3. The Concept of Race

> Every person by nature is racist.
> —Jon Mills and Januz A. Palinowski,
> *The Ontology of Prejudice*

W.E.B. Du Bois suggested that perhaps it is wrong to speak of race as a concept at all, rather it is 'a group of contradictory forces, facts and tendencies' (1940: 67). To call it a concept is already to grant too much because it implies its usefulness for cognition, its clarity and coherence, and hence its validity. And yet, as Du Bois explains his own development his family lineage, and his awareness of other histories and identities, the power of the race resurfaces. His essay on the 'autobiography of a race concept' shows that the concept of race as genealogy and descent is central not only to his own autobiography, but perhaps to the very idea of progress and development itself.

Race as species unites the human race, whereas race as subspecies differentiates and atomises as much as it promises to unite; casting us 'to sink or swim in this sea of race prejudice' (Du Bois 1920: 203). But can we jettison the idea of race and retain the idea of the human race? The beginnings of an answer can be found by way of a philosophical detour through Immanuel Kant's textual web. Kant stands at the centre of the genealogical and philosophical debate concerning the concept of race. Indeed, the non-debate regarding Kant's racism reveals the fault-lines of liberal human rights discourse that define our present.

Kant

> Those who believe they are surrounded by enemies everywhere … are so often astute at interpreting what others do naturally as aimed against them … in which the mind is held in suspense by means of analogies that are confused with concepts of similar things, and thus the power of imagination, in a play resembling understanding.
> —Immanuel Kant, "Anthropology from a pragmaticpoint of view"

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According to Henry Louis Gates, Kant is 'one of the earliest major European philosophers to conflate color with intelligence, a determining relation he posits with dictatorial surety' (1989: 18).[1] The accusation is that Kant contributed to the legitimation of the concept of race, a concept that has had disastrous consequences for humanity. Robert Bernasconi (2001; 2002: 145) agrees that by inventing the concept of race, Kant gave expression to a virulent and theoretically based racism. The sage of Königsberg, the father of both modern moral theory and racial theory, is also a theorist of personhood and sub-personhood (see Mills 1997: 70-72).

Tsenay Serequeberhan concludes that Enlightenment and modernity share 'the trite and bland prejudice that European existence, properly speaking, is true human existence *per se*' (2006: 90). Cultural superiority is normalised. European philosophy, and in particular Kant's philosophical and historical texts, accomplish the replication of the European Enlightenment with racist leanings throughout the globe (see Schönfeld 2000: 123). We can add some local colour to these judgements by recalling that one of the architects of apartheid, D.F. Malan, wrote his MA thesis on Kant (see Giliomee 2003: 365-66; and Korf 2005: 64-67).

One reaction to this criticism has been to ignore it altogether. In response, Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze explained that his anthology of racist Enlightenment philosophers sought to counter the avoidance of discussion of Kant's racism by contemporary philosophers. Particularly glaring for Eze was the omission of any entry headed 'race' in Howard Caygill's otherwise admirable *A Kant Dictionary* (see Eze 1997: 1-9).[2] One can, of course, argue that Kant's racist opinions reveal the deficiencies of the man, but not the failings of his philosophy (see Schönfeld 2000: 124).[3] Unfortunately, as we shall see, Kant articulated his thoughts on race in his published writing, and so separating the man from his thought is more tricky than usual.

It is not enough to lament reprehensible texts 'from the pen of he who the West claims was the thinker of human dignity' (David 2003: 11). David Wood (2004: xi) concedes that Kant held views about non-European cultures and peoples that can only be described as racist, but avers that on the whole Kant's was among the most progressive minds of

his age in respect of social and political matters. What his opinions were is undoubtedly relevant to understanding his thought, according to Wood, but we are guaranteed to learn nothing if we approach philosophers with the sole aim of trying to decide which views expressed by them are in agreement with what we have decided beforehand what all people of good will must believe.[4] The accusatory tone and the call to stay ignorant could not be further from Kant's fundamental injunction that we dare to be wise.

Martha Nussbaum (1997: 23) has expressed concern that the values of reason, equality, and human rights that Kant defended are traduced in some quarters as mere ethnocentric vestiges of western imperialism.[5] Remember that cosmopolitan (citizen of the world: *kosmou politês*) means affiliation with rational humanity: 'Recognizing the cogency of the Stoic view of passions gives us a duty: for it tells us that we have great power over racism, sexism and other divisive passions that militate against cosmopolitan humanism, if we will only devote enough attention to the cognitive moral development of the young' (23). Prejudice exists alongside claims for reason and freedom and it is being used to invalidate the Enlightenment project.

The worry is not so much that a negative judgement is being passed on the historical period of the Enlightenment, but rather that it fuels a rejection of the liberal legacy of human rights. The conspiracy against reason and morality is sure to ensure the victory of irrationalism and particularism at the expense of a reason and a politics of principle.[6] The quest for equality in terms of the teleological progression towards a liberal community envisaged as transparent, knowledgeable, inclusive, and tolerant continues.[7] Continues, that is, irrespective of the possibility that such particular universalism is compatible with the system of hierarchies and exclusions that takes the form of racism and sexism (see Balibar and Wallerstein 1991: 9).

For Nussbaum, Kant has a special place in this tradition: 'Kant, more influentially than any other Enlightenment thinker, defended a politics based upon reason rather than patriotism or group sentiment, a politics that was truly universal rather than communitarian, a politics that was active, reformist and optimist' (1997: 3). The irrationalism of what Anthony Appiah terms 'the deformation of rationality in judgement'

(1990: 8) called racism—its mixing of mystagogic vitalism, apocalyptic theosophy and the rationalisation of inequality—distills the forces of superstition and dogmatism that Kant tried to discredit.[8]

Clearly, not only the philosopher is at stake in this controversy. Universalism may well be a feature of economic expansion, but this does not mean that universalism is identical with the system that it propagates.[9] Far from having deserted the imaginations of its users, this idea of race persists, not yet safely stored away in what Kant called 'the archives of human reason' (Kant 1781/7: B732, A704, 623) nor beaten down like a mad dog.

Seeing race as a social construction imposed on biological differences that are not necessarily racial, that race does not have the physical basis that it is assumed to have, is but one step. However, the conceptual infrastructure that facilitates the transition to racism also supports the idea of universal equality and the humanising call for 'faith in the future of the race' (Nardal 2001: 109). Beneath the level ground on which Kant's majestic moral edifices are built, the concept of race leads to 'all sorts of passageways such as moles might have dug, left over from reason's vain but confident treasure hunting, that make every building insecure (B376: 398).

Uncovering the roots of the concept of race involves revisiting Kant's articulation of reason that will frame the concept of race. Race and reason are not unrelated, and the Kantian principles of human equality, rationalism, universalism, and cosmopolitanism are part of this family history.

Reason

> Reason is a kind of feeling.
> —Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*

When Kant introduces his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/7) with its goal of self-knowledge to be achieved through the institution of a court of justice, self-knowledge is bound up with justice. Reason, as the ability to

think, to represent something by concepts, is to be investigated in order to determine what kind of right it can claim to its possessions. But reason itself is bringing the case.

In this litigious space, the grounds of possession are to be exposed by the process of critical reason itself, 'and this not merely by degrees but according to its own eternal and unchangeable laws' (Axii, 101; see also Rose 1984, chapter 1). The rights and claims of reason to its titled possessions will be decided by scrutinising the legitimacy of concepts that have 'an entirely different birth certificate than that of an ancestry from experiences' (B119, A87, 221). The 'birthplace' of these concepts must be established, traced all the way to 'their first seeds [*Keimen*] and predispositions [*Andlagen*]' (A66, B91, 202-203).[10] Indeed the architectonic of descent informs the critical philosophy from the very first.

The *Critique of Pure Reason* is concerned with regulative principles for the understanding as part of the division of the faculties (reason, understanding, sensibility, and imagination) and types of judgment (theoretical, practical, aesthetic). Reason concerns our capacity for drawing inferences for we recognise a thing only by means of general concepts. The particular is contingent with respect to the universal because we cognise a thing only by means of general concepts (Kant's analytic universals) which pick out a feature it has in common with other things (see Ginsborg 2009).

Yet we cannot deduce all the characteristics of a particular thing solely from the concepts that apply to it. We need experience and sensibility because '[r]eason is driven by a propensity of its nature to go beyond its use in experience, to venture to the outmost bounds of cognition by means of mere ideas in a pure use, and to find peace only in completion of its circle in a self-subsisting systematic whole' (A797, B825, 673). Pure reason is called before the court of reason in order to remove all those errors that have so far put reason into dissension with itself. The ultimate end of the three questions that arise from human reason (What can I know? What ought I to do? What may I hope?) is moral, and they imply another question: What is man? To borrow Kojin Karatani's (2005: 1) suggestive formulation, the transcendental approach seeks to cast light on the unconscious structure that precedes and shapes

experience.

Kant credits David Hume, one of the geographers of human reason, with having awakened reason to a thorough investigation of its own powers in the wake of scepticism regarding causality. *Critique of Pure Reason*, Chapter one, section one of the Doctrine of Method, addresses Hume's argument that the law of causality arises from experience and habit rather than from necessity; every change has a cause, every event has a preceding (sufficient) cause, but we do not see the connection between them. From the inability of reason to establish the principle of causality as necessary Hume inferred the error of reason's attempt to either move beyond experience or to ground itself on experience.

In response Kant pointed to the active role of principles of the understanding that anticipate experience, the constitutive synthesising of perceptions into experience by *a priori* concepts which function as capacities to receive and assimilate the data of sense experience. Experience is possible only by means of the representation of a necessary connection of perceptions. Hume was wrong in inferring the contingency of the law of causality from the contingency of experience; he confused levels of analysis (see A760, B788, 653).[11]

The critical project involves attending to the divisions and co-implication of understanding and judgement, appearance and reality, mind and matter, nature and experience, necessity and freedom, receptivity and spontaneity. The appendix to the Transcendental Analytic, "On the Amphiboly of Concepts of Reflection Through the Confusion of the Empirical Use of the Understanding with the Transcendental," explores the confusion that arises from the blurring of levels of enquiry. The result of the critical project should be the co-ordination of the faculties in accordance with their rightful jurisdiction.

It would seem that, as eternal and unchangeable, the laws of reason are, if not carved in stone, then at least pre-set as a point of co-ordination and adjudication. This gives the impression that the task before us is the bringing into line of various claims made in the name of reason, a kind of supervisory and corrective laying out of the routes, byways, and dead ends into which we may be led by the pursuit of reason. Haunted by fear of dispossession, critical philosophy aims at correcting the abuse of reason, keeping an eye on the steps taken by metaphysics, thereby laying

the foundation of metaphysics as a science.

Just as the *Critique of Pure Reason* preserves a gap, and empty place and openness that is the place of reason, Kant's cosmopolitanism underlines the necessity that reason must find the terms by which to include everyone, even those who reject reason (see Martyn 2003: 101). For the highest purpose of nature, which is the development of all the capacities which can be achieved by mankind, is attainable only in society, and more specifically in the society with the greatest freedom (see Caygill 1995: 190-192).

