

ARTICLE

White Progress: Kant, Race and Teleology

Inder S. Marwah

McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Email: marwahi@mcmaster.ca

Abstract

This article examines how Kant's conceptualizations of natural history and teleological judgement shape his understanding of human difference and race. I argue that the teleological framework encasing Kant's racial theory implies constraints on the capacity of non-whites to make moral progress. While commentators tend to approach Kant's racial theory in relation to his political theory, his late-life cosmopolitanism, and his treatments (or non-treatments) of colonialism, empire and slavery, the problem I focus on here is that race is itself only intelligible in relation to a teleological natural history limiting certain races' capacities to engage in humanity's moral vocation.

Keywords: race; teleology; anthropology; history; moral development; impure ethics; *Critique of the Power of Judgement*; biology; natural history

1. Introduction

After several centuries of relative neglect, Kant's thoughts on race have in recent decades come under the microscope. Long taken as residuum of his forays into the natural sciences, as a hook for his popular lectures, or as 'merely' pragmatic, his racial theory was dismissed as philosophically unimportant and as separable from the real, critical Kant. This is no longer the case. The shift comes in broader and narrower forms. The first is a wide-ranging *rapprochement* between Kant's critical philosophy (the three *Critiques*, the *Groundwork* and the *Metaphysics of Morals*) and 'impure ethics' (published works and lecture notes on history, anthropology, biology, geography and pedagogy). The second concerns whether Kant's racial theory touches on, impacts or otherwise infects his moral, political and practical philosophies.¹

There are good reasons to suggest it does. Not only did race consistently feature in forty years of lecturing on anthropology and geography, but Kant's three essays on the subject evince a more than passing interest in debates on biology, taxonomy, embryology and human generation surrounding the period's theorizations of race.² A growing scholarship also traces the methodological and epistemological entwinements of Kant's racial theory and his evolving critical project, particularly in relation to his account of teleological judgement in the third *Critique*.³ If, as Jon Mikkelsen (2013) observes, Kant

regularly revised his conclusions in certain areas following developments in others, it is worth considering the reverberations of his shifts on race.

For good reason, commentators tend to approach Kant's racial theory in relation to his political theory, his late-life cosmopolitanism and his treatments (or non-treatments) of colonialism, empire and slavery.⁴ My entry point will be somewhat more oblique, focusing on the teleological framework through which Kant makes sense of race and human differentiation. My aim is to clarify how Kant's conceptualizations of natural history and teleological judgement shape his understanding of human difference and race.⁵ I will argue that at least some of the problems with Kant's racial theory pertain less to right – particularly in the 1790s, when he castigates European colonialism – than to non-whites' moral standing within his teleological account of humanity's moral ends. Where much of the scholarship addresses the problem of race in relation to the *Rechtslehre*, we get at a different set of concerns by treating it in relation to the *Tugendlehre*.

The argument proceeds in three stages. I begin, in section 2, by arguing that Kant's fuller view of human – and not just rational – moral agency emerges not in the *Groundwork's* good will, but in the *Religion's* good human being. I flesh out Kant's account of the kind of moral agency of which human beings are capable, as finite, embodied moral actors destined to approach virtue without ever reaching it. Our moral vocation thus lies not in the achievement of moral perfection, but rather in what Kant describes as an 'incessant laboring and becoming' (*Rel*, 6: 48)⁶ toward the fulfilment of our moral obligations. For beings such as we are – rational, yet phenomenal – moral personhood consists in moral *development*, not in a moral faultlessness of which we are incapable.

To anticipate my conclusion, I am going to argue that this is where the problem lies: the teleological framework encasing Kant's racial theory implies constraints on the capacity of non-whites to make moral progress. If humanity's moral vocation lies in the unending *movement* toward moral perfection – in our moral cultivation – we need to take seriously the status of agents who appear incapable of just this. The problem with Kant's racial theory, then, is not that it advances a hierarchy of races (at least this is not the problem I am addressing here), but that race is itself only intelligible in relation to a teleological natural history limiting certain races' capacities to engage in humanity's moral vocation.

There is a lot happening here. So, following my account of the good human being, the article tracks, in section 3, how Kant treats race in different texts (published works and lecture notes, with all due caution regarding the latter's reliability), at different points and to different ends, to distinguish claims that carry moral weight from those that are no less reprehensible, but possibly less consequential. This requires temporization. I trace shifts in Kant's thoughts on race from the 1750s/1760s, throughout the 1770s, when they become better systematized, and into the 1780s, when the teleological framework surrounding race becomes entrenched. I pay particular attention to the division between anthropology and physical geography in the mid-1770s and to Kant's deepening focus on the methodological and epistemological distinctions between 'natural history' (*Naturgeschichte*) and a 'description of nature' (*Naturbeschreibung*). I also elaborate Kant's position in two debates in the natural sciences, on epigenetic and preformationist theories of embryological development, and monogenetic and polygenetic theories of human origination and racial differentiation. Finally, in section 4, I highlight the deepening importance of teleology for making race tractable in relation to human ends and natural purposiveness. Here, I will argue, is where the problem lies.

To circle back to this issue's theme, we might think of radicalizing Kant in a few ways. Neo-Kantians have undoubtedly pressed more or less Kantian insights into the service of progressive projects, such as Charles Mills' Black Radical Kantianism (2017), Elvira Basevich's (2020) innovative application of Kantian public reason in redressing racial injustice and Pauline Kleingeld's (2019) and Lucy Allais's (2016) nuanced reflections on how Kant's racism shapes his contemporary uptake. But the closer we move toward Kant's own thought, I will contend, the more difficulty we encounter in trying to rid it of its racial inflections. To be sure, we can strip away those parts of Kant's anthropology, biology, geography and history – along with their teleological framework – that we have rightly come to reject. But what remains is a shell of Kant's theoretical vision, and certainly not one that he would have recognized, much less endorsed, as his own.

2. The good human being⁷

As is well known, the *Groundwork's* good will anchors Kant's moral theory, delineating the unconditionality of our moral duties, their transcendental foundation and the grounds on which rational agents are compelled to adopt them. The good will, 'the will of a rational being, in which . . . the highest and unconditional good alone can be found' (G, 4: 401), is the moral beacon we are bound to approximate. While the categorical imperative responds to our sensible imperfections, the moral law that it clarifies is transcendently fixed, based on the nature of rational, end-setting beings. The moral law and our duties are thus determined *a priori*, on the basis of our formal attributes as rational entities.

This is, however, not the full picture of our moral personhood. While the critical account addresses the nature and derivation of the moral law, it largely (but not entirely) disregards a second facet of human moral agency: the subjective, volitional element of moral choice. This concerns how we, as embodied moral actors, not only come to act morally, but learn to embed the inclination toward morality into the architecture of our volitions. Given our natural propensity to act against the dictates of the moral law, moral action requires us not just to *recognize* its imperatives, but to *integrate* them within the structure of our incentives. As Kant puts it:

We first have to take up two points here: (1) The principle of appraisal of obligation, and (2) the principle of its performance or execution. Guideline and motive have here to be distinguished. The guideline is the principle of appraisal, and the motive that of carrying-out the obligation; in that they have been confused, everything in morality has been erroneous.

