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Maturity, Freedom of Thought, and Emancipation — On Kant's *What Is Enlightenment?*

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ABSTRACT

In this essay, I want to address two main aspects of the arguably central topic of Kant's treatise on Enlightenment, namely maturity: these concern the notion of the freedom of thought (Section I) and the idea of emancipation that is conveyed by maturity, the fact that it involves a process of growing up to become a citizen (Section II). Freedom of thought denotes the idea of self-agency which all human beings possess in principle whereas emancipation points to the fact that maturity is something that is not a matter of course, neither in individual cases nor for society at large. Maturity is not a natural disposition that one either possesses or not but must be developed. This means that not all human beings are de facto mature always, everywhere and all of the time. That this situation is not something that is in principle unalterable can be demonstrated by way of assessing Kant's apparent views on women's presumable minority 'according to sex'.

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To the courageous and self-thinking women of Iran

Introduction

Kant's minor essays are often seen as less important than the major works of the critical period, in particular the three *Critiques*, the *Groundwork* and the *Religion*. This is unfair though. The series of essays that Kant published, in the 1780s and 1790s, in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, a well-known monthly in Berlin Enlightenment circles, and once in the *Teutsche Merkur*, represent *in nuce*, and often in a stylistically superior writing style, some of the core ideas of Kant's mature thought. At the same time, in those essays various themes are broached which are not or only tangentially dealt with in the major writings. One theme that implicitly runs through the so-called Enlightenment essay of 1784, *An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment*? (henceforth *Aufklärung*),[1] arguably Kant's most popular and influential work, is the notion of self-determination (*Selbstbestimmung*) or self-legislation (*Selbstgesetzgebung*), a theme that is central to his thought in general. This hangs together intimately with Kant's views on the centrality of the thinking subject and reason in general, that is, thinking itself. Thinking and the rational capacity that each human being possesses, as the measure with which we judge or evaluate anything, is centrally thematized in *Aufklärung* in the context of a question that was posed in an earlier installment of the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, namely the question: What actually is enlightenment?[2]

Kant's answer to that question diverges from the then as now usual definition or view of Enlightenment in terms of an intellectual movement or historical stage in Western society—a view that Moses Mendelssohn, too, espoused in his own answer to the question, published shortly before Kant's in the same journal.[3] According to Kant, enlightenment is however not about theoretical knowledge or its dissemination or transference, or the increase in rational knowledge as such, which should be seen as a counterbalance to other non-rational views or ideas of life and society, religious or otherwise. Nor is it just about scientific progress, or merely about cultural or societal development. On the contrary, enlightenment primarily concerns *a way of thinking*. For Kant, enlightenment is also always critique, a capacity for critical thinking. Enlightenment is therefore not just *theory*, or the possession of knowledge (in Kant's text in plural: *Erkenntnisse*), but also a certain perspective on or approach to knowledge, how it can be acquired and applied methodically. The practical dimension is in fact primary. This is evidenced by various passages in *Aufklärung*.

[1] Kant's essay was published in *Berlinische Monatsschrift* 4 (Dez. 1784) under the title "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?" (Kant 1994).
[2] For a fine account of the historical background of Kant's essay, see Deligiorgi (2005).
[3] Mendelssohn's essay, "Über die Frage: was heißt aufklären?" was published in *Berlinische Monatsschrift* 4 (Sept. 1784), 193–200 (see Mendelssohn 1994).

In this essay, I want to address two main aspects of the arguably central topic of Kant's treatise on enlightenment, namely maturity: these concern the notion of the freedom of thought (Section I) and the idea of emancipation that is conveyed by maturity, the fact that it involves a process of growing up to become a citizen (Section II). Freedom of thought denotes the idea of self-agency which all human beings possess in principle whereas emancipation points to the fact that maturity is something that is not a matter of course, neither in individual cases nor for society at large. Maturity is not a natural disposition that one either possesses or not but must be developed. This means that not all human beings are de facto mature always, everywhere and all of the time. That this situation is not something that is *in principle* unalterable can be demonstrated by way of assessing Kant's apparent views on women's presumable minority "according to sex."

I. Maturity and Freedom of Thought

Let us first look at how Kant defines "enlightenment." "Enlightenment is the human being's emergence from his self-incurred minority," Kant writes. "Minority is [the] inability to make use of one's own understanding without direction from another" (*Aufklärung*, AA 8, 35 [Kant 1999, 17]). The term "minority" or "immaturity" is first used by Kant in his early anthropology lectures. In the Friedländer text from the 1775–76 semester, it is said for example: "The understanding can either be used under the guidance of another, or also without the guidance of another. The first is immature, the other is mature" (AA 25, 541 [Kant 2012, 103]). In the same year in which Kant published *Aufklärung*, in 1784, he again lectures in anthropology; in the Mrongovius notes of the anthropology lectures from the 1784–85 semester, one finds this same-sounding passage: "Immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without guidance from another" (AA 25, 1298 [Kant 2012, 412]).

There are a number of core features of Kant's method of analyzing that are, here at the outset of the *Aufklärung* essay, immediately apparent. There is talk of an activity, an exiting (*Ausgang*) from a state for which one is to blame oneself; that is to say, that state is not a state of nature in which one simply and blamelessly finds oneself, without our being able to do anything about it —the English translation of *Ausgang* as "emergence" misses this active aspect, which makes the aspect of culpability more difficult to understand. Kant speaks of an "inability" for which one is responsible oneself, an inability that is "self-incurred" (*selbstverschuldet*). After all, every human being possesses by nature a rational capacity, an intellect, which he is able to make independent use of. One has an epistemic duty to use one's capacity for understanding, a capacity that is innate to every adult human being. To fail using the capacity of our intellect implies an incapacitating of that capacity. It is this failure to conform to an epistemic duty that signifies immaturity.

This epistemic duty is related to an innate *right*, the only innate right that a human being has according to Kant, namely his freedom (AA 6, 237; AA 8, 291–3). Human freedom is directly related to the use a human being makes of his or her rational capacity, the capacity for being

minded. This freedom concerns the will to think for oneself, independently from others. As Kant says, the cause of minority lies not "in lack of understanding, but in lack of resolution (*Entschließung*)" and "courage to use it without direction from another" (*Aufklärung*, AA 8, 35 [Kant 1999, 17]). Enlightenment is thus, put succinctly, having the courage "to use your *own* understanding," which is underlined by the quotation from Horace: "sapere aude," dare to know.[1] Notice also that Kant uses exclamation marks: "Sapere aude! Habe Mut dich deines *eigenen* Verstandes zu bedienen!" This means that, first and foremost, the motto of enlightenment rests on a command, an exhortation or imperative to do something, to act from an epistemic duty, rather than a mere description of a kind or body of knowledge. However, this command is not an external command, imposed on us by others. Rather, it is a command that is intrinsically connected to the innate ability to make use of one's own capacity for understanding.

