

# Why Kant Was Not a "Racist"

## Kant's 'Race Theory'

### Within the Context of Physical Geography and Anthropology – A Philosophical Approach Instead of Ideologically Motivated Ones

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#### I. Kant – a racist?

Since more than three decades, time and again one can find in the literature on Kant<sup>1</sup>, predominantly<sup>2</sup> in English,<sup>3</sup> but recently also in German publications, the claim that Kant was a "racist".<sup>4</sup> What almost all opponents<sup>5</sup> of Kant have in common is the conviction of the correctness of their claim, as one can find it, for instance, in Mikkelsen: "[T]here can be no doubt about the fact that Kant [...] gave expression to views both in print and in his private notebooks that are clearly racist not only in tone but also in spirit, if not, necessarily, in ideological intent."<sup>6</sup> This claim admittedly can have quite different degrees of harshness. In a mild form, it says that Kant's "racism" is an inconsistency by which, however, his practical philosophy

<sup>1</sup> For bibliographical notes see the end of this essay.

<sup>2</sup> Admittedly, two of the first contributions were written in Kant's mother tongue: *Alex Sutter*, "Kant und die »Wilden«. Zum impliziten Rassismus in der Kantischen Geschichtsphilosophie", in: *Prima Philosophia*, 2 (1989), 241-266; *Reinhard Brandt*, *D'Artagnan und die Urteilstafel*, Wiesbaden: Fritz Steiner Verlag, 1991; Neuauflage Stuttgart: DTV, 1998, 223-231.

<sup>3</sup> At the outset, a few remarks about the situation of those who know English, but not German: The Cambridge Edition of Kant's Works (= CE) does not yet contain anything of Kant's lectures on physical geography. Apart from two lectures (Friedländer and Mrongovius), the CE only offers excerpts from the lectures on anthropology; and there are often just those missing that would be relevant to the topic of this article. – In what has been translated, including that from Kant's own publications, the astonishingly high number of avoidable translation errors is striking. At best, the gist of Kant's text is presented, if not even some kind of "poetic licence" is at work; and many omissions are unmarked. – Out of all in the case of passages that could be considered for the accusation of racism, there are repeatedly translations deviating from Kant's wording, which are suitable for supporting that accusation. – There is also a lack of sufficient coordination with regard to the translations of Kant's individual writings. For example, the expression "Familienschlag" is translated as "family sort" in one text and "family kind" in another. "Menschengeschlecht" resp. "Menschengattung" can be correctly translated as "human species" or "humankind", but also as "human race". See below fn. 433.

<sup>4</sup> The fact that there are only comparatively few publications (especially in the German-speaking area) that strictly contradict the accusation of racism might be explained simply by the fact that many Kant connoisseurs considered it too absurd to bother with a contradiction. One of the few who did not remain silent, even at an early stage, was Malter. He ended his relevant essay with the words: "The Kantian race theory not only does not support racism, it is the most serious, most energetic objection to this – the very worst – delusion." *Rudolf Malter*, "Der Rassebegriff in Kants Anthropologie", in: Gunter Mann et al. (Eds.), *Die Natur des Menschen. Probleme der Physischen Anthropologie und Rassenkunde*, Stuttgart/New York: Verlag Gustav Fischer, 1990, 113-122 (m/tr).

<sup>5</sup> That's how, in this article, I will name all and only those who make this accusation against Kant.

<sup>6</sup> *Jon M. Mikkelsen* (Ed.), *Kant and the Concept of Race. Late Eighteenth-Century Writings*, Albany: SUNY Press, 2013, 3.

with its pretension to universal validity for all human beings is not affected;<sup>7</sup> or, still milder, that at least the old Kant had given up his "racist" opinions and thereby also got rid of the inconsistency.<sup>8</sup> In its harshest form, on the other hand, the claim says that Kant not only was with his 'race theory' one of the founders or even the "father" of modern racism, but that his "racism" shows itself even in his moral philosophy.<sup>9</sup> Its universality, it's true, equally refers to all persons, whose concept, however, does not (NB according to this claim!) include all human beings, but actually only white people or even only white men; and in an excessive form the claim says that when Kant himself speaks of all human beings one has to distinguish from them the non-white people as "Untermenschen".<sup>10</sup>

Of the four statements by Kant, which are regularly, and as something like prime examples, quoted in the literature as indicating or even proving his alleged "racism", the first can be found in a paper from 1764,<sup>11</sup> the second in Kant's first essay on 'race theory' from 1785<sup>12</sup> and the third and the fourth in Kant's third essay on 'race theory' from 1788.<sup>13</sup> What in addition occasionally is referred to, are statements in transcripts of Kant's lectures on physical

<sup>7</sup> Reinhard Brandt, (fn. 2); Thomas E. Hill Jr. / Bernard Boxill, Kant and Race, in: Bernard Boxill (Ed.), *Race and Racism*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001, 448-471; Bernd Dörflinger, "Die Einheit der Menschheit als Tiergattung. Zum Rassebegriff in Kants physischer Anthropologie", in: Kant und die Berliner Aufklärung. Akten des IX. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses (Berlin 2000). Bd. 4. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2001, 342-351; Ricardo Terra, "Les observations de Kant sur les races affectent-elles l'universalisme de sa philosophie?", in: Was ist der Mensch? Que é o homem? Antropologia, Estética e Teleologia em Kant, Centro de Filosofia de Universidade de Lisboa 2010, 139-149; Ricardo Terra, Hat die kantische Vernunft eine Hautfarbe?, in: Kant und die Philosophie in weltbürgerlicher Absicht. Akten des XI. Internationalen Kantkongresses (Pisa 2010), Bd. 1. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2013, 431-447. Matthias Kaufmann, "Wie gleich sind Personen – und Menschen? Kant über Geschlechter, Rassen und Kolonisierung", in: Jahrbuch für Recht und Ethik, 27 (2019) 183–204

<sup>8</sup> Pauline Kleingeld, "Kant's Second Thoughts on Race", in: *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 57 (2007) 573-592; confirmed again in: Pauline Kleingeld, "Kant and Forster on race, culture, and cosmopolitanism", in: Pauline Kleingeld, *Kant and Cosmopolitanism. The Philosophical Ideal of World Citizenship*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012, 92-123. Jennifer Mensch, "From Crooked Wood to Moral Agency: On Anthropology and Ethics in Kant", in: *Estudos Kantianos*, 2 (2014) 185-204; Howard Williams, "Colonialism in Kant's Political Philosophy", in: *Diametros* 39 (2014): 154–181; Ian Storey, "Empire and natural order in Kant's 'second thoughts' on race", in: *History of Political Thought*, 36 (2015) 670-699. – It should already be said now that it does not seem strange to anyone who speaks of inconsistencies in Kant's work, whether permanent or finally overcome, that Kant out of all did not notice what is obvious and beyond doubt to them. Maybe it's somehow uplifting to be able to criticize such a thinker. Williams (op. cit., 158) graciously attests to him: "Kant is no doubt an unreliable thinker on the topic and it is probably very much to his advantage that he did not greatly pursue these racist ideas in the decade after."

<sup>9</sup> Alex Sutter, Kant und die "Wilden" (fn. 2) (Also in tone and content Sutter anticipated everything that was in this respect to be read afterwards.) Susan M. Shell, "Kant's Conception of a Human Race", in: Sara Eigen / Mark Larrimore (Eds.), *The German Invention of Race*, Albany: SUNY Press, 1990, 55-72; Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, "The Colour of Reason: The Idea of 'Race' in Kant's Anthropology", in: Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Ed.), *Postcolonial African Philosophy. A Critical Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1997, 103-140; Robert Bernasconi, "Kant and Blumenbach's Polyps. A Neglected Chapter in the History of the Concept of Race", in: Sara Eigen / Mark Larrimore (Eds.), *The German Invention of Race*, Albany: SUNY Press, 1990, 73-90; Robert Bernasconi, "Kant as an Unfamiliar Source of Racism", in: Julie Ward und Tommy Lott (Eds.), *Philosophers on Race. Critical Essays*, Oxford: Blackwell 2002, 145– 166; Robert Bernasconi, "Will the Real Kant Please Stand Up: The Challenge of Enlightenment Racism to the Study of the History of Philosophy", in: *Radical Philosophy* 117 [2003] 13-22; Robert Bernasconi, "Kant's Third Thoughts on Race", in: Stuart Elden / Eduardo Mendieta (Eds.) *Reading Kant's Geography*, Albany NY: SUNY Press, 2011, 291-318; Charles W. Mills, "Kant's *Untermenschen*", in: Andrew Valls (Ed.), *Race and Racism in Modern Philosophy*, Ithaca/London: 2005, 169-193; Thomas McCarthy, "Rasse' und 'Entwicklung' bei Kant", in: Thomas McCarthy, *Rassismus, Imperialismus und die Idee menschlicher Entwicklung*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2015, 76-119.

<sup>10</sup> I have developed the following discussion about Kant's 'race theory' against the background of the various arguments put forward against it. It should therefore be unnecessary to go into these in detail. For the purpose of explanation or illustration only, I occasionally refer to a specific criticism expressed in the literature.

<sup>11</sup> GSE, 02.255.01-03.

<sup>12</sup> VvRM, 02.438.23-25.

<sup>13</sup> ÜGTP, 08.174.24-30 and 08.176.01-06.

geography resp. on anthropology,<sup>14</sup> which, however, do not add anything essential to the four 'incriminating' statements and, moreover, could not be understood as sufficient evidence in themselves.

Now Kant was neither a geographer nor a biologist, and he never took himself as such; additionally, with regard to anthropology he was largely dependent on the empirical material provided by others, researchers or even interested laypeople. In order to be able to do justice to his remarks about race and races,<sup>15</sup> especially human races, in their significance and role within the context of his writings, one must primarily familiarize oneself with the *fundamental* considerations that Kant made in relation to those disciplines.

Hardly had he completed his habilitation in September 1755, when he lectured in his second, the summer semester of 1756, for the first time about physical geography. He went on with that about forty times up to the summer of 1796, from the winter of 1772/73 alternating semester by semester with anthropology.

One reason for holding these 'private' (paid) lectures in addition to his 'public' (free), strictly philosophical compulsory lectures (logic and metaphysics) may have been that, working as a private lecturer without a fixed income and later, albeit to a lesser extent, as a full professor, he was dependent on the fees to attend his private lectures;<sup>16</sup> and the subject of those two lectures was particularly popular and thus also attractive.

A second, completely different reason was Kant's 'philosophical' interest in these disciplines. It could best be expressed in the question: which conditions must these disciplines meet in order to be able to come forward as science. To this, as a special problem, was added the use of teleological principles with which Kant was also increasingly occupied.<sup>17</sup> It will show that his determination of the concept of a human race gave him an excellent opportunity to literally demonstrate in practice the necessity and usefulness of these principles.

In addition and quite independent of the scientific interest, he also had an interest in anthropology, the reason for which was the goal of providing the "world cognizance" necessary for the education of the human species.

## II. Elaboration and development of physical geography and anthropology

According to the announcement made by Kant in 1757 of his lecture on physical geography, this would treat "only the natural properties of the globe and what is on it", but not as completely and philosophically precisely as physics and natural history do, but "with the sensible curiosity of a traveller." Since there was still no textbook to be used by the professors at the time, he would organize the lecture "according to the instructions of a summary draft", in which he "drew from all sources", beforehand from the fundamental works of Varenius, Buffon, Lulofs and then from the "most thorough descriptions of particular countries" as found in

<sup>14</sup> This also includes the *Physical Geography*, published during Kant's lifetime (1802), but not edited by himself (now in Vol. IX of the Akademie Edition).

<sup>15</sup> For this essential distinction see also fn. 75 and p. 17.

<sup>16</sup> See e.g. the letter to Lindner from October 28, 1759 (Br, 10.18f).

<sup>17</sup> Highly recommendable for this context: *Gideon Stiening*, "»[E]s gibt gar keine verschiedene Arten von Menschen«", in: Rainer Godel / Gideon Stiening (Eds.), *Klopffechtereien – Missverständnisse – Widersprüche? Methodische und methodologische Perspektiven auf die Kant-Forster-Kontroverse*, München: Wilhelm Fink, 2012, 19-53.

reports by "skillful travellers" as well as in specialist journals and in publications from various academies of science.<sup>18</sup>

In the second, special part of physical geography, in the context of the *animal* kingdom (sic), "man is viewed in a comparative way in respect of their differences in his natural formation and colour in various regions of the Earth".<sup>19</sup> Kant is concerned with an explanation

"of the tendencies of human beings that are derived from the *region of the Earth* in which they live, of the diversity of their prejudices and way of thinking,<sup>20</sup> insofar as all this can serve to *acquaint man better with himself*; [...]; in a word, [an explanation of] everything that pertains to a *physical* examination of the Earth".<sup>21</sup>

In the next announcement of his lectures (1758) Kant declares:

"In the past six months, I have lectured on physical geography on the basis of my own writings, and I propose once again to lecture on this *useful* and *agreeable* science with various extensions."<sup>22</sup>

In the Holstein lecture, the first, general part of physical geography and the second part about "what the soil contains" (animal, plant and mineral kingdoms), which has already been announced as a special part are followed by another special, third part: "Countries by geographic order" (Asia, Africa, Europe, America). Different from the second part about the three kingdoms of nature, the human being is clearly at the centre of the presentation. There is also talk of human beings and peoples with different skin colours. But neither does the term "race" appear, nor is there even an attempt at a corresponding theory. Only in the second part of the animal kingdom subchapter "On Man" there are two pages on "Opinions on the cause of this [the black] colour"<sup>23</sup>.

Almost a decade after his first lecture on physical geography in the summer of 1756, in his *Announcement of the Programme of his Lectures for the Winter Semester 1765-1766*<sup>24</sup>, Kant writes:

I shall make clear what method ought to be adopted in the study of *man*. And by *man* here I do not only mean *man* as he is distorted by the mutable form which is conferred upon him by the contingencies [sic] of his condition and who, as such, has nearly always been unrecognized even by philosophers. I rather mean the *nature* of man, which always remains,<sup>25</sup> and its characteristic place within the creation, so that one knows which perfection is appropriate to him in the state of *primitive* innocence and which in the state of *wise* innocence.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>18</sup> See EACG, 02.03f (m/tr). According to Werner Stark, the excerpts from these sources make up around four fifths of the oldest known lecture transcript "Ms Holstein". See V-PG/Holstein, 26/1.VI.

<sup>19</sup> EACG, 02.09 (m/tr). – Where I have myself translated writings of Kant into English, I have put priority on the highest possible correspondence with the original. That may sound in places a bit awkward or even somehow "teutonic". I have unfortunately just the great disadvantage that Kant's mother tongue and not English is my native language.

<sup>20</sup> As can be seen from the naming of these characteristics, despite the mention of "colour" it is not yet about "races" in accordance with the concept that Kant only defined eighteen years later. See below p. 12f.

<sup>21</sup> EACG, 02.09 (m/it; m/tr).

<sup>22</sup> NLBR, 02.25 (m/it; m/tr).

<sup>23</sup> V-PG/Holstein, 26/1.89 (m/tr).

<sup>24</sup> NEV, 02.303.

<sup>25</sup> The talk of an unchanging nature of man or of "mankind" (V-Anth/Fried, 25.471.09-12), still more or less a credible assumption here, later receives powerful support from Kant's argument in favor of the thesis of mankind as one species.

<sup>26</sup> NEV, 02.311f.

Concerning his lecture on physical geography Kant continues:<sup>27</sup>

"Right at the beginning of my academic career, I realised that students were being seriously neglected, particularly in this respect: early on they learned the *art of subtle argumentation* but they lacked any adequate knowledge of historical matters which could make good their lack of *having experience*. Accordingly, I conceived the project of making the history of the present state of the earth, in other words, *geography in the widest sense of the term*, into an pleasant and easy compendium of what might prepare them [...] for the exercise of practical reason [...] The name which I gave to the discipline, constituted by that part of the subject on which my chief attention was at the time focused, was that of *physical geography*. Since then I have gradually extended the scheme, and I now propose, by condensing that part of the subject which is concerned with the remarkable physical features of the earth, to gain the time necessary for extending my course of lectures to include the other parts of the subject, which are of even greater general utility. This discipline will therefore be a *physical, moral*<sup>28</sup> and *political* geography. It will, first, show the remarkable features of *nature* in its three realms. It will, however, be only a selection of those features, among the numberlessly many which could be chosen, which particularly satisfy the general desire for knowledge, either because of the fascination which they exercise in virtue of their rarity, or because of the effect which they exercise on states by means of trade and industry. This part of the subject, which also contains the natural relationship which holds between all the countries and seas, and the reason for their connection, is the real foundation of all history. Without this foundation, history is scarcely distinguishable from fairy-stories. The *second* part of the subject considers *man*, throughout the world, from the point of view of the variety of his natural properties [GG. as "human animal"<sup>29</sup>] and the differences in that feature of man which is moral [GG. the result of his free actions] about him [GG. as "rational human being"<sup>30</sup>]. The consideration of these things is at once very important and also highly stimulating as well. Unless these matters are considered, general judgements about man would scarcely be possible. The comparison of human beings with each other, and the comparison of man today with the moral state of man in earlier times, furnishes us with a comprehensive map of the *human species*.<sup>31</sup> Finally, there will be a consideration of what can be regarded as a product of the *reciprocal interaction* of the two previously mentioned forces [nature and freedom], namely, the condition of the *states* and nations throughout the world. The subject will not be considered so much from the point of view of the way in which that condition depends on accidental causes, such as the deeds and fates of individuals, for example, the sequence of governments, conquests, and intrigues between states. The condition of states will rather be considered in relation to what is more constant and

<sup>27</sup> Kant's best defence is his own, because that's the only way to take him at his word. It is therefore with full intention that he is quoted very extensively here and in the following, especially since a report could hardly say it better. Moreover, this is a good opportunity to acquaint the readers with important Kant texts, which they are more likely to be deprived of, above all, in the debate about Kant's alleged 'racism'. In this way, too, the reader who is unfamiliar with these texts or only casually familiar with them, gets a sense of the spirit that these texts breathe and of the specific philosophical interest from which they were written.

<sup>28</sup> "A moral geography is that which considers the *customs* of peoples as they *are* now or as they *were* in ancient times." (V-Lo/Philippi, 24.491 [m/it; m/tr]; also PG, 09.164) Whenever Kant speaks in the context of physical geography and anthropology, both of which are empirical sciences for him, of "moral", then this is always to be understood purely descriptively and not normatively. Nothing else is meant when in 1779 he speaks in a letter of "principles of a moral characterization of the different races of the human species" (Br, 10.256), i.e. of what can be observed in the free actions of people of certain races as respectively typical. It is, however, doubtful that this supposedly typical behaviour can be considered at all as race-specific according to the concept of race later determined by Kant.

<sup>29</sup> TL, 06.435.

<sup>30</sup> TL, 06.435.

<sup>31</sup> Referring to this sentence, Bernasconi initially remarks in a seemingly harmless way: "using the word *Geschlecht* rather than *Race*," only to then continue, anything but harmlessly, namely completely falsifying Kant's statements: "Kant presented the idea of a great map of the human races. He highlighted the moral differences [sic] between the races, as well as those [mentioned as the first by Kant!] in physical properties, emphasizing that without knowledge of them one can scarcely pass universal judgments on man." (Robert Bernasconi, Third Thoughts [fn. 9] 298) Kant does not once speak of "race(s)" in the whole paper. What characterizes man not as a natural being but as a free being ("what is moral about him"), Kant deals with only later in the anthropology after its separation from physical geography (e.g. Anth, 07.321ff). As will show, it has nothing to do with Kant's 'race theory'. For this very reason Kant could not even speak of "moral differences between the races", let alone of "highlighting".

which contains the remote ground of those accidental causes, namely, the situation of their countries, the products, customs, industry, trade and population."<sup>32</sup>

Kant's plan thus provides for a condensation of what he had hitherto offered as "physical geography" and an expansion to include more "generally useful" parts of it. As Adickes states, Kant now wanted to teach his students "to become acquainted with man as a natural and cultural being and to make the history of peoples and states understandable from natural conditions".<sup>33</sup>

With the essay "Of the different races of human beings" Kant in 1775 also announces again his lecture on physical geography,<sup>34</sup> but now in addition his lecture on anthropology, which he had been giving already alternately for two or three years. With reference to physical geography he speaks of a "preliminary exercise in the *knowledge of the world*."

"This knowledge of the world serves to procure the *pragmatic* element for all otherwise acquired sciences and skills, by means of which they become useful not merely for the *school* but rather for *life* and through which the accomplished apprentice is introduced to the stage of his destiny, namely, the *world*. Here a two-fold field lies before him, of which he requires a preliminary outline so that he can order in it all future experiences according to rules, namely, *nature* and the *human being*".<sup>35</sup> However, both of these must be considered *cosmologically*, namely, not with respect to the noteworthy details that their objects contain (physics and empirical psychology) but with respect to what we can note of the relation as a whole in which they stand and in which everyone takes his place.<sup>36</sup> I call the first instruction *physical geography* and have chosen it for the summer lecture course, the second one I call *anthropology*, which I reserve for the winter lecture course."<sup>37</sup>

If one compares these statements with those which Kant made about physical geography in 1765/66, one finds out: Man, insofar as he is a product of nature, remains an object of physical geography; but insofar as he is a product of himself, he now becomes the object of anthropology.<sup>38</sup>

"One opposes these [nature and the human being] to each other, because man is the sole freely acting being on the earth's surface. Nature and freedom, however, are opposed to each other. In physical geography we consider nature, but in anthropology the human being, or human nature in all its situations. These two sciences constitute cognition of the world."<sup>39</sup>

The plan presented for 1765/66 is thus obsolete. To understand more precisely what happened here, it is advisable to take a look at the letter that Kant wrote to Marcus Herz towards the end of 1773. There it says:

"I have read the review of Platner's Anthropologie. I would not have guessed the reviewer myself but now I am delighted to see the evident progress of his skill. This winter I am giving, for the second time, a col-

<sup>32</sup> NEV, 02.312f (m/it; without Kant's italics apart from "subtle argumentation", "having experience", "nature", "man", "states").

<sup>33</sup> *Erich Adickes*, Kant als Naturforscher, Bd. 2, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1925, 381.

<sup>34</sup> See VvRM, 02.443.12.

<sup>35</sup> "The world as an object of outer sense is nature, the world as an object of inner sense is the human being." (V-Anth/Fried, 25.469 [1775/76]).

<sup>36</sup> It's about "a *system*, insofar as multiplicity has arisen *out of the idea of the whole*." (V-Anth/Fried, 25.470 (m/it)).

<sup>37</sup> VvRM, 02.443.

<sup>38</sup> With regard to the following see also: *Werner Stark*, "Historical Notes and Interpretive Questions about Kant's Lectures on Anthropology" and *Reinhard Brandt*, "The Guiding Idea of Kant's Anthropology and the Vocation of the Human Being"; both contributions in: B. Jacobs and P. Kain (Eds.), *Essays on Kant's Anthropology*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003, 15-37 resp. 85-104.

<sup>39</sup> V-Anth/Pillau, 25.733; cf. V-PG/Kaehler, 26,2.299.

legium privatum on anthropology, a subject that I now intend to make into a proper academic discipline. But my plan is quite different.<sup>40</sup> I intend to use it to disclose the sources of all the [practical] sciences, the science of morals, of skill of human intercourse, of the way to educate and govern human beings, and thus of everything that pertains to the practical. I shall look for phenomena and their laws rather than for the first grounds of the possibility to modify human nature at all. Hence the subtle and, to my view, eternally futile inquiries as to the manner in which bodily organs are connected with thought I omit entirely. I include so many observations of ordinary life that my auditors have constant occasion to compare their ordinary experience with my remarks and thus, from beginning to end, find the lectures entertaining and never dry. In between times, I am trying to prepare out of this very pleasant observational theory a preliminary study for the academic youth, a study of skill, of prudence, and even of wisdom that is, along with physical geography, distinct from all other teaching and that can be called knowledge of the world."<sup>41</sup>

Empirical psychology<sup>42</sup> no longer belongs to metaphysics, as in the *Metaphysica* of Baumgarten on which Kant's lecture was based, but becomes part of anthropology. In this it is later as "anthropological didactic" the first (physiological) part before the "anthropological characteristic" as the second (pragmatic) part. Physical geography and anthropology, which together make up the knowledge of the world, here get their permanent and for Kant decisive, namely *pragmatic*, determination related to all possible human practice, whereby physical geography as well as physiological psychology are not pragmatic themselves, but deliver pragmatically important knowledge of the world of which Kant accordingly makes use in his anthropology.<sup>43</sup>

"All cultural progress, by means of which the human being advances his education, has the goal of applying this acquired knowledge and skill for the world's use. But the most important object in the world to which he can apply them is *man*: because he is his own final end. – Therefore to know man according to his species as an earthly being endowed with reason especially deserves to be called *knowledge of the world*, even though he constitutes only one part of the creatures on earth.<sup>44</sup> [...] Physiological knowledge of the human being<sup>45</sup> concerns the investigation of what *nature* makes of the human being;<sup>46</sup> the pragmatic knowledge concerns the investigation of what *he* as a free-acting being makes of himself, or can and should make of himself."<sup>47</sup>

<sup>40</sup> "[...] unlike Ernst Platner's psycho-somatically oriented *Anthropology for doctors and sages* from 1772, whose review by Marcus Herz is the reason for the written statement. But also different from the declaration of intent in Kant's first lecture on anthropology from winter of 1772/73. By no means did Kant want to use it to develop a basic discipline or a preliminary exercise for everything practical and a knowledge of the world, but rather a theoretical, empirical psychology, anthropology, or »cognition of human nature«, a »cognition from observation and experience.« (Reinhard Brandt / Werner Stark, Einleitung zu "Vorlesungen über Anthropologie", 25.VII-VIII [m/tr]).

<sup>41</sup> Br, 10.145f.

<sup>42</sup> See also KrV, A 848f / B 876f.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Anth, 07.119.22-120.08.

<sup>44</sup> "The human being thus interests us more than nature, for nature exists for the sake of the human, the human being is the purpose of nature." (V-Anth/Fried, 25.470).

<sup>45</sup> "[...] in regard to [the] empirical character there is no freedom, and according to this character we can consider the human being solely when we only want to *observe*, and, as happens in anthropology, to investigate the moving causes of his actions *physiologically*." (KrV A 550 / B 578 [2<sup>nd</sup> italics mine])

<sup>46</sup> To this and *only* to this investigation also belongs what Kant says about race and races.

<sup>47</sup> Anth, 07.119. "Knowledge of the world [...] either from a physical or moral point of view. [...] Anthropology provides information about this from a moral point of view, physical geography from a physical point of view. The latter is therefore 1. Knowledge of things in nature according to the difference in space, places and situations in which things are found on Earth. The natural man has the same place according to the position assigned to him by nature. [...] It [physical geography] is necessary, to get to know, for example, customs, traditions, way of acting and kind of constitution of the Mongols [...] [GG. with regard to their natural conditionality]." (V-PG/Vigil; in: *Sabina Laetitia Kowalewski / Werner Stark* (Eds.), Königsberger Kantiana, Hamburg: Meiner 2000, 167; m/tr).

This knowledge of the world is pragmatic insofar as it contains "knowledge of the human being as a *citizen of the world*."<sup>48</sup> Already in the drafts for the lecture on anthropology from the 1770s it says accordingly: "We are examining man here (1.) not according to what he is by nature, but (2.) in order to know – what he can make of himself and how one can use him."<sup>49</sup> The second project is the subject of pragmatic anthropology, while the first is the subject of the systematically, as it were, preceding physical geography resp. physiological anthropology.<sup>50</sup> In order to achieve his destiny both as a "human animal" ("natural human being") and as a "rational human being" ("moral human being"),<sup>51</sup> man needs knowledge of the world. Both kinds of this special knowledge are addressed by Kant in the lectures on anthropology.

The *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view*, published by him in 1798, is even predominantly dedicated to what nature makes out of man, and this also in the part on "anthropological characteristic". There, in the chapter on the "character of the people", for instance, "the question [...] is about *innate, natural* character which, so to speak, lies in the blood mixture of the human beings".<sup>52</sup> It is true that Kant contrasts the "innate character" with the "acquired and artificial" one. But with regard to the former he cannot possibly think of a generally inherited character. Presumably he has in mind characteristics that he thinks are typically found cross-generationally in a specific people compared to other peoples. One is not born *with* them, but one takes them in, as it were, "with the mother's milk," "from childhood"; one acquires them from birth through permanent socialization. Kant speaks quite correctly of "natural character" because the acquisition is not voluntary. You don't *make* yourself, you *become* Italian, Chilean, Japanese – whether you like it or not. Accordingly, Kant speaks of

"maxims, acquired through descent or having become, as it were, [second] nature through long usage and been grafted onto it, which express the sensibility of a people".<sup>53</sup>

But all of this already aims at recognizing man as a citizen of the world. And this pragmatic, cosmopolitan perspective then comes to full fruition in the final chapter on the "character of the species".

"Therefore, in order to assign the human being his class in the system of animate nature and thus to characterize him, nothing remains for us than to say that he has a character, which he himself creates, insofar as he is capable of perfecting himself according to ends that he himself adopts. By means of this the human being, as an animal endowed with the *capacity of reason* (animal rationabile), can make out of himself a *rational* animal (animal rationale)".<sup>54</sup>

"The sum total of pragmatic anthropology, in respect to the vocation of the human being and the characteristic of his formation, is the following. The human being is destined by his reason to live in a society with

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<sup>48</sup> Anth, 07.120.

<sup>49</sup> Refl 1482, 15.659f (m/tr).

<sup>50</sup> In both projects it's about empirical sciences, which as such do not belong to philosophy as "cognition of reason from mere concepts" (Log, 09.23).

<sup>51</sup> See TL, 06.435; Refl 1521, 15.888. Man "as animal and as intelligence [...] animality is based on the dependence of the soul on the body, and intelligence on the domination of the soul over the body. (V-Anth/Fried, 25.476).

<sup>52</sup> Anth, 07.319 (m/it); see also Anth, 07.312.01.

<sup>53</sup> Anth, 07.312 (m/tr). "Sensibility", called by Kant also "temperament", indicates "what can be made of man", in contrast to the "way of thinking" which indicates "what he is prepared to make of himself." (Anth, 07.285).

<sup>54</sup> Anth, 07.321.

human beings and in it to *cultivate* himself, to *civilize* himself, and to *moralize* himself by means of the arts and sciences."<sup>55</sup>

Since 1757, when Kant announced his lecture on physical geography and then also gave it, he has repeatedly and in a systematically meaningful way spoken of man; later, of course, also in the lectures on anthropology. "There is no greater and more important investigation for human beings than the cognition of the human being."<sup>56</sup> In an anthropology lecture from 1775/76, as already in the lecture announcement 1765/66, Kant speaks of the unchangeable nature of humanity.<sup>57</sup>

It is precisely by speaking about humanity that also the concept of race comes into play for Kant. His real interest is in humanity, not in those empirical populations which he calls races. But these are, as it were, a suitable means to an end. It is indeed the concept of race and the populations corresponding to it which, if not provide evidence, at least open up the possibility for him to speak of only one species of human beings.

### III. Kant's 'race theory' as science<sup>58</sup>

Ever since he began in 1756 to give lectures on physical geography, Kant had also spoken of what he later ascribed to race. But it wasn't until 1775, when he announced his lectures on physical geography and anthropology, that he first made race a special topic. The primary concern was the determination and differentiation of certain concepts, used in the international debate, and their possible function for scientific cognition.

With regard to the animal kingdom and thus also to humans, Kant distinguishes the *school division* concerning classes, which deals with "resemblances", from the *natural division* concerning phyla, which deals with "relationships in terms of generation". The school division, as it existed in Linné's classification system, is methodologically of no particular interest to Kant. According to him, it provides a "school system for memory" and only aims at bringing "creatures under titles". The division of nature, on the other hand, provides a "natural system for the understanding" aiming at bringing creatures "under laws".<sup>59</sup>

Apart from the distinction between school division and natural division, Kant makes the further, corresponding distinction between *description of nature* and *natural history*.

"We generally take the designations *description of nature* and *natural history* to mean the same. Yet it is clear that the cognition of natural things as they *are now* always leaves us desirous of the cognition of that which they once *were* and of the series of changes they underwent to arrive at each place in their present state. *Natural history*, which we still lack almost entirely, would teach us about the changes in the shape of the earth, likewise that of its creatures (plants and animals) that they have undergone through natural migrations and the resultant subspecies from the prototype of the phyletic species. It would presumably trace

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<sup>55</sup> Anth, 07.324.

<sup>56</sup> V-Anth/Pillau, 25.733.

<sup>57</sup> V-Anth/Fried, 25.471.

<sup>58</sup> In the literature of the opponents one sometimes reads "scientific racism" (e.g. *Robert Bernasconi*, Unfamiliar source [fn. 9] 145), "scientific" taken as empirical-scientific. But that is a contradiction in terms. "Racism" can only mean that populations are classified as morally superior or inferior on the basis of certain natural characteristics and even treated accordingly. But such a moral classification, let alone a right to a corresponding treatment is not a possible object of empirical science.

<sup>59</sup> VvRM, 02.429.

a great many of seemingly different kinds to races of the same species<sup>60</sup> and would transform the school system of the description of nature, which is now so extensive, into a physical system for the understanding [under laws]."<sup>61</sup> "The description of nature (condition of nature in the present time) is far from sufficient to indicate the ground for the manifoldness of subspecies. No matter how much one opposes, and rightly so, the boldness of opinions, one must venture a *history* of nature, which is a separate science and which could gradually advance from opinions to insights."<sup>62</sup>

"The natural division into species and kinds in the animal kingdom is grounded on the common law of propagation". It was formulated in "Buffon's rule", the rule of the French investigator of nature George-Louis Leclerc de Buffon (1707-1788) which "must properly be regarded only as the definition of a natural species of animals in general". It says, "that animals which produce fertile young with one another (whatever difference in shape there may be) still belong to one and the same physical [= natural] species".<sup>63</sup>

Having said that, Kant is already with humans:

"According to this concept, all human beings on the wide earth belong to one and the same natural species because they consistently beget fertile children with one another, no matter what great differences may otherwise be encountered in their shape. One can adduce only a single natural cause for this unity of the natural species, which unity is tantamount to the unity of the generative power that they have in common: namely, that they all belong to a single phylum, from which, notwithstanding their differences, they originated, or at least could have originated. In the first case, human beings belong not merely to one and the same *species*, but also to one *family*; in the second case they are similar to one another but not related, and many local creations would have to be assumed – an opinion which needlessly multiplies the number of causes.<sup>64</sup> An animal species which at the same time has a common phylum contains under itself not different *kinds* (since the latter signify precisely the differences of the phyletic origin); rather their divergences from one another are called *subspecies* if they are hereditary. If the hereditary marks of the phyletic origin agree with their point of origination, then they are called *regenerations*; however, if the subspecies could no longer provide the original formation of the phylum, then it would be called *degeneration*.