It is in the interest of every rational being to respect what is proper to every other rational being. 'Thus let your opponent speak only reason, and fight him solely with weapons of reason.' (A744, B772, 646) And yet despite such pronouncements, as we have seen, suspicion falls on the objectivity or neutrality of the elevation of reason as the governing principle of knowledge.

From *where* the universality of reason is being announced is hardly neutral since, as Kant himself recognised, philosophy—no less than other disciplines—is part of an institutional and hence political and economic context. The authority and legitimacy of the sites of the production of texts concerned with the promotion of reason both contaminate and facilitate the cause of enlightenment. Human reason, Kant says, accomplishes nothing in its pure use and even requires discipline to check its extravagances and avoid the deceptions that come from them (B795, B823, 672). Part of this discipline is the function of criticism, across different languages and cultures, that, as Kant would say, is work in progress. 'The objections against the suasions and self-conceit of our purely speculative reason are themselves put forth by the nature of this reason.' (A743, B771, 645-646)

But what if the accusation is more damning? What if, instead of focusing on the abuse of reason, and including Kant and the Enlightenment in that abuse, claiming to know Kant better than he knew himself, we accuse the very principle of reason of being party to injustice? Not reason's improper manipulation, the inevitable corruptions of reason, but rather its essence; even in its proper use, reason favours precisely those not committed to universal freedom and human fulfilment. That self-knowledge masks modernity's pursuit of self-

interest, for in letter and in spirit enlightenment promotes injustice. Commitment to reason is a prejudice, a source of power and security that enables its proponents to claim the right to police the world in the name of the self-emancipation of humanity.

To stay within Kant's juridical dramaturgy, we can say that it is always others who are hauled before the court of reason and forced to justify themselves in the language of the court and to be at the mercy of the drive for self-knowledge on the part of the court. After all, in this court reason is both judge and witness. Turning Kant's argument for enlightenment against him, we might observe how easy it is to be immature. That is to say, as easy for the enlighteners as it is for those in need of enlightenment. As Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno argue in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the *Aufklärung* became a version of the mythology it sought to dispel.

One can respond to this type of argument by pointing out that any challenge to reason must (if it is to be registered as a challenge rather than dismissed as nonsense) be understandable, and so must at some minimal level fulfil the criteria of rationality.[12] At first glance this response sounds less like an answer to the implicit charge of reason as despotism and more like an admission of the criticism that reason pre-emptively dictates the terms on which any challenge to its own authority is to be heard: you must first be recognised as a rational being. Kant's 'let your opponent speak only reason' is both prescriptive and permissive.[13]

However, the real point is that even any outside of reason, like madness, that would present a challenge to the dominion of reason is itself anticipated by reason.[14] Indeed there would be no reason without the possibility of non-reason, which makes it a constitutive possibility (without which the idea of reason would collapse), or a condition of (im)possibility.

One can anticipate again the response that this explanation merely serves to confirm rather than to counter the suspicion of a totalising reason. But this is to miss the critical import of reason being constitutively divided against itself, and therefore always open to disruption and overturning, never closed off and secure once and for all. Hence the repression and interminable insecurity, which needs to be read not only as a sign of the fragility of reason, and so an indication of its

weakness or constructedness, but also as the source of its strength and malleability.

In other words, the vulnerability of reason to unreason, its manipulation by partial and sectarian interests is proof of reason's power. That critics of reason's claims to universality see in the promotion of reason the oppressive generalisation of specific historico-cultural values at the expense of other values and principles is itself proof of the reality of reason's imperative force. Challenging the authority of European thinkers with the claims of reason and moral law preserves the spirit of enlightenment—*Sapere aude!*; dare to be wise!

While the limits of the public use of reason are rendered visible in the academic debate regarding Kant's racism, it is the web of concepts out of which wove the concept of race that sheds light on the present. Far from contributing to an apologia, such contextualisation lifts the veil on the tenacity of the concept of race.

Race

> I am apt to suspect the negroes and in general all the other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the Whites. There never was a civilised nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient Germans, the present Tartars, have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government, or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction betwixt these breeds of men. Not to mention our colonies, there are Negroe slaves dispersed all over Europe, of which none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity; tho' low people, without education, will start up amongst us, and distinguish themselves in every profession. In Jamaica indeed they talk of one negroe as a man of parts and learning; but 'tis likely he is admired for very slender accomplishments, like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly.
>
> —David Hume, "Of National Characters"

Emmanuel Eze's *Race and the Enlightenment* includes the above excerpt from David Hume's "Of National Characters."[15] Hume's essay appeared in the 1748 *Three Essays* and *Essays Moral and Political* (3rd edition, Part I, Essay XXI). This footnote, not present in the 1748 edition, was added to the 1753 edition.[16] Hume made minor revisions to the note for the 1777 final edition of his works, but the revision was omitted by his nineteenth century publisher. Oddly it accompanies Hume's vociferous criticism of slavery and may have been part of Hume's strategy of challenging complacency on both sides of an issue (see Asher 2020).[17] What then of Hume's admirer, Immanuel Kant?

In *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* (1764), inspired by Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757), Kant refers approvingly to Hume's footnote:

> The Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises above the trifling. Mr. Hume challenges anyone to cite a single example in which a Negro has shown talents, and asserts that among the hundreds of thousands of blacks who are transported elsewhere from their countries, although many of them have even been set free, still not a single one was ever found who presented anything great in art or science or any other praiseworthy quality, even though among the whites some continually rise aloft from the lowest rabble, and through superior gifts earn respect in the world. So fundamental is the difference between these two races of man [*Menschengeschlechtern*], and it appears to be as great in regard to mental capacities [*Gemüthsfähigkeiten*] as in colour. The religion of fetishes so widespread among them is perhaps a sort of idolatry that sinks as deeply into the trifling as appears to be possible to human nature. A bird's feather, a cow's horn, a conch shell, or any other common object, as soon as it becomes consecrated by a few words, is an object of veneration and of invocation in swearing oaths. The blacks are very vain but in the Negro's way, and so talkative that they must be driven apart from each other with thrashings. (Kant 1764: 110-111)

This passage can be interpreted as Kant arguing for the fundamental difference in mental capacities between the Negro and the White races. A generous interpretation would have that it he is not arguing that they should be treated differently. On the contrary, difference in mental capacities should not undermine the treatment of all peoples as having

equal moral worth. Intellectually deprived individuals should be treated as having equal moral worth.[18]

Yet such an interpretation downplays Kant's positing of a universal difference in 'mental capacities' between races in the first place. There is a world of difference between claiming a difference in mental capacities and a difference in intellectual achievements. The latter may accord with experience (or at least with what Kant gleaned from reading Hume, Peter Kolben, and Georges Louis Leclerc Buffon),[19] however partial and limited. The inference as to capacities, on the other hand, implies judgement as to the nature of the race. Let us look at some other comments by Kant concerning race.

Another notorious passage from *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* intertwines gender and race. I present it here in a longer form than is usual because it has become an important reference point for Kant's racism:

> If we examine the relation of the sexes in these parts of the world, we find that the European alone has found the secret of decorating with so many flowers the sensual charm of a mighty inclination and of interlacing it with so much morality that he has not only extremely elevated its agreeableness but also made it very decorous. The inhabitant of the Orient is of a very false taste in this respect. Since he has no concept of the morally beautiful which can be united with this impulse, he loses even the worth of the sensuous enjoyment, and his harem is a constant source of unrest. He thrives on all sorts of amorous grotesqueries, among which the imaginary jewel is only the foremost, which he seeks to safeguard above all else, whose whole worth consists only in smashing it, and of which one in our part of the world generally entertains much malicious doubt—and yet to whose preservation he makes use of very unjust and often loathsome means. Hence there a woman is always in a prison, whether she may be a maid, or have a barbaric, good-for-nothing and always suspicious husband. In the lands of the black, what better can one expect than what is found prevailing, namely the feminine sex in the deepest slavery? A despairing man is always a strict master over anyone weaker, just as with us that man is always a tyrant in the kitchen who outside his own house hardly dares to look anyone in the face. Of course, Father Labat reports that a Negro carpenter, whom he reproached for haughty treatment toward his wives, answered: "You whites are indeed fools, for first you make great concessions to your wives, and afterward you complain when they drive

> you mad." And it might be that there were something in this which perhaps deserved to be considered; but in short, this fellow was quite black from head to foot, a clear proof that what he said was stupid [*dumm*]. (Kant 1764: 113)

This passage is usually adjudged to be a bad joke, a particularly dumb racist joke.

Still, the black carpenter does not shrink from telling a white man to his face that white men are fools.[20] He validates the judgement that Negroes are haughty to their wives, thereby both confirming and subverting the superiority of white men who cannot control their wives and revert to defensive racism when confronted with that truth. The carpenter's claim to be superior to the white man confirms his inferiority (he confesses his harshness). The superiority of the white man (in terms of gallantry) confirms his inferiority as a man.

Kant can be read as highlighting the operation of prejudice, on the part of the Negro and of himself as narrator. Men, black and white, are indeed united by prejudice against women ('it might be that there were something in this which perhaps deserved to be considered'), and against each other. That white men indulge women is a charge that flatters the white sense of superiority, presaging the dramaturgy of white men saving black women from black men.[21]

Race is the subject of Kant's essays, "Of the Different Human Races" (1775; revised 1777), "Determination of a Concept of a Human Race" (1785), and "On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy" (1788).[22] Kant's lectures on physical geography (delivered from 1756 to 1796) contain the following claim:

> In the hot countries the human being matures in all aspects earlier, but does not, however, reach the perfection of those in the temperate zones. Humanity is at its greatest perfection in the race of the whites. The yellow Indians do have a meagre talent. The Negroes are far below them and at the lowest point are a part of the American peoples. (Kant 1997: 63)[23]

In the second volume of *Physical Geography* (1802) Kant rejects the idea (associated with the myth of Ham) of blackness as punishment, but also shares his knowledge of the thick skin of peoples in equatorial climates; when you chastise them it is best to use split bamboo rather than a whip, in order to enable the blood to escape, thus avoiding hematomas and infection (see Krell 2000: 109).[24] "Of the Different Human Races"

conjectures that different skin colours arise from the different precipitants of dissolved iron left in the channels of dermal excretion by the action of varying proportions of heat and humidity in the blood (see Shell 1996: 193).[25]

There is a tension in Kant's writings between the recognition of formal equality between individuals and peoples, and the substantive inequalities that shape individuals and peoples. The concept of race promises to clarify the variety and the unity found within the human species. "On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy" asks:

> What is a *race*? The word certainly does not belong in any systematic description of nature, so presumably the thing is nowhere to be found in nature. However, the *concept* which this expression designates is nevertheless well established in the reason of every observer of nature who supposes a conjunction of causes placed originally in the line of descent of the genus itself in order to account for the self-transmitted peculiarity that appears in different interbreeding animals but which does not lie in the concept of their genus. (1788a: 40)

The concept of race unites the greatest diversity in generation with the greatest unity of descent. Common ancestry and shared capacities (predispositions) are inferences made from observable differences of morphology and psychology. Kant is here concerned to rebut the argument of George Forster that variety in the human species is solely a product of adaption to climate and environment.[26]

Forster took issue with Kant's theory of race and his ill-informed characterisation of peoples, and, drawing on his own experience, stressed the importance of first hand observation over speculative generalisation:

> How much trouble has from time immemorial come to pass in the world because we proceeded from definitions in which we placed no mistrust and consequently saw—without knowing why—many things in a predetermined light and deceived ourselves and others. (Forster 1786: 148)

Kant's "On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy" (1788) answered Forster by arguing that perception and experience were subject to conditions of possibility that must be taken into account if any claim to objectivity is to be secured. Forster's claim that variety in the human species is solely a product of adaption to climate and environment ignores the fact that the influence of climate on inherited traits does not fully explain observable differences. Kant argue in favour of

monogenesis, and that the influence of climate on inherited traits cannot fully explain observable differences.[27]

Kant's explanation of racial difference centres on the hypothesis that nature has equipped human beings with seeds (*Keime*) and natural predispositions (*Anlagen*). That is to say, as Robert Bernasconi (2001: 23; 2006: 73-90) explains, the seeds of all the races were latent from the start in everyone, and the appropriate seed was actualised to serve a purpose that arose from the circumstances. Once certain predispositions or capacities are developed in a people in response to environment, all other predispositions are extinguished entirely.