If the question is: What is morally good or not?, that is the principle of appraisal, whereby I judge the goodness or depravity of actions. But if the question is: What moves me to live according to this law?, that is the principle of motive. Appraisal of the action is the objective ground, but not yet the subjective ground . . . The supreme principle of all moral judgment lies in the understanding; the supreme principle of the moral impulse to do this thing lies in the heart. This motive is the moral feeling. Such a principle of motive

cannot be confused with the principle of judgment. The latter is the norm, and the principle of impulsion is the motive. (L-Eth, 27: 275)

Kant draws the same distinction in the *Metaphysics of Morals*: ‘practical laws of reason . . . take no account of these [moral] feelings . . . since they have nothing to do with the basis of practical laws but only with the subjective effect in the mind when our choice is determined by them’ (MM, 6: 221). He also issues the same caution, concerning the conflation of objective/determinative and subjective/volitional principles of moral obligation in the *Blomberg Logic*: ‘All error arises when we hold subjective grounds of our judgment to be objective ones’ (cited in Zammito 2002: 276).

There is, then, a division of labour between the objective determination of the moral law (explaining what the moral law requires) and the subjective basis of moral choice (explaining how we come to choose the moral law). Broadly speaking, the first and second *Critiques* address the former by delimiting the transcendental grounds of freedom (self-determined action in conformity with the moral law) and the incentive structure demanded by moral action (immediate respect for the moral law). But they pay significantly less attention to the second, volitional dimension, implicit in Kant’s practical philosophy and most carefully elaborated in his post-critical works. Much of the *Anthropology*, Kant’s writings on pedagogy and the Doctrine of Virtue concern just this: the propaedeutic aids, formative influences and instruments of cultivation developing ‘the will’s receptivity to finding itself subject to the law as unconditional necessitation’ (TP, 8: 283). These are indispensable tools of moral orientation, forming a lifelong, subjective disposition to integrate the demands of the moral law within the structure of our choices. As such, they ‘lie at the basis of morality, as subjective conditions of receptiveness to the concept of duty’ (MM, 6: 399).

This orientation underpins Kant’s conceptualization of moral character, which ‘entails possession of fixed principles and a secure basis, such that we shall never live otherwise than virtuously’ (L-Eth, 27: 464). Moral character inheres in ‘a consistent practical cast of mind in accordance with unchangeable maxims’ (CPrR, 5: 152) and is the defining feature of the good human being. Departing from the problem of radical evil – ‘[h]ow it is possible that a naturally evil human being should make himself into a good human being’ (Rel, 6: 45) – Kant reflects on the configuration of moral volition and on the formation of the subjective disposition toward morality. The good human, he argues, emerges from an internal revolution that fundamentally reorients the will’s motivational structure. Without this deep-seated turn in the maxims governing our incentives, we remain incapable of bridging the chasm between moral and merely legal action:

[S]o long as the foundation of the maxims of the human being remains impure, [moral goodness] cannot be effected through gradual *reform* but must rather be effected through a *revolution* in the disposition of the human being . . . And so a ‘new man’ can come about only through a kind of rebirth, as it were a new creation . . . and a change of heart. (Rel, 6: 47)

By changing the grounds on which we base our actions, and not just our actions themselves, we undergo the motivational transformation redirecting us from evil to moral goodness. This ‘revolution’ alters the maxims governing the will, turning us away

from a predilection to act on sensible incentives and toward the ends set by the good will.

And yet, this internal revolution is only the initial point in the good human being's metamorphosis. While the transition to moral goodness *begins* from this moment of revelation, it *consists* in the lifelong commitments to principled action, rational self-determination and moral improvement following from it. The moral awakening realigning the will's incentive structure is no merely temporary shift, but rather instils an ongoing orientation toward, and dedication to, the principled pursuit of moral action. True moral conversion, Kant argues, demands

a gradual reformation in the mode of sense (which places obstacles in the way of the former), and [both] must therefore be possible also to the human being. That is: If by a single and unalterable decision a human being reverses the supreme ground of his maxims by which he was an evil human being (and thereby puts on a 'new man'), he is to this extent, by principle and attitude of mind, a subject receptive to the good; *but he is a good human being only in incessant laboring and becoming*; i.e. he can hope – in view of the purity of the principle which he has adopted as the supreme maxim of his power of choice, and in view of the stability of this principle – to find himself upon the good (though narrow) path of constant *progress* from bad to better . . . the change is to be regarded only as an ever-continuing striving for the better. (*Rel*, 6: 48, my emphasis)

The good human being's transition from radical evil to moral rectitude thus incorporates two distinctive, if related, dimensions: a moral revolution, and the enduring dedication to moral amelioration it entails.

This 'ever-continuing striving for the better' captures the specifically human task of reaching for, but never reaching, the good will and moral virtue. It illuminates the moral imperative not to *realize* virtue, but to develop the capacities for *approaching* it. Virtue, Kant maintains, is 'always in progress because, considered *objectively*, it is an ideal and unattainable, while yet constant approximation to it is a duty' (*Rel*, 6: 409). As a result, Paul Guyer observes, 'while it makes no sense to say that *to be virtuous* is a duty, it makes sense to say that *to strive to make progress towards becoming virtuous* is a duty . . . the general obligation to be virtuous can be perfectly well understood as a duty to strengthen our natural disposition to be moral' (Guyer 2010: 224–5). All human beings share in an inborn, intuitive sense of the moral good, Kant tells us, however distant it might be from the divine will of angels. Our moral commission is ultimately to reduce this space by cultivating the propensity to seek virtue and the abilities enabling us to do so. While practical freedom is rooted in intelligible character – the capacity to initiate action and set unconditioned ends – *human* freedom, our kind of freedom, remains inexorably subject to the sway of phenomenality. Practical reason enjoins us to pursue the ideal of holiness, but the will's complete conformity with the moral law is 'a perfection of which no rational being of the sensible world is capable'; our good, then, 'can only be found in an *endless progress* toward that complete conformity . . . it is necessary to assume such a practical progress as the real object of our will' (*CPrR*, 5: 122). This is the moral agency of which we are capable, our moral calling. A properly human moral agency is not a question of

achieving a moral perfection beyond our grasp. It rather inheres in a lifelong effort toward the consistent integration of moral imperatives within ourselves. The good human being's 'incessant labouring and becoming' is, for Kant, 'the moral vocation of our nature' (*CPrR*, 5: 122).

3. The evolution of race and teleology

Let us now turn to Kant's conceptualization of race and to the changes it underwent between the 1750s and late 1780s. In what follows, I will (a) trace out shifts in Kant's views on race, contextualizing them in relation to (b) the aims of anthropology and physical geography, (c) debates in the natural sciences, and (d) his dispute with Georg Forster (and Herder) in the 1780s, to (e) demonstrate the ineluctability of the teleological framework surrounding his mature view of race. The idea is to clarify what Kant is saying about race at different points (and why) to better see what facets of his race-thinking might bear on his moral theory (and how).

Over four decades of teaching, Kant's lectures spanned more or less philosophically dense subjects, with physical geography (and as of 1772–3, anthropology) falling into the popular variety intended to draw in students. Starting in 1756, Kant offered his lecture course on physical geography forty-nine times, exceeded only (and narrowly) by his courses on logic and metaphysics (Reinhardt 2012). With all due caution concerning their reliability – the Rink edition is compiled from two sets of lecture notes, from 1775 and 1778, and from Kant's dictation text, dated to his teaching career prior to 1760 – Kant's geography lectures are indicative of some of his earliest thoughts on race.

In the text attributable to 1755–9, Kant addresses various forms of geography – in the later transcriptions, these include mathematical, moral, political, mercantile and theological geography – including humanity's place in the physical world. Following the period's conventions (Kant adopted Buffon's model as of 1757), this involved comparing different races in relation to their colour, shape and dispositions (*Mensch* 2013: 96).