What is at issue here is authority and autonomy. Every human being possesses the freedom to break free from the authority of another—be that authority a person, institution, or tradition, religion, or culture. Each person can make the decision to think for themselves. Of course, that does not mean that the thinking "I" solely relies or can rely on himself as a *source* of knowledge! What matters here is where the ultimate formal authority on which a particular knowledge claim rests lies. That is to say, it concerns the possibility for some knowing subject of "holding-something-to-be-true," a *fürwahrhalten*—what is not at issue is the fact of *knowing* it to be true or for something to *be* true (see *Critique of Pure Reason*, A820ff./B848ff.; cf. AA 8, 140–1). This subjective authority carries with it a certain epistemic responsibility: one is enjoined to provide reasons for one's holding something to be true. For Kant, that epistemic responsibility resides entirely and solely with each individual human being who makes use of his or her own mind. This constitutes the freedom of a thinking subject.

The connection between freedom and thought is not only mentioned in *Aufklärung* but also in an essay that Kant published some two years later, also in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, and which played a role in the so-called *Spinozastreit*, namely, the essay *What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?* (hereafter *Orientieren*). There, Kant makes it quite clear that "the freedom to think is opposed first of all to *civil compulsion*. [...] Second, freedom to think is also [...] opposed to *compulsion over conscience* [...] [and] third, freedom in thinking signifies the subjection of reason to no laws except *those which it gives itself*" (*Orientieren*, AA 8, 144 [Kant 2001b, 16]). The last point is about the self-legislative aspect of thought, the fact that a thinking subject is bound only by the laws of thought itself, not just logical laws but also general rules for universalizability. We shall return to this latter aspect later. The second point concerns moral duty and conscience, which we cannot discuss here. This is also particularly relevant in the context of religious issues, which are discussed in *Aufklärung* but we will have to set aside here. The first element mentioned here,

[1] Horace writes in his letter to Lollius: "Dimidium facti, qui coepit, habet: sapere aude, /incipe" (*Epistolae* I,2,40).

freedom of thought as opposed to "civil compulsion" or civil coercion, is an important facet that Kant also emphasizes in *Aufklärung*: it signifies the fundamental and incontrovertible public character of thought, "namely [the] freedom to make *public use* of one's reason in all matters," as he writes in *Aufklärung* (AA 8, 36 [Kant 1999, 18]). But before we get to that, I want to go back for a moment to the aspect of "resolution" and "courage" that Kant associates with emerging from immaturity, and the question of authority. He writes further:

> It is because of laziness and cowardice that so great a part of humankind, after nature has long since emancipated them from other people's direction [...], nevertheless gladly remains minors for life, and that it becomes so easy for others to set themselves up as their guardians. *It is so comfortable to be a minor*! If I have a book that understands for me, a spiritual advisor who has a conscience for me, a doctor who decides upon a regimen for me, and so forth, I need not trouble myself at all. I need not think, if only I can pay; others will readily undertake the irksome business for me. That by far the greatest part of humankind [...] should hold the step toward majority to be not only troublesome but also highly dangerous will soon be seen to by those guardians who have kindly taken it upon themselves to supervise them; [...] pre-cepts and formulas, those mechanical instruments of a rational use, or rather misuse, of his natural endowments, are the ball and chain of an everlasting minority. (*Aufklärung*, AA 8, 35–6, emphasis added [Kant 1999, 17])

What Kant says here can be transferred without much fantasy to the context of our own time, in which an expertocracy is more and more seen as the indisputable measure of truth while anyone who makes independent use of his reason is quickly disparaged as an armchair scientist or—very topical during the recent Covid pandemic—a hobby virologist, or put down as an anti-vaxxer, conspiracy theorist or worse. This situation is, on the one hand, partly determined by the relative decline in trust in the institutions and the worrisome increase in what is sometimes referred to as "fake news" and "alternative facts" (a.k.a. "post-truth"), a trend that became increasingly apparent in the Covid pandemic during 2020–22. On the other hand, science is seen by its latter-day "fideist" proponents as neutrally "objective" or completely ideology free as if there was such a thing as *the* science or as if scientific consensus were not something that is reached only after long processes of internal evaluation and as if science is sometimes not also beset by controversy and malfeasance (e.g., especially when the pharmaceutical industry is involved). In an extremely complex society such as ours, hyper-specialization in the various fields of science accounts for why only a multidisciplinary approach can lay any claim to objectivity when dealing with a multifaceted, far-reaching *social and political* as well as medical and epidemiological problem such as a pandemic. Presumptuous, self-righteous insistence on "the facts speak for themselves," on the so-called clear

language of "science"—in this case, epidemiology and virology—betrays a blinkered view rather than a sincere wish to solve or mitigate the real problem, in all its social and political ramifications.

The sharp polarization between science "fideists" and its critics is fuelled by a distrust on the part of the science "fideists" of any kind of self-thinking, which is denounced as by definition anti-scientific, hence irrational and irresponsible, if not conspiratorial— whether it concerns the self-thinking from fellow scientists whose specialization is not in virology or epidemiology, critical journalists or indeed laymen. This polarization increases social pressure and the risk of groupthink, which can quickly degenerate into mass psychosis. Signs of this were visible during the pandemic. It is precisely the political authorities, and increasingly large parts of the mainstream media (with fortunate exceptions), that display a culpable inability to pause for reflection, think critically and facilitate a truly critical debate—all with the prima facie attractive-sounding excuse of "we do not have time for reflection, we must act now!"