The dispute with Forster hinged on Kant's claim that the concept of race, whereby variety within the human species attests to a shared origin because of the possibility of interbreeding, is more economical than the positing of a variety of origins. Forster regarded skin colour as an unreliable criterion in the classification of races and, unlike Kant, favoured a polygenetic theory of human origins, the theory then preferred by progressives on account of its anti-clerical bent (see Ackerknecht 1955; Agnew 2003; and Larrimore 2008).

Throughout "On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy" Kant argues for the essential unity of the human race, and for the influence of heredity in defence of his theory 'of the derivation of the inheritable variety of organic creatures from one and the same *natural genus* (species naturalis. in so far as these creatures are united though their ability to reproduce and could have originated from one common line of descent)' (1788a: 50). Kant is not rejecting Forster's claim for common line of descent, but rather what he sees as superstitious claims for the nature of this unity as involving an inexplicable power. The idea of seeds or potentialities shared by all humans serves as an alternative to Herder's notion of a fundamental, generative force mediating between matter and reason, which Kant considered to a reversion to metaphysics and the mysticism of the world-soul.[28]

It seems that as the methodological debate about biological classification progressed, Kant's universalism unravelled and he opened the door to identifying, on a biological basis, culturally or intellectually static races.[29] For Emmanuel Eze (1995) the textual evidence confirms that Kant encodes the human capacity for reason and talent in terms of

skin colour. Disagreeing with Eze, others point out that although racial biology is a fixed factor for Kant, levels of development are not.

Admittedly Kant believed that white Europeans to be the only race capable of developing themselves and achieving republican institutions and commercial economies. All the other races will have to be somehow brought along by Europe. Hence Kant's approval of the Governor of Mexico disallowing (against the order of the King of Spain) intermarriage between whites and Indians on the grounds that in such mingling the better lose more than the worse gain (see Shell 1996: 387, note 23). That is to say, in Kant's defence all people have some predisposition for the development of culture, even if (because of fixed racial characteristics) they will have to be guided to self-governance and commercial activities by Europeans. Progressive cultural dynamism continues, for the moment, to reside in the white race, and European civilisation will continue to drag the rest of the world behind it (see Hedrick 2003: 262-263).

Kant's baleful 'cognitive incapacity' (Appiah 1990: 8) may indeed be a reaction to a perceived threat to his interests or self-image, the result of poor information or misinterpretation. But such judgement reveals little about the concept of race except that it serves as a vehicle of prejudice. More than crude bias is at work here.

We have seen that for Kant racial categories order human variety in accordance with a certain unity. As the *Critique of Judgement* puts it, the prime concern is what unites humanity:

> the image for the entire kind, hovering between the singular and the multiply varied intuitions of individuals, the image that nature used as the archetype on which it based its productions within any one species, but which does not seeme to have attained completely in any one individual. (1790a: §17, 83)

As a concept, race functions as a *representatio communis*, a representation that is common to many things. I compare things and attend to that which they have in common, and I abstract from all other things; the result is a concept through which all these things can be thought.

From reflection one cognises what many things have in common, and afterward one takes away through abstraction that in which they do not agree. One abstracts the use of a concept from the diversity of that which is contained under it. After this comparing, reflecting and abstracting a *representatio communis* remains (see Kant 1992a: 351-353).

From analogy with animal breeding, relations of descent and the action of heredity are presupposed in the idea of unity. As Linnaean taxonomy was based upon shared physical characteristics, so too is Kant's conception of the transmission and development of inherited characteristics guided by phenotypic, observable differences of appearance and behaviour. Adaptability to environment does not explain everything for the white couple in a hot climate does not produce a black baby, even though the parents become tanned in the sun; neither does the black person turn white in a northern climate nor produce white children.

Ideas of heredity and lineage, the inheritance of acquired characteristics, arise from the observation of constancy and continuity and facilitate the leap from inherited physical characteristics to behavioural characteristics. The concept of race gives unity of representation to human variety and enables judgement, the unity of the act of bringing various representations under one common representation.

Race appears to be a regulative concept with which to understand the variety found in nature, a concept that makes sense of this variety in terms of descent. It is an idea that lies behind classification and interrelation in accordance with causality. That is, temporal sequence of appearances subsumed under the concept of an effect in relation to a cause, and appearances subsumed under the concept of substance. As Kant understood it, racial differences call for a purposive account (see Bernasconi 2001: 29).

Kant proposes that all the capacities implanted in a creature by nature are destined to unfold themselves in the course of time. Look at animals, their organs are used and all arrangements attain their end. Man, as the only rational creature on earth, is completely developed in the species rather than the individual (see Kant 1790b). In the "Analytic of Teleological Judgement," first division of the second part of the *Critique of Judgement*, Kant writes of generation and original capacity of selection and construction of a tree in which the possibility of grafting undermines any individual sense of self preservation. Of the organism he notes: 'In such a product nothing is gratuitous, purposeless, or to be attributed to a blind natural mechanism' (1790a: §66, 255).

Kant's example of Tierra del Fuegans, the aborigines of Argentina, takes place in the context of analysing the 'external purposive relations' that tell us what the purpose of a natural thing is:

> We cannot arrive at a categorical purpose in this way because, after all, we cannot see why people should have to exist (a question it might not be so easy to answer if we have in mind, say, the New Hollanders or Fuegians); rather, each such purposive relation rests on a condition that we have to keep putting off: this thing (namely, the existence of thing as a final purpose) is unconditioned and hence lies wholly outside a physicoteleological consideration of the world. But such a thing is not a natural purpose, since it (or its entire species [*Gattung*; race, as in human race]) is not to be regarded as a natural object. (§67, 258)[30]

It is difficult to see the purpose served by some beings (including man) within nature; we need an extra-natural purpose which, as such, lies entirely outside the study of the world on physico-teleological lines. Something that surpasses our teleological cognition of nature is needed if 'the limits of the cognition of (cultural) man' (Spivak 1999: 26) are to be transcended.

Kant's point seems to be that critical philosophy does transcend this limit via attention to the form of purposiveness as the principle of regulative and not constitutive judgement. From this perspective everything in the world is good for something or other, nothing is in vain, and this can be seen when we consider the totality of nature. But at the level of the mechanism of physical causality we cannot determine the end of nature by design for this or that natural thing. At best, Kant can be read as saying that this is what happens if we abandon any appeal to the supersensible; it is impossible to explain why some human beings exist, why human life ever rises above that of the domestic animals they raise.

The concept of race is a unifier of sensory variety whereby evident characteristics are paired with successive states, and causes become reasons. Race is parasitic upon the systematic ordering of concepts in terms of the relation between genera and species. First, diverse particulars are classified as members of a single species, and then distinct species are unified on the basis of common properties into a genus, then different genera into higher genera, etc. The very possibility of concepts as general representations presupposes a system of concepts subordinate

to one another in terms of the relation of genera and species (see Allison 2001: 32-34). Race, as it were, borrows the function of species. Yet species is not exterior to the concept of race either.

Theodore Vial has warned against misreading Kant's concept of teleology, which is 'a subjective regulative concept … Not knowledge, not assumption, but presentiment perhaps' (2016: 52). Teleology is a part of how we look at the world, and for Kant science requires the subjective regulative assumption of intention in the universe. Quoting Kant's "On the Use of the Principle of Teleology," Vial argues that race is a concept of natural purpose not limited to evidence of experience but is tied to "'a purpose determinately given a priori by pure practical reason (in the Idea of the highest good)".' Race for Kant is a matter of subjective taste rather than an objective fact of nature.[31] As Vial sums up:

> One does not experience race in a systematic description of nature. But if we want to move from natural description to natural history (from one damn thing to another to a law, or a narrative with a beginning, middle, and end), if we want to show what is but why and how it must be so, we need to supply a teleological account … Like Kant, we cannot help but frame things in terms of progress.' (Vial 2016: 52-53)

Race is part of the idea of progress, and race is a subjective principle. As a matter to taste, the idea of race is a subjective judgement that gives satisfaction. A judgement of taste, aesthetic, for Kant does not designate anything about the object (i.e., is not a determinate judgement, but a reflective judgement). And yet we speak of race as if race were a quality of the object. It is our mistake and not Kant's, argues Vial, to take race as a determination of objects.

Putting aside whether or not the idea of race can ever be disinterested, it seems that race is indeed like taste in so far as it is implicated in what Derrida terms a 'moral semiotics' (1987: 115). But, unlike beauty, race is tied to progress and race certainly does have a conceptual and determinant representation of an end. The defence of a misunderstood Kant fails to illuminate the forces that inform the concept of race.

Organism

> The very possibility of European modernity as an Idea was the explicit metaphysical negation and theoretical exclusion of Africa and the African, archetypally frozen as 'savage' and 'primitive.'
>
> —Emmanuel Eze, "Modern Western Philosophy and African Colonialism"

It would seem that the concept of race led Kant astray, enabled him to stay at home in provincial prejudice and get intellectually lost at the same time.[32] But why?

If we set aside the tempting, and reversible, hypothesis that Kant was racist because he was European, then aspects of the concept of race that have contributed to its tenacity begin to come into focus. We have seen that race is concerned with origin and development and thus with the history of nature (*Naturgeschichte*). But where does this interest in nature come from, what lays the ground for the emergence of the concept of race?

The idea of development, and regressive as well as progressive dependency, is bound up with the idea of the unity of nature. The latter is a transcendental presupposition in so far as we presuppose that nature does in fact possess this unity.[33] Kant is concerned to understand the purposiveness evident in the ability of an organism to adapt to its environment and to pass on these adaptations unchanged to its descendants.

