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How Is Moral Education Possible? Antinomies of the Kantian Philosophy of Education

If one now asks whether the human species [...] it is to be regarded as a good or bad race, then I must confess that there is not much to boast about in it.¹

*Man can only become man by education.
He is merely what education makes of him.²*

The answer to the question of the possibility of moral education is concurrently the answer to the question of the reasonableness of practicing ethics and even any practical philosophy in the Aristotelian sense. It should be noted that the main task of ethics as a normative science, i.e. determining

¹ Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, [331], transl. Robert B. Loudon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 237.

² Immanuel Kant, *On Education*, transl. Annette Churton, in: Immanuel Kant, *The Collected Works* (Hastings: Delphi Classics, 2016), 1190.

the principles which should guide us in our lives, loses any sense if we remain indifferent to them. Determining how to accept as our own the goods and values indicated in the theoretical order, i.e. how to make them accepted as practical determinants of human conduct, is just as important as their description, justification, and contemplation. The philosophy of education is not only an addition and extension but also a dynamic aspect of ethics.³ This awareness is present within the Aristotle trend, which can be clearly illustrated by Jacek Woroniecki, who wrote that:

Ethics cannot be satisfied with establishing the laws of moral conduct and the criteria according to which we are to judge its compliance or non-compliance with its laws. No; it should, under the threat of losing all practical significance, ask itself how to make people accustomed to the moral law and acquire a permanent disposition to preserve it in all their actions. The question of education is, therefore, one of the essential questions of ethics and a measure of its value; only this ethics is good and true, which, in addition to the good rules of conduct, is capable of indicating the measures to be taken in order to make it permanent.⁴

Kant, too, was aware of the importance of this problem. The issue which appeared in many of his writings was “the mode in which we can give the laws of pure practical reason access to the human mind and influence on its maxims, that is, by which we can make the objectively practical reason subjectively practical also.”⁵

This problem appears in *On Pedagogy*, and the second part of *The Critique of Practical Reason* is devoted to it. In *The Metaphysics of Morals* he devoted separate chapters to teaching ethics and ethical ascetics; moreover, scattered references to this issue can be found in virtually all of his writings (among which the ones contained in *Religion Within the Bounds of Bare Reason* seem particularly significant to me). Nowhere, however, has the problem

³ Cf. Stanisław Gałkowski, *Długomyślność. Wprowadzenie do filozofii wychowania* [Longanimity: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2016), 25–26.

⁴ Jacek Woroniecki, *Katolicka etyka wychowawcza* [The Catholic Educational Ethics], vol. 1 (Lublin: RW KUL, 1986), 329.

⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, transl. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, in: Immanuel Kant, *The Collected Works* (Hastings: Delphi Classics, 2016), 737.

of education been developed in a comprehensive and systematic manner.⁶ Furthermore, the fragments found in various writings are often difficult to reconcile and sometimes even contradictory. Therefore, this work is an attempt to reconstruct (and thus interpret) this issue on the basis of many texts from the critical period. In addition, it is also an interpretation that differs in some points from the previous approach to this question,⁷ but which, I hope, is so strongly rooted in the texts of Kant himself and his system as a whole that it can be taken into consideration in the discussion on the achievements of the philosopher from Königsberg.

At the same time, the inclusion of the issue of education within Kant's concept causes certain, if not antinomic, thus at least serious difficulties, and the way in which he dealt with them sheds new light on the entirety of his system, allowing us to see certain aspects of it which have been so far relatively rarely the subject of reflection.

Children and Adults

Most philosophers emphasise in their writings the similarity between adults and children. The child is someone smaller, weaker, and stupider, which does not allow him or her to be admitted to all aspects of the adult world and requires him or her to be cared for; however, he or she has, at least initially, all the qualities that will later make him or her an adult person. The

⁶ Although Kant's last work *On Pedagogy* is a full description of the relationship between a student and a pupil, it does not contain theoretical or meta-theoretical reflections (or these are only marginally raised issues) on issues considered important today in a comprehensive approach to the issue of education, e.g. the problem of formulating the goals of education, the status of a teacher and a pupil, the relationship between society and education. However, these issues are raised (although often not directly) in the earlier writings of the philosopher from Königsberg; therefore, the study of Kant's philosophy of education must be based on all his works.