Among the subspecies, i.e., the hereditary differences of the animals which belong to a single phylum, those which persistently preserve themselves in all transplantings (transpositions to other regions) over prolonged generations among themselves and which also always beget half-breed young in the mixing with other variations of the same phylum are called *races*. Those which persistently preserve the distinctive character of their variation in all transplantings and thus regenerate, but do not necessarily beget half-breeds in the mixing with others are called *strains*. Those which regenerate often but not persistently are called *varieties*. Conversely, that variation which produces with others half-breeds but which extinguishes gradually through transplantings is called a special *sort*.

In this way, *Negroes* and *whites*, while not different kinds of human beings (since they belong presumably<sup>65</sup> to one phylum), are still two *different races* because each of the two perpetuates itself in all regions and both necessarily beget half-breed children or *blends* (mulattoes) with one another. By contrast, *blondes* and *brunettes* are not different *races* of whites, because a blond man can have nothing but blond

<sup>60</sup> In his essay on the concept of a human race (1785), Kant again makes a corresponding comment: "In **natural history** (which is concerned only with generation and phyletic origination) *kind* and *species* are not distinguished as such. This distinction occurs solely in the **description of nature**, in which only the comparison of marks matters. What is here called *kind*, may often only be called *race there*." (BBM, 08.100).

<sup>61</sup> VvRM, 02.434. More about this at: *Werner Euler*, "Einheit der Abstammung oder Gattungseinteilung? Kants Begriff der (Menschen-)Rasse als Idee einer Naturgeschichte", in: Rainer Godel / Gideon Stiening, (fn. 17) 55-96; *Manfred Riedel*, "Historizismus und Kritizismus. Kants Streit mit G. Forster und J. G. Herder", in: Bernhard Fabian et al. (Eds.), *Deutschlands kulturelle Entfaltung. Die Neubestimmung des Menschen*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2016, 31-48 (before: München: Kraus International Publications, 1980, 31-48); critical: *Tanja van Hoorn*, "Was heißt und zu welchem Ende studiert man Naturgeschichte", in: Rainer Godel / Gideon Stiening, (fn. 17)163-177.

<sup>62</sup> VvRM, 02.443.

<sup>63</sup> VvRM, 02.429.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. ÜGTP, 08.169.

<sup>65</sup> See BBM, 08.98ff; ÜGTP, 08.169.

children with a brunette woman, even though each of these subspecies is preserved throughout extended generations in all transplantings. For this reason, they are *strains* of whites."<sup>66</sup>

In this Kantian essay, in principle, everything is already found that is needed to understand his 'race theory' and its systematic function: All animals on earth that we consider as human beings belong to one and the same species; and among the many hereditary differences that exist among human beings, there is one which is inherited persistently and with unfailing half-breed generation, namely skin colour. As a result, there are people of different races, but not of different kinds.<sup>67</sup> So all people are absolutely equal in terms of their being human (their 'humanity').

Already in this first contribution to 'race theory' from 1775 Kant, starting with 'Buffon's rule' as a heuristic principle, arrives at a concept of race and its distinction from strains, varieties and sorts. On the basis of the empirical material available to him, he divides the human species into (four) different races and discusses the immediate causes as well as possible occasional causes for their possible origin. With regard to the immediate causes, Kant then formulates his germ theory, which is decisive with regard to the empirical findings. He later develops this theory further in the two essays of 1785<sup>68</sup> and 1788<sup>69</sup> within the context of his 'race theory':

"This care of nature to equip her creature through hidden inner provisions ["germs"] for all kinds of future circumstances, so that it may preserve itself and be suited to the difference of the climate or the soil, is admirable. In the migration and transplanting of animals and plants it creates the semblance of new kinds; yet they are nothing other than variations and races of the same species the germs and natural predispositions of which have merely developed on occasion in various ways over long periods of time. Chance or the universal mechanical laws could not produce such agreements. Therefore we must consider such occasional unfoldings as *performed*. Yet even where nothing purposive shows itself, the mere faculty to propagate its special adopted character is already proof enough that a particular germ or natural predisposition for it was to be found in the organic creature. For outer things can well be occasioning causes but not producing ones of what is inherited necessarily and regenerates."<sup>70</sup>

"The human being was destined for all climates and for every soil; consequently, various germs and natural predispositions 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. With these concepts, let us go through the whole human species on the wide earth and adduce purposive causes of its subspecies therein in cases where the natural causes are not easily recognizable and again adduce natural causes where we do not perceive ends. Here I only note that *air* and *sun* appear to be those causes which most deeply influence the generative power and produce an enduring development of the germs and predispositions, i.e., are able to establish a race; by contrast, special nutrition can indeed produce a sort of human beings whose distinctive character, though, soon extinguishes with transplantings. In order to adhere to the generative power, something must affect not the *preservation* of life but its *source*, i.e., the first principles of its animal set-up and movement."<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> VvRM, 02.429f.

<sup>67</sup> "If we want to divide the products logically, we divide them into species and kinds, physically into species and races. Here the animal kingdom could be divided into birds and mammals. There are different races among men; difference of species would be between humans and apes. Physically we can derive the species from a general phylum, e.g. poodles and greyhounds etc. mate with all other dogs. The word race denotes only a subspecies, but not phyletic difference. The concept race applies to the plant and animal kingdoms, but by no means to the mineral kingdom, because there is no generation at all." (Physische Geographie Dohna, 99; = 26/2.1131; m/tr)

<sup>68</sup> BBM, 08.101ff.

<sup>69</sup> ÜGTP, 08.166ff; esp. 173.

<sup>70</sup> VvRM, 02.434f.

<sup>71</sup> VvRM, 02.435f.

"only the phyletic formation can degenerate into a race; however, once a race has taken root and has suffocated the other germs, it resists all transformation just because the character of the race has then become prevailing in the generative power."<sup>72</sup>

Kant then took the step towards a proper theory in his essay on the "Determination of the concept of a human race" from 1785. Before any empirical research, as he now declares, the concept must be determined which "one wants to elucidate through observation, [...] for one finds in experience what one needs only if one knows in advance what to look for." Before one speaks of *human races* in one way or another, one has to determine what one means by a race.<sup>73</sup>

"My intention at present is merely to precisely determine this concept of a *race* [quite controversially understood in the debate], *provided* there are any in the human species; the explanation of the *origin of the actually existing races* that are considered susceptible to this designation is *only a subsidiary work, which one can treat as one wishes*. And yet I see that otherwise astute men, in their evaluation of what a few years ago [1775] was said in that regard, directed their attention only to this subsidiary matter, namely the *hypothetical* application of the principle, but touched only lightly upon the *principle* itself, *on which everything yet depends*."<sup>74</sup>

Kant is therefore primarily not at all interested in the possible content of 'race theory', but rather in making out of it, not least with the help of the idea of race, a theoretically reliable natural history.<sup>75</sup> Its systematic connection, as he conceived it as early as 1775, he outlines here in four principles, in a longer consideration of the law on which his 'race theory' is based, and in a justification for speaking of particular human races.

I. "Only what is hereditary in an animal species can justify a classificatory difference in the animal species."<sup>76</sup>

Kant already held this principle in 1775.

II. "One can assume four classificatory differences of human beings with respect to skin color."

Also this distinction was made by Kant as early as 1775. He now, however, gives reasons in favour of this distinction: The first reason is the rather isolated residence where the classes stay. The second reason arises for Kant from a teleological consideration: the human being is put by nature to the most diverse areas of the earth and thereby also "affected very differently by *air* and *sun*." "[If man] is supposed to persist [in all these areas] in a way that is least needy of art [that is, in the most natural way]", then "the secretion through *perspiration* must be *the most important part of nature's foresight*". But the organ of that secretion, i.e., the skin, "carries in itself the trace of this diversity of the natural character" and justifies in this respect "the division of the human species into *visibly* different classes."<sup>77</sup>

<sup>72</sup> VvRM, 02.442.

<sup>73</sup> Thus, Kant is not, as Larrimore claims, the "inventor of race" but, if at all, the inventor of the *concept* of a race, more precisely: of one concept of a race, and this in fact by using "Buffon's rule". See Mark Larrimore, "Antinomies of Race: Diversity and Destiny in Kant", in: Patterns of Prejudice, 42 (2008) 341.

<sup>74</sup> BBM, 08.91 (m/it apart from "race"). Unsuspectingly, Kant laconically describes here how his opponents are currently dealing with his writings.

<sup>75</sup> Strictly speaking, in reference to Kant's relevant writings, one should not speak of 'Rassentheorie' ('theory of races'), but of 'Rassetheorie' ('theory of race'). What Kant says about populations of human beings who are all of the same race, i.e. of so-called "races", is for him "subsidiary matter". Moreover, as one will see, his talk about such populations quite often does not aim at anything specific to race, so that in such cases one should not take his talk of race literally. See below p. 17.

<sup>76</sup> BBM, 08.91.

<sup>77</sup> BBM, 08.93 (m/it). Kant does not want to assume more classes than the four distinguished according to skin colour, because only these can be proven, while for others there is no certainty. (BBM, 08.93f)

III. "No other characteristic property is *necessarily hereditary* in the class of the whites than what belongs to the human species in general [and wherein people therefore just do *not* differ]; and so with the other classes as well."<sup>78</sup>

So if there are other differences between people (and of course there are), they too, it's true, can be hereditary, but don't have to be.

IV. "In the mixing of those four named classes with one another the character of each one is unfailingly hereditary."<sup>79</sup>

As early as 1775, Kant spoke of "half-breed"; now he also speaks of intermediary sort, bastard, hybrid. Factually nothing has changed.

V. "Reflection on the law of necessary half-breed generation."<sup>80</sup>

The law, which was already mentioned by way of introduction to the paper from 1775, is now specifically made a topic. Kant first ascertains the "very remarkable phenomenon" that there is not a single one among the many characters in the human species existing "within a class of human beings characterized merely by skin color" [that is, within one of the four 'races' distinguished by Kant], which is necessarily hereditary,<sup>81</sup> while the character of the skin colour, "insignificant as it may appear, is universally and *unfailingly*<sup>82</sup> hereditary within its class as well as in the mixing with one of the three remaining classes." This leads to the 'reflection' whether perhaps,

"we can surmise from this extraordinary phenomenon something about the causes of the heredity of such properties that do not belong essentially to the species [that is, are not an essential characteristic of humanity], based solely on the circumstance that they occur unfailingly."<sup>83</sup>

To find a priori the reason why "something which does not belong to the essence of the species can be hereditary" is for Kant an "awkward undertaking" that, in view of the unrestricted "freedom to form hypotheses", only results in lost effort and labour. Instead, Kant resolves to follow his "particular *maxim of reason*" if he finds it

"proved, exactly in keeping with the use of reason in natural science and the only one fit for a consistent mode of thought"; and this "without heeding those alleged facts, which borrow their credibility and sufficiency for the assumed hypothesis almost exclusively from that already chosen maxim and to which facts one can moreover oppose a hundred other facts without effort."<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> BBM, 08.94.

<sup>79</sup> BBM, 08.95.

<sup>80</sup> BBM, 08.95.

<sup>81</sup> It may be that during the physiological adaptation of a population to a certain climate, still other natural characteristics besides skin colour have also developed as inevitably hereditary and, in case of race mixing, necessarily resulting in half-breeds. But Kant does not mention any. In any case, however, the assertion of a causal connection between physiological conditions and mental abilities is excluded. "Yet to try to determine what organization of the head externally in its figure and inwardly in regard to its brain is necessarily combined with the predisposition to an erect gait, yet even more how an organization directed merely to this end contains the ground of the faculty of reason, in which the animal thereby participates – that obviously surpasses all human reason, whether it wants to grope about on the guiding thread of physiology or to fly on that of metaphysics." (RezHerder, 08.54f)

<sup>82</sup> "that which in Africa the sun impressed into the skin of the Negro, and which is hence only accidental to him, must fall away in France, and only that blackness can remain which was allotted to him by birth and which he passes on to his progeny; and therefore, [*that blackness*] alone can be used for a classificatory difference." (BBM, 08.92 [m/tr])

<sup>83</sup> BBM, 08.95f.

<sup>84</sup> BBM, 08.96.

Kant here clearly formulates the already indicated primacy of theory over empirical experience.<sup>85</sup>

He then first points out that

"these and other grounds of explanation would hardly receive credence through the facts adduced to their support, to which one can oppose far better proved ones, if they did not receive their recommendation from an otherwise wholly correct maxim of reason, namely this one: rather to venture everything in surmising from given appearances than to assume special first powers of nature or created predispositions (according to the principle: *principia praeter necessitatem non sunt multiplicandae*)."<sup>86</sup>

But hereupon he continues:

"But I am confronted with another [teleological] maxim which limits the one about doing without dispensable principles, namely, that throughout all of organic nature in all changes of individual creatures their species is preserved unchanged (according to the school formula: *quaelibet natura est conservatrix sui*).<sup>87</sup> Now it is clear that if the magic power of the imagination or the human artifice with respect to animal bodies granted a faculty to alter the generative power itself, to reshape the originary model of nature, or disfigure it by means of additions which afterward would yet be permanently preserved in subsequent generations, one would no longer know at all from which original nature had started, or how far its alteration could go, and into which distorted shape the species and kinds might finally degenerate given that the human imagination knows no boundaries. In accordance with this consideration, I take as my principle not to admit any botching influence of the power of the imagination on nature's business of generation, and not to admit any human faculty to effect alterations in the ancient original of the species or kinds through external artifice, to bring those alterations into the generative power and to make them hereditary. For if I admit even one case of this type, then it is as if I conceded even one ghost story or case of magic. The limits of reason are then broken through once, and delusion forces itself through this breach in thousands. There is also no danger that I intentionally make myself blind to actual experiences with this decision or, which is the same, make myself stubbornly incredulous. For without exception all such fantastic incidences are marked by the fact that they permit *no experiment*, but rather want to be proved only by snatching up contingent perceptions. Yet what is such that, while being susceptible to experiment, cannot withstand a single one, or avoids it with all kinds of excuse, is nothing but delusion and fiction. These are my reasons for not being able to concur with a mode of explanation that ultimately promotes the raving penchant to the art of magic, for which any cloak, even the smallest one, is desirable: namely, that heredity, even only the contingent one, which does not always succeed, could ever be the effect of another cause than that of the germs and predispositions lying in the species itself.

But even if I were to concede characters that spring from contingent impressions and nevertheless become hereditary, it would be impossible to explain through this how those four differences in color are the *only ones* among all hereditary characters that are *unfailingly* hereditary. What else could be the cause of this than that they must have lain in the germs of the to us unknown original phylum of the human species,

<sup>85</sup> More about this in: *Maja Soboleva*, "Der Begriff der Tatsache in der Kant-Forster-Kontroverse", in: Rainer Godel / Gideon Stiening, (fn. 17) 119-132.

<sup>86</sup> BBM, 08.96.

<sup>87</sup> A statement by McCabe is noteworthy: „the works in question [Kant's writings about races] constitute bad philosophy – not because they are racist, but because they are marked by narrow-mindedness and poor reasoning. (To cite one example from Boxill and Hill, Kant's own methodological commitment to not multiplying causes unnecessarily should have led him, as it did Rousseau, to explain human differences around the world simply by citing environmental factors rather than by citing environmental factors and natural racial differences.)" If McCabe had not obtained his quotations from Kant from various secondary literature, but had studied Kant's writings himself; and if in the present case he had not also had his judgement on Kant second-hand, but had formed it himself from well-founded knowledge of the source in Kant, then he would have been able to understand, that what Kant considers to be "natural racial differences", is precisely what confirms his crucial thesis of the *unity* of the human natural species. As for McCabe's demand of Kant not to unnecessarily multiply the causes and therefore to make do with environmental causes, the question arises whether, if he would see (let's say) a brown baby after the delivery of his white daughter married to a white man, he really would not think of a certain causality. In doing so, he would prove that he considered Kant's race concept to be biologically accurate and relevant. However, no one would call him a racist because he took that trait as caused by necessary half-breed generation, and nobody would ask him to look for the cause of the baby's colour in the environment. See *David McCabe*, "Kant Was a Racist: Now What?", in: American Philosophical Association Newsletters, 18 (2019) 196.

and that as such natural predispositions which were necessary for the preservation of the species at least in the first period of its propagation and for that reason had to occur unfaillingly in the successive generations?

Therefore we are pressed to assume that there were once *different phyla* of human beings, approximately in the habitats in which we encounter them now, which were precisely suited by nature to their different regions, thus also differently organized so that the species might preserve itself – of which the four kinds of skin color are the outer mark. Now not only will this skin color be necessarily hereditary in each phylum in its habitat but it also will preserve itself undiminished in every other region of the earth in all generations within the same class if the human species has become sufficiently strong (be it that the complete development came about only little by little or that art was able to assist nature through the gradual use of reason). For this character is necessarily attached to the generative power, because it was required for the preservation of the kind. – However if these phyla were *original*, it would not be possible to explain and grasp why then in their reciprocal mixing with each other the differential character is inherited *unfaillingly*, as actually happens. For nature has originally given each phylum its character in relation to its climate and in order to be suitable for the latter. Thus the organization of one phylum has an entirely different end from that of the other; and the fact that, in spite of this, the generative powers of both should be so well matched, even in this point of their characteristic difference, that an intermediary sort not only *could* originate but *had* to result unfaillingly – that cannot be comprehended at all in the case of different original phyla. Only if one assumes that the predispositions to all this classificatory difference must have lain necessarily in the germs of *a single first phylum*, so that the latter would be suitable for the gradual population of the different regions of the world, can it be comprehended why, once these predispositions developed on occasion and accordingly also in different ways, different classes of human beings had to arise, which subsequently also had to contribute their determinate character necessarily to the generation with each other class, because this specific character belonged to the possibility of its own existence, thus also to the possibility of propagating its kind, and was derived from the necessary first predisposition in the phyletic species. From such inevitably hereditary properties, which are hereditary even in the mixing with other classes by producing half-breeds, one is forced to conclude their derivation from one single phylum, because without the latter the *necessity* of the heredity would not be comprehensible.<sup>88</sup>

What Kant is presenting here is an apagogical teleological justification for his long-known doctrine that there is only one human species, conceived as a reproductive community,<sup>89</sup> from which four classes or races of human beings, distinguished by their skin colour, descend. Therefore, a racial difference between people is *not* equivalent to a difference of kind between them *as human beings*. Kant's contribution to 'race theory' has *as such* a purely scientific objective. In so far as it concerns his two "popular" lectures, it belongs to physical geography with reference to what nature makes of human beings. Proper 'race theory' can of course not be found in physical geography, let alone in anthropology. When Kant in both lectures occasionally talks about races as such, then only as a "preliminary exercise in the *knowledge of the world*"<sup>90</sup>, necessary in the context of the anthropology he intends to take from a *pragmatic* point of view.<sup>91</sup> Overall, however, even in his lectures on physical geography, Kant treats the subject of 'race' remarkably sparingly, in the lectures on anthropology not at all apart from two of them, and in these on less than two pages.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> BBM, 08.97-99.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. also BBM, 08.91.01-02; 08.96.07; 08.101.23.

<sup>90</sup> VvRM, 02.443.

<sup>91</sup> "even knowledge of the races of human beings as products belonging to the play of nature is not yet counted as pragmatic knowledge of the world, but only as theoretical knowledge of the world". (Anth, 07.120) Contrary to the claim of Larrimore, who refers to this passage out of all, Kant did not promise there or anywhere else to deliver "a 'pragmatic' anthropological view of race". (Mark Larrimore, "Race, Freedom and the Fall in Steffens and Kant", in: Sara Eigen / Mark Larrimore (Eds.), *The German Invention of Race*, Albany: SUNY, 2006, 109.

<sup>92</sup> See V-Anth/Mensch, 25.1186-1188; V-Anth/Dohna-Wundlacken; in: *Sabina Laetitia Kowalewski / Werner Stark* (Eds.), *Königsberger Kantiana*, Hamburg: Meiner 2000, 446-448.

In one of his anthropology lectures,<sup>93</sup> there is a distinction between "the characteristic of man" considered as a "natural product" ("character latius", "natural character") and "the ["proper"<sup>94</sup>] moral character of man himself", "where I consider him as a free being" ("character of freedom"<sup>95</sup>). Whether Kant now speaks about the natural or the moral character, it is never about the character of races (apart from the two lectures just mentioned which anyhow deal only with the "natural character"), but rather – alongside the "character of the sexes" on the one hand and that of the "human species" on the other – about the character of "the peoples [nations]".<sup>96</sup> So it is, for example, about the *peoples* of Europe and not of the *white race* and of the *peoples* of America and not of the *copper-red race*. Correspondingly, many of Kant's remarks, often taken by his opponents as "racist", are not directed at any of the four races he distinguishes, but rather at subsets or subclasses, which Kant likes to call peoples; for example at Russians or Germans, at Indians or Chinese, at Hottentots or Senegalese,<sup>97</sup> or at Eskimos or Fuegians.<sup>98</sup>

VI. "Only that which is *unfailingly hereditary* in the classificatory differences of the human species can justify the designation of a particular human race."<sup>99</sup>

Kant's concept of race is *strictly limited* to skin colour and the physiological consequences associated with its emergence.<sup>100</sup> Although also the "properties that belong essentially to the species itself", that is to say, those that make humans human, are unfailingly hereditary, they are irrelevant for the division of races, since they are common to all humans and thus eo ipso essential properties of members of all races.<sup>101</sup> Just as irrelevant are hereditary physical characters<sup>102</sup> that are *not* unfailingly hereditary ("in the same class as well as in the mixing with every other").

"Thus the concept of a race contains first the concept of a common phylum, second *necessarily hereditary* characters of the classificatory difference among the latter's descendants. Through the latter, reliable grounds of distinction are established according to which we can divide the species into classes, which then, because of the first point, namely the unity of the phylum, may only be called **races** and by no means *kinds*. The class of the whites is not distinguished from that of the blacks as a special kind within the human species, and there are no *different kinds of human beings*. Otherwise the unity of the phylum from which they could have originated would be denied, for which denial one has no reason, but rather has a

<sup>93</sup> For the following see V-Anth/Mron, 25.1367f.

<sup>94</sup> V-Anth/Mron, 25.1384.

<sup>95</sup> V-Anth/Mron, 25.1384.

<sup>96</sup> See V-PG/Holstein, 26/1.197-320; V-PG/Kaehler, 26/2.584-616; V-PG/Dönhoff, 26/2.1040-1092; V-Anth/Collins, 25.232-234; V-Anth/Parow, 25.450-452; V-Anth/Fried, 25.654-661; V-Anth/Pillau, 25.831-835; V-Anth/Mensch, 25.1181-1187; V-Anth/Mron, 25.1398-1414.

<sup>97</sup> So he once speaks of the black Mandingoers north of the Gambia river as a "negro nation". (V-PG/Dönhoff, 26/2.1080).

<sup>98</sup> For example, it says in V-PG/Kaehler, 26/2.613: "The inhabitants of North America also express the greatest understanding of all American peoples."

<sup>99</sup> BBM, 08.99.

<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless, Bernasconi claims: "Once Kant's role in constructing a rigorous concept of race is recognized, it is a relatively easy matter to give Kant a place in the history of racism." (*Robert Bernasconi*, *Unfamiliar Source* [fn. 9] 147).

<sup>101</sup> This includes everything that Kant for instance says in the anthropological didactic and in the chapter on the person in the anthropological characteristic from a physiological point of view. One must therefore be very attentive to whether Kant, when he says something about a black or white man, has in mind the human being as such or the member of a race. The latter can only be the case if it is consistent with his concept of race.

<sup>102</sup> Moral characters are anyway out of the question, since they can be acquired through one's own efforts; as are also those characters that have developed through socialization.

very important reason to the contrary, as was proven from the unfailing heredity of their classificatory characters."<sup>103</sup>

Kant summarizes the result of his exposition: "The concept of a race is therefore: *the classificatory difference of the animals of one and the same phylum in so far as this difference is unfailingly hereditary.*"<sup>104</sup> He then adds a remark of some weight for the character of his 'race theory'. This remark shows how much Kant is concerned with natural history – and thus also with 'race theory' – *as science*.

"This is the determination that was my *proper intention* in this essay; the rest can be seen as belonging to the *subsidiary intention or mere addition*, and can be *accepted or rejected*. I consider only the first matter to be *proven* and moreover useful as a *principle* for investigation in natural history, because it is *susceptible to an experiment* that can safely guide the application of that concept, which would be shaky and uncertain without it. – If differently shaped human beings are placed in the circumstances of intermixing and if the generation is half-breed, then there is already a strong conjecture that they might belong to different races; however, if this product of their mixing is *always* half-breed, then that conjecture becomes certainty. On the contrary, if only a single generation exhibits no intermediary sort, then one can be certain that both parents from the same species still belong to one and the same race, no matter how different they might look."<sup>105</sup>

What has been said here is exactly what one can call Kant's 'race theory', which is then also its total sum. It is an inevitably hereditary attribute (skin colour) through which people can differ from each other. In this respect, they are *of a different race*. Understood in this way, "race" is the subject of Kant's teaching, as we encounter it notably in the three essays of 1775, 1785 and 1788. At the same time, Kant also uses the expression to designate certain populations whose members have the same attribute, that is, who are of the same race. Accordingly, he then differentiates between four different races according to the colour of skin. What he says about such races, i.e. about populations, should be viewed with particular caution compared to what he sets out about the attribute. In very many cases he is talking about populations, seemingly meaning races, but actually referring to peoples or tribes. And the "peculiarities" which he then cites about them have absolutely nothing to do with the attribute on the basis of which the respective population *also* is of a certain race.

In conclusion, Kant concedes that his assumption of only four races<sup>106</sup> of the human species does not mean that he is

"completely certain that there is nowhere a trace of still more, but because what I require for the character of a race, namely the generation of half-breeds, has been made out only in those and has been sufficiently established in no other class of human beings."<sup>107</sup>

Kant ends his 15-page treatise on the concept of a human race with a "remark". which contains almost a third of the essay.<sup>108</sup> He starts with the statement:

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<sup>103</sup> BBM, 08.99f.

<sup>104</sup> BBM, 08.100. Kant subsequently neither gave up nor supplemented this purely empirical (biological) concept of race. It is incomprehensible, therefore, how Bernasconi can claim that Kant, in his 1788 essay, "reverted to [a definition of race] in which physical and moral characteristics were fully mixed". (*Robert Bernasconi, Third Thoughts* [fn. 9] 300). For neither are the empirical differences between the races, stated by Kant, which Bernasconi mentions as proof and with regard to which Kant naturally changed his views over the decades, part of a new concept of race, nor do they bring a moral-philosophically relevant element to Kant's 'race theory'. They are merely either correct or erroneously stated. More on that below p. 36ff.

<sup>105</sup> BBM, 08.100 (m/it apart from "experiment" and "always").

<sup>106</sup> In the sense of an attribute, but also in the sense of a population.

<sup>107</sup> BBM, 08.100f.

<sup>108</sup> For the following quotes see BBM, 08.101-106.

"The present theory, which assumes certain original *germs* in the first and common human phylum which are quite properly *predisposed* to the now present racial differences, is based entirely on the **unfailing nature** of their heredity, which is confirmed in the four races named through all experience [sic]."

The subsequent meticulous justification of this ground of explanation needs not to be given here in view of the purpose of this article. Kant then again summarizes the result of his considerations:

"Thus the *unfailing heredity* of peculiarities from both parents is the only true and at the same time sufficient touchstone for the difference of the races to which the parents belong and a proof of the unity of the phylum from which they originated – namely, of the original germs placed in this phylum and developing over the course of the generations, germs without which that hereditary manifold would not have come about and above all would not have been able to become *necessarily hereditary*."

Another justification concerns Kant's teleological approach:

"The *purposive character* in an organization is surely the general reason for inferring a preparation that is originally placed in the nature of a creature with this intent, and for inferring created germs, if this end could only be obtained later on."

Kant concedes that

"this purposive character can be demonstrated nowhere so clearly as in the *Negro race*; <sup>109</sup> yet the example taken from the latter alone also entitles us at least to conjecture the same of the remaining ones, according to the analogy. [...] As far as the purposiveness of the organization of the other races is concerned, to the extent that it can be inferred from their color, it is indeed not possible to demonstrate it with equal probability. Yet the explanatory grounds for the skin color that could support the surmise of purposiveness are not entirely lacking."

With reference to scientific research literature, Kant discusses empirical hypotheses relating to various cases that might support such a surmise. But then, after a dash, he declares that all of this is for philosophy

"artificially constructing hypotheses.<sup>110</sup> They are however good for addressing an opponent who has no sound objection against the main proposition but triumphs over the fact that the assumed principle cannot even render the phenomena comprehensible – and for repaying *his* play with hypotheses with a similar play, which is equally seeming at least.<sup>111</sup>

One may assume whatever system one wants, this much is still certain: that the currently existing races could no longer go extinct if all their mixing with each other were prevented. [...] Thus the germs which were originally placed in the phylum of the human species for the generation of the races must have developed already in most ancient times according to the needs of the climate, if the residence there lasted a long time; and after one of these predispositions was developed in a people, it extinguished all the others entirely."<sup>112</sup>

With this, however, a statement about the "shape of the first human phylum (as far as the constitution of the skin is concerned)" is excluded. Presumably in order to correct his own earlier assertions,<sup>113</sup> Kant adds: "even the character of the whites is only the development of

<sup>109</sup> Since this article is about Kant's 'race theory' and only about it, in the following I will always use the term 'Negroes' and not 'Black people', let alone 'coloured people' when it is about people whom Kant calls "Negroes". For 'coloured people' there would be four possibilities. "Hottentots", "Moors" and Papuans can be as black as one likes – for Kant they do not belong to the 'Negro race'.

<sup>110</sup> Such a hypothesis, relating to the "skin of the Americans," had been discussed by Kant immediately before. The result of this artificially constructed hypothesis led him three years later to his highly incriminated placement of the 'Americans' at the very lowest level. See ÜGTP, 08.175f.

<sup>111</sup> Last sentence partly m/tr.

<sup>112</sup> It is not directly the climate that makes the race, but it is the climate-induced development of a specific germ, 'designated' for that.

<sup>113</sup> See VvRM 02.441: "Phyletic species. Whites of brunette colour." In a lecture on physical geography from 1782, Kant once again conjectured that Adam's colour was "brunette" as an "intermediary sort between all races"

one of the original predispositions that together with the others were to be found in that phylum."<sup>114</sup>

Even more than Kant's treatise of 1775 on "the different races of human beings", the one of 1785 on the "determination of the concept of a human race" shows how much Kant wanted physical geography, and with it 'race theory', to come forward as science. This interest increased again when Kant dealt in 1788 in his essay on "the use of teleological principles in philosophy" with Georg Forster's objections<sup>115</sup> to what he (Kant) had written in 1785<sup>116</sup>.

As already the title of the work suggests, the considerations made in it go far beyond what could be of relevance for the assessment of Kant's 'race theory'. Kant begins with the reference to a cognition gained in the *Critique of Pure Reason*:

"Elsewhere<sup>117</sup> I have shown that in metaphysics reason on the theoretical path of nature (with respect to the cognition of God) is not able to achieve its *entire* intention as wished, and that therefore only the teleological path remains for it – yet in such a way that it is not the natural ends, which rest only on arguments from experience, but an end that is given and determined a priori through pure practical reason (in the idea of the highest good) that may supplement the shortcoming of the deficient theory."<sup>118</sup>

But then Kant, now referring to *physics* instead of *metaphysics*, goes on to say that in a "small essay on the human races"<sup>119</sup> he had "attempted to prove a *similar* warrant, indeed a need to start from a teleological principle where theory abandons us."<sup>120</sup> At the same time he declares "for all *investigation of nature*" the primacy of "theory" over the "determination of ends".<sup>121</sup>

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(V-PG/Dönhoff, 26/2.897), but he revoked this shortly afterwards arguing with the justification: "because then he would have been a white man and would not have been able to sire a copper red." (V-PG/Dönhoff, 26/2.899 [m/tr]). Interestingly, in a lecture from 1770 there is a hypothesis that comes close to what we know today: "The first phylum must therefore have been in the hot region of the world, and the various human figures must be degenerations from this phylum, caused by the special conditions of the regions." (V-PG/Hesse, 26/2.118 [m/tr]).

<sup>114</sup> Incidentally, the fact that Kant once ascribed the white colour to the phyletic species, had purely biological reasons for him (see VvRM, 02.440f) and nothing to do with racism or ethnocentrism of a white European. Precisely for this reason Kant was later able to easily dispute his assumption, also this purely biologically.

<sup>115</sup> See Georg Forster, "Noch etwas über die Menschenracen. An Herrn Dr. Biester", in: Der Teutsche Merkur, 1786, 4. Vierteljahr, 57-86, 150-166.

<sup>116</sup> In that writing (BBM) he would have explained an opinion expressed longer ago, namely in the article from 1775. See ÜGTP, 08.160.

<sup>117</sup> See KrV, A 685-704 / B 713-732; see also KrV, A 814-819 / B 842-847.

<sup>118</sup> ÜGTP, 08.159.

<sup>119</sup> See VvRM, 02.434ff; but also BBM, 08.102ff.