In so far as race is bound up with causality it is also linked to the concept of time; both the successive order of time grounded in causality, and temporality as pure intuition, the nexus linked to the transcendental imagination. The eighteenth century birth of the concept of race can only be understood against the background of the debate about the nature of the organism and the rejection of preformationism (the theory that biological phenomena are produced by God, in miniature at the time of Creation).

Preformationism saw the generation of one organism from another as an illusion. The new science of the seventeenth century sought to break with Aristotelian teleology and explain natural phenomena mechanically, without the assumption of a guiding end or purpose, and

extended to the hypothesis that the inorganic matter has the power to organise itself as in crystals, snowflakes. Final causes guide mechanical process (see Kant 1790a: §72-71, 270-277). But what distinguishes mechanical process from organic process, and why was this distinction important for Kant?

Since an organism was understood as something which possessed organs (working instruments), it was important to distinguish between the organism as complex instrument and the machine. The primary goal of created beings is self-realisation. However, the argument that organisms have a self-causing capacity that involves self-maintenance and reproduction does not necessarily distinguish them from more complex machines. Hence the theological resonance of the question of design or construction, and the physical-mechanical necessity under which a thing is possible in terms of efficient causality. Mechanism rules out the question of purposive behaviour, while vitalism mystifies purposive striving.

Kant appears to have rejected the idea of creation by God in favour of natural processes, but he also rejected the fundamental forces of matter alone as sufficient to account for biological phenomena. Organisms may not be produced by design (i.e., natural products), but they appear (to us) as if they are so produced (i.e., artefacts).

Hannah Ginsborg shows how Kant navigates this debate and, in the *Critique of Judgement*, formulates the contradictory idea of a natural end or natural purpose (*Naturzweck*)—a regulative concept that is also a part of nature—to account for the irreducibly formative drive or force (*Bildungstrieb*) observable in biological phenomena. Organisms can be explained by mechanical explanation, but mechanical explanations are insufficient and so we need to appeal to final causes. Hume argued that causal connection cannot be inferred from experience, and Kant responded that causality that unites perception into experience is a condition of experience.

For Kant, causality is a category or pure concept of the understanding, a concept of relation under which all perceptions must first be subsumed before they can serve as judgements of experience.[34] The concept of a natural end (purposiveness without intentionality), contingent lawfulness, involves a contradiction because it posits a

naturally given object as governed by normative constraints. Race forms part of this problematic.

How, Ginsborg asks, can we regard something both as natural, and as manifesting (or failing to manifest) how it *ought* to be, or what *ought* to happen? After all, normativity is part of our natural psychological processes and not a part of nature, for to regard something as if it is designed is no different from regarding it as in fact designed. How can we coherently regard an organism (animal or plant) both as an end and as a natural product?

Ginsborg interprets Kant to be claiming that 'our entitlement to regard particular natural things as purposive, and hence as natural ends, derives from a more general principle belonging to the faculty of judgement, namely that of the purposiveness of nature for judgement' (2009: 465). Kant:

> No human being appreciates *a priori* that there must be a purpose in nature, but we can very well appreciate *a priori* that there must be a connection between causes and effects. Consequently, the use of the teleological principle is, in the consideration of nature, always empirically conditioned. (1788a: 52; see also A547, B575, 540)

Critique of Judgement attempts to clarify these issues. Purposiveness must be thought to entail the abandonment of mechanism for it is tautological to explain the apparent purposiveness of objects by appealing to a case that acts according to purposiveness. Groping for such a cause we stray into the transcendent where reason is seduced to poetic raving.

Yet the principle of purposiveness, when dealing with the products of nature, is a useful heuristic principle for investigating the particular laws of nature. Reason must proceed cautiously and regard nature's power to produce things with a shape that manifests purposiveness as possible through mere mechanism. But the attempt to explain things in mechanical terms must not then exclude the teleological principle:

> For [going to the extreme of explaining everything only mechanically] must make reason fantasize and wander among chimeras of natural powers that are quite inconceivable, just as much as a merely teleological kind of explanation that takes no account whatever of the mechanism of nature made reason rave. (1790a: §78, 296)

Neither the explanation of nature's causality in terms of mechanism nor in terms of purposiveness are free of serious objections. Because they are

mutually exclusive they can all too readily become dogmatic and constitutive principles of determinative judgement for gaining insight into nature. Kant offers an illustration:

> For example, if I assume that a maggot should be regarded as the product of the mere mechanism of matter (i.e., of the restructuring that matter does on its own, once its elements are set free by putrefaction), I cannot then go on to derive the same product from the same matter [now regarded] as a causality that acts in terms of purposes. Conversely, if I assume the maggot is a natural purpose, then I cannot count on there being a mechanical way of producing it and cannot assume this as a constitutive principle for judging how a maggot is possible. (§78, 296-297)

We need a principle that makes it possible to reconcile the mechanical and the teleological principles by which we judge nature. As supersensible and transcendental such a principle cannot be known.

All we can do when confronted with natural beings, whose possibility is inconceivable to us purely in terms of the principle of mechanism, is rely also on teleological principles. At least both principles are probably reconciled in one higher principle that, as the origin of both principles of physical laws and final principles, is itself neither purely mechanistic nor intentional. The possibility that the two types of production might well be linked in one and the same basis is a source of reflective rather than determinative judgement.[35]

Race is entwined with the prickly matter of Kant's terminological distinctions. Key is the idea of purposiveness in so far as the concept entails that capacities are realised in various environments and transmitted to future generations. That is, race is bound up with the idea of a purposive and unified nature that is amenable to our understanding of the purposiveness of nature. The harmonisation of nature with our judgement involves both cognitive power and (contra Kant)[36] the subjective sense of pleasure. Although it seems to be tethered to teleology, purposiveness shares the 'as if' structure of evolution which maintains that organisms act 'as if' they are trying to develop the best organs and survival strategies. Although, in itself, we tend to believe today that the process is purely mechanical and senseless (see Žižek 2006: 238).

For Kant race does not refer to some racial essence, rather it unfolds within the perspective of causation; the necessity of a series leading up to

and beyond a conditioned being. There does not need to be any essence other than human potential (which, of course, might play the role of essence). Race functions by inference and analogy according to the principle that what belongs to the many is so because of a common ground. Eventually, as racism, the concept of race will refer to the conditions of possibility of the entity man, joining together perception and reason, matter and form in the attempt to generate schemata (apprehension-rules), categories and hierarchies, under which to subsume representations.

Race names the ground or cause of its subsequent effect, a necessary and sufficient connection, and becomes itself metaphysical. Analogical inferences yield identity of the ground, the organic technic of nature. The concept of race carries the burden not only of affirming the principle of nature's purposiveness for judgement, for our cognitive faculties, but also vindicating nature's cognisability. Race, it seems, accords both with the subordination of mechanism to teleology and with 'the principle that the perceptual and imaginative activity with which we respond to nature outside of us, while itself a part of nature broadly construed, can also be regarded as *appropriate* (and, on occasion, *inappropriate*) to the natural objects which elicit it through their effects on our sense-organs' (Ginsborg 2009: 466).[37]

In Kantian terms it seems that race functions as a concept of reflective knowledge with a categorical function. As the concept of the form taken by human matter/content, race is the result of the efficient causality shared by all human beings (seeds, predispositions) in accordance with the final cause imposed by nature on human nature. But race is not merely a heuristic means whereby we understand organisms. It foregrounds the abyss of judgement.

Kant distinguishes between two powers of judgement, determinate or reflective. The former goes from the universal to the particular, the latter from the particular to the universal. Reflective judgement, moving from the particular to the universal, looks like an empirical judgement. But reflective judgement does not determine the object, only the mode of reflection concerning it. The concept of the purposiveness of nature belongs to reflective judgement, the subject's power to reflect. Kant further distinguishes two types of inferences of the reflective mode of

judgement, inference through induction and inference through analogy (see 1992b: §82-84, 625-626).

In *Kant's Theory of Taste*, Henry E. Allison addresses Kant's discussion about inferring empirical universals from particulars via induction and analogy. Inference by induction moves from the particular to the universal via the principle that what belongs to many things of a genus belongs to the remaining ones also. Inference by analogy moves from a particular similarity of property to a total similarity of remaining properties.[38] The principle of these inferences is, according to Kant, '*that the many will not agree in one without a common ground, but rather that which belongs to the many in this way will be necessary due to a common ground*' (1992b: §83, 626; and see Allison 2001: 35).

Race appears to be related to the kind of reflective judgement that proceeds by analogy and a common ground. But race also makes an assertion about how objects came to be, and it says something about the structure and constitution of nature. It anticipates or predetermines what the object as such is, and so has a constitutive aspect; gathering to itself the regulative function of reflective judgement as well as the power of constitutive judgement to determine how nature really is. It would seem that the concept of race mediates knowledge of an object and is bound up with our entitlement to think of nature in the normative terms required by natural teleology, and it operates by means of a version of the contradictory idea of a natural end. As a concept based on inheritable characteristics, race comprehends phenomena in accordance with a principle of unity, and, as a teleological judgement, compares what is with what ought to be.

Race, as a concept revealing the unity of representations, is not ingrained in our mode of representation for race is not part of logic, the necessary laws of the understanding and of reason, or the form of thought. But it is linked to the category of causality, an *a priori* concept and form of thought by which we grasp the phenomenal world of nature. Biological species are not, as Linnaeus would have it, aggregates assembled on the basis of a subjectively perceived likeness (see Shell 1996: 194). Race proceeds by inference and analogy which are inseparable from our cognition and the power of judgement. Yet errors for the most part arise from inference and analogy: 'a crutch for the

human understanding' (Kant 1992c: 409) that we cannot do without, even though they lead to mistakes.

This is made explicit in the *Critique of Pure Reason* when race appears in the appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic in the context of the critique of human reason's natural propensity to overstep the bounds of reason. Kant is concerned here with the tendency of our reasoning to form hierarchically related concepts, and to move towards ever higher, more inclusive, general principles. Our understanding embeds one inference in an ascending series of inferences forming systematically interrelated concepts. Inference is possible because our concepts stand in hierarchies related as species and genera.

Kant is also concerned with the explanation of the dialectical illusion in all transcendental proofs of the existence of a necessary being. With the existence of a supreme being to give unity and purpose to nature reduced to a matter of faith, what then explains the order and purposiveness observable throughout the world? It is in the wake of these cosmological and theological speculations that the concept of race resurfaces under the heading "On the regulative use of the ideas of pure reason:"

> If I see insightful men in conflict with one other over the characteristics of human beings, animals or plants, or even bodies in the mineral realm, where some, e.g., assume particular characters of people [*Volkscharaktere*] based on their descent or on decisive and hereditary distinctions between families, races [*Rassen*], etc., while others, by contrast, fix their minds of the thought that nature has set up no predispositions at all in this matter, and that all differences rest only on external contingency, then I need only consider the constitution of the object in order to comprehend that it lies too deeply for either of them to be able to speak from an insight into the nature of the object. (A667, B695, 603-604)

Confronted with nature's diversity and unity it is tempting to speculate on the cause, and particularly tempting to speculate on the cause of our own identity and differences as a species. Indeed our own reason tempts us to speculate in accordance with the transcendental presupposition that 'we simply have to presuppose the systematic unity of nature as objectively valid and necessary (A651, B679, 595). But we cannot yet legitimately claim to have knowledge of the cause of this organisation.