⁷ It is impossible, of course, to refer in such a short text to all literature. However, the most eminent example of such an approach, which, despite its value, I consider to be insufficient, can be the following: Heinrich Kanz, "Immanuel Kant (1724–1804)", *PROSPECTS: The Quarterly Review of Comparative Education* (Paris, UNESCO: International Bureau of Education) XXIII (3/4) (1993): 789–806.

child is both a subject and an object of morality (although he or she often does not even know about it and is not yet able to act properly). The adult (mature) person is, therefore, a continuation – a development of the child.

In Kant's works, the gap between these stages is much greater, to such an extent that it makes us even contemplate the moral status of the child.

While we have a duty to treat humanity always as an end in itself, as Zbigniew Kuderowicz claims, “[...] humanity turns out here not to be an empirical ‘human nature’, but a reasonable ability to establish a law of universal validity,”⁸ which children, obviously, do not have. Consequently, it must be recognised that the end in itself is not every human being, but only the one who is able to use reason, i.e. the adult. The problem arises, therefore, of whether the child is worthy of respect, since respect belongs to a rational and autonomous individual (and the child *ex definitione* is not yet such). This would open the way to consider that the child is only a “semi-finished product of humanity”, and – therefore – it is not the child itself that is the subject of concern and respect of the educator but the “future adult” that is rooted in it.

The gap between childhood perceived as a state of wildness and adulthood seen as “moral autonomy” is to be filled by education.

Two Kinds of Education

Kant repeatedly emphasises the importance and causality of education in the field of moral development. The development of the child without the support he or she receives from adult members of his or her community would be significantly impeded and even impossible: “Man can only become man by education. He is merely what education makes of him.”⁹

The key word here is *only* because Kant emphasizes that moral development is not spontaneous. Education is not only a support but also a fundamental causal factor. The elimination of educational influences will not lead, contrary

⁸ Zbigniew Kuderowicz, *Kant* (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 2000), 66.

⁹ Immanuel Kant, *On Education*, transl. Annette Churton, in: Immanuel Kant, *The Collected Works* (Hastings: Delphi Classics 2016), 1190.

to what Rousseau wrote, to an optimal state but to savagery and barbarity (barbarity is “[f]orce without freedom and law”).¹⁰

Kant seems to deny people their creative abilities outside culture and society. Without education a person would not be able to transcend his or her animalhood, probably remaining (although Kant does not develop this thread more widely) at the level of innate reflexes and creating no culture. That is why subordinating the child’s animal nature to reason (although at this stage it is, of course, the educator’s reason) by subjecting it to strict discipline (“Discipline changes animal nature into human nature”¹¹) is a necessary condition for the development of humanity.

Although Kant admits that there is an “embryo of goodness” in our nature, he equally believes that it does not act in itself and cannot even be the basis for educational activities: “in the moral cultivation of the moral capacity for good created in us, we cannot begin from a natural state of innocence but must start from the supposition of a depravity of the elective will in assuming maxims that are contrary to the original moral capacity.”¹²

In Kant’s writings we can find two visions of moral development: the first is autocratic and rigorous education based on “Prussian discipline”, concerning the period before achieving moral autonomy, when the educator points out to pupils some goals and values to be pursued and constantly supervises and controls their development.¹³ On the other hand, after maturity has been attained (i.e. the recognizing the respect for the moral law as the sole motive for our conduct), there is virtually no room in Kant’s concept for education understood as an organized external influence exerted to change the thinking

¹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View*, [330], transl. Robert B. Loudon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 235.

¹¹ Immanuel Kant, *On Education*, transl. Annette Churton, in: Immanuel Kant, *The Collected Works* (Hastings: Delphi Classics, 2016), 1189.

¹² Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, transl. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, in: Immanuel Kant, *The Collected Works* (Hastings: Delphi Classics, 2016), 966.