In Rink's ordering, Kant treats human beings in the first section of the lectures' second volume, 'Concerning Human Beings' (human/racial differences also appear in the first volume, but in the section dated to 1775/1778, to which I will return below). Along with relatively unmediated and often fabulous observations on various peoples and races, we find here one of the most often-cited passages demonstrating his racism. Inhabitants of the torrid zones, Kant asserts, 'fail to reach the same [degree of] perfection' as inhabitants of temperate regions, and '[h]umanity has its highest degree of perfection in the white race. The yellow Indians have a somewhat lesser talent. The Negroes are much lower, and the lowest of all is part of the American races' (*PhyG*, 9: 316). Given its notoriety, a few things are worth noting about the passage. First, the evaluative facets concerning humanity's perfection appear out of place because they are, in fact, out of place. Werner Stark (2011: 87–92) has demonstrated that it was inserted by Rink and cannot have been written prior to the mid-1770s, while the surrounding text dates to the mid-1750s. Second, abhorrent though Kant's views are, they directly reproduce the travel literature on which he based his lectures. That said, the references to humanity's perfection and talent are significant, and I return to them below.

These early reflections on race are notable in a few respects. First, as Robert Louden (2015) observes, the geography lectures cover a much wider swathe of non-white cultures than do those on anthropology, whose treatments of nations (under 'The Character of Nations') focus on a handful of European states, and of race (under 'The Character of the Human Species') relate to humanity's moralization. By contrast, the geography lectures span the globe and its peoples, addressing the external character of Asian, African, European and American populations. The 'external' qualifier is important: as the study of physical nature, geography accounts for humanity's outer (phenotypic) character, not its inner constitution. It concerns physical space and yields a strictly descriptive, and not explanatory, reckoning of phenomena, its methodological commitments constraining the kind of information it can produce. From an epistemic standpoint, Kant's reflections on 'Ruminants with Fixed, Branch-Like Horns' are no different from those on 'National Characteristics in Siberia'. Moral valuations of race or culture do not figure.

Second, Kant here attributes racial difference to climate rather than heredity, a position reversed in his mature racial theory (Clewis 2015: 533–4, 549). 'Because the colour of human beings goes through all shades of yellow, brown and dark brown, finally becoming black in the torrid zones', Kant surmises, 'it is obvious that climate is the cause ... it is the temperature of the region, rather than a particular parental lineage, that is responsible for this' (PhyG, 9: 314). His observations on race are, at this point, just this: observations derived from travel literature and employed to teach popular courses, rather than any kind of systematic theory of race.

1764's *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* contains the first significant published account of Kant's race-thinking – significant because, John Zammito notes (2002: 301), *Observations* outlines roughly the basic structure and some of the substantive content that the lectures on anthropology would adopt over the next three decades. Race falls into *Observations*' final section, treating the character of the human species (what would become the 'Anthropological Characteristic' in the 1780s–1790s). At this point, Kant divides the investigation into the character of human beings 'in general', the character of the sexes and the character of the world's nations.⁸ He also infamously declares on Hume's authority that

Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises above the ridiculous ... while among the whites there are always those who rise up from the lowest rabble and through extraordinary gifts earn respect in the world. So essential is the difference between these two human kinds, and it seems to be just as great with regard to the capacities of mind as it is with respect to color. (*OFBS*, 2: 253)

This does not amount to a racial theory, lacking several key features of Kant's mature account. First, he does not distinguish the morally irrelevant character of nations (by which he designates Europeans, principally differentiated through non-hereditary temperamental variations) from the character of races that, despite ambiguities, appears to carry moral weight. From the mid-1770s on, this distinction would shape his anthropology (and racial theory). Second, he does not clearly separate moral and physical character. While noting that the 'characters of mind of the peoples are most evident in that in them which is moral' (*OFBS*, 2: 245), Kant's 'observations' frequently

confound moral and empirical attributes. Finally, Kant has yet to develop the teleological framework enabling any comprehension of racial difference. The same disjointedness holds in both the *Collins* and *Parow* notes from the early 1770s.

Kant's views on race take on a more systematic organization in the mid-1770s, as they are drawn into anthropology's examination of the 'character of nations'. At this point, he advances the central theoretical feature of his racial theory, his account of the germs (*Keime*) and predispositions (*Anlagen*) dividing humanity into four distinctive races, marking his entry into the period's biological sciences. Kant here begins to develop the teleological viewpoint instrumental for understanding human diversity and racial differentiation, articulated through the division between a mechanistic 'description of nature' and a historical-teleological 'natural history'. While the distinction stretches back to the 1750s and becomes increasingly pronounced in the 1780s, it starts gaining conceptual traction in the mid-1770s, as Kant pulled physical geography and anthropology apart and published his first essay on race. 'The discovery worth announcing in 1775', Jennifer Mensch maintains, was 'an increasing sense on Kant's part of the positive explanatory role that could be played by teleology in the search for a rationally unified order' (2013: 106). The central structural, substantive and methodological-epistemological elements of Kant's racial theory thus begin to take shape at this juncture, coalescing in 'Of the Differences Races of Human Beings' (1775/1777). All these elements also appear in the 1777–8 *Pillau* lectures' ruminations on 'what kinds of germs lie hidden in the soul of the human being' and on the 'predispositions for morality that lie in human nature', which Kant treats in relation to 'the vocation of human nature' (L-Anth, 25: 838).

Before addressing the substance of 'Of the Different Races', it is worth dwelling on the methodological and epistemological implications of the geography–anthropology split. In Kant's introduction to the 1775/1778 geography lectures, which Olaf Reinhardt takes as 'the only part of the text that could be taken as wholly genuine and representative of Kant's geographical thought' (2012: 435), he distinguishes 'knowledge of the world' from 'knowledge of human beings', farming them off to, respectively, physical geography and anthropology (PhyG, 9: 157). But he also differentiates the kinds of knowledge surrounding these modes of inquiry. Experience of the world, Kant states, can be conveyed by 'narrative or as a description. The former is a history, the latter a geography' (9: 159). 'Division of knowledge according to concepts', he goes on to specify, 'is logical; according to time and space it is physical. By means of the former, we obtain a system of nature (*systema naturae*), as for example that of Linnaeus. With the latter, we obtain a geographical description of nature.' Dismissing 'the systems of nature that have been drawn up so far' – that is, Linnaeus' system – as 'mere aggregations of nature', Kant explains that history accounts for things contiguous in time, while geography 'concerns phenomena that occur simultaneously in space' (9: 160–1).⁹

These parsings provide an epistemic baseline – and epistemic restrictions – for the kinds of claims produced by given disciplines, while also taking aim at 'natural systems' predicated, as with Linnaeus, on strictly logical categories. As an accounting of objects in physical space, geography can generate 'a description of nature, but not a natural history' (PhyG, 9: 162). Kant's treatments of human differentiation in the context of geography are, then, strictly observational. They describe peoples' external character, and may use racial types to account for them, but have no explanatory

power. Restricted to observations in space, but not in time, they have no capacity to conjecture on what race is, or might be; geography simply registers data about the natural, physical world. Kant's contention that 'the nations of the southern hemisphere are on the lowest level of humanity' (9: 230) are, then, reprehensible, but descriptive rather than substantive (even if they remain, obviously, evaluative; Kant frequently exceeds his own boundaries).