Race, as a classificatory concept, is bound up with the transcendental ideas of unity and substance that overreach experience and so lead us into delusion and deception. Kant compares transcendental illusion to optical illusion; to the sea appearing higher at the centre of the horizon, or the moon seeming larger as it rises (B354, 386). Or like the objects seen behind the surface of a mirror, the illusion of depth behind the mirror's plane is particularly useful if we want to see not only the objects in front of our eyes, but also the objects behind us (A645, B673, 591). One needs to be able to judge correctly.

Judgement

> Humanism administers lessons to 'us' (?)
> —Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*

It looks like the concept of race, *qua* concept, has its place in understanding which uses it to judge the totality of humanity (the human race) as the unity of species, and to make distinctions within the components or strands (races) that go to make that unity.

The section of the *Critique of Judgement* entitled "The Reason Why it is Impossible to treat The Concept of a Technic of Nature Dogmatically Is That Natural Purpose Is Inexplicable" distinguishes between the dogmatic and the critical treatment of a concept. Race, as a concept that subsumes natural things under it, would then be determinate and not merely reflective. It is an empirically determined concept that is itself determined in accordance with another concept, the idea of human development. As such, race would fall into the category of a dogmatic concept: 'We treat a concept (even an empirically conditioned one) dogmatically if we consider it as contained under, and determined in accordance with, another concept of the object such that this other concept amounts to a principle of reason' (1790a: §74, 277).

The temptation, as we have seen, is to put the concept of race in the category of subjective prejudice, a category into which the inferences frequently made from the concept certainly deserve to be consigned. Or as Kant puts it: 'We treat a concept merely critically if we consider it only

in relation to our critical power, and hence in relation to the subjective conditions under which we think it, without venturing to decide anything about its object.' The problem, of course, is that the concept of race does indeed venture to decide something about its object. And what is decided under the concept of race is what we have been calling human development or progress, which in turn presumes a direction or purpose in human life—what Kant terms 'the concept of a thing as a natural purpose.'

Such a decision subsumes nature under 'a causality that is conceivable only [as exercised] by reason; this subsumption then allows us to use that [causal] principle in order to judge what experience gives us of that object.' Since we have no definitive proof of the objective reality of a natural purpose, 'the concept is not constitutive for determinative judgement, but merely regulative for reflective judgement' (§74, 278). And so it appears we are back to the possibility of race as implicated in reflective judgement (via natural purposiveness and causality). And to the possibility that the concept of race cannot be dismissed as merely subjective prejudice.

The connection with natural purpose blocks any smooth relegation to dogmatic subjectivism. But then neither does race qualify as a rational principle. And yet herein lies the abyss of judgement that complicates the concept of race. For the concept of a natural purpose is itself undecidable; whether it has objective reality or whether it is part of how we conceive the world is impossible to decide, 'we have no way of seeing' (§74, 278). '[Therefore,] we do not know whether the concept is an objectively empty one that [we use] merely [for] reasoning (*conceptus ratiocinans*), or is a rational concept, a concept that is a basis for cognition and is confirmed by reason (*conceptus ratiocinatus*).' The conclusion is obvious: because of this undecidability 'we cannot treat this concept dogmatically, for determinative judgement … In other words, the concept is not constitutive for determinate judgement, but merely regulative for reflective judgement.'

The concept of race is linked, or rather feeds off or parasitises, the regulative function of natural purpose for reflective judgement. The dogmatic determinism of race hangs from the thread of the ambiguity of natural purpose.

If the concept of a natural purpose was 'objectively empty' would that not satisfactorily devalue the concept of race? It would not, in the terms we are exploring, drag down the concept of race into the bin of dogmatic subjectivism, but it would nudge it further away from any claim to real objectivity. What Kant has to say about the concept of a thing as a natural purpose has profound implications for the concept of race which concerns 'a *natural product*,' that product being for our purposes man.

A natural product has two apparently contradictory aspects, natural necessity and contingency:

> That [the objective reality] of the concept of a thing as a natural purpose cannot be proved by reason is clear from this: as a concept of a *natural product* it contains natural necessity; and yet, as concept of the same thing as purpose, it contains at the same time a contingency (relative to mere laws of nature) of the form of the object. (§74, 278)

Nature is not a machine, and human beings, like other organisms, are not living machines. Natural necessity contains at the same time a contingency. This is why for determinative judgement which has empirical objects as its object 'the concept of a thing as a natural purpose is transcendent', i.e., no object is encountered which proves the reality of the concept of natural purpose.

For reflective judgement the concept of natural purpose 'may be immanent as concerns objects of experience' and part of how we conceptualise natural products; 'and hence we cannot provide it with the objective reality [needed] for determinative judgement' (§74, 279). Hence the undecidability of the concept of a natural purpose.

At first glance it is tempting to map the concept of race onto this account of natural purposiveness. Do not the mythical, paranoid projected fictions of race dovetail with the 'transcendent,' i.e., unproveable and all-encompassing, aspect of determinative judgement which has empirical objects as its target? How neatly does race fit the criteria of immanence, as when it is claimed that race is simply one of the structures of how we think, and that everyone is by nature a racist? Race as natural purpose, the end and inner essence, would seem to seal the isomorphism.

Clearly such a recoding and intermingling of race and natural purpose is at work in some dealings with race. A perennially exploitable conceptual reserve, or misconception, we might say. Yet the overlay does

not work, not least because the concept of a natural purpose does not arise from taking a subjective principle for a determinative principle. Natural purpose is not what we would like it to be, and neither is race what we would not like natural purpose to be. Kant's argument offers a way out of the dead end of such a diagnosis in a way that avoids the recuperative capacity of the concept of race to always spring up out of its apparent quarantine.

Regarding the productive undecidability of the concept of natural purpose, Geoffrey Bennington (2017: 144-197) poses the questions: By what capacity of judgement do we decide this undecidability? What enables us to see the intertwining of natural necessity and contingency? What enables us to see what 'we have no way of seeing,' a known unknown?

It seems that the over-arching answer involves freedom and necessity, or lawfulness. Bennington suggests that evidence of the autonomy of judgement is, in part, provided by the contradiction between mechanical causality and final causality (natural purposiveness). Mechanical causality meets its limit in organisms apparently subject to final causality. Since final causality or natural purposiveness does not rule out, but rather presupposes as *natural* purpose, contingency and chance are observable in organisms.[39]

We have seen that race grafts onto mechanical causality and natural purposiveness.[40] Often under the guise of mechanical causality (genetics, sociobiology, etc.) the concept of race retains its transcendent aspect which points to the final end of nature (humanity). Whether as human perfectability (the goal of natural purposiveness), evolution, survival, or trans-humanism as the sublation of the human—all point to the final end of nature. As Kant puts it, 'it must be that reason has a certain suspicion [*Ahnung*: presentiment], or that nature gives us a hint, as it were, that if we use the concept of final causes we could perhaps reach beyond nature and connect nature itself to the highest point in the series of causes' (§72, 271).

Judgement, it seems, is essentially teleological and when race thinking is opposed by an equally teleological speculation regarding the ends of man and nature nothing essential is displaced. The end remains the good of humanity. The anti-race strategy of invoking mechanistic causality

(there is no race gene) appeals to the very mechanical necessity which Kant says undermines the contingency of the human organism and its final end as the realisation of freedom. By a peculiar twist of logic, those arguing for the reality of race are able to point with satisfaction to the verification of mechanical determinism and at the same time offer the possibility of transcendent alternative beyond mere materialism. Exactly who, then, is threatening the dignity and freedom of us humans, etc.?

While Kant certainly distinguishes races (whites, Negroes, Huns and Hindus), he also argues that there is only one human species, not different sub-species. The primary concern is with the *Bestimmung*, determination or destiny, of the species as a whole.[41] The human race is a collective identity secured over time in the concept of race. Which explains in part why it has been argued that, prompted by his revision of his theory of biology, Kant changed his mind on the importance of racial difference (see Kleingeld 2007). However, what is more valuable is the evidence of race accompanying Kant's thinking to the end, and the fact that criticism of the violence of the civilised was accompanied by an unfolding raciology.

In the essay "Toward Perpetual Peace," having sketched the limits of hospitality extended to the stranger and commented that no-one originally has any greater right than anyone else to occupy any particular portion of the earth, Kant writes:

> If we compare with this the *inhospitable* behavior of the civilised, especially commercial, in our part of the world, the injustice they show in *visiting* foreign lands and peoples (which with them is tantamount to *conquering* them) goes to horrifying lengths. When America, the negro counties, the Spice Islands, the Cape, and so forth were discovered, they were, to them, countries belonging to no one, since they counted the inhabitants as nothing. In the East Indies (Hindustan), they brought in foreign soldiers under the pretext of merely proposing to set up trading posts, but with them oppression of the inhabitants, incitement of the various Indian states to widespread wars, famine, rebellions, treachery, and the whole litany of troubles that oppress the human race … and this for powers that make much ado of their piety and, while they drink wrongfulness like water, want to be known as the elect in orthodoxy. (Kant 1795: 329-30)[42]

Violence is one of the means whereby the peoples of the earth have thus entered into a universal community, and Kant highlights the hypocrisy of those who claim a monopoly on civilisation.

Peter Fenves (2003) interprets Kant to be arguing that European rulers may present themselves as the representatives of civilisation, but they are more savage than those whom they treat as such. Kant did not want to introduce the idea of natural differences and so risk deflecting attention from the political equality of those subject to arbitrary decree. According to Fenves (2003: 99), one of the reasons Kant dropped his defence of the concept of race by the time he wrote the *Critique of Judgement* (1790) is that he did not want to bolster the arrogance of European rulers and their apologists. A defence that begs the question of the role of Kant's other major works in shoring up such conceit.