After almost two years of pandemic without any real exit strategy, the media were mainly to be blamed for forsaking its fundamentally critical role towards failing governments and instead lambasting, as a true guardian (*Vormund*) in state service, those who criticized the government and its epidemiologist and virologist experts. The media's active role, as a quasi-propaganda tool of an increasingly authoritarian government, in denigrating or outright slandering—in Germany critics were often disdainfully called, by government officials as well as journalists, *Querdenker* or *Schwurbler*—those who remain critical, however ostensibly unfounded, and do not comply with the dictates of power, is quite recent. This poses a potential danger to the fundamental freedom to be permitted, within the limits of the law, to have a different point of view and express this publicly, which is precisely what Kant strives to illuminate in *Aufklärung*. A pandemic, and certainly not one of the magnitude as the one that plagued us recently, is not a sufficient reason to suspend that freedom, both the freedom to think and be able to make choices for oneself when it comes to questions of life and death.[1] When we give up that freedom in favor of public health or a supposed fundamental right to physical health (*körperliche Gesundheit*), say, as it was frequently argued by experts and intellectuals alike,[2] the foundations of a liberal democratic society, in which we have to hold out and tolerate differences of opinion even in crisis situations, are undermined.

Kant demonstrates a psychosocial insight when he articulates one reason for immaturity, which could be called an argument from comfort: namely, it is all too convenient to be placed under the "guardianship" of an expert or a group of experts, lest one be compelled to think and investigate for oneself. It is easiest to defer to others, to experts or political leaders, for making decisions and in this way to delegate one's epistemic duty to think to others. Why should I want to think about certain matters when we have politicians or scientists or church leaders to do this on our behalf?

[1] See Schulting (ms.) for more detail.
[2] See e.g., the discussions in Günther & Volkmann (2022).

One thus relies solely on the transfer of knowledge by the expert. But by unquestioningly accepting the expert's absolute authority, as one's guardian, one in fact also ascribes all responsibility to him. In this way one incapacitates (*entmündigt*) oneself. This implies that *per impossibile* one wishes to divest oneself of one's autonomy, the innate capacity of man to follow only that rule or law that one has prescribed or legislated oneself through reason, in accordance with point 3 from the quotation from *Orientieren*: "freedom in thinking signifies the subjection of reason to no laws except *those which it gives itself*" (*Orientieren*, AA 8, 144 [Kant 2001b, 16]).

Another social phenomenon that Kant touches on here is the lurking groupthink mentioned earlier: people consider maturity not only to be a burden because they find it uncomfortable for themselves, but also "very dangerous." One might be tempted to make up one's own mind! There is huge peer pressure not to engage in thinking for oneself. The risk of group coercion and conformity is a real one. This is of course especially true when the state takes on an excessively patronizing role or encourages conformism: paternalism is a form of a state-ordained *Entmündigung* of the freethinking and autonomously acting citizen—paternalism is a symptom of despotism, as Kant says (AA 8, 290–1). But it is not only the state—the monarch, in Kant's argument—that can act outside of its lawful remit here: it is precisely those who set themselves up as guardians, the experts, and the media foremost, who may play an important censoring role, which is often denied because it is widely but erroneously thought that by definition censorship can be imposed only by the state. There is a special, pernicious kind of censorship that threatens to become internalized. When Kant speaks of "precepts and formulas" (*Aufklärung*, AA 8, 36 [Kant 1999, 17]), he points to the temptation to conform, to fall back on standards which others—not necessarily state officials—set out for you, steadily gnawing away at your natural ability to think for yourself. It is not just that it is a dereliction of my duty to think for myself when I defer to others by compliantly submitting to their heteronomous authority, similar to how I would be summoned to simply obey a tyrannical monarch's censorious edicts. Rather, what happens is that I have *internalized* particular norms about what is deemed to be true and good, propagated and enforced by institutions, pressure groups and the media as well as thought leaders and *Querdenker*, so that what is in actual fact imposed on me by an external authority is presented to one *as* inner, as one's own authentic voice, thereby basically eliminating self-legislated thinking for the self has become a replica of external authority. The spontaneous agent of thought has been replaced by an automaton that is merely parroting what others think. Mechanical, automated thinking has as it were become second nature.[1] The most harmful censorship is not blunt censorship by the state but the hidden censorship of *self*-censorship, an internalized conformity as a collectively sanctioned way of thinking that becomes the standard.

[1] Pointedly, Kant refers to the fact that a human being is more than a "machine" at the end of *Aufklärung* (AA 8, 42 [Kant 1999, 22]).

Of course, Kant is not saying that we should not rely at all on the expertise or guidance of a scientist, church pastor or physician, or that the state should not have a regulating or steering function at all. It certainly does not mean that anyone can think and express what they like in any arbitrary fashion, without being bound by any rule or law; "libertinism" (*Freigeisterei*) is certainly not the motto of the Enlightenment (*Orientieren*, AA 8, 146 [Kant 2001b, 17]). Even the greatest nonsense is still subject to laws, Kant says, and certainly proper thinking, despite its internally anchored freedom, is bound by laws, namely its *own* laws. Neither thought nor freedom is unbridled (*Orientieren*, AA 8, 144–5).[1]

However, the issue here revolves around the question to what extent and in what sense the individual assigns authority to the expert or body of experts and takes into account the relationship between the transfer of knowledge by the expert and himself as a subject thinking for himself; and, very importantly, the extent to which he is given the space to do so, by the state and by society at large (including the media).

This brings us back to the first crucial element of maturity that I referred to earlier: namely, the necessarily public and argumentative or communicative nature of thought. This is an element that resurfaces several times in Kant's thinking. For example, in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, published six years after *Aufklärung*, where Kant, in the context of a discussion of the *sensus communis*, elaborates on the following three "maxims of the common human understanding," the second of which concerns a "broad-minded" way of thinking:

> 1. To think for oneself; 2. To think in the position of everyone else; 3. Always to think in accord with oneself. The first is the maxim of the unprejudiced way of thinking, the second of the broad-minded way, the third that of the consistent way. The first is the maxim of a reason that is never passive. The tendency toward the latter, hence toward heteronomy of reason, is called prejudice; and the greatest prejudice of all is that of representing reason as if it were not subject to the rules of nature on which the understanding grounds it by means of its own essential law: i.e., superstition. Liberation from superstition is called enlightenment, since, although this designation is also applied to liberation from prejudices in general, it is superstition above all (*in sensu eminenti*) that deserves to be called a prejudice, since the blindness to which superstition leads, which indeed it even demands as an obligation, is what makes most evident the need to be led by others, hence the condition of a passive reason. As far as

[1] Consider also Kant's metaphor of "the light dove [that], in free flight cutting through the air the resistance of which it feels, could get the idea that it could do even better in airless space" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A5/B8–9 [Kant 1997, 129]), suggesting that free and critical thought is not the kind of free-floating thinking that is completely unbound by limits and constraints.