<sup>120</sup> How can one take a much-quoted author seriously with his criticism of Kant's 'race theory', who writes the following comment on the first paragraph of Kant's essay from 1788 (ÜGTP, 08.159): "The only thing more stunning than the parallel between the ideas of God and of 'race, as *radical* peculiarity' [08.163.25], is the suggestion that race might offer experimental confirmation of the critical philosophy as a whole." The author ends his tangled reflections, which he puts into Kant's pen, thus: "Indeed, empirical confirmation of race would show the critical project as a whole to be viable and indeed necessary. Allied with the philosophy of freedom and the idea of God, race was ready to assert metaphysical and world-historical significance." This complete distortion of Kant's teaching then reaches its climax at the end of the article: "race became an a priori concept, its teleology evident independently of empirical data. In 1788 Kant likened the 'permission' practical reason granted for approaching human experience with race as a category to that it gives for faith in God [...]. But, while developed independently of evidence, race looked to be empirically confirmed, and in this way legitimized Kant's whole project." (*Mark Larri-more*, *Antinomies of Race* (fn. 73) 356f; 362; similar also: *Ian Storey*, *Empire and natural order* [fn. 8] passim) Unfortunately, a not inconsiderable part of the literature critical of Kant's 'race theory' is on this methodical level.

<sup>121</sup> ÜGTP, 08.159 (m/it).

"No teleology or practical purposiveness can compensate for the lack of [theory]. We always remain ignorant with respect to the efficient causes, no matter how evident we can make the suitability of our presupposition with final causes, be they of nature or of our will."<sup>122</sup>

What Kant, however, here again seeks to justify, is

"the warrant, which has not yet been sufficiently elucidated, of being allowed to use the teleological principle where sources of theoretical cognition are not sufficient. Yet this use has to be restricted to the extent that the right of *precedence* of the theoretical-speculative investigation to first try out its entire faculty in the matter is secured, and furthermore that subsequently this freedom shall remain available to it at all times".<sup>123</sup>

With this essay from 1788, Kant raises the philosophy of science level of the discussion further by presenting his understanding of natural research as science and of its limits.

He sees himself misunderstood by Forster on two crucial points: for him, firstly, Forster considers it "awkward" to establish a guiding principle even in searching and observing; secondly, Forster does not see why there has to be "a principle that would orient observation toward a *natural history* to be furthered by this procedure, in contrast to a mere *description of nature*; moreover, he finds this distinction itself illicit. Yet this dissention is easily removed."<sup>124</sup>

"With regard to the first scruple, it is undoubtedly certain that nothing purposive could ever be found through mere empirical groping without a *guiding principle* of what to search for; for only *methodically* conducted experience can be called *observing*."<sup>125</sup>

With regard to the second scruple, Kant once again clarifies what he understands by natural history in contrast to description of nature:

"*history of nature* would only consist in tracing back, as far as the analogy permits, the connection between certain present-day conditions of the things in nature and their causes in earlier times according to laws of efficient causality, which we do not make up but derive from the powers of nature as it presents itself to us now. Such would be a history of nature that is not only possible but that also has been attempted often enough, e.g., in the theories of the earth [...], by thorough investigators of nature, whether they may now have achieved a lot or a little with it."<sup>126</sup>

Kant attaches great importance to the fact that the "entirely heterogeneous" business of the description of nature and natural history are carefully separated,<sup>127</sup> whereby for him the description of nature "appears as a science with all the splendor of a great system", while natural history "can only point to fragments or shaky hypotheses."

"Through this separation and through the presentation of natural history as a science of its own, although one that for now (and maybe forever) is realizable more in silhouette than in deed (and in which for most questions a vacuum is likely to be found), I hope to bring it about that one does not with putative insight give credit to one discipline for something that actually only belongs to the other one, and that one gets to know more closely the extent of actual cognitions in natural history (for one possesses some) as well as the lat-

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<sup>122</sup> ÜGTP, 08.159.

<sup>123</sup> ÜGTP, 08, 160.

<sup>124</sup> ÜGTP, 08.161.

<sup>125</sup> ÜGTP, 08.161 (1<sup>st</sup> italics mine).

<sup>126</sup> ÜGTP, 08.161f.

<sup>127</sup> Forster had written: "*description of nature* and *history of nature* – a division which I can certainly accept as long as the two are always combined again and treated as parts of a whole", but then he added: "In *history of nature* it must be different [than in the description of nature] if, as Herr Kant claims, it is concerned only with generation and phyletic origination. But in this sense, history of nature would probably only be a science for gods and not for men. Who is able to explain the genealogy even of a single variety up to its species, if it, let's say, did not arise only under our eyes from another [variety]?" (*Georg Forster*, "Noch etwas über die Menschenrassen"; here quoted after: *Georg Forster*, Werke in vier Bänden, Bd. 2, Frankfurt/Main: Insel, 1969, 86f [m/tr])

ter's *limits*, which lie in reason itself, together with the *principles* according to which natural history could be enlarged in the best possible manner."<sup>128</sup>

The concept designated by the term "race" is

"well grounded in the *reason* of each observer of nature who infers from a hereditary particularity of different interbreeding animals that does not lie in the concept of their species a common cause, namely a cause that lies originally in the phylum of the species."<sup>129</sup>

For Kant, natural history is "natural investigation of origin". So the concept of race is needed for natural history. It is an idea leading the research idea if one takes the 'risk of a natural history'<sup>130</sup>. "To be sure, he [the observer of nature] will have to determine the word ["race"] clearly for this purpose; and this we would like to attempt here."<sup>131</sup>

With regard to his already known division of "the *human species* (understood in accordance with its universal marks in the description of nature) [...] in a system of natural history into *phylum* (or *phyla*), *races* or *subspecies* (*progenies classifica*) and different *human sorts* (*varietates nativae*)" Kant states:

"Yet all of that is so far merely an idea of the way in which the greatest degree of manifoldness in the generation can be united by reason with the greatest unity of phyletic origin. Whether there really is such an affinity in the human species must be decided through the observations that make known the unity of the phyletic origin.<sup>132</sup> And here one sees clearly that one must be guided by a determinate principle merely in order to *observe*, i.e., to pay attention to that which could indicate the phyletic origin, not just the resemblance of characters, since in that case we are dealing with a problem of natural history, not of the description of nature and of mere methodical nomenclature. Someone who has not made his investigation according to that principle will have to search again; for what he needs in order to decide whether there is a real or merely a nominal affinity among the creatures will not present itself to him on its own."<sup>133</sup>

This means that a firm position is taken against Forster's criticism. What is necessary is both the distinction between description of nature and history of nature and, for history of nature, a principle in order to guide searching and observing.

The most certain proof for the thesis of more than one human phylum would be

"the impossibility of gaining fertile progeny through the mixing of two divisions of human beings that are different in hereditary terms. However, if such a mixing succeeds, then even the greatest difference of shape is no obstacle to finding that their common phyletic origin for them is at least possible. For just as they can still *unite* through generation into a product that contains characters of both, despite their diversity, so they were able to *divide* through generation out of one phylum, which had the predispositions for the development of both characters originally hidden in it, into that many races. And reason will not without need start from two principles if it can make do with one."<sup>134</sup>

Even when it is about concrete differences to Forster, Kant argues, as he does here, not with empirical counterevidence, but theoretically. For the purposes of this article, one point in which the views of the two differ from one another, is of particular importance, "which, how-

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<sup>128</sup> ÜGTP, 08.162 (1<sup>st</sup> italics mine)

<sup>129</sup> ÜGTP, 08.163 (m/it).

<sup>130</sup> See VvRM, 02.443.

<sup>131</sup> ÜGTP, 08.163.

<sup>132</sup> See Klaus-Gert Lutterbeck, "Normativität des Faktischen? Integrale Wissenschaft vom Menschen und ihre Folgen", in: Rainer Godel / Gideon Stiening, (fn. 17), 103f.

<sup>133</sup> ÜGTP, 08.164.

<sup>134</sup> ÜGTP, 08.164f.

ever, concerns not so much the observation (description of nature) as the theory to be assumed (history of nature)".<sup>135</sup>

According to Forster, the difference between 'negroes' and all other people<sup>136</sup> with regard to a hereditary peculiarity taken as originally implanted can only be explained under the assumption of two original phyla, which would shake Kant's assumption of a single human species.

"If, on the contrary, every region produced the creatures that were appropriate for it, and indeed in that relationship to one another which was indispensable for their safety and preservation: how is it that the defenceless man is supposed to make an exception here? Rather, as Mr. K. himself claims, nature has given each phylum its character, its special organization, originally in relation to its climate and its appropriateness for it. Indisputably, this exact relationship between the country and its inhabitants can be explained most easily and briefly by a local emergence of the latter."<sup>137</sup>

Kant, on the other hand, thinks it to be

"possible and indeed more appropriate to the philosophical mode of explanation to view them [...] as a development of purposive first predispositions implanted in one phylum. [...] the system [used by Forster to explain the class-specific characters] according to which the germs are already originally divided and isolated in two different phyla but nevertheless afterward in the mixing of what was previously separated melt together again harmoniously – this system does not procure the slightest further ease for the possibility of rational comprehension than the system according to which the germs are originally implanted in one and the same phylum and subsequently develop *purposively for the first general population*<sup>138</sup>. In addition, the latter hypothesis carries with it the advantage of sparing us different local creations. Moreover, 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. Therefore the teleological mode of explanation does not place a new burden on the investigation of nature beyond the one which it can never shake off in any case, namely to follow only the *principle of ends* in those matters."<sup>139</sup>

But since also Forster's friend, the "famous philosophical anatomist" Hr. Sömmering, whom Forster was strongly influenced by in his view of 'negroes', "defends the perfect purposiveness of the Negro formation with respect to his native country", Kant thinks that "only those difficulties would have to be removed which prevent Hr. F. from joining my position, not so much with respect to the principle but rather with respect to the difficulty of adapting it appropriately in all cases of its application."<sup>140</sup>

In his essay "Noch etwas über die Menschenracen"<sup>141</sup>, directed against Kant,<sup>142</sup> Forster had spoken of a "sequence of steps"<sup>143</sup> with regard to skin colour. He was of the opinion that, starting from northern Europe via Egypt, Arabia and Abyssinia to the equator, people's skin

<sup>135</sup> ÜGTP, 08.168.

<sup>136</sup> Unlike Kant, Forster does not divide these other people into three further classes.

<sup>137</sup> *Georg Forster, Werke* (fn. 127) 95f (m/tr).

<sup>138</sup> To be understood as the process of populating.

<sup>139</sup> ÜGTP, 08.169. Already in 1775 Kant wrote about the assumption of local creations: "To say with Voltaire that God, who created the reindeer in Lapland to consume the moss of these cold regions, also created the Laplander there to eat this reindeer is not a bad idea for a poet but a poor resort for the philosopher who must not leave the chain of natural causes except where he sees it manifestly attached to immediate fate." (VvRM, 02.440; partly m/tr)

<sup>140</sup> ÜGTP, 08.169f.

<sup>141</sup> See fn. 115.

<sup>142</sup> More precisely: against Kant's essays "Determination of the Concept of a Human Race" from 1785 and "Conjectural Beginning of Human History" from 1786.

<sup>143</sup> *Georg Forster, Werke* (fn. 127) 81 (m/tr).

was getting darker and darker and, from there going south, on the other hand, in reverse direction paler and paler, that therefore the colour of human skin would be climate-dependent. There would be a similar "colour scale"<sup>144</sup> in America and Asia. Forster also thought that skin colour changes over time when a "family"<sup>145</sup> moves to a different climate zone; only the duration of this change would be indeterminable for us. Forster saw it as being proved "that the skin colour of people, it is true, late and with imperceptible steps, but consequently infallibly on the long run, obeys the influence of the climate".<sup>146</sup> With this argument he wanted to challenge Kant's thesis of the original germs.

Against that, Kant brings into play "the mark of unfailing half-breed generation, upon which everything really depends here [for the purpose of racial differentiation] – a mark that is sufficiently determinate and justifiably to be taken for the only decisive one."<sup>147</sup> By responding to Forster's empirical arguments and, moreover, supplying his own,<sup>148</sup> he shows that Forster "proves nothing against the fitness of the necessarily hereditary skin color for a differentiation of the races."<sup>149</sup>

Then, Kant comes to speak about what is, in his opinion, Forster's "most important counterargument",

"by which, in case it were founded, would be proven that, even if I were conceded my *original predispositions*, the suitability of human beings to their mother-countries *in their spreading* over the surface of the earth would not persist with these original predispositions. At most, says Hr. F., it could just be argued that *exactly those* human beings *whose predisposition* are suited *for this* or that *climate* would be born here or there through a wise arrangement of providence. But, he continues, how is it then that this same providence became so shortsighted not to think ahead to a *second transplanting*, in which that germ, which was fit only for one climate, would have become entirely purposeless."<sup>150</sup>

It is precisely this counterargument that gives Kant the opportunity to extensively discuss not only his thesis of the original predispositions, but also implicitly his idea of description of nature and natural history and thus, as it were, his theory of science with respect to physical geography.

"As far as the first point is concerned, one should remember that I took those first predispositions not to be *divided among different* human beings – for then they would have become as many different *phyla* – but to have been *united* in the first human couple. Hence those of their descendants in which the *entire* original predisposition for all future subspecies was still unseparated were fit for all climates (in potentia), such that the germ that would make them suitable to the region of the earth in which they or their early descendants were to find themselves could develop in that place. Thus there was no need for a special wise arrangement to bring them into those places where their predispositions fit. Rather wherever they went by chance and continued their generation over long periods of time, there developed the germ for this region of the earth to be found in their organization, which made them fit for such a climate. The development of the predispositions depended on the places, and the places did not have to be selected according to the already developed predispositions, as Hr. F. misunderstands the matter."<sup>151</sup>

<sup>144</sup> Georg Forster, Werke (fn. 127) 81 (m/tr).

<sup>145</sup> Georg Forster, Werke (fn. 127) 81f (m/tr).

<sup>146</sup> Georg Forster, Werke (fn. 127) 82 (m/tr).

<sup>147</sup> ÜGTP, 08.170.

<sup>148</sup> Especially the example "of a small people that has been propagating itself for some centuries in our Northern countries, namely the *gypsies* [...] an *Indian* people". (ÜGTP, 08.172).

<sup>149</sup> ÜGTP, 08.172.

<sup>150</sup> ÜGTP, 08.172.

<sup>151</sup> ÜGTP, 08.173.

The second point to which Kant reacts is Forster's comment, that the same understanding, that calculated according to Kant's theory "so correctly, which countries and which germs should match, [...] suddenly became so short-sighted as not to have foreseen the case of a *second transplanting*".<sup>152</sup> Kant concedes "that the understanding, or, if one prefers, the spontaneously purposively active nature, indeed paid no heed to a transplanting after germs have already developed, yet without thereby justifying the accusation of lacking wisdom and being short-sighted."<sup>153</sup> People with a natural character already adapted to a certain region would be prevented from changing to a new region by the very fact that they are not or only poorly adapted to it.<sup>154</sup>

And with that, Kant takes the offensive:

"Yet precisely that which Hr. F. takes to be an insurmountable difficulty for my principle throws the most advantageous light on it, when applied in a certain way, and solves difficulties that no other theory is able to do anything about."<sup>155</sup>

It is about Forster's thesis that the cause of the different formation of skin colour are sun and air.<sup>156</sup>

"An important confirmation of the derivation of the unfailingly hereditary differences through the development of predispositions that are to be found together in a human phylum originally and purposively for the preservation of the kind is the following: the races that have developed from it are not spread *sporadically* (in all parts of the world, in one and the same climate, in the same way), but *cycladically* in unified heaps which are to be found distributed within the confines of a country in which each of them was able to form itself. [...] Each of these races is, as it were, isolated and, while being in the same climate, they are distinguished from each through a character that adheres inseparably to the generative faculty of each of them. Thus they render very improbable the opinion of the origin of these characters as effects of the climate, while confirming the conjecture of an entirely consistent generative affinity through the unity of phyletic origin, while simultaneously confirming the conjecture of a *cause* of their classificatory difference residing in the human beings themselves, not merely in the climate – a difference which must have required a long time before becoming effective in a way suited to the place of the propagation, and which, once established, permits no further subspecies through any transferrals. For this reason the cause of the classificatory difference can be taken for nothing other than a gradually purposefully developing *original predisposition* placed into the phylum and restricted to a certain number according to the main differences of the influences exercised by the air."<sup>157</sup>

In conclusion, Kant states once again against Forster that his (Kant's) 'race theory' relates to a *natural species* belonging to *natural history*, not to a *school species* belonging to the *description of nature*. Although he would agree with Forster

"that in a natural science everything must be explained *naturally*, because otherwise it would not belong to this science. [...] Yet the same principle – that everything in natural science must be explained naturally – also indicates the boundaries of natural science. For one has reached its extreme boundary if one uses the last of all explanatory grounds that can still be confirmed by *experience*."<sup>158</sup>

"Since the concept of an organized being already includes that it is some matter in which everything is mutually related to each other as end and means, which can only be thought as a *system of final causes*, and since therefore their possibility only leaves the teleological but not the physical-mechanical mode of expla-

<sup>152</sup> Georg Forster, Werke (fn. 127) 94 (m/tr).

<sup>153</sup> ÜGTP, 08.173.

<sup>154</sup> See ÜGTP, 08.173f.

<sup>155</sup> ÜGTP, 08.175.

<sup>156</sup> See Georg Forster, Werke (fn. 127) 80ff.

<sup>157</sup> ÜGTP, 08.176f.

<sup>158</sup> ÜGTP, 08.178f.

nation, at least as far as *human* reason is concerned,<sup>159</sup> there can be no investigation in physics about the origin of all organization itself. The answer to this question, provided it is at all accessible to us, obviously would lie *outside* of natural science in *metaphysics*. I myself derive all organization from *organic beings* (through generation) and all later forms (of this kind of natural things) from laws of the gradual development of *original predispositions*, which were to be found in the organization of its phylum. Such development can often be seen in the transplantings of plants. How this phylum itself *came about*, this problem lies entirely beyond the limits of all physics possible to human beings, within which I believed that I had to hold myself."<sup>160</sup>

Forster claims to be the better expert on the observed phenomena and the related special problems. With reference to him, out of all, Kant then expresses his fear, based on various quotations from Forster's article, that a "philosophical *jury* [...] composed of mere investigators of nature" could come to the conclusion "that he had thereby, without noticing it, gone astray from the fertile soil of the investigation of nature to the desert of metaphysics."<sup>161</sup> Like Kant, Forster argues teleologically; but in contrast to him he does not heed the limits of such argumentation, namely being restricted to empirical conditionality.

The discussion between Forster and Kant shows that they both have a keen interest in scientific research into the causes of certain differences that can be observed in humans, and in the explanation of these differences. The dispute only casually concerns the empirical material. It is not about any peculiarities (characteristics) of the different races. It is about 'race theory' and the correct method for obtaining *empirical* (and not, by any means, normative) knowledge; it is about scientific theory of natural research.<sup>162</sup> At any rate, everybody, who wants to attest to Forster and/or Kant 'racism', will only be bored to tears reading the essays dealt with *here*.<sup>163</sup>

#### IV. Kant's primary interest in scientific cognition

For Kant, it is of fundamental importance, with regard to physical geography and thus also to biology, that not just *description* of nature with its classifications is at stake, but *history* of nature,<sup>164</sup> understood as the history of the development of "things in nature" including a causal explanation for this development. In the special case of biology, i.e. in relation to *organic* things in nature and thus also to humans, the scientifically required *methodical* searching and observation also require the use of teleological principles,<sup>165</sup> without which "nothing of a purposive nature would ever be found"<sup>166</sup>. However, as physics, it only deals with such

<sup>159</sup> See also the considerations that Kant had made decades earlier: NTH, 01.230; BDG. 02.113ff.

<sup>160</sup> ÜGTP, 08.179; cf. also ÜGTP, 08.159.13-14; 08.182.19-20

<sup>161</sup> ÜGTP, 08.179f. For Kant, natural research is its counterpart, i.e. physics, and thus physical geography and with it 'race theory' belong as natural research to physics.

<sup>162</sup> In this regard, Riedel speaks of a "methodological dispute, extremely significant in terms of the history of science, which essentially concerns differences in the concept of history of nature (a), the relationship between theory and observation (b) and the logic of teleological concept formation (c)." *Manfred Riedel*, *Historizismus* (fn. 61) 33; see also: *Maja Soboleva*, *Begriff der Tatsache* (fn. 85), 130f.

<sup>163</sup> Perhaps this is a reason why most of Kant's opponents give their full attention to the "subsidiary matter" and ignore the principle points. Kant himself complained about this as early as 1785 (see BBM, 08.91).

<sup>164</sup> Kant's model was the long-established natural history of the heavens.

<sup>165</sup> Excellent for that: *Gideon Stiening*, *Arten von Menschen* (fn. 17) 30-38; 41f; 50f.

<sup>166</sup> ÜGTP, 08.161. Such a use is absolutely necessary: "we cannot conceive of the possibility of such beings in which a part exists for the sake of all and all parts for the sake of one other, than through an idea which underlay their genesis." (VAÜGTP, 23.75; m/tr) "This is a universal rule which one must observe, and which is very philosophical, that one always search for the purpose and intent of something which exists universally in nature".

ends "that can be known to us through experience ["ends of nature"]".<sup>167</sup> "Hence the use of the teleological principle with respect to nature is always empirically conditioned."<sup>168</sup> It is a regulative (searching) principle for the reflective power of judgement in order to find purposiveness and must prove itself empirically. Theoretical natural research always retains the "right of *precedence*"<sup>169</sup>.

It is precisely such a use that provides Kant, via his determination of the concept of a human race, sufficient reason for assuming that human beings have the same origin (and by that their common bond), and that therefore a racial difference does not mean a difference between humans *as human beings*. The different races can be viewed "as specifications tied back to an origin, which are held together by the unity of an end [preservation of the species] also at the level of differentiation."<sup>170</sup> It is just the conceptually determined differences between the races that testify to the unity of the human species. All human beings are the same kind of animal with the same features that characterize that kind, which are not altered by race-specific characteristics.

Kant's 'race theory' is directly and primarily natural science.<sup>171</sup> He understands it in this sense as belonging to physical geography resp. to theoretical knowledge of the world.<sup>172</sup> In this regard, it has shown an amazing continuity over the years. Its basic features have remained unchanged since it was first formulated in 1775. Only its scientific profile is sharpened more and more in the following works. However, one should always be aware that it remains just subordinate in the frame of Kant's efforts to establish history of human nature as a science. Not only would it therefore be quite misleading to call Kant a 'race theorist'; already talking about a 'race theory' of Kant – unavoidable for lack of a more suitable expression – easily gives to what he has said about race and races the appearance of a theoretical independence that does not exist at all.

As far as its scientific quality is concerned, its superiority over Forster's lies in its explanatory power. Kant is "le seul à expliquer à la fois l'interfécondité de tous les hommes entre eux et le fait que leur couleur de peau ne soit pas seulement fonction de la latitude. [...] Kant développe une biologie dans laquelle les causalités externes (environnementales) et les causalités internes (héréditaires) de la différence des phénotypes humains sont distribuées selon des lois précises."<sup>173</sup>

It should be emphasized once again that Kant's interest in 'race theory' is in scientific theory whose application with its concrete outcome "is only a subsidiary work, which one can

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(V-Anth/Fried, 25.679). It should be superfluous to point out that this teleological procedure in the service of scientific cognition does not mean that when Kant speaks of "an arrangement very wisely made by Nature" (BBM, 08.103), of a "wise arrangement of Providence" and of "the spontaneously purposively active nature" (ÜGTP, 08.172 f.), we are dealing with hypostases, or even with theological language. Nature is merely *thought of* as acting intentionally. See also ÜGTP, 08.178.14-22.

<sup>167</sup> ÜGTP, 08.159.

<sup>168</sup> ÜGTP, 08.182.

<sup>169</sup> ÜGTP, 08.160.

<sup>170</sup> Bernd Dörflinger, "Die Einheit der Menschheit als Tiergattung" (fn. 7) 347.

<sup>171</sup> However, a caveat has to be made that here, as in anthropology, it is not and cannot be about what Kant would call 'proper' science. See MAN, 04.468ff; Anth 07.120f.

<sup>172</sup> Cf. V-Anth/Mensch, 25.1195; Anth, 07.120.

<sup>173</sup> Raphael Lagier, *Les races humaines selon Kant*, Paris: PUF, 2004, 3.

treat as one wishes."<sup>174</sup> As early as 1778, when the Leipzig publisher Breitkopf was very impressed by Kant's first essay on 'race theory' and asked Kant "whether you would be interested in doing this in a more extensive work, and whether in such a case I would be allowed to offer myself as a publisher"<sup>175</sup>, Kant in a friendly manner received the offer in his immediate reply, but rejected it for the time being with the reasoning:

"since the history of nature is not my study but *only my hobby* and my principal aim with respect to it is *to use it to correct and extend our knowledge of mankind*. [...] I could indeed contribute something to a general section of the history of nature, namely *some general ideas rather than their detailed application*."<sup>176</sup>

After having said that his intention "at present is merely to precisely determine this concept of a *race*", Kant consciously adds: "*provided* there are any in the human species".<sup>177</sup> This is not necessarily to be understood as a doubt on the part of Kant about the existence of races, but rather as an indication that the assumption of existence is not necessary for his project to determine the concept of a human race. Nor did Kant want to appear as a specialist in an individual science. A critique of Kant's 'race theory' would therefore also fundamentally miss its target if it were to focus on the empirical phenomena discussed therein and not on the essential elements of his theory, through which such phenomena first become facts relevant to scientific cognition. Kant's fundamental interest is directed to the conditions of exactly such cognition. Everything else, "the hypothetical application of the principle", is a "subsidiary matter".<sup>178</sup> At the latest with Kant's essay from 1788 and its precisely stated subject, namely the use of teleological principles in philosophy, the actual, namely scientific-philosophical objective of Kant could have been clear to every reader – and thus the necessity of seeing empirical theses under discussion in the light of this objective. The 'main thing' for Kant are the principles by which scientific research should be guided, whereby the already mentioned principle that everything in natural science must be explained *naturally* also implies its limits.

If one wants to assess what Kant understands by 'race theory' as belonging to physical geography *as a science*, then it is important to note what he regards as its subject area and what kind of science he thus views it as. Among the "*things in the world*"<sup>179</sup>, the subject area is the organic products of nature, especially the animals and of these in turn above all the human being, i.e. *the human being as an animal* under "the guardianship of nature" and therefore not yet in the "condition of freedom". Accordingly, the kind of science that 'race theory' is concerned with is the "history of *nature*", not the "history of *freedom*".<sup>180</sup> It is therefore only about "the investigation of what *nature* makes of the human being"<sup>181</sup>, about "the me-

<sup>174</sup> BBM, 08.91.15f; see also VvRM, 02.440.23-25; ÜGTP, 08.167.29f.

<sup>175</sup> Br, 10.227.

<sup>176</sup> Br, 10.230 (m/it).

<sup>177</sup> BBM, 08.91 (2<sup>nd</sup> italics mine).

<sup>178</sup> BBM, 08.91.

<sup>179</sup> Anth, 07.120.

<sup>180</sup> See MAM 08.115.

<sup>181</sup> Anth, 07.119. In a lecture on physical geography from 1770 (which also took place before the beginning of the lectures on anthropology), a chapter bears the heading: "The diversity of men with regard to the abilities of the body and the mind, according to the diversity of soil and climate." and the following chapter the heading: "Of the diversity of men, which arises from their power of choice." (V-PG/Hesse, 26/2.119 resp. 128). To this corresponds Kant's distinction between the *physical* and the *moral* character. "The first is the distinguishing mark of the human being as a sensible or natural being; the second is the distinguishing mark of the human being as a ra-

chanical arrangement of his animal existence"<sup>182</sup>. In this respect, man, like any other animal, is subject to the laws of nature.<sup>183</sup> For that reason, empirical findings based on this, whether right or wrong, do not concern humans as free-acting and therefore responsible beings and hence offer no possibility of making legally or ethically relevant (e.g. hierarchical) distinctions and of discriminating accordingly.<sup>184</sup> Racial characteristics are exclusively a product of nature, not attributable to the human being; man in his humanity is not at all affected by them.<sup>185</sup>

For Kant, among the natural differences in the human species, the difference in skin colour that characterizes the races is the only one that is inevitably hereditary and, in case of race mixing, half-breed as well. This is based on Kant's theory, advocated by him since 1775,<sup>186</sup> of the first predispositions<sup>187</sup> (germs) "taken to have been *united* in the first human couple", of which one develops depending on the climate (region) and leads to a race, while the other predispositions, 'designated' for other climates, 'go extinct'.<sup>188</sup>

The climate causing the 'unfolding' of the race-specific germ loses its determining power after the completion of the adaptation. That's why Kant then can also write with reference to the climate:

"Climate and soil also cannot furnish the key here [for the character of a people]; for migrations of entire peoples have proven that they do not change their character as a result of their new place of residence; instead they merely adapt it to the circumstances, while language, type of occupation, and even type of dress always reveal traces of their ancestry, and consequently also their character."<sup>189</sup>

Of course, this makes it necessary to find out what kind of characterization of a race (or a people) is involved in each relevant statement by Kant. It should be remembered that what we understand nowadays by genetics was well known as a problem in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but was still largely conjectural and only gradually became a scientific discipline with Gregor Mendel around the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In Kant's time, one was therefore limited to more or less plausible conjectures also with regard to the question of whether any properties were due to certain gene configurations or to hereditary-independent postnatal environmental influences or perhaps also to environmental influences causing genetic changes,<sup>190</sup> –

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tional being endowed with freedom." (Anth, 07.285) The 'race theory' is only concerned with the physical character as a product of nature.

<sup>182</sup> IaG, 08.19.

<sup>183</sup> "animality is based on the dependence of the soul on the body" (V-Anth/Fried, 25.476).

<sup>184</sup> If Kant had made similar statements about certain races of dogs in a chapter related to the species of dogs as he did about 'Negroes' or Fuegians, then no one would have thought of calling it "racist".

<sup>185</sup> Kleingeld's claim that Kant gave up "his description of the different races as having very different 'characters' and even different moral standing" after 1792 and limited the concept of race to physiology (*Pauline Kleingeld*, *Second Thoughts* [fn. 8] 590) has to be corrected: Kant never worked with a different concept of race. For him the difference in racial characters is purely physiological; and Kant cannot even speak of a "different moral standing" with reference to races. So he also didn't have to give up anything in the 1790s.

<sup>186</sup> See VvRM, 02.434ff.

<sup>187</sup> ÜGTP, 08.173.

<sup>188</sup> See VvRM, 02.442.08-11; BBM, 08.105.23-28; see also BBM, 08.98.16-23.

<sup>189</sup> Anth, 07.313.

<sup>190</sup> "To distinguish the innate of men from the acquired; the personally or commonly innate." (Refl. 1380, 15.603) A fundamental statement by Kant on this problem area can be found in KrV, A 666ff / B 694ff. The passage that is particularly relevant here reads: "If I see insightful men in conflict with one another over the characteristics of human beings, animals or plants, or even of bodies in the mineral realm, where some, e.g., assume particular characters of people based on their descent or on decisive and hereditary distinctions between families,

a limitation which at a much higher level even currently still exists. It is therefore not surprising that among Kant's various statements there is both the thesis of an immutability of the natural "inner predispositions" once they have been 'unfolded', as well as the thesis of a possible change in character depending on the kind of environment. And as little surprising is, that there, where Kant, it is true, speaks of people, who are of a certain race, his speech always then (de facto in the majority of cases) has nothing to do with his 'race theory', when the characteristics, mentioned by him, do not fall under his concept of a race or even belong to the moral character of free beings. In any case, one should take Kant's statements about races or peoples as exactly what Kant himself once says about them: as a play with hypotheses.<sup>191</sup> It is very likely that many of his empirical assumptions and the generalizations on which they were based<sup>192</sup> were wrong.<sup>193</sup> As it will show, however, there is nothing discriminatory or even 'racist' about them.<sup>194</sup>

Before the accusation of racism against Kant and the fundamental mistakes of it are discussed, it will be shown in an excursus that the accusation cannot reach Kant's position at all as long as it is limited to what for Kant is only an accessory left to one's discretion. Another excursus is intended to prepare for an issue that plays an important role in the discussion of the accusation of racism that then follows.

### First excursus: Play with hypotheses

As is known, Kant's theory of observational natural research aims at the correct search, guided by a specific principle.<sup>195</sup> It does not offer a guarantee for a correct result. Kant himself is therefore fully aware of the uncertainty of many of his empirical claims and remarkably often expresses reservation, hesitation, misgiving, qualification. The following chronological selection of different statements from various writings bear sufficient witness to this:

"with the reasoned curiosity of a traveller"<sup>196</sup>; "They are falsely accused of eating human flesh. In general, the most sensible of all new travellers have found this cruelty, attributed to some unknown people, to be untrue."<sup>197</sup>; "I will cast my glance [...] more with the eye of an observer than of the philosopher."<sup>198</sup> "only a tolerable level of accuracy"<sup>199</sup>; "we now take a quick look"<sup>200</sup>; "The Nicobar Islands are occupied by colo-

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rates, etc., while others, by contrast, fix their minds on 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 hidden for either of them to be able to speak from an insight into the nature of the object." At that time, it was, and even nowadays it still is, very difficult and controversial to determine whether genetic causes or those of the environment and socialization or even an interaction between the two are to be assumed.

<sup>191</sup> See also RezHerder, 08.62.06-17.

<sup>192</sup> Many of the sources from which Kant drew and adopted his material are now known. See the apparatus in vols. XXV and XXVI of the Akademie Edition.

<sup>193</sup> For example, Kant's references to 'black people' observed in Europe, have since been disproved primarily by the millions of experiences that have been made with 'black people' in the USA, especially in its northern states, and meanwhile also in Europe.

<sup>194</sup> More on that below p. 39.

<sup>195</sup> See ÜGTP, 08.161.

<sup>196</sup> EACG, 02.03 (1757).

<sup>197</sup> V-PG/Holstein, 25/1.236f (m/tr) (1757/59).

<sup>198</sup> GSE 02.207 (1764).

<sup>199</sup> GSE, 02.243.