One can trace a certain caution regarding the grading of humans back to Kant's early work. *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens* (1755) considers the varieties of life that undoubtedly exist on other solar bodies. Kant speculates that the material composition of beings will get finer and more delicate the further they live away from the sun. Fineness in material composition has as its correlate excellence of thinking and imagination. Indulging pleasant speculations regarding these different inhabitants, Kant notes that '[h]uman nature, which in the scale of being holds, as it were, the middle rung, is located between the two absolute outer limits of perfection, equidistant from both:'

> If the idea of the most sublime classes of sensible creatures living on Jupiter or Saturn provokes the jealousy of human beings and discourages them with the knowledge of their own humble position, a glance at the lower stages brings content and calms them again. The beings on the planets Venus and Mercury are reduced far below the perfection of human nature. What a view worthy of our astonishment! On one side we saw thinking creatures among whom a Greenlander or a Hottentot [*Grönländer oder Hottentotte*] would be a Newton; on the other side we saw people who would admire Newton as if he were an ape [*Affen*].
>
> Superior beings, when of late they saw
> A moral Man unfold all Nature's law,
> Admir'd such wisdom in an earthly shape,
> *And shew'd a NEWTON as we shew an Ape.*
> (Pope) (Kant 1755: 138)

The symbols of intellectual inferiority are non-Europeans subject to European colonisation, who are compared to primates.[43] While there is a hierarchy between different worlds, the planetary nature of density precludes a hierarchy of intelligences on the same planet (see Schönfeld 2000: 123-4). Pope's *Essay on Man*, "Epistle II: Of the Nature and State of Man, With Respect to Himself as an Individual," is invoked to caution against the hubris of man.[44]

As a concept race spans and gathers forces that not only claim to explain facts and tendencies, but which structure our conception of those matters. Descent, lineality, is part of our representation of natural organisms. Sequence and purposiveness—relation (inheritance and subsistence) and causality (dependence and community)—are conditions of the possibility of natural organism. Kant's lesson, however prejudiced and incorrect his own judgements were, is that we need to critically reflect on the perspective through which we experience and judge if we are to avoid systematic distortion.

Conclusion

> "The aliens are not coming—they are already here and they have infiltrated human society while looking human."
>
> —David Icke, "Renegade: The Life Story of David Icke"

It seems that Kant's interest in race was not a pre-critical lapse of judgement. His final writings contain the following passage:

> One can take the classification of organic and living beings further. Not only does the vegetable kingdom exist for the sake of the animal kingdom (and its increase and diversification), but men, as rational beings, exist for the sake of others of a different species (race). The latter stand at a higher level of humanity, either simultaneously [*neiben einander*] (as, for instance, Americans and Europeans) or sequentially [*nach einander*]. For instance, if our globe (having once been dissolved into chaos, but now being organized and regenerating) were to bring forth, by revolutions of the earth, differently organized creatures, which, in turn, gave place to others after their destruction, organic nature could be conceived in terms of different world-epochs, reproducing themselves in different forms, and our earth as

> an organically formed body—not one formed merely mechanically. (Kant 1995: 66-67)

Europeans are superior to Americans, but this superiority is curtailed by the collective prospective inferiority of the human species. But superiority is relative, not absolute, and perhaps transient.

Peter Fenves (2003: 160-169) suggests that human beings, ends-in-themselves from the perspective of practical reason, are a means for transition to another 'species (race)' from the perspective of theoretical reason. We do not exist so that reason can be realised. We exist for another species of the same genus or another race of the same species for whom we make a place. In giving this law of concession to ourselves we, as rational beings, do something that plants and animals cannot do. Now is the time for concession.[45] Human beings exist for the sake of another species of the same genus or another race of the same species, and humankind is a means whose end lies in another, late coming rational being. Until the late comers arrive we have no way of knowing if they are another species or another race.[46]

Earlier Kant had warned against assuming that we are the only rational creatures or that other rational creatures reason like us. Either assumption substitutes habit for cognition 'in a way similar to animals:' 'For merely because we are not familiar with rational beings other than the human being, we would have a right to assume them to be constituted just as we cognize ourselves to be, i.e., we actually would be familiar with them' (1788b: 146). To assume that other rational beings lack 'a different way of presenting [*Vorstellungsart*: picturing]' is to propose 'that our ignorance would render us greater services for expanding our cognition than any meditation.' The human species is a bridge that disappears as a subject race:

> as if the other race were to arrive on earth, colonize all of the continents, and make their original inhabitants, including Europeans, into a subject race. Slavery is perhaps ruled out, but colonial servitude is not … the image of Europe suddenly colonised by a race that treats its inhabitants as they have treated the inhabitants of other continents. (Fenves 2003: 163)

Human beings must concede their space to other beings for the sake of whom they exist. Global colonial servitude and extra-terrestrial domination are inseparable from the idea of humanity and of progress.

The words that Kant wrote and deleted after the above quotation permit, perhaps, some optimism:

> only although rational creatures nevertheless preferably make a place [*Platz zu machen*] for other, still more perfectly organized ones— not merely [*de*] *facto* (with respect to their political existence) but rather [*de*] *jure* because of their now innately greater specific perfection, so that it would be organized after the earlier ones have conceded them their place [*nachdem die vorige ihnen Platz geräumt haben*], until finally a universal unity [*allgemeine Einheit*] of the final purpose of all organic bodies in a supreme world cause (which here may be called *demiurge*, since it is not here considered from a moral perspective[)] brings forth a complete organization. Earth-globe now now [breaks off]. (quoted in Fenves 2003: 167)[47]

Race resurfaces within the quest for unity and the compatibility between freedom and causality, 'our idea of perfect humanity' (A568, B596, 551), and the destiny of reason. Know the outcome and you'll see the journey.

Notes

[1] The epigram to Gates's *Finding Oprah's Roots: Finding Your Own* reads: 'If a race has no history, if it has no worth-while tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated' (2009: ix). The epigram is a quotation from Carter G. Woodson (1926: 239), founder of Negro History Week (now Black History Month in the USA).

[2] One can now add to Eze's list *A Companion to Kant* (2010), edited by Graham Bird, which also does not mention race.

[3] See Judy (1991) for an argument that rejects this nicety. Hill and Boxill (2001) defend Kant. See also Mills (2005); and Larrimore (2008).

[4] If this is the only spirit in which you can read works in the history of philosophy, then both you and the world at large would be better off if you simply remained ignorant of the history of philosophy and did not put on a show of knowing anything about it.' (Wood 2004: xi-xii)

[5] In *Not for Profit. Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (2010), Nussbaum links Enlightenment values to the role of the humanities in raising awareness of the structure of argument, and forming capacities for citizenship and respectful action. She does not address the equally important question of whether the current system needs citizenship and respectful action.

[6] In fact the critique has not, so far, thrown the baby out with the bath water: 'All the elements of a solution to the problems of humanity have, at different times, existed in European thought. But Europeans have not carried out in practice the mission which

fell to them, which consisted of bringing their whole weight to bear violently upon these elements, of modifying their arrangement and their nature, of changing them and, finally, of bringing the problem of mankind to an infinitely higher plane' (Fanon 1961: 253).

[7] In terms of intellectual exchange, there seems no more reason than usual to fear the overthrow of reason; see Eze's, *On Reason: Rationality in a World of Cultural Conflict and Racism* (2008).

[8] 'There is no plausibility at all, for example, in the suggestion that such Kantian principles as human equality, rationalism, universalism, and cosmopolitanism are in their content favorable to racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression, and such a thesis needs only to be stated explicitly to discredit itself. But this highly implausible thesis may be put forward by implication if it can be associated with the quite distinct point that *even* a cosmopolitan and universal ethical theory, such as Kant's, can be combined with racist or male-supremacist views in its application.' (Wood 2008: 12)

[9] This is the argument of Patric Colm Hogan's (1993) review of Balibar and Wallerstein's *Race, Nation, Class*.

[10] Careful study of Kant's structuring metaphors would include consideration of the seed analogy: 'It is too bad that it is first possible for us to glimpse the idea in a clearer light and to outline a whole architectonically, in accordance with the ends of reason, only after we have long collected relevant cognitions haphazardly [*rhapsoditisch*] like building materials and worked through them technically with only a hint from an idea lying hidden within us. The systems seemed to have been formed, like maggots [*Gewürme*], by a *generation aequivoca* [spontaneous generation] from the mere confluence of aggregated concepts, garbled at first but complete in time, although they all had their schema, as the original seed, in the mere self-development of reason, and on that account are not merely each articulated for themselves in accordance with an idea but are rather all in turn purposively united with each other as members of a whole in a system of human cognition, and allow an architectonic to all human knowledge, which at the present time, since so much material has already been collected or can be taken from the ruins of collapsed older edifices, would not merely be possible but would not even be very difficult' (A835, B863, 692-693). As we shall see, the idea of seeds is essential to the concept of race.

[11] See also Book 1, Part II, *Critique of Practical Reason*; and *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, Preface and §27-30.

[12] Or in the words of Martha Nussbaum: "We should recognize humanity wherever it occurs, and give its fundamental ingredients, reason and moral capacity, our first allegiance and respect" (1997: 7).

[13] Kant acknowledges the barriers to the universality he is attempting to construct. Reflecting on his taking stock of his building materials and the type of edifice they might compose, he concludes: 'It turned out, of course, that although we had in mind a tower that would reach the heavens, the supply of materials sufficed only for a dwelling

that was just roomy enough for our business on the plane of experience and high enough to survey it; however, that bold undertaking had to fail from lack of material, not to mention the confusion of languages that unavoidably divided the workers over the plan and dispersed them throughout the world, leaving each to build on his own according to his design' (A707, B735, 627).

[14] See Jacques Derrida (1981) and Michel Foucault (1984) for responses to Enlightenment blackmail. Edward Baring links this debate to the argument that anti-colonial thinkers can only extricate themselves from Europe using European ideas (2010).

[15] Hume's invocation of the parrot has been interpreted as referring to the Cambridge educated Jamaican poet Francis Williams. For a defence of Hume see Valls (2005). See Immerwahr (1992: 482) for the textual history of "an ugly piece of racism that stains Hume's character"; also also Palter (1995), Garrett, (2000), Eze (2000), and Morton (2002).

[16] See David Hume, "Of the Populousness of Antient Nations" (1752), in *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*.

[17] Gilles Deleuze comments on the alienation effect of Hume's scepticism: 'His empiricism is a sort of science fiction universe *avant la lettre*. As in science fiction, one has impression of a fictive, foreign world, seen by other creatures, but also the presentiment that this world is already ours, and those creatures, ourselves' (2001: 35).

[18] Lawrence Thomas argues for this interpretation (2004: 235-36). As Todd Hedrick comments: "even if we agree with Kant that judgments regarding the *character* of individuals and judgments about the *moral worth* of persons are analytically distinct modes, it would surely be naïve to believe that, at the level of impure historical reality, the two modes have nothing to do with one another." (2008: 267).

[19] Buffon's *Histoire naturelle générale et particulière* (1749-1788) and other texts disclosed an interwoven network of biological lineages, interconnecting and interweaving with one another in a vast tapestry (see Sloan 1979, and Bernasconi 2001: 16). Buffon's *La dègènèration des animaux* (1766) argued that the white man, who truly represents humanity, has grown progressively blacker in a tropical climate and can recover his original, normal color by returning to the temperate zone. Buffon suggested an experiment whereby a number of blacks would be transported from Senegal to Denmark and kept there in isolation and under observation. It would then become clear how long it would take for such people to turn white, blonde, and blue-eyed (see Isaac 2004: 9-10). Isaac argues that Kant, like Buffon, assumed that racial characteristics are determined by external influences (climate) and then, after many generations become hereditary (i.e., acquired characters became hereditary). Peter Kolben's *Caput Bonae Spei Hodiernum, das ist Vollständige Beschreibung des africanischen Vorgebürges der Guten Hoffnung* (1719) presents a sympathetic portrait of the KhoiKhoi beliefs and customs (see Anne Good 2006). Sigfried Huigen notes that Kant used the abbreviated, second edition of Kolben's work (2009: 57, note 94). In his first chapter, "Kolb's Defence of the 'Hottentots' (1819),"

Huigen shows how Kolben tried to turn around the prejudice that the badness of the Hottentots 'was established a priori' (34). See also Christopher Fox et al (1995). According to Martin Schönfeld Hottentots are KhoiKhoin [sic], Bushmen, "the original inhabitants of South Africa" (200: 122). Kant read about *Bushmänner* in Kolben's account of his travels. John H. Zammito outlines the new understanding of man as a cultural being constituted through historical process which contributed to the vogue for travel literature: 'The key idea was that the *synchronic* dispersal of cultural levels demonstrated by the travel literature mirrored faithfully the *diachronic* evolution of human cultural levels, so that the juxtaposition of the "primitives" (Hottentots or Hurons) with contemporary Europeans told the same story of "civilization" that could be constructed from the sequence of historical cultures from the ancient Fertile Crescent to the *siècle des lumiéres*' (2002: 236).