'Of the Different Races' marks an important shift in Kant's race-thinking by pulling geography and anthropology apart, the latter taking as its object 'what [man] as a free-acting being makes of himself, or can and should make of himself' (*Anth*, 7: 119). The essay initiating Kant's systematic investigation into race thus forms the context in which he begins to seriously consider how free-acting beings make moral progress in the world. The distinction between natural history and a description of nature also deepens, as Kant argues that the former alone can produce a coherent concept of race. Race is only comprehensible diachronically, over time and through relations of filiation and (re)generation defining a species. While Linnaeus' 'school division'

concerns *classes*, which divide the animals according to *resemblances*, the natural division concerns *phyla*, which divide the animals according to *relationships* in terms of generation. The former provides a school system for memory; the latter provides a natural system for the understanding. The first only aims at bringing creatures under titles; the second aims at bringing them under laws. (DHR, 2: 429)¹⁰

Beneath the descriptive/explanatory split lies a recognition that strictly mechanistic reckonings of causal determination cannot account for the systematic organization of organic beings – the key insight that Kant would develop fifteen years later, in the *Critique of the Power of Judgement*. 'Chance or the universal mechanical laws', Kant holds, 'could not produce such agreements' as are on evidence in biological organisms' adaptations to their environments, race chief among them. As Robert J. Richards observes, Kant insists that 'in comprehending the organization and operation of creatures, an investigator had to assume a teleological causality – since no application of merely mechanistic laws could make biological processes intellectually tractable' (2000: 27). From its earliest moments, then, Kant's racial theory presumes a larger purposive natural organization within which racial differentiation can be made, reflectively, comprehensible, even if Kant had not at this point confined teleological judgement to the reflective status it occupies in the third *Critique*. Race's conceptual coherence depends on temporal movement, on the presumption of humanity's advancement toward a given end.

I will now trace out the substance of Kant's racial theory in 'Of the Different Races', which remains broadly consistent with the two subsequent essays on race in the 1780s, before returning to debates in the natural sciences lurking in the background.

Kant's racial theory advances a monogenic view of human origins against the period's polygenic alternatives, offering a plausible and parsimonious explanation of humanity's shared origins despite our external differences. This analytical abstemiousness opposed the 'opinion which needlessly multiplies the number of causes' that 'many local creations would have to [assume]' (DHR, 2: 430). Kant instead

identifies four races of human beings, descended from a single phyletic source: '1) the race of the *whites*, 2) the *Negro race*, 3) the *Hunnish* (Mongolian or Kalmuckian) race, 4) the Hindu or *Hindustani race*' (2: 432). This original human being contained all four germs (*Keime*), each equipped with its own particular predispositions (*Anlagen*), from which the different races evolved. These 'various germs and natural predispositions', Kant contends, 'had to lie ready in him to be on occasion either unfolded or restrained, so that he would become suited to his place in the world and over the course of the generations would appear to be as it were native to and made for that place' (2: 435). As human beings spread across the globe, climatic variations activated given germs in different populations, developing over time the racial character best suited to their particular environments. Once a germ takes root, it becomes permanent, hereditary and exclusive, extinguishing the others and fixing a population's race. Racial differentiation is thus irreversible: once set, racial character becomes impervious to further changes through transplantation.

As John Zammito (2002: 302; 2007: 56) recognizes, Kant's racial theory is centrally preoccupied with limiting the moral and metaphysical excesses pervading the nascent sciences of man by clarifying the agencies and mechanisms of racial differentiation. Kant carefully distinguishes human beings' latent racial predispositions, endowed with a generative power, from the climatic triggers activating and extinguishing them. Race also does not capture the full breadth of human variation. While race describes '*the classificatory difference of the animals of one and the same phylum in so far as this difference is unfailingly hereditary*' (CHR, 8: 100), Kant also addresses the 'varieties', 'sorts', 'kinds' and 'strains' capturing humanity's endless contingent differentiations. While the phenotypical manifoldness of human varieties is propagated through interbreeding, environmental influences and a broad range of other conditions, race alone is inextinguishable once set. Kant thus draws a firm line between fixed racial characteristics and superficial ones attributable to external stimulus (such as tanned skin) or mutable hereditary traits (such as hair or eye colour).

These distinctions follow from several debates in the natural sciences on biological generation, embryological development and morphology (Huneman 2007a: 3). First, as noted above, Kant stakes out his monogenic position against the polygenisms of Kames, Voltaire and Forster. Appealing to 'the common law of propagation' to explain the diversity of racial types, he offers a biological and theoretical basis for the claim that 'all human beings on the wide earth belong to one and the same natural species' (DHR, 2: 429).

Second, Kant wades into disputes over epigenetic and preformationist models of embryological generation, as the *Keime-Anlagen* structure of his racial theory enables what Phillip Sloan describes as a middle course between them (Sloan 2002: 238). For my purposes, Kant's germ theory introduces a teleological element into the core of his account of race: race *only* exists as an explanatory conjecture for understanding human variation in relation to our natural ends. The germ theory and its teleological husk also reach beyond the race essay, appearing in the 1775–6 *Friedländer* anthropology lectures. 'Innate to human nature', Kant holds, 'are germs which develop and can achieve the perfection for which they are determined'; even the 'savage Indian or Greenlander' has

the same germs as a civilized human being, only they are not yet developed. We equally have reason to believe that there are germs for greater perfection innate to human nature, which could well be developed, and [that] humanity must achieve the degree of perfection for which it is determined, and for which it has the germs within itself. (L-Anth, 25: 694)

Kant's anthropology mirrors his racial theory, integrating its conceptual apparatus (germs, whose efflorescence develops the four human races), its monogenism (the shared presence of all germs, *in potentia*, in all human beings) and its teleological form.

Finally, Kant contributes to controversies surrounding Buffon's and Linnaeus' competing taxonomic systems. The Linnaean, as we have seen, could only generate a 'school system of the description of nature' (DHR, 2: 435), a representative account of natural phenomena based on logical categories rather than a relational one based on physical categories – the proper stuff of natural history, for Kant (Fisher 2007: 105; Huneman 2007a: 8; Sloan 2007: 156–8). That was only possible, he argues, by adopting Buffon's view 'that animals which produce fertile young with one another (whatever difference in shape there may be) still belong to one and the same physical species' (2: 429). A species was thus defined not by fixed morphological attributes, as Linnaeus would have it (and as might be accounted for by mere observation), but through inter-generational reproduction – as Mark Fisher puts it, through 'membership in a historical line of descent' (2007: 111). The germ theory distances Kant from his earlier climatological view of race and toward one based on time and inheritance:

Air, sun, and nutrition can modify the growth of an animal body but they cannot also provide this change with a generative power that would be capable of reproducing itself even without cause; rather what is supposed to propagate itself must have laid previously in the generative power as antecedently determined to an occasional unfolding in accordance with the circumstances in which the creature can find itself. (DHR, 2: 435)

Through a modified Buffon, Kant thus folds race into an historicized account of the species' diversity in relation to its ultimate ends. It enables him, in the context of his racial theory, to 'venture a *history* of nature, which is a separate science and which could gradually advance from opinions to insights' (DHR, 2: 443).

This natural history becomes further entrenched, and an object of controversy, in Kant's two subsequent essays on race. 'Determination of the Concept of a Human Race' (1785) is principally dedicated to more thoroughly refuting polygenism, in the course of which Kant elaborates his account of *Keime* and *Anlagen* vis-à-vis racial differentiation and his contention that understanding race is the 'task of natural history' (CHR, 8: 102). It also voices his deepening concern with epistemological and methodological excesses in the natural sciences, as '[t]he limits of reason are then broken through once, and delusion forces itself through this breach in thousands' (8: 97).