<sup>200</sup> GSE, 02.252.

nies of 'Herrenhüter'. The inhabitants are passed off as cannibals, presumably because they were dangerous in resisting the Europeans who wanted to take their land away from them"<sup>201</sup>; "Yet this is only a sketchy enticement to investigation in a field which is too foreign to me for venturing even conjectures with any confidence."<sup>202</sup> " In such cases, where one examines mankind, one must still treat everything very problematically."<sup>203</sup> "only a subsidiary work, which one can treat as one wishes" "subsidiary matter"<sup>204</sup>; "subsidiary intention or mere addition, and can be accepted or rejected"; "not as if I were completely certain"<sup>205</sup>; " this is only my casual opinion, which I present to the reader to judge as he pleases"<sup>206</sup>; "we ought not to give credence to fables of this type [about cannibals in Africa] so easily "<sup>207</sup>. "The witty one is bold in his judgement. But who has power of judgement, apprehensive and undecided. Writings in which boldness of judgement shine forth, are impermanent, e.g. Buffon. (People praised him for this, but wrongly. Because it is no merit to make such daring, often wrong judgements. The boldness of a Galileo was different, who nevertheless ended up in prison in his 70<sup>th</sup> year for just that. One has to be cautious, without falling into the error of being too apprehensive). Every hypothesis is a daring opinion."<sup>208</sup>

"One will see from the variety in people's taste that with us a great deal is based on prejudices." "But I ask [...]: why for us nowadays does musk stink while to everyone 50 years ago it smelled so pleasant. How much cannot the judgement of other people change our taste, as time goes by."<sup>209</sup> "If finally we cast a few glances at history, we see the taste of human beings, like a Proteus, constantly take on changeable shapes. "<sup>210</sup> "Eskimos, which the French described as a cruel, defiant, and obstinate nation, the English, however, as a very mild nation. But it is also quite natural that the behaviour of these peoples are consistently guided by the behaviour of the newcomers."<sup>211</sup> "One may find blacks pretty when one is well acquainted with them, for our repulsion of the black colour is nothing but habit."<sup>212</sup>

Kant points out that Europeans make changes to themselves just as randomly as other races, so it would be "very wrong" that they should start laughing about it.<sup>213</sup> A decade later he eventually noticed in another lecture:

"One dwells on the customs of other peoples and forgets that one does the same things, for example, one is surprised that Indians paint their skin with colours, that they wear rings in their noses, since our ladies paint their faces red and white, and wear rings in their ears."<sup>214</sup>

In his *Critique of the Power of Judgement* Kant puts his finger on the point:

"Now if in a similar way there is sought for this average man the average head, for this one the average nose, etc., then this shape is the basis for the normal idea of the beautiful man *in the country where this*

<sup>201</sup> V-PG/Hesse, 26/2.263 (m/tr) (1770).

<sup>202</sup> VvRM, 02.440 (1775).

<sup>203</sup> Refl. 1251, 15.552 (m/tr) (1776/78).

<sup>204</sup> BBM, 08.91 (1785).

<sup>205</sup> BBM, 08.100.

<sup>206</sup> ÜGTP, 08 167 (1788).

<sup>207</sup> PG, 09.229 (1802).

<sup>208</sup> V-Anth/Dohna-Wundlacken, (fn. 92) 232 (m/tr) (1791/92).

<sup>209</sup> V-PG/Holstein, 26/1.100 und 102 (m/tr) (1757/59).

<sup>210</sup> GSE, 02.255 (1764).

<sup>211</sup> V-PG/Kaehler, 26/2.614 (m/tr) (1775).

<sup>212</sup> V-PG/Dönhoff, 26/2.893 (m/tr) (1782).

<sup>213</sup> See V-PG/Dönhoff, 26/2.908.

<sup>214</sup> V-PG/Dohna, 3 (m/tr) (1792). It was for Kant also worth noting that tattooing was "fashionable on the loins and buttocks, in New Zealand and Tahiti - the Society Islands in general". (V-PG/Dohna, 113 [m/tr]). Certainly he could not imagine what he would see in this respect 200 years later in the highly cultured and civilized "western world" - and not only on buttocks.

*comparison is made; hence under these empirical conditions a Negro must necessarily have a different normal idea of the beauty of a figure than a white, a Chinese person a different idea from a European.*"<sup>215</sup>

### Second excursus: Hierarchical classification

In his essay *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* from 1786, Kant outlines a "history of the first development of freedom from its original predisposition in the nature of the human being". He outlines the "*first beginning*" of the "history of human actions" "insofar as *nature* makes it".<sup>216</sup> In lecture transcripts from 1775/76 and 1777/78 there are the following remarks, which, as it were, prelude this essay. They typically deal with the human being in general, of *whatever race*, and his possible development from natural beings to 'cultured' and 'civilized' beings:

"The human being is determined as an animal for the woods, but as a human being for society [...] The human being is [...] lazy by nature; he does nothing other than that to which nature and necessity drives him. [...] The human being develops his talents solely in the civil state."<sup>217</sup> "Innated to human nature are germs which develop and can achieve the perfection for which they are determined. How many germs have not already developed, about which one could before just as little have believed that they would develop, as we now believe about those which are still not developed. Who has seen a savage Indian or Greenlander, should he indeed believe that there is a germ innate to this same [being], to become just such a man in accordance with Parisian fashion, as another [would become]? He has, however, 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, and [that] it will be transposed into the condition which is the greatest possible."<sup>218</sup>

"If human beings had remained under the care of nature, if it had offered them everything voluntarily, then all of them would have remained in a state of stupidity, and would at least only somewhat refined their animal enjoyments. Providence, however, has willed that we should live in a world where we are able to obtain something for ourselves only through effort. [...] In the state of superfluity the human being must be looked upon as a spoiled child, who knows no hardship at all."<sup>219</sup> [...] The hardships of life are the incentives to the development of the talents."<sup>220</sup>

Particularly revealing are then the statements in the aforementioned essay. Kant begins his reflections with "that which is capable of no derivation by human reason from previous natural causes: thus with the *existence of the human being*"<sup>221</sup> who, as long as he, "inexperienced", obeys the "call of nature", is still solely guided by "instinct, that *voice of God*"<sup>222</sup>. In four steps, described by Kant in more detail, which "reason took in elevating the human being entirely above the society with animals," the transition of man takes place "from the crudity of a *merely animal* creature into humanity, from the walker of instinct to the guidance of *reason* – in a word, from the guardianship of *nature* into the condition of *freedom*."<sup>223</sup> It is the

<sup>215</sup> KU, 05.234 (m/it); see also p. 40f.

<sup>216</sup> MAM, 08.109.

<sup>217</sup> V-Anth/Fried, 25.689f.

<sup>218</sup> V-Anth/Fried, 25.694 (m/it). Of course, these germs do not mean those from the 'race theory', which deal with a purely natural law determined, physiological development into *different* races, not with what people can make of themselves.

<sup>219</sup> Cf. ÜGTP, 08.174.28-30.

<sup>220</sup> V-Anth/Pillau, 25.843f (partly m/tr).

<sup>221</sup> MAM, 08.110.

<sup>222</sup> MAM, 08.111.

<sup>223</sup> MAM, 08.115 (m/it).

transition from the history of man as a mere natural being to the history of man as a free-acting being guided by reason.

Following *Genesis*, Kant summarizes the "conjectural beginning" of this *human* history in a "close of the story". It says:

"The beginning of the following period was that the human being passed over from the period of comfort and peace into that of *labor* and *discord*, as the prelude to the unification in society. Here we must once again make a great leap and transfer him at once into the possession of domesticated animals and crops, which he himself was able to multiply for his nourishment through sowing or planting (*Genesis* 4: 2), although the transition from the savage life of hunters to the first, and from the unsettled digging of roots or gathering of fruit to the second, might have taken place slowly enough.<sup>224</sup> Here there had to begin already the strife between human beings who up to then had been living peaceably near one another, whose consequence was the separation of those of different ways of living and their dispersion across the earth. The *pastoral life* is not only comfortable but also, since there can be no lack of fodder in land that is uninhabited far and wide, it provides the most secure support. *Agriculture*, or planting, on the contrary, is very troublesome, dependent on the inconstancy of the weather, and hence insecure, requires also abiding dwelling, property in land and sufficient force to defend it; the shepherd, however, hates this property, since it limits the freedom of his pastures. As to the former, the farmer could seem to envy the herdsman as more favored by heaven (*Genesis* 4: 4); in fact, however, the latter became very burdensome to him as long as he remained in the neighborhood; for the grazing stock did not spare his plantings. Now since after he has done harm to them it is an easy matter to get far away with his herd and evade all compensation for that harm, leaving nothing behind that he could not find just as well anywhere else, it was probably the farmer who used violence against such incursions which the other did not take to be impermissible, and (since the occasion for it could never entirely cease), if he did not want to forfeit the fruits of his long industry, he finally had to *distance* himself as far as it was possible for him from those who carry on the pastoral life (*Genesis* 4: 16). This separation makes the third epoch.

When sustenance depends on the cultivation and planting of a soil (chiefly with trees), it requires abiding dwellings; and their defense against all violations requires a number of human beings assisting one another. Hence with this way of living human beings could no longer live as scattered families, but had to hold together and erect villages (improperly called *towns*), in order to protect their property against savage hunters or hordes of roaming herdsmen. The first needs of life, whose acquisition required a *different way of living* (*Genesis* 4: 20), could now be *exchanged* for one another. From this *culture* had to arise and the beginning of *art*, both as a pastime and as industry (*Genesis* 4: 21–2); but most importantly there had to arise also some arrangement for a civil constitution and public justice, first surely only in regard to great violent acts, the avenging of which was now left no longer to individuals, as in the savage condition, but to a lawful might that held the whole together, i.e. to a kind of government, which was not itself subject to the exercise of power (*Genesis* 4: 23–4). – Bit by bit, from this first and crude inception, all human art, among which that of *sociability and civil security* is the most beneficial, could gradually develop, humankind multiply, and extend itself everywhere from a central point, like a beehive sending out already formed colonists. With this epoch began also the *inequality* among human beings, this rich source of so much evil, but also of all good, and it increased ever further.

Now as long as the nomadic pastoral peoples, who recognize God alone as their lord, continued to swarm around the town dwellers and farmers who have a human being (supreme ruler) as their lord (*Genesis* 6: 4) and as long as these sworn enemies of all landed property showed hostility toward the latter and were in turn hated by them, there was to be sure continual war between the two, at least unceasing danger of war, and on both sides peoples could therefore at least rejoice internally in the priceless good of freedom – (for the danger of war is also still today the sole thing that moderates despotism, because wealth is required for a state to be a might, but without *freedom*, no enterprise that could produce wealth will take place. In place of this, in a poor people there must be great participation in the preservation of the commonwealth, which in turn is possible only when it feels itself to be free in the latter). – But with time the increasing luxury of the town dwellers, but chiefly the art of pleasing, in which the town women eclipsed the dingy maids of the deserts, must have been a mighty lure for those shepherds (*Genesis* 6: 2), so that they entered into combination with them and let themselves be drawn into the glittering misery of the towns.

<sup>224</sup> A statement from 1792: "Perhaps the Mosaic commandment not to imbibe blood is intended to remove people from the hunter's life. The condition that follows next is the nomadic life – the first step towards culture." (V-PG/Dohna 116 [m/tr]); cf. ZeF, 08.364.24-29.

Then, through the melting together of two otherwise hostile populations, with the end of all danger of war, came at the same time the end of all freedom, hence the despotism of mighty tyrants, on the one side, yet with culture hardly begun, soulless luxury in most abject slavery mixed with all the vices of the crude condition, on the other side, which irresistibly deflected humankind from the progress of the formation of its predisposition to good predelineated by nature; and it thereby made itself unworthy of its own existence as a species destined to dominate the earth, not to enjoy like cattle and to serve like slaves (*Genesis* 6: 17).<sup>225</sup>

The development of mankind begins with the hunter-gatherer life of humans as mere natural beings; and it is precisely with these that physical geography as such and thus also the 'race theory' deal and to which they limit themselves. It is the "savages" in history and in Kant's time that is talked about again and again. The further development from the already more bound pastoral life to the sedentary life of the peasants means the gradual cultivation and civilization of mankind and thus, as Kant would say, a gradual progress towards greater perfection as a species of free beings.

Talking about such progress implies the possibility of an evaluative hierarchical classification. Between the mere natural being and the 'cultured' and 'civilized' being developed to full freedom, there is a series, divisible at will, of steps towards the ideal; and according to the level or degree of approximation, hierarchical classification or grading is possible. People make use of this possibility on a daily basis, – teachers awarding grades and judges awarding medals, and patients finding doctors, car drivers garages, and customers finding shops "first class" or just lower class. All of these evaluations are based on statements of fact, which may be true or false; but *as such* they are not discriminations.

Incidentally, what Kant thinks of when distinguishing between the stages of culture and civilization, regularly refers to the *respective* level of development that an individual person has reached in his or her life, or a population of any size, or just humanity as a whole. There is by no means only progress; rather, a population<sup>226</sup> and, in the worst case, even all of humanity can fall behind a level that has already been reached. Germany between 1933 and 1945 would be a particularly apt example of such a relapse, one that Kant probably could hardly imagine. Unfortunately, it could since long be supplemented by countless others.

## V. The reproach of racism and its failure in principles

Particular points of attack for the opponents are some of Kant's strikingly 'positive' judgements about the white race resp. the European peoples and strikingly 'negative' judgements about 'Negroes' and Fuegians. The following may serve as *pars pro toto*:

Of the whites he says, that they

"contain all the incentives of nature in affects and passions, all talents, all predispositions for culture and civilization [...]. They are the only ones who always progress in perfection."<sup>227</sup>

"Humanity has its highest degree of perfection in the white race."<sup>228</sup>

His explanation for these findings is:

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<sup>225</sup> MAM, 08.118-120.

<sup>226</sup> In the *Physical Geography* one reads: "The Peruvians seem to have lost a great deal of their ancestral skill. One still finds walls of palaces made of hewn flints, although at that time they had no iron but only copper tools for building ." Here Kant only assesses the current appearance of a population. (PG 09.428f; ebenso Refl 108, 14.632.13-19 [1758/59]).

<sup>227</sup> Refl 1520, 15.878 (m/tr) (1780s).

<sup>228</sup> PG, 09.316.

"Yet the ["temperate"<sup>229</sup>] region of the earth from the 31st to the 52nd degree of latitude in the ancient world<sup>230</sup> (which also with respect to its population appears to deserve the name of the ancient world) is rightly taken for that region of the earth in which *the most fortunate* [sic] *mixture of the influences* of the colder and hotter regions are found and also the greatest riches in creatures of the earth are found; and where also the human being must have diverged the least from his original formation, given that he is *equally well prepared for all transplantings* from there."<sup>231</sup>

One case is of particular scientific-philosophical importance for Kant because it "throws the most advantageous light"<sup>232</sup> on the application of his principle by confirming its correctness *ex negativo*, as it were. It concerns the "inhabitants of America" (specifically, however, the Fuegians are meant). He describes and explains their condition as follows:

"That their natural disposition did not achieve a *perfect* suitability for any climate, can be seen from the circumstance that hardly another reason can be given for why this race, which is too weak for hard labor, too indifferent for industry and incapable of any culture – although there is enough of it as example and encouragement nearby – ranks still far below even the Negro, who stands on the lowest of all the other steps that we have named as differences of the races."<sup>233</sup>

"that the Americans came to their race in this way can be seen from this; because all their vitality has almost expired, they accept no culture at all and are very degraded people (since, on the contrary, the negroes are very teachable and can be cultivated), which indicates that their vitality must have suffered a great loss".<sup>234</sup>

"The Americans [...] are therefore completely degraded because they are not adapted to any region of the Earth and have always come from one into the other."<sup>235</sup>

"Altogether, the *nations* of the *southern* hemisphere are on the lowest level of humanity and they have no interest in anything other than the most sensuous pleasures. The savages towards the north, although they live even closer to the pole, display far greater talents and skill."<sup>236</sup>

"The yellow Indians have already a somewhat lesser talent. The Negroes are much lower, and lowest of all is *part* of the American *peoples*."<sup>237</sup>

"It is known of the Terra del Fuego that the inhabitants there come closest to wildness and animality. The Greenlanders still show a lot of spirit, but the Fuegians not the least, although they lie in the Königsberg latitude and have the sea around them."<sup>238</sup>

"The inhabitants [of the Terra del Fuego] are the most wretched people in the world [...]. The sad country also seems to be responsible for the fact that they eat their children and perhaps themselves too, because they don't have animals and live only on seals, which they keep until they rot."<sup>239</sup>

"The inhabitants of Terra del Fuego show the example of the most miserable people, they are far more miserable than the Greenlanders, their land only nourishes them on the sea-coast. The missionaries cannot even do much good, because their way of life is too restricted to concern themselves with religious matters. Their houses are open [...] and yet it is as cold in their summer as in our winter. Their bodies

<sup>229</sup> PG, 09.316f; Refl 1497, 15.770. V-PG/Holstein, 26/1, 96: „zonae temperatae“.

<sup>230</sup> That roughly means the area north of the line Casablanca, Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad and south of the line London, Berlin, Warsaw.

<sup>231</sup> VvRM, 02.440f (m/it).

<sup>232</sup> See ÜGTP, 08.175f.

<sup>233</sup> ÜGTP, 08.175f (1788).

<sup>234</sup> V-PG/Dönhoff, 26/2.901 (m/tr) (1782).

<sup>235</sup> V-PG/Bergk, 26/2. 1111 (m/tr) (1792?).

<sup>236</sup> PG, 09.230 (m/it) (1802).

<sup>237</sup> PG, 09.316 (m/it; m/tr). The CE (transl. Olaf Reinhardt) makes of Kant's "Völkerschaften" ("peoples") "races"!

<sup>238</sup> V-PG/Messina, 26/2.664 (m/tr) (1776?).

<sup>239</sup> V-PG/Dönhoff, 26/2.842f (m/tr) (1782).

aren't even completely covered with sealskins and they're trembling all over. They are so hungry that they have offered their children to the Dutch for a piece of meat, which is certainly a sign of extreme poverty when even the impulse of nature is denied."<sup>240</sup>

It is here always about second-hand allegations of facts and related – correct or incorrect – causal explanations. These are based on the idea that man is "made for the whole earth" and that, because "his body is so formed by nature that he can by habit be accustomed to any climate, although it is terribly different [...] the different national character of the human beings arises."<sup>241</sup> The 'terrible' difference in climate does not only result in a mere difference in the character of the nations resp. races, but also in those "steps" that Kant speaks of and which his opponents accuse him of, as being an offensive "racist" hierarchical classification.<sup>242</sup>

Well, the quoted judgement on Fuegians cannot be a "racist" judgement, if only because as such it would have to refer to all members of the "coppery" race. In addition, the "incentives", "talents", "predispositions" relevant to culture and civilization do not fall under Kant's concept of race; one doesn't have them on the basis of one's race. Statements related to them are therefore also ruled out as an accusation of racism.

What Kant believes he can find out empirically, is that the 'white race', mostly represented by European peoples, at his time had – more or less, depending on the people – a higher degree of cultivation and civilization than the other races resp. peoples, whereby he sees the reason for this in the more favourable climate for them. Kant's verdict on the Fuegians as "incapable of any culture"<sup>243</sup>, assessed and condemned as "racial discrimination"<sup>244</sup> by his opponents,<sup>245</sup> corresponds to his various descriptions. This people evidently has not even reached the stage of development of hunters, let alone that of shepherds<sup>246</sup> or tillers. Due to its living conditions, it does not even have a chance for the beginnings of cultivation or even civilization. Kant has nothing else in mind when he remarks that it occupies "the lowest of all the other steps". Something like that could be said nowadays of people who eke out a living in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro or the slums of Mumbai or the refugee camps of Libya.

The way in which Kant speaks of the "most wretched", "most miserable people in the world" - this tone adopted here by Kant is clearly an expression of pity, mercy, regret and in any case far removed from 'white' arrogance and degrading attitude.<sup>247</sup> That part of the

<sup>240</sup> V-PG/Dönhoff, 26/2.1090f (m/tr).

<sup>241</sup> V-PG/Kaehler, 26/2.372f (m/tr) (1775).

<sup>242</sup> Marcus Willaschek e.g. writes in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung from June 22, 2020 with reference to the passage quoted in fn. 228 and 237 from PG, 09.316: "That Kant, in contradiction to his own moral-philosophical universalism, which attributed absolute value to all people, *belittles* blacks, women and other groups across the board is sad and shameful." (m/it; m/tr).

<sup>243</sup> ÜGTP, 08.175f.

<sup>244</sup> To be this, the assertion would have to have been made with the knowledge of its falsehood for the purpose of public disparagement, i.e. as slander. You can think of someone, e.g. your neighbour, as "incapable of any culture" without discriminating against him in the slightest; you can even value him and be his friend, for example because of his unusual honesty or kindness of heart.

<sup>245</sup> Larrimore speaks in all seriousness of Kant's "vicious empirical views" (*Mark Larrimore, Race, Freedom* [fn. 91] 103).

<sup>246</sup> "the nomadic life, – the first step to culture." (V-PG/Dohna 116)

<sup>247</sup> Read also the description of the usual steps of enslavement, from capture, transport to port and ship, crossing, sale on the slave market to the purchase of a child out of "mercy" towards the mother who has already been bought. It cannot possibly leave the reader cold. (See V-PG/Dönhoff, 26/2.1080f).

(phyletic) species, that 'by chance'<sup>248</sup> wandered into the 'well-tempered' zones resp. ended up there, only drew the luckier lot, so to speak. The unlucky lot was drawn by those "cohorts of human beings" whose "expansion [...] brought about forcefully through violent revolutions of nature"<sup>249</sup> brought them via East Siberia and Alaska along through both hemispheres of America to Tierra del Fuego.

As for Kant's talk of perfection, he nowhere exactly says what he means by that. Even when he talks about perfection of "Bildung", it doesn't get any clearer. Because the concept of "Bildung", which in his time played such an important role with regard to the vocation of the human being, is quite ambiguous. Kant uses it both in relation to man as a natural being and in relation to man as a free being. Thus, on the one hand, it is about physical formation, on the other hand, it is about 'spiritual' (civilizational and moral) education or cultivation. In addition, the concept of "Bildung" and the concept of its perfection can both refer to individuals, to races and peoples and to humanity as a whole and mean then something different in each case. Especially with regard to the human species, the degree of perfection achieved at any one time does not imply that all races or all peoples, let alone all individuals, have attained that degree.<sup>250</sup> On the contrary: both historically and geographically, there can be large and ever-changing differences in degree. Is it here where the source for the alleged hierarchical classification may be found?

Kant writes in the 1<sup>st</sup> edition (1775) of his first essay on races:

"If one asks: with which of the present races the first human phylum may have had the greatest resemblance, one will, although without any prejudice<sup>251</sup> with regard to the presumptuously greater perfection of one colour from the other, presumably declare oneself for that of the whites. For the human being, whose descendants were to adapt to all zones, could be most adept at this, if he was originally suited to the temperate climate; because such lies in between the outermost limits of the states in which he should get caught. And in this very zone we also find, since the oldest times, the race of the whites."<sup>252</sup>

Everything that Kant presents here is about (false or correct) physiological findings and an attempt at a causal explanation.<sup>253</sup> It's all about humans as natural beings, about "physical characters"<sup>254</sup> and therefore only about differences in degrees and "steps" in relation to the

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<sup>248</sup> "wherever they went by chance and continued their generation over long periods of time, there developed the germ for this region of the earth to be found in their organization, which made them fit for such a climate." (ÜGTP, AA 08.173)

<sup>249</sup> ÜGTP, 08.175.

<sup>250</sup> The development to higher steps of culture proceeds differently for individuals and for peoples. There are wild and civilized individuals and peoples in history, as there are in the present. That is why Kant can refer to ancient Europe when he speaks of contemporary savages in Africa. For him, the Europeans were only in his time at the forefront of the cultivation progress, of course, with significant differences between the European peoples themselves. Incidentally, the assertion that their culture is "superior" would be quite different from the assertion that Europeans are "superior"!

<sup>251</sup> Kant was obviously aware of the possible accusation of a white European prejudice.

<sup>252</sup> VvRM, 02.521f (m/tr). Quite different then Kant's judgement 1785: BBM, 08,105f; cf. also V-PG/Dönhoff, 26/2.897 and 26/2.899.15-23.

<sup>253</sup> So, when reading in particular the three essays on 'race theory', the names of Gregor Mendel and Charles Darwin keep coming to mind, but never those of Arthur de Gobineau or Houston Stewart Chamberlain. Bernasconi, however, has the presumption to make, without giving any evidence, the historically absurd assertion, which he also does not substantiate: "Kant's emphasis on the fixity of the races and on race mixing is strongly echoed in the nineteenth century usage of the term and constitutes his legacy. For this reason, reference to Kant is indispensable to any history of the concept of race." (*Robert Bernasconi, Kant and Blumenbach's Polyps* [fn. 9] 86).

<sup>254</sup> BBM, 08.99.

predisposition required for life under certain climatic conditions. Thus Kant can say in this empirically descriptive and explanatory way e.g. of the 'Negro' – rightly or wrongly – that he is "well suited to *his* climate, namely strong, fleshy, supple, but, given the abundant provision of *his* mother land, lazy, soft and trifling".<sup>255</sup> Thirteen years later, as already mentioned, Kant, in his last essay on 'race theory',<sup>256</sup> distinguishes the "faculty to work" from an "immediate drive to activity independent of all enticement" and then says of the Indians and 'Negroes' that they

"do not bring *any more* of this impetus into other climates and pass it on to their offspring than was *needed for their preservation in their old motherland and had been received from nature*; and that this inner predisposition extinguishes just as little<sup>257</sup> as the externally visible one. The *far lesser needs* in those countries and the *little effort* it takes to procure only them demand no *greater* predispositions to activity."<sup>258</sup>

A *morally* evaluating, discriminating hierarchical classification does not occur at all with such statements about races. They relate solely to what nature has made of humans as animals. In order to be a characteristic of a race, a property must be *inevitably* hereditary and, in case of race mixing, it must unfailingly result in *half-breeds*. With regard to 'racial' differences, Kant, it is true, may not only be thinking of the difference in skin colour, but also perhaps of what, in the process of a population's adaptation to the respective conditions of an area of the earth, could be the *natural* formation of the entire human organism as a psychosomatic unit, the "inner predisposition". Yet, the intelligence quotient, or the individual character of a person and the peculiarities associated with them, are at any rate out of the question, since they lack the necessity of heredity and of half-breed generation.<sup>259</sup>

The differences and thus also the 'positive' or 'negative' peculiarities of races that Kant ascertains on the basis of (in his case alien) observation are always a product of the play of *nature*. Here, it is not the "moral character of the human being himself where I regard him as a free being that is of interest",<sup>260</sup> but the "natural character" ("Character latius"), "where I

<sup>255</sup> VvRM, 02.438 (m/it). In an attempt to prove his racism claim, Schönecker shortens Kant's quote by the words "well suited to his climate, namely strong, fleshy, supple, but " and thus turns a purely biological statement into an apparently racist one. (See Dieter Schönecker, "Amerikaner seien »zu schwach für schwere Arbeit«. Und Schwarze faul: Wie ich lernte, dass Kant Rassist war", in: Neue Zürcher Zeitung from April 16, 2021); more 'method' of this kind in: Ian Storey, Empire and National Order [fn. 8] 671). Certainly, even then it is not clear what would be racist and derogatory in the statement that certain people, 'given abundant provision', as it were, in the land of milk and honey, sit back and do nothing.

<sup>256</sup> In the meantime it should have been shown that talking of an essay on 'race theory' is not wrong, but at least misleading. Because the essay is literally about the "use of teleological principles in philosophy", that is, about a problem area that goes far beyond physical geography as science. The 'race theory' offers Kant only a very good opportunity to exemplarily demonstrate such a use; and the case of interest here, discussed by Kant in a note, is nothing but an episode in this presentation.

<sup>257</sup> This thesis appears to be particularly problematic. But if it is wrong, then it is an empirical error and nothing else.

<sup>258</sup> ÜGTP, 08.174 (m/it).

<sup>259</sup> When Kant once says of the 'Negroes' that they are all very devoted to stealing and brandy, he cannot possibly mean that these are necessarily inheritable and inevitably half-breed propagated characteristics. So, according to him, they cannot belong to the character of the 'black' race.

<sup>260</sup> "The [GG. "moral"] character is the mark of man as a free-acting being. It seems to be contradictory, but it is not. A free-acting being must act in such a way that it is always based on maxims, and when these maxims are persistent, then this is his character. [...] The character is not innate, but it is the epitome of the principles that a person makes for himself and is therefore acquired. [...] the character does not depend on birth or on chance, but only on ourselves." (V-Anth/Dohna-Wundlacken, [fn. 92] 412f [m/tr]) – In a postscript of Kant's earliest lecture on anthropology (1772/73) one reads about character: "Characters are nothing other than what is peculiar to the *higher* faculties. Every human being, it is true, has great incentives and preparations for all kinds of activities, but there is still a higher principle in him to make use of all the capacities and incentives; to sacrifice and inhibit feelings, etc. The nature of these *higher* powers makes up the character. So one also doesn't say when one uses the word character, *what kind of capacities a person has, but how he uses them and what he will do.*" (V-

regard the human being as a product of nature and look at what sets him apart from other products".<sup>261</sup> In the person, the sexes, the nations and the human species can be distinguished a natural and a moral character,<sup>262</sup> while the respective character of the races is merely a natural character and thus the object of physical geography and for pragmatic anthropology only a "preliminary exercise in the *knowledge of the world*".<sup>263</sup> According to Kant's concept of race, a race *as such* just cannot possibly have a "moral" character. However, since only the moral character has an 'inner worth',<sup>264</sup> a race also cannot be the subject of moral evaluation and discrimination.

A *morally* evaluative hierarchical classification is ruled out in principle by Kant's 'race theory'. All races have the same status: each being a distinct subspecies of the same phylum. Only the (incorrect or correct) ascertainment of natural differences is possible here.<sup>265</sup> Let's take a statement, diligently quoted by Kant's opponents, as it appears to be particularly characteristic of his alleged "racism":

"In the torrid zones, humans mature more quickly in all aspects than in the temperate zones, but they fail to reach the same perfection.<sup>266</sup> Humanity<sup>267</sup> has<sup>268</sup> its highest degree of perfection in the race of the whites. The yellow Indians have a somewhat lesser talent. The Negroes are much lower, and lowest of all is part [sic] of the American peoples."<sup>269</sup>

This statement does not differ in its avoidance of moral value judgements from the following:<sup>270</sup> "The river on earth with the largest amount of water is the Amazon. The Mississippi has already less water. The Danube has far less water, and the Moselle has the least." Just as the Moselle is not "disparaged" or "devalued", so neither are in Kant's statement – contrary to the opinion of some opponents – certain peoples of America. The *empirical* 'cognitions' which Kant offers in physical geography and in anthropology, the latter both physiologi-

Anth/Holstein, 25.227 [m/it]; see also V-Anth/ Parow, 25.437f) In short, it is about the human being as a free being, not as a product of nature.

<sup>261</sup> V-Anth/Mron, 25.1367f (m/tr).

<sup>262</sup> See also V-Anth/Mron, 25.1368.

<sup>263</sup> VvRM, 02.443.

<sup>264</sup> Cf. Anth, 07.

<sup>265</sup> See especially the passages quoted above (p. 34) from ÜGTP, 08.175f and PG, 09.316.

<sup>266</sup> Cf. also V-PG/Holstein, 26/1.96.18-97.04.

<sup>267</sup> Also note here that all four mentioned populations are seen as belonging to the one humanity.

<sup>268</sup> Present tense! The author talks about the current state. Other statements show that Kant considered a development towards greater "perfection" to be possible in other races as well. See e.g. Refl 1501, 15.788.29-789.03; V-Anth/Fried, 25.694.18-28; V-Anth/Pillau, 25.840.05-07 ("seem!"), 25.840.11.

<sup>269</sup> PG, 09.316 (almost literally in V-PG/Pillau, 221f; however, there is talk of "races [!] of the whites", and the conclusion reads: "and the Americans are degraded most profoundly, and among them especially the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego.") For the usefulness of this passage as a source see: *Werner Stark*, "Historical and Philological References on the Question of a Possible Hierarchy of Human »Races«, »Peoples« or »Populations« in Immanuel Kant – A Supplement"; in: Stuart Elden / Eduardo Mendieta (Eds), *Reading Kant's Geography*, Albany / New York: SUNY Press, 2011, 87-102.

<sup>270</sup> It is therefore quite incomprehensible how Dörfinger can say of Kant that he asserts a "value hierarchy of the human races" and then adds in an apologetic gesture that "this does not characterize the Kantian critical philosophy, but only the occasionally uncritical and power of judgement lacking Kant"; – indeed, a powerful judgement of the kind that writers are fond of using when trying to free themselves from difficulties in understanding Kant's texts. (See *Bernd Dörfinger*, *Die Einheit der Menschheit als Tiergattung*. [fn. 7] 349f [m/tr]) Willaschek does it the same way: "that Kant did not think his own universalism through to the end [...]." According to Willaschek, Kant did not succeed in "consistently thinking through his basic moral and political convictions and avoiding serious misjudgements". (*Marcus Willaschek* in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* from June 22, 2020 [m/tr])

cal and pragmatic, must be fundamentally distinguished from what he expresses in normative respect in moral philosophy (encompassing doctrine of right and of virtue).<sup>271</sup> One can only criticize and bring down Kant's alleged 'hierarchical classification' quoted here, by showing empirically that it is incorrect. However, the accusation of racism will have to be abandoned if one does not also provide valid reasons for the assumption that Kant made the assertions, which he was well aware of being false, with discriminatory intent.