¹³ In *On Pedagogy* Kant not only describes the games that children should play but also indicates what the proper toys are. See: Immanuel Kant, *On Education*, transl. Annette Churton, in: Immanuel Kant, *The Collected Works* (Hastings: Delphi Classics, 2016), 1203.

and action of the pupil. All changes are (should be) the result of self-education only – independent work on oneself and one's character.¹⁴

Apart from doubts of a practical nature – how can autonomy and independence be achieved by someone who is constantly being trained, not in making proper and independent decisions but in obedience and discipline – there is also a theoretical problem: the transition from childhood to adulthood, i.e. from the state when we are guided by the will of the educator to the state in which we are guided only by a sense of respect for the law, has a binary character – so it cannot appear gradually. Partial selflessness is not selflessness yet, just as there can be no *semicategorical imperative*. Consequently, we are not dealing with a gentle transition – evolution – but with a sudden change – revolution – in the human disposition.

The Impossibility of Education

As Otfried Höffe remarked, “Kant interprets the educational process as a bridge between nature and morality.”¹⁵ The problem, however, is that it is impossible. In order to be in line with Kant's basic concepts, we must recognize that the educator, understood as an external causal factor, simply does not have the right tools to achieve the desired goal.

Moral education has two complementary dimensions (we can call them, after Kant, *didactics and moral asceticism*¹⁶). The first pertains to moral reasoning and consists in recognizing increasingly higher standards, which we are going to use when issuing ethical judgements concerning moral good and evil. The second dimension is moral behaviour, i.e. making decisions and actions according to accepted values and norms. People we consider as moral

¹⁴ It is characteristic that although Kant had a great influence on the pedagogy and theory of education, only this part of Kant's concept has been noticed within these disciplines. It is probably due to its convergence with the fundamental statements of his ethics.

¹⁵ Otfried Höffe, *Immanuel Kant*, transl. Andrzej M. Kaniowski (Warszawa: PWN 1995), 172.

¹⁶ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Moral* (48), in: Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, transl. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 597.

are the ones who fulfil the following two conditions: they make decisions guided by perfect moral standards, and secondly, their conduct is consistently their own, i.e. they are driven by precisely those values which, at the theoretical level, they previously considered to be the most essential. This means that they not only think morally but also act in the same way. In the case of Kant's formal ethics, the matter becomes somewhat complicated because the basic dimension of morality is not the achievement of an external goal (good) but an action guided by proper motives (selflessness of will). Here too, however, consistency of behaviour, coherence between thought and action, are two of the fundamental characteristics of a mature personality. Accomplishing this is one of the most crucial goals of education.

The basic problem is whether such a state can be achieved from the outside, and thus whether the actions of the educators can really have an impact on the formation of such a personality.

Moral Didactics

Kant's Copernican revolution resulted in the closure to us of certain ways of changing someone else's moral thinking. First of all, the educator cannot refer to the obvious objectivity of the *starry sky above us*, pointing out, for example, the real good that exists. As Kant wrote, "Nor could one give worse advice to morality than by wanting to derive it from examples."¹⁷ The recognition of the goodness of an action, object, or a person would consist in comparing it with the pre-existing ideal of goodness. This concerns even the most perfect being – God: "But whence have we the concept of God as the highest good? Solely from the idea of moral perfection that reason frames a priori [...] there is no genuine supreme basic principle of morality that does not have to rest only on pure reason independently of all experience."¹⁸

¹⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of The Metaphysics of Moral* (4:409), in: Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, transl. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), 63.

¹⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of The Metaphysics of Moral* (4:409), in: Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, transl. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), 63.

If morality originates from the idea of *a priori*, its maxims cannot be a conclusion of rational reasoning. It is impossible to be persuaded during a discussion or to present universally valid arguments in its favour without engaging in a vicious circle.