'On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy' (1788) advances Kant's argument for, as the title would suggest, the necessity of teleological explanation for natural phenomena generally, and race specifically. The essay was spurred by Georg Forster's 'Something More about the Human Races' (1786), which attacked Kant's

racial theory for starting from abstract principles rather than empirical grounds.¹¹ Kant counters that, in the absence of an overarching theoretical touchstone, ‘nothing of a purposive nature could ever be found through mere empirical groping’ (UTP, 8: 161). ‘[O]ne must be guided’, rather, ‘by a determinate principle merely in order to observe, i.e., to pay attention to that which could indicate the phyletic origin, not just resemblance of characters’ (8: 164). Race thus invites methodological reflection on the investigation of purposive systems, as Kant invokes the distinction between *Naturgeschichte* and *Naturbeschreibung* to settle ‘the principles according to which natural history could be enlarged’ while avoiding ‘harm from the carelessness of letting the boundaries of the sciences run into each other’ (8: 162). His concerns here are congruent with his critical preoccupation with the limits of reason, particularly in relation to the third *Critique*’s account of teleological judgement. ‘Oriented by the language of destiny and purpose’, Jennifer Mensch observes, ‘Kant discovered that with a teleological approach he could avoid the pitfalls of subreption, even while invoking the beneficence of nature’s care for her chosen species’ (2013: 106).

Against Forster’s ‘empirical groping’, bereft of the capacity to discriminate between races, varieties and strains, Kant’s teleological mode of inquiry ‘follow[s] only the *principle of ends* in those matters’ (UTP, 8: 169), getting at ‘the *concept* designated by this expression’ – race – and at its necessity ‘with respect to natural history’ (8: 163). From this vantage point, race becomes comprehensible as the mechanism enabling a human species of shared phyletic origins to populate the globe in accordance with nature’s intentions. By providing the four germs sustaining environmental adaptation, nature equips us with the tools to spread across and moralize the entire world: ‘the evolving seeds were distinct but originally implanted in one and the same line of descent *purposively suited for the first general populating of the earth through their offspring*’ (8: 169). More broadly, teleology imparts a method of investigation encompassing humanity’s vocation as a species, drawing race into its explanatory remit. As part of a ‘*system of final causes*’, our place in the natural world ‘only leaves the teleological but not the physical-mechanical mode of explanation’ (8: 179). This is why ‘there can be no thought of sparing us *teleological* grounds of explanation in order to replace them with physical ones, in the case of organized beings as regards the preservation of their kind’ (8: 169).

This reasoning culminates in the third *Critique*’s treatments of natural systems, human ends and teleological judgement, where Kant most fully elaborates the reflective, teleological standpoint enabling beings of our kind to make (speculative) sense of ‘natural purposes’ – organic beings – whose existence cannot be accounted for by merely mechanistic causation. He reconciles mechanistic and teleological forms of causality by limiting their domains, relegating teleological explanation to the strictly epistemic realm concerning how we might *think* about natural objects, having no capacity to tell us anything about them in an ontological or determinative way.¹² The teleological approach is demanded by the limitations of our cognitive capacities, which discern a purposive organization in organic bodies and natural systems irreducible to pure chance – and so, requiring an explanation in terms of purposes – but remain incapable of peering into nature’s operation in any objective sense that might yield determinative judgements. The presumption of purposive organization is a requirement of the faculty of judgement: we must assume, reflectively, that natural systems are governed by a given order, anchored in given purposes, even if we are

unable to demonstrate it. The third *Critique* thus illuminates how the mechanistic causality observable in the natural world might be compatible with a purposive explanation of natural organization, the very tension between *Naturbeschreibung* and *Naturgeschichte* traceable back to the 1750s but only drawn into theoretical focus through Kant's racial theory in the 1770s.

The third *Critique* is, also, the endpoint of Kant's theorizations of human generation and embryological formation – again, only taken up in a systematic way in the context of his racial theory, as of 1775. Despite abandoning references to *Keime* in the *Critique of the Power of Judgement* due to Blumenbach's critique of the germ theory, Kant's epigenism deepens as he locates a purposive power in nature itself (in Blumenbach's terms, 'a formative impulse' (CPJ, 5: 424)) against preformationist accounts treating nature as an incubator in which pre-existing forms would mechanically unfold (a 'merely mechanical formative force', *ibid.*). As Philip Huneman notes, given that for epigenetic explanation, 'time is the very condition of its manifestation ... when we read the Third *Critique* we can understand why Kant was committed to epigenesis' (2007b: 84). Still further, Kant's assessment of non-European races remains largely unchanged from his racial theory: outside a teleological explanation centred on humanity's ends, '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 the Fuegians)' (5: 378).

Race is, then, the ground on which Kant developed the teleological standpoint rendering nature's organization, and humanity's place within it, comprehensible. Race sits at the intersection of his theorizations of natural history and biological generation, both governed, Alix Cohen argues, by a shared teleological logic (2009: 119). Far from incidental to Kant's serious philosophical interests, his racial theory serves as the methodological foundation for his mature view of human purposes and for the teleological judgement rendering those purposes intelligible. It arises out of an epistemological, methodological and disciplinary partitioning starting in the mid-1770s and becoming increasingly entrenched in the 1780s. On one side is natural history, linked to pragmatic anthropology, incorporating Buffon's genealogical account of species, and anchored in a teleological framework explaining racial differentiation in relation to purposive natural order. On the other is a description of nature, linked to physical geography, a mechanistic accounting of objects in space. The latter permits the observation and description of natural phenomena; the former permits their comprehension by placing them in relation to their ends. Race is, then, at the crux of natural history, just as natural history enables the concept of race.

4. Race, teleology and moral development

The previous section aimed to clarify what Kant is saying about race at various points, and to what ends, and to show his racial theory's imbrications with teleological natural history. The problem here is not Kant's racism (at least, not straightforwardly), but rather that humanity's moral advancement is incomprehensible absent the teleological framework stemming from, and surrounding, his racial theory. Kant's speculations on the species' nature and ends lapse into incoherence without the presumption of our movement toward collective moralization, which requires the variation accounted for by his racial theory. Through its incorporation into natural

history, race moves from dispensable appendage to explanatory necessity for understanding natural purposiveness and humanity's place within it. The problem, then, is that we cannot make sense of human purposes without the teleological assumption of moral progressiveness operationalized through racial differentiation.

Where this leaves non-whites remains disputed. Robert Loudon takes Kant's perorations on racial character as regrettable but emphasizes the equiprimordiality of the four racial seeds in the original phylum. This basic stance – that the greater weight of Kant's moral egalitarianism should take precedence over his racial theory's inegalitarianism – also pervades the 'second thoughts' camp, where Sankar Muthu and Pauline Kleingeld see Kant's cosmopolitanism as amenable to deep pluralism. Robert Bernasconi and Mark Larrimore, by contrast, take Kantian teleology as marching non-Europeans toward assimilation, subjection or extermination. While Kleingeld and Jon Mikkelsen note that Kant ultimately retracts his prognostications that Europeans would give law to the rest of the world, this does little to attenuate his view that many non-whites would simply 'die out', a thought he accepts with disconcerting casualness.