Let's take another statement that Kant's opponents also like to quote. Kant once says, with reference to the "European" and the "black" race, that mixing them "degraded the good [...] without proportionately raising the worse".<sup>272</sup> In order to decide whether this amounts to discrimination worth criticizing, one would have to know what Kant means here with the adjectives "good" and "bad". What is certain, however, is that it cannot possibly be a case of so-called racial discrimination. For, first, the quotation rules out *half-breed*; thus, what has been evaluated as "good" or "bad" cannot be race-specific. Second, Kant's concept of race permits, if any at all, only an adverbial use of those terms: well or badly adapted to the climate, which cannot be meant here though. Kant probably doesn't think here at all of "Europeans" and "blacks" as races, but as peoples or cohorts of human beings, at however conditioned, differently high levels of cultivation. One only has to read Kant's confession from the mid-1760s, that Rousseau had brought him around in favour of the rabble he (Kant) despised until then, in order to know that such levels could not (any longer) justify any moral value difference for him, that rather, in view of the "rights of humanity", there really was no such difference (anymore).<sup>273</sup>

Anyone who accuses Kant of discriminating with his empirical (hypo)theses against certain groups of people, by attesting to them certain natural characteristics, does not take into account, that for Kant, and by no means only for the 'critical' Kant, empirical features are morally (legally and/or ethically) without any relevance,<sup>274</sup> and that thus their mere statement cannot be discriminatory in the sense, that people are *morally* classified according to these features, and *insofar* considered unequal and treated accordingly. It is not Kant, but his opponents, who turn his *empirical* sequence of steps referring to racial characteristics into a *moral* (legal and/or ethical) discrimination. Making the degree of rights and dignity dependent on certain empirical characteristics such as gender, race, descent, abilities, fortune, etc. is well known from human history. It was Kant who did away – and that in principle – with this. It

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<sup>271</sup> In the present case, the point is not that *someone* allegedly made "racist" statements, but that *Kant* is said to have done so. So you have to understand something about Kant first, not about racism. But most of those who accuse Kant of 'racism' may be racism experts; renowned Kant connoisseurs they are not. But even those of his opponents who are regarded as such, largely forego in their reasoning *fundamental* considerations with regard to Kant'. Bernasconi speaks of "the fact that Kant scholars waited for non-specialists like Emmanuel Eze and me to raise the issue of Kant's racism". He rightly demands that the racism of acknowledged philosophers must be seen "in relation to the larger body of their work. This includes raising the question of how the racism of these thinkers relates to their philosophy." But what just doesn't occur to him is, that it should first be examined in the context and light of that philosophy, whether the assumption of racism makes sense at all. (See *Robert Bernasconi*, Will the real Kant please stand up [fn. 9] 13f).

<sup>272</sup> VASF, 23.456 (m/tr)..

<sup>273</sup> See BGSE, 20.44.

<sup>274</sup> *Michael Wolff* rightly complains in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* from April 14, 2021, "that all four main papers [of the video conference "Kant – ein Rassist?" ("Kant – a racist?"), organized 2020 by the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften] related to Kant's writings reflect uncritically what is said in the "Racism" section of the Kant article of the English Wikipedia, which makes Kant one of the »central figures in the birth of modern scientific racism« and gathers from a writing from 1764 that skin colour is a »moral quality« for Kant." (m/tr).

is his opponents whose position implicitly amounts to the end of a universalistic doctrine of right and virtue.

Alongside other authors, Kleingeld asserts against Kant: "The racial hierarchy [...] goes against the presumption of human equality which one would expect from someone with a universalist moral theory."<sup>275</sup> She apparently failed to understand what "equality" means in Kant's moral philosophy. "The capacity to set oneself an end – any end whatsoever – is what characterizes humanity (as distinguished from animality)."<sup>276</sup> Acting in pursuit of an end can be attributed to humans. It is this imputability and *only* this that makes man, *every* man, a person.<sup>277</sup> Whether a human being is cultivated or uncultivated, civilized or uncivilized, intelligent or stupid, intellectually advanced or retarded, virtuous or vicious – all this does not in the least affect the being of a person (personhood)<sup>278</sup> and thus the unconditional equality of *all* human beings with regard to the "original right belonging to every man by virtue of his humanity" and to his likewise innate dignity, given that they all belong to the one human species. But there is not a single syllable of right and dignity in what Kleingeld calls Kant's "racial theory". She thinks that according to the "hierarchy" presented by Kant, "the races also vary greatly in their capacities for agency and their powers of intellect."<sup>279</sup> Even *if* it were so, it wouldn't change anything. For the equality of which moral philosophy speaks is completely independent of any physical or mental faculties.<sup>280</sup> The triumph of the idea of right consists precisely in the fact that it abstracts from the natural and thus irremediable differences (inequality) between human beings,<sup>281</sup> as it were wearing a blindfold over its eyes. A 'Newton' and a 'village idiot' do not differ in any way as persons, even if the 'idiot' should be a European and the 'Newton' a Fuegian, which is at least very easily possible in the case of the idiot. Recent history in particular has shown that the highly cultivated academic can become a mass murderer, just as a mentally clueless and completely uneducated unskilled worker can be a moral model. This is where, what is *fundamentally* wrong in the criticism against Kant, is revealed. By attaching the accusation of racial discrimination to the allegedly impermissible, because incorrect, empirical hierarchical classification, Kleingeld, out of all, implies by that the thesis that, when there are really essential differences between human groups with regard to natural predispositions, also discrimination would be permitted.

Often, when accusations of "racism" are made, the issue of "Eurocentrism" with an attitude of superiority is brought into play too. In doing so, something decisive is overlooked: What is meant by "Eurocentrism" is first nothing more than a specific kind of "egocentrism",

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<sup>275</sup> Pauline Kleingeld, *Second Thoughts* (fn. 8) 574; see also Thomas McCarthy, 'Rasse' und 'Entwicklung' bei Kant (fn. 9) 91.

<sup>276</sup> TL, 06.392.

<sup>277</sup> See MS, 06.223.

<sup>278</sup> Person is the human being existing as a *rational* natural being in space and time (homo phaenomenon), insofar as he is at the same time represented "merely in terms of his *humanity*, as [moral] personality independent of physical attributes (homo noumenon)". (See RL, 06.239; TL, 06.418 [partly m/tr])

<sup>279</sup> Pauline Kleingeld, *Second Thoughts* (fn. 8) 574.

<sup>280</sup> "his insignificance as a *human animal* [Tiermensch] can [sic] not infringe upon his consciousness of his dignity as a *rational human being* [Vernunftmensch]" (TL, 06.435 [partly m/tr]). Larrimore again says in all seriousness: "Kant's mature ethics should certainly have led him to repudiate [an interest in race and diversity]" and adds the most outlandish explanation: "His rigorously abstract mature ethics was developed against the backdrop of a continued commitment to the importance of understanding deep human differences like gender, temperament and race, and may indeed presuppose them." (*Mark Larrimore, Antinomies of Race* [fn. 73] 351)

<sup>281</sup> Cf. RL, 06.239.23-30.

more precisely: of epistemologically unavoidable "egocentrism". Every human being has a horizon within which he thinks, feels, collects experiences, judges. He can become aware of the extent of this horizon and he can broaden it, but he remains, and this inevitably, within a certain horizon. It is therefore misleading to say that he has left his earlier horizon when he replaces a previously pursued ethnology of 'uninvolved' observation with one of 'participatory' observation. He expanded it. The field of possible misunderstandings still remains infinitely large. It begins in relation to the closest family members and friends and ends in relation to humanity in general. You can never be sure that other people, whoever they are, will see, feel, judge, evaluate, etc. something exactly in the same way as you do. Instead of mocking or even getting het-up about the empirical misjudgements of Kant and others of his contemporaries, one should always be aware that such mistakes can be, and really are, made by anyone at any time. So the various images, that 20<sup>th</sup>-century ethnologists like Malinowski or Mead had of certain ethnic groups, also proved in need of correction. That is the fate especially of good scientific research. But the falsity of an image, whether 'negative' or 'positive', held of certain races does not also mean "racism".

Not only to name the purely empirical, merely descriptive and thus value-free distinction of races, e.g. by colour, an example of "racism" is misguided. It also makes no sense to regard as "racist" the empirically based assessment of such races with regard to cultural and civilizational achievements resp. capabilities. Likewise, Kant's biologically based hierarchical classification of the four races is *as such*, just like that of the four rivers, a mere statement of facts – right or wrong.<sup>282</sup> It would only become racist and discriminatory if, as already mentioned, Kant would hold it, *aware of its falsehood*, with the *intention of* (moral/legal and/or social) *discrimination*.<sup>283</sup> For this assumption, there is not the slightest trace of support in Kant's various statements. As far as real discrimination of this kind is concerned, Kant repeatedly formulated his unconditional verdict on it with a clarity and argumentative sharpness that is second to none.

It should be added that also Kant's judgements about peoples (nations), which often do not, like the 'race theory', refer to man as a mere natural being, but to him as a cultural being endowed with freedom, designate characteristics that one has (or believes to have) empirically ascertained as distinctive peculiarities of a people. But here, too, the many differences, mentioned by Kant, between peoples with regard to the respective progress achieved in cultivation and civilization<sup>284</sup> do not offer him any possibility for any kind of discrimination.

Nevertheless, he is often accused of "Eurocentrism", which moreover is taken as having a "racist" basis. As proof, reference is often made to the following statement from 1784 and in particular to the part in brackets.

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<sup>282</sup> Incidentally, still in the 1790s Kant was making distinctions well-known from earlier years. He speaks of "civilized [...] states" (ZeF, 08.358); of a people "that holds out no prospect of a civil union with it"; of "savages", "American savages"; of "our superiority"; of "civilized inhabitants" (RL, 06.266); of "ignorance of [the] inhabitants", of "cultivation of crude peoples" (RL, 06.353). However, he now calls at the systematically appropriate place, namely in the *Doctrine of Right*, the behaviour of the Europeans as what it is: "injustice", "Jesuitism", "reprehensible" (RL 06.266).

<sup>283</sup> The fact that this discrimination is based on a biologically founded hierarchical classification of races does not mean that the racism itself is also biological. To speak even of a racist of "the worst biological sort", as *Dieter Schönecker* did so in the mentioned video conference (see fn. 274), is nothing but a thoughtless use of language.

<sup>284</sup> Also nowadays, we speak of "underdeveloped countries" or – more conciliatory, but meaning the same thing – of "developing countries". These designations *as such* do not contain any discrimination.

"For if one starts from *Greek* history – as that through which every other older or contemporaneous history has been kept or at least accredited – if one follows their influence on the formation or malformation down to the present time its influence on the education or miseducation of the state body of the *Roman* nation which swallowed up the Greek state, and the latter's influence on the *barbarians* who in turn destroyed the former, down to the present time, and also adds to this *episodically* the political history of other nations, or the knowledge about them that has gradually reached us through these same enlightened nations – then one will discover a regular course of improvement of the state constitution in our part of the world (which will probably someday give laws to all the others)."<sup>285</sup>

Firstly, it is here obviously only about European and other peoples; their race, white or otherwise, is not spoken about. Secondly, it is only about a particular historical development and a particular *present* result "in our part of the world".<sup>286</sup> Thirdly, the entire essay deals with "the history of the human species in the large as the completion of a hidden plan of nature to bring about a [...] perfect state constitution".<sup>287</sup> Since Europe was closer to this goal for Kant in 1784 than the rest of the world, he assumed it was likely that the global spread of the "improvement of the state constitution" would also come from Europe. "Giving laws" does not at all mean an imposition by world-ruling Europeans, which *legally* was not even possible for Kant. Nor is there any mention of a European mission. One should rather think of something like 'furnishing the rest of the world with the laws necessary for a state formation'. The idea of a good state constitution, which was developed and gradually realized in Europe over a period of more than two thousand years, would then also be adopted outside Europe as a guideline, norm or 'law' for one's own political actions, just like the USA with the Bill of Rights and France with its 'revolutionary' declaration of the rights of man and of the citizen became a model for the rest of the world. The demand for compliance with human rights, the rule of law or democratic principles, which is often raised nowadays, can certainly be understood as an attempt to spread ideas worldwide that arose and developed in the Occident. There is in this just as little racism or Eurocentrism as a reason for feeling superior. The Europeans were lucky (Renaissance, Reformation and gradual weakening of the influence of the Churches, natural sciences, Enlightenment, French Revolution); and unfortunately for half a millennium they also prevented a large part of the world from developing in this way, or at least severely hindered it. So when Kant attests to certain peoples, and with them sometimes to the white race, in terms of philosophy of history and cosmopolitanism something like superiority of progress, then this is an empirical assertion that can be right or wrong, but by no means does it imply any moral upgrading resp. a corresponding degrading. The decision about right and wrong as well as good and evil cannot be made in philosophy of history, but only in moral philosophy. So whatever "superiority" any individual or population may have, it does not confer any rights, let alone, the right to rule over other individuals or populations.

But which (kinds of) statements by Kant are indeed used in the debate for accusing him of racism? Before attempting an answer, an excursus should be inserted to show how hermeneutically careful and methodically precise one has to be when interpreting Kant's texts, even with regard to the use of individual words.

### Third excursus: "dumm" and "stupide"

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<sup>285</sup> IaG 08.29.

<sup>286</sup> See for that Kant's "glances at history" in GSE 02.255f.

<sup>287</sup> IaG, 08.27 (without Kant's italics).

I would like to draw attention to the expression "dumm" ("dumb"; "silly") which has time and again caught the eyes of inquisitors; especially with the statement published by Kant himself: "this scoundrel ["Kerl"<sup>288</sup>] was completely black from head to foot, a distinct proof that what he said was stupid ["dumm"]<sup>289</sup>, whereby, what has to be observed, that "stupid" does not refer to the "Kerl", but to what he said. What more does one need, it seems, to recognize a racist in Kant? But perhaps in relation to the offensive term it might be useful to look at its use and the history thereof and at the origin of the word

The origin of the German terms "dumm" and "doof", as they are currently understood (as e.g. "dumb" and "silly"), lies in the speechlessness resp. deafness of people. The first expression, derived from the Middle High German "tump", originally referred to a person's muteness ("*Stummheit*"), the second, derived from the Low German "doof", to a person's deafness ("*Taubheit*").<sup>290</sup>

The experience, common in the past, was that people, who were born deaf and therefore then also unable to speak, i.e. so-called deaf-mute people, appeared as "thick" ("*be-griffsstutzig*", "stupid"<sup>291</sup>).<sup>292</sup> And so the expression for dumbness and deafness got the, be it additional, be it different, meaning of "dumm"<sup>293</sup> ("dumb") resp. "doof"<sup>294</sup> ("goofy") in the current understanding. The phenomena by which this use of the expressions is supported are thus not necessarily based on a *genetically caused* deficiency. Rather, it can also be a matter of a lack of opportunities for mental development, as was undoubtedly the case with most deaf-mutes of earlier times.

Precisely the latter is likely to be the case with Kant's use of the expressions "dumm" and "stupid".<sup>295</sup> When he uses them in reference to particular races or peoples, he is most likely referring to people (individuals or even populations) who either did not have or did not have enough of those opportunities in their lives or were not driven to use them.<sup>296</sup> In statements from three lecture transcripts, partly already quoted, Kant makes a few remarks:

"When a man comes to earth as a new citizen of the world, he still does not know how to support himself through skills and tools. In our regions one cannot live otherwise than by agriculture, to which great skill

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<sup>288</sup> "Kerl" means here something like "fellow", "bloke", "chap" and definitely not "scoundrel".. To translate Kant's expression in this way, gives the text already a whiff of "racism".

<sup>289</sup> GSE, 02.255. A nice counterpart to this statement is this: "With Congo the possessions of the Portuguese begin, but in the country itself there are Negro princes who are quite civilized, so that even some of them go to Portugal and study, and probably become doctors and advocates." (V-PG Dönhoff, 26/2.1083 [m/tr])

<sup>290</sup> Still today "taub" means in Dutch "doof"; in Danish: "døv"; in English: "deaf".

<sup>291</sup> From Latin "stupere" = in English: to stun; to be baffled; in German: "stutzen", "verblüfft sein"; therefore also: "stupend" ("astounding").

<sup>292</sup> "people born deaf, who for this very reason must remain mute (without speech), can never arrive at anything more than an *analogue* of reason." (Anth, 07.155).

<sup>293</sup> Still today the Dutch word "stom" and the English word "dumb" mean as well "stumm" ("speechless") as "dumm" ("stupid").

<sup>294</sup> In German a person who is considered to be stupid is sometimes called not only "dumme Nuss" ("dumb-nut"), but also "taube Nuss" ("deaf nut"); in Cologne dialect "doof nuss" ("goofy nut").

<sup>295</sup> "Ignorance often looks like stupidity." (V-Anth/Pillau, 25.775 [m/tr]).

<sup>296</sup> "The character of the inhabitants of Upper Germany, which is Catholic, is very different from the character of the inhabitants of Lower Germany. Those are namely, caused by their religion, stupid and ignorant compared to these." (V-PG/Hesse, 26/2.287 [m/tr]) "Italy has more academies than all of Europe put together, and yet the greatest ignorance prevails there because the religion prevents them from using higher reason." (V-PG/Hesse, 26/2,281 [m/tr]).

and invention belonged."<sup>297</sup> "The human being is [...] lazy by nature; he does nothing other than that to which nature and necessity drives him. [...] The human being develops his talents solely in the civil state."<sup>298</sup> "If human beings had remained under the care of nature, if it had offered them everything voluntarily, then all of them would have remained in a state of stupidity, and would at least only somewhat refined their animal enjoyments."<sup>299</sup>

To this corresponds Kant's explanation of his assertion that "among the Negroes there are some very witty, some quite stupid and dumb people [...] depending whether they are born and educated either in the mountains or in the lower regions."<sup>300</sup> In another postscript of the same lecture of 1772/73 it says similarly: "that the Negroes, who are very frequently bought and brought to American plantations, are dumb or witty, lazy or lively, *depending on whether they have grown up either in swampy regions or on hills*."<sup>301</sup>

In view of Kant's concept of race, claiming "stupidity" ("Dummheit") as a characteristic of a *race* is in principle out of the question. And to know that stupidity is not necessarily hereditary, let alone, proportionately, it was enough for him to take a look at himself and his daily environment. But then, this characteristic also did not come into consideration as something necessarily belonging to particular *peoples*. So the only possibility left for labelling an entire population as "stupid" is that, for whatever reason, their natural abilities have not developed.

In his 'race theory', physical geography and anthropology Kant speaks about people in the same, purely descriptive way as he speaks about animals and, for example in the chapter "Countries in geographical order"<sup>302</sup>, about everything that is interesting to report about the various countries. Also expressions such as diligent, lazy, sensible, clever, stupid, friendly, dangerous etc. are to be understood as purely descriptive. Kant notes many differences, but he does not discriminate.<sup>303</sup> There is no population that he ethically or legally evaluates at all, let alone, belittles.<sup>304</sup> Even if one would consider people of all skin colours

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<sup>297</sup> V-PG/Hesse, 26/2.118 (m/tr)..

<sup>298</sup> V-Anth/Fried, 25.690

<sup>299</sup> V-Anth/Pillau, 25.843f.

<sup>300</sup> V-Anth/Parow, 25.450f (m/tr); Refl 1349, 15.589 (m/tr) (1772-75): "Perhaps the vast forests of Germany have from time immemorial made the Germans dull ["stumpf"] and phlegmatic. England would only have to be overgrown by more forests and [so] the Apennines, then both nations would already become duller ["stumpfer"]." "Stumpf" is used here to mean "mentally retarded", "ignorant"; compare the term "Stümper" ("bungler"), which is still used today.

<sup>301</sup> V-Anth/Collins, 25.233 (m/it; m/tr); see also from the same period: Refl 1349, 15.589 (fn. 300) and 20 years later: V-PG/Dohna, 58. Also contradictory judgements, if really Kant's at all, are not surprising: "the negroes are quick and eager to learn and can be cultivated" (V-PG/Dönhoff, 26/2.901 [m/tr]); "So e.g. the Negroes are very stupid in general". Kant adds: "The ones in the far north seem to be rather the same as the Negroes with regard to stupidity, e.g., the Samoyeds." (V-PG/Hesse, 26/2.116 [m/tr]) "The Negroes from Senegal are the wittiest people [...] All Negroes [...] are very stupid, but they know rather well how to hide it." (V-PG/Hesse, 26/2.290 [m/tr] [1770]). The fact that they know how to hide it, though, rather proves that they are by no means that stupid. Presumably, Kant also here has the lack of intellectual development in mind. "The expression, the human being has no reason; sometimes means, he has no rational capacity, but most of the time, he has no power over reason." (V-Anth/Pillau, 25.780 [m/tr])

<sup>302</sup> PG, 07.377ff.

<sup>303</sup> See above p. 39f.

<sup>304</sup> When Kleingeld writes: "There is a genuine contradiction between, on the one hand, Kant's stated universalist moral principles, which are formulated as applying equally to all humans (and even to all rational beings), and, on the other hand, his specific views on racial hierarchy and the various alleged deficiencies on the part of non-whites." (*Pauline Kleingeld*, *Second Thoughts* [fn. 8] 584), then she fails to recognize, that the falsity of an empirical thesis does not interfere with a normative thesis which is not at all based on it. – Bernasconi once complains, that there is "no reason to believe that the attribution of cosmopolitan right [...] implies equality of capacities between the races." (*Robert Bernasconi*, *Third Thoughts* [fn. 9] 304) Apparently he doesn't understand either

except the "white" to be stupid or lazy, one would have, according to Kant, the unconditional duty to respect the right and dignity of humanity in the person of *all* people of *every* race.

## VI. The reproach of racism in the light of concrete statements of Kant

The human populations, about which Kant made remarks of the most varied kinds, could be human beings of the same race;<sup>305</sup> more often they were peoples,<sup>306</sup> mostly arranged according to continents<sup>307</sup> and countries. A strict distinction must be made and it must be observed whether it is about statements that can be found in the transcripts of a Kant lecture which were written by others, or about mere notes that Kant made for his way of thinking; or about statements published by Kant himself. Most of the statements that seem to indicate the reproach of 'racism' can be found in the first field. At best, they can be ascribed to Kant, and can therefore always only be taken as confirmation of a view of Kant that is already known as such, but not as proof of it. In principle, this also applies to the relevant notes found in Kant's estate, the number of which is admittedly not very large anyway.

In the following, therefore, we will mainly deal with text passages<sup>308</sup> published by Kant himself, which come into consideration for the accusation of 'racism' culminating in a 'racist' 'hierarchy', or which at any rate are used for this in the literature, and with such passages, which demonstrate the absurdity of the accusation. In addition, there are statements that shed light on the rather relaxed attitude that Kant adopts in relation to the concrete anthropological 'data situation' that is available to him and used by him.

Since Kant pursues anthropology as a pragmatic approach with the aim of imparting knowledge of the world that is useful for life, and since he understands physical geography as a necessary preliminary exercise, he deals with such peculiarities that, due to the lack of a necessary heritability and unfailingly half-breed propagation, are not racial characteristics, but on the contrary are subject to possible change through physical and/or moral occasional causes, in *both* disciplines. Correspondingly, he also speaks in both disciplines mostly of peoples (nations) and frequently, where he seems to speak of races, he actually means peoples. Since it is often not immediately obvious whether a statement refers to a race or not, the field of Kant's explanations on anthropological phenomena presented here must be somewhat broader than just 'race-related'. Kant's countless detailed remarks about the Span-

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that the natural differences between people are absolutely irrelevant for the legal (and of course also for the ethical) status of *all* people. Moreover, the talk of "equality of capacities" is completely incomprehensible.

<sup>305</sup> So e.g. in Refl 1520, 15.875ff.

<sup>306</sup> It also happens that Kant uses both expressions synonymously. So he says e.g. of the English, that they arose from the mingling of two races, "the old Britons and Saxons"; the Germans are "mostly blends of Romans, Tatars, etc.". (V-PG/Hesse, 26/2.107f [m/tr])

<sup>307</sup> With the result that then e.g. the "white" Persians, the "yellow" Indians and the "Mongolian" Chinese come together. See V-PG/Holstein, 26/1.197ff (m/tr).

<sup>308</sup> The *Physical Geography* was published, it is true, during Kant's lifetime (1802) and was therefore included among Kant's published writings (Vol. IX of the Akademie Edition). But these are pieces of text edited by Friedrich Theodor Rink and mostly compiled by him from lectures that Kant held in 1757/59 resp. around 1775. For this reason alone, they cannot be taken at face value, if at all as views of the later Kant, and not as those of a lecture copyist, or a copyist of a copy, or of the editor. More about this in: *Werner Stark*, "Notbehelf oder Edition? Die Ausgabe von Kants Vorlesung über physische Geographie durch Friedrich Theodor Rink (1802)", in: Jörn Bohr (Ed.), *Kolleghefte, Kollegnachschriften und Protokolle. Probleme und Aufgaben der philosophischen Edition*, Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2019, 22.

iards, Italians, French, English, Germans, Poles, Russians, Turks, Chinese etc. will however be ignored.

The material is arranged chronologically to provide insight into development and continuity. It will be easy to see that Kant distributes his 'negative' as well as his 'positive' statements widely across all races resp. peoples. Some text passages were deliberately reproduced in all their detail, because the 'atmospheric' in them, as it were, like setting the tone, is or can be, of importance for the topic of this contribution. One example may suffice: "The *mission* land in which the *Jesuits* have the *government* where they *let* the savages *cultivate* it giving them, it's true, *provisions*, but *not anything of their harvest*, and altogether treating them as *children*",<sup>309</sup> no detail here is accidental.

The earliest publication by Kant coming into consideration here is his *Draft and Announcement of a Collegii of Physical Geography* from 1757. In the introduction Kant indicates the character of his lecture, which was accessible to everybody:

"All this, however, not with that completeness and philosophical precision in the parts, which is the business of physics and history of nature, but with the reasonable curiosity of a traveller who everywhere looks for the remarkable, the strange and the beautiful, compares his collected observations and thinks over his plan."<sup>310</sup>

In the small book *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* from 1764, the fourth and final section is about peoples, not races. He deals "with the national characters" under the added restriction: "insofar as they rest upon the different feeling of the sublime and the beautiful." To "national characters" Kant makes a footnote, which is just as decisive as it is little noticed in the literature:

"My intention is not at all to portray the characters of the peoples in detail; rather I will only outline some features that express the feeling of the sublime and the beautiful in them. One can readily guess that only a tolerable level of accuracy<sup>311</sup> can be demanded in such a depiction, that its prototypes stand out in the large crowds of those who make claim to a finer feeling, and that no nation is lacking in casts of mind which unite the foremost predominant qualities of this kind. For this reason the criticism that might occasionally be cast on a people can offend no one, as it is like a ball that one can always hit to his neighbor. I will not investigate here whether these national differences are contingent and depend upon the times and the type of government, or whether they are connected with a certain necessity with the climate."<sup>312</sup>

When it says a little later in the text:

"The characters of mind of the peoples are most evident in that in them which is moral [GG. i.e. regarding them as free beings]; for this reason we will next consider their different feeling in regard to the sublime and the beautiful from this point of view.",

then Kant again adds a footnote that clarifies how he wants his 'judgements' to be understood:

"It is hardly necessary for me to repeat my previous apology here. In each people the finest portion contains praiseworthy characters of all sorts, and whoever is affected by one or another criticism will, if he is fine enough, understand it to his advantage, which lies in leaving everyone else to his fate but making an exception of himself."<sup>313</sup>

<sup>309</sup> V-PG/Kaehler, 26/2.610 (m/it).

<sup>310</sup> EACG, 02.03 (m/tr).

<sup>311</sup> Still a decade later, Kant admits that it "is indeed to dare a lot to want to determine the characters of entire peoples." (V-Anth/Fried, 25.654).

<sup>312</sup> GSE, 02.243.

<sup>313</sup> GSE, 02.245. Schönecker, who, as can be gathered from his contribution, had familiarized himself only shortly before the above (fn. 274) mentioned BBAW-conference with Kant's texts, judges: "Kant is a racist, and

Relevant to the subject of this article is Kant's "quick look"<sup>314</sup> at Africa and North America:

The *Negroes* of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises above the foolish. Mr. *Hume*<sup>315</sup> challenges anyone to adduce a single example where a Negro has demonstrated talents, and asserts that among the hundreds of thousands of blacks who have been transported elsewhere from their countries, although very many of them have been set free, nevertheless not a single one has ever been found who has accomplished something great in art or science or in any other praiseworthy quality, 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. The religion of fetishes which is widespread among them is perhaps a sort of idolatry,<sup>316</sup> which sinks so deeply into the ridiculous as ever seems to be possible for human nature. [...]

Among all the *savages* there is no people which demonstrates such a sublime character of mind as that of *North America*. They have a strong feeling for honour [...] The Canadian savage is moreover truthful and honest. The friendship he establishes is just as adventurous and enthusiastic as anything reported from the oldest and most fabulous times. He is extremely proud, sensitive to the complete worth of freedom, and even in education tolerates no encounter that would make him feel a lowly subjugation. *Lycurgus* probably gave laws to such [sic] savages [as were Kant's contemporaries in Canada], and if a law-giver were to arise among the six nations, one would see a Spartan republic arise in the new world; just as the undertaking of the Argonauts is little different from the military expeditions of these Indians, and *Jason* has nothing over *Attakullakulla* except the honor of a Greek name.<sup>317</sup> All of these savages have little feeling for the beautiful in the moral sense [...] The other<sup>318</sup> natives of this part of the world show few traces of a character of mind which would be disposed to finer sentiments, and an exceptional lack of feeling constitutes the mark of these kinds of human beings.

[...] In the lands of the *blacks* can one expect anything better than what is generally found there, namely the female sex in the deepest slavery? A pusillanimous person is always a strict master over the weaker, just as with us that man is always a tyrant in the kitchen who outside of his house hardly dares to walk up to anyone. Indeed, Father Labat reports that a Negro carpenter, whom he reproached for haughty treatment of his wives, replied: *You whites are real fools, for first you concede so much to your wives, and then you complain when they drive you crazy*. There might be something here worth considering, except for the fact that this scoundrel was completely black from head to foot, a distinct proof that what he said was stupid. Among all the savages there are none among whom the female sex stands in greater real regard than those of *Canada*. In this perhaps they even surpass our civilized part of the world."<sup>319</sup>

"finally we cast a few glances at history [...] The ancient times of the Greeks and Romans [...] Gradually even this remnant of the finer taste was extinguished with the complete *decay of the state*. [...] The highest flight that human genius took in order to ascend to the sublime consisted in adventures. One saw spiritual and worldly adventurers and often a repulsive and monstrous sort of bastard of both. *Monks with the mis-sal* in one hand and the *battle flag* in the other, followed by whole armies of *deceived victims* in order to let their bones be buried under other regions of the sky and in a more sacred ground, consecrated warriors,

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not only that, but his group-related misanthropy [...] also extended to varieties, peoples and cultures." (*Dieter Schönecker*, *Wie ich lernte, dass Kant Rassist war* [fn. 255]).

<sup>314</sup> GSE, 02.252.

<sup>315</sup> Cf. Hume's essay "On National Characters", in: *David Hume*, *The Philosophical Works in 4 Volumes*, vol. 3, London 1882, Reprint Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1964, 252.

<sup>316</sup> Compare what Kant wrote 30 years later about "counterfeit service" and "fetish service" in Christianity as well. (See RGV, 06. 167ff resp. 173 and 179f) One tends to dismiss many concrete judgements that we find in Kant about foreign peoples as absurd. However, one should be aware that the development of ethnology, which was still in its infancy at the time, is characterized by permanent corrections of methodical errors.

<sup>317</sup> With this historical comparison, Kant makes it clear that he sees 'savagery' as a certain state in the development of humanity, which some people overcome earlier and others later. Everything that Kant occasionally praises in relation to the level of development of the 'Europeans' is to be understood under this very perspective, which, however, leads some authors astray to accuse Kant of "racism", or at least of "Eurocentrism".

<sup>318</sup> This shows that Kant is actually talking about peoples ("Völkerschaften") and not about races, in the case of America not about the copper-coloured race.

<sup>319</sup> GSE, 02.253-255.

sanctified by solemn oaths to violence and misdeeds, subsequently a strange sort of heroic fantasists, who called themselves knights and sought out adventures, tournaments, duels, and romantic actions. [...] *Finally*, after the human genius had happily lifted itself out of an almost complete destruction by a kind of *pal-ingenesis*, we see in our own times the proper taste for the beautiful and noble *blossom* in the arts and sciences as well as with regard to the moral [...].<sup>320</sup>

In his first essay on races, Kant speaks of the "coldness and insensitivity of the natural disposition [...] all remnants of the effect of a long residence in cold parts of the world" related to the "Americans" "from the extreme north of this part of the world on over to Staten Island".<sup>321</sup> "the natural disposition of the Americans ["as an incompletely adapted race"] [...] which betrays a half extinguished life power<sup>322</sup> that can be viewed most easily<sup>323</sup> as the effect of a cold region of the world."<sup>324</sup>

Referring to this effect, Kant continues:

"In a people which has grown sufficiently old in the greatest *humid heat* of the warm climate to have adapted completely to its soil, there must be effects entirely opposed to the previously discussed ones. The exact opposite of the Kalmuckian formation will be produced. [...] The skin had to be oiled, not merely to mitigate the too strong evaporation but to prevent the harmful absorption of the putrefactive humid elements of the air. The abundance of iron particles, which otherwise are found in all human blood and which here are precipitated in the reticular substance through the evaporation of the phosphorous acid (of which all Negroes stink), causes the black color showing through the upper thin skin; and the heavy iron content in the blood appears also to be necessary for preventing the enervation of all parts.<sup>325</sup> [...] in short, this results in the Negro, who is well suited to his climate, namely strong, fleshy, supple, but who, given the abundant provision of his mother land,<sup>326</sup> is lazy, soft<sup>327</sup> and trifling."<sup>328</sup>

In the context of his *Review of J. G. Herder's Ideas for the Philosophy of the History of Humanity* from 1785, Kant makes a critical remark that is also to be understood as self-referential and anticipates his later talk of the "play with hypotheses"<sup>329</sup>.

<sup>320</sup> GSE, 02.255f (m/it).

<sup>321</sup> VvRM, 02.433.

<sup>322</sup> To this, Kant makes the following footnote: "To adduce only one example: one makes use of the red slaves (Americans) in Surinam only for labors in the house because they are too weak for field labor, for which one uses Negroes. Yet there is no dirt of forcible means in this case; however, the natives of this part of the world are lacking in general in faculty and endurance." Although Kant gives here only an example of his assertion of an extinguished life power, Kleingeld comments: "It is hard to avoid the impression here that Kant implicitly accepts slavery." (*Pauline Kleingeld*, *Second Thoughts* [fn. 8] 576)

<sup>323</sup> Kant says: "am natürlichsten" ("most naturally" = "in the most natural [sic] way").

<sup>324</sup> VvRM, 02.437f (m/it).

<sup>325</sup> Note: establishment of empirical facts and attempt at a causal explanation. See for that also: BBM, 08.93.21-31; 08.103.06-27.