> the second maxim of the way of thinking is concerned, *we are accustomed to calling someone limited (narrow-minded, in contrast to broad-minded) whose talents do not suffice for any great employment (especially if it is intensive). But the issue here is not the faculty of cognition, but the way of thinking needed to make a purposive use of it, which, however small the scope and degree of a person's natural endowment may be, nevertheless reveals a man of a broad-minded way of thinking if he sets himself apart from the subjective private conditions of the judgment, within which so many others are as if bracketed, and reflects on his own judgment from a universal standpoint* (which he can only determine by putting himself into the standpoint of others). (*Critique of the Power of Judgment*, AA 5, 294–5, emphasis added [Kant 2001a, 174–5])

The concept of *sensus communis* is actually more applicable to aesthetic judgments, Kant writes, yet before the enumeration of the three maxims of common human understanding quoted above, he says that we can understand it as

> the idea of a communal sense, i.e., a faculty for judging that in its reflection takes account (a priori) of everyone else's way of representing in thought, in order as it were to hold its judgment up to human reason as a whole and thereby avoid the illusion which, from subjective private conditions that could easily be held to be objective, would have a detrimental influence on the judgment. Now this happens by one *holding his judgment up not so much to the actual as to the merely possible judgments of others, and putting himself into the position of everyone else, merely by abstracting from the limitations that contingently attach to our own judging*; which is in turn accomplished by leaving out as far as is possible everything in one's representational state that is matter, i.e., sensation, and attending solely to the formal peculiarities of his representation or his representational state. [...] In itself, nothing is more natural than to abstract from charm and emotion if one is *seeking a judgment that is to serve as a universal rule*. (*Critique of the Power of Judgment*, AA 5, 293–3, emphasis added [Kant 2001a, 173–4])

Kant makes it very clear here that self-thinking is not pure subjectivist, unrestrained "libertinism" (*Freigeisterei*) (cf. *Orientieren,* AA 8, 146). Thinking for oneself comes with a certain responsibility that is inherent in the reflexive character of thinking itself. The purposive and justified use of one's reason, the "broad-minded" way of thinking of which Kant speaks, aims to rise above one's own subjective prejudices and put oneself in the position of "human reason as a

whole (*die gesammte Menschenvernunft*)," i.e., of "*everyone* else." We must seek "a judgment that is to serve as a universal rule." This could be called the universalizability requirement that is inherent in maturity, in enlightened thinking. The consideration must be whether I can imagine that my own thoughts yield a universal rule, which affords a criterion for determining a shared objectivity to one's thoughts. But of course, that also applies reciprocally to the thoughts of the other, in whose at first sight "narrow-minded" world of thought I must be able to put myself.

Mature thinking is not based on a standpoint epistemology, which persists in one's own bias—Kant's term is "prejudice"—or indeed ignorance, nor on shifting responsibility to "science." Thinking is based on a reflective consideration of a wide range of differing views. Self-thinking is therefore always also thinking *with* the other. It requires a certain "formal" distancing from one's own ingrained contingent prejudices or one's sense of moral-epistemic superiority. We cannot exclude the other simply because we—and by "we" is meant each individual thinking "I" for himself—believe that we have truth on our side, that we consider our view to be "the only true one." Freedom of thought also implies the freedom to be wrong. And the possibility that we ourselves are wrong in fact cannot be ruled out either. Maturity therefore not only means freedom of thought and freedom from the authority of the other but also implies a certain epistemic humility on our own part.

In contemporary debates about freedom of speech and academic freedom—the latter a subject that is more complex than can be addressed here, since there are more factors at play and certain limitations apply in the case of academic freedom that do not apply to freedom of speech in general—it is often said that no-platforming a particular speaker does not imply that his or her specific *beliefs* are thereby censored. By making the distinction between having beliefs and having a platform to express them, one believes the charge of cancel culture or censorship can be evaded. As said, it is also believed, erroneously, that censorship can only be exercised by the state, something that would have been the case in Kant's time—take for example the edict that affected Kant's ability to write on religious topics in the early 1790s—but which is no longer so in contemporary Western society where the spheres of influence shared between state and social actors are much more evenly distributed. In any case, distinguishing between having certain beliefs and having a platform for expressing them comes down to sophistry, based on a misguided distinction between freedom of thought and freedom of publishing. Of course, no one has a *right* to be published on a particular platform or medium. However, in principle denying someone the opportunity to publicly express their beliefs —by means of social no-platforming or withdrawing invitations under social pressure, for example—comes down to de facto censorship.

Kant is very explicit about this in the text from *Orientieren* quoted in part earlier:

> Of course, it is said that the freedom to *speak* or to *write* could be taken from us by a superior power, but the freedom to *think* cannot be. Yet how

> much and how correctly would we *think* if we did not think as it were in community with others to whom we *communicate* our thoughts, and who communicate theirs with us! Thus, one can very well say that this external power which wrenches away people's freedom publicly to *communicate* their thoughts also takes from them the freedom to *think*—that single gem remaining to us in the midst of all the burdens of civil life, through which alone we can devise means of overcoming all the evils of our condition. (*Orientieren*, AA 8, 144 [Kant 2001b, 16])

Freedom of thought implies the ability to communicate one's thoughts "publicly." If one deprives someone of the opportunity to express himself in public, one deprives that person of the freedom of thought *tout court*. As we have seen before, and what Kant again confirms in the quotation above: Freedom of thought only exists "in community with others," to whom we must be able to communicate our thoughts and vice versa. If we exclude someone from that community, then freedom of thought itself is at stake.