These are principally questions of right. The problem I am highlighting is different. It is that Kant's racial theory suggests a developmental limit or torpor in non-European races – Black and Native American races, in particular – that throws into question their capacity to share in humanity's moral advancement. If my earlier claim holds – that our moral vocation lies in *approaching* virtue and *cultivating* our moral faculties – then non-whites appear unable to engage in humanity's characteristic form of moral agency. Non-Europeans' stuntedness comprises an incapacity to participate in the *kind* of moral life of which humans are capable, in the moral development definitive of our vocation. Consider, for instance, Kant's variable attribution of talent across racial lines, given that by '*talent* (natural gift) we understand that excellence of the cognitive faculty which depends not on instruction but on the subject's natural predisposition' (*Anth*, 7: 220). While '[t]he white race contains all incentives and talents in itself' (*L-Anth*, 25: 1188), Kant states in the 1781–2 *Menschenkunde*, the Negro has none, the Hindustani's is 'meager', and the American – incapable of culture and 'well below' the Negro – lacks it entirely. This is borne out by his contention, in *Anthropology Pillau* (1778), that 'Americans have such relations in their nature that they now should become no more perfect', and that Negroes are 'no longer susceptible of any further civilizing' (25: 843). Since 'many people do not progress further by themselves' – in this case, Greenlanders and Asians – '[w]e must look for the continual progress of the human race toward perfection in the Occident' (cited in Loudon 2014: 223). Still more directly, and in a published essay, Kant maintains that 'Americans and Negroes are each a race, sunk beneath the remaining members of the human species in their mental predispositions' (review of Herder's *Ideas*, 8: 62) – and this in 1785, well into the critical period.

Kant's estimation of Native Americans' capacities perhaps best illustrates the moral limitations implicit in his conceptualization of non-Europeans. The Native American is an 'incipient', 'incompletely adapted race' (*DHR*, 2: 438), its 'adaptation . . . interrupted halfway through [its development] . . . establishing the persistent state of this cohort of human beings' (*UTP*, 8: 176). Sufferers of genealogical, climatic and migratory misfortunes, 'their natural disposition did not achieve a *perfect* suitability for any climate', Kant avers, relegating them to 'the lowest of all the other

steps that we have named as differences of the races' (ibid.). They are marked by a permanent stuntedness, a 'half extinguished life power' (DHR, 2: 438) rendering them incapable of development. Kant's evaluation remains consistent over time. 'We find nations that do not appear to have progressed in the perfection of human nature, but have come to a standstill', he proclaims a decade earlier, in 1777–8,

while others, as in Europe, are always progressing. If the Europeans had not discovered America, the Americans would have remained in their condition. And we believe even now that they will attain to no perfection, for it appears that they will all be exterminated, not through acts of murder, for that would be gruesome! but rather that they will die out. (L-Anth, 25: 840)

Such passages illustrate how racial character conditions progress toward 'the perfection of human nature', as certain races appear incapable of moral advancement. Kant could hardly put it more bluntly: 'Americans have such relations in their nature that they now should become no more perfect' (L-Anth, 25: 843). 'If a people in no way improves itself over centuries', he suggests further, 'then one may assume that there already exists in it a certain natural predisposition which it is not capable of exceeding' (L-Anth, 25: 1181). If, as I have argued, our moral vocation lies in our moral amelioration, non-whites' incapacities in just this regard must strike us as deeply problematic.

There remains a rejoinder, raised by Mikkelsen (2013: 25), Louden (2000) and Jeffrey Church (2022: 168), which is that the reflective, non-determinative status of teleological judgements, as mere speculations on humanity's advancement, isolates Kant's moral philosophy from his racial theory. Teleological judgements are falsifiable claims, the argument goes, propositions amenable to revision given better information. As better information *has* become available – namely, an awareness of race's social constructedness – we should simply change our views and move on. Church understands Kant's teleological method in this way, as akin to scientific inquiry issuing hypotheses to orient our thinking on human ends, but as amenable to unconstrained revision.

From this standpoint, Kant's theorization of human progress is a dispensable supplement to an otherwise free-standing account of transcendental moral agency, which can be cleanly separated from its surrounding racial and teleological conditions. But this is not how Kant conceptualizes moral personhood, which incorporates *both* the regulative ideal *and* a careful reckoning with how beings *of our kind* move toward it. A 'metaphysics of morals cannot dispense with principles of application', Kant maintains, 'and we shall often have to take as our object the particular *nature* of human beings, which is cognized only by experience, in order to *show* in it what can be inferred from universal moral principles' (MM, 6: 217). Kant's historical, biological and anthropological teleologies bridge just this distance, between our moral duties and our constitutive imperfection. Those duties hold *because* of our particular nature, as beings obligated by the moral law but destined always to fall short of its observance. The endpoint, however – the moral beacon we are bound to approximate – is neither dispensable, revisable nor arbitrary.

Kant's view of human moral personhood needs an account of progress, without which it ceases to recognizably be his view at all. As he understands it, our moral

vocation lies in the species-wide movement from nature to freedom, or – socially – from the ‘raw state’ (Lectures on Pedagogy, 9: 442) of barbarism to civilization, or – politically – from paternalistic autocracy to republican self-determination. Without the explanatory, though conjectural, work that racial differentiation does to account for humanity’s global spread, Kant’s notion of moral advancement falls apart. The movement toward moral perfection is precisely the movement from backward, irrational social forms to a state of civilization enabling, as he puts it, ‘a sovereignty in which reason alone is to dominate’ (CPJ, 5: 434). Truly scientific inquiry remains falsifiable because it does not start from the presumption of a particular endpoint. Kant’s teleology does, tethered as it is to a particular view of what human moral agency consists in and must ultimately aim toward.

Dilek Huseyinzadegan makes this point especially lucidly. Kant’s politics, she argues, are non-contingently predicated on a distinctive history and anthropology that shapes and constrains them. His Eurocentrism does not just surface in denigrating racial taxonomies, but rather conditions his vision of historical advancement and of its endpoint, ‘a cosmopolitan world order consist[ing] of European peoples, institutions, and cultural development *at the expense of non-Europeans* . . . [rendering them] peripheral to universal history’ (2019: 58). Huseyinzadegan’s insight here is that historical narratives shape political possibilities, and our moral and political landscape is determined in a non-arbitrary way by the notion of historical unfolding encasing it – that ‘a particular construction of history grounds particular political goals’ (p. 61). This could not be truer in Kant’s case. Humanity’s progress is not culturally neutral but rather consists in the cultivation of cultures of ‘discipline’ and ‘skill’ enabling the perfection of our rational capacities (by contrast, Negroes ‘acquire culture, but only a culture of slaves’ (L-Anth, 25: 1187)). The end is neither contingent nor optional: it is what makes Kant’s moral and political theory make any sense at all. If history conditions our political possibilities, we should ask ourselves whether the futures that Kant’s theoretical horizon allows for is one we might want to endorse.

5. Conclusion

It seems difficult to deny that Kant’s racial thinking carries moral weight. ‘Even if racism is not seen in the core principles’, Kleingeld notes, ‘racist prejudice can (and in Kant’s case does) influence how the most basic moral and political principles are applied in the elaboration of the full theory’ (2007: 585–6). It is just this influence that I have aimed to highlight by showing how intimately Kant’s theory of race is braided into his accounts of moral agency, human nature and the species’ progress, and into the critical project more broadly.