<sup>326</sup> On various occasions, Kant explains particular peculiarities, which he finds in members of a certain race, with specific environmental conditions. This could easily lead to the assumption that these peculiarities are also race-specific characteristics like skin colour. However, since they are not necessarily inheritable, let alone, necessarily resulting in half-breeds, they may perhaps be typical of a population, but they are not characteristic of a race. It would therefore be quite possible that in the case of the withdrawal of the "abundant provision" of the "mother land" the affected 'Negroes' themselves or at least their descendants would by no means be "lazy, soft and trifling" anymore.

<sup>327</sup> Kant's description refers solely to physiologically caused facts. How Mensch with regard to that can speak of "weakness of character" and "moral characteristic" is incomprehensible. (*Jennifer Mensch*, *From Crooked Wood to Moral Agency* [fn. 8] 194). It is just as incomprehensible how Larrimore can speak of "moral [sic] *Keime* and *Anlagen*" and of Kant's "claim that the stifling of the *Keime* that generated the races fatally handicapped the prospects for autonomy of all but the Whites", when it is exclusively about physiology. (*Mark Larrimore*, *Race, Freedom* [fn. 91], 106)

<sup>328</sup> VvRM, 02.438.

<sup>329</sup> See BBM, 08.104.

But there is one thing that the reviewer would have wished, as much as to our author and to *everyone* else who undertakes as a philosopher a universal natural history of the human being: namely that a historical-critical mind had done all the preliminaries for them, picking out from the *immeasurable* multiplicity of ethnographic descriptions or travel narratives and all their *conjectural* records belonging to human nature, especially those in which they contradict one another, placing them next to one another (yet also with added reminders on the *credibility* of each narrator); for then no one would so rashly base himself on one-sided accounts, without first having weighed them precisely against the records of others. But now from a multiplicity of descriptions of countries one can prove, *if one wants to*, [...] that Americans and Negroes are each a race, sunk beneath the remaining members of the human species in their mental predispositions, but on the other side by just as *apparent* records that as regards their natural predispositions, they are to be estimated equal to every other inhabitant of the world; so it remains to the *choice of the philosopher* whether he wants to assume differences of nature or wants to judge everything in accordance with the principle *tout comme chez nous*, so that all his systems he erected on so *shaky* a foundation must take on the *look of rickety hypotheses*.<sup>330</sup>

Kant makes yet another remark in this review, which is quoted here because it is one of the passages frequently referred to as evidence of Kant's alleged disparagement of certain races.<sup>331</sup>

Does the author really mean that if the happy inhabitants of Tahiti, never visited by more civilized nations, had been destined to live for thousands of centuries in their tranquil indolence, one could give a satisfying answer to the question why they exist at all, and whether it would not have been just as good to have this island populated with happy sheep and cattle as with human beings who are happy merely enjoying themselves?<sup>332</sup>

In his second essay on 'race theory', in which Kant determines the concept of a human race, there are, as expected, no specific judgements about people of the same race. But he gives an explanation of a peculiarity specific to the Negro race with reference to the purposiveness of an organization:

"For one knows now that the human blood becomes black (as can be seen at the underside of a blood cake) merely by being overloaded with phlogiston. Now already the strong odor of the Negroes, *which cannot be helped through any cleanliness*,<sup>333</sup> gives cause for conjecturing that their skin removes much phlogiston from the blood and *that nature must have organized this skin*<sup>334</sup> so that the blood could dephlogistize itself in them through the skin in a far greater measure than happens in us, where that is for the most part the task of the lungs. Yet the true Negroes live in regions in which the air is so phlogistized through thick forests and swamp-covered regions, that it is, according to Lind's report, deadly peril for the English sailors to navigate up the Gambia River even for one day in order to buy meat there. Thus it was *an arrangement very wisely made by Nature* to organize their skin such that the blood, since it does not by far sufficiently remove enough phlogiston through the lungs, could dephlogistize itself much more strongly through the skin than is the case with us. It thus had to transport a lot of phlogiston into the ends of the arteries, thereby becoming overloaded with it in this location, that is, under the skin itself, and so shine through black, although it is still red in the interior of the body.<sup>335</sup> Moreover, the different organization of Negro skin from ours is already noticeable through touch."<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>330</sup> RezHerder, 08.61f (m/it).

<sup>331</sup> For example, Serequeberhan declares, Kant "himself thinks that the Tahitians in particular, are 'nothing', i.e. mere sheep". (*Tsenay Serequeberhan*, "Eurocentrism in Philosophy: The Case of Immanuel Kant", in: *The Philosophical Forum*, 27 [1996] 343) For Kant, on the other hand, they are just not sheep; rather they are and remain humans, and what he criticizes about them as human beings is that they behave as if they were sheep.

<sup>332</sup> RezHerder, 08.65. In a reflection from 1775-77 one reads: "Man has such a drive to perfect himself, that he even considers a people, that has completed its development and merely enjoys it, to be superfluous and believes that the world would lose nothing, even though Tahiti would perish." (Refl 1500, 15.785; cf. also IaG, 08.21.18-26)

<sup>333</sup> Likewise V-PG/Dönhoff, 26/2.891.36-37.

<sup>334</sup> Likewise V-PG/Bergk, 26/2.1108.

<sup>335</sup> Kant's attempt at a scientific explanation of something he had read about in travelogues that he could not verify becomes in Kleingeld: "the paper is clearly written from a 'white' perspective and for a 'white' audience (as

With this – as the later Kant already knew – wrong explanation of an – as I have known since long from my own experience – erroneously asserted empirical fact, the remark in the first essay about the supposed 'stink' (the "strong odor") of all 'Negroes' once and for all loses its alleged offensiveness.

The 'race theory' as such is of crucial importance for Kant because it proves to him the unity of the species. So he also reports extensively on the necessary hereditary differences between people of the one species. The fact that the focus is on the black race has purely pragmatic reasons for him. He thinks, that "with respect to the peculiarity of a race, [the] purposive character can be demonstrated nowhere so clearly as in the *Negro race*; yet the example taken from the latter alone also entitles us at least to conjecture the same of the remaining ones, according to the analogy."<sup>337</sup> What exactly he conjectures, Kant then describes in detail, in order to finally conclude his reflections with the remarkable and, in the present context, extremely important words, already known to the reader: "Still there is little comfort for philosophy in artificially constructing hypotheses."<sup>338</sup>

In Kant's essay *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* published a year later, there are two passages that rule out a morally evaluating (discriminatory) hierarchical classification of populations (e.g. on the basis of mental ability):

"And thus the [sic] human being had entered into an *equality with all rational beings*, of whatever rank they might be (Genesis 3: 22); namely, in regard to the claim of *being himself an end*, of also being esteemed as such by everyone else, and of being used by no one merely as a means to other ends. In this, and not [sic] in reason<sup>339</sup> considered merely as an instrument for the satisfaction of various inclinations, there lies the ground of that so unlimited equality of the human being even with higher beings, however superior beyond all comparison they might be to him in natural gifts, none of whom has therefore a right to deal and dispose with him merely at their discretion."<sup>340</sup>

"[An example of the] conflict between the striving of humanity toward its moral vocation, on the one side, and the unalterable following of the laws placed in its nature for the crude and animal condition, on the other side [...] might be the *inequality* among human beings, and indeed not that of natural gifts or goods of fortune but of their universal *human right* – an inequality about which *Rousseau* complains with much truth, but which is not to be separated from culture so long as it proceeds, as it were, planlessly (which is likewise unavoidable for a long time), and to which nature had certainly not destined the human being, since it gave him freedom and reason to restrict this freedom through nothing but reason's own universal, more precisely external lawfulness, which is called *civil right*."<sup>341</sup>

There is a longer relevant statement in Kant's 1788 essay, which ends with the remark already mentioned<sup>342</sup> about the state of the Fuegians:

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indicated by Kant's use of the words 'we' and 'us', and features such as his readiness [sic] to assume that blacks necessarily smell bad)". (*Pauline Kleingeld*, *Second Thoughts* [fn. 8] 578).

<sup>336</sup> BBM, 08.103 (m/it; without Kant's italics).

<sup>337</sup> BBM, 08.103.

<sup>338</sup> BBM, 08.104; see above p. 18.

<sup>339</sup> It is worth remembering once more the aforementioned remark made by Kant in his *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* in 1764, in which he speaks of his contempt for the rabble and explains that Rousseau brought him around, and then refers all that to the establishment of the rights of humanity. (BGSE, 20.44) In short: The empirically ascertainable differences between individuals or populations, their respective stages of cultivation and civilization, are irrelevant for the equality of human beings with regard to their rights and dignity.

<sup>340</sup> MAM, 08.114.

<sup>341</sup> MAM, 08.116-118.

<sup>342</sup> See above p. 34.

"Yet precisely that which Hr. F.<sup>343</sup> takes to be an insurmountable difficulty for my principle throws the most advantageous light on it, when applied in a certain way, and solves difficulties that no other theory is able to do anything about. I assume that so many generations were required from the time of the beginning of the human species through the gradual development of the predispositions which are found in it for the purpose of complete adaptation to a climate that during this time span the expansion of the human species over the most considerable part of the earth could have taken place, under meager multiplication of the species – an expansion that for the most part was brought about forcefully through violent revolutions of nature. If through these causes a small people of the old world<sup>344</sup> had been driven from southern regions to the northern ones, then the adaptation, which may not yet have been completed with respect to the previous region, must have gradually come to a standstill, while making room for an opposite development of the predispositions, namely for the northern climate. Now let us suppose that this sort of human beings had moved in a north-eastern direction all the way to America – a view which currently has the greatest probability<sup>345</sup> –, then its natural predispositions would have developed as far as is possible even before it could have expanded again to any considerable degree to the south in this new part of the world, and this development, which was now completed, would have made impossible all further adaptation to a new climate. Thus a race would have been founded which remains always the same for all climates in its advance toward the south, and which therefore is not suited to any climate, since the southern adaptation prior to its departure was interrupted halfway through and exchanged against an adaptation to the northern climate, thereby establishing the persistent state of this cohort of human beings. And indeed *Don Ulloa* (an extremely important witness, who knew the inhabitants of America in both hemispheres) asserts having found the characteristic shape of the inhabitants of this part of the world to be of a consistent similarity (one of the more recent seafarers, whose name I cannot give with certainty right now, describes their color as *iron rust* mixed with *oil*). That their natural disposition did not achieve a *perfect* suitability for any climate, can be seen from the circumstance that hardly another reason can be given for why this ["incompletely adapted"<sup>346</sup>] race, which is too weak for hard labor,<sup>347</sup> too indifferent for industry and incapable of any culture<sup>348</sup> – although there is enough of it as example and encouragement nearby – ranks [GG. inso-

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<sup>343</sup> Georg Forster.

<sup>344</sup> The Eurasian region is meant. For the following see already VvRM, 02.437f.

<sup>345</sup> and which has long since been proven.

<sup>346</sup> VvRM, 02.437.

<sup>347</sup> Cf. the reference to "a half extinguished life power" (VvRM, 02.438; also V-PG/Dönhoff, 26/2.886). "The old Indian inhabitants (Caribs, now only living on St. Vincent) can bear this work just as little as Europeans, only negroes are made for it." (V-PG/Dohna 241) "Already Columbus had reported on the unwillingness of the South American Indians to be integrated into work processes, while the Portuguese – as he decidedly remarked – apparently had an easier job in this respect with the people living there on the African west coast. It was therefore not even two decades after Columbus' first voyage until, in January 1510, the first ship with 50 black slaves sailed from West Africa, initially still with a detour via Spain, to Haiti in order to return home to Europe with goods produced there." (*Christian Geulen*, *Geschichte des Rassismus*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., München: C. H. Beck, 2021, 40f [m/tr]) Kant's statement thus even seems to have been correct.

<sup>348</sup> Bernasconi comments on this statement so: "[Kant is] clear that racial differences embraced not only physical characteristics but also *mental or moral* characteristics." (*Robert Bernasconi*, *Third Thoughts* [fn. 9] 299)

far] still far below even the Negro,<sup>349</sup> who stands on the lowest of all the other steps<sup>350</sup> that we have named as differences of the races."<sup>351</sup>

What Kant is presenting here is again an empirical, i.e. non-normative hypothesis for the causal explanation of (correct or incorrect) assumptions about the "Americans" that he was familiar with from travel literature<sup>352</sup>. Correspondingly, the concluding remark is not, as the opponents consistently claim, a sort of morally evaluative hierarchy, but a likewise purely empirically determined order of levels. It is important to note that this remark deals, although not immediately recognizable, with two very heterogeneous issues.

When Kant speaks here of "steps" and "differences of the races", he is referring to Forster's "colour scale". This scale arises from the distance to the equator; and the jet-black 'Negro', living on the equator at zero latitude, is at the "lowest" step of the latitude-aligned colour scale. And it is precisely these steps that Kant has in mind when he speaks here of "differences of the races".

If Kant, on the other hand, thinks of the American in Tierra del Fuego that he is "still far below even the Negro", who is said to be on the "lowest" step (zero), then that "far below" cannot possibly refer to this step and therefore to racial differences. Rather, it is now about the passage "too weak for hard labor, too indifferent for industry and incapable of any culture". The colour steps resp. the steps of latitude are now replaced by what might be called steps of cultivation<sup>353</sup>.

By forcing heterogeneous points of view into the same sentence, Kant makes it implicitly clear (by changing the position of the 'Negro' in the hierarchy) that what he says about Fuegians has nothing to do with the "differences of the races" mentioned in his argument with Forster.

This also applies to what he wrote two pages earlier about 'negroes' and gypsies:

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<sup>349</sup> A transcript of a lecture once says about the "race of the Negroes": "They acquire culture, but only a culture of slaves; that is, they allow themselves to be trained." (V-Anth/Mensch, 25.1187) Kleingeld easily turns Kant's "Knechte" ("servants") into "slaves". (*Pauline Kleingeld*, Kant's Second Thoughts [fn. 8] 576; likewise *Robert Bernasconi*, Third Thoughts [fn. 9] 301; *Robert Bernasconi*, Unfamiliar Source [fn. 9] 148; and then also the CE [transl. Robert B. Loudon] ) Just as easily, Kleingeld explains Kant's term "abrichten", translated by her as "to train", with: "a term used for the training of animals"; cf. however KrV A 134 / B 173; A 645 / B 673; Refl 6577, 19.92.06-07. With similar hermeneutic acrobatics, *Pauline Kleingeld* believes to be able to conclude in all seriousness from the sentence "These [the Mandingos] are primarily sought after as slaves, because they tolerate work in the greatest heat that no human can endure." (V-PG/Dönhoff, 26/2.1080) that Kant differentiates here between slaves and humans, to which she specifically drew the attention of her audience. The text indeed says "kein Mensch" ("no human"); but this means in such contexts just "nobody" and has to be taken purely metaphorically. See <https://www.bbaw.de/presse/pressemitteilungen/pressemitteilung-kant-ein-rassist-teil-2-kants-theorie-der-menschenrassen>.

<sup>350</sup> Not to be confused with the "sequence of steps" and "colour scale" in the sense of Forster, which Kant criticized a few pages earlier!

<sup>351</sup> ÜGTP, 08.175f.

<sup>352</sup> Here Kant relies in particular on the travelogues of Cook and Forster, to which he adheres very closely. At the same time, he shows, and this in the sense of what was said at the beginning of the long paragraph (ÜGTP, 08.175.01-04), that Forster's *own* description of the Fuegians, with which he does agree, is very well suited to defend the heuristic use of teleological principles in natural research.

<sup>353</sup> I deliberately do not speak of level of culture, because the state of the Fuegians is described as a state "without any culture". They are – as a population, not as a race – with their miserable state also at a level zero at which cultivation as a step towards culture would have to begin. What Kant once said in one of his last writings about "the lowest level of man's living nature" sounds as if it were related to the Fuegians: "prior to all culture, namely the merely animal instinct." (VNAEF, 08.413 [partly m/tr])

"Rather through the arranged suitability to the climate nature has hindered its exchange, especially that of the warm climate against the cold one. For it is exactly this poor match of the new region to the already adapted natural character of the inhabitants of the old region that all by itself keeps them away from the former. And where have Indians and Negroes attempted to expand into northern regions? – But those who were driven there have never been able to bring about in their progeny (such as the Creole *Negroes*, or the *Indians* under the name of the gypsies) a sort that would be fit for farmers or manual laborers."<sup>354</sup>

Kant makes the following remark on this, which, as might be expected, is again a question of purely empirical claims for which a causal explanation is given, namely, with reference to the respective adaptation of a natural disposition to a certain climate and consequently to the respective non-adaptation to another climate.

"The last remark is *not put forward here in order to prove something* but is nevertheless not insignificant. In Hr. *Sprengel's* Contributions [...] a knowledgeable man<sup>355</sup> [Tobin], adduces the following against Ramsay's wish to use all Negro slaves as *free* laborers: that among the many thousand freed Negroes which one encounters in America and England he knew no example of someone engaged in a business which one could properly call *labor*; rather that, when they are set free, they soon abandon an easy craft which previously as slaves they had been forced to carry out, and instead become hawkers, wretched innkeepers, lackeys, and people who go fishing and hunting,<sup>356</sup> in a word, tramps.<sup>357</sup> The same is to be found in the gypsies among us. The same author notes on this matter that it is not the northern climate that makes the Negroes disinclined for labor. For they would rather endure waiting behind the coaches of their masters or, during the worst winter nights, in the cold entrances of the theaters (in England) than to be threshing, digging, carrying loads, etc.<sup>358</sup> Should one not conclude from this that, in addition to the *faculty* to work, there is also an immediate drive to activity (especially to the sustained activity that one calls industry), which is independent of all enticement and which is especially interwoven with certain natural predispositions; and that Indians as well as Negroes do *not* bring *any more* of this impetus into other climates and pass it on to their offspring than was needed *for their preservation in their old motherland* and had been *received from nature*; and that this inner predisposition extinguishes just as little as the externally visible one."<sup>359</sup> The *far*

<sup>354</sup> ÜGTP, 08.173f. With a hermeneutic somersault, Kleingeld concludes: "What is important in the present context [...], is that Kant's comment about the 'Indians' ('Gypsies') and 'Negroes' makes clear that his assumption that the non-white races have inferior *mental* capacities (including capacities for agency) plays a crucial role." She had already introduced this consideration with the assertion: "Kant here re-attaches his 'moral characterization' of the races to his physical race theory." (*Pauline Kleingeld*, *Second Thoughts* [fn. 8] 581)

<sup>355</sup> On this, Kleingeld, for her part, remarks: "he *endorses* a pro-slavery text, citing with approval the criticism of a 'knowledgeable man'" (*Pauline Kleingeld*, *Kant and Forster* [fn. 8] 92 [m/it]; so already in "Kant's Second Thoughts" [fn. 8] 574). Kant speaks of a man who knows about slaves; and his text is not 'pro-slavery' nor does it contain criticism, but a (right or wrong) statement of facts. Kant probably thought it was correct because it seemed to confirm his *biological* theory that a race is adapted to a certain climate. *That was all that mattered to him in his contribution*. The reproach of Bernasconi: "there was still enough material included to enable Kant to argue again[st] Tobin's view of Africans and African slavery generally, had he been of a mind to do so." therefore, as it were, completely misses the subject. (*Robert Bernasconi*, "Unfamiliar Source" [fn. 9] 164; see also *Robert Bernasconi*, *Will the real Kant please stand up* [fn. 9] 15). Kant was definitely "of a mind" and decided, however, not for a slavery-friendly and against a slavery-critical description, but for an example of freed slaves and against an example of better treated slaves, since only the former was relevant at all to his biological theory. That that "knowledgeable" man used the established fact to make an argument in favour of maintaining slavery does not make Kant's use of the example an endorsement of the case.

<sup>356</sup> These, too, are kinds of labour!

<sup>357</sup> Also this sentence is taken by Kleingeld as proof of Kant's "endorsement of an anti-abolitionist text". (*Pauline Kleingeld*, "Kant's Second Thoughts" [fn. 8] 582). But merely stating that a freed person does not like doing certain jobs is, after all, not the same as saying that he should not be freed. Storey also shows the same understanding of logical reasoning: "[it] appears to justify slavery on the grounds that, absent white intervention, 'Indians as well as Negroes' are unable to muster sufficient 'impetus' to activity." (*Ian Storey*, *Empire and natural order* [fn. 8] 679)

<sup>358</sup> It is not at all about the pros and cons of the liberation of 'Negro slaves', but, without comment, only about the empirical thesis regarding the role of the "adapted natural character" in case of a change of climate zone.

<sup>359</sup> Placing the origin of the 'Gypsies' in India is not entirely unfounded. Characterizing them as vagabonds or nomads is also not entirely incorrect. However, it has always been and still is wrong to define people as unchangeable without taking into account the social conditions under which certain behavioural patterns have, often unavoidably, developed.

*lesser needs* in those countries and the *little effort* it takes to procure only them demand no greater predispositions to activity."<sup>360</sup>

In the essay *Towards Eternal<sup>361</sup> Peace* from 1795 and in the preparatory notes for it, Kant expresses himself, with a clarity and sharpness that speaks for itself, about the European nations and especially about their dealings with people of other races.

"Just as we now regard with profound contempt, as barbarous, crude, and brutishly degrading to humanity, the attachment of savages to their lawless freedom, by which they would rather struggle unceasingly than subject themselves to a lawful coercion to be instituted by themselves, thus preferring a mad freedom to a rational freedom, so, one would think, civilized peoples (each united into a state) must hasten to leave such a depraved condition, the sooner the better; but instead each *state* puts its majesty [...] just in its not being subject to any external lawful coercion at all, and the splendor of its chief consists in his being able, without even having to put himself in danger, to command many thousands to sacrifice themselves for a matter that is of no concern to them; and the *difference between the European and the American<sup>362</sup> savages* consists mainly in this: that whereas many tribes of the latter have been eaten up by their enemies, the former know how to make better use of those they have defeated than to make a meal of them, and would rather increase the number of their subjects, and so too the multitude of their instruments for even more extensive wars, by means of them."<sup>363</sup>

"The inhospitableness [of the inhabitants] of sea coasts (for example, the Barbary Coast) in robbing ships in adjacent seas or enslaving stranded seafarers, or that [of the inhabitants] of deserts (the Arabian Bedouins) in regarding approach to nomadic tribes as a right to *plunder* them, is therefore *contrary to natural right*; but this right to hospitality – that is, the authorization of a foreign newcomer – does not extend beyond the conditions which make it possible to *seek commerce* with the old inhabitants."<sup>364</sup> – In this way dis-

<sup>360</sup> ÜGTP, 08.174 (m/it apart from "free", "labor" and "faculty"). Kleingeld summarizes this passage as follows: "he claimed that people from Africa and India lack [sic] a 'drive to activity', and hence [sic] lack the mental [sic] capacities to be self-motivated". (*Pauline Kleingeld, Kant's Second Thoughts* [fn. 8] 573) Schönecker also abuses Kant's text: "The so-called 'Creole Negroes', for example, expelled from their native country, would lack [sic] a 'drive to activity' on the new soil (as former slaves), the pronounced development of which from one of those original predispositions in their native country was not necessary, but then made itself felt as a deficiency on the new soil." (*Dieter Schönecker, Wie ich lernte, dass Kant Rassist war* [fn. 255] [m/tr]) I cannot see yet on the basis of which criterion he can speak of "explicit racism" in this regard. Rather, it seems to me that Kant here has much more understanding, yes even empathy, for the uprooted blacks than their alleged defenders, who apparently think that former slaves should be happy after all, to be able to now do a job as freedmen, "which previously as slaves they had been forced to carry out". Cf. also Anth, 07.276.13-18.

<sup>361</sup> That I say *with Kant* "eternal peace" ("ewiger Frieden") and not, as for instance the CE (transl. Mary J. Gregor) "perpetual peace" ("immerwährender Frieden"), may require a justification. When the peace established by Augustus was called "pax perpetua" on coins, and this formula was used throughout the Middle Ages, and still with reference to the Treaty of Westphalia, then durability was meant. This is precisely what Kant did not have in mind when he spoke – literally meta-physically – of "eternal" peace. The time dimension does not play an essential role in this idea. "What is *in time* is *everlasting*, but not eternal". (Refl 4134, 17.429) In relation to historical reality, "eternal" peace is not to be understood temporally as a "perpetual" state. The epithet "eternal" expresses the fact that with the founding of the civil state, the *fundamental* insolvability of legal disputes that characterizes the state of nature is *completely* eliminated. The *legal peace* thus established is an ideal of reason, independent of all determination of time, an "eternal" (timeless) task (cf. ZeF. 08.386.27-33) facing mankind a priori. In this – and only in this sense – Kant can say on the one hand: "The state must be regarded as eternal" (RL, 06.367) and on the other hand speak of an "everlasting" peace with regard to a golden age, i.e. in a historical, not in a juridical perspective. (see MAM, 08.122) – Kant speaks of "eternal peace" in: KrV, B 780; B 805; RGV, 06.34; 06.124; ZeF, passim; VNAEF, passim; RL, 06. 350; 06.354f. "permanent peace" in RL, 06.347; "continuing foundation of peace" in RL, 06.355.

<sup>362</sup> Kant also speaks in historical terms "[of] American savages as well as [of] European savages in the age of chivalry" (ZeF, 08.365). With this, the following statement from 1775 also gains systematic importance: "In general, one notices that the savages are very similar to each other, which circumstance could to some extent discover the original drives of the [sic] human being." (V-PG/Kaehler, 26/2.613)

<sup>363</sup> ZeF, 08.354f (m/it; without Kant's italics)

<sup>364</sup> "A foreigner can rightly claim this degree of sociality, but only limited to the mere hospitality of the inhabitants of each land not to oppose him with hostility." (VAZeF, 23.173). "all nations stand *originally* in a community of land, though not of *rightful* community of possession (*communio*) and so of use of it, or of property in it; instead they stand in a community of possible physical *interaction* {*commercium*}, that is, in a thoroughgoing relation of each to all the others of *offering to engage in commerce* with any other, and each has a right to make this attempt

tant parts of the world can enter peaceably into relations with one another, which can eventually become publicly lawful and so finally bring the human race ever closer to a cosmopolitan constitution.

If one compares with this the *inhospitable* behavior of civilized, especially commercial, states in our part of the world,<sup>365</sup> the *injustice* they show in *visiting* foreign lands and peoples (which with them is tantamount to *conquering* them) goes to *horrifying lengths*.<sup>366</sup> When America, the negro countries, 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*.

China and Japan (*Nipon*), which had given such guests a try, have therefore wisely [placed restrictions on them], the former allowing them access but not entry, the latter even allowing access to only a single European people, the Dutch, but excluding them, like prisoners, from community with the natives. The worst of this (or, considered from the standpoint of a *moral judge*, the best) is that they do not even profit from this *violence*; that all these trading companies are on the verge of collapse; that the Sugar Islands, *that place of the cruelest and most calculated slavery*, yield no true profit but serve only a mediate and indeed not very laudable purpose, namely, training sailors for warships and so, in turn, carrying on wars in Europe, 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."<sup>367</sup>

"Trade in negroes, which is in itself already an offense against the hospitality of black peoples,<sup>368</sup> will be even worse for Europe in its consequences. For the result of the amount of sea power and the increased number of sailors used for commerce with the sugar islands, and adding in the war which could be waged using them, is partly the burial of a number of human beings en masse in the sea, partly the emptying of all coasts or also of whole peoples, and partly slow starvation through obstruction of the circulation of food. – The lands of America had barely been discovered before not only the inhabitants were pushed aside or swindled to make room for settlements, but they were even in part *made into slaves as goods without owners*, and in part forced out of their territory and wiped out by internal wars through which they were made unhappy because driven by jealousy and concern for the supremacy of one part in a multitude of long wars, because of which the commercial inhabitants grew in power at a manifold of new opportunities. The visits from our part of the world to the East Indies, on the mainland as well as on the islands, began with separate, peaceful settlements and resulted in the subjugation of a substantial part of the old inhabitants, but even worse the internal wars, from which only China and Japan were spared, which the European powers provoked from such a great distance and which finally reached their own territory itself, and which were concluded with the people of our lands no longer allowed any territory in their lands.

The principles that allege conformity with the right of possession applied to newly discovered lands that are believed to be barbaric and inhabited by unbelievers, as goods without owners, acquired without the assent of the inhabitants and even with their subjugation, are completely opposed to the cosmopolitan right limited to mere hospitality<sup>369</sup> [...].

A spark of a violation of human rights suffered in another continent, in accordance with the flammability of the material of thirst for power in human nature, above all in their leaders, lights the flame of war that reaches the region where it had its origin.

It is quite necessary to extend the concept of the human right not merely to internal matters of a state constitution in one people or to the relation of nations to one another in a right of nations but finally also to a

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without the other being authorized to behave toward it as an enemy because it has made this attempt." (RL, 06.352).

<sup>365</sup> "one sees that they recognize no limitation to their presumptions except whatever their own powerlessness prevents them from doing, and all the foreigner's goods, indeed even the person of the foreigner himself, are treated like booty thrown into their hands by nature." (VAZeF, 23.173).

<sup>366</sup> "one will note with horror the ills that overstepping the bounds of hospitality [...] has brought to the human species" (VAZeF, 23.173).

<sup>367</sup> ZeF, 08.358f.(m/it apart from "seek", "inhospitable", "visiting" und "conquering").

<sup>368</sup> See also V-PG/Dohna, 234.

<sup>369</sup> The CE translation (Fred Rauscher) says "cosmopolitan right to limited hospitality".

cosmopolitan right, because the right of states as well as the right of nations [are needed] for external human right in general; without them the prospect of approaching perpetual ["eternal"] peace would be completely cut off."<sup>370</sup>

Referring to the passages just quoted, Bernasconi provides an example of what I would like to call "McCarthyism" which may serve here as a model for many others to be discovered in him and other opponents. He is concerned with proving that Kleingeld is wrong in her thesis of Kant's change of mind in the 1790s, which, by the way, he is right about, albeit for reasons that, as will be shown, are not his own. Bernasconi asserts against her attempt to save at least the 70-year-old Kant from the auto-da-fé:

"Kleingeld fails to reflect on two important features of Kant's discussion. The first and most striking is that Kant decided *not* to include this discussion in his published text. In *Toward Perpetual Peace*, as in the draft, Kant attacked the pirates of the Barbary Coast for enslaving stranded shipfarers, but when he came to criticize the inhospitable of »the civilized, especially commercial, states,« their use of slavery was not explicitly mentioned, and instead he referred only in general terms to the horrifying treatment of the inhabitants of the countries visited. The overall criticism of the European states is as harsh in the published text as in the draft, but the criticism no longer highlights the slave trade as such. He limited himself to condemning »the cruelest and most calculated slavery« [...]. In other words, Kant was not so strongly committed to his opposition to the race-based slave trade that he was prepared to express his objections in print".<sup>371</sup>

If Bernasconi had read Kant's texts as philosophical, instead of just looking for 'rotten eggs' smelling of 'racism', then he could have read in *Towards Eternal Peace* already before the faulted passages at the systematically correct place about the "*validity of these innate and inalienable rights [freedom and equality] belonging necessarily to humanity*"<sup>372</sup>. With that, Kant had said all that Bernasconi would have liked to dictate to him eight pages later. Our author, on the other hand, muses that we do not know Kant's reasons for his alleged silence; maybe it was a lack of "moral courage". But what, according to him, we do know is that Kant decided not to publish the position on the slave trade formulated in the preparatory work.

Bernasconi also complains that while Kant criticized the slave trade in the draft for the peace-essay, he did not even in a draft make use of the opportunity to condemn at the same time also the institution of slavery. That one can read in the same passage: "the inhabitants [...] were even made into slaves as goods without owners" and the subjugation of the inhabitants was "completely opposed to the cosmopolitan right limited to mere hospitality", and that Kant then clearly speaks of a "violation of human rights" – our author, a mixture of Beckmesser and inquisitor, obviously finds all this too little even and especially for a draft.

Bernasconi finally comes to the verdict:

"[n]evertheless, even this comment directed against the cruelty of the slave trade marks a departure for Kant in contrast with his much earlier *insistence* that Black slaves *had to be treated harshly*: for example, in Rink's edition of the *Physical Geography*<sup>373</sup> Kant records that all inhabitants of the hot zones have a thick skin and so must be hit not with sticks but whipped with split canes."<sup>374</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> VAZeF, 23.174f (m/it).

<sup>371</sup> Robert Bernasconi, Third Thoughts (fn. 9) 302f.

<sup>372</sup> ZeF, 08.350 (m/it).

<sup>373</sup> PG, 09.313.

<sup>374</sup> Robert Bernasconi, Third Thoughts (fn. 9) 303 (m/it). By the way, it is a strikingly frequent method used by opponents to say, for the purpose of dramatization and scandal, as in the quotes above: "Kant insisted" or "persisted" or "highlighted", where the latter simply just stated something.

This last, apparently irrelevant remark is extremely characteristic of the way in which Kant's texts are treated in the circle of his opponents.<sup>375</sup> Elsewhere, according to Bernasconi, Kant limits himself to "statements about the best way to whip Moors" without at the same time demanding the abolition of slavery.<sup>376</sup> Eze, with whom Mills<sup>377</sup> agrees, expresses a similar and at the same time even worse opinion. He approvingly quotes an English 'version' of Kant's text from the secondary literature, without referring to Kant's writing himself:

"»Training« for Kant seems to consist purely of physical coercion and corporeal punishment, for in his writings [!] about how to flog the African servant or slave into submission, Kant »advises us to use a split bamboo cane instead of a whip, so that the ‚negro‘ will suffer a great deal of pains (because of the ‚negro’s‘ thick skin, he would not be racked with sufficient agonies through a whip) but without dying.«<sup>378</sup>

If, on the other hand, one reads the original text for comparison, then it should be clear what I mean by "McCarthyism":

"Like all the inhabitants of the torrid zones, the Moors have a thick skin, and for this reason when they are punished they are whipped not with sticks but with split canes, so that the blood may find a way out and not suppurate under the thick skin."<sup>379</sup>

This sentence is the last of eight paragraphs of a one-page chapter at the beginning of Part Two of *Physical Geography*, entitled: "Some Peculiarities of the Black Color of Humans". Accordingly, it only contains physiological statements related to the skin.