The moral law and duty do not arise from or respond to transcendental reality; consequently, they have nothing to do with reality:

Obedience in this case is not the object of theoretical-philosophical cognition, but the subject state of the learning subject. The intellectual distance between the subject and the object is lost or, in fact, cannot be created anywhere, since the subject himself, not to mention the extra-subjective reality, cannot be the object of other cognition than in the form of duty. Therefore, it is not possible to check the intellectual validity or accuracy of the sense of duty arising in a human being. Either this feeling is there or it is not there.¹⁹

Since the sense of duty is completely individual and subjective, there is no possibility of a rational discourse about the emergence of duty, and this makes this aspect of education, which consists in establishing an intellectual relation between the educator and the pupil, impossible. Education presupposes the possibility of intersubjectively meaningful communication about what is to be its object. On the other hand, basing the obligation only on subjective states, without reference to external reality, makes it impossible for two subjects to communicate about it, including the communication between the educator and the pupil.

At the same time, the lack of reference to rational arguments when trying to change someone's behaviour means an attempt to objectify the other person. Alisdair MacIntyre expressed this thought in the following way:

What Kant means by treating someone as an end rather than as a means seems to be as follows [...]. I may propose a course of action to someone either by offering him reasons for so acting or by trying to influence him in non-rational ways. If I do the former, I treat him as a rational will, worthy of the same respect as is due to myself, for in offering him reasons I offer him an impersonal consideration for him to evaluate. What makes a reason a good reason has nothing

¹⁹ Jerzy Gałkowski, "Z historii pojęcia wolności – Duns Szkot, Kant, Sartre", *Roczniki Filozoficzne* XIX, 2 (2004): 79.

to do with who utters it on a given occasion, and until an agent has decided for himself whether a reason is a good reason or not, he has no reason to act. By contrast, an attempt at non-rational suasion embodies an attempt to make the agent a mere instrument of my will, without any regard for his rationality.²⁰

Therefore, in an educational situation we are dealing with a dichotomy of either-or; either full respect and recognition for autonomy or total instrumentalism towards the other person. There is no possibility of a “third state” (typical of virtually all concepts of education) – the transitional stage – when the educator recognizes the full human dignity of the pupil, even though he or she has not yet reached the state of full moral autonomy, which enables his or her partially instrumental treatment (manifested even in not explaining the meaning of any educational procedures to the pupil). Since rational argumentation is not possible when it comes to accepting moral maxims, all means (including, of course, upbringing) of exerting influence on the other person *ex definitione* in this matter are instrumental.

The only thing that remains for the educator is to generally support the comprehensive intellectual development of the pupil, in the hope that a properly formed mind will create appropriate *a priori* ideas on its own in the future. In this situation, however, the teacher’s agency is only indirect.

Moral Asceticism

The second dimension of education comes down to the answer to the following question: what to do to make what is recognised in the theoretical order, also a practical motive for our conduct? This entails much greater difficulties, of which Kant, after all, was fully aware:

But it is not so clear, and on the contrary must at first glance seem to everyone quite improbable, that even subjectively that presentation of pure virtue can have more power over the human mind and can provide a far stronger

²⁰ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue. A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 47.

incentive to effect [...] than all the deceptive allurements of enjoyment [...].
But it is really so.²¹

The difficulties stem primarily from the fact that Kant considers all acts (even those having the desired effect) which would be caused by anything other than direct submission to moral imperatives to be devoid of any moral trait: "What is essential to any moral worth of actions is that the moral law determines the will immediately."²² The measure of a person's moral maturity is the selflessness of will, which means that all decisions and actions taken under any external influence or resulting from habit, routine, or emotions cease to be moral and become only "legal":

The moral level on which a human being [...] stands is respect for the moral law. The disposition incumbent upon him to have in observing it is to do so from duty, not from voluntary liking, nor even from an endeavour he undertakes unbidden, gladly, and of his own accord; and his proper moral condition, in which he can always be, is virtue, that is, moral disposition in conflict, and not holiness in the supposed possession of a complete purity of dispositions of the will.²³

In practice, these statements question the value of the whole of education because they mean that acts performed under any influence have no moral value. However, education, no matter how it is understood, is the preparation of any child for his or her future life and consists in making it easier for him or her to make the right decisions and actions.

The development of virtue in the Aristotelian sense (or rather that of every form of moral education) is the creation of concrete dispositions for a specific action, i.e. such a transformation of natural inclinations that they direct human activity harmoniously, without unnecessary waste of energy, e.g. on internal struggle. Precisely, what Kant rejects, therefore, is to do good on the

²¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* (5:152), in: Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, transl. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 261.

²² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* (5:72), in: Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, transl. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 198.

²³ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* (5:85), in: Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, transl. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 208.

basis of a *voluntary tendency*. Meanwhile, “[t]he ideal of Kantian pedagogy is a constant state of tension, an eternal struggle of will.”²⁴ A virtuous act in the Aristotelian sense would, according to Kant, only be legal. In other words, *morally better* is a decision that is *unprepared*, i.e. taken as a result of an *unprecedented* experience of duty; furthermore, every decision to act (or not to act) should be taken as if it were taken for the first time in one’s life. If an analogous decision has ever been made before, it should not affect the next one. From such a view, it takes only one step more to state that education hinders the achievement of mature morality.

Education can be a necessary aid in bringing us into the world of “legality”. Properly directing a young person’s reflexes, taming his or her animal nature, will make him or her act in a desirable way. Equally, emphasizing the requirement of disinterestedness of an act puts us in a paradoxical situation. For it should be recognized that the better, i.e. more effective, the education is, having a greater impact on the future decisions and actions of the pupil, actually the worse it is as it deprives these actions and decisions of the value of morality. Therefore, truly moral education is impossible. The mentioned *malice of will* of wickedness of the will²⁵ also prevents moral development from occurring spontaneously. Moreover, it is not possible to impose respect for the law as the only motive for our actions from the outside.

Even the simplest educational influence, which is a personal example of an educator, or pointing to examples of other people, who have already reached the highest stages of moral development, would not be effective. Kant states this directly:

[...] what others give us can establish no maxim of virtue. For, a maxim of virtue consists precisely in the subjective autonomy of each human being’s practical reason and so implies that the law itself, not the conduct of other human beings, must serve as our incentive. [...] A good example (exemplary conduct) should not serve as a model but only as a proof that it is really possible to act in conformity with duty.²⁶

²⁴ Jacek Woroniecki, *Katolicka etyka wychowawcza*, vol. 1 (Lublin: RW KUL, 1986), 371.

²⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, transl. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, in: Immanuel Kant, *The Collected Works* (Hastings: Delphi Classics, 2016), 966.

²⁶ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Moral* (48), in: Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, transl. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 591, 592.

A change in an individual's morality can only come from within the individual.

A Bridge or a Sudden Transition

If the above interpretation of the works of the Königsberg philosopher is correct, then there is a number of antinomies or at least difficulties in his system: education is both absolutely necessary and completely ineffective; moreover, there are two completely incompatible concepts specifying what this education should consist of. It is, therefore, entirely unclear how, in this context, education and moral development are possible. How do we explain the fact that people become moral?

The solution to almost all these difficulties can be found in the *Religion Within the Bounds of Bare Reason*. It offers ideas which, if included in the concept of education (or rather moral development), would make it possible to create a consistent and coherent whole with one another. However, this would come at a high price – in practice, it would mean negating any kind of causality of education.

In this work, Kant describes the change in human morality not as a process of gradually establishing respect for the law but as a one-off and violent act – a kind of illumination:

But that a man should become not merely a legally but a morally good (God-pleasing) man, that is, virtuous in his intelligible character (*virtus noumenon*), a man who, when he recognises a thing as his duty, needs no other spring than this conception of duty itself; this is not to be effected by gradual reform, as long as the principle of his maxims remains impure, but requires a revolution in the mind (a transition to the maxim of holiness of mind), and he can only become a new man by a kind of new birth, as it were by a new creation (Gospel of John, iii. 5, compared with Gen. i. 2) and a change of heart.²⁷

²⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, transl. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, in: Immanuel Kant, *The Collected Works* (Hastings: Delphi Classics, 2016), 964.