Let us return to *Aufklärung*. Halfway through the essay, Kant introduces the familiar, and at first blush confusing, distinction between the "private" and "public" uses of one's reason or speech. We have not come across the notion of a "private" use of one's reason or speech until now. The private use of one's speech does not exactly concern an individual person's right to have his own opinion (freedom of speech). In fact, the private use of one's reason can be quite limited.[1]

By the latter, Kant means the use a person makes of his reason "in a certain *civil* post or office with which he is entrusted" (*Aufklärung*, AA 8, 37 [Kant 1999, 18]). This is, of course, primarily aimed at officials of the state and civil servants, whose "positive" function is to achieve certain public goals. As officials, they must be "passive" with respect to their own freedom as citizens of the "commonwealth," to which they belong just like any other citizen. The state must be able to perform its function without interference or opposition from its own officers. As Kant puts it, "it would be ruinous if an officer, receiving an order from his superiors, wanted while on duty to engage openly in subtle reasoning about its appropriateness or utility; he must just obey" (*Aufklärung*, AA 8, 37 [Kant 1999, 18–19]). As functionaries they are "passive," in a sense "prejudiced" as Kant says in the above-quoted passage from the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, for they are subject to the heteronomy that comes with their passive role as civil servants. Only as citizens of the commonwealth can those same civil servants also make "public" use of their reason, by actively criticizing the same policy that they officially, passively must support. This passive/active distinction also applies to ordinary citizens themselves: as residents of a state

[1] Though Kant does not specifically address here academic freedom, academic freedom is captured by both the private and public uses of one's reason. Insofar as an academic is an officer in service of a state organization, e.g., at a public university, his freedom to "privately" use his reason can be quite limited, whereas at the same time he has at least the same broad freedom as scholar as everyone else.

citizens *passively* have to pay taxes on pain of a fine or even imprisonment, and yet as mature citizens of the commonwealth they can at the same time *actively* criticize tax policy—as long as they pay.

By making public use of one's reason, Kant means "that use which someone makes of it *as a scholar* before the entire public of the *world of readers*" (*Aufklärung*, AA 8, 37 [Kant 1999, 18]). It is this public use that is essential to freedom of thought, as we have discussed at length above. And here too in *Aufklärung*, Kant makes it clear that thinking takes place before a readership (*Publikum der Leserwelt*), a forum where one can make one's thoughts known. Everyone, whether public servant, priest or citizen, is a member of a "commonwealth," and therefore "a scholar who by his writings addresses a public in the proper sense of the word" (*Aufklärung*, AA 8, 37 [Kant 1999, 18]). It is striking that for Kant *everyone* can be considered a "scholar." This label is thus not limited to academics! To be a scholar in this sense does not mean to possess a vast wealth of knowledge; one can have so much objective knowledge (*Kenntnisse*) and yet be "least enlightened in the use" one makes of one's faculty of cognition. Self- thinking, maturity, means "seeking the supreme touchstone of truth in oneself (i.e., in one's own reason)." "The maxim of always thinking for oneself," which is a "negative principle in the use of one's faculty of cognition," *that* is enlightenment (*Orientieren*, AA 8, 146, footnote [Kant 2001b, 18]). And every layman is capable of thinking for himself.

Let me close this section by quoting the passage in *Orientieren* which best encapsulates Kant's view on enlightenment in full:

> Thinking for oneself means seeking the supreme touchstone of truth in oneself (i.e., in one's own reason); and the maxim of always thinking for oneself is enlightenment. Now there is less to this than people imagine when they place enlightenment in the acquisition of information; for it is rather a negative principle in the use of one's faculty of cognition, and *often he who is richest in information is the least enlightened in the use he makes of it*. To make use of one's own reason means no more than to ask oneself, whenever one is supposed to assume something, whether one could find it feasible to make the ground or the rule on which one assumes it into a universal principle for the use of reason. This test is one that everyone can apply to himself; and with this examination he will see superstition and enthusiasm disappear, *even if he falls far short of having the information* [*Kenntnisse*] *to refute them on objective grounds*. For he is using merely the maxim of reason's self-preservation. (*Orientieren*, AA 8, 146, footnote, emphasis added [Kant 2001b, 18])

II. Maturity, Universalism, and Emancipation

Exhortations to aspire to a humanistic universalism and appeals to think beyond a tribalistic "we," beyond any particular identity or group interest, remain gratuitous without an appeal to individual responsibility and judgment and when no room is made for the possibility of actually realizing such lofty ideals. Universal ideals are after all pursued by subjects that are aware of themselves as self-thinking agents pursuing such ideals. However, not everyone ipso facto meets the epistemic duty to think "for oneself" and judge in accordance with reason at all times, and thus help realize the universal ideal of the self-preservation of reason (*die Selbsterhaltung der Vernunft*) (*Orientieren*, AA 8, 146, footnote [Kant 2001b, 18]).[1]

To think for oneself means to submit to no heteronomous authority, recognizing solely the jurisdiction of reason. "Self-thinking" people recognize nothing as reasonable but what they themselves grasp as reasonable. "Self-thinking" means that with every action or view one must ask oneself if the maxim or rule on the basis of which one carries out any action or adopts a particular view could be adopted as a universal law, applicable to everyone (see e.g., *Orientieren*, AA 8, 146, quoted at the end of the previous section). Put simply, are the reasons why I say or do something also universalizable? That is to say, is what I say or do in principle also something everyone else should say or do? To ask oneself such questions constitutes, for Kant, the essence of "enlightenment."

But self-thinking is a mentality or stance, not an innate factual quality or a dispositional trait that automatically manifests itself, nor a trait that could be causally explained by one's genetic makeup or cultural background, or indeed group identity. Every adult human being, regardless of background or identity, possesses this quality inherently *just because* he or she is a human rational being, but it must be cultivated. Every adult person has the *capacity* for enlightenment, regardless of circumstances, "however small the scope and degree of a person's natural endowment may be" (*Critique of the Power of Judgment*, AA 5, 295 [Kant 2001a, 175]).

For Kant, having the capacity of understanding and being able to use that capacity independently of others is a universal maxim that is valid for every human being without exception, that is to say for every adult human being whose cognitive abilities are properly functioning. But note: "is valid." We must talk here about validity, not about facts or factuality per se, or at least these two realms, facticity and validity, must not be conflated. After all, it is not the case that everyone also thinks in accordance with reason or makes proper use of his or her capacity for thought in actual fact, always, and in all respects. Some people or groups of people do not seem to be making much use of their capacity for thought at all.

Having the capacity of the mind, the ability to think according to rules that one imposes on oneself strictly in accordance with reason, does not by itself imply *strict* universal validity, as is

[1] Cf. Refl. 1509, AA 15, 823: "Grundsatz der Vernunft: ihre Selbsterhaltung."

the case with the categorical imperative which can be deduced a priori from reason, or indeed with the constitutive rules of logic to which using that capacity is bound. Having the capacity to think is itself not like a logical law that always applies univocally, such that everything that I think is always true or even logically valid. The capacity of self-thinking is in a sense an assumption rooted in rational faith (*Vernunftglaube*) (*Orientieren*, AA 8, 140–1), which, although inextricably bound up with the possibility of philosophy, cannot be derived from it as if it concerned a principle of logic. Rational faith, a central Kantian concept that appears in various of his works and which we cannot examine further here, and the assumption of an innate predisposition to think for oneself are related and presuppose each other. In principle we thus have a capacity for reasonable thinking based on rational faith. However, that does not automatically mean that everything that is in actual fact being thought is thereby also reasonable, in accordance with reason (even if *what* we think may still be valid purely *logically*). As Heiner Klemme recently put it succinctly: "The maxims of the self-preservation of reason do not protect the individual against foolish acts" (Klemme 2023, 66).