Let's stay with Kant and the main issue. The same clear condemnation of the Europeans in favour of the non-Europeans as in the peace-essay can also be found in Kant's principle juridical work, in the *Doctrine of Right* from 1797. However, there is no mention at all of races, but of peoples and the rights of their members and thus of the human being not as a mere natural being, but as a rational being endowed with freedom.<sup>380</sup>

"Yet this possible abuse cannot annul the right of citizens of the world *to try to establish community with all and, to this end, to visit all regions of the earth.* This is not, however, a right to *make a settlement* on the land of another nation [...]; *for this, a specific contract*<sup>381</sup> *is required.*

The question arises, however: in newly discovered lands, may a people undertake to *settle* [...] and take possession in the neighborhood of a people that has already settled in the region, even without its consent? –

If the settlement is made so far from where that people resides that there is no encroachment on anyone's use of his land, the right to settle is not open to doubt. But if these people are shepherds or hunters (like the Hottentots, the Tungusi, or most of the American nations) who depend for their sustenance on great open regions, this settlement may *not take place by force but only by contract, and indeed by a contract*

<sup>375</sup> It is also remarkable how Bernasconi (op. cit. 308f) falsifies beyond recognition what Kant explains in the *Critique of the Power of Judgement* (KU, 05.431f) in order to arrive at his verdict on Kant.

<sup>376</sup> Robert Bernasconi, *Unfamiliar Source* (fn. 9) 151.

<sup>377</sup> Charles W. Mills, *Untermenschen* (fn. 9) 178.

<sup>378</sup> Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, *Colour of Reason* (fn. 9) 116. A similar mastery in the targeted handling of Kant's texts can also be seen in Shell. She falsifies Kant's remark, referring to early European history, about "Germanic blood" ("germanische Blut"; Refl 1520, 15.880) into "German blood" (= "deutsches Blut"), and then immediately considers the possibility of Kant being "the avatar [...] of the ravings of Houston Stewart Chamberlain". (*Susan Shell, Kant's Conception of a Human Race* [fn. 9] 56)

<sup>379</sup> PG, 09.313.

<sup>380</sup> See also Anth, 07.285.

<sup>381</sup> The peace-essay even says: "a special beneficent pact [...], making him a member of the household for a certain time" (ZeF, 08.358).

*that does not take advantage of the ignorance of those inhabitants* with respect to ceding their lands.<sup>382</sup> This is true despite the fact that sufficient specious reasons to justify the use of force are available; that it is to the world's advantage, partly because these crude peoples will become civilized<sup>383</sup> (this is like the pretext by which even *Büsching* tries to excuse the bloody introduction of Christianity into Germany), and partly because one's own country will be cleaned of corrupt men, and they or their descendants will, it is hoped, become better in another part of the world (such as New Holland). Yet, all these supposedly good intentions cannot wash away the *stain of injustice* in the means used for them. – Someone may reply that such scruples about using force in the beginning, in order to establish a lawful condition, might well mean that the whole earth would still be in a lawless condition; but this consideration can no more annul that condition of right than can the pretext of revolutionaries within a state, that when constitutions are bad it is up to the people to reshape them by force and to be unjust once and for all so that afterwards they can establish justice all the more securely and make it flourish.<sup>384</sup>

In the *Doctrine of Right* Kant already settled the issue of 'slavery' in the introduction. In the "Division in accordance with the subjective relation of the subject imposing obligation to the subject put under obligation" it says:

"1. [...] 2. The relation in terms of rights of human beings toward beings that have rights as well as duties. *Adest.* For this is a relation of human beings to human beings. 3. The relation in terms of rights of human beings toward beings that have only duties but no rights. *Vacat.* [sic] For these would be human beings without personality (serfs, slaves). 4. [...]."<sup>385</sup>

One can become a bondsman ("servus in sensu stricto") or a slave with the loss of one's personality only through one's own crime and therefore only "by a verdict and right".<sup>386</sup> The owner can "alienate him as a thing, use him as he pleases (only not for shameful purposes) and dispose of his powers, though not of his life and members".<sup>387</sup> Immediately afterwards Kant declares:

"No one can bind himself to this kind of dependence, by which he ceases to be a person, by a contract, since it is only as a person that he can make a contract. [...] if the master is authorized to use the powers of his subject as he pleases, he can also exhaust them until his subject dies or is driven to despair (as with the Negroes on the Sugar Islands); his subject will in fact have given himself away, as property, to his master, which is impossible."<sup>388</sup>

Also with this passage Bernasconi has a problem:

"Because a Black slave in the Sugar Islands is neither a bondsman as Kant defines the term, nor a contract laborer, it is hard to understand why Kant would introduce this case, unless he meant to imply that it is legitimate for a slave owner literally to work his slaves to death."<sup>389</sup>

Well, Kant's issue here is not black slaves, but the juridical assessment of bondage. According to this, bondage (slavery) is legally possible only as a result of a crime, which Kant speaks of in the context of his reflections on the right to punish. It means that the criminal "since the state will not provide for him free of charge, [...] must let it have his powers for any kind of work it pleases (in convict or prison labor) and is reduced to the *status of a slave* for a

<sup>382</sup> In a lecture from 1770 one reads: "The North Americans keep very sacred to this day the treaties which William Penn established with them when he settled colonies with them and bought a tract of land from them." (V-PG/Hesse, 26/2.124f [m/tr])

<sup>383</sup> In Kant's own terminology it would be "cultivated".

<sup>384</sup> RL, 06.353 (m/it apart from "try", "visit", "settlement", "settle", "Büsching").

<sup>385</sup> RL, 06.241.

<sup>386</sup> RL, 06.283; 06.329f.

<sup>387</sup> RL, 06.330 (without Kant's italics).

<sup>388</sup> RL, 06.330.

<sup>389</sup> Robert Bernasconi, "Unfamiliar Source" (fn. 9), 151.

certain time, or permanently if the state sees fit".<sup>390</sup> Bondage, however, on the basis of a contract is legally impossible. Since now the black slaves in the Sugar Islands are not slaves by crime and cannot legally be slaves by contract, concluded by them as free persons, or even without contract, their slave status is clearly a wrong. It violates the "original right belonging to every man by virtue of his humanity": "*Freedom* (independence from being constrained by another's choice), insofar as it can coexist together with the freedom of every other in accordance with a universal law".<sup>391</sup> The reference causing trouble for Bernasconi refers, by way of example, to what is the case "with the Negroes in the Sugar Islands", i.e. what is actually happening to them. Its "legitimacy" is subject to the condition that their "master is authorized". But exactly this has turned out to be impossible.

The following quote from his marginal notes in the *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* from 1764 shows how long Kant's thoughts expressed here had already been familiar to him:

"But what is much harder and more unnatural than this yoke of [natural] necessity is being subject of one human being to the will of another. No misfortune can be more terrifying to one who is accustomed to freedom, who has enjoyed the good of freedom, than to see himself delivered to a creature of his own kind<sup>392</sup> who could compel him to do what he will (to give himself over to his will). [...] everyone must feel it in himself that [...] in the choice between slavery and the risk of death one will have no reservation about preferring the latter. [...] But that a human being [in contrast to an animal] should as it were need no soul himself and have no will of his own, and that another soul should move my limbs, that is absurd and perverse [...] Instead of freedom elevating me above the cattle, it places me beneath them, since I can more easily be coerced. Such a person is to himself as it were nothing but the houseware of another. [...] In short, the human being who is dependent [in this way] is no longer a human being [in the sense of a free being whose actions can be imputed to him],"<sup>393</sup>

As already mentioned at the beginning, there is an attempt to free at least the later Kant from the reproach of being a racist and, moreover, inconsistent. According to Kleingeld's line of argumentation,<sup>394</sup> Kant-Saulus fell between 1792 and 1795 off his 'racist' steed to rise purified as Kant-Paulus. Still in 1792, unlike in 1798<sup>395</sup>, Kant, again according to Kleingeld, spoke out against racial mixing.<sup>396</sup> In fact, however, also in 1792 Kant, at the place indicated by her, only discusses, that nature *would seem to prevent* the spread of the half-breed, and that at least half-breed generation never takes place in case of "parents of [*the same*] race". Nevertheless, there is, according to the "end of nature", "a very extraordinary diversity among people". If, on the other hand, half-breeds became general, "it could not last long that all people would become the same with regard to their external formation and therefore also presuma-

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<sup>390</sup> RL, 06.333 (m/it).

<sup>391</sup> RL, 06.237. As early as the 1760s, Kant writes: "and here is the 1<sup>st</sup> axioma: all people are equal: it is a principle for the savage; but for us, who strayed far, it is to be proven, and the ground of ethics" (V-PP/Herder, 27.66); "The only natural necessary good of a human being in relation to the will of others is equality (freedom)" (BGSE, 20.165).

<sup>392</sup> Kant means here the one species of human beings, not a race. "In *natural history* (which is concerned only with generation and phyletic origination) *kind* and *species* are not distinguished as such." (BBM, 08.100).

<sup>393</sup> BGSE, 20.92-94 (partly m/tr). In this passage entitled "On Freedom", Kant already uses the same "negative" concept of freedom with which he works thirty years later in the *Doctrine of Right*: "independence from being constrained by another's choice". (RL, 06.237).

<sup>394</sup> See *Pauline Kleingeld*, Second Thoughts [fn. 8]; *Pauline Kleingeld*, Kant and Forster [fn. 8].

<sup>395</sup> See Anth, 07.320.

<sup>396</sup> See *Pauline Kleingeld*, Second Thoughts [fn. 8] 591.

bly their character".<sup>397</sup> Another lecture transcript from the same period, nonetheless, seems to confirm Kleingeld:

"What to say, will the races melt together or not? They will not melt together, nor is it desirable. The whites would be degraded. For those races do not adopt the manners and customs of the Europeans."<sup>398</sup>

Kant speaks here – as often also elsewhere – indeed of races, although it would be more correct to say peoples, nationalities, tribes, etc. Manners and customs are not something that falls under Kant's definition of a human race; they are not necessarily inherited and their propagation is certainly not unfailingly half-breed. Therefore it is also irrelevant here whether these manners and customs belong for Kant to the natural or moral character of the population. In any case, it is obviously qualities "of practical relevance,"<sup>399</sup> of which he thinks, that they are typically found across generations in a certain "cohort of human beings"<sup>400</sup>, compared to another cohort of human beings, and that they represent a specific stage of development of cultivation or civilization. What Kant means here by "nor is it desirable" is not a mixing of races, but what will shortly be discussed as the extinction of characters.

Kleingeld's assumption that Kant's idea of the role of race was not yet firmly established between 1792 and 1795, can, according to her, also be concluded from the fact that in the drafts for *Towards Eternal Peace* he speaks of the differences of races, of languages, and of religions and of the "separations" caused thereby,<sup>401</sup> but omits the races in the published version.<sup>402</sup> But in the very next sentence he already here omits the races and instead adds as third element "types of governments". Of mixing and its approval or rejection, there is absolutely no mention. In the publication, on the other hand, the text shows very clearly that there is no possibility at all of mentioning races either. It is about the separation of independent states which is relevant to international law. In contrast to languages and religions, races do not play a role in this regard. One sees: counting once to three and then to two is not enough for an adequate understanding of Kant's philosophy, let alone for its critique.<sup>403</sup>

For his statements in *Towards Eternal Peace* and in the *Doctrine of Right*, Kant in no way needed the alleged change of mind in the 1790s that supposedly brought him to the doctrine of cosmopolitan right.<sup>404</sup> It is true, that with this teaching, it was now also certain that cosmopolitan right is "limited to conditions of universal *hospitality*"<sup>405</sup> and thus a *right to visit* "which is given to *all* human beings in virtue of the freedom of space assigned to them by *nature*,"<sup>406</sup> yet not at all, also a *right to be a guest*. But this right to visit, like the right of human-

<sup>397</sup> See V-PG/Dohna, 107f (m/tr); cf. already ÜGTP, 08.166.33-35. More on that below.

<sup>398</sup> V-Anth/Dohna-Wundlacken, (fn. 92) 448 (m/tr).

<sup>399</sup> Anth, 07.121.

<sup>400</sup> ÜGTP, 08.175.

<sup>401</sup> VAZeF, 23.170.

<sup>402</sup> ZeF, 08.367.

<sup>403</sup> *Pauline Kleingeld* repeats her 'critical' counting in "Kant und Forster" [fn. 8] 116. By the by, Shell already counted the same way long before her. (*Susan Shell*, Kant's Conception of Human Race [fn. 9] 72).

<sup>404</sup> Kant has been using the word "Weltbürger" ("citizen of the world") since 1764 (GSE, 02.256), 1766 (Träume 02.63), 1776 (Philanthropin 02.447; 02.451), 1784 (IaG, 08.15; 08.17; 08.26; 08.28; 08.31), WA, 08.37), 1790 (KU 05.316; 05.432), and HN (15.517 f.; 15.590; 15.618; 15.625; 15.630; 15.634; 15.780!; 15.873; 15.896). – Kant also clearly formulated the idea of a republican constitution as early as 1781 (KrV A 316ff / B 372ff).

<sup>405</sup> ZeF, 08.357.

<sup>406</sup> VAZeF, 23.173 (m/it).

ity, is ultimately based on the concept of right in external relations, as Kant develops it in §§ B-E of the *Doctrine of Right*.<sup>407</sup> According to Kant's doctrine of right, it is, as has been said, *legally* impossible for a human being to enslave himself;<sup>408</sup> and thus it is eo ipso also *legally* impossible to enslave another human being. Kant therefore did not have to comment specifically on slavery in his doctrine of right, as some 'politically correct' investigators among the 'Kant researchers' demand. The idea of the right of humanity was sufficient for the assessment of slavery as injustice, and Kant has demonstrably had this idea since the 1760s,<sup>409</sup> just as he had long been certain of the unconditional validity of the moral law when he wrote his first essay on racial theory.<sup>410</sup>

Nevertheless, Kleingeld reproaches him of having neglected in the 1780s, "to criticize non-white slavery".<sup>411</sup> Bernasconi along with some others blows the same trumpet: "Although one would expect Kant to have recognized that the system of chattel slavery ran entirely counter to the principles of his moral philosophy, there is no record of his having expressly opposed it."<sup>412</sup>

Kant's third contribution to the 'theory of race', to which Bernasconi refers here, was not the place to bring into play moral-philosophical principles and judgements based on them. The *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*, on the other hand, in which Kant discussed these principles, were not the place to specifically bring up the Negro trade. The appropriate place for this was writings on applied moral philosophy; and it was precisely there that Kant expressed himself accordingly; – especially in *Towards Eternal Peace* and in the *Doctrine of Right*, but also in lectures as early as 1777 and 1784.

In particular with regard to the lectures on physical geography and anthropology, there was no reason, or even necessity, for Kant to comment on Bernasconi's issue and thus to make moral judgements within the framework of empirical sciences.<sup>413</sup> Unlike some of his current opponents,<sup>414</sup> he distinguished between appropriate and inappropriate opportuni-

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<sup>407</sup> See RL, 06.230-233.

<sup>408</sup> See RL, 06.330.10-22.

<sup>409</sup> "Every means that is contrary to the highest rights of mankind is not good: now people are all equal" (V-PP/Herder, 27.77); "rights of humanity" (BGSE, 20.44); "right of humanity" (Refl 7565, 19.456); "right of men" (Refl 1166, 15.516); "the rights of men and of humanity in one's own person" (Refl 6791, 19.162); "the right of humanity" (Refl 6801, 19.166); "rights of men" (Refl 1404, 15.612); "rights of men (and of humanity in one's person)" (Refl 1497, 15.767); "That humanity in our own person has certain rights which are inviolable and inalienable" (Refl 7080, 19.244); "The unifying power of all right lies not so much in what is peculiar to a person as in the right of humanity. Therefore all men have the obligation to support the right of every individual." (Refl 7862, 19.538); "the sacred rights of humanity" (WA, 8:39); "The [sic] human being is by nature free and all [sic] human beings are by nature equal". (V-Anth/Mron, 25.1419) (1784/85) (all m/tr).

<sup>410</sup> See e.g. Refl 6639, 19.122 (m/tr): "The categorical (objective) necessity of free actions is necessity according to laws of the pure will" (1769-70).

<sup>411</sup> *Pauline Kleingeld*, *Second Thoughts* (fn. 8) 585f.

<sup>412</sup> *Robert Bernasconi*, *Unfamiliar Source* (fn. 9) 149.

<sup>413</sup> Admittedly, there are in Kant countless extremely critical judgements about the behaviour of the Europeans in relation to slave trade and colonization. Here is a small selection of locations: V-Mo/Herder, 27.11.08-12 (1762-64); V-PG/Hesse, 26/2.26.19-25; 26/2.124.25-125.04; 26/2.263.11-14 (1770); V-PG/Kaehler, 26/2.591.13-21; 26/2.600.14-16; 26/2.610.13-16; 26/2.613.21-32 (1775); V-Anth/Pillau, 25.840.10-16 (1777/78); V-PG/Dönhoff, 26/2.1055-1057 (1782); V-PG/Dohna, 234 (1792); VAZef, 23.174.04-32 (before 1795); ZeF, 08.358.29-359.19 (1795); RL, 06.353.14-37 (1797).

<sup>414</sup> See e.g. *Matthias Kaufmann*, *Wie gleich sind Personen* (fn. 7) 189.

ties.<sup>415</sup> He wanted analysis and (causal) explanation in the empirical sciences; he wanted to observe and understand (human) nature as it really is.

His silence, however, is interpreted as an implied action according to the principle: "Silence counts as consent."<sup>416</sup> Quite apart from the flimsy character of such a procedure, the question arises as to whether Kant did not help the slaves, and thus mankind, more by providing through long-term work the best arguments which mankind has had against slavery ever since, instead of making ineffective statements and confessions.

As early as 1777, in a lecture given by Kant on practical philosophy, all the elements of Kant's later doctrine of right relevant to our topic are present.<sup>417</sup> The all-important point here is this: the concept of right refers to beings who can act freely and therefore accountably. This is the case with human beings, and therefore, when Kant speaks there of right, it is fundamentally about human beings; and since for Kant, as is well known, these all belong to the one humanity in the genetic sense,<sup>418</sup> it is about all human beings of all races without exception and without distinction.

Kant addresses the matter even more explicitly in the transcript of his lecture on natural right from 1784: "We belong to ourselves by birth, thus our mine and yours of ourselves has no beginning."<sup>419</sup> What is with regard to our person (internally) mine and yours we have thus "by nature" and not acquired; and it is inalienable:

"Persons cannot be taken control of, not even through a pactum."<sup>420</sup> "The author himself admits that servus cannot be mutilated or executed because he has his natural rights. He can never relinquish his natural rights, otherwise he ceases being a person. If he makes himself obligated ad omnes operas perpetuas then life, limbs, etc. are included. Slavery is therefore impossible *in jure naturae*."<sup>421</sup>

If Kant means, as Mills asserts,<sup>422</sup> only the white (European) humans when he speaks of humanity, and if correspondingly the right of the human being or of humanity would only mean for him the right of the white human being or of white humanity, then race would be an integral part of this concept of right. Kant's concept, however, is based exclusively on the external freedom of man and the resulting accountability in relation to external actions. So Mills would have had to show that for Kant only the white race is externally free and accountable. In the absence of evidence, however, he wisely refrained from doing so.

Kant's last publication, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* from 1798, also contains, in its part on "anthropological characteristic", a nearly 10-page chapter on the

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<sup>415</sup> The usual tone of self-evidence in the demands, made by his opponents, makes one think of the famous joke, according to which the replied to the teacher's question: "What is it: it's brown, has a long tail and climbs trees?" by saying: "I myself would say: it's a squirrel. But as I know the whole business here, it's certainly the dear baby Jesus again."

<sup>416</sup> This in turn is reminiscent of the trial conducted in the 1920s against the performance of Arthur Schnitzler's "Reigen" because of its alleged immorality, in which the argument was then put forward that the immorality of the piece was shown, for example, by the fact that at certain moments even the curtain was drawn.

<sup>417</sup> See V-PP/Powalski, 27.134-162.

<sup>418</sup> See VvRM, 02.429f.

<sup>419</sup> V-NR/Feyerabend, 27.1341.

<sup>420</sup> V-NR/Feyerabend, 27.1344.

<sup>421</sup> V-NR/Feyerabend, 27.1381 (partly m/tr).

<sup>422</sup> Charles W. Mills, Kant's *Untermenschen* [fn. 9].

"character of the people" and then a chapter of not even one page<sup>423</sup> on the "character of the race". But while in the former he deals with the various European *peoples*,<sup>424</sup> he just refers in the latter, with regard to the various *races*, to a work by Girtanner<sup>425</sup>, the content of which corresponds to what he himself used to deal with in his lectures on physical geography resp. in his essays on 'race theory'.<sup>426</sup> He himself instead speaks of what he considers to be the character of a race,<sup>427</sup> no matter which one.

This is exactly why something has to be said about this chapter, especially since it also plays a significant role in the context of the accusation of racism levelled against Kant. Indeed, some opponents claim, citing this chapter as proof along with other texts, that Kant was against miscegenation, which would for them apparently, and even regardless of possible reasons for such a disapproval, corroborate that accusation.

So Bernasconi claims: "There is no doubt that Kant was opposed to the mixing of races."<sup>428</sup> He refers for this to the first two essays of Kant on 'race theory', where, however, nothing is found that could support his assertion.

In the first essay, in which Kant speaks of a "hereditary difference or sort among animals of one and the same [sic] phylum and race", he argues against a breeding of a "family sort" proposed by Maupertuis. He had previously defined this as "produce[d] over time through marriages that always remain in the same families<sup>429</sup> [...] in which something characteristic finally takes root so deeply in the generative power that it approximates a strain and perpetuates itself like the latter." As an example, he refers to the nobility of Venice and Tahiti. If only, he objects, "Nature can work undisturbed (without transplantation or foreign mixing [as in the case of breeding]) through many generations, then she always finally produces a lasting sort, which marks ethnic groups forever."<sup>430</sup> Bernasconi's 'explanation' distorts this to: "In other words, to avoid race [sic] mixing was merely to act in conformity with nature."

He continues, referring to Kant's second essay on races: "For Kant, the present division of races was permanent and indissoluble, so long as all race mixing was prevented [BBM, 08.105.01-03]." With his own statement, slightly changed in Bernasconi's translation, Kant only wants to record something at the end of his essay that represents a triviality within the framework of his 'race theory': "the currently existing races could no longer go extinct if all their mixing with each other were prevented. [conditional tense!]" But Bernasconi goes so far

<sup>423</sup> Larrimore gives as a reason for this: "the abbreviated section [...] seemed too short to do much of anything." (*Mark Larrimore, Race, Freedom* [fn. 91] 109) Kant thus is said to have been silent only because his mouth was closed.

<sup>424</sup> That's probably why the CE (Robert B. Loudon) changes the heading to "The character of the peoples".

<sup>425</sup> "With regard to this subject I can refer to what Herr Privy Councilor *Girtanner* has presented so beautifully and thoroughly in explanation and further development in his work (in accordance with my principles)" (Anth, 07.320).

<sup>426</sup> Kant once makes the succinct statement: "Despite the unity of the human species, there is still a difference of races to take up, whose special character belongs to *physical geography*" (V-Anth/Mensch, 25.1195 [m/it]).

<sup>427</sup> Here, too, the CE changes, this time misleadingly, the heading to "On the character of the races".

<sup>428</sup> *Robert Bernasconi, Unfamiliar Source* (fn. 9), 154. However, he himself remarks with regard to the question of miscegenation: "his comments on this issue are not especially prominent". (op. cit., 149)

<sup>429</sup> See also ÜGTP, 08.167.10-17. In a lecture from about the time of the first essay it says: "However, nature has laid already by herself a natural repugnance [regarding inbreeding], for nature intended that we should unite with *other* races, in order to avoid all too great a connection *within* a society." (V-Mo/Kaehler, 245 [m/it; m/tr])

<sup>430</sup> VvRM, 02.431.

as to interpret: "It seems to have been Kant's view that if Providence introduced the division of races, that meant that they should be retained."<sup>431</sup>

Finally he makes reference to Kant's *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* to prove his assertion. First he refers to the end of the chapter on the "character of the people", in which the different European *peoples*<sup>432</sup> are the subject:

"This much we can judge with probability: that the mixture of *tribes* (by extensive conquests), which gradually *extinguishes the characters*, is not beneficial to the human species<sup>433</sup> – all so-called philanthropism notwithstanding."<sup>434</sup>

The only thing Kant is thinking about here is the melting together of certain populations (tribes, peoples) and the resulting loss of a rich spectrum of characters. Kant pleads against their extinction and implicitly for diversity among them. There is no mention of races and their mixing at this point. Bernasconi then directly turns to the immediately following chapter on the "character of race", without now, however, having more success by referring to the following passage:

"I want only to make a further remark about *family kind* and the varieties or modifications that can be observed *in one and the same race*. Instead of *assimilation*, which nature intended in the melting together of different [sic] races, she has here made a law of exactly the opposite: namely, in a people of the same race (for example, the white race), instead of allowing the formation of their characters constantly and progressively to approach one another in likeness – where ultimately only one and the same portrait would result, as in prints taken from the same copperplate<sup>435</sup> – rather to diversify to infinity the characters of the same tribe and even of the same family in physical and mental traits."<sup>436</sup>

Kant thus speaks of a twofold intention of nature: 1) assimilation in the case of the melting together of *different* races (which is, by no means, arguing *against* race mixing); 2) diversification within the *same* race.

Bernasconi, on the other hand, summarizes: "Races were defined in such a way that it is only in the case of race mixing that the diversity at which nature usually aims is frustrated. Kant took this as confirmation that nature opposed race mixing."<sup>437</sup> He seems to think erroneously that for Kant the assimilation brought about by the melting together of *different* races is an obstacle to diversification "to infinity" in the case of family kinds, varieties, modifications of the *same* race, and can therefore not possibly be the end of nature aiming at diversity.

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<sup>431</sup> Op. cit., 157.

<sup>432</sup> With regard to which he - even more than with regard to people of different races - ascertains a variety of positive and negative peculiarities.

<sup>433</sup> Here the CE (Robert B. Loudon) says "race"! It is by no means wrong per se to translate "das menschliche Geschlecht" into "the human race". But it is a serious mistake to do so when it comes to Kant's writings. And that is indeed done in the CE-translations of WA, GMS, KU, RGV, TP, ZeF, RL, TL, SF, Anth. (The hundreds of cases in earlier writings, notes, lectures and letters are ignored here.) There is one human species, and by dividing it in a certain way Kant gets different classes which he calls races. This crucial distinction between species and races gets disguised by translating "Geschlecht", understood by him as "Gattung" ("species"), into "race". And all those mistranslations are completely unnecessary, as is proven by laG, RezHerder. MAM and ÜGTP, which have "humankind" or "species" for "menschliches Geschlecht".

<sup>434</sup> Anth, 07.320 (m/it; partly m/tr).

<sup>435</sup> See also what was said above on p. 59 f. about the spread of the half-breed.

<sup>436</sup> Anth, 07.320 (m/it apart from *family kind* und *assimilation*).

<sup>437</sup> Robert Bernasconi, *Unfamiliar Source* (fn. 9), 157.

To further confirm his assertion, Bernasconi quotes from Kant's third essay on 'race theory'; but on the basis of his faulty translation of Kant's statement he presents quite a distorted picture of Kant's issue. Kant says there:

"With respect to the *varieties*, nature seems to prevent the *melting together* because it is contrary to its end, namely the manifoldness of the characters; by contrast, as regards the differences of the *races*, nature seems at least to permit the melting together, although not to favor it".<sup>438</sup>

Mixing now, what Kant says about *varieties* and *their* diversity of characters with what he says about *races* and *their* differences, Bernasconi ends up with the assertion:

"he *persisted* in regarding race mixing as *contrary* to nature: »nature, at least permits, even if she does not encourage, the fusing together of *characters with respect to racial differences*«. "<sup>439</sup>

Bernasconi doesn't even notice that it is anyway only a side note and that the entire context, as in the *Anthropology*, refers to the point that the melting together of varieties is contrary to nature. Kant is concerned with avoiding the extinction of characters caused by melting together, be it characters of peoples, varieties or family kinds, whereby in the latter the extinction can reach a climax in infertility<sup>440</sup> caused by inbreeding. But Kant also wants to avoid the extinction of the character of race, which for him, as the chapter in *Anthropology* shows, consists in nothing other than in an abundance<sup>441</sup> of physical and mental traits intended by nature.

A reflection by Kant on anthropology shows that with regard to everything that Kant says in the context of anthropology about the 'intention of nature' or about 'providence', one must always be aware of whether it refers to what this very nature "does *for its own end* with respect to the human species"<sup>442</sup> as a class of animals.<sup>443</sup> or to what it does in relation to what human beings as free-acting beings make or can and should make of themselves.

"Because it is an intention of Providence that peoples do not fuse together, but are in conflict with each other through repelling force, so national pride and national hatred are necessary to separate the nations.<sup>444</sup> Therefore either through religion, since a people believes that all others are accursed, like Jews and Turks, or through the sense of superiority of their intellect that everything else is clumsy and ignorant, or of their bravery that all must fear the people, or of their freedom that all others are slaves, a people loves its country above others. Governments like to see this delusion. This is the *mechanism* in the world order, which instinctively binds and separates us. Reason, on the other hand, gives us the law that, because instincts are blind, they do direct animality in us, but must be replaced by maxims of reason."<sup>445</sup> For

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<sup>438</sup> ÜGTP, 08.166 (m/it)..

<sup>439</sup> *Robert Bernasconi*, *Unfamiliar Source* (fn. 9), 157 (m/it). Cf. the translation of the CE: "as regards the differences of the races, nature seems at least to permit the melting together, although not to favor it".

<sup>440</sup> See *Anth*, 07.321.08-09.

<sup>441</sup> Cf.. also *Anth*, 07.179.32-35.

<sup>442</sup> Here again the CE (Mary J. Gregor) says "race".

<sup>443</sup> *ZeF*, 08.365.

<sup>444</sup> So, also from the 1770s, Refl 1499, 15.783. Similar Refl 1451, 15.634 (m/tr): "Another special quality is that the human species is separated into so many different peoples of languages, religions and customs and is kept from cosmopolitan disposition by each's patriotism." Note that Kant does not mention races here either.

<sup>445</sup> Recall that Kant repeatedly ascribes even war to be the cause of something, "what reason could have told them even without much sad experience" (*IaG*, 08.24). And yet his verdict is clear: "There is to be no war". (*RL* 06.354). But this legal judgement is entirely consistent with the ascertainment of a natural mechanism. Bernasconi speaks in a falsifying way of "a philosophy of history rooted in [Kant's] account of natural *history* that *authorized violence*". (*Robert Bernasconi*, *Third Thoughts* [fn. 9] 311 [m/it])

the sake of that, this national delusion has to be exterminated and replaced by patriotism and cosmopolitanism."<sup>446</sup>

In a nutshell, this means: the aim of nature does not denote a norm for human action to be followed as such. Man as a free being, it is true, is affected, but not constrained by the inner and outer nature with regard to his will and actions.<sup>447</sup> He therefore can and should decide on the basis of his values and purposes what influence he wants to grant to nature. The teleological perspective taken when speaking of an aim of nature is the expression of a research maxim, a guide to the acquisition of knowledge, not a statement about the reality of nature, let alone, the standard for that decision.

#### Fourth Excursus: On a hermeneutic lapse

Kant incidentally speaks in several lectures, in a Reflection and in a draft of "extermination", "dying out" and "(mutual) wiping out" of "races" resp. "nations". The statement in the Reflection has led to comments in the literature that represent nothing more than a hermeneutic lapse with regard to Kant's work and can be considered as prototypical for the 'McCarthyism' in the circle of his opponents. Here first Kant's – actual or alleged – statements:

"But because extensive terrain is required for hunting, which the Europeans are gradually taking over and thereby diminishing; furthermore, the inhabitants there have also become acquainted with brandy, which they drink so heavily that they would inevitably die in case of overindulgence, and since they are thereby made unskilled for hunting, then the children's pox introduced; so one can certainly say that the inhabitants in Europe came to the North American nations at least to their misfortune and that over time these nations will run out [= die out], since the women who suckle children when they are already grown, during which time they cannot bear children at all."<sup>448</sup>

"it appears that they ["the Americans"] will all be exterminated, not through acts of murder, for that would be gruesome! but rather that they will die out. For it is calculated only a twentieth part of all the previous Americans are still there. Since they only retain a small part, since the Europeans take so much away from them, there will arise among themselves struggles, and they will wipe out each other"<sup>449</sup> <sup>450</sup>.

"The Caribes were [...] so exterminated by the Europeans that only a few are left on Dominique."<sup>451</sup>

"All races will be exterminated (Americans and Negroes cannot govern themselves. So only serve as slaves<sup>452</sup>), except that of the whites."<sup>453</sup>

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<sup>446</sup> Refl 1353, 15.590f (m/tr).

<sup>447</sup> For what concerns the human being as a "free" or "free-acting" being, one does not, by any means, have to presuppose "transcendental freedom"; what Kant in the Critique of Pure Reason (KrV A 801f / B 829f) calls "practical freedom", capable of being proved by experience, is sufficient. Cf. also SF, 07.91.22-33.

<sup>448</sup> V-PG/Kaehler, 26/2.613 (m/tr) (1775).

<sup>449</sup> The CE (Allen W. Wood) misunderstands Kant's "sich einander aufreiben" ("wiping out each other") as "sich aneinander reiben" and falsifies and plays down Kant's statement to: "they will be in friction with one another."

<sup>450</sup> V-Anth/Pillau, 25.840 (partly m/tr) (1777/78).

<sup>451</sup> V-PG/Dönhoff, 26/2.1090 (m/tr) (1782).

<sup>452</sup> McCabe makes out of "So only serve as slaves" "are made to be slaves" and "they should be enslaved". But Kant's words are only a statement. In this, there is neither a justification nor a request. (*David McCabe, Kant Was a Racist* (fn. 87) 194)

<sup>453</sup> Refl 1520, 15.878 (m/tr) (1780s). Kaufmann comments: "The fact that he notes this without any evaluative comment could in turn indicate a lack of empathy and also of efforts to prevent such developments." (*Matthias Kaufmann, Wie gleich sind Personen* [fn. 7] 190 (m/tr); see also 196).