[20] See Susan Shell (2002) for discussion of the tensions in Kant's theory of moral education revealed by this passage. Kant is drawing on Jean-Baptiste Labat's memoir of the Antilles, *Nouveau Voyage aux isles Françoises de l'Amérique* (1722).

[21] See Gayatri Spivak's (1999: 284-285) discussion of Freud's "A Child is Being Beaten" (1919) in the context of the ideological dissimulation of imperial political economy; and David Kazanjian (2003: 150-155) on Kant

[22] Kant's essays are collected in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Anthropology, History and Education* (2008), edited by Robert B. Louden and Günter Zöller.. Kant's "On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy" is included in *Race*, edited by Robert Bernasconi (2001: 37-56).

[23] See also David Harvey (2000); and Stuart Elden (2009). Consider too Kant's appeal to the scenes of unprovoked cruelty and murder-dramas in New Zealand and the Navigator Islands (Samoa) in part 3 of book 1 of *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793).

[24] Peter Fenves (2003: 91) argues that although throughout the 1770s and 1780s Kant had strenuously argued for skin colour as the principal criterion for distinguishing among the race, ultimately the self has no colour in the Kantian corpus. Fenves also notes that Kant's *Physical Geography* is fraught with textual problems (202, note 10). However, J. Kameron Carter gives the following translation of a private fragment collected in Kant's *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie*: "'All of the races will be stamped out [*Alle racen aussgerottet warden*…; they will undergo an inner rotting or decay leading to their utter eradication] (Americans and Negroes can't rule themselves. They serve therefore only as slaves), but never that of whites. The stubbornness of the Indians in how they use things is at the root of their problem. This is the reason why they do not melt together with whites'" (quoted in Carter 2008: 92).

[25] See the essay by John Mitchell (1744), referred to approvingly by Equiano at the end of chapter one of his *Interesting Narrative*. Mitchell explains skin colour in terms of Newtonian optics and stresses the role of environment: 'so that the black Colour of the Negroes of Africa, instead of being a Curse denounced on them, on account of their

Forefather Ham, as some have idly imagined, is rather a blessing … in that intemperate region' (146). According to Mitchell, it is whites who have 'degenerated', through 'luxurious Customs, or soft and effeminate Lives' (148) from the original 'swarthy' colour of Noah and his sons. Mitchell also shares his research in the thickness of various skins.

[26] Forster's *Noch etwas über die Menschenrassen* (1786) and Kant's relevant texts are included in Mikkelsen (2013).

[27] As Jürgen Goldstein explains: 'Kant wants to understand how reason constitutes the reality with which it is concerned; Forster wants to see the immediate impression defended. Kant is a transcendental philosopher, because he uses experience to examine the condition of possibility; Forster would probably describe himself as a realist' (2019: 96). Forster objected to Kant's '"philosophical jargon":' '"he uses his artificial language to curl up into the most invincible, prickliest form of hounded hedgehog to make you believe you cannot get at him"' (quoted in Goldstein 2029: 100).

[28] See Shell (1996: 200-202), and the biographical information provided by Kuehn (2001: 343-344). Forster's belief in 'the immediate connection between reality and observation' did not preclude what Chunjie Zhang calls '[a]n ambiguity of Forster's epistemology' since he recognised that scientific objectivity is not free of the inevitability of 'subjective and affective interferences in the construction of reality' (2017: 27).

[29] 'Even though he intended merely to outline categories of understanding, his idea of an originally white race was taken as a description of reality and used to support European claims to special closeness to the origin.' (Strack 1996: 299)

[30] See Johann Reinhold Forster on 'the poor inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego': 'Human nature appears nowhere in so debased and wretched a condition, as with these miserable, forlorn, and stupid creatures' (1778: 171). Foster *père* puts this stunted development down to climate and environment (food, exercise, etc.) because "*all mankind, though ever so much varied, are, however, but of one species* ... sprung from the same original stem" (175, italics in original).

[31] 'By reason of its qualitative universality, the logic of taste resembles the logical judgement which, nonetheless, it never is, in all rigor … The judgement of taste relates to a purely formal finality, without concept and without end, without a conceptual and determinant representation of an end' (Derrida 1987: 76)

[32] 'This humanism justifies, at least surreptitiously, the intervention of pragmatic culture and anthropology in the deductions of judgments of taste.' (Derrida 1987: 115)

[33] See Kant (1790c), the first introduction to the *Critique of Judgement* that was not included by Kant in the published text.

[34] However, Dennis Rohatyn (1975) suggests that causality for Kant is not a condition of possibility of experience; rather causality is part of the explanation of the analogies of experience and the production of judgement.

[35] 'We do not merely make the transcendental presupposition that nature as a whole is purposively constructed for our cognitive activities … but rather we also consider

individual objects from the point of view of their purposiveness—(subjectively) for our feelings of pleasure and displeasure in aesthetics and (objectively) for one another in the study of nature ... The subjective purposiveness of nature, that is, the correspondence of nature to our need for order, is a principle of reflective judgement.' (McLaughlin 1990: 3)

[36] See Kant's "First Introduction to the *Critique of Judgement*" for the claim that the concept of perfection as objective purposiveness and the feeling of pleasure have nothing to do with each other (1790c: 417-418).

[37] 'It is right, that is, rationally justified, to presuppose the principle of purposiveness because judgement legislates it to itself as a condition of the possibility of its self-appointed task: the application of logic to nature.' (Allison 2001: 41)

[38] See Allison on Kant's account of the emergence of a schema-like concept and the feeling of pleasure or displeasure that accompanies aesthetic comparison: 'we might think of the understanding as "energized" to grasp the rule that seems to underlie the apprehended content, which, in turn, "inspires" the imagination to exhibit it as fully as possible' (2001: 50).

[39] 'For to the extent that the object in question is found in nature, it must necessarily involve necessity entailed by laws, whereas *qua* natural end it involves contingency with respect to those same laws … The concept of purposive causality does indeed exist objectively (as in human art and technology), as does that of mechanical natural causality; what cannot obtain to such objectivity is the concept of a natural purposive causality, for which such a concept cannot be drawn from experience (by abstraction, as we were just saying) or posited as necessary for an experience to be possible.' (Bennington 2017: 164-5)

[40] 'According to Kant, the nonuniversal characteristics of all other species are "racial," that is to say, subject to hybridization. The existence of variables (or characteristics not invariably inherited) is unique to man and explicable from a "higher standpoint," on the grounds that species devoid of reason, and having the value of "means only," are preformed by nature. Racial differentiation is thus a lingering sign of mankind's affinity with his animal comrades.' (Shell 1996: 386, note 19)

[41] 'Henceforth, the history of the species will be written in the character, not of race (by which mankind was able to survive the geological upheavals of the earliest ages), but variety (by which individuals show their suitability for an affinity of ends).' (Shell 1996: 203)

[42] See also Kant's *Metaphysical Elements of Justice* (1797) for criticism of justifications of predatory colonialism as the veil of injustice that would sanction any means to good ends; no amount of good intentions can wash away the stain of injustice. Kant argues that settlers of inhabited land must not take possession of it either through violence or the exploitation of the ignorance of the indigenes. He rejects the justification that ultimately such dispossession will be for the greater good of mankind or that it will bring culture to primitive peoples. However, Peter Fenves (2003: 42-46) argues that

Kant allows for the establishment of zones outside of the legal order and yet inside the sphere of executive power; provinces or colonies.

[43] Thus David L. Clark sees here a barely displaced allegory of Europe's close encounters with Africa and other equatorial regions of the universe: 'certain fundamental fantasies that will become crucial to the colonial imaginary are being sketched out in these pages ... Is not Kant's hapless Venusian not an uncanny premonition of the woman (re)named the "Hottentot Venus," the southern African called Sarah Baartman' (2001: 258).

[44] See Lovejoy (1964: 194-195) on Kant and Pope; and Fenves (1991: 32-33) on Kant's subversion of Pope.

[45] In the second part of *The Conflict of the Faculties*, under the heading "What Do We *Want* to Know in this Matter?," Kant opens with the argument that the question whether the human race (*Geschlecht*) is constantly progressing should not be confused with the question whether new races of the human being might arise in the future: 'If it is asked whether the human race at large is progressing perpetually toward the better, the important thing is not the natural history of man (Whether new races [*neue Racen*] may arise in the future), but rather his moral history and, more precisely, his history not as a species according to the generic notion (*singulorum*), but as the totality of men united socially on earth and apportioned into peoples (*universorum*)' (1798a: 141).

[46] Elsewhere Fenves notes that Kant, champion of 'the new division of the human race into various races', also advanced 'a tenuous principle of reflective judgement, which ratifies the doctrine that only one race is graced, whereas the rest are not' (2006: 21).

[47] 'In the *Opus postumum* this perspective [i.e., that of the *Critique of Pure Reason*] is reversed, the *focus imaginarius* now being also the principle from which the systematic unity of all the moving forces of matter is thought to emerge.' (Förster 2000: 84).