It is thus important that we exercise judgment (*Urteilskraft*) in making use of our thinking capacity (*Denkvermögen*). It also means that we must be open to the special circumstances under which we apply our maxims for judgment and action. Simply put, everything we do and think must always be put in context, and is defeasible. We must always ask ourselves whether certain rules we employ for our actions, and certain views we hold, are actually applicable in, or effectively relate to, reality. There is a fundamental discrepancy between a rule or maxim taken *in abstracto* and its actual application or realization. We cannot simply ignore the particular context of that about which one makes a judgment or in respect of which one formulates a maxim for action. Therefore, universalist platitudes such as "All people are equal" or "The intrinsic dignity of all people is inviolable," while true, are meaningless pronouncements when expressed merely in the abstract without taking into account contingent external factors. Such in principle true statements cannot be utilized as a panacea for social or political problems if their concrete context is not further addressed and politically feasible solutions are not carefully deliberated. There are often conflicting interests, and liberal sounding statements that merely make a point of stressing equality and unity tend to be clichéd and moralistic and as such do not contribute to a practical resolution of such conflicts. Sometimes an idealist stance is ill-advised and one must be realistic and simply acknowledge that a conflict cannot be resolved or cannot be resolved immediately, without thereby detracting from the in principle equal status of the parties in the conflict. Not everyone makes proper use in actual fact of his or her capacity for thought, or bears responsibility in actual fact for his or her actions. Such observations are not value judgments about people's innate *capacities*. They are judgments about the *proper use* of one's capacity for thought and judgment *in particular circumstances*.

Abstract universalism and the rejection of universalism are two sides of the same coin. Just like abstract universalism, which foregrounds the universal truths of equality and intrinsic dignity for all while ignoring particular circumstances, the generalizing, formalistic criticism of, or rejection of, universalism as such expresses the same abstract interpretation of it. On account of such critical views, Kant's universalism is considered not truly universal because supposedly certain groups of people would be excluded from that same universalism in actual cases where the tenets of universalism such as "Equality for all" or "The intrinsic dignity of all people is inviolable" do not seem to apply, or at least not completely. Ergo, Kant's universalism would in reality be particularistic and exclusive, intended exclusively for the privileged Western white man, who alone enjoys universal rights to the full. People of non-Western backgrounds or women in general would supposedly not be the subjects of Kant's universalism, or in fact explicitly be excluded from it. This criticism can be heard more and more in contemporary debates about Kant, especially in the context of discussions of his alleged racism and position on colonialism.

But here too validity (*Gültigkeit*) and application (*Geltung*), or validity and realization, are easily conflated. Such a reading that appeals to specific irreducible cultural differences rests—just like an overly abstract universalism that holds forth with hollow declarations such as "All are equal"—on an abstract distinction between form and content, which holds that either the general form is stressed at the expense of the particular content, or the particular content is seen as stressed too much at the expense of universal form.

We can illustrate such an overly formalistic, cursory reading of Kant's texts with the standard account of his views on women. There are texts in Kant's oeuvre that, at first glance, appear to show unsettling examples of misogyny or are, at the very least, not particularly favorable to women (see e.g., AA 6, 279; AA 7, 209, 307; AA 27, 36, 48). Kant is not particularly known for his feminism! It thus seems that Kant excludes women, as apparently, he does other groups of people, from his universalist perspective, regardless whether this has to do with moral action or more generally with the capacity for judgment associated with the use of one's reason. But are women, by definition, as adult human beings, on Kant's account then not mature citizens who must be able to use their capacity for thinking without the guidance of others?

Klemme quotes a telling passage from one of the *Vorlesungen zur Anthropologie* (*Anthropologische Menschenkunde*):

> It is assumed that certain people are not authorized to use their understanding on their own but are capable of [*können*] judging only with the help of a foreign understanding. Such people are called minors [*Unmündige*]. Some are minors according to age; they are incapable of [*können...nicht*] complying with their own understanding and reason but must be guided by another. Others are minors according to sex; certain

> insights and businesses are wholly outside the sphere of the female room. They are not allowed [*dürfen...nicht*] to make use of their own reason but must submit to the observations of a foreign reason; but as regards public matters, they must rely on foreign reason. With children immaturity is natural; the guardian of a woman's room is called a custodian. (*Anthr. Menschenkunde*, AA 25, 1046–7, translation mine)

On a superficial reading, this passage from one of his many *Vorlesungen* on anthropology seems to indicate that Kant regards women as immature. In the published *Anthropology* from 1798, he indeed appears to deny (married) women maturity, as wives are to be submissive to their husbands as their guardians. He curiously contends that a woman who "by the nature of her sex has enough of a mouth [*Mundwerk genug hat*] to represent both herself and her husband, even in court [...], could literally be declared to be *over-mature* [*übermündig*]" (AA 7, 209 [Kant 2007, 315]). But Kant makes no validity judgments in the passage in the anthropology lecture quoted above. Rather, he points to the concrete, actual condition of immaturity in which women largely find themselves—this was certainly the case in Kant's days. At least two things bear this out.

First, Kant uses the modal verb "*dürfen*" here (and not, for example, the imperative "*sollen*"). There is a restriction imposed from outside: either something is allowed or prohibited, or one is obliged to do something. This is significant in view of the fact that Kant believes that immaturity is something that is rather "self-incurred" (*selbstverschuldet*) and deserving of blame. Of course, the imposed restriction also applies to children: both children and women "have to" (*müssen*) be guided by others. But the important distinction between minors and women is that, according to Kant, immaturity in children is "natural," since children by definition have not yet reached a certain age and therefore maturity, hence they are called minors, while women need a chaperone or custodian, suggesting that immaturity in women is not natural. Note also that Kant contrasts "*können*" in the first sentence with "*dürfen*" in the second: whereas women are presumably not *permitted* to make use of their own understanding, children *cannot* make use of their understanding without the guidance of others. Likewise, to speak of "self-incurred immaturity" in the case of children would be inapposite because children cannot be blamed for their being underage. The culpability condition does not apply in their case. Therefore, a categorical distinction should be heeded between immaturity "according to age" (*den Jahren nach*) and that "according to sex" (*dem Geschlecht nach*). The latter is not natural but socially constructed.