Just as there are no intermediate states between selflessness and other motives, the change of moral disposition must take place in a violent leap – a revolution in disposition “by a single immutable resolution.”²⁸ At the same time, there is no rational explanation of this phenomenon: “Now how it is possible that a man naturally bad should make himself a good man transcends all our conceptions?”²⁹ In this case nothing remains; however, referring to supernatural factors,

[...] the transformation of the disposition of a bad into that of a good man is to be placed in the change of the supreme inner principle of all his maxims, in accordance with the moral law, provided that this new principle (the new heart) be itself immutable. A man cannot, however, naturally attain the conviction [that it is immutable], either by immediate consciousness, or by the proof derived from the course of life he has hitherto pursued, [...] when he has used the original capacity for good so as to become a better man, that he can hope that what is not in his power will be supplied by a higher co-operation. [...] But then the principle holds good: “it is not essential, and therefore not necessary for everyone to know what God does or has done for his salvation,” but it is essential to know what he himself has to do in order to be worthy of this assistance.³⁰

This help is a kind of grace of which we cannot say when or under what circumstances it will be bestowed on us; we can only assume (or rather hope) that if we use all our possibilities, grace will bring upon us what our nature is unable to do. There is probably some element of predestination in this, typical of Protestant theology, because ultimately it is not our effort but God’s grace that decides whether we are good or bad. Education, however, is still a necessary factor, albeit not sufficient, to prepare a person to receive grace but by no means is it the cause of it. The abruptness of the transformation of the moral disposition is visible only to God; from a human point of view

²⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, transl. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, in: Immanuel Kant, *The Collected Works* (Hastings: Delphi Classics, 2016), 965.

²⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, transl. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, in: Immanuel Kant, *The Collected Works* (Hastings: Delphi Classics, 2016), 964.

³⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, transl. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, in: Immanuel Kant, *The Collected Works* (Hastings: Delphi Classics, 2016), 966–967.

it can be seen as a constant striving for improvement.³¹ One could say that Kant, just as he wanted to overthrow knowledge in order to make room for faith, so “overthrew” education in order to make room for grace.

To sum up, the moral development of man consists of three stages: the first one is classic (although, according to today’s standards, quite autocratic) upbringing, which enables us to learn how to act properly but cannot make us moral (or even hinders us in some way). The second stage is a rapid change in our disposition when our thinking and respect for the law change incomprehensibly and become the only motivation for our conduct. Finally, the third stage is the time during which we build our own identity and morals free from external influences in this area.

The need to refer to grace (and thus simply to a miracle) to explain the most important point of the process of education is probably a serious weakness from the point of view of the philosophical system. However, Kant’s attitude to the problem of education is, in my opinion, an inevitable consequence of its basic assumptions.

His concept of a moral act refers to a man who is already fully formed and shaped. There is no element of dynamism in it, the vision of man is static, every act is performed in isolation from the previous acts. We cannot, therefore, speak of the development whose concept presupposes any continuity. It is difficult to relate such a vision to a person who is just building his or her personality because it refers to a person who already has experience and fully established beliefs, and not to a person who is only acquiring them.

This in turn results from the basic attribute of Kantian ethics. The philosopher “withdrew the essence of ethical life from the field of experimental experience of a person and shifted it into the realm beyond the experimental, to a noumenal one”³² while education (and everything that is the subject of the entire practical philosophy) in its essence depends on shifting our thoughts into the real world – the experimental one. The attitude of Kantianism towards this problem must then have been full of contradictions.

³¹ Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, transl. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, in: Immanuel Kant, *The Collected Works* (Hastings: Delphi Classics, 2016), 965.

³² Karol Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie podmiotu moralności* (Lublin: RW KUL, 1991), 169.

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to reconstruct (and therefore to interpret) the concept of moral education and development contained in Kant's writings as well as to show ways to avoid the difficulties that arise within his system. The basic problem is how to reconcile – within one system – Kant's conviction of the importance of upbringing with the claim that autonomy, treated both as the goal of education and a feature of a mature man, means no subordination to external influences, which indirectly questions the possibility of exerting educational influence. The similar question is

the relationship between respect for humanity and the belief that humanity relies on rationality and autonomy, which children do not yet possess. In my opinion, these difficulties can be dispelled by taking into account the subsequent phases of human development which can be found in the writings of the thinker from Königsberg, while pointing to the necessary role of grace as a causative agent of emerging human morality.

Keywords: Immanuel Kant, autonomy, education, moral development, grace