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The Cape

In March 21st 1775, a young George Forster, future friend of Benjamin Franklin and Alexander von Humboldt, called at the Cape of Good Hope as part of James Cook's second voyage of exploration (1772-1775). Over five weeks as the *Resolution* had its rigging repaired Forster explored Cape Town. His record of Friday, April 7, translates as follows:

> The arrival of the ships draws several inhabitants thence [i.e., from Cape Town] to False bay [sic.], who confine themselves in narrow lodgings, for the sake of enjoying the company of strangers. This peculiar situation affords many favourable opportunities towards forming more intimate connections which, we were told, the strangers seldom neglect, especially as beauty and vivacity are not uncommon at the Cape.
>
> After a stay of three days, we returned to the Cape-Town, where we passed our time in examining the animals at the Company's garden, and searching all the furrier shops, in order to collect an assortment of antelope skin. We were likewise

favoured with a sight of a live *ourang-outang*, or ape, from the island of Java, of that species which has the honour to be adopted as a near relation by several philosophers. This animal was about two feet six inches high, and preferred crawling on all fours, though it could likewise sit and walk upon the hind legs. Its fingers and toes were remarkably long, and its thumbs very short, its belly prominent, and its face, which was as ugly as it can well be imagined, had a nose more resembling the human than that of other monkies. This animal, I am told, has been since brought over to the menagerie of the Prince of Orange, at the Hague. (Forster 1777: 658)

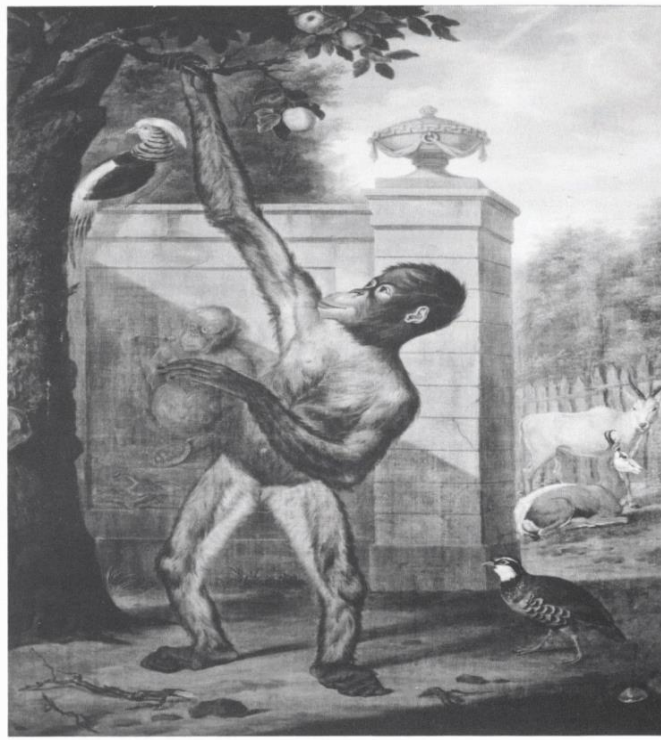


Fig. 6. Painting by Tethart Philipp Christian Haag of an Orang-utan and Springbuck in the menagerie of Willem V in 1777 (Rijksmuseum Paleis Het Loo, Apeldoorn, on semi-permanent loan from Koninklijk Kabinet van Schilderijen (Mauritshuis), The Hague; actual canvas size: 174 × 110.5 cm; photo: Arnold Meine Jansen, Baarn).

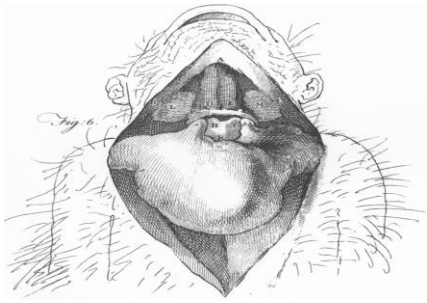
(Rookmaaker 1992: 151)

Forster added the following footnote:

> The creature died at the Hague in January 1777; but, through the gross ignorance and canine malice of the keeper, the ablest anatomists in Holland were disappointed in the hope of dissecting it. He cut off its head, in order to prevent them examining the organs of speech; and its hands and feet, to preclude the possibility of comparing the phalanges with the human and other skeletons. When we consider, through whose interest the inspector of that princely collection at the Hague was appointed, we cannot wonder, that he was a stranger to liberality of sentiment. (658)

The keeper was Arnout Vosmaer, the Prince of Orange's director of natural history. Subsequent editors of *A Voyage Around the World* have attributed this remark to Johann Reinhold Forster, George's father. George apologised to and subsequently modified the note to state that the torso was in fact given to Mr. Camper, a famous anatomist, to dissect. That is to say, the specimen was not needlessly wasted. Vosmaer published his acceptance of Forster's apology in *The Monthly Review* and speculated the source of the calumniatory note to be Vosmaer's enemies in Holland (see Meijer 1997a).

Petrus Camper published the results of his anatomical research on the organs of speech in the Orang Outang in *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* (1779). Camper reported that he examined 'seven Orangs, beside the living one which was sent to His Highness the Prince of Orange' (145). All came from Java by way of the Cape of Good Hope. Camper provided sketches made of the first Orang he dissected in 1770:



(Camper 1779: 158)

Camper defended Vosmaer and gave the history of the Orang which belonged to the Prince of Orange and died in January 1777:

> She died not long afterwards, and was soon cut to pieces by the order of Mr. Vosmaer, to be stuffed for the museum of his Serene Highness the Prince of Orange; but, as this cannot be done without preserving the face, a part of the skull, hands, and feet, it is very evident, that Mr. Vosmaer was obliged to cut off the head and the other extremities, and to destroy the most interesting parts for natural knowledge.
>
> I was very sorry to hear of the fate of this curious and uncommon creature, more especially as I had great reason to flatter myself with the dissection of the entire animal as soon as it was dead.
>
> I need not remind anyone of the particulars mentioned by Mr. Forster in the 2nd volume of Voyage round the World, p.553.; nor of his rather too severe criticism upon the conduct of Mr. Vosmaer, the inspector of the Museum belonging to the hereditary Stadholder of the United Provinces. Mr. Vosmaer had, without doubt, no other intention but to preserve the fresh skin of this uncommon animal stuffed, for the cabinet of his benefactor, and not the least malevolent intention to prevent the dissection of the other parts not necessary to this purpose; for, when, by special order of his Most Serene Highness the Prince of Orange, the remaining trunk was sent to me, I found the organ of voice not in the least hurt, and quite entire, as it is still to my great satisfaction. After having duly examined, dissected, and delineated the *viscera* of the breast and belly, I have put it in melasses, in a fine phial, in order to preserve so valuable a preparation, not only for my museum, but for natural knowledge in general. (Camper 1779: 151-152)[1]

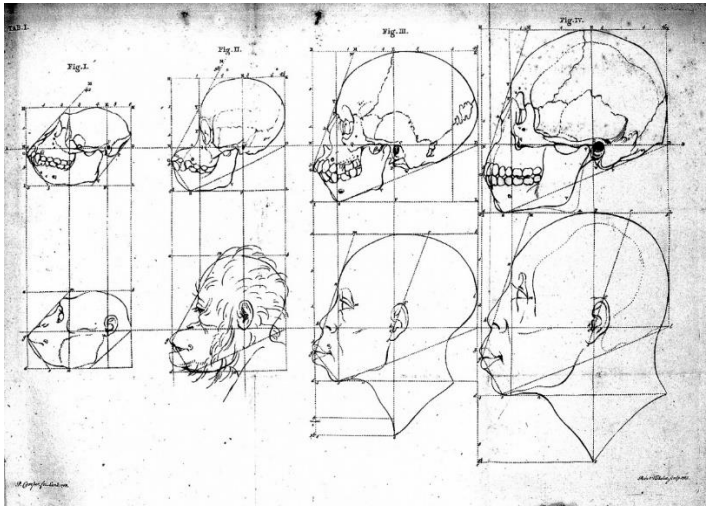
Camper concluded that the organ of speech of the Orang is decidedly different to that of man, and therefore they cannot speak:

> Having dissected the whole organ of voice in the Orang, in apes, and several monkies, I have a right to conclude, that Orangs and apes are not made to modulate the voice like men; for the air passing by the *rima glottidis* is immediately lost in the ventricles or ventricle of the neck, as in apes and monkies, and must consequently return from thence without any force and melody within the throat and mouth of these creatures; and this seems to me the most evident proof of

> the incapacity of Orangs, apes, and monkies, to utter any modulated voice, as indeed they never have been observed to do. (155-156)

At issue here is the uniqueness of speech to humans, and the association of reason and speech (see Johann Reinhold Forster 1778: 172-174). If other animals have similar anatomical features to humans, why can they not speak? Whether one attributes the human speech to divine intervention or to good fortune, the uniqueness of humans and their affinity with other animals is being determined. At stake is the animality of the human as much as the humanity of animals, specifically primates. Camper argued that the physical capacity for articulate speech did not exist for apes, and the gift of speech was purely a matter of anatomy rather than more direct divine intervention (see Meijer 1997b).

That this issue of comparative anatomy and zoological categorisation is not merely an abstract academic matter can be demonstrated by looking at one of the anthropometric drawings produced by Camper on the basis of his researches:



(Camper 1821: 175)

Camper's craniological biometric was taken up by phrenology and 'scientific' racism. Yet Camper himself argued for the unity of the human species, and criticised the attempt to divide humans into exclusive races with uniform characteristics (see Meijers 1999). He underlined the conclusions he thought flowed from his in the lecture "On the Origin and Color of Blacks" delivered in 1764 (published 1772):

> In the year 1758 in Amsterdam I had the opportunity to dissect a black Angolese boy and I found his blood very much like ours and his brains as white, if not whiter. When I dissected this body in public, I examined it in a totally objective way and compared all the parts with the famous description of the Bushman or "Orang-Outang" of the renowned Tyson. I must confess that I found nothing that had more in common with this animal than with a white man; on the contrary, everything was the same as for a white man. You ask, and rightly so, why indeed the comparison with the Bush-man? That is simply, Gentlemen, because there are Philosophers to be found who want to show with some rhetorical flourish that Negroes and Blacks descended from the mingling in olden times of white people with great Apes or Orang-Outangs, which were called Satyrs by the Ancients. (Camper in Meijer 1997b: 6)

Camper's humanism was not sufficient to prevent the appropriation of his work by those addicted to 'the rhetorical flourish.'

Although clearly perceiving what would now be termed systemic racism, he was unable to block the distortion of his basic thesis:

> It has been said occasionally that Cham, because he was cursed by his father Noah, changed in color and became black. Whatever the case may be, it seems quite obvious that all scholars, through their association of a very hateful image with the color black, acted as if a certain well-deserved curse, or wrath of the Divine Supreme Being, were the origin of the unfavorable color: and usually, if not always, this one-sided and absurd account worked in favor of the Whites, because they had devised it themselves and thus had accorded themselves superiority over others of a different color. What kind of an image must the poor Americans have conceived of white people, after being treated by them in such an undeserved, such a cruel and barbaric manner? Will they not believe that the God of heaven and earth changed those brutes, as a permanent sign of his righteous wrath, into white people? This digression causes you to blush, and not without cause. All of us, not only as human beings but as Christians, would wish to be black if we could wash off this sin through such a change in color …You will no longer raise any objections to joining me in holding out the hand of

> brotherhood to Negroes and Blacks, and in recognizing them as true descendants of the first man whom we all recognize as our Father!
>
> I have spoken. (6, 9)

Kant refers approvingly to Camper in his lectures on physical geography, delivered from 1756 to 1796 and published as *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* in 1798.

Notes

[1] See Thomas Burgeland Johnson on 'Vasmaer's [sic] account of an oran-outang presented to the Prince of Orange in the year 1776' (1837: 92) that lived for seven months in Holland. Johnson concludes that 'the ouran-outang is justly entitled to rank next to the Negro in the wonderfully graduated scale of animated nature' (97), and that the unqualified abolition of slavery is an invitation to conflict. Johnson is particularly impressed with the bad behaviour of baboons at the Cape.

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