This latter way of conceiving of maturity is what Kant elsewhere associates with "legal" or "civil" immaturity, which can be so called "if it rests on legal arrangements with regard to civil affairs" (*Anthropology*, AA 7, 208–9 [Kant 2007, 315]). It may seem at first sight that Kant endorses such "legal" immaturity for women, who "cannot personally defend their rights and pursue civil affairs for themselves." It is not clear, from the declarative manner of reasoning in the

published *Anthropology* text—which we recall is not part of Kant's corpus of transcendental or critical philosophy, and was compiled on the basis of his many lectures over the years, even if Kant authorized it as being the latest version of his views on anthropology—whether a) Kant thinks women *ought* not be able to personally exercise their rights and thus enjoy civil independence, or b) just that, in given social and economic circumstances, women's actual civil status can be guaranteed only by the husband in a marriage, thus more reflecting women's current status in society than prescribing a normative rule. Kant argues that, in principle, there is a "natural" equality in a couple but that the husband's dominance over his wife is not contradictory to it to the extent that it functions "to promote the common interest of the household" (AA 6, 279 [Kant 1999, 428]). But the former (a) could hardly be justified a priori just on the basis of the precept of maturity, and it also conflicts with the idea that immaturity is self-incurred, for if their "legal" immaturity is warranted or even a priori justified and they *ought* to be immature, women could hardly be blamed for it (see further below on the culpability condition). So it seems that there is room on a Kantian view, if not strictly speaking in Kant's own view, for the idea that women can and even must achieve some sort of civil independence, inside marriage and indeed outside it.

Kant should at any rate have drawn that conclusion also based on the fact that he encountered many women in prominent positions, either in person or through correspondence, women who were quite obviously articulate and made use of their own capacity for thinking and judging without the guidance of others. Between 1758 and 1762 two Russian Tsarinas ruled in Königsberg. He even writes a letter to Tsarina Elisabeth in which he addresses her with all manner of honorifics such as "allerdurchlauchtigste Großmächtigste Kaiserin." There was undoubtedly something opportunistic about the way Kant formulated his address to the Tsarina, because he wanted to obtain the position of professor at the University of Königsberg (which he only succeeded in doing years later). But a "Selbstherrscherin" is not exactly someone who needs a custodian (quotations from Klemme 2023, 67–8).

Secondly, someone who is immature "according to age," such as an underage child, cannot be held responsible for being underage. After all, it is its natural state. However, the aspect of culpability is precisely what Kant emphasizes in *Aufklärung*. Immaturity, including that of women, is "self-incurred" or culpable if it is not due to lack of understanding but because one fails to try and get oneself out of it, something for which one is to be blamed and for which one is responsible oneself. This sounds paradoxical at first: if it is true that women are not *permitted* to be "legally" mature in virtue of society's limitations of the exercise of their freedom, also and particularly in business and legal affairs—their immaturity is imposed on them by society's structures and social mechanisms— how can it be that they themselves are to be blamed for this? Are they really responsible for their own imposed immaturity?

Klemme writes regarding this:

> Kant does not mean that women could not, and do not want to, be partially mature. After all, they run the household and are legal subjects who can enter into a marriage contract. However, they do not take an active interest in their civic independence. (2023, 68, translation mine)

What Klemme points out here is the importance of a citizen's independence, which is to be claimed by the subject herself alone (but cf. AA 6, 314 and the earlier cited *Anthropology* at AA 7, 208–9). This is about autonomy and self-agency. Although immaturity may be the effect of external hindering circumstances, the responsibility for remaining in that immature state ultimately lies with the subject herself. Outside hindrances, social or otherwise, cannot be exculpatory reasons to remain in a state of immaturity. Thus, she herself must take an "active interest" in acquiring "civic independence" in social life. That is why Kant speaks of immaturity as something "self-incurred." The contingent circumstances in which one finds oneself at the hands of others do not provide a license to shift the blame for one's situation to others. One owes it to oneself to break free from the reins of tutelage, if at all possible. And this I contend is the general dialectic of Kant's reasoning in *Aufklärung*, also in regard to women, as I shall argue below.

Here, Kant could in fact be taken to be advocating for the liberation of women, which however women must foster of their own accord. This is only logical because liberation cannot be a heteronomous cause, something done by others on your behalf. For if it were, this would imply a degree of tutelage or paternalism that one wants precisely to get away from. To no longer bow under the yoke of tutelage, to emerge from immaturity, is an action that the subject must undertake herself, an act for which she herself must take responsibility. It is always a matter of resolutely "to make use of one's *own* reason" (*Orientieren*, AA 8, 146, footnote, emphasis added [Kant 2001b, 18]).

This is of course far easier said than done, and Kant is well aware of this, even though one may find that Kant is perhaps somewhat too optimistic (or too negative for that matter, on a certain reading of his views of a woman's place in marriage). He speaks of a "progress of enlightenment" (*Aufklärung*, AA 8, 37 [Kant, 1999, 18]), but the "great unthinking masses" develop in that direction only very slowly, for to "enlighten an age" is "arduous" (*Orientieren*, AA 8, 146 [Kant, 2001b, 18]). "Precepts and formulas, those mechanical instruments of a [...] misuse of [one's] natural endowments," keep the general public in a permanent state of immaturity. Only few manage to escape from it. Immaturity seems to have "almost become nature" (all quotations *Aufklärung*, AA 8, 36 [Kant 1999, 17–18]).