Neo-Kantians have, of course, marshalled elements of Kant’s corpus for various ends. But this requires a certain distance from Kant’s own notion of moral personhood – of what human beings are and should aim to be. The closer one gets to Kant’s actual view, the more pronounced do its limitations become. We can purge the historical, anthropological and teleological elements from his thought, but it is not clear that what remains is discernibly Kantian. Kant’s political theory revolves around the Doctrine of Right, just as his moral theory revolves around the Doctrine of Virtue and *Critique of Practical Reason*. But neither is exhausted by them, as both remain incomplete without his elaborations on how human beings might

move toward their realization. While we can undoubtedly keep our gaze trained on the transcendental purity of the first and second *Critiques*, what we are left with is a moral theory with no human being in it. It is not Kant's moral theory.

Radicalizing Kant, then – and to put it a bit polemically – might just mean abandoning him, to some extent. Or, maybe, reading him from the perspective of a critical history of the present to understand how universal histories in the Enlightenment mould have subtended Eurocentrist political projects, from nineteenth-century 'benevolent' imperialisms to twentieth-century modernization theory to current neocolonialisms. 'Addressing the problem of Eurocentrism in Kant's thought', Huseyinzedegan contends, requires 'that we actually pay attention to other historical narratives and views of history, as well as to how those narratives and views might shape and inform our politics' (2019: 59). It may be that the most radical thing we can do with Kant is to set him aside – to stop turning back to the same blinkered sources we have reached to for centuries to navigate our moral and political worlds. This is not to diminish the moral force of Kant's egalitarianism, nor to suggest that we should reject it outright (whatever that might entail). It is rather to make a broader disciplinary appeal that political theorists and philosophers widen beyond the thin cast of canonical, invariably Euro-American figures to whom we turn time and time again. To radicalize, then, may be to more seriously engage the vast non-Western theoretical and normative resources long dismissed by Western thinkers, that Kant assured us, some 250 years ago, would soon be relegated to the ash heap of history.

Acknowledgements. This paper greatly benefited from discussion and feedback from the online *Radicalizing Kantianism?* workshop, 16–17 June 2021. I am grateful to Jamelia Shorter-Bourhanou, Frank M. Kirkland, Helga Varden, Inés Valdez, Dilek Huseyinzedegan, Elvira Basevich, Carol Hay, Jordan Pascoe, Corey Dyck and Charles W. Mills for their insights and steering, and to Huaping Lu-Adler, Alex Livingston and Murad Idris for additional discussion. Corey and Charles are owed a double debt of gratitude for their editorial guidance. This article is dedicated to Charles.

Notes

1 Zammito (2002), Loudon (2000), Wood (1999), Munzel (1999), Wilson (2006), Frierson (2003), Huseyinzedegan (2019), Cohen (2009). Huaping Lu-Adler's [forthcoming](#) *Kant, Race, and Racism: Views from Somewhere* will significantly shape the debate on the relation between Kant's critical and racial theories.

2 Kant's biological writings are subject to a vast literature. The essays in Huneman (2007) are particularly instructive as regards their relation to teleology.

3 Sanford (2018), Mensch (2013), Cohen (2009), Huneman (2007).

4 For early, pathbreaking essays on Kant's racial theory, see Eze (1995) and Serequeberhan (1996). These raised challenging questions regarding the intersections of Kant's racial and moral theories taken up in influential essays by Robert Bernasconi, Mark Larrimore, Charles Mills, Bernard Boxill and Thomas Hill, and books by Robert Loudon and Allen Wood. A second wave of interest, sparked in no small part by Pauline Kleingeld's speculations on Kant's 'second thoughts' on race, focuses on Kant's political thought and on his positions on empire, colonialism and slavery. For just a few in a now expansive literature, see Kleingeld (2007, 2014), Muthu (2003), Bernasconi (2011), Valdez (2017), Flikschuh and Ypi (2014), Storey (2015), Marwah (2012) and McCarthy (2009).

5 Though fewer, some commentators address Kant's racial theory in relation to his accounts of teleology and natural purposiveness. See Mensch (2013), Storey (2015), Sanford (2018), Huseyinzedegan (2019), Clewis (2015), Ypi (2014), Loudon (2015), Cohen (2009), Lu-Adler (2022) and Boxill (2017). Sanford's and Huseyinzedegan's analyses are particularly instructive for my purposes: much of section 3 tallies with Sanford's account, and my conclusions, in sections 4 and 5, are indebted to Huseyinzedegan. It is important to note that Kant's understanding of teleology shifted over the course of his career

(particularly across the 1770s and 1780s), yielding nuances and complexities I am unable to capture in this article. I do not aim at a comprehensive overview of those changes, but rather focus on the development of teleology specifically in relation to race and natural science. I thank the journal's reviewer for pushing me to clarify this point.

6 With the exceptions of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of Judgement* (Kant 1953, 1987), references to Kant's works are to the Cambridge editions and follow standard *Akademie* citation (volume: page): *Groundwork of The Metaphysics of Morals* (G), *Metaphysics of Morals* (MM) and 'On the Common Saying: That May be Correct in Theory, But it is of No Use in Practice' (TP) in Kant 1996; Kant's lectures on ethics (L-Eth) in Kant 2001; *Anthropology* (Anth) (Kant 2006a); *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (Rel) in Kant 2006b; 'Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime' (OFBS), 'Of the Different Races of Human Beings' (DHR), 'Determination of the Concept of a Human Race'(CHR), 'On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy' (UTP), 'Review of J. G. Herder's *Ideas for the Philosophy of the History of Humanity*. Parts 1 and 2' and 'Lectures on Pedagogy' in Kant 2007; Kant's lectures on anthropology (L-Anth) in Kant 2012a; *Physical Geography* in Kant 2012b.

7 This section and brief parts of section 3 condense arguments I have made elsewhere. For the fuller version, see Marwah (2019).

8 Zammito confirms that while the Anthropological Characteristic's organization was 'hodgepodge' (2016: 238) across the 1770s and 1780s, its basic substance remained relatively consistent.

9 As Phillip Sloan puts it, Kant distinguishes 'two projects in natural history, one the empirical study and classification of objects as they are empirically given in the present, *Naturbeschreibung* . . . and the other a historical science of nature that described relationships and changes over time, including the inquiry into origins and historical changes' (2006: 628). The concept of race, as Kant developed it in the 1770s, pulled it squarely into the latter camp.

10 For a careful treatment of the epistemological limits of 'scholastic' description and purposive natural history, see Morris 2011: 176–80.

11 Kant's racial theory was in the 1780s also set against Herder's 'pantheistic transformism' (Sloan 2006: 638). See Zammito 2002: ch. 9, and Mensch 2018.

12 A large literature addresses the epistemic status of teleological judgements and their relation to natural purposiveness in the third *Critique*. For this in relation to Kant's racial theory, see Richards (2000), Cohen (2009), Huseyinzedegan (2019) and Sanford (2018).