"The lands of America had barely been discovered before the inhabitants were pushed aside or swindled to make room for settlements, but even the inhabitants were in part made into slaves as goods without owners, and in part forced out of their territory and wiped out by internal wars".<sup>454</sup>

In all these passages Kant either states a fact that has happened or he predicts one. And in all apart from the Reflection, the Europeans are held directly or indirectly responsible for it. One would think that, at least here, Kant does not provide his opponents the slightest target. But in the Reflection he makes a prognosis that is in favour of the white race: "All races will be exterminated [...], except that of the whites."

Without noticing the difference between "they will be exterminated" and "they may or should be exterminated" and thus the difference between a purely empirical assertion and an approval or even a request, Sutter claims with reference to the very sentence of the Reflection:

"Thus Kant went in private so far as to give to racist enslavement and even global genocide carte blanche in the form of a prognosis. One can't help suspecting that the Kantian philosophy of history could be supported by concepts and ideas which systematically result in a tacit agreement with racist violence."<sup>455</sup>

Sutter had previously already formulated the thesis,

"according to which the specifically Kantian *humanistic universalism* of practical reason, at least insofar as it is made concrete in terms of philosophy of history, is obviously bound to an *implicitly racist assumption*."<sup>456</sup>

Thirteen years later, Bernasconi follows in Sutter's wake. He devotes to Kant's words "All races will be exterminated [...] except that of the whites." a detailed reflection, although at the same time he admits not to know any other statement of this kind in Kant.<sup>457</sup> This reflection shows in an absolutely exemplary way where thoughts can lead (astray), if one is hermeneutically so tuned, as Bernasconi has shown on several occasions.

"Kant, who had presented the races as products of the foresight of nature, and wanted them to retain their integrity, seems to have reversed himself by suggesting that only Whites would survive. It is a scenario opened up perhaps by the knowledge, already available to him, of how non-White civilizations collapsed, by conquest or disease, on contact with Whites. We should beware overdetermining the meaning of Kant's note, but it suggests that, faced with two ways in which the foresight of Providence that had produced the races might be frustrated, *Kant was more ready to contemplate the extinction of all the races except that of the Whites, rather than see the disappearance of all the races through race mixing*. Kant himself did not explain how the races apart from the Whites would be extinguished, nor does he repeat this thought elsewhere to the best of my knowledge. Rather than finding an attempted resolution to the problems of reconciling cosmopolitanism with a *philosophy of racial inequality*, what one finds in Kant is a dead end that, contrary to the impulse governing his idea of a universal history, suggests the destructiveness of human affairs."<sup>458</sup>

First, there is something to be set right here:

Races are a product of the "spontaneously purposively active nature"<sup>459</sup>, and talking about them refers to human beings *as natural beings*. The extermination of races, of which Kant speaks, is however brought about by human beings (in this case above all by members

<sup>454</sup> VAZeF, 23.174 (partly m/tr) (before 1795).

<sup>455</sup> Alex Sutter, Kant und die "Wilden" [fn. 2] 249 (m/tr).

<sup>456</sup> Alex Sutter, Kant und die "Wilden" [fn. 2] 242 (m/tr).

<sup>457</sup> He could have known the Anthropology lecture Pillau.

<sup>458</sup> Robert Bernasconi, Unfamiliar Source [fn. 9] 159 f. (m/it).

<sup>459</sup> ÜGTP, 08.173.

of the white race) as *freely acting beings*. Since it is thus avoidable, there is no need for Kant to consider it as an option. But this also applies to the second alleged option, because neither is Kant against racial mixing, nor does such a mixing necessarily mean the disappearance of races.

Kant also did not have the problem of reconciliation that he was supposed to have without being able to solve it. Apart from the fact that a "philosophy of racial inequality" is not to be found in him, empirically given inequalities are completely irrelevant in the context of his cosmopolitan idea, because this is exclusively about the human being as a *person*.

Finally, it is just wrong to speak of a dead end. All of Kant's writings related to a universal history in cosmopolitan respect<sup>460</sup>, finish with an optimistic foresight.<sup>461</sup>

But Bernasconi has still more to say. He continues:

"This idea of the extinction of whole races would be *used a century later* to uphold White purity and comfort those who could not imagine a world in which people of all races could live in close contact together in peace. *Kant's note shows that as soon as the idea of race is juxtaposed with the new discipline of a philosophy of history, it invites »solutions« that involve wholesale extermination.* The fact that Kant did not solve the problem of how, within the framework of a universal history, cosmopolitanism can be reconciled with a *view of White superiority* meant that *he left to posterity a dangerous legacy. Kant's note had no historical impact, but he was at very least an articulate spokesman for a framework that had disastrous consequences.* One would expect both philosophical and political problems to arise from a view in which all human beings are divided into discrete groups, but where the members of one of the groups alone is in possession of all the qualities and talents necessary to flourish, so that the members of the other groups have no genuine contribution to make. If, as in this case, procreation between the allegedly superior group and any of the other groups leads to a loss of the qualities that distinguish the former group, then matters are much worse. But this was the view that Kant sought to legitimate from a scientific perspective."<sup>462</sup>

The first sentence of this passage, which is reminiscent of Sutter and the terrible consequences allegedly emanating from the "carte blanche", made out by Kant "in private", may well be called impertinent, if not infamous. Bernasconi suggests that the idea of the extermination of entire races, allegedly contained in a conjecture casually noted by Kant about future events, was in turn used a century later to maintain white racial purity. The second sentence is indeed obviously wrong,<sup>463</sup> since the assumed juxtaposition does not take place at all, and Kant therefore did not have to solve the aforementioned problem. But not only with regard to what Bernasconi apparently wants to say here, a statement has to be made, but, in addition, also with regard to his talk about a reconciliation of cosmopolitanism with a view of white superiority.

<sup>460</sup> The CE frequently translates Kant's "Absicht", when he uses it synonymously with "Hinsicht", as "aim", "purpose", "intention", "intent" instead of "respect", "regard", "view".

<sup>461</sup> See IaG, 08.30.13-21; MAM, 08.123.22-27; TP, 08.313.14-21; SF, 07.93.09-23; Anth, 07.332.30-333.10.

<sup>462</sup> *Robert Bernasconi*, *Unfamiliar Source* [fn. 9] 160 (m/it). Another nine years later, Bernasconi is still moving in the same wake and declares: "It is our knowledge of that fact [that "Kant put ethics first"] which provides the basis for thinking that Kant's moral theories should have trumped his convictions about what he saw as the fact of racial hierarchy, understood as inequality of capacities that he recorded in his lectures on physical geography and elsewhere. But he found it hard to reconcile these inequalities, which – in line with his racial theory – he believed to be permanent, with his hopes for humanity. He speculated about the extermination of all the races other than the White race, but particularly the extinction of the race of Native Americans." (*Robert Bernasconi*, *Third Thoughts* [fn. 9] 296.) For his assertion in the last half-sentence he gives the useless source Refl 1513, 15.840. In Refl 1499, 15.781 from the mid-1770s it only says: "Americans exterminated."

<sup>463</sup> Nevertheless, the talent worthy of a Grand Inquisitor is remarkable with which Bernasconi manages to turn a single short sentence, moreover the only one relevant here, that he knows 'to the best of his knowledge' from Kant, into a dangerous legacy for posterity, and at the same time to turn Kant into an eloquent speaker for an issue with disastrous consequences.

The crucial error in Bernasconi's interpretation of Kant is of a principle-theoretical nature. He fails to recognize the fundamental difference as well as the connection between theoretical and practical philosophy and between moral philosophy and the philosophy of history. Only because of that, he becomes convinced that he is discovering problems of reconciliation in Kant. The following remarks<sup>464</sup> attempt to make visible systematically, albeit in a condensed form, what Bernasconi failed to recognize. With that, the criticism leveled at Kant should also take care of itself.

## VII. Moral philosophy and philosophy of history – and what about ‚race theory‘?

Only after completing his metaphysical doctrine of right, i.e. after pointing out the juridical steps to be taken altogether with regard to world peace, Kant raises an empirical question. He does it in the peace-essay, in a "supplement" to the peace treaty, as an overall treaty consisting of the preliminary and the definitive articles. The all-encompassing categorical imperative of right commands unconditionally to pursue the founding of world peace. The possibility to fulfil this juridical duty may, and must be, assumed in practical respect, as long as the impossibility of realizing the idea of peace has not been theoretically proven from human history;<sup>465</sup> – which has not happened so far, and is a priori also impossible. Historical experience undoubtedly shows that this juridical duty has not yet been fulfilled. However, a look at the history<sup>466</sup> of mankind could give a positive indication with regard to the chances of realizing world peace. This purely practical interest is the only reason and the only justification for Kant's (rather 'frugal') philosophy of history, which represents a mere "supplement" to his juridical peace doctrine. This, in turn, doesn't need nor get any justification resp. limitation from that philosophy.

In principle, Kant's philosophy of history can be understood as the attempt made in cosmopolitan respect, more precisely: in respect of cosmopolitan *right*, under the assumption of purposiveness *in the whole*,<sup>467</sup> to relate the (*natural*) events, observable in human history, to the possible culture of mankind, and in particular to the (*moral*) concept of reason of the highest political good,<sup>468</sup> and thus to understand the path to juridical peace as being trodden by mankind out of *natural* reasons. According to this understanding, it is the nature of human beings as (rational) natural beings, which ultimately – whether they want it or not<sup>469</sup> – leads them to create eternal peace.

Kant therefore looks for signs in human life and in the history of mankind for an (empirical) "guarantee of eternal peace"<sup>470</sup>; and he finds some.

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<sup>464</sup> I am making use of considerations that I have made earlier. See *Georg Geismann*, *Kant und kein Ende*, vol. 3: *Pax Kantiana oder Der Rechtsweg zum Weltfrieden*, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2012, 221-231.

<sup>465</sup> The onus of proof is with the one who claims the impossibility of peace-making. Cf. RL, 06.354f.

<sup>466</sup> Cf. Anth, 07.328f.

<sup>467</sup> Cf. IaG, 08.25.33; KU, 05.176.07-09.

<sup>468</sup> See RL, 06.355. In a late Reflection Kant speaks of the "highest cosmopolitan good" (RefI 8077, 19.612).

<sup>469</sup> Cf. ZeF, 08.365.31-32; also IaG, 08.22.07.

<sup>470</sup> ZeF, 08.360. For details see IaG, 08.15ff; MAM, 08.107ff; KU, 429ff; TP, 08.307ff; ZeF, 08.360ff; SF, 07.79ff; Anth, 07.321ff.

In the essay *Idea for a Universal History in Cosmopolitan Respect* from 1784 it is the "unsociable sociability" of human beings, which nature uses to bring about the development of "all its predispositions in humanity",<sup>471</sup> and thereby in the end also a lawful order of the society.<sup>472</sup>

In the peace-essay, Kant raises two questions with regard to the possible role of nature for "affording of the guarantee" of peace:<sup>473</sup> what situation has nature brought mankind into, so that it (nature) is now necessitated to ensure peace for mankind; and how does it provide the assurance of peace?

a) The first question concerns "what nature does for its own end with respect to the human species"<sup>474</sup> as a class of animals.<sup>475</sup>

"Its provisional arrangement consists in the following: that it 1) has taken care that people should be able to live in all regions of the earth; 2) by *war* it has driven them everywhere, even into the most inhospitable regions, in order to populate these; 3) – just by war it has compelled them to enter into more or less lawful [and insofar peaceful] relations."<sup>476</sup>

b) The second question concerns

"the essential point with regard to eternal peace: what nature does in this respect with reference to the end that the human being's own reason makes a duty for him, hence [with reference] to the favouring of his *moral purpose*, and how it affords the guarantee that, what man *ought* to do according to laws of freedom, but does not do, is secured without prejudice to this freedom also by a compulsion of nature so that he will do it"<sup>477</sup>

. This "affording of the guarantee"<sup>478</sup> by the "great artist *nature*"<sup>479</sup> consists in peace-securing (natural) effects "according to all three relations of public right: the *right of a state*, the *right of nations* and *cosmopolitan right*"<sup>480</sup>. Both "internal discord" and "war from without"<sup>481</sup> force a people to replace the anarchy of its natural state with a civil constitution.<sup>482</sup> The "difference of languages and religions"<sup>483</sup> causes a "separation of many neighbouring

<sup>471</sup> IaG, 08.27.

<sup>472</sup> See IaG, 08.20.

<sup>473</sup> See ZeF, 08.362f.

<sup>474</sup> The CE (Mary J. Gregor) says: "human race".

<sup>475</sup> ZeF, 08.365.

<sup>476</sup> ZeF, 08.363 (partly m/tr).

<sup>477</sup> ZeF, 08.365 (partly m/tr by making use of the publication of *Wolfgang Schwarz*, *Principles of Lawful Politics. Immanuel Kant's Philosophical Draft Toward Eternal Peace*, Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1988).

<sup>478</sup> ZeF, 08.362.

<sup>479</sup> ZeF, 08.360.

<sup>480</sup> ZeF, 08.365.

<sup>481</sup> ZeF, 08.365. The (theoretical) thesis that wars are historically inevitable, and the (practical) thesis that it is morally necessary to seek world peace, are as independent of one another as they are compatible with one another. Cf. also Kant's purely historical-causal judgement on "laziness, cowardice and duplicity". It consistently disregards all moral philosophy; its proper place is in the philosophy of history. (Anth, 07.276).

<sup>482</sup> Cf. Anth, 07.330f; IaG, 08.27ff; MAM, 08.118ff.

<sup>483</sup> The translations both of CE and Schwarz differ from the original. The CE says "differences of language and of religion"; Wolfgang Schwarz (op. cit., p. 101) says "differences of languages and of religions". Kant doesn't say "Unterschied" (= "difference"), but "Verschiedenheit" (= "difference"). The term "Verschiedenheit" evokes the connotation of diversity, variety and also dissimilarity; e.g. "verschiedene Länder" (= "various countries" and "different countries"); "verschiedene Mal" (= "several times"); "Verschiedenes" (= "different things" or – in Newspapers – "miscellaneous"). Kant simply refers to the fact that there are several, or various languages and religions, differing from each other.

states independent from one another"<sup>484</sup> and in this way counteracts the formation of a (despotic) universal monarchy. Finally, "spirit of commerce" and "mutual self-interest"<sup>485</sup> create a tendency among states to replace their warlike, extremely 'uneconomic' relations with cosmopolitan ones.

The empirical "guarantee" resulting from the "mechanism of human inclinations"<sup>486</sup> does not allow, it is true, any (theoretical) prediction of the political development,<sup>487</sup> especially since the future history of mankind also depends on the (principally unknown) development of human knowledge, which in turn is an essential factor of human acting. But in practical respect<sup>488</sup> it suffices, because it shows that the juridical duty to promote world peace is not aimed at a "merely chimerical end".<sup>489</sup>

Kant's doctrine of peace is essentially doctrine of right. His considerations referring to the empirical guarantee of eternal peace do not contain instructions for juridical steps to be taken, but reflections on the meaning and the chances of the peace treaty. They are theoretical (empirical) from a practical point of view and therefore part of the philosophy of history. They presuppose the doctrine of right and would make no sense at all without it. And not a single word in the preliminary and definitive articles would need to be changed if the outcome of those reflections were different. For Kant's *juridical* theory of world peace, his philosophy of history is therefore irrelevant. It is a mistake to think that Kant's cosmopolitanism is determined by his philosophy of history and not vice versa. Kant was concerned with history in cosmopolitan respect, not with cosmopolitanism in respect of philosophy of history. It is therefore impossible for Kant's "humanistic universalism" to be "bound to an implicitly racist assumption", as Sutter and, indirectly, Bernasconi assume.

Incidentally, Kant in no way claims that eternal peace is inevitably brought about by natural mechanisms. "For we are dealing with free-acting beings, to whom, it is true, what they *ought* to do can be *dictated* in advance, but of whom it cannot be *predicted* what they *will* do."<sup>490</sup> No matter how strongly the mechanism of nature may urge mankind towards peace on earth, this can nevertheless be realized only through human action aimed at it, – not as a natural event, but as a foundation.

Kant has a purely practical concept of history, and accordingly his teleological interpretation of history has no theoretical relevance that would expand our historical knowledge, but only practical relevance. Looking at history serves only to answer the question of what we may expect with regard to peace in the world.

The title *Towards Eternal Peace* already makes clear what it is about: the history of mankind as a way to get there, understood (not: recognized!) from a practical point of view with the help of the cosmopolitan guiding thread. The natural mechanism at work in human society, of which Kant speaks, does not have the theoretical status of natural laws that would permit the assertion of inevitability. What Kant really assumes, as a sort of social regularity

<sup>484</sup> ZeF, 08.367 (without Kant's italics.).

<sup>485</sup> ZeF, 08.368.

<sup>486</sup> ZeF, 08.368.

<sup>487</sup> See SF, 07.83f.

<sup>488</sup> The CE says "for practical purposes".

<sup>489</sup> ZeF, 08.368.

<sup>490</sup> SF, 07.83 (partly m/tr).

empirically proven through the course of mankind's natural history, is the general existence of certain social forces, the antagonism of human "unsociable sociability," which exerts a powerful effect on people's willingness to submit to conditions of public-law,<sup>491</sup> i.e. to do "what reason could have told them also without so much sad experience"<sup>492</sup>. But such history remains senseless and meaningless as long as it is not viewed "from another standpoint"<sup>493</sup>, from which it is also understood as the history of beings who are subject to laws of freedom.

Nature's<sup>494</sup> "guarantee" of eternal peace rests, as already indicated, on the fact that the natural tendencies of mankind themselves bring about a kind of social dynamics within human society which, albeit slowly, leads men, "without prejudice to [their] freedom [...] by a compulsion of nature" to actually do what they ought to do "according to laws of freedom".<sup>495</sup> Human beings are, as it were, brought by nature to be externally free.<sup>496</sup> Kant's general argument would go something like this: In the long run, humanity will be willing (or at least tends<sup>497</sup>) to submit to coercion by public law, simply because it is better off with it. Kant's 'optimism' rests above all on the insight that violating juridical principles does not pay off for mankind, at least in the long term,<sup>498</sup> while complying with them does, even for a people of devils. Nature "guarantees" them that *if* they, however motivated, do what reason tells them to do, they *can* achieve the goal set by reason.

Insofar as Kant's philosophy of history deals with the second question discussed here, and thus refers to human beings as free-acting beings, the idea of race, which, as is known, is limited to man as a mere natural being, cannot possibly be an object in it at all.<sup>499</sup> In fact, it really doesn't play a role anywhere in the philosophy of history. However, within the framework of the first question, the "extermination" of the populations, which Kant calls "races", would as genocide belong to the innumerable 'sad experiences' from which mankind suffers on its arduous and dangerous path towards eternal peace. Of these experiences the *philosophy of history* would say: "They are nature's terrible means »for its own end with respect to the human species as a class of animals«<sup>500</sup>." But at the same time *moral philosophy* declares categorically: "It is all wrong; it is against the (moral) law of freedom."

Kant's completely coherent position here can in conclusion be outlined as follows: What nature is doing there for its own end is quite horrible; and we human beings have an unconditional duty to prevent or at least reduce it and, moreover, to actively promote global peace-

<sup>491</sup> Cf. IaG, 08.20.27-29; 08.22.33-34.

<sup>492</sup> IaG, 08.24 (m/tr).

<sup>493</sup> IaG, 08.30.

<sup>494</sup> Kant also speaks of „providence“. See for that: *Georg Geismann*, Kant und kein Ende, Bd. 1: Studien zur Moral-, Religions- und Geschichtsphilosophie, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2009, 94ff; KrV, A 695-702 / B 723-730.

<sup>495</sup> ZeF, 08.365.

<sup>496</sup> Cf. TP, 08.313.12-14; ZeF, 08.365.31-32.

<sup>497</sup> Cf. SF, 07.84f; Anth, 07.324; 07.329; 07.331.

<sup>498</sup> Cf. SF, 07.94.

<sup>499</sup> Kant he himself even once hints at this: "If it is asked whether the human *species* (at large) is progressing continually towards the better, then it is not about the *natural history* of man (whether new races of them may arise in the future), but rather about the *moral history* and this, it is true, not according to the *generic concept* (singulorum), but according to the totality of the human beings united socially on earth and apportioned into *peoples* (universorum)." (SF, 07.79 [m/tr; "natural history" und "peoples" m/it])

<sup>500</sup> ZeF, 08.365.

making. The one thing about these horrible experiences that is not sad is the hopeful thought that at some point humanity will be so weary from the ills that it inflicts on itself<sup>501</sup> that, if only out of prudence and enlightened self-interest, it will finally let reason prevail.<sup>502</sup>

### VIII. Review

Having completed the text up to this point, I have taken the trouble to re-read all the works by Kant's opponents that have been considered. I found some places that gave me reason to amplify my contribution with a few additions. Overall, however, it turned out that the reader would not gain any significant knowledge if I went into detail with what is wrong with their respective criticism and why it is wrong. So, a brief summary may suffice.

It is mainly the blatant lack of systematic, methodological and principle-theoretical care and of textual familiarity in their Kant exegesis,<sup>503</sup> that has determined the opponents in their accusation of racism,<sup>504</sup> and, by the way, with regard to the development of Kant research it is quite worrying. Mostly, this lack already shows in the statements from Kant that the opponents take resp. do not take into account,<sup>505</sup> as well as in the arguments that they advance against Kant. They take Kant in all simplicity at his word, more precisely: at the word that seems to them to be in need of criticism, and descend upon it without further ado, whereby

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<sup>501</sup> See MAM, 08.118.

<sup>502</sup> That's how, more than two centuries later, we may hope that the relentless threat of ills, especially caused by climate change (natural disasters, famine, refugee flows, global wars), will literally force the humankind to see reason. Of course, Putin's war of aggression against Ukraine, which is taking place at the time of finishing this essay, considerably weakens such a hope.

<sup>503</sup> Unfortunately, Storey's talk about the "increasingly meticulous map of Kant's racial thought" only applies if it is related to the growing registration of allegedly racist statements that Kant is said to have made with his own pen or with someone else's. (*Ian Storey*, *Empire and Natural Order* [fn. 8] 673) The soundness of the arguments in favour of the accusation of racism has not increased in quality since Sutter's 1989 paper [fn. 2]. With regard to the assessment of Kant's "racism" Bernasconi expects the "basic standards of historical scholarship" to be fulfilled. (Robert Bernasconi, *Third Thoughts* [fn. 9] 291) Unfortunately, he himself did not live up to this expectation, but even less to that of fulfilling the "basic standards of *philosophical* scholarship".

<sup>504</sup> This accusation is time and again accompanied by that of anti-Semitism and misogyny. With regard to the latter, reference is rather often made to the exclusion of women from participation in legislation (TP, 08.294f; RL, 06.314f). For Kant, the attribute of "civil *independence*" that a person has as a "civil personality" in a civil state consists in "not needing to be represented by another" in matters of right – and that also and above all means: with regard to legislation. For Kant, the restriction of the right to vote to independent citizens is by no means necessary for *empirical* (e.g. gender-related) reasons, but for *juridical reasons*. If one were to give a citizen, who is in his voting behaviour dependent on the will of another citizen, a right to vote, then the person on whose will that citizen is dependent would de facto have two votes, so that the vote of the dependent (to which Kant, for reasons that cannot be discussed here, also counts women) would literally become the vote (voice) of his master. But that would contradict the fundamental right of political freedom, which consists precisely in being able to participate in legislation *according to one's own will*. Therefore, in order to secure this fundamental right, the legal restriction of the voting right to independent citizens is necessary. For its part, however, the law of this limitation is only capable of universal approval, and thus compatible with the fundamental right of everyone's political freedom, if at the same time the possibility "of being able to work one's way up from this passive condition to the active one" is legally guaranteed for everyone. (See RL, 06.313ff; more on *that in: Georg Geismann, Kant und kein Ende, Bd. 3: Pax Kantiana oder Der Rechtsweg zum Weltfrieden, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2012, 93-102*).

<sup>505</sup> *So it makes a fundamental difference for the understanding of what Kant wants to say, whether one quotes (correctly in each case!): "all negroes stink" (see e.g. Pauline Kleingeld, Second Thoughts [fn. 8] 578), or "of which all negroes stink" (both above, p. 48), or "the strong odor of the Negroes, which cannot be helped through any cleanliness" (above, p. 49), or whether one finally also refers to the biological causal explanation that Kant gave for the asserted fact (ibid.). By suppressing Kant's explanation, Kleingeld's text immediately smells of the "racism" she is looking for, while Kant's statement has just as little to do with it as the statement: "People with athlete's foot have a strong odour." The fact that this is true while Kant's statement is false does not alter anything.*

the descent is all too often not accompanied by references, or if, then these are not seldom inaccurate or wrong. What the authors then say, is frequently not even in accordance with the 'letter' of Kant's texts, let alone, with their 'spirit'. Moreover, the paraphrases of statements of Kant are often an expression of considerable 'licence', resulting in more or less large deviations from the original. Furthermore, no scrupulous distinction is made between whether a statement was published by Kant himself or at least noted, or whether it is only known from a transcript or copy. Everything is treated as evidence when it suits the purpose.

The careless and often enough even falsifying handling of Kant's texts, which can be seen not least among the influential opponents, and a regular disregard of the further argumentative environment has probably to be explained with a 'prioritization' of political commitment over scientific quality. Zeal and agitation often take the place of "sine ira et studio".<sup>506</sup>

Almost all opponents presuppose, beyond all doubt, certain statements made by Kant as "racist", and then only ask whether they are compatible at all and, if so, how they are compatible with certain philosophical positions of Kant. But they would have done better to start from precisely these positions, be it from his ethics and his philosophy of right, be it from his scientific-theoretical position, which is particularly represented in the essays about race, in order to then ask whether in the light of these positions the incriminated statements really are what they *prima facie* appear to be for some readers.

Conclusion: The assertion that Kant was a "racist" can be safely dismissed and the literature that supports it can be shelved or archived in the libraries as *curiosa*.

Postscript: Since years I know that the Cambridge Edition contains many and often grave errors in translation. But after having looked at it word for word for my essay, I firmly believe that for serious philosophical research it cannot replace the study of the original texts. The fact that many of the terms used by Kant himself are mentioned in hundreds of footnotes is of little help to those who do not understand German. And even those who do, are not much better off as long as they make do with the Cambridge Edition.<sup>507</sup>

### Summary

Kant first presented his 'race theory' in 1775; and although he then elaborated it further in 1785 and 1788, the basic features remained the same; and also in the 1790s, he essentially did not change<sup>508</sup> or even abandon them. Nor have there ever been any inconsistencies between his 'race theory' and his philosophy proper, especially his moral philosophy.

On the one hand, (moral) differences between humans as free beings (persons) cannot play any role with regard to Kant's statements on races *as such*, since such differences are not innate, let alone unfailingly hereditary within a race, as well as in case of race mixing. On

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<sup>506</sup> Sometimes combined with an eager striving for 'political correctness', as is shown for instance in the view, that just talking of races is "racist" and therefore reprehensible. Such a view is all too easily reconciled with the opinion that racism would be entirely justified should science, e.g. the genetic anthropology, discover that there are differences between human beings for whose description a word like "race" would be appropriate. See also above p. 39f.

<sup>507</sup> To be frank, I was quite stupefied about the number of cases in which the translation significantly deviates from what Kant himself says. I give one example out of hundreds: Kant says in a letter to Marcus Herz (Br, 10.145): "die erste Gründe der Möglichkeit der modification der menschlichen Natur überhaupt". The translation makes it: "the foundations of the possibility of human thinking in general."

<sup>508</sup> A notable change, nevertheless, is the abandonment of the phlogiston theory in favour of Lavoisier's.

the other hand, (empirical) differences between humans as mere natural beings (animals) cannot play any role with regard to Kant's moral judgements, since they are not imputable.

The reproach of "racism" is possible only in two cases: 1) A statement about races, although *knowingly* false, is made with the sole intention of discrimination. This would have to be proved by Kant's opponents. 2) Empirical differences, whether real or erroneously assumed, serve as the basis for legal or social discrimination. Exactly that is excluded in principle and in relation to the whole of humanity with Kant's moral philosophy.

The literature in which Kant is accused of "racism" shows a blatant exegetical lack of systematic care and textual familiarity. It largely ignores Kant's theory of philosophical and scientific principles and his methodological criticism.

### Zusammenfassung

Kant stellte seine 'Rassenlehre' erstmals 1775 vor; und obwohl er sie dann 1785 und 1788 weiter ausarbeitete, blieben die Grundzüge dieselben; und auch in den 1790er Jahren hat er sie im Wesentlichen nicht verändert oder gar aufgegeben. Auch hat es zu keiner Zeit irgendwelche Inkonsistenzen zwischen seiner 'Rassenlehre' und seiner eigentlichen Philosophie, insbesondere seiner Moralphilosophie, gegeben.

Einerseits können (moralische) Unterschiede zwischen Menschen als freien Wesen (Personen) im Hinblick auf Kants Aussagen zu Rassen *als solchen* keine Rolle spielen, da solche Unterschiede nicht angeboren, geschweige denn innerhalb einer Rasse sowie im Falle von Rassenmischung notwendig vererblich sind. Andererseits können (empirische) Unterschiede zwischen Menschen als bloßen Naturwesen (Tieren) im Hinblick auf Kants moralische Urteile keine Rolle spielen, da sie nicht zurechenbar sind.

Der Vorwurf des „Rassismus“ ist nur in zwei Fällen möglich: 1) Eine *wissentlich* falsche Aussage über Rassen erfolgt in alleiniger Diskriminierungsabsicht. Das müssten Kants Gegner beweisen. 2) Empirische Unterschiede, ob wirklich gegeben oder irrtümlich angenommen, dienen als Grundlage für rechtliche oder soziale Diskriminierung. Genau das ist mit Kant's Moralphilosophie prinzipiell und in Bezug auf die ganze Menschheit ausgeschlossen.

Die Literatur, in der Kant „Rassismus“ vorgeworfen wird, zeigt einen eklatanten Mangel an systematischer, methodenkritischer und prinzipientheoretischer Sorgfalt und Textvertrautheit bei der Kant-Exegese.

### Bibliographical Notes

All but four of the textual references to Kant refer to the standard German edition of Kant's works, Kant's *Gesammelte Schriften*, edited by the Royal Prussian (later German, now Berlin-Brandenburg) Academy of Sciences (Berlin: Georg Reimer, later Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1900–) = Akademie Edition. The following sigla are used: Anth = Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View (1798); BBM = Determination of the Concept of a Human Race (1785); BDG = The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God (1763); BGSE = Remarks in the Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime (1764 ff.); EACG = Plan and Announcement of a Series of Lectures on Physical Geography (1757); Br = Correspondence; GMS = Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (1785); GSE = Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime (1764);

HN = Handwritten Remains; IaG = Idea for a Universal History in Cosmopolitan Respect (1784); KpV = Critique of Practical Reason (1788); KrV = Critique of Pure Reason (1781/87); MAM = Conjectural Beginning of Human History (1786); MS = Metaphysics of Morals (1797); NEV = M. Immanuel Kant's Announcement of the Programme of His Lectures for the Winter Semester 1765-1766 (1765); NLBR = New Doctrine of Motion and Rest (1758); NRFeyer = Kant's Lectures on Natural Right (1784); NTH = Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens (1755); PG = Physical Geography (1802); Philanthropin = Essays regarding the Philanthropinum (1776-77); Refl = Reflection Notes; RezHerder = Review of J. G. Herder's Ideas for the Philosophy of the History of Humanity (1785); RL = Metaphysical First Principles of the Doctrine of Right (1797); SF = The Conflict of the Faculties; TL = Metaphysical First Principles of the Doctrine of Virtue (1797); ÜGTP = On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy (1788); VAÜGTP = Drafts for On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy; VASF = Drafts for The Conflict of the Faculties (1794/98); VaZeF = Drafts for Towards Eternal Peace; VNAEF = Proclamation of the Imminent Conclusion of a Treaty towards Eternal Peace in Philosophy (1796); VvRM = Of the Different Races of Human Beings (1775/77); WA = An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment? (1784); ZeF = Towards Eternal Peace (1795).

V-Anth/ means transcript of a lecture on Anthropology, V-Lo/ on Logic, V-Mo/ on Moral Philosophy, V-PG/ on Physical Geography. Each is followed by the corresponding name; only "Fried" means Friedländer, "Mensch" Menschenkunde, "Mron" Mrongovius und "Vigil" Vigilantius: V-Anth/Collins (1772/73); V-Anth/Fried (1775/76); V-Anth/Mensch (1781/82?); V-Anth/Mron (1784/85); V-Anth/Parow (1772/73); V-Anth/Pillau (1777/78); V-Lo/Philippi (1772); V-Mo/Herder, 27.11 [1762-64]; V-PG/Bergk (1791?); V-PG/Dönhoff (1782); V-PG/Dohna (1792); V-PG/Hesse (1770); V-PG/Holstein (1757/59); V-PG/Kaehler (1775); V-PG/Messina (1776?); V-PG/Pillau (1784); V-PG/Vigil (1793).

V-Mo/Kaehler = Vorlesung über Moralphilosophie, *Werner Stark* (Ed.), Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2004; V-Anth/Dohna-Wundlacken; in: *Sabina Laetitia Kowalewski / Werner Stark* (Eds.), Königsberger Kantiana, Hamburg: Meiner 2000, 183-454.

V-PG/Dohna is quoted from the full-text version, available via: [https://telota-webpublic.bbaw.de/kant/base.htm/geo\\_doh.htm](https://telota-webpublic.bbaw.de/kant/base.htm/geo_doh.htm)

V-PG/Pillau is quoted from the full-text version, available via: [https://telota-webpublic.bbaw.de/kant/base.htm/geo\\_base.htm](https://telota-webpublic.bbaw.de/kant/base.htm/geo_base.htm)

The number before the (first) full stop refers to the volume of the Akademie-Edition, the number after it to the page. A second full stop is followed by a reference to the line. For the Critique of Pure Reason, reference is made to the 1<sup>st</sup> (A) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> (B) edition. – My additions within quotations are in square brackets. Such brackets also indicate omissions. My italics = m/it; my translation = m/tr.

I refer only to the Akademie Edition, since the reader can easily find the corresponding pages in the Cambridge Edition. Translations of quotations from Kant are taken or adapted, *unless indicated otherwise*, from the *Cambridge Edition of the Writings of Immanuel Kant*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992 –. Minor changes to these translations have been tacitly made by me