка зародилася ще в античному світі й поступово поширилася в західній культурі Середньовіччя, раннього Модерну та особливо Просвітництва, отримує вагомі додаткові імпульси в контексті кантівського переосмислення метафізичних основ теорії пізнання та моралі. Чи не найважливішим наслідком цього переосмислення стало системне теоретичне обґрунтування здатності індивіда користуватися власним розумом, його інтелектуальної, а відтак і моральної автономії, свободи волі як фундаментальних засад особистого самовизначення (Self-determination) та самореалізації (Self-realization). Це у свою чергу стало теоретичним та морально-правовим підґрунтям подальшої легітимації в модерному та постмодерному світі ідеалу людини, яка створює себе сама. **Висновки.** Значення філософії Канта в контексті становлення ідеї Self-made-man важко переоцінити. Вона вся просякнута закликком-лейтмотивом до індивіда мати мужність користуватися власним розумом, бути незалежним і самодостатнім у своїх оцінках, виборі та вчинках, а відтак і відповідальним за їх наслідки, урешті-решт бути передусім метою, а не засобом. Завдяки цьому людина, за визнанням Гегеля, у самій собі знаходить безумовно міцний і стійкий центр. Фактично, посиливши позиції людиноцентричної філософії, а також морально-правові засади ліберального гуманізму, ідеї Канта забезпечили подальшу світоглядну легітимацію орієнтації індивіда, що об'єктивно зростає, на активне покладання на самого себе (Self-reliance) та персональну відповідальність (Personal responsibility) за власну долю як ключові принципи концепту Self-made-man.

Ключові слова: філософія Канта; інтелектуальна та моральна автономія; особистість, що самовизначається; ідея Self-made-man

Received: 18.01.2024

Accepted: 20.06.2024