References

- Allais, L. (2016) 'Kant's Racism'. *Philosophical Papers*, 45(1/2), 1–36.
- Basevich, E. (2020) 'Reckoning with Kant on Race'. *Philosophical Forum*, 51(3), 221–45.
- Bernasconi, R. (2011) 'Kant's Third Thoughts on Race'. In S. Elden and E. Mendieta (eds), *Reading Kant's Geography* (New York: SUNY Press), 291–318.
- Boxill, B. (2017) 'Kantian Racism and Kantian Teleology'. In N. Zack (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 44–53.
- Church, J. (2022 [forthcoming]) *Kant, Liberalism, and the Meaning of Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Clewis, R. (2015) 'Kant's Natural Teleology? The Case of Physical Geography'. In R. Clewis (ed.), *Reading Kant's Lectures* (Berlin: de Gruyter), 526–52.
- Cohen, A. (2009) *Kant and the Human Sciences: Biology, Anthropology and History*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Eze, E. C. (1995) 'The Color of Reason: The Idea of "Race" in Kant's Anthropology'. In K. Faulstich (ed.), *Anthropology and the German Enlightenment: Perspectives on Humanity* (Cranbury, PA: Bucknell University Press), 103–40.
- Fisher, M. (2007) 'Kant's Explanatory Natural History: Generation and Classification of Organisms in Kant's Natural Philosophy'. In P. Huneman (ed.), *Understanding Purpose: Kant and the Philosophy of Biology* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 101–22.
- Flikschuh, K., and L. Ypi (eds) (2014) *Kant and Colonialism: Historical and Critical Perspectives*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Frierson, P. (2003) *Freedom and Anthropology in Kant's Moral Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Guy, P. (2010) 'The Obligation to be Virtuous: Kant's Conception of the *Tugendverpflichtung*'. *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 27(2), 206–32.
- Huneman, P. (2007a) 'Introduction: Kant and Biology? A Quick Survey'. In P. Huneman (ed.), *Understanding Purpose: Kant and the Philosophy of Biology* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press), 1–36.
- (2007b) 'Reflexive Judgment and Wolffian Embryology: Kant's Shift between the First and the Third Critiques'. In P. Huneman (ed.), *Understanding Purpose: Kant and the Philosophy of Biology* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press), 101–22.
- Huseinzadegan, D. (2019) *Kant's Nonideal Theory of Politics*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Kant, I. (1953) *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. N. K. Smith. London: Macmillan & Co.
- (1987) *Critique of Judgment*. Trans. and ed. W. Pluhar. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing.
- (1996) *Practical Philosophy*. Trans. and ed. M. J. Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2001) *Lectures on Ethics*. Ed. P. Heath and J. B. Schneewind, trans. P. Heath. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2006a) *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. Trans. and ed. R. B. Loudon. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- (2006b) *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason: And Other Writings*. Trans. and ed. A. W. Wood and G. di Giovanni. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2007) *Anthropology, History, and Education*. Ed. G. Zöllner and R. B. Loudon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (2012a) *Lectures on Anthropology*. Ed. A. W. Wood and R. B. Loudon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- (2012b) *Physical Geography*. In E. Watkins (ed.), *Natural Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 434–678.
- Kleingeld, P. (2007) 'Kant's Second Thoughts on Race'. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 57(229), 573–92.
- (2014) 'Kant's Second Thoughts on Colonialism'. In K. Flikschuh and L. Ypi (eds), *Kant and Colonialism: Historical and Critical Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 43–67.
- (2019) 'On Dealing with Kant's Racism and Sexism'. *SGJR Review*, 2(2), 3–22.
- Louden, R. (2000) *Kant's Impure Ethics: From Rational Beings to Human Beings*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- (2014) 'Cosmopolitical Unity: The Final Destiny of the Human Species'. In A. Cohen (ed.), *Kant's Lectures on Anthropology: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 211–29.
- (2015) 'The Last Frontier: Exploring Kant's Geography'. In R. Clewis (ed.), *Reading Kant's Lectures* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 505–25.
- Lu-Adler, H. (2022) 'Kant and Slavery: Or Why he Never Became a Racial Egalitarian'. *Critical Philosophy of Race*, 10(2), 263–94.
- (forthcoming) *Kant, Race, and Racism: Views from Somewhere*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Marwah, I. S. (2012) 'Bridging Nature and Freedom? Kant, Culture and Cultivation'. *Social Theory and Practice*, 38(3), 385–406.
- (2019) *Liberalism, Diversity and Domination: Kant, Mill and the Government of Difference*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- McCarthy, T. (2009) *Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mensch, J. (2013) *Kant's Organicism: Epigenesis and the Development of Critical Philosophy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- (2018) 'Kant and the Skull Collectors: German Anthropology from Blumenbach to Kant'. In C. Dyck and F. Wunderlich (eds), *Kant and his German Contemporaries*, vol. 1, *Logic, Mind, Epistemology, Science and Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 192–210.
- Mikkelsen, J. (2013) 'Translator's Introduction'. In J. M. Mikkelsen (ed.), *Kant and the Concept of Race: Late Eighteenth-Century Writings* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press), 1–40.
- Mills, C. (2017) *Black Rights/White Wrongs: The Critique of Racial Liberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Morris, D. (2011) 'The Place of the Organism in Kantian Philosophy: Geography, Teleology, and the Limits of Philosophy'. In S. Elden and E. Mendieta (eds), *Reading Kant's Geography* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press), 173–94.

- Munzel, G. F. (1999) *Kant's Conception of Moral Character: The 'Critical' Link of Morality, Anthropology, and Reflective Judgment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Muthu, S. (2003) *Enlightenment against Empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Reinhardt, O. (2012) 'Physical Geography: Introduction'. In E. Watkins (ed.), *Immanuel Kant: Natural Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 434–8.
- Richards, R. J. (2000) 'Kant and Blumenbach on the *Bildungstrieb*: A Historical Misunderstanding'. *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C*, 31(1), 11–32.
- Sanford, S. (2018) 'Kant, Race, and Natural History'. *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 44(9), 950–77.
- Serequeberhan, T. (1996) 'Eurocentrism in Philosophy: The Case of Immanuel Kant'. *Philosophical Forum*, 27(4), 333–56.
- Sloan, P. (2002) 'Performing the Categories: Eighteenth-Century Generation Theory and the Biological Roots of Kant's *A Priori*'. *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 40(2), 229–53.
- (2006) 'Kant on the History of Nature: The Ambiguous Heritage of the Critical Philosophy for Natural History'. *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 37, 627–48.
- (2007) 'Kant and British Bioscience'. In P. Huneman (ed.), *Understanding Purpose: Kant and the Philosophy of Biology* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 149–70.
- Stark, W. (2011) 'Historical and Philological References on the Question of a Possible Hierarchy of Human "Races," "Peoples," or "Populations" in Immanuel Kant: A Supplement'. In S. Elden and E. Mendieta (eds), *Reading Kant's Geography* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press), 87–102.
- Storey, I. (2015) 'Empire and Natural Order in Kant's 'Second Thoughts' on Race'. *History of Political Thought*, 36(4), 670–99.
- Valdez, I. (2017) 'It's Not about Race: Good Wars, Bad Wars, and the Origins of Kant's Anti-Colonialism'. *American Political Science Review*, 111(4), 819–34.
- Wilson, H. (2006) *Kant's Pragmatic Anthropology: Its Origin, Meaning and Critical Significance*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Wood, A. (1999) *Kant's Ethical Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ypi, L. (2014) 'Commerce and Colonialism in Kant's Philosophy of History'. In K. Flikschuh and L. Ypi (eds), *Kant and Colonialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 99–126.
- Zammito, J. (2002) *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- (2007) 'Kant's Persistent Ambivalence Toward Epigenesis, 1764–90'. In P. Huneman (ed.), *Understanding Purpose: Kant and the Philosophy of Biology* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press), 51–74.
- (2016) 'What a Young Man Needs for his Venture into the World: The Function and Evolution of the "Characteristics"'. In A. Cohen (ed.), *Kant's Lectures on Anthropology: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 230–48.