Nevertheless, "we do have distinct intimations that the field is now being opened for them to work freely in this direction and that the hindrances to *universal* enlightenment or to *humankind*'s emergence from its self-incurred minority are gradually become fewer" (*Aufklärung*, 8, 40, emphasis added [Kant 1999, 21]). Notice that Kant talks about "*universal* enlightenment" and

"*humankind*'s emergence" as a goal toward which we gradually progress. This suggests again that the *universal* validity of the precept of maturity must be read in terms of a regulative ideal for everyone, women included, which in practice is not yet actualized to its full potential, and in all likelihood remains something realized in full only in potentiality. Not everyone everywhere may already enjoy the freedom to make use of one's own reason without sanction. In reality, while the emergence from immaturity is the aim which is realizable just because the maxim or principle of maturity, of thinking for oneself, is universally valid, the state of minority is still the factual situation for the greater part of humanity, and sadly in particular for most women in the non-Western regions of the world. The universal validity of the maxim of maturity does not take away from the fact that it is really possible and indeed actual that large groups of people remain constrained by the shackles of immaturity at least for some time, and that contingent sociopolitical forces are largely the cause of this. The universality of the principle or maxim cannot undo the fact of the matter of external restriction and oppression, just as much as contingent facts cannot undermine the universal validity of the maxim. "People gradually work their way out of barbarism of their own accord *if only one does not intentionally contrive to keep them in it*" (*Aufklärung*, AA 8, 41, emphasis added [Kant 1999, 21]).

Enlightenment is a continuous development, not a closed, finite collection of achievements: "As matters now stand, a good deal more is required for people on the whole to be in the position, or even able to be put into the position, of using their own understanding confidently and well in religious matters, without another's guidance" (*Aufklärung*, AA 8, 40 [Kant 1999, 21]).[1]

When Kant therefore writes that "by far the greatest part of humankind (*including the entire fair sex*) should hold the step toward majority to be not only troublesome but also highly dangerous" (*Aufklärung*, AA 8, 35, emphasis added [Kant 1999, 17]), Kant is not, despite appearances and despite apparent contradictory views stated elsewhere, making a misogynistic statement about women (as well as other groups) and their perceived *natural* inability to be mature. On the contrary, in the remainder of the sentence he makes it perfectly clear that "guardians" see to it that women are kept under control, and

> have kindly taken it upon themselves to supervise them; after they have made their domesticated animals dumb and carefully prevented these placid creatures from daring to take a single step without the walking cart [*Gängelwagen*][2] in which they have confined them, they then show them

[1] Kant focuses on religion because religious immaturity is "the most harmful [as well as] the most degrading [*entehrendste*] of all" (*Aufklärung*, AA 8, 41, trans. emended [Kant 1999, 21]).

[2] Kant uses the same word for "walking cart," *Gängelwagen*, in *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* (1786), where, translated as "go-cart," it is associated with the "guardianship of nature" and "instinct" in contrast to "reason" and "the condition of freedom" (AA 8, 115 [Kant 2007, 168]). Earlier in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant uses the term *Gängelwagen*, translated as "leading-strings," in a theoretical context, that is, the introductory section of the

> the danger that threatens them if they try to walk alone. (*Aufklärung*, AA 8, 35 [Kant 1999, 17])

This domineering guardianship ensures that large groups of people do not dare to think for themselves, "to walk alone." The real danger associated with assertiveness may not be all that great. However, for many people the real-life consequences of self-thinking by way of criticism of the accepted norm—the risk of social isolation, disapproval by peers, denunciation, "cancelling," etc.—do "make them timid and usually frightens them away from any further attempt" (*Aufklärung*, AA 8, 35–6 [Kant 1999, 17]). Self-thinking therefore requires "resolution and courage," hence the exhortation quoted from Horace at the start of *Aufklärung*: "*Sapere aude*!" "Dare to think!" (*Aufklärung*, AA 8, 35 [Kant 1999, 17]).

Women are subjected to oppressive institutionalized structures and social mechanisms in large parts of the world, which prevents them from benefiting from their natural right to take responsibility, and think, for themselves. These factual circumstances do not have a negative influence on the universal *validity* of the rational maxim of maturity as such but they have an effect on the extent to which what is universally valid is also realized, actualized.

Kant makes no pronouncements about how the emancipation of women or any other group of civil minors could or should take shape. That is simply not his philosophical project. To criticize him for it is to misapprehend the nature of his thought, and also to overstate its scope—notwithstanding prevaricating statements in the various texts in which he addresses the status of women. In *Aufklärung*, he merely 1) argues that the practical precept of maturity is valid for every adult human being and 2) observes that in many cases circumstances have a negative or inhibiting effect on the actual possibilities for realization (the application range of the regulative ideal of maturity). This concerns a certain anthropology that describes the subjective, both hindering and facilitating conditions for its application, comparable to how Kant sees this in the context of the a priori laws of morality and its relation to a moral anthropology (cf. AA 6, 217). Such an anthropology—and it certainly need not be the *Anthropology* that Kant actually published but could be a more critical one—is important but does not in any way detract from the universality of the maxim of maturity as such. The latter is not grounded on such an anthropology. After all, if it were so grounded, that would mean that the principle would be dependent on empirical, contingent factors, which would contradict Kant's view that to persist in immaturity is something for which one is culpable. Such culpability can only be apportioned to human rational beings who in principle have the freedom of thought and who by nature, that is to say by virtue of their possessing the capacity of reason, must be treated as mature. They can be blamed for their rational decisions, not

Analytic of Principles, to signify the assistance that examples provide to "sharpen the power of judgment" (A134/B173–4 [Kant 1998, 269]).

for their temperament or cultural background, let alone their social conditions, or the simple fact that one is a man or a woman.

Maturity, in which enlightenment basically consists, is actually only in its infancy as far as the wider populace is concerned, says Kant. We do not yet live in an "*enlightened* age," but we do live in an "age of enlightenment," says Kant, suggesting that it concerns not a completed project but a continuous process of enlighten*ing* (*Aufklärung*, AA 8, 40 [Kant 1999, 21]). This was certainly the case in Kant's own time when large parts of humanity still found themselves in a state of minority, but it remains true in our time despite the achievements of the past two centuries of European civilization since Kant's essay. This indicates that, for Kant, enlightenment is not a completed entity with a definable historical limit, nor a body of doctrines or a hereditary ideology. Rather, enlightenment is a universal ideal to be realized, a process, not a closed project that supposedly failed because not everyone enjoys in actual fact the same benefits that it promised to all. It is a continuous, live task for every person alike to extricate oneself, to self-emancipate, from the chains of tutelage.[1]

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AA = *Kant's Gesammelte Schriften* (De Gruyter, 1900–), followed by volume and page number(s).
A/B = A and B edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant 1998).
Anthropology = Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, in Kant (2007).
Aufklärung = An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment? in Kant (1994, 1999).
Orientieren = What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking? in Kant (2001b).
Refl. = *Reflexionen*

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